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Recalibrate Models of Successful Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Printed in the United States of America

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Models Brought to the 180° Symposium

Preface

Ten years ago I read the book, *Starting Right,* edited by Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark, & Dave Rahn. It was on the first page at a side bar exercise from Ron Foster that I read these words:

"What are your theological rocks? Which of your beliefs about God matter the most to you? Which ones would you say are "musts" for youth ministry? Do you have a theological conviction that serves as the hub of your beliefs and practices? Think of an adolescent you know. If you share only five things about God over the course of your ministry with this teenager, what would you want him or her to hear you say? Write your theological rocks here."

I did that exercise ten years ago and concluded for myself that my personal top five in youth ministry are, Salvation, Second Coming, Sanctuary, Sabbath and Stewardship. Theology is our first task in youth ministry. The way we treat teenagers or young adults is driven by our understanding of salvation and grace.

The Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE) launched the annual 180° Symposium as a gathering point for free thinking dialogue on matters critical to youth and young adult ministry. Intentionally inviting participants from within the Church structure, our expectation is that we will create smart networks advocating and seeking solutions. Ultimately our desire is that appropriate change will take place, that our Church's inquisitive and searching nature for present truth will lead us into new grounds for the sake of the Gospel. That as we deepen our theological reflection, we will engage the culture and follow our higher calling to ministry.

To that end, last October at our third gathering, we addressed the theology of youth ministry with applicable models. We brought professionals, practitioners and professors proposing solutions and models.

Our research and report, edited by Steve Case, is in your hands as you read this preface. We hope it serves as a tangible resource for those passionate about reaching the throngs of youth and young adults desperately seeking authentic community. Scott McKnight in his work, *One. Life,* said:

- Without love, society becomes a chaos of individuals.

- Without love, society becomes a free for all.

- Without love, society ceases being society.

- With love, society becomes community.

- With love, society becomes one for all and all for one.

- With love, society becomes kingdom.

As you wrestle with why and how best to reach young people in your community may this resource provide you extra insight and encouragement.

To share your thoughts or for information about joining the next 180º Symposium, exploring the 2nd and 3rd generation youth ministry please feel free to contact me at japhet@andrews.edu

Japhet De Oliveira Director,
180º Symposium

Acknowledgement

Special thanks:

To our editor Steve Case who synthesized and condensed all the data between these covers while resisting the warm Californian winter sunshine.

To Terry Swenson who not only moderated the gathering but with life experience and theological strength helped shape the process.

To Emily Hickerson and Brittany Woods for recording all the multiple conversations and supporting all our participants.

To all the participants whose unique perspectives shaped and honed us all. And for their honesty and freedom of expression that crossed all areas.

To the wonderful meals, words, support and counsel from Andrews University President, Niels-Erik Andreasen, Lake Union Conference President, Don Livesay and Andrews University Seminary, Dean Denis Fortin.

To our sponsors E.L Minchin Lectureship and Advent*Source*.

And of course to God who is ever patient with our feeble attempts at solutions. May His wisdom be seen through our human expressions.

For the One.

Pastor Japhet J De Oliveira
Director, Center for Youth Evangelism
Chaplain for Missions
Center for Youth Evangelism
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Introduction

What is a "model" for youth or young adult ministry? As a teen I gained experience both by copying and by doing the opposite of what others in leadership modeled for me, although I didn't think of their example as a model. But it was.

My final two years in college, the local youth pastor hired me as a student minister. This turned out to be my unofficial internship as this unconventional youth pastor steered me in ways I would have never chosen on my own. Yet I didn't considered this as a "model" for youth ministry. It was simply the way we did things, and I learned many new things from my mentor, Bill Smith.

Upon graduation I received sheer grace in the form of an official internship at the Lodi English Oaks Church in the Northern California Conference. To this day I thank God for what this church and the senior pastor, Don Mulvihill, did to train me. Again, I never thought of this as a "model" for youth ministry. We simply did youth ministry and marveled at what God did with our humble (and sometimes not so humble) attempts to serve.

In graduate school at Andrews University, I once again received undeserved opportunities to minister. I remember testing out a way of ministry that forced people out of their comfort zones. The results typically proved to be significant—either positive spiritual growth for some or anger, denunciation, and even threatened lawsuits from others. It was potent, whatever "it" was. I might have referred to it as fresh, Godly, inspired, or some other euphemistic label. Others probably would have labeled it as reckless.

What was I doing? If you had asked me what model of ministry I followed, my response would have been some sort of jumbled theory, a story of unbridled success, an enthusiastic invitation to join God's activity, and then divert to another topic. I had no idea what type of "model" I was using. I simply used whatever had worked for me before or any new idea that barged into my head.

A Break Through

During one of those hour-long Seminary-wide lectures designed to provide a burst of insight beyond regularly scheduled classes, my thick skull felt penetration. The professor presented and critiqued Avery Dulles' *Models of the Church*. At the end of the lecture I had several take-aways:

- I don't agree with everything the author (or professor) said.
- I do agree with some of what was presented.
- I can't integrate all of the elements with which I agree.
- I need to figure out how to evaluate and prioritize what is best.

All of these are part of what a student should experience in graduate school. It shouldn't be just a "jug-to-mug" dumping of information from a smart professor into the empty head of a dumb student. Those who fret about unanswered questions, gray areas, and potential lack of clarity should remain in memorization levels of education with fill-in-the-blank worksheets rather than learning how to think. By all means, graduate education should teach students how "to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought" (White, 1903, p. 17). The professor might have neatly tied off the topic at the end of the lecture, but my mind continued the exploration for months.

At a youth ministry training event, I made presentations and then listened to another experienced youth leader proclaim that the secret to youth ministry was to have a youth choir. All ministry must run through the youth choir. Immediately my gut tensed and my mind countered silently, "No, all ministry must run through a sports program." Then I remembered a guitar-toting friend who would claim that all ministry funnels through praise music. I later observed a youth pastor who centered all ministry through a high-impact drama troupe.

Some claim that mission trips are all that matter. Others maintain that small groups make the lasting difference. Mentoring programs come and go, much like peer counseling has an ebb and flow. It seems that every new youth leader, and the few congregations that have a youth pastor, each

have their own recipe or perspective on the secret to youth ministry. But very few have even a faint concept of what a "model" for youth ministry might be or should be.

Young adult ministry often proves to be more vague since it seeks to be different from youth ministry (whatever that happens to be). With a more mobile, independent and transitory group, any "model" easily fluctuates from leader to leader, from week to week. Few move beyond whatever the latest program is to what model they might implement. Either they copy what others have already done, do something in contrast to what has been done, or strike out on an untested, new idea. Each of these is a model, but few know they are following it.

How Models Work

A model provides structure for ministry. Like the skeletal system of the body, it functions best when it supports the body. You don't want your bones to be broken or to show themselves, just like you don't want your model for ministry to be broken or to show itself. It serves the ministry rather than vice versa.

A model indicates place, purpose, and process for ministry. For example, a street ministry model would be more likely to occur on the streets of a city rather than a suburban sanctuary. It would connect those living on the streets with Jesus and possibly those ministering would connect with Jesus by connecting to those on the streets. And the process might be a short burst onto the street scene followed by retreat or possibly setting up an outpost center in or near the street.

In contrast, a retreat center model for ministry would be more likely to occur in or near nature and away from the hustle and bustle that typifies many ministries. Its purpose would be to center (or re-center) on God and the values one's lifestyle probably

steals from what a person desires. The process necessitates an investment of time (perhaps a weekend or a week) and maybe a directed focus.

A more traditional model would offer a weekly gathering for worship and religious instruction as well as fellowship. An order of service might provide the standard process from which occasional small deviations could be allowed for the sake of the kids.

A model provides a pattern to plan and evaluate. Deviations are only deviations when they depart from an established norm. A model provides that norm. Sometimes a ministry needs change, but change from what? And why? And how? Without an awareness of an existing model or an alternative, you might simply create a monster or an anti-model that doesn't serve your purpose other than to be different from the others (which would be a model!).

Models help to reveal the purposes and goals of a ministry. Because a model indicates place, purpose and process for ministry, these become anchor points that highlight what matters most. If this fails to reveal what truly matters, individuals and groups are more likely to make appropriate changes, and can do so consistently by changing the model and making further evaluations.

What We Did

The Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE) at Andrews University hosted the 180° Symposium October 19-21, 2010. The topic for this third year of the 180° Symposium was "Models for Youth and Young Adult Ministry." Individuals wrote papers in advance, made brief presentations when we gathered, and then tackled the topic as focus groups. The individual papers form the second half of this book. Most of these follow a relational or incarnational model for ministry. Within a

limited number of pages, each author had to present one's model with a theology for that model as well as an explanation and illustration. We requested a visual representation of the model, but didn't require it.

Under the direction of CYE Director, Japhet De Oliveira and with Terry Swenson, chaplain of Loma Linda University serving as the facilitator, the large focus group subdivided into smaller working units to wrestle with a greater breadth of potential models for youth and young adult ministry. Eventually the group came to a consensus on the top 10 models. Some groups fleshed out a few of these more than others. The rest simply got handed to the book editor to complete. The book editor served as a floater from group to group, gleaning the insights and perspectives of the various contributors. These top 10 models form the core of the book.

Each subgroup selected a delegate for a think tank to meet "after hours" in order to hammer out a theology for youth and young adult ministry. This group's work came back to the larger group the next day for input and revision. This theology forms the brief, theological section right after this introduction.

The interplay of ideas and the conviction and passion expressed joined with the rich diversity of experiences and thought in the various focus groups. At times, things seem to bog down, then pick up, then burst through. Some break throughts took place during the meals or intermission; others during the perseverance of the focus group's work. At times it seemed like nothing more than the work of humans; then it seems as though the supernatural took hold. Exhilaration and frustration often seemed like twins. The investment seemed to yield a sharper focus for the participants. We share our results as a work in progress, both on paper and in our ministries.

An additional seven models got added, not because they had been voted or even discussed, but simply because they exist. These may have formed without conscious thought or intention, but they operate. Most will quickly identify them and be able to name places where they have seen them in operation. Mentioning these doesn't endorse them, but it does explain them and hopefully guides people to better models.

Some Who Have Gone Before Us

Most of the papers demonstrate a model born out of personal experience by the author. Few refer to youth and young adult ministry professionals who have already written about models in youth ministry. Perhaps this is the place to acknowledge some giants who have already been over this ground. Any one of these resources offers pause to reconsider where one might be currently, as well as where one might want to go when it comes to youth and young adult ministry. We have much to learn from others who have preceded us.

Mark Senter has written the most regarding models for youth and young adult ministry. One of his works (Senter, 1992) traces a historical flow of youth ministry with various models prevailing in different eras. The mid-nineteenth century utilized Sunday Schools and entities like the YMCA to reach young people in the United States during westward expansion. Over the turn of the century and through WWI, the model changed from Sunday Schools to youth societies as schools took priority over churches in the lives of young people. The mid-twentieth century moved the center of youth ministry onto the school campus with Youth for Christ and Young Life clubs and an incarnational youth ministry model. Currently, youth ministry relies on a professionalization with a paid youth pastor and publications, conventions, and training through church and para-church organizations.

Senter (1987) also has offered eight specific models of youth ministry:

1. Community model (gather in Christ)
2. Competition model (discipleship vs. secularism)
3. Discipleship model (train students to be God's people)
4. Fundamentalist model (separate from the world)
5. Gift Development model (spiritual gifts for service)
6. Ministry model (train in church for ministry outside of church)
7. Urban model (youth pastor goes to where the kids are)
8. Youth Fellowship model (youth learn to lead in the youth group)

More recently (2001), Senter offered a four-quadrant model for youth ministry that provides two axes. The vertical axis presents the church of the future at one end and the church of the present at the other. The horizontal axis separates training (come) from sending (go). When these two axes cross, the resulting four quadrants are best seen in the following graphic (adapted from Senter, 2001, p. xvi).
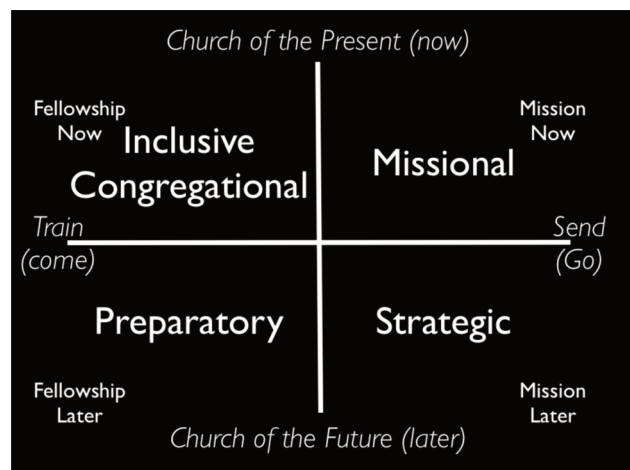
Three Ph.D.s in youth ministry (Dean, Clark & Rahn, 2001) forged an academic youth ministry book (that used to be an oxymoron) that presented a theology and seven models for youth ministry. These included:

1. Evangelism (be with Jesus, preach Jesus, confront evil)
2. Family (churches support families as the agents for spiritual maturing)
3. Christian Practices (the means/habits/practices to respond to God)
4. Student Leadership (identify, nurture, and utilize God's gifts to young people)
5. Critical Consciousness (discernment to address current issues for God)
6. Community (come together for transformation)
7. Innovation (living out the story of God in our specific time and place)

Jim Burns challenged the program oriented youth ministry models of the 1980s with a relational emphasis. According to Burns, "Today we realize that long-term influence with lasting results comes from significant relationships and role models. Of course programming has its place in youth ministry, but the long-term positive influence on the lives of students comes from people, not programs" (Burns, 1988, p. 15). As mentioned earlier, this model seemed to be the most prevalent one among the contributors to this book.

Mark Oestreicher (2008) outlined three models of youth ministry and suggested that current models should implement the third version to be effective now. Although each had its time, the presence-oriented model reaches young people today. These three models are:

1. Proclamation, evangelism and correction, identity (Matthew 7:13-14)

2. Programs, discipleship and positive peer groups, autonomy (Mattthew 28:19-20)
3. Presence, communion and mission, affinity (John 17:18; Acts 2:44-46)

For those who would like to distill or discover other models for youth and young adult ministry, many are available to examine, evaluate, adapt, or adopt. The trendy emergent church model (Kimball, 2007) is simply one. Belcher (2009) offers something different from the emergent church and yet also different from traditional models. Yaconelli (2002) embraces human inconsistency and clings to God's consistent love. Paulien (2008) presents Jesus as the timeless answer to changing times. A new wave of family-based youth ministry comes from the experiences of Joiner (2009). Miller (2003) offers a new and personal perspective on spirituality outside of typical church garb. Rice (2002) reaches back into Jewish roots for a model he finds helpful for today. And Spencer (2010), while succumbing to cancer, offers his last view of what he imagines the church can be.

What About You?

What model for youth and young adult ministry have you utilized? Are you aware of the models available? Could you name any you would endorse? What would you use to critique the model you currently employ (whether or not you've been aware of it)?

Please remember that a model for youth and young adult ministry serves best when it is the skeletal system for your living organism. You don't want it to be broken and you don't want it to show. But it does need to provide the support and shape for your ministry. And it should be based on God and how God operates. That takes us to the next section—a theology for youth and young adult ministry.

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A Theology for SDA Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Many people feel intimidated by the word "theology." Knowing it has something to do with God, most retreat or go silent, feeling certain that others are more qualified to speak to the topic or maybe feeling fearful one would say something wrong.

But we all "do theology." All of us have opinions and respond to what happens in life. Regardless of whether or not we consider ourselves to be godly, we either deny the supernatural or explain it in ways that make sense to us. Sometimes God seems distant and at other times She seems close. We have rather entrenched ideas about God's gender as well, right?!

Rather than limiting "theology" to ivory towers for scholars, broaden your understanding to include your world. Just as God came to earth in the form of Jesus through the incarnation, God comes to us in our everyday lives today as well. Jesus got hungry and thirsty, tired and refreshed. He identified with us. Let's identify with Him.

A Model Needs a Theology

A model for ministry needs to be much more than just a good idea or a plan or a structure. It needs to be rooted in how God operates. Some rely on God's previous activity in one's life as the reference point. We live in a time in which most of us have ready access to God's activity and special revelation over hundreds of years. The Bible offers a treasure trove of God's activity and how humans interface and respond to God. We'll go to Scripture for authority and then make comparisons to our lives today for an understanding of how God acts.

Rather than taking an isolated verse or story upon which to create a theology, we do better to note themes and consistencies God has revealed. For instance, Jepthah's vow to sacrifice as a burnt offering the first thing that came out of his house if God provided victory over the Ammonites (Judges 11:30-31) wouldn't be a good basis for youth and young adult ministry! It certainly didn't turn out that way for his young daughter (Judges 11:34-40). Just because it can be found in the Bible doesn't make it a model to emulate. The Bible contains many examples of bad models. The Israelites worship of the golden calf at the base of Mount Sinai can be found in Scripture (Exodus 32:1-6). But this record shows us what not to do rather than what to do.

We could also use examples from the New Testament. Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell all he had, give it to the poor, and then come follow Jesus (Luke 18:22). Some take this as the model for how to relate to possessions if you would be a true follower of Jesus. Yet Zacchaeus offered half of his goods to the poor and Jesus pronounced that salvation had come to his house (Luke 19:8-9). In further contrast, the demon-possessed man Jesus cleansed had nothing to sell, but he offered to follow Jesus. Yet Jesus refused and sent him back home (Luke 8:38-39). All three of these incidences with Jesus are recorded in the Gospel of Luke. They seem inconsistent for establishing a model for youth and young adult ministry. The details vary considerably. But they do contain some similar themes. For example, each instance involved a dramatic change from life before Christ in contrast to life after Christ. And each instance created a decision that would be difficult for the potential follower of Jesus—something the individual would need divine support in order to maintain. And each instance provided choice even though not every individual made a good choice.

Doing theology often necessitates that we wrestle with the text and with the story, as well as our own story in order to ascertain how God operates as well as how we will relate to how God works. While professional theologians might provide insights into God, we need God-lovers and God-followers to help us understand how to live for God as we seek to identify models based on how God does things. Read and live; live and read. Pray and practice; practice and pray.

The Process We Followed

Our group chose to root our theology in the Bible and then compare that to our various life experiences in ministry in order to arrive at a theology for youth and young adult ministry. With representation from each subgroup, we worked independently and then together to forge this theology. We didn't come up with identical material that miraculously blended when we compared notes. But as we discussed our work and our understandings of God, the kingdom of God became the unifying theme. From that core, the components quickly emerged and the crucial wording came together more quickly than what seemed typical. Perhaps these were the miracles in the process.

Because each member in the group identifies with the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA), we labeled this "A Theology for SDA Youth and Young Adult Ministry" although nobody and no entity gave us this task in an official manner. We offer it as our foundation/theology for the models for youth and young adult ministry that follow.

To the extent that others identify and adopt any or all of this, we offer it as a useful tool. Basing this on Scripture provides common ground for all Christians. Testing it from our collection of ministry experiences potentially makes it unique for those who came together for the Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE) 180° Symposium October 19-21, 2010, at Andrews University. For those who would prefer to simply criticize, spend your time and energy coming up with your own theology and get on with ministering to youth and young adults.

Here It Is!

The full theology for SDA youth and young adult ministry follows in a moment. Take it and unpack each line and every sentence. Ask yourself how this compares to what God has already revealed. What additional Scripture would you add? What has God called you to do right now? What is God's desire for youth and young adults today?

The shortened version reads like this:

What it's all about: the kingdom of God!

What we do:

1. Prepare for
2. Present to
3. Participate in

Here's the complete version. This provides the foundation for the models that follow.

A Theology for SDA Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Seventh-day Adventist youth and young adult ministry finds its calling in the kingdom of God. It prepares, presents, and participates in the kingdom of God.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD – Christ's disciples today proclaim that the kingdom of God is at hand, just as they did 2,000 years ago. This kingdom is not of this world, but it is in the world. It is near, coming, present, within us, and beyond us. It calls us and it sends us. It is already here, and yet it is still to come. It is the presence of God Himself.

PREPARE – *We prepare youth and young adults for the kingdom of God.* Like John the Baptist, we prepare others as well as ourselves for the kingdom of God. The status quo must change. We live in anticipation of Christ's coming. Transformation begins. Our paradigm shifts when we prepare for the kingdom of God. We live differently and treat others differently.

PRESENT – *We present to youth and young adults the kingdom of God.* The love of Christ compels us to share the good news that the kingdom of God is already here in God's goodness, and yet it is also still coming in God's glory. This motivation drives us to contextualize and skillfully communicate the kingdom by sharing and living kingdom values here and now in authentic ways. Christ demonstrates reconciliation to and through kingdom citizens by grace. While the time is now, the kingdom continues to unfold. We invite others to join by responding to Christ's invitation, "Come, follow Me."

PARTICIPATE – *We join with youth and young adults to participate in the kingdom of God.* When we respond to Christ's invitation, we become citizens of the kingdom of God. Our new identity places us into something much bigger than ourselves or our previous world. Relationships take priority as we share, cooperate and collaborate in cross-cultural and intergenerational ways, equipped by the Holy Spirit. We become part of the family of God, replacing our own instincts with kingdom values. By inclusively participating in the life of God, we experience incarnational community. While God is near and even within, He also sends us to share His kingdom with others in the world.

Based on:

Joshua 24:1-25

Malachi 4:5-6

Matthew 5-7

Matthew 10:5-26

Matthew 28:19-20

Mark 1:14-20

Luke 3:2-18

1 Corinthians 12-13

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Ephesians 1:7-14

Colossians 1:12-14

1 John 1-2

I John 4:8-21

Revelation 14:6-12.

Overview of the 10 Models

After deliberating on various models for youth and young adult ministry, the participants in the 180° Symposium at Andrews University in October, 2010, narrowed their choices to the "Top 10" models for youth and young adult ministry. Some of these mirrored the papers they had prepared prior to the symposium. Others came from the discussions Japhet De Oliveira organized and Terry Swenson facilitated. Each of the 10 models received further discussion with a major heading and Scriptural roots, plus a few bullet points from symposium participants. These got passed along to the book editor to flesh out in greater detail.

Following are these "Top 10" models. Each one contains the following elements:

- Brief description

- Biblical Basis

- What It Looks Like

- Keys to Make It Work

- Obstacles

- Opportunities

As you read through these, ask yourself which one(s) would work best in your ministry setting. These are not a matter of right or wrong models, but different pathways to lead people to the kingdom of God. Don't attempt to integrate all of them into your ministry or you will create a monster, such as "relational leadership through small groups that facilitates a lost and found, family-based discipleship for cross-cultural, social advocacy through missional, wholistic worship."

The models are simply tools to provide structure to help facilitate your ministry rather than starting from scratch or re-inventing the wheel. Instead of celebrating the discovery of a wheel that rotates, use one of these existing wheels to get farther down the road!

Write in the margins and the blank, end pages your adjustments, changes, additions, and corrections to these models. Let's compare notes in God's kingdom—both here and in heaven!

The Lost and Found Model

The Lost and Found Model believes that every human being is lost and that God seeks to find every lost person. When a lost person is found, bountiful celebrating ensues. Once a person has been found, that person becomes part of the search and rescue for others who are lost. Such people also join the celebrations. Each lost person has infinite value. Each found person has unique gifts to seek others who are lost as well as to celebrate when such people are found. The Lost and Found Model incorporates all of the community's gifts of faith to reach those who are lost.

Biblical Basis

Luke 15 contains the trilogy of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. These illustrate differing conditions for those who are lost. Some get lost and are aware of it but can't get out of their situation without intervention from others. Others aren't even aware they are lost and might even be "in the house" while they are lost. And still others choose to maximize their lostness to their own denigration and destruction.

We also can see different measures taken to find the lost. Sometimes this requires a departure from the safety of home to go to dangerous places in order to effect a rescue. At other times we need to look within our own household or church to rescue one who is lost. And sometimes we simply have to wait until others come to their senses and choose to head home before we can run, embrace, and start the party!

The Old Testament Passover event (Exodus 12) and subsequent celebrations of it (Leviticus 23:5-8) demonstrate the lost condition of all and the gift and celebration of salvation (being found). The Red Sea deliverance and subsequent celebration offers another refrain on the same theme (Exodus 14-15). Paul presents an extensive New Testament explanation of this lost and found model in Romans 1-9 (note Romans 3:23-24 for a short version of it).

Jesus himself claimed that he came to seek and to save those who were lost (Luke 19:10). His followers do the same.

What It Looks Like

The Lost and Found model sometimes functions like a roller coaster. The lost element can be troublesome, burdensome, difficult and sad. On the other hand, the found element calls for celebration, joy, life and community. When these two happen simultaneously, it becomes incongruous. When the lost seem more prevalent than the found, it colors the outlook, and vice versa.

This model consistently sends individuals and groups on expeditions to seek the lost. It uses tried and true methods as well as new

ones—all for the purpose of seeking the lost. Each person utilizes whatever gifts God has given, including those outside of the traditionally expected gifts of bible study, music, medical service, public speaking, and education. Auto mechanics, artists, janitors, retailers, nerds, entrepreneurs, athletes, small business owners and others all see themselves in search of the lost.

This model also seems trigger-happy to start the party. Instead of comparing one party with another, the uniqueness of each celebration stands on it own and also reminds those celebrating of their past celebrations and expected future ones. Yet the anticipation of the final celebration with the return of Christ continues as the ultimate celebration of a new era, while motivating participants to continue to seek the lost as excitement builds towards that climax.

Personal relationships, church activities, daily living, events in life—all get interpreted through the lens of "lost and found." Yet individuals continue to be treated as individuals and valued as individuals even when they are lost. At the same time, hope always pulls towards being found by God and playing any role necessary in the process.

Keys To Make It Work

In addition to the mind set and outlook of seeking the lost and celebrating each find, one key to make this work is finding the niche and purpose for each person in the bigger picture. Are you more of a seeker or a celebrator? Be ready to do both, but are you gifted more towards one than the other? When it comes to youth and young adult ministry, this model recognizes that some who grow up in the church are lost and need to be found, including some regularly attending and possibly participating.

Another key is to individualize each search and each celebration. No cookie cutter molds need to be put through the motions. No half-hearted attempts are acceptable. Always be going for it!

Never limit yourself to the church environment, yet don't neglect that either. Be transparent and authentic about the human condition and God's goodness and persistence. Love all; serve all. Seek the lost; celebrate whenever found. Never miss an opportunity to celebrate!

Obstacles

Some can feel overwhelmed by the lost. "Older brothers" are lost but deny it. They resist accepting those who are saved until an indefinitely long time of probation has been served. They also resist celebrating.

It's possible for an "us" and "them" orientation to creep into the atmosphere of us/found versus them/lost. Some ministries can become stale or redundant when the same emphasis gets run into the ground.

Those who seek spiritual growth through avenues outside of the lost and found model can distract from or dilute this model.

Opportunities

With all human beings starting in a lost position, and with those already found still capable of becoming lost, the target group seems huge. And with so many needs, the avenues to reach those who are lost are as limitless as the God in search of them.

Celebrating connects earth to heaven and vice versa. What a treat! The Holy Spirit's work in and through people provides multiple reasons for hope, success, and assurance.

You are needed and wanted, and you need God. These basic realities get repeated continuously.

The Wholistic Worship Model

All of life can be found in worship to God. The tendency to segregate or fragment life into component parts for analysis not only robs life, but destroys it. For example, pulling each petal off of a flower in order to compare them with one another might leave the examiner with the best petal, but no longer with a flower.

The Wholistic Worship Model envisions all of life as worship. This includes scheduled gatherings for corporate worship, serving others, eating and sleeping, conversing, observing life, cleaning toilets, and even dozing while meditating. God doesn't show up at church and leave us on our own during the week. An awareness of holy ground impacts how we treat others at all times and in all situations, and perceives God where others miss him. Integrity increases with integration, forming a model that can be understood as the opposite of hypocrisy.

Biblical Basis

Romans 12:1-2 presents the expected response to God's saving action described in the first 11 chapters of Romans. The word "therefore" alerts the reader to this. The expected response comes in the form of a life fully dedicated to God, which is our "reasonable service." In contemporary terms we would label this as living for God 24/7 (24 hours a day; 7 days a week—all the time!).

Humans tend to highlight certain elements and downplay others. Seventh-day Adventists

are guilty of this when they boast of worshiping God on the "right day" (the 7th day as prescribed in Scripture—Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11 and emulated by Jesus—Luke 4:16), but fail to worship him on the other six days. Isaiah 58:13-14 calls for proper Sabbath observance. But the context of the first 12 verses describes God's people who make a show of pious actions but fail to treat others well or even with decency. God promises to start listening when they start to care for others instead of merely going through the motions at church. The first chapter of Isaiah presents the same argument (Isaiah 1:11-20).

Jesus made a similar indictment of the religious leaders in his own day by quoting Isaiah 29:13 regarding lip service rather than heart commitment and action (Matthew 15:1-14). Matthew 23 records repeated denunciations by Jesus directed to the hypocritical religious leaders. In contrast, the instructions about how to live for God can be found in Christ's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Instead of limiting God to a place and time, we expect to see him at all

times and in all places, even when it might not seem obvious that he is present (Matthew 25:31-46).

What It Looks Like

You should expect identifiable gatherings for corporate worship, but this model expands beyond the limits of these events. Camp meeting counts, but so does the month after camp meeting. Sabbath counts, but so do Tuesday and Thursday. Time at church counts, as does time at home and time at school and time at work. How we treat God counts, in the same way that how we treat others counts.

Imagine what it would be like to have a meal with Jesus himself. This model presents all meals in this way. Grace before a meal moves from a formality to actually being thankful to God for what he has provided.

The question could be asked, "Where did you see Jesus today?" Participants begin to look for God and to see him in unexpected places, people, and activities.

Based on an understanding and acceptance that all we have and all that we are belongs to God, we set out to serve God on a daily basis rather than working for a boss, seeking one's personal advancement or agenda, or feeding the insatiable ego. Because of God's gift of salvation, we relate to God, to each other, to nature, and to society at large with a Godly devotion and personal sacrifice in all matters and in all situations. Expect this to be perceived as "over the top" or well beyond what one needs to do, or even a waste of resources.

Keys To Make It Work

The primary key to make this work is full acceptance of Christ's gift of salvation. The new creation of 2 Corinthians 5:17 often erodes back to "normal" instead of living a "new normal." A focus on God's gift and gifts makes keeping score and pigeon-holing people into hierarchies a superfluous waste. Participants will need to renew this orientation or else they are apt to slide back into compartmentalized living common to most people.

The other key is to sacrifice repeatedly. The sacrifice on the altar of burnt offering was consumed. But a "living sacrifice" means offering it again and again and again! How many times? As long as God's gift continues. Such focused abandon to live for Jesus will seem odd and displaced by others, but it will provide constant communion with God for the ones in perpetual sacrifice who worship unceasingly!

Obstacles

Perhaps the biggest obstacle would be well-meaning religious people who recommend balance rather than abandonment to God. Ask yourself if God provided balance by emptying heaven in the gift of Jesus to this world. Your response comes from God's gift, not reasonable or measured doses of goodness.

The tendencies to conserve and compartmentalize pose persistent obstacles to this model. Being conservative is all about saving or conserving rather than giving or releasing. The words of Jesus on conserving money (Matthew 6:19-21; 31-33) and conserving one's life or soul (Matthew 16:24-26) illustrate how liberal God has been as a model for us.

Compartmentalization enables us to commit portions to God and still keep other parts for ourselves, even when done respectably (Mark 7:8-13). Those unable to see the big picture will naturally compartmentalize life. Those who can perceive a broader view will change, based on integrity and devotion.

Opportunities

The most positive thing about this model is to live in constant communion with God and to be about his business. It frees the follower of the traps and distractions the world has to offer. By living in full devotion to God, one's heart resides in heaven while one's body carries out the will of God on earth. Your heart will rejoice with the things that cause God to rejoice, and you will weep at the things that make God weep. You'll be out of this world, and yet in the world in ways that confuse and baffle those who fail to march to the drumbeat you keep hearing.

The Discipleship Model

Jesus had 12 disciples. Christ's Gospel Commission to his disciples begins with the direction for them to go and make disciples of all nations. Disciples follow their leader, learning what the leader stands for and lives, and applying this to their own understanding and lives. The Discipleship Model could be described as a life-long journey of discovering and applying the principles and practices of Jesus Christ.

Biblical Basis

The Gospel Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) begins with a world-wide mandate to go and make disciples of all nations. This includes baptism and instruction in all the commands Christ gave his own disciples. The influential Apostle Paul told the Corinthian believers that they should follow Paul's example just as Paul followed Christ's example (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Jesus chose young people to be with him as disciples (Mark 3:13). He later sent out larger numbers while mentioning a great harvest and the need for more workers to go into the fields (Luke 10:1-2). Paul teamed up with Barnabas and later with Silas (Acts 13:4-5; 15:40). After the debacle concerning the young John Mark's desertion (Acts 15:36-40), Paul mentored multiple young people such as Timothy, Titus, and others (Acts 16:1-16). Moses mentored Joshua (Exodus 24:12-14; Deuteronomy :) and Elijah mentored Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21). We are called to do the same type of thing today,

especially when it comes to youth and young adult ministry!

Discipleship often can be described as "three steps forward, two steps back" experiences as a disciple learns, makes mistakes, and learns more (Matthew 16:16-19 and 23). Through the process, it becomes obvious that Christ's disciples had been with Jesus because they were doing the same things Jesus had done (Acts 4:13; John 15:26-27; John 16:12-15). The Discipleship Model expects for that to continue through the Holy Spirit's power (John 17:20-21).

What It Looks Like

Instead of a moment or an event, discipleship is a journey. It involves coming alongside others, teaching, listening, verbalizing, questioning, testifying, growing, and learning. Models demonstrate what is right and good and Godly, although they aren't perfect. Admitting weakness, apologizing, asking for forgiveness, saying "I was wrong" are part of modeling just as much as demonstrating strength, making a

stand for the right, doing good, choosing wisely, and resisting temptation.

After celebrating when the lost is found (model #1), discipleship kicks into gear. It can function from the cradle to the grave with spiritual growth throughout the life cycle. Spoon-feeding is appropriate for babies. Experiential learning is valuable for all. Measured results might be difficult to quantify, but trends and change can be noticed over time.

Discipleship finds its root in discipline. This includes developing spiritual habits as well as choosing and planning for growth. Time, action, reflection, and repetition comprise the mix. Mentors and mentees are the human agents in the process. Matching these sometimes requires divine intervention or direction. Such relationships might occur spontaneously or formally. Their duration and intensity vary. Occasionally words make the greatest impact; usually actions play the greater role. Combining words and actions is ideal, matching "walk "and "talk."

In a congregational setting, you can expect to see more teamwork than solo direction or activity. Multiple generations integrate rather than segregate. Learning takes place from old to young, and vice versa. Expectations include current competence as well as improvement and increased understanding. The action-reflection combination occurs spontaneously as well as a scheduled experience. Discipling individuals and events usually don't make the headlines, but they fit into the larger picture of maturing in Christ.

Keys To Make It Work

The three keys to make the Discipleship Model work are the disciple, the mentor, and time/experiences. A disciple can grow without an official mentor. Teachable people constantly learn from others, both what to do

and what not to do. With current technology, many learn from others without even coming into direct contact with them. The primary key for discipleship is a ready disciple.

A mentor with intentionality increases the benefits for a disciple by being available, focused, and even directive. Mentors can disciple others in arenas in which they lack personal experience, but there's nothing quite like having been over the path previously. We expect mentors to have experience, wisdom from that experience, and the ability to transfer that in a way that connects with the disciple. Some demonstrate greater acumen than others in such an enterprise. Astute mentors recognize individuality and potential in disciples, including personal motivations, backgrounds, and environments. No two people are the same; no two situations are identical.

The third key, time/experiences, relates to commodities that might be in short supply. Depending on the relationship and one's current flow in life, even being at the same place at the same time proves to be difficult for some, even those with good intentions. Being in school together or working together might increase the amount of time and experiences together, but that can change from one semester to another or from one task to another. Based on one's current time and experiences, mentor-disciple relationships probably are available. That takes us back to the first two keys.

Obstacles

Each of the three keys already mentioned—disciple, mentor, and time/experiences—could also be obstacles. Attitude, communication skills and ego have the potential to be door-openers or door-closers. With flexible and difficult-to-measure elements over time, evaluation often becomes hazy and cause-effect relationships may also lack clarity. Some prefer the sensationalism of

a big event or a charismatic star more than "long obedience."

Opportunities

If you are alive, you probably have opportunities to be a disciple and also a mentor. You only have the time and experiences that come your way or that you create. Within those can be found the relational contacts for discipleship. If you believe that the Gospel Commission has been divinely ordained, then you can expect supernatural forces to be available for discipleship. You may need to initiate relationships, both to be a disciple and to be a mentor. Look around you—the fields are white for the harvest!

The Family-Based Model

Youth and young adults have their genesis in families. This model engages families in the process of youth and young adult ministry. At a time in which age segregation has dominated many forms of ministry, the family-based model returns to what God originated in the Garden of Eden and seeks to restore today.

Congregations empower families to provide religious instruction, worship experiences, service activities, and social interaction rather than segmenting age-specific programming like a giant public school or a department store. Bigger isn't necessarily better. Fracturing families certainly isn't. Those who lack positive family environments benefit from positive functional family settings, which offers a better alternative than removing youth and young adults from their existing family.

Biblical Basis

Families predate the Fall of humanity (Genesis 1:27-28, 31). When it comes to religious education, God gave his people instruction to shape and pass on the faith through families (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). The bridge between the Old Testament and New Testament contains a prophetic message of restoring families by turning the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of the children to their parents (Malachi 4:5-6).

Paul's letter to the Ephesians contains rich, family imagery. The verses often read at weddings regarding the love and submission of a husband and wife (Ephesians 5:21-33) actually illustrates the great mystery of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:32). Paul also includes counsel to children as well as parents (Ephesians 6:1-4), citing the 10 commandments and God's promised blessing. Paul introduces the book by naming God as the "father" of our Lord Jesus Christ and specifying God's love through His unchanging plan to adopt us into His own family through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3-5). In addition to the family metaphor, Paul includes the Body concept in which disparate parts fit together perfectly as each part does its own special work that helps the other parts to grow. This makes the entire body healthy, growing, and full of love (Ephesians 4:16).

It seems that from the beginning, and right through to the end, God's creation of the family posits the ideal setting for the family of God. To the extent we emulate that, we tap into God's original and redeemed environment for spiritual life and growth in community.

What It Looks Like

Expect more small units rather than large ones. Expect multiple generations rather than narrow age differentiated groupings. Expect rough spots, like families. Expect loyalty, maturation, struggle, change, celebration, disappointment, rites of passage, and pulling together for a common cause. Expect fights, forgiveness, changing roles, growth and adjustments. This is family.

Recognizing the benefit of occasional same-age activities, these still will take place in family settings or expanded family settings. When it comes to youth and young adult ministry, the roles young people play must change because they are changing. Instead of passing information and right behaviors from one generation to the next, the youth and young adult years call for new expressions and fresh discoveries. Instead of segregating this into a separate youth group or youth church service, existing leaders offer opportunities and support, feedback and encouragement as youth and young adults find and express their unique relationship with God and creation.

Youth and young adults receive real responsibility with opportunities and funding for them to minister. This includes accountability and more opportunities and additional funding. It also expects accountability to youth and young adults, and not merely accountability from them. Just as youth and young adults must "put up with" adult preferences in music and worship styles, adults must "put up with" youth and young adult preferences as well. The same could be said for children's music and worship. After all, God "puts up with" all of it, since our best falls far short of the worship that takes place in heaven!

The concept of "family" must exceed a nuclear family image of a father and mother and 1.7 children. "Extended family" presents a more accurate picture for this model, with additional generations, individuals, pairings, changes, uniqueness, love, expectations, traditions, hope, security, and intimacy. In this crucible, God becomes fully integrated in life, growth, change, and consistency.

Keys To Make It Work

The primary key for a family-based model is commitment to engagement. Children usually have no choice in the matter. But as a person "grows up" the possibility of departing becomes real and sometimes expected. Whether it's "finding one's self on your own" or "going away to college" or "needing to get away" such expectations presume that the desired result could not occur in the existing family context. Maybe it could. The current social expectation for many is that children must move away and start something on their own. If this really were true, why have so many young adults boomeranged back home?

A commitment to engagement means working through difficulties instead of running from them. It retains hope in spite of current realities. It renews through forgiveness and second chances. It absorbs another's hurts and intensifies another's joy. It finds its place and aids others to explore and find theirs as well. It gives and it takes. It projects equality while juggling inequality. It sacrifices, shares, and makes demands. It launches beyond the family and yet protects the family.

Change remains constant. A key to make the family-based model work incorporates the changes in the life cycle. Sometimes changes should be stimulated, and other times slowed. Celebrate the present, but don't bronze it so the present actually gets stuck in the past.

Obstacles

The family has been under constant attack, dating back to the Garden of Eden. That hasn't changed today. Sexuality, also a

long-time issue in the history of the world, continues to significantly influence families. Sin in its various forms, including basic selfishness, creates multiple divisive elements that war against families. Divine grace, forgiveness and love are necessities for families. Without these Godly elements, families have little hope.

Opportunities

Based on God's original creation and his on-going creative acts, families might be the most ideal environment for God's presence among human beings. Where or what is "home" for you?

The Missional Model

Based on the Gospel Commission and the promise from God to equip his people to fulfill it, the Missional Model expects and encourages youth and young adults to share the Gospel— NOW! The human perspective renders this impossible. The divine perspective pronounces it not only possible, but probable.

The human process, limited by human power, typically follows a slow, progressive movement from simple to complex, from small to large, and from simulations to reality. What this means for youth and young adults is that they really can't get into the game until they are older, more educated, wealthier, experienced, and higher on some human-engineered ladder. That's just the way it is, from a human perspective.

The divine perspective, powered by the supernatural, typically surprises people by small, medium, and large miracles primarily through people who are open and willing to be instruments for God. What this means for youth and young adults is that they are in the game now, equipped by God to be effective now, and also continue to learn and improve. This usually is not accepted or appreciated by those with a human perspective.

When it comes to the Gospel, God's time always seems to be NOW, not later. While it has implications for the past and the future, the need and response are present tense. This matches the time orientation of youth and young adults.

Biblical Basis

Jesus gave the Gospel Commission to his disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Few would entrust them with so great a charge, but Jesus did. The secret wasn't in the disciples, but in the Holy Spirit that equipped and powered them. Just before ascending back to heaven, Christ told his disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8 NIV).

The kingdom of priests God intended for his people in Old Testament times (Exodus 19:6) gets passed on to the followers of Jesus Christ in the New Testament (1 Peter 2:9). The purpose continues to be passing along God's invitation for others to come out of darkness and into God's wonderful light, just as Christ's followers have experienced it.

What methods will they utilize to share this good news? The same Holy Spirit that empowered the disciples on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) also equips God's people to carry on the ministry of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-13). This includes presenting the Gospel in a myriad of ways as well as maturing in Christ.

The time is now. According to 2 Corinthians 6:2 (NCV), "I tell you that the 'right time' is now, and the 'day of salvation' is now." The writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 4:7) quotes Psalm 95:7-8 to specify that "Today" is the time to listen and respond to God.

Age has never been an obstacle or an asset for God. He uses people who are available and open to him (1 Samuel 3; Luke 2:25-40). God will minister to and through youth and young adults right now because of their availability and openness, not because of their age.

What It Looks Like

For some reason people still seem surprised that God works through young people. Whether it's preaching a sermon, providing leadership or manual labor, insights or courage, young people can do incredible things for God. These don't originate in some personally cultivated craft, but through divine power.

The spreading of the Gospel often takes different forms when young people attempt new methods or go retro with old methods in new garb. We should be surprised when others are surprised that this can occur. Have we forgotten about God's power and his track record?

Young people inoculated to the activity of God and the possibility that God will minister through them right now need a fresh vision of what God has done in the past and his desire to reach others today. Even simple actions like feeding a homeless person, listening to an elderly person's stories, studying the bible alone or in a group, or sharing one's faith even without training can ignite divine activity and create sacred moments. The spectacular can tempt young people into ego trips or forgetting their source of power. God's powers are available to all who are open to him, not just young people. Those who forget or fail to comprehend will discover these things the hard way.

Keys To Make It Work

Two keys are all that really matter. The first is God, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The second is a person open to God's activity. By saying "Yes" to God, anything can happen.

On a secondary level, visionaries and people of faith can inspire young people to be open to God and to place them where God can minister through them. They can open doors that others would block. They can thwart or respond to resistance. Of course, God can do that whenever God chooses, but it's usually better when we cooperate with God.

Obstacles

One obstacle comes in the form of limiting one's vision to human power ("There's no way that we could do _____!"). The opposite comes in a manipulative form of demanding that God do things the way we want. God is God, not a magic genie who offers three wishes for personal desires. Another obstacle shows itself when we expect God to always use the same methods and agents. The reverse may also happen— expecting that God will only use new methods or agents. One other obstacle is that free people have the right to say, "No."

Opportunities

Limitless. Because this model relies on the supernatural, setting boundaries proves to be meaningless and making predictions

seems no better than guessing. The golden opportunity comes in the cooperation of the human and the divine. This taps into the Lord's prayer in terms of, "Thy kingdom come, they will be done; on earth as it is in heaven."

Young people who thought they would have to wait until some unknown future time when God might be able to use them can experience God and his power right now and still continue to be shaped into his image and sharpened as a tool in the hand of the Almighty. No college or grad school acceptance or starting employment can compare to that—now or for eternity.

The Social Advocacy Model

Who will speak on behalf of youth and young adults? Rarely will it be one from their own group. Then who? A hurting mother whose child felt perpetually marginalized, even at church, and eventually ended it all through suicide? Who will speak or represent the youth and young adults? Will it be simply for a line item in the church budget or something more radical like a paradigm shift that affects the entire church as well as the community?

The Social Advocacy Model moves beyond short-term acts of service to embrace justice. This requires more personal investment (time, money, energy, influence) than feeding the homeless once a month or supporting an annual mission trip. Calls for justice expose systems and demand change. This creates resistance. Politics come into play because this involves people and multiple layers of systems. The few churches that try this model usually bow out when it comes to systemic changes outside their church walls.

Youth and young adult ministries typically occur in large churches. These serve the privileged more than the marginalized. They often try to "keep their own" or "retrieve the ones they lost" rather than serving the larger community of youth and young adults. Few churches advocate or empower the disenfranchised, which includes the majority of young people in the world. Instead of photo ops during charity excursions or wake up calls to "how good we have it in safe suburbia," the Social Advocacy Model calls for entrance into the world of marginalized young people, living with them, and changing the systems that keep them marginalized. (A special thanks to Steve Yeagley and Franklin Bray for their significant contribution to flesh out this model.)

Biblical Basis

The incarnation of Jesus Christ as Immanuel (God with us—Matthew 1:23) illustrates the social advocacy model from God's perspective. Few who appreciate God's investment by becoming flesh among us (John 1:1, 12, 14) would want to follow suit either in the Isaiah 53 example or the Philippians 2:5-11 admonition. Who would want to trade places with the disenfranchised? Jesus already has (2 Corinthians 5:21)!

When given the chance to announce his mission before his hometown synagogue (Luke 4:16-20), Jesus chose Isaiah 61:1-2 as his passage. The familiar "setting captives free" would have been welcomed had it personally benefitted those present. But Christ referenced outsiders instead of those present. This incited fury to the point of mob action determined to eliminate the unwanted voice.

Social advocacy rarely is soothing or compliant!

Humans tend to set up social systems in pyramid style, which works ideally for those who would play "king of the hill." Scripture turns this upside down and describes God's kingdom as one that cares for the least of these (Matthew 24:31-46; James 1:27; Isaiah 1:17-18). Those who emphasize orthodoxy would do well to begin here! Churches usually serve the their dominant group or rising stars rather than the marginalized (James 2:1-9).

The God who became human, now represents humans in heaven (Hebrews 4:14-16). He hasn't left us behind. Instead, God is with us on earth through the Holy Spirit, and we are present in heaven through Jesus Christ (John 14:15-21). In the same manner, God's people are called to advocate where people have been disenfranchised, to take God's presence to them, and to set them free.

What It Looks Like

Young people, for the most part, fit in the marginalized portions of society. If the young people in your city came to your church (not just the nice and clean-cut kids), what would that look like? What would happen?

You can reverse the image. If your church spent a day living with the young people in your city, where would you actually be? What would happen?

Go to schools, go to the poor areas of town, ask the police, inquire at social services, explore the difference between private and public medical services, live on the streets for a week. Then ask yourself who is marginalized.

Don't sucker for the easy answers, because it's much deeper and more complicated than that. We find it much easier to give a homeless man a hamburger or slip him a $5 bill rather than living with him, have him live with us, or come to understand his individual story.

The Social Advocacy Model may start with simple service activities, but it moves beyond to the reasons why people need charity. Why doesn't the homeless person get a job? Why doesn't the government take care of them? Why doesn't our church do more? Why don't I? Keep asking questions. Keep searching for answers. When you meet resistance, you're probably starting to make a difference.

Keys To Make It Work

You need 3 P's to make this work: passion, perception, and perseverance. Passion initially drives this model. Young people have a general sense of justice, but often lack the depth of understanding or the experience to move beyond simple acts of kindness. Adults who nurture this can actually plant the seeds that take the young people farther than the adults wanted them to go! That's when the passion of young people takes this past the tipping point.

Perception not only sees who gets marginalized, but also why and how. This type of perception sees beyond simple answers or hand-me-down generalizations and stereotypes. You need this for "street smarts" as well as how to "fight city hall" (or the church board, for that matter). When an older, wiser person provides the necessary perception that teams up with the passion of young people, the Social Advocacy Model has a chance to get traction.

Perseverance doesn't mean "pedal-to-the-medal" as much as persistently returning after being rebuffed, exhausted, beaten, discouraged, and bloodied. To endure the suffering, misunderstanding, hatred, and attacks that social advocacy provokes necessitates perseverance.

Obstacles

The primary obstacle is human nature—selfishness! Systems formalize this into socially acceptable norms. Explanations and rationale adequately present one side of the story, but not both sides. For example, when it came to the woman caught in adultery and brought to Jesus (John 8:3-11), let's say that she was guilty. That would be just one side of the story. Where was the guilty male (see Deuteronomy 22:22)? That's the other side.

Another obstacle is sheer difficulty—it's hard! Churches create their own systems that often mirror society, including selfishness, self-seeking, self-exalting, and even self-preserving. Discouragement, anger, frustration, cynicism, and alienation easily attach to those in this model, especially if they don't frequently return to an anchor in God's call and hope and love.

Opportunities

The needs are endless and recurring. Young people comprise about half of the world's population. Selfishness takes many forms everywhere. Setting people free, like Jesus did, will place you in conflict with individuals and institutions, and it will place you into fellowship with His sufferings and His victory and His joy.

The Small Groups Model

The Small Groups Model stand as the antithesis to the often unspoken belief that "bigger is better." Some even go so far as to brag about how many small groups they have, exposing their captivity to the numbers game.

Size really does matter. The bigger the group, the greater the performance; the smaller the group, the greater the fellowship. These aren't guarantees; simply tendencies.

Worship, with a focus on God, can take place in a large group, a small group or individually. Religious education, with a goal of instruction, usually functions better in a smaller setting and with dialogue. Fellowship, with a goal of shared intimacy, occurs best in a small group through interaction.

"Small groups" come in a variety of shapes and styles. Some seem task-oriented and seek to accomplish a goal, such as a church committee, a youth group leadership planning team, a praise band. Others seem more social in nature, like hanging out at a youth leader's house on Friday nights, skate boarding together, just jamming when it comes to music. Still others blend programs and people, such as a drama group, food prep team, or creating videos for the youth group.

A more conventional understanding of small groups refers to a collection of 6-12 people who meet together regularly for personal and spiritual growth.

Biblical Basis

The Old Testament family unit functioned as a small group (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). Jesus chose 12 disciples to be with him (Mark 3:13-14). The early church worshiped in the temple, but met in homes for fellowship (Acts 2:46-47).

While speaking to the disciples about forgiveness and confronting divisions among believers, Jesus explained, "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst" (Matthew 18:20 NASB). This was never intended to be a hopeful excuse when few people show up for a church meeting. It promises presence when God's people meet together in His name. Listening to God easily becomes more personal in the small group setting.

What It Looks Like

Small groups that gather for personal and spiritual growth must develop trust in order to grow. Usually this begins somewhat superficially as people get acquainted with one another. Simple get-to-know-you games

and gimmicks can pave the way for appreciation, understanding, and greater depth. The first few times a new group meets, a larger percentage of time will need to be devoted to growing friendships. In general, males find it easier to get acquainted through activities, preferably physical ones. Often females need merely a brief starting point to launch their conversational skills.

Spiritual growth needs more than swapping personal stories. An outside source of authority, namely the Bible, guides the group to something greater than anecdotes or personal biases or opinions. Different forms of prayer invite participants to express their needs, their joys, their hopes, and their gratitude. When participants acknowledge and submit to the greater power called God in prayer, it levels the playing field within the group rather than creating a hierarchy.

Group rules provide security by establishing boundaries within which growth can take place. Although these would seem obvious to some, they should be identified and endorsed by individuals within the group. These include respect, authenticity, confidentiality, accountability, and common sense elements such as engaging but not dominating discussions, and taking reasonable risks to grow.

Keys To Make It Work

Perhaps the greatest key to small groups is the leader. This person needs to be someone who understands God as well as group dynamics. The leader serves as a facilitator to create a safe climate from which participants will take reasonable risks. A clear-cut manual can't determine what to do in a given situation. The leader must. Sometimes this means to back off and other times it means to plunge forward.

Commitment prevents many youth and young adults from joining or staying with a

small group. Personal invitations with dialogue can set appropriate expectations. An open period of 2-3 gatherings provides an opportunity for individuals to check things out to see if they will be part of the small group. But then a commitment needs to be made to meet consistently as a small group. Without that, the group will start from "ground zero" each session rather than building on previously established trust.

Setting a terminal point enables participants to make the commitment. Otherwise they fear losing face or being a "drop out." Consider the rhythm of your target group as you set up 8-12 sessions to gather and then take a break. Young people are more likely to commit to a weekly gathering over a 2-3 month span than an indefinite promise each week. After taking a break for a few weeks, start afresh and allow others to join, or break into two groups and start the process anew.

Input from God needs to be applied to personal living. Instead of admonishing others how to live, personal applications stem from God's calling on the individual, which then receives encouragement, prayer support, and follow up from the rest of the group. The group provides security for the individual to respond to God, and then the group assists the individual to follow through with the individual's response.

Obstacles

Busyness prevents many from committing to a small group. Simple logistics such as time and place sometimes make gathering regularly difficult or impossible. Negative previous experiences with small groups can create a credibility gap regarding their value and potency.

Fear and insecurity stop others. Ironically, both can best be dealt with in a small group. The small group facilitator continues to be the

key to initiate and to direct the small group. Sharing too much or not enough can derail a group, as can broken confidences or personal friction that divides rather than strengthens through growth, forgiveness, and grace.

Opportunities

Some say that the best evidence for Christ is a loving and loveable Christian. A similar statement could be made regarding small groups—the best evidence for the value of small groups is a small group that works.

The Cross-Cultural Model

You and I are the same, and yet different. Which one controls the other? That can be taken several ways. 1) Do our differences control our similarities? 2) Do our similarities control our differences? 3) Do you control me? 4) Do I control you?

The Cross-Cultural Model brings diverse individuals and groups together in following Jesus. To do so we need four sets of **A-D**'s.

Awareness of **D**ifferences – this includes discovering the needs, likes, background, values, expectations, lifestyles, and orientation of those who are different than me/us.

Acceptance of **D**iversity – this involves being open to inclusiveness and embracing others. This may stem from curiosity, interest, need, or a foundation of personal security and broadened perspective.

Agreement on **D**irection – this might be a lengthy process, but the outcome focuses on working together to mutually meet needs. These could be for you or me or both of us or something beyond us.

Application of **D**esign – this comes down to the practical sharing of experiences. History gets created at this point and adjustments can be expected over time.

Biblical Basis

The story of Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4) illustrates the Cross-Cultural Model from God's perspective. The immediate needs were obvious. The disciples went to town to buy food. Jesus waited at the well with no means to draw water. The woman came to draw water when she thought nobody would be present. Hundreds of years of bad history, intensified by diverse worship styles and practices, would make even civil interaction a noble accomplishment. Yet God, in the form of Jesus, won the woman to his kingdom, and turned her into an evangelist to those who despised her, something Christ's disciples never seemed to consider.

In Old Testament history, God's call to Abram (Genesis 12:1-3) included leaving his own country and family to begin a new nation elsewhere, plus a promised blessing for him, his family, and through them a blessing to the whole earth. By the time of Moses, the promised blessings for obedience listed being the head rather than the tail, and always having the upper hand (Deuteronomy 28:13). Maybe the promise had a partial fulfillment during the reign of Solomon when people from every nation came to visit the wise king and to hear what God had shared with him (1 Kings 10:24). But by the next generation, the

kingdom split. Later God's people went into exile. By the time of Christ, nationalism kept them distracted as squabblers in a land occupied by Roman soldiers.

The New Testament presents Jesus, who reached out to both Jews and Gentiles. He was crucified by both, yet gave the Gospel Commission to make disciples of all nations. John later reiterated that commission when he described an angel from heaven proclaiming the everlasting gospel to every nation, tribe, kindred and people on the earth (Revelation 14:6-7).

Sadly, the model rarely works (or even gets tried). In spite of Paul's words that "in Christ" we are all one (Galatians 3:27-29), God's actions that take his people into cross-cultural settings often receive greater resistance from his followers than from those invited to come follow (Acts 10, 11, and 15).

The greatest and most profound evidence that Christ's followers truly belong to Him shines most profoundly when they love each other (John 13:35).

What It Looks Like

"Unity within diversity." That slogan shows up more on banners than in action. Security in one's identity enables a person to walk tall without being arrogant, and explore different perspectives without being defensive or intimidated. There must be give-and-take. Clarity on essentials would remove many barriers. Inquisitiveness and appreciation without forced replacement would open rather than close doors.

"Cross-cultural" can be different generations, ethnicities, countries, geographical areas within countries, socio-economic groups, educational levels, genders, religions, sexual orientation, political groups, families, schools, and even life experiences.

Find common ground. Seek understanding from another perspective. Withhold judgment for a time in order to better comprehend the reasons and foundations for differences. Affirm what you genuinely can. Consider your own background, practices, and reasons, as well as how they function in a broader sphere. Grow. Differentiate between essentials and non-essentials. Ask others to do the same. Re-evaluate. Find common ground on which you will need each other and work together. Repeat.

Keys To Make It Work

The first key to make the Cross-Cultural Model work is personal security of one's identity. All of us have certain elements that remain stable while others are in flux. Insecure people often find security through attempts to control their environment. This mitigates against cross-cultural experiences. Personal security can come from within or outside of one's self. Christ's acceptance of us "just as we are" provides security, plus the promise to change us into all He wants us to be (Ephesians 2:8-10). We are complete "in Him" (Colossians 2:10). Other keys include the "A-D's" listed at the start of the Cross-Cultural Model.

Obstacles

The major obstacle that prevents the Cross-Cultural Model from working is the individuals within the Body of Christ. This shows itself in the Body as a whole. The greatest segregations occur during worship. What's wrong with that picture?! If the only thing you have in common with another person is Jesus Christ, is that enough to bring you together? If not, then Jesus Christ isn't God. If so, then come together in Christ. When Jesus is not our "all in all" we fight and bicker and refuse to give up secondary identities, preferences, and "rights" and make a mockery of the Gospel.

Opportunities

The Cross-Cultural Model forces us to cling to Jesus as Savior and Lord, and to place everything else as peripheral. As the Apostle Paul testified (Philippians 3:3-11), all things, even very good things, are nothing but "dung" (KJV—figure it out) compared to knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. Utilizing the Cross-Cultural Model might be your avenue to salvation, as well as the road for others in your church and beyond.

The Relational Model

Sometimes known as the friendship model or the "warm, fuzzy model" the Relational Model gives priority to relationships. Sanguine types seem to do this naturally, but not necessarily with purpose. Simply being nice doesn't guarantee a relationship, although it makes a good starting point.

Driven individuals can co-opt the Relational Model as a means to "earn the right to be heard." By spending some time befriending someone, you can create capital or leverage to get the person to do something you want. For example, if I spend some time playing basketball with you at the park when you want me to, then you should to come with me to the youth group when I want you to do so. I would hope that you would soon choose to come to the youth group because you want that yourself, which would free me up to start a relationship with another person to try to get them to the youth group.

Using relationships in this instrumental manner departs from the pure application of the model, although it tends to be the common way individuals and groups have used it. The true Relational Model develops relationships as an end in itself, without any strings attached. From a Christian perspective, being with another person corresponds to God's practices of being with us. If we want to go deeper than that, we would go deeper into the relationship to understand the person and to experience that person's life, just as Jesus did in the Incarnation.

Biblical Basis

The first chapter of the Bible shows God's intention for relationships. "So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female." (Genesis 1:27 TEV) By the third chapter, God came to the humans and they hid due to their guilt from sin (Genesis 3:8-10). Some see the rest of Scripture recording God seeking to restore the lost relationship, culminating with "Now God's home is with mankind! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. (Revelation 21:3 TEV)

Between those bookends are examples such as the introduction of the wilderness sanctuary. "Have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8 NIV). The incarnation exemplifies God coming to us (Hebrews 1:1-3). As The Message paraphrases it, "The Word [God] became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood (John 1:1, 14 MSG)."

The visit of Jesus to Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) illustrates a point of tension with the Relational Model. Do-gooder Martha

sought Christ's assistance to send Mary to the kitchen to help with the necessary work. The response Jesus gave echoes through the years, "There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it—and I won't take it away from her (Luke 10:42 TLB)!" For centuries, relational people seem to "get it" while others get frustrated, feel guilty, and then kick back into gear to get things done while the relational people just hang out and seem fine with that.

What It Looks Like

Being together is more important than programs. Visiting a person at their home or school or work often makes a greater impact than simply going to church or going through the motions at youth group. When it comes to programs, people take priority over content. In fact, you will probably schedule time for nothing but hanging out, maybe providing snacks and a smoothie bar, plus a setting with comfortable chairs and background music. If you have a program, it will include ice breakers, group building activities, and flexible interaction rather than a monologue or rigid, pre-arranged flow chart. Social networking becomes ministry and connections register more than official meetings.

A ministry of presence happens when a relationally-oriented person comes into the sphere of another person. Sharing means a two-way street, with openness to accept or decline whatever the other person might offer. The goal of understanding supersedes any pre-set agenda. Often Westerners have difficulty comprehending the Eastern element of fellowshipping, usually in the setting of a meal. Instead of quoting Revelation 3:20 (Behold I stand at the door and knock. . .) the relational model simply does it. Food often plays a significant role, as does time, finding rhythms, listening, and savoring.

Keys To Make It Work

When you hear someone say, "God made us as human beings; not human doings," how do you respond? If you agree, then you are the key to make it work. If you disagree, then you need someone else to make it work while you complete all the chores necessary to pull off a program. Dotting the 'i's" and crossing the "t's" might seem essential to some, but they hardly represent an entire word, much less a complete letter! Besides, essence matters more than image.

Another key is to manage or re-direct the type-A people who need organizational charts, job descriptions, schedules, lists, numbers, clip boards, and weekly reports. If you don't, the busy-bodies might unnecessarily distract you or kill the relational spirit. Have them do their thing, but don't make that the main thing.

You also need a strong enough relational presence to make this the culture of your ministry model. This can come from one powerful influencer, or multiple influencers. The larger your group, the greater the relational presence needed, for it tends to becomes dwarfed by size and sidelined when efficiency demands increase.

Obstacles

The biggest obstacle is time. And it only seems to get worse in capitalistic societies in which time equals money. Monetizing relationships smacks of sacrilege. The numbers game questions the true value of people by using different metrics and persistently taking measurements.

A single leader has limitations when it comes to having personal relationships with everyone in a youth or young adult group. If access to the primary leader is mandatory, then the group and ministry will extend no more than a dozen people. But if the Relational Model spreads beyond one leader,

it can increase the total number by as many key relational leaders as are available. But who's counting?

Another obstacle is how people count ministry, specifically certain ministry times or places. For example, spending four to six hours with young people late at night but missing church the next day registers as a lack of ministry rather than deep or lengthy ministry.

Opportunities

Opportunities abound wherever people exist. The need increases when people are busy running to and fro, when they don't listen well, and whenever you have individuals looking for heroes, role models, and/or mentors. Empathy will always be more potent than sympathy.

The Leadership Model

Who leads the youth and young adult ministry in your church? How old is that person? How old are the others who assist?

The Leadership Model empowers youth and young adults by developing them as ministry leaders. Inherent in this model is the expectation that young people can indeed lead, and can do so now.

Sometimes young children lead others, by their enthusiasm, cuteness, or the vested interest others have in them. "A little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6) relates to more than just the new earth. Even authoritarian parents find themselves led by their children on occasion.

At what point do young people lead in ministry? That may depend on whether or not others in leadership cling to that role or share it or even recruit those younger into it. Attempts to withhold leadership as a carrot for future involvement misses the potential that current involvement increases future involvement and responsibility. It also intensifies current experiences.

Biblical Basis

The Old Testament describes leaders in various stages or life, whether it was reluctant

Moses called to lead Israel out of Egyptian slavery at the age of 80 (Deuteronomy 34:7), or Joash who became king at the age of seven (2 Kings 11:21) or Josiah who became king at the age of eight (2 Kings 22:1). Spiritual leaders such as the high priest seemed to be relatively mature (Deuteronomy 10:6; 1 Samuel 4:18), yet Samuel began to receive direct messages from God while he was only a child (1 Samuel 3:7-9).

Age seems to matter very little to God, even though it may mean a lot to humans. According to Paul, Timothy's faith began in childhood when he received wisdom from Scripture at an early age (2 Timothy 3:15). God equips his followers with spiritual gifts, regardless or their age (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11). This doesn't dismiss the reality that additional training, experience, and education would be helpful. But neither does it deny that young people are able to lead while they are young.

The disciples began to follow Jesus when they were considered "young people." Jesus gave them responsibilities and tasks well

beyond their capabilities (Matthew 10:5-23). These examples should serve as an encouragement for us to place more young people in leadership for God.

What It Looks Like

Instead of voting young people into figurehead posts on meaningless church committees, give them opportunities to do ministry and recruit others to join them. Organically, they will become leaders. This doesn't mean a large group must follow, but it provides functions a leader can fill in order to serve.

Existing leaders should perpetually recruit others to join them in leading, and lead others to do as well. No official mentoring labels must be assigned in order for mentoring to take place. Make it a two-way street with young people following and leading interchangeably, as needed and as the Spirit moves.

Simple progression moves from I lead and you follow, to I lead and you assist, to you lead and I assist, and finally you lead and I follow. The steps might not flow seamlessly, but the progression offers a natural development.

At other times young people simply pick up the mantle and run with it. Leadership should not be presented or understood as popularity, but function and service. It carries rewards and exacts a toll. The Godly pattern of leadership emphasizes service rather than status.

Keys To Make It Work

Either of two starting points could make this work. One features a young person who responds to the need to lead. The other happens when an older person invites and equips a young person to lead.

The situation in which leadership takes place depends on at least one person following the leader. This happens all the time in unofficial ways, whether it's something as passive as participating or not participating in a given ministry, attending church or not attending, moving towards God or retreating from Him. A person's influence makes that person a leader. Official titles or positions may help or actually hinder leadership. Servant leadership means much more than titled leadership or strong-arming another person.

Obstacles

When young people lack vision, they fail to lead. Established leaders who feel irreplaceable prevent young people from leading. Bureaucracy quenches leadership, at least meaningful leadership. Lack of purpose or direction wastes potential leadership. Postponing opportunities loses leadership. Maintaining the status quo stymies leadership.

Opportunities

Wherever and whenever a need for action arises you have an opportunity for leadership. Whenever and wherever you want enthusiasm, energy, optimism, and passion, recruit young people to lead or assist in leading. You might need to paint a vision for those unable to see it. Mentor leaders and learn from one another.

Church organizations, whether at the local church or in geographical areas hosting special events have multiple opportunities to enlist, train, empower, and benefit from young leaders.

Often funding prevents ministry opportunities from developing or continuing. Investing funds in young people and empowering them to choose where, why, and how to spend it provides tangible evidence of trust and enables them to test their skills. Poor

choices on how to spend money occur all the time with adults. Why not give young people a chance? Could they really do any worse?! This might give those who are older a greater incentive to pray for the young people. If you want to try this to an extreme, hand over your entire church budget to young people to operate for a year. Now that would be an opportunity!

Overview of Some Additional Models

Two points should be made about these "additional models."

1. These did not make the vote for the "Top 10 Models" among the participants of the 180° Symposium. In fact, some of them were not even mentioned.

2. These models do show up in churches across America (and beyond). Usually they are not pursued intentionally, but they become the way youth or young adult ministry operates. Hence, their inclusion as an "add on" for explanation. This should not be taken as a recommendation.

Instead of the components that rounded out the presentations for the "Top 10 Models," these seven additional models simply have a description, a critique, and then a section for "possibilities" in case your group finds itself entrenched in the model and you want to make the most of it.

Let it be repeated, none of these seven are presented as a recommended model (like the "Top 10"), but simply a tool to identify what often takes place unintentionally. We hope that you will be intentional in following better models for your ministry context rather than merely slipping into thoughtless patterns or remaining in poor models for ministry.

The Entertainment Model

Description

"I like that!" rings the golden bell for the Entertainment Model. The worst possible response would be "I don't like that!" Something must change to return to the "I like that!" response. Another fateful response is, "I'm bored." Concerned parents want to know, "Did my child like what happened?"

If people like to laugh, then humor must be included. If they prefer serious study of the Scriptures, then drop the laughs and pick up a Bible. Music, which often is divisive, clearly demonstrates what a group finds entertaining. If spectators don't like a particular genre of music, either they will leave or the musical style must change to please them. This is true whether it's a rock bank or hymns, jazz or gospel. Do whatever it takes to get people to show up, and then to return. Or you can threaten to not return until the program suits what you consider acceptable or entertaining (although you probably would not use the term "entertainment").

Without written evaluations for each event or gathering, the easiest way to gauge the "I like it" meter is simply counting how many people are present. If the numbers hit the mark (or higher), it doesn't seem to matter what it took in order to get people to show up. This assumes that what takes place at the gathering is always worthwhile. Sometimes large numbers eclipse any other evaluation. If the numbers prove to be inadequate, then something must change so that more people will be present.

In cultures with a simple lifestyle, almost anything will entertain the masses. Short-term mission trips to remote area often result in "everybody showing up" when foreign visitors arrive. The short-term missionaries feel successful because their impact drew a large number of people.

In cultures with lots of options, the Entertainment Model continues, but the responses fluctuate in a competitive market. Sometimes churches compete against each other for the best show in town. At other times, they compete with non-religious options, such as sports or concerts or recreation or the media. Some churches offer their own versions of sports, concerts, drama, recreation or social gatherings, and "free food."

Preaching, music, facilities and equipment, breadth of options, unique ministries, money, quality of performance—all fit into the bottom line of how many show up.

And that all depends on whether or not they like it!

Critique

The Entertainment Model is the most common model for youth ministry, and other ministries as well. It is also the most often criticized. It doesn't have to be negative. Just because somebody likes something doesn't make it bad. But the opposite must also be tested: just because somebody likes something doesn't mean it's good!

The Garden of Eden must have been wonderful. Many elements of creation continue to entertain, which sometimes blends with being inspired! When the Creator made humans in his image, he made them creative as well. One shouldn't be surprised when humans create entertaining elements or experiences. A musical piece that touches your soul, a well-developed and powerfully delivered sermon, a skit that you relate to immediately, a video clip that really gets you thinking—all of these can be entertaining. The crucial test is whether they take you to the creator or to the Creator—to the human instrument or the Divine source behind the human. Current idol worship presents itself in the form of human heroes from the entertainment industry, not metal or stone images. Religious celebrities aren't immune to this.

Jesus had mass gatherings and mass desertions. He fed thousands and then sent them away (Matthew 14:13-22). He led the triumphal entry into Jerusalem the same week that the crowds turned against him, shouting, "Crucify him!" (Mark 11:7-10; 15:12-14). Jesus knew what it meant for people to like him and to not like him! Clearly he had a different priority. So will his followers.

This can be confusing when leadership and/or finances dictate either an Entertainment Model or an Anti-Entertainment Model. Either Model misses a higher purpose. Entertainment should function as simply one of the tools God uses to connect people to Him. When entertainment fails to do that, make a change or rely on some of God's other tools.

Possibilities

Entertainment attracts Christians and non-Christians alike—it's something we share in common. God the Creator appreciates creative expression and excellence. These usually require development, coaching, honest feedback, and proper focus.

When entertainment directs a spectator or participant beyond the performer to the God who inspires, it serves its purpose well. Praising only the person denies the true Source. Praising God but not the performer ignores the God-human connection.

While encouraging the highest quality, the Entertainment Model doesn't have to go with the most expensive or most popular or most amazing thing. Simplicity, motive, and commitment make better evaluation criteria anyway. The Entertainment Model can compete in the marketplace without making that its home.

The Charismatic Leader Model

Description

Call this the "Pied Piper" model. The only thing that matters is the one, charismatic leader. As long as that one person is present, everything seems to go great. That individual has a way of seizing the moment, and can do so just about anytime and every time. People follow.

Charisma operates beyond the analytical. You can't create a specific plan with all of the right components, like an equation, and expect it to work. But having a charismatic leader does work. This special person usually has multiple talents, such as music or other artistic elements, intelligence, a sixth sense for individual and group dynamics, sports skill and interest, a commitment to God, good looks, and often something unique or quirky. Organizational skills, adhering to protocol, and follow through rarely enter the charismatic leader's orientation. This type of leader most likely is slightly older than the target group and certainly younger than the parents of that group. But the greatest asset of the charismatic leader is enthusiasm. Often this takes things over the top and it provides youth and young adults with a leader they willingly follow.

Living out one's own reality and relationship with God places the charismatic leader in his own world, which is just a step ahead of the youth or young adults, and yet behind the rest of the adults. Parents find themselves torn between joy because their children are following a spiritually inclined leader, yet frustrated that this leader does things "by the seat of the pants" and often fails to utilize a network of other willing assistant leaders. The charismatic leader identifies with the young people more than the adults, which adds to the attraction for the young people and the exasperation of the adults.

Critique

Just as the charismatic leader makes everything happen by being present, whenever that leader is absent, everything either falls apart or pales in comparison. For example, if the charismatic leader takes a group on a weekend retreat, that retreat will go great for everyone present, but those who attend any youth or young adult event back at the church will find it to be a dud—lifeless. Within time, nobody will show up to anything

unless the charismatic leader is present, or they will quickly leave when they discover the "Pied Piper" won't be there.

Others rarely are empowered to lead because they just don't have what it takes. Young people who mimic the leader might be given small, visible opportunities. Those who would lead differently aren't seen as a threat, but somewhat clueless and even a nuisance. These probably are the ones who desire a clearly stated plan, which won't likely happen since it stifles the spirit and forces the leader to be accountable.

Potential dangers can develop with romantic crushes, especially when the charismatic leader is just slightly older than the youth or young adults. Because of the position of the leader, a youth or young adult has nothing to lose by developing romantic interests and feelings with the leader, but the leader has nothing to win and everything to lose if that isn't kept in check.

As unlikely as it seems to many, there will be some in the youth or young adult group who, for whatever reason, don't march to the charismatic leader's beat. Such a person won't fit in and won't be given any credibility and probably won't stick around the group for very long, because "everyone loves the leader" except for this eccentric outcast. Maybe a person like that will get a chance when the charismatic leader leaves, but just about everyone else will leave then, too, and "nobody will be able to do it the way the last leader did!"

Possibilities

The greatest strength of a charismatic leader is that people follow and it rarely matters what else happens. In a sense, the leader plays the role of God—able to handle every situation and capable of making the most of it. A charismatic leader can jolt a group to life. Participants seem more willing to give God a try and engage in whatever is happening. The non-conformist approach appears to be more spiritual because it deals more with a feeling than a controlling or rigid plan.

Perhaps the greatest need for the charismatic leader is to join forces with others to make a team. This includes adults who will not only make up for the leader's deficiencies (organizing, planning, etc.), but also pass along some of the skills to make the leader more than charismatic. It includes young people who aren't just like the leader, and maybe don't even want to be like the leader, but still need to be actively involved in the group.

A youth or young adult group with a charismatic leader has the opportunity of impacting the rest of the congregation and community by moving outside the comfort zone of "only the groupies." This might result in lack of acceptance or not as loyal a following compared to the tightly knit group around the leader. But it will grow the leader, the group, and foster a dependence on God instead of merely on the charismatic leader.

The School-Based Model

Description

The school system for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America creates some unique dynamics when it comes to youth and young adult ministry. The first one deals with being "in" or "out." In some churches, those who attend the church school are "in" and those who don't are considered "out."

Young people often segregate themselves this way at church gatherings. Those from the church school stick together and those who attend public school hang on the fringes. Conversations and announcements favor church school life. For example, a statement like, "Nobody is here today because the choir is on tour" insinuates that all who are present are "nobodies" and "the choir" must be the church school choir.

In churches where the dominant group does not attend a church school, that church school becomes a non-factor and those who attend it will probably change churches to attend one that gives preference to the church school.

Those who home-school their adolescents often struggle with the tension of wanting their children to be part of the youth group for social interaction, and yet not be negatively influenced by those other kids. The church school gets perceived as not being serious enough, not academic enough, lacking the right kind of music, being too sports-oriented, or possibly downright worldly.

When a church school is associated or affiliated with just one church, the church usually takes the lead in the relationship. The church probably started the school for its own young people as well as to reach out to others in the community. As soon as more than one church becomes part of the school constituency, "church" gets split into multiple segments and the church school develops its own life and center, which serves as the center for the students rather than their church. Do the math—how many waking hours per week does a young person spend at school, at home, at church?

Most families that have young people either invest in the school or hand off their children to the school's purview. Often the parents who are involved in the school are the same parents who support the youth or young adult program at church. Once again, count the hours spent in each arena. The church school becomes the central agency for the home, and church gets the leftovers. For example, when a sports tournament takes place, the church school draws players and many others because the tournament serves

as the gathering point for the young people. Any church activity scheduled at that same time will languish. Perhaps only those from the "out" group will attend.

Critique

A church school usually has a larger staff of full-time employees than a church youth group. But the school staff aren't trained to be youth pastors or youth leaders; they are trained in various disciplines, such as English, history, computers, math or science. Their spiritual influence and initiative in the lives of their students may take second place to their primary emphasis of teaching their given school subjects. Those who teach a class in religious topics often cover much more material in a week than a youth leader can do in 20-30 minutes on the weekend. As a result, the religious education in the church setting seems comparatively elementary and church youth groups become primarily social gatherings in a religious building.

Often misunderstandings develop between school and church leaders due to a lack of communication. Church school employees tend to shrink from church involvement, especially with young people. They want a break from having been with their students all week, so there tends to be a disconnect when it comes to church. Those who promote God during the week at the church school may not even attend church on the weekend. If they do, they probably won't be involved with their students.

Young people who attend a Christian school participate in church activities only if they have time or if they are looking for a different arena to develop their skills. The church youth group can serve as a farm system to train youth who aren't yet student leaders. As they develop, the church school recruits them to support their larger enterprise. The newly trained church youth leaders drop their youth leadership so they can enter student leadership. They have moved to "the big leagues."

Often church participation drops severely after high school graduation. Some may say, "When they graduated from school, they also graduated from God." In reality, for those who attend a church school, it happened during their high school years. Their church school involvement replaced their church involvement. As they "move on" church influenced their earlier development, not their adolescence. If they attend a Christian college, they are apt to look to that educational institution to direct and drive their future religious involvement. Those who don't take that road might return to church to seek a social group that also provides spiritual connecting points. Active young adult ministry can glean from this transient group that seeks familiar roots.

Possibilities

If you serve in a setting that includes a church school, increase the communication between the church school and the constituent churches. Initiate and persist in communicating among the youth leaders from the different churches. Coordinate efforts since you often are dealing with the same youth— those who see each other as classmates more than being youth in different churches.

Coordinate purposes and calendars, both between the school and the churches as well as among the churches. Be present in the lives of young people in multiple settings. Capitalize on "vacation" periods for the church to take the lead. Communicate, coordinate, celebrate, repeat.

The Traditional Model

Description

"We've always done it this way," describes the Traditional Model. It probably worked in the past; it may work in the present. But that doesn't even come up for serious consideration. "We're going to press ahead, confident that what worked for us years ago will work for young people today."

Churches that utilize the Traditional Model may be satisfied with the continuity and predictability inherent with it. In contrast, young people usually prefer something new or different (although not all young people are that way). Youth groups that follow tradition might have adult leaders who are controlling or who fall into the rut of doing things the way they were done when they were young. Traditional youth groups might have youth who don't think outside of the box or who mirror what they have seen adults do in the past.

Youth who will endorse the adult agenda get put into junior leadership roles. All others are ignored or corrected. Adults expect that the young people will grow up to be just like them. Budding new identities must conform to somewhat narrow and traditional norms. For example, some churches present Sabbath School or AY the way they have for years, even though it may have died or is on life support with adults keeping this youth program going. It may not reach young people any longer, but somebody prevents it from being changed or from pulling the plug.

It seems that anything new is automatically suspect and anything old obtains a ringing endorsement, at least for those in charge.

Critique

Some things change and some things don't. Young people don't think the same or act the same as children, and yet they have their same names and belong to their same families. Are youth leaders able to differentiate between what should change and what shouldn't? Are they secure enough to be open to change?

Often, people with strong orientations to "truth" and "control" and "fear" seem unable to differentiate a method from a truth; a preference from a pillar; a practice from a doctrine. Changing the order of service or how a group practices prayer might threaten the stability of the group. This brings into question issues of truth and the fear of being wrong. Anything untested can't be trusted, so nothing will even be tested, at least not by this youth group. That leaves the group with whatever somebody, somewhere, somehow tested in the past and found to be right.

Ironically, most young people who grow up being secure and feeling safe will launch into new arenas simply because they do feel grounded. From a foundation of strength, they readily broaden their horizons and willingly chart paths into new territory. Locking these young people into a Traditional Model would prevent them from discovering new insights. Confident of what they have received, they expect to find even more. They can't imagine that the rest of their lives will be spent regurgitating the same thing. Instead, they expect to continue to grow, building on the shoulders of those who have gone before.

Possibilities

Identify what is core and make that clear. Adults who have waited for years to finally be in control might need to give up their long-anticipated reign. They also face the possibility of young people leading those older into new arenas and taking in new vistas. Instead of praying hand-me-down prayers, all can begin to pray earnestly from the heart as explorers leave the fort and enter the wild unknown.

Once the core elements have been clarified, address these to the current target group. Be ready to change the methods to gain the desired result. Engage young people in the process. They are humans who should have input; not animals to be trained on a leash and then put in a pen. Hand off leadership and responsibilities to them. Expect it to be slightly different. Adults will actually have much greater influence if they do this while they still have input rather than keeping young people quietly submissive and then completely losing them once they can leave. Support them as they grow. It's easy for adults to forget what they were like at that age.

The New Thing Model

Description

"Out with the old, in with the new," typifies the New Thing Model. Treating every moment as though it's New Year's Eve, virtually everything in existence seems worthless compared to anything new coming around the corner or down the pike.

On the other hand, such an approach places such a high priority on newness that value, quality or purpose might not count for much. Instead of discernment, date of release determines acceptability.

This automatically places the New Thing Model squarely in the realm of fads. This makes it expensive, for "new" usually is, and its shelf life always seems to be quite limited. This can take the form of new equipment, new methods, new materials, new leaders, new everything. It also makes every element in your ministry disposable or easily put into storage. Do you have to have the latest computer or software technology? What about a new and better sound system? Will you fly the newest, hot speaker or singer across the country so your church is the first one to feature her? Must you start your youth group meeting with a YouTube clip that just got posted?

The New Thing Model stands in direct contrast to the Traditional Model. If you have two leaders, from both orientations, you will have perpetual differences and discord. One or the other will go since both can't co-exist. Most of us have a bent one way or the other, but probably aren't completely extreme. Or are you?!

Critique

The new creates curiosity and anticipation for some people, but fear and trepidation for others. It is usually fresh, but also untested and sometimes flawed. The desire for originality accepts beta versions, which means they are still too new to be fully functional. But the new can also be exciting and refreshing simply because it is new. Sometimes things that are good get discarded just because they aren't new. Such a superficial orientation hardly contributes to depth.

Relationships can suffer when the new trumps what has been established. Would you drop all of your existing friends just for the possibility of gaining a new friend? Would you dump your friends for a chance to hear a new musician in concert? If you have an

orientation towards the New Thing Model, the answer would be, "Of course!" And your relationships would probably suffer.

When the new gets accepted without any merits other than not being old, you need some different criteria for evaluation. When someone gasps, "We've gotta do this because it's the latest!" someone needs to ask, "But is it any good?" And "Why?" There might be some occasions in which you or your youth group might try something simply to test it out for evaluation purposes. You might choose to drop that item, adjust it, or fully endorse it. But that shouldn't be your regular practice (unless you're following this model!).

Possibilities

Going with what is new provides a great way to tap into young people because they have or want to have new perspectives. If you are a creative person, test things on your youth as a focus group. If you aren't very creative, get your young people to be the creators. Your role may be to coach them, encourage them, guide them, or shape them.

When young people create things afresh, challenge them to take the good that may be classic and give it a new face. Challenge them to take what is current and call it into question based on the Gospel and the examples from the life of Christ. Challenge them to create with quality and not just quantity. Challenge them to appreciate what has stood the test of time because it did communicate for more than an instant.

How does a young person internalize faith? By wrestling with it personally and applying it to one's life. The New Thing Model might be the avenue for young people to take a fresh look at something they know is worthwhile but seems too staid or boring to adopt until later. This could set them on the path for a lifetime of new discoveries with God.

The Bi-Lingual Model

Description

Immigration often means a new culture with a new language. Church can become a way to maintain the culture from one's mother country. Challenged by the newness, the low social status, the financial pressures, and that difficult new language, church for an immigrant group offers relief and comfort in a new land.

It maintains the culture of the mother country. Church can be an all-day experience with religious programming, good food, fellowship, family orientation, social activities, more food, and it's all done in one's original language! Such refreshment can keep people going in their struggle their next week in the new country.

But what happens with the next generation? What is their mother country? What is their mother language? The next generation usually is more adaptable, and with the educational system in America, probably gets more immersed into speaking English (or "American") than the first generation. And the second generation learns that to get ahead, fitting into the larger culture is a must! How will the second generation relate to church?

For the second generation, church becomes the foreign country, where practices, power structures, personalities, and passions seem out of place compared to the American life they consider home. Language typifies this split. While their parents' mother language dominates the church, English dominates their world. Which will they choose? Do they even have a choice?

Sometimes this takes more than one generation to fully change. But as long as generations stay in America, the melting pot will continue to melt from the mother country to the country of mixed ethnic groups and multicultural norms. Either return to the original country, live in a small niche in America in which you can maintain your ancestral heritage, or make America your country. Few move seamlessly among those options. Most have to choose one or have it be chosen for them.

Language becomes a dividing line and observable indicator in churches when the youth group operates in English and the church service uses the mother language. Over time, a separate "youth church" in English might run concurrently in a different room while the "regular church service" takes place in the sanctuary. Once this occurs, you have two churches, and they will become increasingly distant.

As long as immigration continues, fresh faces, families, and young people will continue to long for the ways of the mother country in the church. Such a demand might maintain attendance and participation of new young people since it reminds them of their roots. But the second and third generation will slowly slip away. On-going immigration obscures that reality. But when immigration dwindles or stops, the drop out from ensuing generations clamors for a change.

Critique

Because the church doubles as the cultural and religious center for the immigrants, differentiating between those two is difficult or impossible for some to do. Changing the order of service, the introduction of new technologies, and using English all stand in contrast to worship the way the immigrants recall it from their years back home. The immigrants might be surprised if they returned to their roots to see that changes may have occurred "back home" as well! Nevertheless, changes at church threaten their security and stability. This becomes increasingly troublesome as people age.

Ironically, parents who came to America for the sake of their children find themselves losing their children to the American way. This includes not only the language, but also the values and movement towards secularism and materialism rather than godliness and family solidarity. Over the generations, grandparents might be entrenched in maintaining the mother culture in church, while parents span both the old and the new and the grandchildren speak only English and prefer an English-speaking church where their American friends attend. Sometimes it seems like the only element young people appreciate about the mother country is the food.

Possibilities

Bi-lingual churches provide a combination of both worlds into one unique culture. A bi-lingual church honors and respects both countries/worlds and seeks to bring them together for worship. This necessitates clarity in purpose and dialogue regarding priorities of worship, culture, personal preferences, and negotiables.

Being unique is fine. In fact, everyone is unique, which makes everyone the same! But it takes intentionality, openness, give-and-take, and graciousness as well as communication skills that include listening in order to stay connected. A bi-lingual church provides a key avenue for this to happen. But unless immigration continues, eventually it will become an American church and no longer even a bi-lingual church. The Bi-Lingual Model forms an important link for immigrating communities in the transition that covers a number of generations.

The One Thing Model

Description

The One Thing Model for youth and young adult ministry describes frequency rather than priority. For example, a congregation might have a "Youth Day" for the church service once a year and consider it to fulfill the youth ministry needs for a year. A church may have a token young adult on its church board and call that "listening to our young adults."

But don't expect anything more than that one thing! Don't ask for funding or a room in which to meet or a focused outreach in the community. In one way or another, the message comes through, "You already have your one thing!"

If asked whether or not the church has a youth or young adult ministry, many would nod in the affirmative, certain that the base has been covered adequately.

This unspoken model seems common in a family setting or a small church with few or no youth. The church may do no more than one thing either because it doesn't need to or doesn't want to or it doesn't have the resources to do more than one thing. Perhaps the congregation's resources enable it to have a consistent Pathfinder Club or a weekly AY program, but nothing more. Small churches don't necessarily have a comprehensive program 24/7. In fact, having one thing a week might be a bit of a stretch.

A congregation that has no young people often sees no need to do anything for young people since they aren't present. When asked to consider the future of their church, some passively send the church to its grave since the senior citizens are headed that direction anyway. They find that easier than trying to stir up things or make the changes to attract youth or young adults to their existing church. An annual youth event might release any guilt associated with such irresponsibility or lack of mission.

It's possible that a church might have such great integration among its members and in the community that it needs no separate youth or young adult ministry.

Critique

Let's be clear—the One Thing Model does include one thing! That's more than many churches offer! It can be a galvanizing point for the church as well as its young people and those in the community. Many adults can reference a single event or a consistent "one thing" that brought them to Christ and grew them in discipleship. Frequently those are the people who pass it on by providing something in their church when they are adults.

When a church provides one thing, that usually means one person leading one thing. With those conditions, the one person's influence, style and interactions will be less than a team or a multi-faceted approach would have. When the youth leader of a small group is the parent of both youth, you simply have a home youth group. By the time of adolescence, most are looking for additional input beyond the foundation laid by the family.

One thing misses many other possibilities. For example, if Pathfinders captivates the outdoorsy types of young people, what about the computer geeks or the academics? If Bible Bowl nurtures the Bible trivia kids, what's available for those who flourish with freedom outside of highly structured events? If you have only one arrow in your quiver, you'd better be a very good archer with your one shot.

Possibilities

Celebrate what is, rather than bemoaning what isn't. One is more than zero! If you have just one thing for youth or young adults at your church, you'll want to prioritize to make the one a very good selection. You'll need to take inventory of what you have in terms of people, resources, target group, and needs. Consider your mission. What about the future in the short term and in the long term? What about right now?

Some churches go through cycles in which they have a group of children that progress as a cohort through different stages in the church. You might have 5-12 children in your church who mature into youth group age. But when they graduate from that, what young adult ministry will they lead or co-lead? And what will happen to your youth group when they leave?

The One Thing Model could become a rut that merely repeats on an annual basis. Or it can be alive and expectant of renewal, change, growth, relevance, and a newness every time.

A church that integrates youth and young adults into its body for a whole church experience can still provide a limited amount of age-specific opportunities, just as it might do a women's retreat, a Valentine's banquet, a letter-to-soldiers campaign, or a weekly day care for MOPS (Mothers Of Pre-Schoolers). A One Thing Model can change its "one thing" as needed.

An Overview of the Models Brought to the 180° Symposium

Participants invited to the Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE) 180° Symposium at Andrews University October, 2010 prepared a paper in advance, describing a model for youth and young adult ministry. Each model was to have a title, an abstract, a theology that would support it, an explanation, application to a ministry setting, and an option to include a visual illustration of the model. All of this had to fit into 5-8 pages, which meant that these preachers had to do their 10-minute version rather than their 30-minute sermon!

By submitting these papers in advance of the 180° Symposium, others had the opportunity to read the papers prior to the gathering. The first day of the 180° Symposium each participant gave a brief summary of one's paper and then fielded questions and comments from the rest of the participants.

After the second day of focus groups on the topics, the editorial board decided to include the papers presented in advance of the symposium as the second half of this book. The first portion would be the "Top 10 Models" the focus groups developed as well as the theology for SDA youth and young adult ministry.

The CYE sent the papers to Steve Case to edit in conjunction with the authors. What you find in the following pages are those revised papers. The most common model features relationships or the incarnation. Several deal with various forms of the arts. All of them come out of ministerial experience. Some include a visual illustration of the model. Some influenced the "Top 10" more than others. Each made a significant contribution. Compare these with the "Top 10" and make adjustments or utilize as a model for your ministry to youth and young adults.

These papers are presented in alphabetical order according to the last names of the authors.

A.I.M for the M.I.A.

Ricardo V. Bain, Youth Director, North Bahamas Conference

Abstract

It has been well documented that young people leave our churches at an alarming rate. Many of them are missing from the church that claims to love them so much. Until we step up and are intentional about reclaiming and keeping our missing members we will continue to experience high drop out statistics among young people. We must reclaim the missing by strategically seeking their association, assimilation, affirmation, accountability, and attendance.

The Problem

In many Seventh-day Adventist churches the attrition rate of young adults gives cause for alarm! And there seems to be little movement to do anything about it. Roger Dudley of the Institute of Church Ministries at Andrews University conducted a 10-year study of 1,523 young Adventists in the United States. In the tenth year Dudley's best estimate is that 49% had left the church (Dudley, 2000). These were baptized, committed youth at the start of the study. Of those who remained in the church only 55% attended regularly (Dudley, 2000). According to Barry Gane, the Valuegenesis study has shown that 28% are not planning to be in the church when they are 40. (Gane, 1993). Addressing this predicament is not expected to be a breezy undertaking; however, it is one that we can ill-afford to stop working to quell.

The Sunrise SDA Church in the Bahamas recently implemented the model described in this paper. This congregation has 176 registered members, with about 75 in regular attendance. The active youth population of the church is about 30 young people. The missing young people—those between the ages of 19-30—still on the register number 55. At the time of this writing, the church was three months into following the model described below. We are seeing tremendous results already. We use many different facets to accomplish the goal of having these missing youth return and stay in the church.

An Explanation of The Model

As the pastor of the church, I simply took the word "aim" and made it an acronym for "Advance In Mission." I reversed the acronym to identify those who no longer attend at "Missing In Action." (See diagram at the end of the chapter). Five additional "A-words" further define and describe the "Action": Association, Assimilation, Affirmation, Accountability, and Attendance.

I am persuaded that we must make it a point of emphasis at every level of the church to focus on the missing youth and young adults. It is urgent that we relentlessly pursue them with a spirit of mission that never dies. We want to work like everything depended upon us to get them back in the church. We also want to trust God like everything depended on Him for guidance to bring this to fruition.

We will Advance in Mission for those who are missing from our church's Association, Assimilation, Affirmation, Accountability, and Attendance. We will work with a defined strategy to woo these young people back to God's house with the goal of permanent presence and action.

The Theological Foundation for This Ministry Model

This model finds its biblical foundation in the trilogy of parables Jesus told in Luke 15. Some Pharisees and scribes were complaining about Jesus communing with sinners. In response, Jesus told the parable of the lost sheep. This story depicts a shepherd who had one hundred sheep. When he discovered that one was missing, he left the ninety-nine sheep and searched for the lost one until he found it. Once the lost sheep had been found, the shepherd called together all his friends and neighbors for a party. Jesus said the same thing happens in heaven when people who have left are found.

Relating this parable to the model, we find the shepherd "Advancing In Mission" to find the "Missing In Action." The search continued until the lost was found. And finding the lost wasn't a matter of relief or reprimand, but a cause for celebration with friends and neighbors.

The parable of the lost coin comes next. This model reflects the essence of this parable as well. A woman lost a silver coin—"Missing In Action." Because the coin is valuable to her, she lit a lamp and searched for the coin until she found it. Once again, when the lost was found it resulted in a celebration with friends who were called for the express purpose of celebrating.

The parable of the prodigal son also tightly fits this model. From the story we can tell that the youngest boy approached his father and demanded his portion of the inheritance. His father gave it to him and he left home—"Missing In Action." He wasted himself and his substance in wild living. He came to himself and he decided to go back home. This young man prepared a speech to request the position of a hired servant in his father's house. However, while on his way back home, the father "Advanced In Mission" for his son who was "Missing In Action." He ran to his son while the son was still a great way off, kissed him, put a ring on his finger, shoes on his feet, a robe on his back, and didn't even give him time to recite his speech. He was excited just to have him back home. He then involved his son in a party. According to Luke 15: 24 (NKJV), "'For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry."

The trilogy of Christ's parables in Luke 15 presents a model of seeking the lost, continuing to search until the lost is found, and celebrating with others when the lost are found. While the context of these stories places both God the Father and Jesus Christ as the ones in search of the lost, this example applies to those who follow Christ as master and lord.

Missing in Association

When we survey the situation we face concerning the deterioration of our young adult population, we may find out that young people are not properly or deeply associated with the church. It is not long before many of these youth leave for churches that offer more

genuine associations and relationships. To relate to this concern as we did the following at our church:

1. We created an extensive list of all the young people registered in our church and determined who is actually attending and who is not.

2. We assigned these names to the young people attending church to work with the missing members. This gave them a point of contact with the church again.

3. We also called young people who were not attending and invited them to social activities. We gave them time to decide. Sometimes we called once, twice or even three times. Some did not respond. However, we did not get discouraged. We tried again and some of them came.

Missing in Assimilation

Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Church*, wrote, "Assimilation is the task of moving people from an awareness of your church to attendance at your church to active membership in your church" (Warren, 1995). I resonate with this definition. We are generally good at making young people aware of our churches, and even getting them to attend. Our weakness seem to be in assimilating them into the active membership. At the Sunrise SDA Church we worked to achieve assimilation in these ways:

1. We helped the returning young people to become involved in the life of the church by linking them to a young adult small group called G.Y.I. (Genuine Youth Ignition).

2. This small group is charged with the responsibility of assimilating the returning young person into the fellowship of the church.

3. The returning young person would also have the freedom of expression during the "Share and Care" segment of the group meeting. This is an open time when we take testimonies.

4. We offer prayer and additional forms of tangible support when the young people have their issues.

5. We also engage them in cross generational connections. We connect these young people with a select group of adults to be "Share and Care Partners." This basically means they look out for them during the week. As a result, we have seen an uncommon revival at our church.

Missing in Affirmation

The atmosphere of our churches must be perfumed with affirmation and genuineness if youth and young adults are going to remain. It is also imperative for them to constantly affirm others by expressing positive thoughts and giving support to peers. At the Sunrise SDA Church we seek to affirm returning young people in the following ways:

1. We make a big deal about their presence at church by showering them with positive expressions.

2. We celebrate their successes, such as passed exams, positive relationships, drama performances, basketball game wins (we even celebrate the losses).

3. We seek to be genuine with our words to returning, fragile, youthful member.

4. We rely on a hospitality group made up of young people to ensure that those who return are cared for on Sabbath. The hospitality group is also responsible for calling the returned youth to check up on them at least twice during the week.

Missing in Accountability

David J. Felter made accountability comprehensive when he stated, "Everyone is accountable for something to someone. Accountability is simply inescapable. The ramifications are enormous. Whether the setting is business, industry, education, family life, or ecclesial organizations, we are all accountable." (Felter, 2009) We cannot live without accountability. When youth and young adults are not held accountable for their relationship with God and some aspect of church life they experience a type of death—dropping out. When this happens they are missing because of a lack of accountability. At our church we hold the young people who are present accountable in the following ways:

1. We made a prayer list of all missing youth. Each person present is connected to the name of one who is missing. We expect a report at the next meeting as it relates to the contacts made with those missing persons. That report includes both praying for the missing person and making contact with that person.

2. We also organized a Youth Mentoring program. Each young person present was linked with one returning. This gave the youth who were in church an appreciation for accountability and those returning were held accountable to their new mentors. We called these mentors "Access Partners."

3. We embarked on a series to train and educate the church so that they could be friendly and warm towards the returning young people. We admonished adults to allow the young people space to grow and develop in their Christian experience.

4. We also include accountability in the small group G.Y.I. Members of the

small group sign a contract to help ensure this. We are intentional about seeing to it that they are present at group meetings and church services.

Missing in Attendance

When young people are missing the care of proper association, assimilation, affirmation, and accountability within the church they tend to be missing in attendance. They neglect to assemble themselves with the church. It is alarming how many of them are missing because of carelessness and blatant unconcern. "The American church is dying. Perhaps most startling is the gravity of how many exit the church and the pace at which this exodus is occurring. Each generation that passes loses more than the previous generation. Multitudes are dropping out of the church!" (Rainer, 2008)

In addition to the previously mentioned actions taken in the youth group, we have initiated the following elements for our church as a whole to woo back those who have stopped attending:

1. We started group visits. We had brief meetings in the homes of the missing young people and made sure many of their friends were present. The outpouring of love and togetherness gave most of them the feeling of warmth that made them commit to coming out to church again. And they did!

2. We invited them to social events at the church so that they could be connected to us in a non-threatening way.

3. We created a young adult presence that would dominate the worship planning committee. Our intention for this action was to keep the church services interesting and viable for young people.

It Works

With these actions in motion we have already seen many of those who were:

Missing in Association, Missing in Assimilation, Missing in Affirmation, Missing in Accountability, and Missing in Attendance start attending our services again. We have seen 12 of the 55 missing young people return to the church and be re-baptized. Of course this meant we did a lot of celebrating! We have seen this model effectively lead those in our church to minister to many young people, and we believe it can be used to influence many more.

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ADVANCE A I M MISSION

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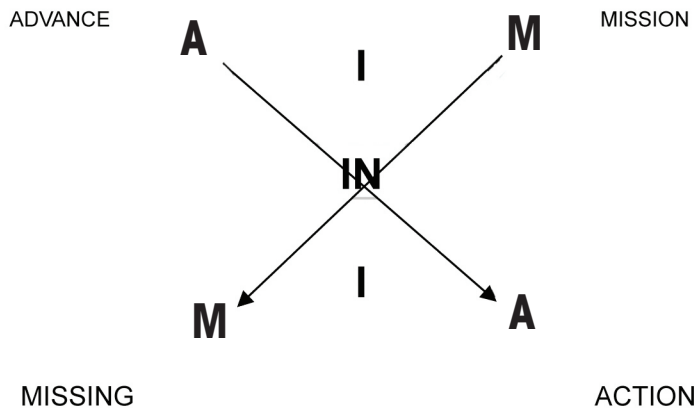
MISSING ACTION

MISSING IN ACTION

Missing in Association
Missing in Assimilation
Missing in Affirmation
Missing in Accountability
Missing in Attendance

Social Advocacy Youth Ministry Model

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Abstract

Every church should have a transformative youth ministry but not everyone has been sensitized to the irrelevance of traditional church programs to 21st century youth needs. Every church, however, seeks to reach communities with young people. Every school should have a meaningful non-academic youth ministry contextualized to its community, but not every school has formatted a structure for the holistic development of young people. Every community deserves to have meaningful youth organizations but not every community has invested in the commonwealth of youthfulness. The Social Advocacy Youth Ministry Model is suitably structured to stimulate and sustain the level of interaction and care for the church and the un-churched youth. It is relevant to all communities and should be used by all.

Undeniably, social advocacy has a biblical origin. Genesis 4:9-10 identifies the dysfunctional attitude of a community that seemed to have had lost its accountability for its members. Social advocacy evaluates community on the basis of accountability. It interprets justice on the premise of purpose. It resolves injustice on the same basis that it demands justice. Cain is symbolic of emotional dissatisfactions, economic bankruptcies, family dysfunctions, political instabilities, religious fanaticism, racial indifferences and unmanaged passions. Abel is the symbolic silence that fails to cry out to prevent and correct injustices.

As in the time of Cain and Abel, social injustice existed in Jesus' time. Luke's account of the inauguration of Christ's ministry took place in his hometown of Nazareth. When asked to select a portion of Scripture for the synagogue reading, he chose the passage from Isaiah 61:1-2, which reads, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19 NRSV)

Christ was the peasants' advocate. In that way Jesus applied the principle of accountability to the issue of faith. Consequently the matter of faith application has been a discussion in the Christian church

from the time of Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus used the conditions of his time, including the attitudes of the religious leaders, to argue for a transformed society. He pointed to a relevant gospel that was equipped to give liberation to the peasants and other exploited people. Jesus lambasted as poor role models the powerful and enriched scribes and Pharisees of his day (Mathew 23:1-39).

Christ's concern is still relevant today, as it was when Yahweh asked Cain about his brother Abel (Genesis 4:9-10). Through the medium of social advocacy the question that Cain so snobbishly avoided can be answered daily. Social advocates believe that Cain is his brother's keeper. Social advocates are intentional on how Christians translate the virtues of Sabbath worship (Exodus 20:8-11) into acts of kindness through all the days of the week. They pursue the means through which the principle of liberation can be best transferred to the marginalized young adult and low-income families. Social advocates ask, "How can the worshipping church say that it 'loves God whom it has not seen' (1 John 4:20) and be silent in the work and public places?" The tenet of social advocacy answers with unquestionable certainty a commitment to transformational leadership.

The preservation of advocacy has been a call of the church. Christ's handling of the reaction of the religious leaders who pressed him regarding the woman brought to him after an adulterous act (John 8:2-12) presents a classic advocacy principle. The expectation was that Jesus would condemn her in some way, which would eliminate his authority as Savior. When the church adopts a non-advocacy position on matters of social justice (often translated "righteousness"), it reflects a supportive attitude to condemnatory voices with the wrong attitude. Women and young people are often victims of such silence and chauvinistic mindsets. Social advocacy is transformative witnessing and it demands an

appetite for righteous disobedience and unconventionality. Christ's dealing with the Samaritan "woman at the well" (John 4:1-42) presents an archetypal example of the power of advocacy work.

The Church and Social Advocacy

Social advocacy is for the "sick" who have no voice and the abuser who has a destructive purview to life. Unfortunately, it has not been traditionally viewed as a responsibility of the church. It has often been viewed as secular and ungodly. However, social advocacy and justice has been the interests of many professors of religion—both Catholic and Protestant (Banana, 1985; Sider, 2006; Van Reken, 1999). For example, Monte Sahlin (1997, p. 12) asserted, "We believe as a religion (SDA) that issues of religion cannot be separated from the health of the family, neighborhood, or any aspects of human life."

According to the Second Vatican Council:

It is the special vocation of the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, in each and every one of the world's occupations and callings, and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, form the context of their existence. There they are called by God to contribute to the sanctification of the world within, like leaven, in the spirit of the Gospel, by fulfilling their own particular duties.

Youth ministry in the 21st century is uniquely challenged by noted attitudes that repel the behavior of Jesus to those defined as sinners. The tentacles of consumerism, secularism, liberalism and pluralism, cultural norms and values of the institutionalized church further compound it.

The community needs the mark that implicitly indicates the spiritual involvement of the church in exposing the wickedness of the evil systems. As argued by Brueggeman and supported by Campbell in *Preaching to the Powers,* we need "speech that breaks the silence of violence and the violence of silence." (Brueggeman 1998, p. 203) The community is dependent on that word. In the context of the conversation on transformational youth ministry, the church needs to review its approach to handling the disparities and marginalization of its youth. The feeling of marginalization is tantamount to banishment of youth, the exact opposite of what they need.

The culture in which we live is no longer under the control of Christians. In fact, it could be labeled unfriendly to the point of exile from friends and support systems that remain in the dominant culture. Such a stance creates polarization when it comes to the Christian faith (Hauerwas & Willimon, 1998; Brueggemann, 1997; Campbell, 2002). While this faith has its own community, it often stands against the rest of the world. In such a relationship the challenge to preachers remains "How do we make the gospel credible to the modern world?" (Hauerwas & Willimon, p. 19).

While the relevance of the church shows in community building and transformational work, the voice of youth and young adult leadership should be in social advocacy. When the Jewish exiles returned to build the temple and Jerusalem, in a relatively short amount of time capitalistic greed showed itself as some prospered at the expense of others who sold their children into slavery (Nehemiah 5:1-13). Who will speak up for the young who suffer simply from the utter selfishness of adults? And this has not been limited to Old Testament accounts. Social advocacy is the metaphoric *Magna Carta Libertatum* (Luke 4:18-19) of Jesus' agenda.

The Youth Ministries department of the Seventh-day Adventist community of faith has a divine mandate to call its members to be catalysts of social advocacy in both the private and public sectors. Employment in those sectors ought to be seen as opportunities to be instruments of God's grace and creative power. Rather than perceiving one's work as a job, it should be understood as an opportunity to advocate for social justice and the benefit of the nation.

Seventh-day Adventist Christians are taught that decisions of social justice for young adults and the greater community are reflected in our daily decisions. Social advocacy needs to be seen as an integral approach to transformational Christianity. It is not an individual task. "It is a call to work with others to humanize and shape the institutions that touch so many people. The lay vocation for justice in the world cannot be carried forward alone, but only as members of a community called to be the 'leaven' of the Gospel (The U.S. Catholic Conference FABC Paper 87)." This effectiveness of this principle can be best supported by young adults.

Youth leadership is strongest when the Jesus model shapes Seventh-day Adventist ideologues. In fact, Ellen G. White in *Ministry of Healing* penned:

> Let not your un-Christ like character misrepresent Jesus. Do not keep the little ones away from Him by your coldness and harshness. Never give them cause to feel that heaven would not be a pleasant place to them if you were there. Do not speak of religion as something that children cannot understand, or act as if they were not expected to accept Christ in their childhood. Do not give them the false impression that the religion of Christ is a religion of gloom, and that in coming to the Savior they must give

up all that makes life joyful. As the Holy Spirit moves upon the hearts of the children, co-operate with His work. Teach them that the Savior is calling them, that nothing can afford Him greater joy than for them to give themselves to Him in the bloom and freshness of their years (White, 1942, pp. 43-44).

For some, it seems as though church simply must tolerate its youth. In actuality, the church needs to advocate for the youth. In order to experience a move beyond tolerance, the church needs a change of attitude. As Katherine Mansfield wrote, "Could we change our attitude, we should not only see life differently, but life itself would undergo a change of appearance because we ourselves had undergone a change of attitude (Mansfield, 2007)." When youth leadership is transformational and advocates for the un-churched and socially disenfranchised youth, communities that are negatively impacted by tourism, prostitution, domestic violence, illiteracy, and consumerism will their find voice in the church. Kimball (2007, p. 58) appropriately summed it up in the words:

> I believe Jesus wants them [those who like Jesus but not the church] to understand what the church really is and not just make assumptions about it. I think Jesus wants the church to offer an apology to people when needed, and I think Jesus wants those who like him to forgive the church if she has wounded them.

Model Application

Social advocacy research has indicated two fundamental approaches to youth ministry in the SDA church—a "To Youth" approach and a "For Youth" approach.

The "To Youth" approach in youth ministry emphasizes token positions in the operations of the church. Its main purpose is to ensure

that the youth are not made to feel "left out" of the affairs of the church and that a representation by age is apparent in areas where reasonable youthful recklessness is flexible. With careful placement young people can be given a sense of belonging without threatening the smooth running of the church. For example, one of the individuals picking up the offering can be labeled a junior deacon as long as the offering plate gets handed over to responsible adults immediately after the offering has been collected. A young person can be put on the church board as long as that young person is silent most of the time or makes primarily nice comments. The image of youth involvement gets promoted but its reality is primarily for show or expediency.

The apparent strength of the "To Youth" approach is its understanding that representation of young adults is necessary. Its weakness is inherent in its strength. The understanding for representation does not compel the base to act. Rather it relies on urgencies to determine when it responds by the creation of a position for a young adult. It typically occurs at a politically convenient time for adults or after a crisis so representation comes after the fact.

The "To-Youth" approach makes evaluations on the basis of established commitment to church operations, including baptism into the body of Christ and the ability to fellowship with church members. The evaluations struggle with status quo maintenance and generational commensality—"Let's all get along!" It expects that the young adults of the church have limited and undeveloped talents or gifts necessary to effectively serve. It assumes that their lifestyles are probably worldly and run counter to the spiritual things of God. The assessment tool for an invitation into church office is the consistency with which they attend they attend Sabbath and Wednesday night church services, how close they sit to

the front of the church, their relationship status, their clothing style, and the respect they show for established church leaders. This youth ministry approach has form without substance, lacks relevance, and is unfriendly at best and vindictive at worst.

With the second approach, the "For Youth" approach, youth ministry is systemic and institutionally bureaucratic. It appears elitist even when its intention may have some validity. The approach is derivative of a structure that perceives youth ministry as a welfare system—*we do for you what you are unable to do for yourself since you are incapacitated*. In such a system, young adults are continuously assessed as needy and dependent, as self-defeating, rebellious against a system that has tried so hard to keep them alive, as losing the way to God's throne and in need of a shepherd. Furthermore, they are considered to be unholy and consequently unqualified to participate in particular church functions or to hold particular church positions.

The "For Youth" approach evaluates young adults on the potential negative results of youthful immaturity, generational naivety and spiritual dwarfism. It asks the questions "What if they mess it up, can we fix it? Why should we allow them to participate in the program?" It asserts its authority based on its own evaluation. It responds by making plans for the youth and insisting that is what's best for them. If consultation is held with young people and feedback is provided, a high-handed response can be assured.

The "For Youth" ministry approach perceives the system as substantively infallible. It focuses its success on historicity and current trends in some church sectors where a high percentage of the population is youth. The attribution is that traditional programs have maintained the focus of a high percentage of young adults and that there is no real need to alter the approach.

The best approach to facilitate responsible growth and development among the youth is one that emphasizes relationship, camaraderie, community and family. The church would benefit immeasurably from creating space for community and open dialogue with youth and young adults.

A relational emphasis recognizes more than casual greetings and pleasant platitudes. It intentionally, without a clandestine motive, works its way into the heart of the youth, identifies with their deficiencies and provides relevant age appropriate responses to both the churched and the un-churched.

Building on this is a participation element which recognizes the interrelatedness of relationship and results. It instructs for results and is result driven. Results are, however, balanced with meaningful relationship The Participatory Ministry approach promotes the building and strengthening of relationships without victimization or concealed motives. It voids itself of proven attitudes and perceptions with displaced results. It is a catalyst for change in those who having embraced the ministry display impeccable Christian values and others, though appreciative of the ministry remain conscious of their innate deficiencies and desired changes.

Hope

I want to add my voice to a harbinger of transformation: there is no better way to begin the process of transformational social advocacy youth ministry than with the church. The church is the spiritual body, the body with access to supernatural resources. The church is the body with unique relationships and the community that best reflects the world. She is therefore best positioned for social advocacy work.

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Cool Copy Cats: Placing Youth and Young Adults as Ministry Leaders

Steve Case, President of Involve Youth

Abstract

Place youth and young adults as ministry leaders. Adults serve as mentors, but also as those who call young people to leadership. This includes preparing and doing ministry together, as Jesus did with His disciples. It also includes stretching young people as they catch the vision of leading beyond their capacity by relying on the Supernatural. Programs serve as a catalyst to marshal young people to lead. The process must exceed the task of merely creating a program. Instruct adult mentors to create ministry teams that also serve as spiritual communities. In such a setting, all young people are called to lead in some aspect by discovering their places in the Body of Christ.

This model for youth and young adult ministry lives out the word "model." Placing young people in leadership takes Christian mentoring and applies it to leadership in ministry, like Paul's admonition, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" 1 Cor 11:1 (NIV). Although it may seem obvious, the need far exceeds the practice and the benefits can expand well beyond maintenance or perpetuity. As important as mentors might be, the most important element is to simply place youth and young adults in ministry leadership, regardless of whether or not such a title or position exists. Instead of expecting youthful leaders to mimic their mentors as copy cats, placing them in leadership roles needs to push them beyond their developed talents and to rely on God in addition to helpful human mentors.

A Little Explanation Please

At times we limit leadership opportunities to existing roles, and we primarily think of high profile ones such as pastor, head elder, church board, conference president, or some finance position in a hierarchy. Merging youth and young adults with such functions results in resistance from adults and a sifting that results in an occasional super star or future pastor getting a head start as a "junior elder" or a token youthful board or committee member.

In contrast, this model calls for virtually all youth and young adults to function as ministry leaders, each sharing the load by taking responsibility for specific tasks or functions that contribute to the overall ministry of the Body of Christ (Bruinsma, 2009). These may start small and might be new avenues of ministry. They can also be existing services such as a youth group leader or teacher, an outreach coordinator, or serving on a worship or social committee.

Children's ministry relies on adults to lead and the children to follow. By the time a person reaches the age of youth with the onset of adolescence, let there be an expectation that the young people will do some of the leading themselves. This doesn't necessarily mean that adults have no part to play; nor does it mean that everything should be handed over to unsuspecting or even promising youth. But develop a youth culture through words and actions that places young people into leadership roles.

Ideally this takes place by means of a simple structure of adult leaders with youth assistants to begin. Take a functional role like a youth group leader. An adult in such a position becomes responsible not only for the youth group meeting, but also to recruit, train, and empower young people on the youth group team. The team carries the responsibility to create and conduct the program for a given youth group meeting. One person might be the initial impetus and organizer, but the team develops with an overt task of providing the program and a covert task of developing leadership and teamwork for ministry. There might be two-to-four youth group teams that rotate on an agreed upon schedule. The same system could be utilized for various areas of ministry, such as Sabbath School, Friday evening vespers, AY, service activities, etc.

As young people show aptitude and responsiveness, move them into a co-leader role with the adult leader. As development continues, the youth can become the leader and the adult moves into an assistant role, supporting the youth in leadership. The theoretical progression goes from 1. I lead and you follow; 2. I lead and you assist; 3. You and I lead together; 4. You lead and I assist; and 5. You lead and I follow. In reality, there is more likely a "three steps forward, two steps back" process. Just because someone shows great skill in one particular place or time doesn't guarantee consistency, perspective, or internalization. Celebrate the positive, correct the negative, and continue to paint the vision as you support young people in their new leadership.

As you follow the ebb and flow in the lives of young people, your leadership teams will need to anticipate and adjust accordingly. Holidays, vacation periods, major school or church events, and the way life happens demand some level of flexibility. Some leaders will poop out, pop out, or move into other leadership roles perhaps at school or work or other areas of church ministry. In such situations, instead of being bitter for losing someone to whom you gave a start, celebrate that they have been launched into a lifetime of service. Since you don't expect youth to stay youth for their entire lives, always be recruiting, training and celebrating.

Benefits

The immediate result of involvement stands out as a major benefit of this model. When this occurs for young people, mentoring gets better traction because the focus on the program instead of on the person ironically makes the person more open to growth and change in the process. When such developments continue through the youth years, by the time young people reach the young adult stage they sense no need for

adults to make the plans for them since they have tasted leadership in ministry by this time. Instead of continuing church attendance primarily as critical consumers, these young adults make things happen themselves.

Some models for ministry depend on a core group or key leaders for success. This model seeks a place for each person. The need for the Supernatural quickly becomes obvious. Structures and organizations still have their place, but this model functions best as a living organism, adding and dropping different types and forms of ministry based on who is part of the organism, not based on a program that might be in place or desired by adults on the outskirts.

This model works best inter-generationally, although it can work within a single generation. Either way, leaders get trained to do ministry in the moment. But there continues to be an expectation that people will eventually leave, and they will initiate and step into ministry roles wherever they happen to go.

Don't expect copy cat leaders just because of mentors (Elmore, 2009). You aren't trying to merely replicate what exists. Instead, you are seeking for God to develop young people to lead with their God-given talents, the gifts the Holy Spirit gives them, and in their current context. With this model, leaders are part of an organism that can claim originality as a characteristic. Put another way, these are *Characteristically Original, Organic Leaders*—COOL copy cats!

Where is Jesus?

Rather than asking, "What would Jesus do?" let's ask, "What *did* Jesus do?" When it came to choosing leaders, he chose rejects, specifically those the honored rabbis of his day rejected (Bell, 2005). I must admit that this is the first of two problems I have with the model Jesus utilized. The second problem is

that Jesus sent out his disciples way too soon! There was no way that they were ready to go even two-by-two, and certainly not ready for any attempt to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons." Matt 10:8 (NKJV) But that's what He did; and that's what they did!

Those young disciples, quite likely only teens (Chris L., 2008), found themselves in leadership roles and in the midst of spiritual warfare. This occurred merely after "being called" and observing Jesus and hearing that famous Sermon on the Mount. And while most students of the rabbis went through 12-18 years of training (Chris L., 2008), the disciples had merely three years before their rabbi left them with these words, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matt 28:18-20 (NKJV). The Supernatural would continue with them (Nielsen, 2009).

The need for the Supernatural for the three-year intensive is as obvious as the need for the Supernatural after Christ returned to heaven. The same should be true for us as we place youth and young adults in leadership. There might be "baby steps" in some instances, but we have Christ's example of going well beyond manageable progression to exposure and immersion into establishing the kingdom of God.

What training and time frame would you require from a healed demoniac before sending him as your representative? Passing at least one standardized test? A closely monitored internship? An accountability partner? Therapy? Although the cleansed demoniac begged to follow Jesus, Christ sent him immediately back home to proclaim the

Good News of what had happened to him (Mark 5:18-20).

Christ's healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda and the man born blind leave both in awkwardly jubilant and inappropriate situations (John 5 and John 9). And why did Jesus have so few contact hours with his disciples between his resurrection and ascension 40 days later? Perhaps more seminars or visioning sessions would have prevented their ridiculous final question, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6 (NASB). Why didn't Christ hover over them more?

This same seemingly reckless abandon for leadership training, depending on a miraculous infusion for the leader, can be found in other places in Scripture. Noah's one quality for building an ark to save the world before the flood can be summarized in one word: grace! Gen 6:8 (KJV). Gideon as a leader would probably elicit words such as "pathetic" and "pitiful," yet God chose him to lead (Judges 6 and 7). Moses received his call to lead Israel out of Egypt following 40 years with sheep rather than after his training to become Pharaoh. Little boy David didn't even get invited to the family presentation to Samuel, until God overruled Samuel's initial perceptions on who should be anointed as the next king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:4-13).

Similar examples can be cited after the time of Christ. The assessment of Peter and John when they appeared before the Jewish high council was, "As they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus." Acts 4:13 (NASB). Philip conducted an intensive Bible study with the Ethiopian eunuch, and baptized him; then the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, leaving the Ethiopian to carry the Gospel alone (Acts 8:26-39)!

Paul set up leaders in churches he started, although his own stay proved to be somewhat limited to the point that he re-visited those churches and also wrote letters to them, which seemed to be sorely needed. And Paul even split with Barnabas when the youthful John Mark didn't follow through with his responsibilities (surprise?). Yet Paul later took young Timothy under his wing as well as noting to him that John Mark was "helpful." 2 Timothy 4:11 (NLT).

A consideration of spiritual gifts indicates that each person who follows Jesus receives a supernatural gift from God to be of practical benefit. "Each person is given something to do that shows who God is. Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful." 1 Cor 12:5-6 (Message). Most humans and institutions do just the opposite—they place a call to those who have demonstrated the best talents. Will we follow the way of the world or the way of God when it comes to placing youth and young adults in leadership? As many preachers have orated, "God doesn't call those who are equipped; He equips those who are called." If this is really true, then we should place young people in leadership and pray for God to equip them (and join in the miracle process ourselves).

Drawbacks

While copy cats who mimic existing leaders might ensure maintenance or image, it's the cool copy cats who follow an invisible God who manifests Himself in people of all ages and abilities. But the risk is great. It goes against common sense and common practice. It relies on the Supernatural instead of on proven and controlled human experience. Seniority and status get thrown out the window, as do financial resources and politicking.

Young people will cause disappointment, due to inexperience, lack of follow through, unrefined people skills, quitting, letting ego replace calling, failing to adequately prepare, a dimming of spiritual fervor, and getting distracted when the urgent overshadows the important.

Re-read that previous short paragraph about the drawbacks of placing youth and young adults in leadership. Couldn't the same be said for adults? We will all need to repent as well as confess, sometimes privately and sometimes publicly. And then we will have to return to God and ask for Him to act in us and through us again. Choose any Bible translation and read 1 Cor 1:26-31.

Some may fall into the routine of merely assigning names on a flow sheet to theoretically place leaders onto a template plan for ministry. No wonder some argue against programming (Belcher, 2009, Kimball, 2007, and Oestreicker, 2008).

When adults call young people into leadership and mentor them, community and spiritual growth exceed programming and put it in its proper place (Rainer and Rainer, 2008, and Root, 2007). But the process takes much more time than just doing it on one's own. Program planning simply becomes a catalyst to bring small groups together to grow in their faith and to find ways to communicate it and give it away. That process is at least as important as the actual product called a program.

Putting It Into Practice

Occasionally a young person will catch a vision and step into leadership without adult initiative. This model calls for adults to constantly recruit, train, encourage, support, and deploy youth and young adults for leadership in varying degrees. Instead of an adult leading alone, pull young people into the process, not to become a copy cat, but to

Cool Copy Cats
Placing Youth and Young Adults as Ministry Leaders

■ Youth Pastor/Leader

● Mentor

▲ Youth and/or Young Adult
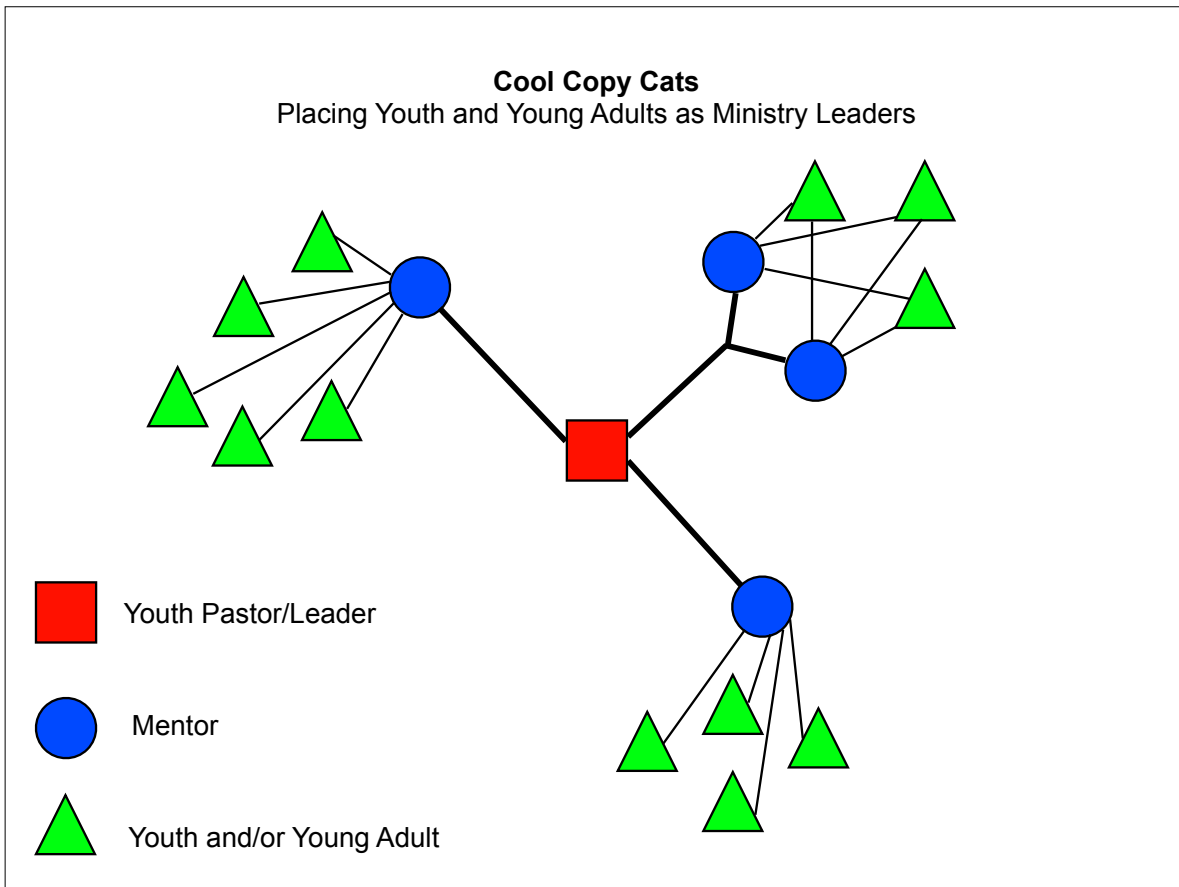
be a cool copy cat—characteristically original, organic leaders.

What role or function do you play in the Body of Christ? Recruit others to join you! If you do music, switch from solo and track accompaniment to group and live accompaniment. If you plan programs, get a focus group and varieties of input and action. If you work behind the scenes, recruit one or two young people to assist you. If you're up front, share the spotlight and coach others while challenging them to live up to what they publicly proclaim.

And keep looking for young people to recruit. After all, your cool copy cats get older each year and they will move on. Prepare to get excited, disappointed, challenged, and wowed as God's actions supersede the best-laid plans and purposes of humans.

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The Youth Ministry Foundation

Tim Cross, Youth Pastor of the Collegedale Church

Abstract

God has designed the family and church family to be the foundation of youth ministry. Youth ministry efforts built on this foundation maximize both influence (DeVries, 2004, p. 63) and retention (Rainer & Rainer, 2008, pp. 122-125). Therefore, youth ministry models can be built on this foundation to ensure long-term effectiveness. This can be achieved by helping to develop the spiritual—relational bonds between youth, their families, and church families; as well as intentionally designing each youth ministry model for synergistic partnerships with families and church families. Consequently, the Seventh-day Adventist Church could reorganize the priorities of its youth ministry funding and structure in order to make effective youth ministry among families and church families the top priority. Each conference could develop an integrated youth ministry strategy that would align all youth ministry efforts to help build strong families and church families where teens are connected and serving Jesus.

A God Designed Youth Ministry Foundation

Deuteronomy 6 contains the most concise description of the fundamentals of God's design for youth ministry.

> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.
> (Deuteronony 6:4-9, NIV)

These words that Moses spoke just before his death are pregnant with vital information for youth ministry. Certainly Moses must have had great concern for the successful handoff of a passionate love for God to the next generation. As a result one can discover herein that God's effective strategy for accomplishing this task is to weave a passionate love for God into the daily routines and conversations of life, starting at home and extending to the broader community of faith. One can also clearly discern the end goal of youth ministry is to lead young people to love God with every fiber of their being. Ephesians 4:16 affirms these conclusions

using the metaphor of a body, "From Him [Jesus] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (NIV).

Once again there is the undeniable picture of youth ministry taking place in the context of the young people being integrated with their families and church family. These two God designed institutions, family and church family, serve then as the foundation upon which all effective youth ministry models can be built. Every youth ministry model can be custom designed for each culturally unique ministry setting in order to serve as a bridge to take teens from where they are into an experience as is portrayed in Ephesians 4:16.

The Challenge of the *Homogeneous* Principle

The *Church Growth Movement's Homogeneous Principle* has made significant contributions to the proliferation of local church families working to target a narrow homogeneous demographic. The book of Ephesians, written to a group of people who were extremely diverse, challenges this pragmatic fallacy with a strong call to unity in cultural diversity (Eph 4:1-3). It goes so far as to use the metaphor of an intricately connected body to illustrate the church to this diverse group of believers (Eph 4:16).

When the *Homogeneous Principle* is applied to youth ministry resulting in the segregation of teens from other generations it is particularly disastrous. Rainer and Rainer's research documents the devastating results, "Our research reveals that if a teen has no adult interaction in the church, it's almost a guarantee he or she will drop out of the church" (2008, p. 124). Unfortunately isolating youth from their families and church families has become a common youth ministry practice (DeVries, 2004, pp. 21-33) and (Wright & Graves, 2007, pp. 46-52).

Influence and Retention Benefits of the God Designed Youth Ministry Foundation

However, the good news is that when a youth ministry builds upon the two institutions God created to disciple young people, the impact can be significant. Partnerships with families can exponentially increase the impact of a youth ministry upon a teen's life, "And when it comes to faith formation, the impact of parents is dramatic. Research now shows that parents who simply talk about faith in the home and who involve their children in serving alongside them can actually double and sometimes triple their children's chances of living out their faith as adults (Strommen, Jones, and Rahn, 2001, as cited in DeVries, 2004, p. 63). Also an intentional integration of teens with the local church family can have amazing results as well, "A pastor can reduce the dropout rate of teens from an almost certainty of losing students to only a 50-percent chance simply by getting adults involved in their lives!" (Rainer & Rainer, 2008, pp. 124-125).

Application in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists

Since 2002 the youth ministry of the Collegedale Church has been on a journey pursuing the goal of partnering with parents and helping teens develop meaningful friendships with Christian adults. Certainly this adventure has not been without its challenges. However, progress has been made. Currently the heart of the spiritual programming revolves around home-based bible study groups for teens, but also including parents and other family members. A typical group has 20-50 people present, meets twice a month on Friday evenings, starts with a shared meal and then transitions into a devotional bible study morphing into a few smaller groups scattered around the house. Such groups are often initiated when

students are in seventh grade and continue for six years through graduation from 12th grade. The bible study groups are usually led and hosted by adults who are trained and coached by the youth pastor. For students in 7th and 8th grade adults facilitate the lessons and then during the 9th grade year the groups often transition to student leadership under the mentorship of an adult. The Friday night, devotional, student-led bible study groups are then complimented by Youth Sabbath School which is an adult led doctrinal bible study. Finally an active athletics program significantly increases the quality and quantity of adult-teen friendships as well.

The results have been mixed. However, many students have clearly indicated that the Friday evening bible study groups as well as their athletics coaches have been significant parts of their journey in connecting with God and growing spiritually during their teen years. It is also apparent that these friendships developed between the teens and adults continue well beyond 12th grade graduation and serve as spots of glue in the teens lives, helping them stick with the Collegedale Church, but more importantly continue to be followers of Jesus.

Implications for the Seventh-day Adventist Church

DeVries observes that, "Only the church and the family can provide Christian nurture from birth to old age—even death. Almost all other groups students are involved in are essentially orphaning structures (2004, p. 87). DeVries goes on to describe orphaning structures in this way,

> Orphaning structures provide support and connection for people only so long as they fit into the age group of that particular organization. Many orphaning structures provide teenagers with a high degree of support and involvement. But in the

end, without a connection with lifelong nurturing structures like the family and an extended family, a young person's life can easily become a fragmented and rootless search for identity. (2004, p. 87)

The implications of DeVries observations could be significant for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Historically the Adventist Church has placed a high priority on youth ministry ventures such as Adventist Christian education, summer camp, and conference sponsored big events like youth rallies and bible conferences—all of which typically take place away from families and church families.

Meanwhile, most local Seventh-day Adventist Churches do not have a well trained and experienced youth pastor helping to recruit, train, coach, and help develop a custom youth ministry that fits the culture and context of their ministry setting. The results are often inevitable: summer camp, the conference youth ministry events, and academies are often vibrant and engaging to the teens; and the local churches are not. This reality then tends to exacerbate what is often already a developmentally natural progression of segregation of teens from their families and church families, resulting in the young people often being orphaned from any significant long-term spiritual nurture. This then contributes to the soaring dropout rate of young Seventh-day Adventists which is evidenced by a US Adventist Church median age of 51 compared to 36 in the general population (Sahlin & Richardson, 2008, p. 5).

What should be done? It seems that setting the goal of helping families and church families become young peoples' primary spiritual nurturers would be an incredible step in the right direction. Then the next step would then be to have each Seventh-day Adventist conference develop an integrated strategy to achieve this goal with synergistic partnership

among all youth ministry entities within its conference i.e. Adventist Education, conference youth ministry, and each local congregation. Joiner observes,

> Without an integrated strategy, parents struggle over how to partner with the church, programming tends to be isolated in impact, there is no consistent forum to evaluate and improve what you are doing, volunteers become disillusioned with the lack of direction, leaders and staff drift toward silo thinking, overprogramming and competing systems dilute your influence. (2009, p. 113)

As pastors continue to move the practice of their ministry more into alignment with their role described in Eph 4:12 "to prepare God's people for works of service" and as an integrated strategic partnership plan is developed with Adventist educators and conference youth directors; more funds could be made available to provide local churches with needed youth ministry training and coaching. Perhaps it is time to introduce district youth pastors into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These district youth pastors could specialize in recruiting, coaching, and training volunteers in seven or eight different local churches in how to run a custom designed, engaging youth ministry in their unique context. Also these district youth pastors could help facilitate a key a partnership with the local Adventist schools helping to make sure the students and their families are well connected in their churches. This could certainly help shift the youth ministry focus to the priority of families and church families.

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The One Project

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Abstract

We need to understand the reason we exist and what should drive any model of youth ministry we choose. The purpose of our lives is not to succumb to a middle-class materialistic faith that only works during the early years but to embrace Jesus first in everything we know. We need to detach ourselves from a consumer-driven faith and explore, with renewed passion, the Gospel – Jesus Himself. The foundation of our movement and core of our theology, as the apostle Paul so clearly shares in Galatians 6:14, is in Jesus reclaiming this whole planet one life at a time. "The One" project is youth ministry that will change us personally, affect our local community and claim this planet in the name of Jesus. It is the hope of His soon return and the celebration that Jesus is why we exist, that Jesus is why we will change and that Jesus is the answer.

Almost Christian

The National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), as analyzed by Kenda Creasy Dean (2010) in her latest work *Almost Christian,* shares a silent reality already experienced in Europe and now being accepted in North America. There was a time when one was either a child or an adult. However, following World War II there emerged a generation in the middle called teenagers. An adolescent group of 13-16-year-olds with money and free time that has moved into the 21st Century. Twenty-one is the new 16 (Dean, 2010). Youth professionals have started to adopt the term "young adult" as a title to handle this phenomenon. Society has adopted business market trends to extend the adolescent years instead of going against the grain and encouraging maturity. Twenty-five-year-olds who handle million dollar mutual funds during the workweek are not yet seen as adults in their church with maturity and wisdom to lead, but instead are qualified as "young" adults. We are facing a steady conservative loss rate of 50% of this generation, not grasping that the less connected they are with a church, the less likely they will stay with their faith community.

Add to the formula an inactive faith expression laced with the lack of authentic joy in the lives of many adults and the results are all around us. The hard truth is that we have passed onto teens "a well-intentioned but ultimately banal version of Christianity" (Dean, 2010, p.15). In Europe, we have to go back to the core of Jesus and realize that the legacy from at least two previous generations has not been passed on.

Secularism has taken root and the power and presence of Jesus is missing. We have a generation who are almost Christian but lack vitality in their faith.

Coin, Sheep and Son

Ten years ago, the late Jim Cress, who was then the General Conference Ministerial Director, visited a church I was pastoring and shared a message that helped to focus my personal approach to youth ministry. His insightful understanding of Luke 15 gave me the framework and clarity to shape my practice, revolving around three stories that Jesus told: that of the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son. These three stories represent three broad groups that are leaving out the back door of the church.

The story of the lady who lost her coin represents those who stay but are disconnected. They attend every week, but are comfortable texting during services. For all intents they look like they are engaged, but in reality they are lost inside the church. They have formal religion, but no heart. They have embraced intuitional customs with no movement and passion. The apathy level is high and the routine is mundane. They are bored and disengaged.

The story of the lost sheep represents those who simply wander away. They miss a couple of Sabbath Schools, they skip the occasional youth program, and they accept appointments that take them away from moments of connection. They know Jesus exists, but one day simply forget to listen to His voice and wander away, just like the sheep did.

The story of the lost son represents those who have chosen to leave. They have weighed their options and made a choice to leave, to step away in an act of defiance and rejection.

Those who remain, those who wander, and those leave are all disconnected from Jesus by some shape or form. And honestly, these characteristics are representative of more than just the millennial generation—they can be applied to all people.

At Our Core

I was stuck clearing customs at Dulles International Airport in Washington DC and had the privilege of talking for two hours with one of Mercedes-Benz' chief engineers while he was on a world tour for quality control. We discussed the collapse of Mercedes-Benz during the 80s and 90s and their recent return to build the quality they used to be famous for in the 60s and 70s. The most interesting turn in our conversation was that Mercedes-Benz is proud to have one engine for all their cars. This honestly stumped me until it was qualified with a sub thought that the one engine has four hundred plus variations. Fuel quality is different in every country; weather variations and salt levels in the atmosphere affect structure, and government performance requirements shape the outcome. The key is that they all have the same starting point–the one ideal engine, a strong start.

Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church youth ministry is often seen as synonymous with Pathfinders. That however is not our one engine . . . that is simply one variation, especially when one sees the global factors that shape our application due to culture, resources and needs. At our core we have one engine. We have one reason we exist and that should shape all of our models.

Simon Sinek (2009), in his delightful work *Start with Why*, explains what he calls the golden compass. Three concentric circles, which start with "why" in the center circle, "how" in the second circle and "what" in the final outer circle. He suggests that businesses that successfully following the law of diffusion and thus gain the early and late majority

market share answer the question "why" first. Those that have focused on "what" they produce have invariably had a weaker market presence.

Taking Sinek's theory into scripture and laying it over a fundamental text like John 3:16 (ESV) provides us with this perspective.

Why – For God so loved the world

How – that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him

What – should not perish but have eternal life

What does that one engine look like? What is our "why" and ultimate purpose of youth ministry?

For the One

Looking again at Luke 15, we see that it also offers some very practical solutions to work with these three broad groups. For instance, the shepherd would never have noticed one of his sheep was missing unless he counted. In youth ministry we should have accurate records of all our youth. We, as a community, need to know when anyone is absent and find out why immediately. But more interesting than all the tips embedded within this passage is the fact that they are all focused on "one." That is, for the one person who is almost Christian and for the One Jesus Christ. The character of Jesus is the reflection of God. The entire Great Controversy is about vindicating and lifting up God who believes in the freedom of choice –love.

Ellen White (1898), in the opening chapter of her manifesto piece, *Desire of Ages*, writes that God is with us through Jesus. Through her study of scripture and personal connection she encountered Jesus. She expressed that "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share that we might be

justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed'." (White, 1898, p. 25). Yet that image of God through Jesus is not as beautiful as it should be. The One we follow has been tainted by us.

Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch (2009), in *ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church*, draw our attention to Jesus the One! They argue that for far too long Christianity has portrayed a Jesus alongside KKK, or "Tsar Nicholas II, who oversaw the vicious Bloody Sunday massacre" (p. 4); that the Jesus of old is missing from our lives and that what in fact our church needs is not reformation but refounding, a connection with the founder Jesus Himself (Frost & Hirsch, 2009). For too long now our faith has simply become a "moralistic therapeutic deism" (Dean, 2010, p.29). Frost and Hirsch shared a quip from an archbishop who said, "Everywhere Jesus went there was a riot. Everywhere I go they make me cups of tea (Frost and Hirsch, 2009, p. 21)." At some point we have to recognize that Jesus has a personal, local and global effect on us that is positively and radically against sin.

Options

Granted we might all agree that Christianity has suffered a poor marketing campaign and that as a result, youth ministry in particular faces an uphill struggle with inquisitive critical minds. Is there hope for a generation that is overloaded with information and nuances in truth, who do not trust anyone, are cynical towards any attempt of sincerity, and have not grasped the history of this planet through Jesus? What can we do?

In July 2010, five simple Jesus followers (Alex Bryan, Japhet De Oliveira, Sam Leonor, Tim Gillespie and Terry Swenson) got together in room 602 at the Holiday Inn in Denver. We came together for fellowship and prayer. We

had planned this gathering for over a year and eventually found the time when all our calendars lined up. After two days of prayer, fasting, communion and reflection we looked across the room at each other and acknowledged again that Jesus was number one.

It sounds incredibly simple, but it was our "ah-ha" moment. We spoke in truth and freedom that Jesus should be number one in everything we do. We remembered the energy that started the Seventh-day Adventist Church was a deep desire to see Jesus return. Our movement was led by youth and adults, and like the 12 disciples, burned with a passion to know Jesus and make Him known.

We realized as Gabe Lyons (2010) in his new work *The Next Christians* challenged, that we have "to recover the Gospel, to relearn and fall in love again with that historic, beautiful, redemptive, faithful, demanding, reconciling, all-powerful, restorative, atoning, grave-abounding, soul-quenching, spiritually fulfilling good news of God's love" (p.192), as expressed in Jesus.

Our church began as a movement with Jesus as its number one focus. In fact, our denominational name, which just passed its 150th anniversary on October 1, 2010, is about the blessed hope in Jesus returning.

What if we gathered together leaders from all over the world to celebrate the supremacy of Jesus in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? What if we gathered and focused on what it would mean for us, on a personal, and then local, and finally global community? What if we had honest conversation about our legacy, heritage and call for our church today? What if we brought leaders, youth and adults, young and old, employed and retired, pastors and members and simply soaked in Jesus again.

For too long our focus has been on ourselves. Edwin H. Friedman (2007) in *A Failure of Nerve* suggests that it is not simply that we fix our methods and all will be well. Rather, it is about being engaged honestly and emotionally in the future. Those explorers who discovered America did so not because they were the most intelligent or capable or had the right stars line up to warrant it, but because they simply were engaged and had the nerve to be first. They were compelled by something greater—a passion unlike anything we have seen.

Making Jesus first in our lives will give us the nerve to try something different. With the nerve must come focus, as Erwin McManus (2008) in *Wide Awake* recounts in the story of the disciple Peter walking on water. Peter, because of his lack of focus, ignored the visible Jesus, embraced the invisible wind and nearly drowned. Our option is to know Jesus and to stay connected with Him daily, in order to see all we believe and do through Jesus.

At the end of the day, when I look back on my life, I want to know that I served well, played hard, that my boys and wife are proud of me, and that Jesus inspired my leadership. Honestly, what more is there? Jesus. All.

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Every Man Prays in His Own Language: Worship Through the Art of Jazz

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Abstract

God calls us to worship whole-heartedly, utilizing the gifts that he has given us. It is God alone who can truly judge our motivations. Our duty is to examine our intentions and put Him first in everything we do. Duke Ellington, one of the most respected jazz musicians of all time, aimed to do this through his music. He composed three sacred concerts, all of which drew heavy criticism. Even with all the criticism, Ellington believed that "every man prays in his own language and there is no language that God does not understand."

The issue of music in the church has always been a sensitive one. I have found myself to be closer to this situation than most because I am a musician; more specifically, a jazz musician. Growing up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, my career choice has been a difficult thing for people to understand because of the negative stereotypes that come with it (Walser, 1999). Because of these stereotypes, my musical style has not been considered as an appropriate form of worship. Don't get me wrong; God has placed certain church members in my life who have given me an outlet to worship through jazz. Even so, I have often wondered why I continue to be part of a church where my utmost gift to God is considered inappropriate. I believe this issue of acceptance (not just in music) is one of the greatest shortcomings of the Adventist Church and its inability to keep young adults and other age groups in the church.

The Worship War

I'm not saying that a church should hire Van Halen for their house band every Sabbath in order to keep young people "entertained." What I am saying is that everyone should have an outlet where they can use the gifts God has given them. Of course everyone has experienced, in one form or another, a "worship war" where "conservatives" versus "liberals" or "traditionalists" versus "progressives" fight over what style of worship will be most acceptable to God. After awhile, churches split, members leave, and sometimes pastors are even moved. Why? Because one group determines a given style is not acceptable to God. What does this say to people outside of the church?

The Sacred Concerts of Duke Ellington

Consider the following words spoken by one of the most respected jazz musicians of all time, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1973, p. 262): "Every man prays in his own language and there is no language that God does not understand." Ellington has written countless compositions such as "Take the 'A' Train" and "Satin Doll" which are still considered standards in the jazz repertoire. His composition style and his ability to write specifically for each band member remains an inspiration for many of today's composers. He is also considered one of the great innovators of contemporary jazz piano and has influenced many jazz pianists. Ellington's band survived for over forty-five years and is regarded as one of the most successful of the era. Even with all of these accomplishments, Duke Ellington felt the need to compose sacred works and regarded his sacred concerts as his "most important work" (Ellington 1973, p. 269). The sacred concerts contain some of his most progressive writing and each concert had a central theme; creation, love, prayer, and worship. Ellington communicated each of these elements in the best way he knew how, through the art of jazz music. In the last ten years of his life, Duke Ellington poured everything he had into these sacred concerts.

Ellington's motivation to write these concerts came straight from his relationship with God. He considered himself "a messenger boy, one who tries to bring messages to people, not people who have never heard of God, but those who were more or less raised with the guidance of the church (Ellington 1973, pp. 267-268)." Ellington grew up in two different religious communities, the Methodist tradition of his father and the Baptist tradition of his mother. Both of these views gave contrasting church musical experiences but Ellington himself acknowledged that these two churches provided him with the same core theological beliefs (Ellington, 1973). He also stated that both of these experiences influenced his early musical development and throughout his early career he aimed to include elements of the church in his music (Chung & Sawyer, 2008). It was these views that led Ellington to use jazz as a means of communicating his spiritual beliefs. Reverend Dean Bartlett (who served as Ellington's spiritual advisor while touring) wrote of the sacred concerts, "Is liturgical worship the only form of public prayer? We believe not! Among other forms surely must be included all expressions of the creative and performing arts. Especially where such expressions are offered consciously by the artists and performer 'to the service of God'" (Ellington 1973, p. 265).

Ellington's sacred concerts received many performances around the world and were received well by everyone who heard them. Even so, Ellington also received many forms of criticism regarding his sacred music. Some stated that Ellington wanted to gain a profit by creating a new musical genre: sacred jazz (Hill, 1995). Other critics stated that this was some of Ellington's "lesser" work (Collier, 1987). He was criticized for his intentions to write and perform the First Sacred Concert at Grace Cathedral both before and after its debut. One account came before a concert at the famous Constitution Hall in his hometown of Washington DC. The 250 member Baptist Ministers Conference of Washington went on record to say that they were "refusing to endorse the concert" while some complained his music was too "worldly" (Hasse, 1993). Even members of Ellington's own band worried about how people would receive sacred music being performed in a jazz setting (Dance, 1999). Still others showed concern as to whether jazz belonged in a church or not. These criticisms would not deter Ellington's goal as he expressed a desire to offer the Sacred Concerts to fulfill his

duty as "a messenger boy" for God, all the while keeping his own unique style as an integral part of his music (Giddins, 1981).

Communication

In response to his critics, Ellington explained why he chose to use jazz as a way to communicate his spiritual beliefs:

"Communication itself is what baffles the multitude. It is both so difficult and so simple. Of all man's fears, I think men are most afraid of being what they are – in direct communication with the world at large. They fear reprisals, the most personal of which is that they 'won't be understood.' How can anyone expect to be understood unless he presents his thoughts with complete honesty? This situation is unfair because it asks too much of the world. In effect, we say, 'I don't dare show you what I am because I don't trust you for a minute but please love me anyway because I so need you to and, of course, if you don't love me anyway, you're a dirty dog, just as I suspected, so I was right in the first place.' Yet, every time God's children have thrown away fear in pursuit of honesty – trying to communicate themselves, understood or not – miracles have happened (Ellington 1973, p. 261)."

This statement by Duke Ellington describes his outlook and motivation behind all of his sacred works. Ellington firmly believed that this form of communication was acceptable to God. The Baptist Ministers Conference placed judgment on Duke Ellington's motivation to write these concerts; Ellington believed God was the judge. "You can jive with secular music," Ellington said in response to why he felt so strongly about his sacred music, "but you can't jive with the Almighty" (Ward and Burns 2000, p.453).

Sincere Worship

Later in his autobiography, Ellington (1973) continued to describe his views on how God accepts our worship:

"Wisdom is something that man partially enjoys – One and only One has all the wisdom. God has total understanding. There are some people who speak one language and some who speak many languages. Every man prays in his own language, and there is no language that God does not understand… It has been said once that a man, who could not play the organ or any of the instruments of the symphony, accompanied his worship by juggling. He was not the world's best juggler but it was the one thing he did best. And so it was accepted by God. I believe that no matter what the skill of a drummer or saxophonist, if this is the thing he does best, and he offers it sincerely from the heart in – or as accompaniment to his worship, then it will not be unacceptable because of the instrument upon which he makes his demonstration, be it pipe or tom tom. If a man is troubled he moans and cries when he worships. When a man feels that which he enjoys in his life is only because of the grace of God, he rejoices, he sings, and sometimes dances. In this program, you will hear a wide variety of statements without words, and I think you should know that if it is a phrase with six tones, it symbolizes the six syllables in the first four words of the Bible, 'In the Beginning God,' which is our theme. We say it many times and many ways (p. 262)."

Ellington has described the very essence of how God wants us to worship Him – sincerely from the heart. If we can look past the drum set or electric guitar and understand that this person is offering a gift to God sincerely from the heart, then we come to a closer understanding of how God views us. This can only be accomplished with the help of God.

Are We Listening?

These ideas are not presented for the purpose of convincing the church that everything should be acceptable within a worship service. Of course there are things that are not part of God's plan for our lives or our church. God makes us aware of these things as we draw closer to him in a mutual relationship. An emphasis on relationship is important because it shifts the focus away from us and places it solely in the hands of the Creator. For example, when we focus on the relationship instead of how someone spends the Sabbath, we are closer to becoming a more accepting community. The Pharisees of Jesus' days are prime examples of twisting God's law to fit an agenda. The irony of the situation is that they were fighting against the Son of the very One who they were supposedly following. How did Jesus handle it? With love, kindness, and an invested interest in the person as a human being. Are we twisting God's law into something that fits our own agenda? This question could be asked of both sides in any church debate.

It is important to remember that everyone worships in a different way. In an article in the *Adventist Review,* William Johnsson (2000) responded to the concern of worship music in the church by stating, "Music that sounds strange to my ears may become a vehicle for devotion, adoration, and praise to Jesus as Savior and Lord (p. 5)." Do we as a church accept people who are offering their talents for the service of God? I suggest that we not

judge others' motivations, but let God guide our minds and hearts to make sure our own motivations are correct. How can we truly understand people if we are not willing to let them communicate through the things they do best? When we let God guide us, we will come to understand that "every man prays in his own language and there is no language that God does not understand" (Ellington, 1973, p. 262).

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Artists in Christian Expression (ACE)

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Abstract

Countless young Christians have been gifted by God with creativity and talents in the arts. Many of these young people are not welcome to use their gifts in a local church setting due to tradition, misguided rules, faulty theology or fear. Artists in Christian Expression is a young adult ministry model that seeks to give these artists a Christian outlet and forum to explore their gifts in a safe environment and to have the opportunity to share their artwork with the broader community.

Introduction

"God the artist created something out of nothing. He composed the symphony others merely echo, painted the masterpiece others reflect, wrote the story others try to tell… They all started in his imagination—an imagination that has inspired our own." (Bruner, 2001, p. 49)

"Where would the church be without art? How could faith be expressed without song, poetry, or image? Christianity's central message comes through a story, and within that story are more stories… But even though the Christian community needs artists, the two worlds of church and art find themselves mutually wary, sometimes even hostile, often with little understanding or appreciation of one another. The church worries that art will go 'too far' and draw attention to itself rather than lead the faithful to God. The artists fear that the church will direct or limit their imagination and judge, censor, or abuse their creativity. In this situation, both sides forget that creation is essentially a divine action, and that life itself began with art." (Jensen, 2004, p. ix)

Rationale

Many young adults are gifted in the arts and are not welcome to use their gifts in the church setting. Drama, dance, visual arts, some poetry, some styles of music, and certain musical instruments are considered inappropriate for worship or are even considered irreverent – regardless of the artist's intent and heart.

Michelle Bergmann, associate editor of *Insight* magazine, contends that God embedded creativity in us when He designed us" (*Insight*, March 24, 2007, 3). As Steve Turner stated in his book, *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts:*

"Creativity is part of [our] inherited image because God is a designer and maker. Our desire to create, our ability to make concepts tangible and our pleasure in making are all reflections of God's original 'let there be' and 'it was good.' This means that creativity is not merely permissible, it is essential. It is what God wants. To express ourselves in art is to experience more fully the richness of being human…. During the naming of the animals we are told that God was interested 'to see what [Adam] would name them' (Genesis 2:19) indicating that God derived pleasure from Adam's creative acts." (Turner, 2001, p. 66)

The Bible relates numerous examples of humans engaging in creative expression. For example, Miriam leads the Israelite women in dancing, singing and playing tambourines (Ex. 15:20-21). Bezalel is filled "with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship" (Ex. 31:3-5). We find that Jubal is "the father of all who play the harp and flute" (Gen. 4:21). King David himself "danced before the Lord with all his might" when the ark was brought back to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:14). And where would we be without the poetry of the Psalms and Song of Songs and the stories of Jesus? These are but a few examples of artistic expression in the Bible. It is clear to me that God does not frown upon sincere, gifted artists glorifying His name.

Additionally, Kelly Kullberg discovered an important role of art in her Veritas Forums:

"Art is critically important because the artist translates ideas into cultural influence, and ideas have consequences. Whether false or true, abstract ideas become tangible through story, image and sound, through emotion and impression. Musicians, dancers, designers, actors and filmmakers join Veritas Forums and share their art and ideas with us. With many believers at the forefront, there is a movement of art to reclaim truth and beauty. Visually sophisticated, with intellectual depth, we are seeing a renewal of art that espouses hope, healing, redemption and homecoming. These artists are re-enchanting (singing into) our cultural void. For artists who embody truth and grace, our culture and our future is within reach. Inspired by the Spirit of the Artist, all is possible." (Kullberg, 2006, pp. 178-9)

Artists in Christian Expression intends to provide a forum, community, and network for Christian artists who "embody truth and grace," who are inspired by "the Spirit of the Artist," and who wish to "espouse hope, healing, redemption and homecoming." Here they will find a Christian outlet for their talents in a safe, nurturing environment.

Target Audience

Christian young adults are not very different from other young adults when it comes to certain characteristics. Most young adults are quite idealistic and tend to see the possibilities the world can hold for them:

Portico Research Group… observed that "21-25-year-olds are busy creating a culture of possibility. These young people see every aspect of life as an open opportunity for self-expression and self-fulfillment. Approaching work, fun, friendships, art, music, home decorating and world travel with almost equal levels of enthusiasm and determination, they place their personal stamp upon every endeavor – and expect to learn and grow through each one." (Cunningham, 2006, p. 42)

As stated above, this idealism spills over into their creative self-expression, and when they value Christianity, it is only natural to want to share a Christian version of this creative expression. If they are not welcomed to share within the local church setting, they will likely look for another place that has

similar ideals and welcomes them; "Twentysomethings are lovers of community" (Cunningham, 2006, p. 47).

But artists can be likened to certain people groups who just don't fit the standard Adventist mold. This is especially true in light of the fact that a significant number of artists are homosexual and are in just as much need of Christian community as their heterosexual counterparts.

When flawed humans dictate who belongs, inevitably some people or people groups—who don't meet certain predetermined criteria—get lesser welcome into Christian community. As a result, they are pushed to the outskirts of mainstream Christianity or may never choose to explore our local congregations at all. This is a source of disillusionment for many. (Cunningham, 2006, p. 58)

Artists in Christian Expression hopes to reach these people—those who have felt less than welcomed; those who have been pushed out of, or to the fringes of, the church; those who have something to share but need a community in which to share it. Barna (2005) described spiritual mini-movements that operate outside the local church, one of which is the Christian creative arts guild.

The Model

As with any successful ministry, a leadership team of like-minded individuals should be created to carry out all the different aspects of the ministry. This group will not only lead out in the planning and logistics, but also be the review board for the artwork.

There should be at least a monthly gathering of artists recruited from throughout the surrounding community. At the meetings, leaders should take turns preparing a time of worship, which sets the tone for the whole program. It can't be stressed too much that this community is meant to glorify God, not

self, and worship is vital to that end. The gatherings are also the avenue for discipling the young adult artists, with older or more experienced artists mentoring younger and less experienced artists.

After worship, the group can plan quarterly or semi-annual arts shows that showcase specific genres of arts. For example, the quarters could be broken out in the following way: 1) music and poetry/storytelling; 2) visual arts, including painting, drawing, sculpture, graphic design, photography, stained glass, woodworking, knitting, etc.; 3) music and Christian comedy; 4) drama and other performance art. This is merely suggestive. Depending on how many people become involved with the ministry and the talents they bring to the table, there may be a show that encompasses all.

It should be recognized that artists can push the envelope when it comes to freedom of expression. Two key Scripture verses should be the mantra of the ministry: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble" (1 Corinthians 10:31-32); and "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things" (Philippians 4:8).

In order to preserve a godly atmosphere at the shows, there will be a review board made up of the leadership team. This board will be responsible for ensuring that the work presented is not offensive or ungodly and artists abide by the standards of the Adventist Church. There should be a contract that artists have to sign that states they agree to the terms of engagement.

The surrounding community will be invited to these shows. This is an opportunity for outreach—to reach a segment of the population who would not go to an Adventist

church. The shows should be promoted through the local paper and posters hung in the community and any free methods of promotion that can be located. Freewill offerings can be encouraged at the shows in order to recoup expenses.

The venue(s) of the shows will be instrumental to their success. It is highly likely that a venue outside of the church or Adventist school would be more successful with both disillusioned artists and the local community.

On show days where performing arts are featured, a schedule must be made to determine the order of presenters and whether an intermission will be required. It would be wise to have a run-through before the doors open to ensure smooth transitions and to check sound levels. Sound equipment and lighting, if needed, should be of high quality and operated by an experienced technician.

On show days where visual arts are featured, a gallery setting should be evoked in the venue. Items should be elegantly and properly displayed. Flat, solid surfaces are needed and it's possible that easels will need to be borrowed or purchased.

All show days should have refreshments available for the guests. Handouts on ACE, and perhaps Adventist beliefs, should be handy. Include a time for meeting with the artists and mingling, perhaps at the end of the shows. Teams of volunteers will be needed for set-up, clean-up, and refreshments, which may either be purchased or made by the volunteers.

A high-quality program should be created and printed for guests listing the artists and the name of their work of art. If a venue or equipment is donated, the donors should also be acknowledged in the program.

If possible, one show a year could benefit a specified charity. This would require more planning, time, and effort, but would certainly be worthwhile.

Another aspect of the monthly meetings is to allow for open discussion among the artists. Here they will have an opportunity to talk about their triumphs and trials, their work, and Christian art around the world. They can share ideas and network with each other. They will also be encouraged to use their talents in service throughout the community. For example, visual artists could volunteer their time at nursing homes providing experiential activities for the residents or in schools without arts programs.

In addition to the monthly gatherings, there would be an online forum for the group. In this forum, artists could further create community by posting questions, photos of themselves and their artwork, and performance dates. ACE leaders will need to operate the site or frequently monitor it in order to ensure appropriateness.

Conclusion

Artists in Christian Expression is designed to serve artists, including disillusioned ones, by creating or expanding Christian community when it is not readily found within the local church setting. It also intends to provide a Christian presence in the surrounding community. With these two aspects working hand in hand, ACE can be a vehicle that displays love for one another, love of God through artistic expression, and love of God for each individual.
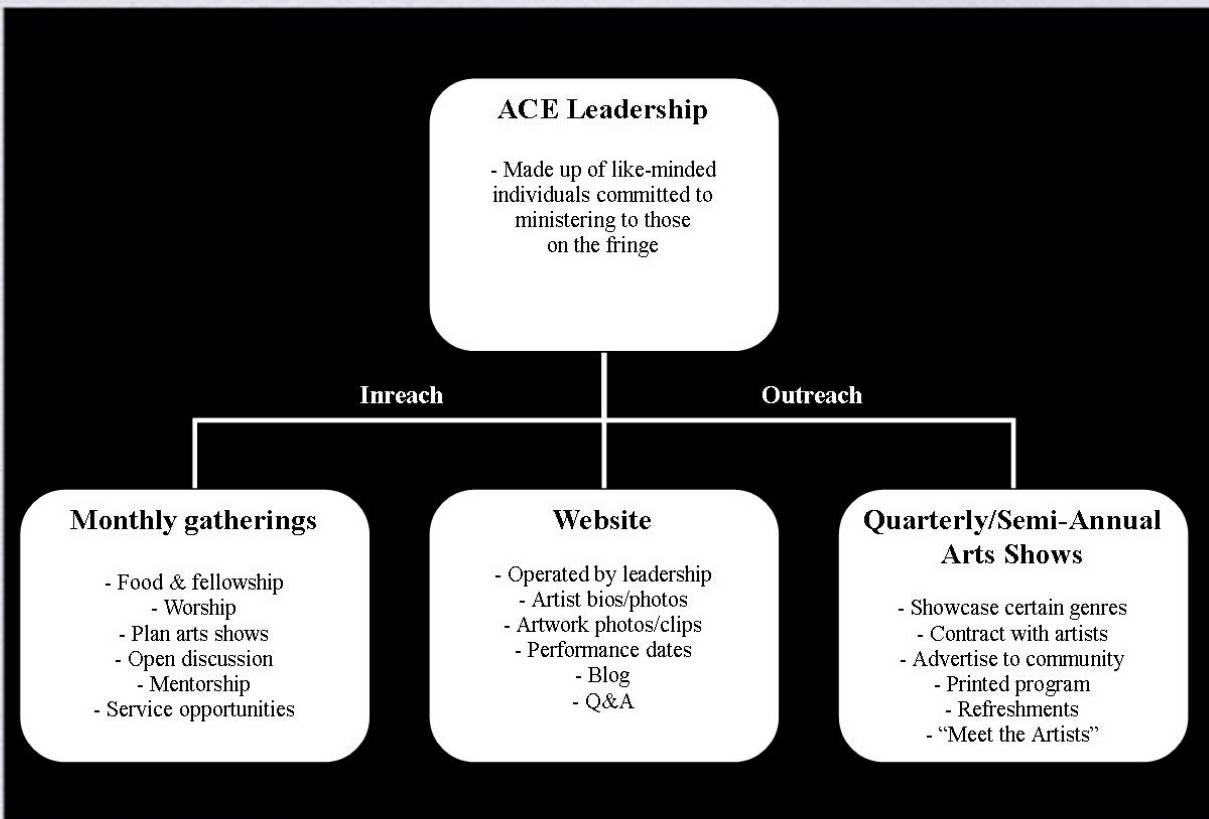
Artists in Christian Expression (ACE) - In a Snapshot

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Youth Camp Meeting Ministry is Alive and Growing

Benjamin Lundquist, Youth Pastor Camelback SDA Church

Abstract

The Arizona Conference camp meeting setting for a full week of youth ministry created a setting for a model of youth ministry that has yielded a 600 percent increase in student participation over a five year period. It includes the three components of spiritual feeding, relationally connecting, and physically serving. This model could be used in other settings as well.

Background

During the 2010 Arizona Conference youth camp meeting program more than 300 students traveled to Prescott, AZ for the opening weekend. As this opening weekend drew to a close, we were thrilled to find that a core group of 180 high school teenagers remained, a group over 600 percent larger than when we began in 2004. This core group took part in a holistic week long ministry experience, and was led by a team of more than 25 adults, many of whom donated vacation time to invest in the lives of these students. By the close of the week we were thrilled to watch and support five students who gave their lives to Jesus in baptism. Excitement has continued to grow as an increasing number of students are choosing to join camp meeting each year.

This is the model for camp meeting youth ministry used in the Arizona Conference. This model could be effectively applied to many youth ministry environments. The term "holistic" refers to an intentional effort to provide balanced youth ministry in order to meet the spiritual needs of students. The model began in 2004, with three goals: 1) Deepening students' walk with the Jesus, 2) Building a peer community to support students' journey with Jesus beyond camp meeting, and 3) providing students the opportunity to impact the lives of others through service.

This model has been developed to create a God-centered camp meeting experience that will transform the lives of students. Having an entire week with a consistent core group of students is a gift that should not be wasted. Instead of baby sitting or trying to keep them out of trouble, this model is proactive based on God's initiative as demonstrated through Scripture with the creation of humans.

In the story of God's creation and interaction with Adam, it is clear that mankind, and this does include high school students, was created to experience God in multiple ways. To focus on only one avenue and neglect others would limit the holistic experience God desired to have with Adam. In order for Adam to really know and love his Creator, God fed him spiritually, connected with him relationally, and called him to serve physically. This was God's special and intentional package deal. The same is true of our interaction with students. In both individual and corporate spirituality there needs to be activities and disciplines that provide balanced and holistic growth (Mulholland, 1993). We should not, for example, preach the gospel to students without giving them immediate opportunity to live out the gospel through service.

Spiritual Feeding

God fed Adam spiritually. Scripture notes that God "walked in the garden in the cool of the day." (Genesis 3:8) Adam was being fed spiritually through being in God's presence. For camp meeting to transform the lives of students they must be fed spiritually by being in the presence of God. If we want our kids to grow into what God desires for them to become, to be people who know how to offer God's love, life, and creativity to a brutal, hurting, and stunted world, then we need to share the presence of Jesus with them (Yaconelli, 2006).

This first part of this model involves adults purposefully journeying with students into the presence of Jesus. What students need most are people who know how to be present to God and present to others (Yaconelli, 2006). The entire youth leadership team, including all speakers, musicians, and support staff are committed to walking with students on their spiritual journey during the week. The idea here is to practice the presence of Jesus

throughout the entire camp meeting experience. There is not a time during the week long program that the presence of Jesus gets turned off.

Adults who love God and love students are agents of Christ's love during camp meeting. The adult leaders worship with students, pray with students, encourage students, serve the community alongside students, and stop to have conversations with students whenever the opportunity arises. The key here is for adults to continually point students to Jesus by being with them. In addition to adult interaction, students are fed spiritually by relevant Christ-centered preaching, creative prayer initiatives, and participatory worship opportunities. Students had the chance to write on prayer walls each day and take part in evening dramas during the week.

Connect Relationally

God also connected to Adam relationally. God created Adam with the need to be connected to other people. Adam was meant to share and experience life with others. Scripture shares that often quoted statement that it is not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). God formed for Adam a friend with whom he could share life. God revealed himself more deeply to Adam through the friend he created from him and for him.. Like Adam, students need relational connectivity. As Christians we are called to belong, not just believe. We are not meant to live lone ranger lives; instead we are to belong to Christ's family and be members of the body (Warren, 1995).

The second part of the camp meeting model involves building a student community. The idea here is to develop friendships between students that will last as a support system far after camp meeting is finished. Adult youth leaders do this by calling all students by name, making a point to

introduce students to each other. Each afternoon the students engage in team building games and activities that force them to reach outside their comfort zone and meet other people.

Through the uses of digital photography and video the students were constantly seeing them selves interacting on the screen with other students, reinforcing their sense of belonging. Students are given a voice in the camp meeting program through the use of testimony sharing times, and in the decision-making process of community service projects. Students are also encouraged to work in teams during community projects, giving them a chance to work along side those they do not know.

Serve Physically

God invited Adam to serve physically. Adam was not created and left to roam the garden aimlessly. As God invested in Adam through the practice of presence, He then invited Adam to a life of service. Scripture tells how God gave Adam the task of calling all created animals by name (Genesis 2:19-20). This valuable truth shares God's desire for his people to have a life of significance and purpose. This is an area where many youth programs fall short. Students want to make a significant contribution to this world, and want to belong to a movement that is making a difference. We do a disservice to students if we preach to them but fail to give them an opportunity to serve with significance.

The third and final part of camp meeting model involves creating a high impact community service opportunity for students. As they are being fed spiritually and connected relationally, they are then given the chance to get out in the community and serve. Students need to be connected to their communities. We need a holistic teaching— we need to be concerned about the body, the soul, and the experience, the quality of life of

people within the community (Claiborne and Perkins, 2009). The idea here is to allow students to live the Gospel by being the hands and feet of Jesus in the community. Five years ago, after watching the ABC television show "Extreme Home Makeover," the leadership team wondered why that type of an emotional experience couldn't happen at the camp meeting. As the wheels began to turn, God set in place a series of huge community home makeover project that would deeply impact the core group of students.

In 2007, the leadership team prayerfully searched for our first home to do a makeover. God connected us to a single parent who lived from one welfare check to another, supporting her two kids—one of which was handicapped. Her name was Nancy and she lived in a dilapidated home that had leaked water from the roof for over 10 years. The planning began. We recruited contractors, raised funds, and engaged in preparation work. Over the course of six days a team of 50 students and professional volunteers completely transformed the exterior of Nancy's house. This first project gained statewide attention as local TV stations ran prime time stories about what the students were doing in the community. One neighbor commented, "Kids in this day and age just don't do this type of stuff anymore."

This was the missing puzzle piece in the Arizona youth camp meeting program. When the students served physically in addition to being fed spiritually and connected relationally, their experience became transformational. Students are the church of today, not some unknown future. Therefore, we must create an environment where students are challenged to serve others and discover the significant life God has called them to live (Fields).

Since 2007, the students have served on four extreme home makeover projects in the

Prescott, AZ community. In June, 2010, more than 180 students worked on one single project serving a recovered meth and heroine addict who had turned over his life to the Lord. As the students served and interacted with Dale, their lives were impacted in the most remarkable way. It was an absolutely thrilling experience to stand next to Dale as he yelled, "Move that bus." Dale was embraced through the hugs and hi-fives of hundreds of students. Many students for the first time felt like they had a reason and purpose for their lives. God had created them for something significant. During that week, God called them to help Dale. This reminds me of Ephesians 2:10 which says, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

The key to the growth and success of this model was the holistic experience for students. Students heard amazing biblical preaching, experienced Christ-centered worship, and experienced support on their journey by Godly adults who cared for them. They were encouraged and invited to be part of a student community that extends way beyond the time limitations of camp meeting. And students stayed connected all year through the wonders of phone calls, texting, and social networks. When a student from camp meeting hurts, a peer is there to listen and encourage. Finally, the students were given a purpose for being at camp meeting. Their purpose became deeper than hanging with friends and playing wild games. They were being called to camp meeting by God to make a difference in the life of a stranger in need.

This model is a six-year work in progress. There are many elements that still need to be tweaked and reworked. God may decide to send the Arizona youth camp meeting in an entirely new direction with a different model in the future. But for now He continues to move

us toward holistic youth ministry through feeding students spiritually, connecting them relationally, and inviting them to serve physically.

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Inter-Generational Youth Ministry: Youth and Adults Growing Together

Milton Marquez, Youth Pastor, Paradise Adventist Church

Abstract

Some of the factors that contribute to youth leaving the church after high school include lack of spiritual inter-generational relationships and consistent biblical teaching. These same factors are missing in some youth ministries. The following model seeks to reinsert these two particular factors using an inter-generational model (IGM) for youth ministry at the Paradise Adventist Church (PAC).

Introduction

I never enjoy being challenged publicly. Defensiveness sets in and I begin to devise my plan of attack. The Senior Pastor came back from his trip with a fire I had not seen before. Under his arm was the book Soul Searching by Christian Smith. The barrage began. Youth ministry is broken. Youth ministry needs to change. I left that meeting feeling uneasy and angry. Yes, I was defensive.

It took me a while to pinpoint why I was so upset. I wanted to make sure that it was not a pride issue. That is never good. So I began to pray and examine how I was feeling. It finally hit me and I went into my next meeting with confidence and a clearer understanding about what the real issue was. I waited my turn and made this bold statement: "The problem is not with youth ministry. The problem is with the church!"

I admit that my statement was rather simplistic but I realize now as I look back on that incident how true that statement was. If there is a problem with youth ministry then there is a problem with the church because those two entities cannot be completely separated. Are there issues within youth ministry? Yes! Are there issues within the church in general? Of course! What we need to focus on is finding a way where youth ministry can thrive within the church, not separate from the ministry of the church.

That incident began a journey of reflection and brainstorming to try and discover how the youth ministry at our church could help youth grow spiritually and be a blessing to the local church body and the community. As we

learned more about what helps youth in their spiritual journeys, a model began to take shape that both youth and adults began to buy into. This Inter-Generational Model (IGM) is the focus of this paper.

We will explore a theology of IGM that will identify three areas that are crucial to this model: Unity, support and teaching. Then we will look at some principles of IGM that should be considered when designing a specific model. After that we will look at the specific way this model is practiced at the Paradise Adventist Church (PAC). At the end of the paper we will look at some missing elements that need to be explored and considered for the future growth of this particular model.

Theology of IGM

The idea of having multiple generations working together for a common goal sounds wonderful. Anyone who has tried it on any level has quickly found out that it is also challenging. When the youth leader looks around and sees that there are very few adults after the initial push, he or she may ask if the IGM is worthwhile or even possible. I've been there.

Part of the problem is that we have not asked ourselves if an IGM is truly something we should do. Do we have theological support for a ministry such as this? If this can be established then we have found motivation and power that goes beyond a ministry fad. A brief exploration into Scripture will not only show us that an IGM is necessary within the church, but also give us specific areas to focus on within this ministry.

Thom and Sam Rainer conducted a study of why youth drop out of the church after high school. The results of the study were presented in their book *Essential Church?* The four areas they identified as necessary to retain youth were Simplify, Deepen, Expect

and Multiply. The area that thrives within an IGM is Deepen. To deepen means to ground youth in the Word of God. The need to teach youth what the church believes and practices based on biblical truth is essential.

It is the will of God that adults train youth into all biblical truth. God commanded the Israelites in Deuteronomy 6:5-7, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." This is a directive from God, especially for parents, that His commands be passed down to the next generation at every appropriate moment.

The Rainers bring this out in their book: "Young people are more likely to come back to church if they have been grounded in Scripture. Similarly, young people are more likely never to leave church if they are taught the truths of God's word" (Rainer and Rainer, 2008, p. 195).

But biblical teaching isn't the only thing that exists within the IGM. If this were the only component needed, most of our churches would be having great success in retaining youth. In John 17 we find Jesus praying just before his arrest. He begins praying for himself, then moves on to the disciples and then ends his prayer by lifting up all future believers. "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" John 17:23. Jesus' desire was that his church be unified. This doesn't just apply only to people of different races, socio-economic status or gender. God's will is that unity includes even those of different ages. And unity is the desire not only of God but of his children as well. "People are attracted to unity.

Young people have little patience and time for a church that is divided" (Rainer and Rainer, 2008, p. 172).

We see the importance of teaching and unity in the IGM, but there is still one more element that is crucial: the element of support. A variety of symbols can be used to describe the Church. Paul's epistles picture it as a body, with Christ as the head. In this description of the church we can learn about an often misunderstood facet of the IGM. It has to do with who supports whom.

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" Ephesians 4:15,16. The church needs each of its members, no matter what the age, to be a supporting ligament within the body. That doesn't only mean that adults support youth. It also means that youth support adults. This is the true biblical view of the church and is not seen lived out in most of our congregations. The common view is that adults minister to youth, either with volunteer leaders or the youth pastor. This type of ministry does not line up with the way God designed the church to be.

One way of describing support is through an understanding of how God uses relationships. When people come together they each have a unique set of circumstances and beliefs in which God works. Adults and youth come together to experience Christ in a way that can only be obtained in the intersecting of their lives. Without each other they would miss out on this reality (Root, 2007). Youth and adults have so much in common that it is beneficial to them to learn how to work together and care for one another (Smith, 2005).

Principles of IGM

Before looking at the specific model of the IGM that is being used at the PAC, let's look at some principles that can guide a group in their use of the IGM for their own church.

When it comes to teaching, the truths of Scripture do not need to be watered-down for the youth. Young people are capable of understanding deep spiritual truths found in the Bible. These do not need to be avoided. They just need to be expressed in the language that youth speak. If we share the Gospel with them in a fresh way, they are capable of understanding it. Teaching can occur in the following three components: 1) A pastor who effectively communicates God's word; 2) Small group Bible study; and 3) Encouraging all members to study the Bible on their own (Rainer and Rainer, 2008).

When it comes to unity, both groups need to come together. How one does this will differ from group to group but you cannot bring people together when they are physically apart. Even when we provide teaching to our youth, it should be surrounded with strong adult relationships (Smith, 2005).

When it comes to support, it is extremely important to find leaders who understand that being a part of the IGM means that God leads individuals to both give and receive blessings. If your leaders come humbly and are open to God blessing them through the youth they are working with, there is an opportunity for something great to happen. God has used youth in the past to bring blessings to his people. This area of spirituality is not reserved for adults only. Youth are at a stage of development labeled *synthetic-conventional faith* in which they are open to dialogue about faith with adults and may possibly make some changes (Harkness, 2000). Involving parents at this stage and giving them opportunities for leadership is also a very wise decision (Fields, 1998).

IGM Practiced at PAC

The following is a description of the model being practiced at the PAC. It continues to grow as we learn more about how the IGM works best in our setting.

Before we began to implement an IGM approach we had a basic list of activities that were regularly on the schedule: Youth worship service, vespers, social activities, Sabbath School & community service. We decided to continue with the same activities but do them in ways that brought adults and youth together. We created a team of three members to continually monitor this dynamic. The team consisted of the youth pastor and two volunteers. These three members meet on a weekly basis and administrate the program.

We trained adults to be facilitators. They work with a group of youth to plan each activity of the ministry. The planning and implementing of the activity is secondary to the time spent with the youth. Opportunities to mingle, pray, plan and execute the program open the door for deeper spiritual relationships between youth and adults.

We also created an Executive Youth Council which meets on a quarterly basis. This group deals with large, youth-related issues and the current status of the program. It provides communication to parents and enlists their involvement. All parents of the youth, and other interested adults are invited to be part of this group.

We created a Youth Council to train youth in leadership concepts and get their input. The Youth Council meets on a monthly basis and deals with current youth ministry issues. We invite all high school-age youth to join. The meeting begins with a potluck that includes the adults of the Executive Youth Council. We encourage the adults to meet new kids and follow up with those with whom they have already started to bond. Once the meal is over

the youth gather for their meeting and invite three adults to join them.

When we implemented the IGM we noticed greatest result in our Sabbath School. We took seriously the call to teach biblical truth to our youth and get them connected to spirit-led adults. We began by choosing one teacher so that there could be continuity by implementing a themed approach. The youth pastor served as the regular teacher.

Another component to our Sabbath School program is to serve breakfast as part of the program. This gives the youth and adults a comfortable atmosphere where they can talk and share together.

The final element to our teaching ministry was to give people time to come together. We do not begin teaching until a significant time has passed for people to mingle and get to know each other. This time usually lasts about 30 minutes. The adults in our ministry know that this is the time for them to talk to kids and get to know them so that relationships can develop.

Before we began this approach we were lucky to have 15 students at our Sabbath School program. Since we have implemented an IGM approach to Sabbath School we have over 40 kids coming on a regular basis. And they are not just coming for the food. They actually stay for the study time as well.

Missing Pieces

Our model is not perfect. It is still a work in progress. We recognize that there are parts that need to improve and other elements that need to be added. So far we have noted the following inadequacies.

Since this is a model that functions within the church we have yet to discover how to incorporate a larger portion of our youth into the greater family of the PAC. Youth usually function well within the youth ministry

program but they have a hard time moving into adult ministry once they graduate from high school. We have not yet been successful in completing that transition.

The adults who are a part of the IGM are sincere and want to see youth growing in their relationship with God. What some of them lack is the knowledge of how to approach a young person and share God with them. We need to provide this kind of training.

We are being successful in the areas of internal ministries (vespers, worship, social, etc.) but are struggling to reach out and make a significant difference in our community. We take care of our own, but not those outside our church walls. It has been extremely difficult to get a consistent community service ministry off the ground. This is an area we continue to pray about and explore with God.

Conclusion

Implementing an IGM at your church will take a lot of work, but the benefits will greatly bless your congregation. If your model includes teaching, unity and support, it will be successful in blessing both youth and adults within your congregation. We have had much success in using this model and we continue to grow within it. We are convinced that having a church in which youth and adults work and grow together is the will of God for His Body.

ADMINISTRATION

| Volunteer | Youth Pastor | Volunteer |

DECISION-MAKING

| Executive Youth Council | Youth Council |

PROGRAM PLANNING

| Facilitators + Youth | Facilitators + Youth | - - - ▶

PROGRAM EXPERIENCES

| Youth & Adults Sharing and Growing Together |
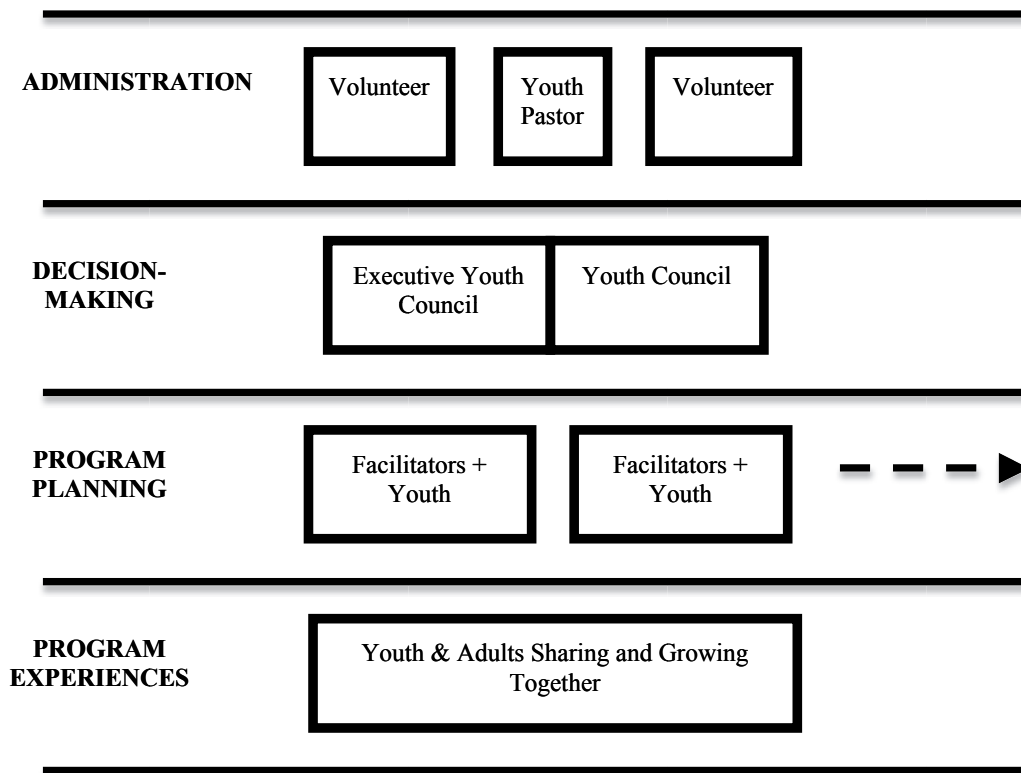
IGM Model at PAC

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The ABCs & Ds of Young Adult Relationships: A Conceptual Model for Discipling New Generations

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Abstract

Literature has consistently pointed to relationship building as the primary means of nurturing the spiritual growth of adolescents and emerging adults (Setan, 2008). Yet, according to recent observations, the relevant praxis of young adult ministry is all but absent from our current Protestant landscape (Wuthnow, 2007). This paper offers practical elements in fostering spiritually nurturing ministry relationships with those who are in post-secondary education through pre-parenthood.

Young adults, those who are in post-secondary education through pre-parenthood, seek quality relationships in all spheres of life (Setan, 2008; Wuthnow, 2007). In the realm of faith development and spiritual community, this search is both crucial and daunting for young adults and the church alike.

It was a sunny Friday afternoon in a crowded metropolitan restaurant and farmer's market. Gathered around a small wooden dining table sat a group of young adult friends from various places, enjoying a leisurely lunch. I [Kasper] will never forget what Adrian, a young college student from the city of Dallas, Texas, told me. He explained that there was no way he would have come back to the church he is now a member of unless they had taken the time to get to know him and interacted on a relational level. He could have cared less about what they believed at the time of his searching. What kept bringing him back every week was the fact that he could feel like they really wanted to connect with *him*.

For the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the quest for meaningful, transformative, young adult relationships is a significant barometer for an aging denominational population (Center for Creative Ministry, 2006). Do our young adults feel like they can find the quality relationships they seek whenever walking through our doors?

During a recent interview with noted ministry researcher Roger Dudley, I [Allan] was struck by his comment:

"While there are many factors in retention, I really think that the congregational climate is perhaps the most important thing of all. To them [young people], Adventism is that congregation. . . If that congregation is a warm, accepting place, then Seventh-day Adventism must be a good thing. If that congregation is a place that is struggling, then they wonder what's the matter with Adventists" (Martin, 2009, p.19).

It is sad, but true: many of the young adults I [Kasper] know who have left Seventh-day Adventist church fellowship have not done so out of disagreement with fundamental beliefs, but out of a lack of inclusion and unconditional acceptance within the social community of their local churches. In an insightful commentary on retaining church membership, Roger Dudley echoes these observations: "Research on why members leave… suggests that social and relational factors are much more significant than disagreement with denominational teachings." He continues: "The reasons most frequently cited by persons who leave local church fellowship are found in the realm of relationships, the absence of a sense of belonging, and the lack of meaningful engagement in the local congregation and its mission" (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee, 2007, p. 2).

It is time for those within the Seventh-day Adventist Church to start placing their actions where their intentions are. It is time for young adult ministry to become more than a priority agenda item and become a priority action philosophy. Robert Wuthnow, professor of Sociology at Princeton University, endorsed, "My view is that congregations can survive, but only if religious leaders roll up their sleeves and pay considerably more attention to young adults than they have been" (Wuthnow, 2007, p. 230).

It should be asserted here that every adult member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is perceived by new generations as an authority figure or leader, to varying degrees and contexts, within the local congregation. And the need is significant enough to call on every Seventh-day Adventist Christian adult to foster environments of relational ministry with young adults, lest we succumb to the bystander effect that has crippled our faith community for far too long.

The idea of relationship building as a primary ministry model is not simply a result of recent research. This concept has been exercised since Christ's perfect example of soul winning. Observing the current state of affairs within the increasingly secular context of current generations, what are the essential characteristics needed to make meaningful and positive differences in the lives of young adults? Here are four key observations, the ABC's and D's of young adult relationships.

Authenticity: The Art of Being Real

Young adults are desperately looking for relationships that are real, honest, and transparent (Martin, 1998; Stetzer, Stanley, & Hayes, 2009). In a recent survey of American young adults, researchers Kinnaman and Lyons found that 85% of non-Christian young adults and 47% of young adult church attendees perceive the church to be "hypocritical." Seventy percent of non-Christians surveyed also believed the Christian faith is out of touch with reality

(Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007). Unfortunately, the claim of hypocrisy is not a new attack against Christendom. What is significant about these experiential observations is their connection to the core values of young adults within the current generational cohort. Young adults today cry out for honesty and vulnerability in people they encounter. Continuing in their plea to fellow leaders in the faith, Kinnaman and Lyons advocate for a corrective perception where Christians are transparent about their flaws and act first, talk second (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007). Opposed to the faux facade of "having it all together," young adults are seeking out genuine interaction with Adventists that are human, willing to admit they too are working through issues and challenges. In contrast to previous generations that valued individuality and privacy, young adults want significant adults to be more relationally involved in their lives. Leaders who are willing to be authentic offer young adults a priceless opportunity for rich relationships.

This is not to say that adults are to develop an awkward relational climate by divulging too much and creating a confessional-type codependency. Nor does cultivating authenticity suggest that every conversation be centered on self-disclosure. Be gradual and genuine. The simple steps of building trust validate one's reliability. The humility to admit mistakes, then pursue forgiveness goes a long way towards authenticating a young adult relationship.

Sincerity is one of the most vital facets to authentic relationships. An honest interest in a young adult, fueled by virtuous intention, builds relational bridges to new generations that have seen so little attention from parental and adult figures. Christ's authentic interest in the people He encountered stands out just as much in the 21st century as it did in the first.

Young adults want genuine, bona fide

relationships. Don't pretend perfection; be human. Those who are willing to be real, honest, and sincere offer young adults a cherished opportunity for rich relationships.

Belonging: Feeling Accepted and Involved

Young adults today seek in ever increasing ways to be valued as active contributors to the world around them. They don't want to just fit the mold prescribed them; they want to help shape it. In our interview conversation, Dudley noted a contributing factor to young adult attrition is the "lack of inclusiveness of youth involvement in congregational life and leadership" (Dudley, 2000). According to Dudley's research respondents, an ideal church is one where young adults are active in the life of the group (Martin, 1995). As we conversed, I [Allan] noted the qualities Dudley identified that make the church attractive to new generations:

> "I think one of the things is [that] they found a place of belonging there; they felt like they were a part of a family; they felt like they were needed; they felt like the church depended on them; they felt acceptance there; they had friends there; it was a pleasant experience for them" (Martin, 2009).

It is our firm belief that leaders who are willing to minister collaboratively with young adults solidify their sense of purpose and significance as part of their faith community. Former president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Jan Paulsen also agrees,

> "We [church leaders] need to hear and understand what they [young adults] are saying, for it comes across clearly and strongly from those who are under thirty in our church. The point they are making is this: Being

included, being trusted, being considered responsible, for elders to be prepared to take some risk with inexperience, are sentiments and attitudes which senior leadership must be willing to show, or we [young adults] are gone! We are gone simply because we have no ownership responsibility in the life of this church" (Paulsen, 2006, p. 14).

There is a risk involved with allowing the participation of newer generations in your ministry. It means that you as a leader must be vulnerable to new approaches and methodologies. Often the skill sets young adults bring to the table take different forms than ones recognized by generations past. Was it that long ago that we played music on vinyl discs and composed papers on typewriters? Our dexterity to integrate young adult's unique contributions and value their talents not only impacts their sense of belonging, but also our relevance to their peers. Being needed and feeling involved also bolsters their experience of security and meaning.

Young adults bring tremendous skills and talents along with mental dexterity to apply their knowledge with relevance. Adults who intentionally work synergistically alongside these new generations make a tremendous impact on their sense of belonging and purpose.

Compassion: Do Something Now

In the days of increasing community awareness through social networking, compassion ministries have never been in better positions to connect with those outside the Christian faith. All sociological markers seem to endorse the high value of service and characteristic social activism of emerging adults (Setan, 2008; Smith & Snell, 2009; Wuthnow, 2007). The desire of current generations to be compassionate contributors

to their society is being widely expressed in various forms. From environmental concerns to humanitarian causes and beyond, young adults are connecting with the needs surrounding them in ways unlike the generations preceding them.

Compassionate service has traditionally been the trademark of faith communities, both in global missions and charitable benevolence. Unfortunately, compassion is rapidly disappearing from the list of adjectives new generations place on the Christian religion. Recent surveys show that only one third of young adults outside the church perceive that Christians are a caring people (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007).

Social action is high on the priority list of young adults, and their perception of an attractive church is one actively involved in helping people in need (Dudley, 2000). Funding missionary endeavors in far off lands is fine, but one-dimensional. Young adults are clearly interested in being a community of character that does more than outsource compassionate endeavors (Martin, 1995). Global is good, but young adults also gravitate towards ministries that meet local needs in their neighborhoods and communities. They're eager to align with causes and advocacy that transcend denominational and socio-political lines for the sake of making a good difference in the world.

From short-term local mission trips to protests against sweatshop labor, young adults are adamant about the human responsibility to enact the ideals of God's kingdom here on earth (Dudley & Walshe, 2009). And it is in this humanitarian context where they could conceivably find value in religious organizational structures. The church has real meaning for them to the degree it lives out Christ's call to help those in need. Leaders who are passionate about making a

difference among the marginalized and rally their community to action will find young adults joining them in the fray.

Discipleship: On the Journey Together

Among the generational needs of Authenticity, Belonging, and Compassion, the need for Discipleship is the value most uniquely met by the Great Commission. However, many struggle to provide effective models of this method. Christian demographer George Barna suggested, "The chief barrier to effective discipleship is not that people do not have the ability to become spiritually mature, but they lack the passion, perspective, priorities, and perseverance to develop their spiritual lives" (Barna, 2001, p. 54).

This appears to be especially true during the young adulthood years that are marked with significant identity and relational transitions (Barna, 2006; Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007; Smith & Snell, 2009). Barna further indicted, "This [discipleship barrier] is partially attributable to our focus on providing programs rather than relationships that support growth" (Barna, 2001, p. 55).

The modernistic structure of ministry departments, the fear of crossing the daunting "generation gap," the human tendency to "flock together" with our own kind, and Western individualism are among many contributors to the relational isolationism that has been perpetuated for generations (Martin, 1998).

However, contrary to popular myth bolstered by the rebellion of Boomers and angst of Generation X, today's young adults are different—they are looking to be discipled by adults and others (Martin, 1995; Stetzer, Stanley, & Hayes, 2009). Tim Elmore describes young adults as not seeking a "sage on the stage," but rather, they long for a "guide on the side" (Elmore, 2008).

It is the art of discovering and affirming young adult virtues that benchmark effective discipling. As Christ was able to transcend the initial characteristics of His twelve disciples and reveal the noble attributes He was shaping in them, so too He calls us to nurture young adult lives. When Christ's followers 'go and make disciples,' they impact emerging generations and they also further the cause of the Gospel.

The process of discipleship is not an overnight endeavor. It requires significant investments that don't promise certain and immediate dividends (Martin, Bailey, & LaMountain, 2009). However, there is no lack of evidence that such diligent discipling fosters life transformation.

Young adults are eager to be mentored by spiritually wise adults willing to pour their life experiences into new generations. Don't dictate direction, rather explore possibilities and lend guidance. We urge you, as leaders in the faith: Mentor young adults in fulfillment of Christ's call to make disciples and empower these new generations to expand His kingdom.

Simply Complex Relationships

The Great Commission challenges Adventist adults to go beyond superficial relationships with new generations. Although small talk and social mixing have their vital roles in relational introduction, young adults crave deeper relationships that look beyond the exterior.

> Reflecting on religion, relationships, and new generations, Dudley commented: "It's not some kind of behavioral code, some complex theoretical experience. I want them [young people] to see it as a relationship experience. I want them to see that it is first a relationship with God, who is a Friend, and a

relationship with their fellow human beings, where they help and support each other. At the center of true religion is this question of relationship" (Martin, 2009, p. 20).

Being authentic… fostering belonging… expressing compassion… purposefully discipling – in some ways, young adult relationships are simple. Throughout the complex paths of ministry within our current generations, we must keep ever present the simple task Christ gave in the Great Commandment. Let us follow His call to fulfill the Great Commission in the lives of new generations in light of His soon coming.
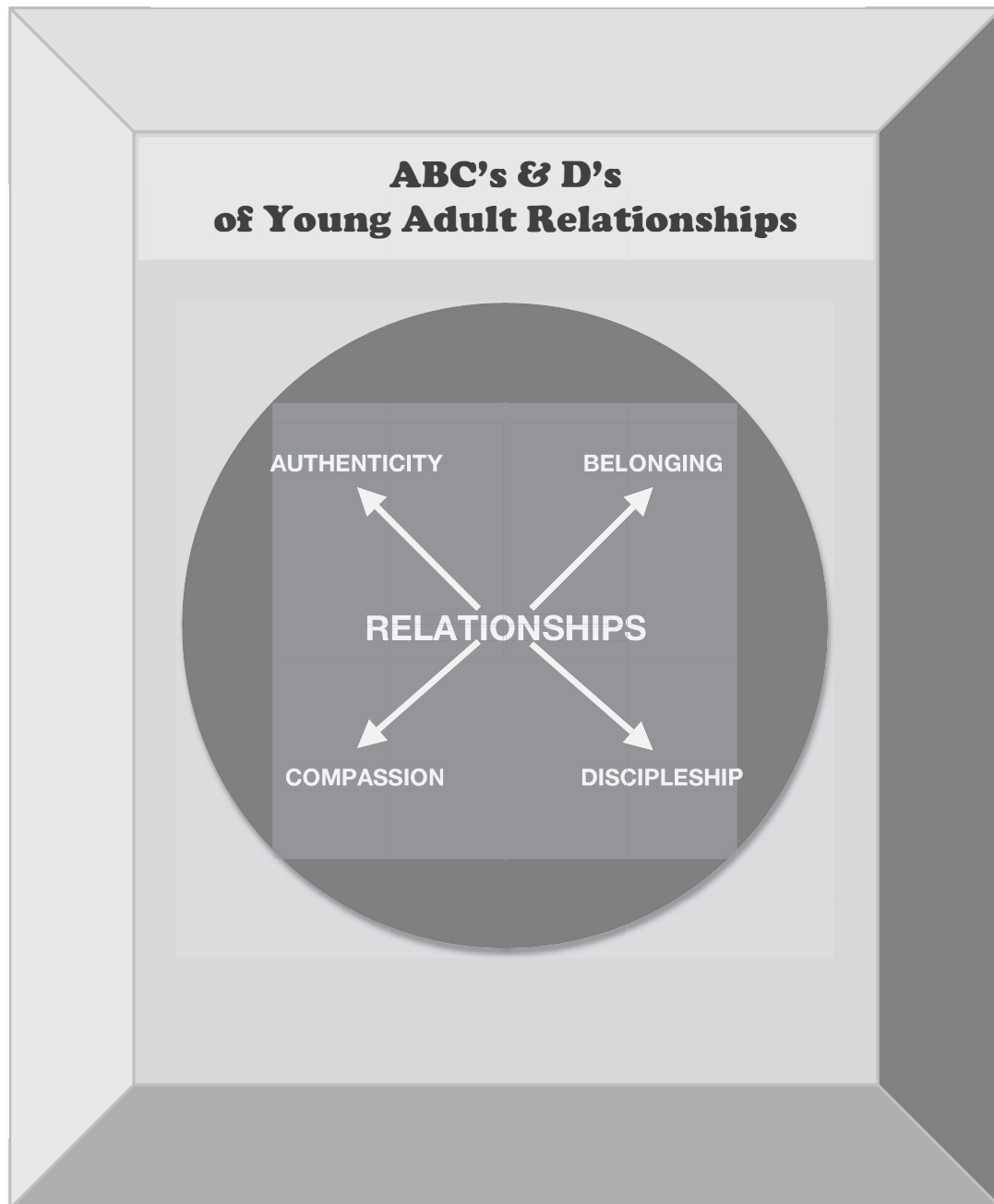
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We Are Not in Kansas Anymore!

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Abstract

Hispanic churches in the United States historically have been fed by the influx of immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries. During the last decade, due to stiffer immigration laws and economical factors, that influx has decreased dramatically. Now more than ever, a model to care and retain Hispanics immersed in American culture is necessary for the future of the Hispanic church in America. What makes it relevant for youth ministry is that most American-cultured Hispanics are young.

Introduction

In the 1930 classic movie "The Wizard of Oz", Dorothy, the main character, finds herself and Toto, her little dog, in a place different than where they were before that mysterious tornado hit. As she realized their new whereabouts, Dorothy says, "I've a feeling we're not in Kansas any more." We find a similar situation as we take a look at the Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist church development since its humble beginning on December 23, 1899 in the town of Sanchez, Arizona. When we compare it to today's church, we could honestly say, "we are not in Kansas any more."
(http://www.azpathfinders.org)

One of the main reasons the Seventh-day Adventist church has grown in big cities in the North American Division has been the need to accommodate immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries. Since then, the number of Spanish-speaking churches in the North American Division had grown exponentially. In an *Adventist Today* article, Monte Sahlin wrote, "Since the 1970s a growing segment of the Adventist Church in North America has been made up of Spanish-language local churches." (Sahlin, 2009) According to the North American Division report, in 2009 there were 1,077 Spanish churches and companies with 167,230 members in North America! If the growth patterns were to remain constant, we would not have anything to worry about. But reality tells us the growth patterns are not remaining constant, and other issues come into play as well.

Natural Problems

Needless to say, the Spanish-speaking church suffers from the same predicaments as every other church in America. The impact is

somewhat different and sometimes even more complicated than English speaking churches. Let's begin with the transition from modernity to post-modernity. The post-modern movement initially impacted the so-called "first world countries." The "third world countries" experience its ramifications later (McHale, 2008). Since most Spanish-speaking countries fall in the "third world" category, immigrants who come from such countries bring their culture and way of thinking with them. This includes their language and worship styles, which creates a modern church in a post-modern society (http://www.nationsonline.org).

The so-called "generation gap" generally affects all cultures. For example, generational differences cause barriers in communication, varieties in perspective, and differing ways to gather truth. Churches are not exempt from the generation gap phenomenon. The disparity gets accentuated because older generations are more likely to attend church than younger generations (Hitti, 2006).

Hispanic churches face a bicultural dilemma, a bilingual barrier and a dual cosmovision of worship. These three situations, when not attended, create a huge breach between American-born members and the immigrant members. This hinders the possibility of growth and the future of Hispanic churches. These problems, although most noticeable between youth and adults, has no age limit. And its ramifications reach across all members and ministries of the church.

"Then" – A Biblical Perspective

At the end of the book of Matthew, Jesus gave his disciples instructions regarding whom they should reach and what should they do to reach them. "Jesus came and spoke to them, saying… Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son

and of the Holy Spirit," Matthew 28:18-19 (New King James Version). Note that the disciples were to make followers of "all nations." That meant Christians would not be of one nation or one culture or one language.

As the Christian Church began to reach other nations, the apostles faced a conundrum. Acts chapter 15 narrates the clash of cultures resulting from spreading the Gospel to non-Jews. After deliberations, they concluded, "So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" Acts 15:8-9. That landmark statement could be considered the official establishment of multicultural ministry in the Christian church.

In a view of the previous Biblical evidences for multicultural ministry we come to some practical conclusions. First of all, people are never from the same, identical cultural background. Today we find ourselves in the most incredible multicultural society; therefore our ministry should be carried out with that same multicultural target in mind. Secondly, Christianity should not be limited to one language, especially when the church worship service is conducted in a language other than that of the country where it is located. Finally, ministry is most effective when is practiced in the context of the people where it is performed. It is far easier to catch fish in the water than on dry land.

"Now" – A Practical Approach

There is no doubt several models have been tried to reach American-born Hispanics in Spanish churches. Unfortunately, the results have not offered the desired outcome. One of the most common ineffective models embraces the idea that Spanish is the only language to be used in Spanish churches. American born Hispanics are "pushed" to learn Spanish. Members who have difficulty

learning Spanish find themselves unable to participate, which also excludes them from church leadership.

Another model offers separate worship services—one in Spanish and the other in English. These can be held at separate times or in separate locations. The typical result is a split congregation or the pastor favoring one over the other.

A recent plan to reach American-born Hispanics has been the creation of young adult churches. By intentionally catering the worship style to young adults, the response is positive but relatively short-lived. For example, when young adults marry and have children, their activities and pursuits drastically change to include children's ministries and fewer late night gatherings. Newer young adults often find that the established young adults are stuck in their ways and unwilling to hand over the leadership reins to them. Since aging cannot be prevented, the problem has been what to do with the people when they get older. The initial young adult churches lost their original composition and the surviving ones have become regular churches with a lack of identity. They are not well accepted by Hispanic or American communities.

For the past 12 years I have wrestled with the dilemma of keeping American Hispanics in Spanish churches. I have been youth pastor in one of the largest Hispanic churches in Los Angeles. Also, I pastored a Hispanic young adult church for over five years. For the last five years I've been the senior pastor of a large Hispanic church in the Southern California Conference. In this role I have worked on blending immigrant worship elements and American cultural needs. The result of this effort has taken a church from 250 attendees to 450 in a year and a half. Such attendance includes non-Hispanics and non-Spanish speaking Hispanics. Over this

time a model for ministry has taken shape. This model utilizes four components that center on worship, drawing various groups together into the Church.

The process begins with **Awareness**. Most members in Hispanic churches don't visit other churches. They are oblivious that other Adventist churches in the same conference worship in a different way than they do. The way worship was conducted decades ago needs to evolve to become relevant to the people of today. What was learned in their countries years ago worked to reach people in those countries at that time. If we want the church to exist in the future, we need a church that will reach the people who live in our city today. The awareness process begins by educating the membership of the existence of generational and cultural differences. Those who have teenagers at home are sometimes more scared than aware of the differences between them and their children.

The second step in the process is that the Bible is a book of context and change. God spoke to people in their own culture, language and time so that they could understand the message. The story of the Bible is based on the condition of humans and the transformation God wants to complete. Therefore, if the church is the medium through which God wants to reach the unsaved, it must be open to speak to people in their own culture, language and time in order to be efficient.

Finally, the awareness process leads to a practical way to be a Christian. The church has to be moved from a faith based on religion, tradition and customs to a practical and relational faith.

Preaching is one of the most important aspects of this model. Sermons are usually done as a series with contemporary themes planned months in advance. As a preacher, I make sure that every sermon has a biblical

truth, is part of a story, and offers a practical "how to do it" element. We provide handouts for the sermons every week and make sure multimedia slides are bilingual. The objective of the messages is to teach the ancient truths of Scripture by applying them to the needs of today. Also, our vision, goals and purpose receive constant expression from the pulpit.

The most important aspect of the model is **involvement**. We emphasize this in two areas. The first area is to involve the youth in the development of the worship and church ministries. The second area of involvement is relationships or "fellowship" with different generations interlaced in different areas. Participation is essential in front and behind the scenes. We find that they have an incredible amount of talent! Because of that we started new ministries such as graphic design and video editing. Our communication department has 12 members, all under the age of 30. They are in charge of the church website, bulletin and video streaming of worship services as well as other technology based responsibilities.

We have discovered that as the ministries develop, fellowship increases. In order to better offer opportunities for fellowship we created "lunch teams." Every week one of the 15 different teams prepares lunch for our friends and members. People come to church to hear the Word, but stay in the church when they build relationships. Following lunch, we started to offer Bible studies. This has grown to the point that now we usually have 20-30 Bible studies every Sabbath after lunch.

The appearance of the **facility** is extremely important. The platform or front of the sanctuary needs to reflect the people you want to reach. In our church we have stained glass and two video projection screens. We have flowers and a communion table along with video cameras and computers. We have a big Bible in the middle of the stage and color lights projected on the wall. There is translation equipment for those who need it, and all printed materials they need in their language. We want to make sure the environment is conducive to a worship experience as well as to a connection with the times and needs.

All these elements converge to form our **Worship style**. The style of worship determines the group of people to be reached. If we want to reach the young, we need to include them in the worship service. Worship style is more than just the music. The style of the worship encompasses the elements and rhythms of the liturgy. In order to decide what is going to be included in a relevant worship service, we must answer the question "What is the purpose?" We must remember we are in a multimedia-oriented epoch. Today, people are used to flip channels to what they think is most attractive, relevant and suitable. The worship style must be streamlined and purposeful. Unnecessary elements only deter the worshiper from the experience. Also, the selection of words used by the worship leaders should not require an "Adventist" dictionary to be understood. The message should be simple and relevant to all people in attendance.

Our church service has a "blended" worship style. There are elements of traditional combined with elements of contemporary worship. For example, we start with a call to worship followed by an invocation and a hymn. Then, as the welcome progresses, which includes people shaking hands and hugs, the praise team leads a couple of songs leading to the sermon. The songs are usually in English and Spanish, and words between songs are also bilingual. Four different praise groups rotate from week to week to lead the church in worship. These groups include youth and adults. We collect offerings at the end of the sermon and then provide a blessing. Since

the implementation of this worship style, attendance has doubled and offerings and tithes increased. We eliminated 30 minutes that used to be swallowed by "preliminaries." The average sermon lasts 40 minutes.

Conclusion

Change never comes without resistance. Nevertheless, the only way to overcome resistance is by positive results. Changes that are made with a purpose result in positive outcomes; change for the sake of change creates opposition. Most members love their youth and their church. They want to have a successful, living and productive church. Unfortunately, they don't know how and are often afraid to do something new. When planning and instruction are imparted with purpose, the church and our youth will benefit greatly.

American Hispanics

Immigrant Hispanics

Awareness

Facility

Worship

Preaching

Involvement
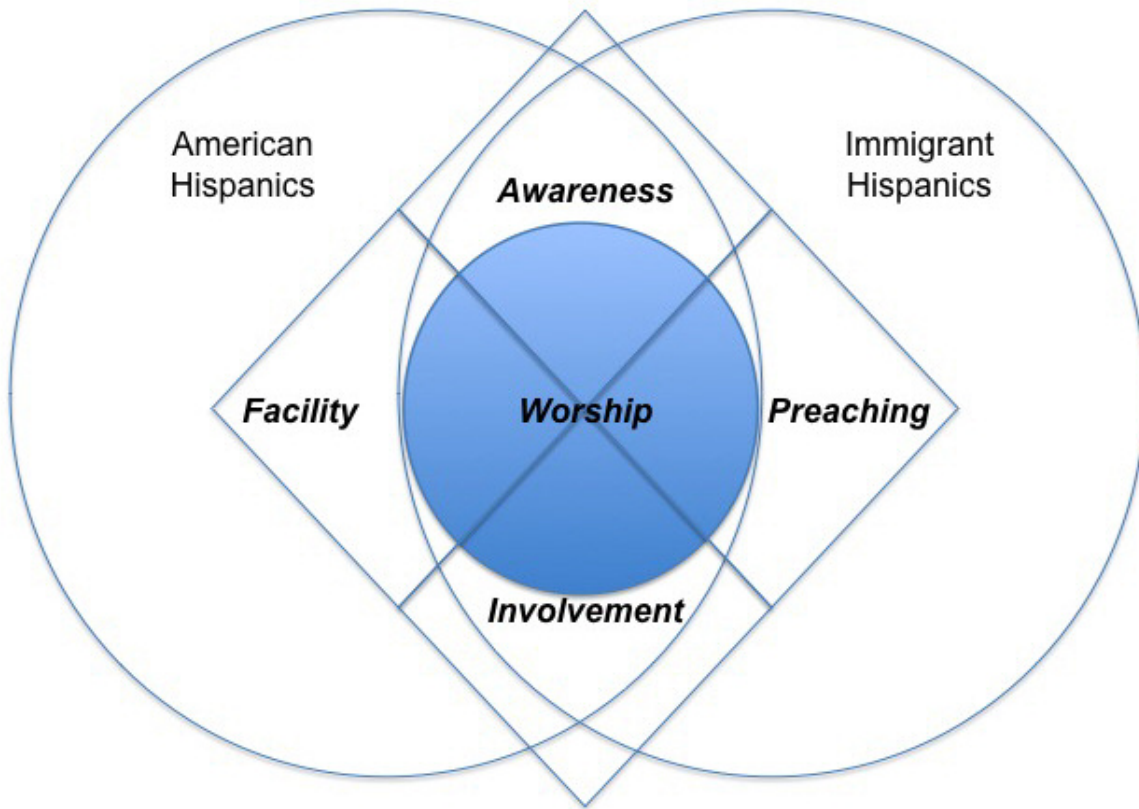
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From Traditional to Relational: Introducing the 4-Fs Paradigm for Postmodern Youth Ministry

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Abstract

Postmodernism hurls a plethora of multiple challenges at today's young people. More and more, we are feeling the symptoms of urbanization, mobility, fragmentation of the traditional community, technology, democratization and individualism. Consequently, the great call of our youth today is for more spirituality, community and authenticity; a call to which traditional youth ministry can no longer respond. A relational youth ministry model built on what I have termed the 4Fs Principles of Faith, Fun, Food, and Fellowship has proved to counter the challenges posed by postmodernism and to provide a way forward for youth ministry. Faith is an essential factor for young people of this generation. Fun is an important tool because there are many other things competing for young people's attention. Food brings young people together and creates opportunities, lasting impressions and Fellowships enables young people to have a sense of belonging before they believe and behave.

Introduction

Youth and young adult commitment to the Church has drastically declined. This has been the case in virtually all Christian faiths such as the Catholic, Adventist, and other Protestants (McCorquodale, et. al., 2004). Youth ministry of the early 1990s in Seventh-day Adventist in Jamaica, for example, was simpler than it is today. During this time most Adventist churches had large and vibrant youth groups. Youth Sabbath Schools, Adventist Youth Society meetings and the Pathfinder Clubs were well attended. The sum total of youth ministry centered in the AY society program on Sabbath afternoons. This scripted and predictable program included a recitation of the A.Y. mantra, the secretary's report of the previous week's meeting, a song service and the activity session which included a Bible games, rap sessions or any other Christian related activity. The day's activities would climax with a grand social. In addition, the youth ministry leaders used to frequently organize trips to the beach or a picnic to the park. There were also the usual

Summer Camps and the Easter Pathfinder Camps. This was the traditional youth ministry model.

The traditional approach did not integrate into its programs all the aspects of life that affected the youth. Some very important aspects sometimes overlooked included the social, emotional, relational and physical. The traditional model was more intentional about the spiritual and less intentional, if at all, about other areas. This model of youth ministry succeeded at least in the spiritualization of the youth (Neufeld, 2002). However, in many regards, it came short in areas that involved the youth in dialogue and to seek for their opinions, interests, ideas and concerns. It was didactic rather than engaging. The inclusion of a social or physical element, especially in a Sabbath program, would be strongly discouraged as unacceptable and irreverent. For this reason youth were not allowed to invent other activities of interest to them. The model depends on forces other than the youth.

The Driving Force behind Yesterday's Youth Ministry Model

Compared to the declining youth ministry of this period, traditional youth ministry flourished because of the following circumstantial factors.

Force: Urbanization in the early 1990s was in its infancy. For example, individualism was almost unheard of in the Caribbean, from where I came. The traditional community was mostly intact and the extended family and the local community still reared the children. To attend or not to attend school and church was a choice for this body to make, not the young person. The unwritten law was that, "one always attends church as long one resides under their parents' roof, regardless of age."

There were fewer options: During these earlier times, church attendance would rank

very high on a young person's weekend list of activities, especially the Adventist Youth programs and the Saturday night socials. For one, the "churched culture" of the 1950s (Neufeld, 2002) was still the reality of that time. Additionally, young peoples' alternatives were very limited. Though technology was on the rise, it had not reached the level where it is today. Cell phones, cable television, internet, video games and other modern technological inventions that compete for attention today were not as pervasive then. Limited car ownership also hampered mobility and therefore hampered the free movement of the young people.

Friends: Friends were limited to only a few because face-to-face encounter was the most common means of communication and interaction between young people. E-mails, social networks, cell phones and text messaging were non-existent. As a result, Church provided a main platform to facilitate these kinds of encounters. Young people attended church to see friends from whom they had been separated from for a long time either because of school or work. Though this provided a wonderful opportunity for the social draw of young people, most churches ignored this felt need. A large portion of this captive audience was lost because the friendship factor was not intentionally taken into account.

Fear: During this time, many young people were greatly motivated to stay in church out of fear (of death, of judgment etc), and many preachers either nurtured or capitalized on this fear for the purpose of proselytizing. The preachers preached sermons with themes of judgement and impending doom for the world. They ended their sermons recounting tragic and frightening stories in order to get positive responses to their appeals for baptism. This fear was programmed into young people to such an extent that some youth could not

even sleep at night fearing that they might die. Many youth were therefore attending baptism and church services because of their fear of imminent death.

Challenges to Today's Youth Ministry

Commenting on the present condition of the youth ministry in North America, Neufield (2002, p. 194) states, "The current state of Youth Ministry can be described as tumultuous, chaotic and confused." Postmodernism preceded an explosion of advanced technology and increased mobility. These forces pose major challenges that defy and even threaten to paralyze the status-quo of traditional youth ministry (McCorquordale, 2001). Increased mobility has led to a disconnection of conventional frameworks such as family and community structures. Such structures contribute to and influence the development of human relationships, values and expressions. Increased mobility has therefore adversely affected the role assigned to the parents as primary educators and faith formatters of the children.

The nature of the today's education system is also alien to the spiritual dimension of learning. The education processes are based on competition which promotes individual achievement and materialism. Society has also become increasingly multicultural, which brings about new demands for encountering religious diversity in both schools and churches. Youth today demand technical, scientific answers to questions of faith and science (Swartz & Codrington, 2003).

While my generation lacked options, this generation has multiple options; while my generation was forced to attend church, this generation will be pushed further away if they are forced to attend; while the generation of the 90s and before accepted the status quo, the postmodern generation "is characterized by freedom of choice, rejection of creed"

(Swartz & Codrington, 2003) and traditional values. The culture is today desensitized to death compared to preceding ones, and therefore youth haves absolutely no fear of death (Kupelian, 2004). These challenges lead to the need for a model that addresses the current challenges facing postmodern youth ministry. The Rational Model answers these challenges.

The Relational Model

The rational model I propose integrates four principles I term "The Four Fs (4Fs) Factor." The undergirding statement of relational youth ministry is that "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care" (Warren, 1995, p. 40). The relational approach focuses first and foremost on building trusting relationships in a non-confrontational way. Leaders seek out young people through common interest as a point of entry. This stands in contrast to the didactic overtone of the traditional approach that leaves very little room for feedback and interaction. The results may not be immediate in the relational approach, but the long-term benefit will prove deeper, stronger and more lasting than the temporary and external achievements from the traditional approach.

The Four Fs approach serves to link all the ingredients that encompass a holistic youth ministry by utilizing the framework of the four components (Faith, Food, Fun, and Fellowship). These factors broaden the scope of the ministry beyond the traditional approach, which is often mainly "program focused."

Faith is an essential factor for young people in this generation, contrary to what their external behaviors and attitudes may indicate. Findings from the National Survey of Youth and Religion show that 65% of adolescents believe in a personal God and 80% pray at least periodically (Smith & Denton, 2005). Another more recent study

identified common traits of Christian American teens. They have a personal story about God they can share, they have a deep connection to a faith community, they have a sense of purpose and they also have a sense of hope about their future (Dean, 2010).

Aaron and Damico, (their real names) are two un-churched youth who were reluctant to attend our recent youth event. One night I asked them, "If we were to do something differently in this program, what would you like that to be?" Aaron responded, "We want more of the church stuff; the games are good, but we need more of the church stuff." Aaron response should make youth ministers cautious expecting that young people want to be entertained, and therefore spending the majority of their ministry resources in this area. These boys' shared experience has shown that they will come to be entertained, but they desire the spiritual and will seek it in other places when it's not found in the church. This young man concluded that without a clear emphasis on faith, our ministry can just be another social club.

Fun: My own experience at my first Andrews University DMin. intensive in 2010 proved to be interestingly enlightening. There, Professor Steve Case, in fulfilment of the prescribed curriculum, engaged us in a series of activities and discourses. I observed that the fun activities the professor implemented made the learning process quite a unique one. The activities such as team games enabled students to gain more knowledge and experiences. I left with a reinforced conviction that effective youth ministries today will be the ones that are prepared to explore pleasurable ways with which to communicate their mission. While fun is not the end to ministry, it is a very important means to that end.

Food: All people like food especially if it is free. Food acts as the fuel for every society. It includes caloric intake for energy, but the

emotional, psychological, and even social elements also merge in food. Food is important! In the American economy, the food marketing system is the second largest advertiser (Gallo, 1999). *Out of Balance* (2005) disclosed that in 2004, food and beverage advertising amounted to some $11.26 billion. Food is an effective influencer. I have observed that being intentional about serving food at the Friday night youth meetings in my church has attracted a large number of youth. Food draws them to the church, but after coming, they are blessed by the discussions. I have also observed that when food was not served some youth just don't show up; and even those who came, left early. This is the tendency in today's churches who now offer finger food after their services. Food brings people together and creates an opportunity for us to create a lasting impact on the young people.

Fellowship: The importance of young peoples' need for fellowship was made clear to me while serving as a youth director in the East Jamaica Conference in Kingston. The big concern of the church in Jamaica at that time was young people attending movie theatres. Youth flocked to the theatres against the expectation of the church in order to watch the same movies that they already have at home. Why? I came to realize that it was not the movie the young people were going for but they were seeking a place to belong.

I know of churches that have closed their games room, rooms with state-of–the-art games that now only collect dust. What were the reasons for closing? The youth were hanging around the church too late at nights and there was no one to supervise them. At one point we ended up cancelling our basketball competition because the conference had no money to provide accident insurance although there were millions of dollars flowing into evangelistic campaigns. Consequently, the youth gravitate to where the

action is, i.e. the movies houses. It is therefore instructive to us that if we're to realize growth in youth ministry today, we should consider activities that bring youth together in groups.

Biblical Illustration of the Model

This model has a theological foundation in the New Testament as revealed in the teachings and acts of Jesus Christ. The relational model copies the method that Jesus used in his ministry and gives a clear guideline that can be employed by youth ministers today. According to White (1905, p. 143) regarding the earthly ministry of Jesus, "Christ's method alone will give a true success in reaching the people. The saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence then He bade them, "Follow me." If this was Christ's method, then the New Testament is replete with the principles of relational ministry.

For example, Jesus demonstrated relational ministry when he fed 5,000 people with bread and fish. According to Luke 9:10-17, the people's faith in Jesus made them seek for him even to his secret place where He was with His apostles. He further developed their faith in Him by receiving them and speaking to them about the kingdom of God and healing those who were sick. In verse 14, Jesus moved ahead to create a chance for fellowship when He told His apostles to make the people sit down in groups of 50. Jesus demonstrated the place of food in a ministry when he refused the plea by his apostles to let the people go due to their hunger. He instead told the apostles to first give them something to eat. After eating, Jesus involved the people in collecting the remains. Imagine the feeling tone when comparing the leftovers to what they had to start!

Ministry Application (Tested, Tried, & Proven)

In the latter part of August, 2010, in our bid to establish this youth ministry model with a practical application of the 4Fs factors, our church conducted a one-week youth event in Bermuda. Our major objectives were fostering the development of the total person—spiritually, socially and relationally, and to empower them for responsible participation in the life, mission, and work in their community. We organized various activities ranging from electronics games, to table games, to indoor football and basketball. A more structured portion of each evening included a Christian illusionist show, drama presentation, a faith presentation from an invited guest speaker, team activities and small groups interactions. We served food each evening after the initial 40-45 minute game time.

The tremendous transformation that happened in the lives of the youths as they attended the event night after night amazed us. Many young people who were initially reserved and withdrawn became totally involved in the activities, competing in the games, sharing in family group, taking a stand for Jesus, and even volunteering to pray during prayer sessions. The youth were consistently on time and hardly ever missed a session. At the end of the event we had no baptisms—the common measure of success. Nonetheless, we are convinced that it was a success because of the objectives we had with the relational ministry model. This event established new relationships, furnished us with a fresh database of young people that we never had before, and energized an eager group of young people regarding the gathering for youth created by the Church.

Conclusions

The relational model therefore:

a) Enables the youths to understand and internalize the need for faith in their lives and to readily practice it.

b) Eliminates the possibility of misunderstanding between the youth and their ministers. This ensures that their commitment to youth ministry and the other church activities remains strong.

c) Builds confidence in the youth by instilling the sense of belonging that makes them readily identify with the ministry.

d) Counters the negative impact that the media would have on youth ministry by providing alternative source of fun to the youths.

Illustration of the Models

The Traditional Model
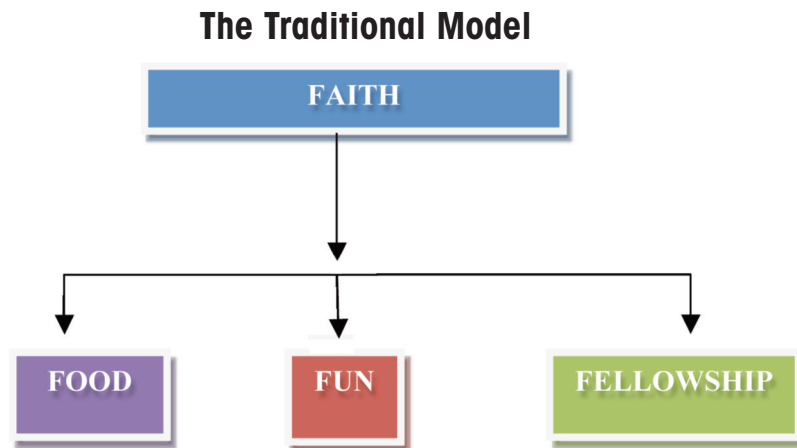
The Relational Model with the 4F's Factors
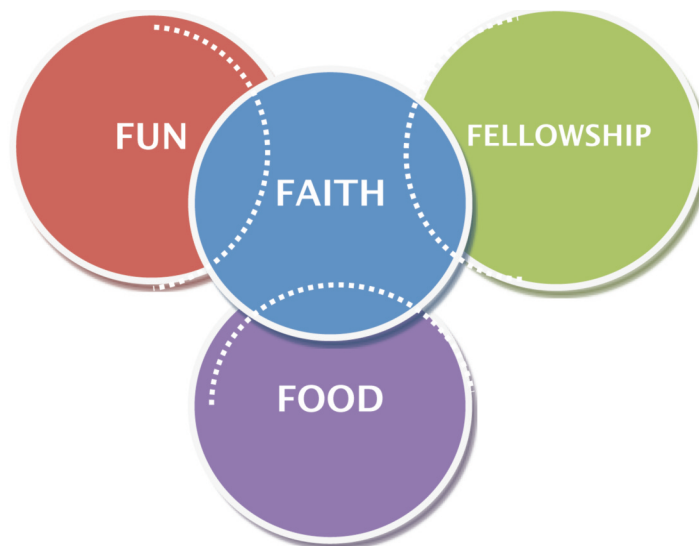
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Including Developmental Stages in Youth Ministry

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Abstract

Many of our programs and ministries for our children, youth and young adults have a complete disregard for their developmental stages. In order for our children to develop an intrinsic and lasting faith our ministries have to fit their developmental stage. The incarnational ministry model of Jesus provides us with a theological basis to make our children, youth and young adults ministries fit. Having a complete disregard for their developmental stages and expecting them to be mini-adults prevents our children from coming to Jesus. This paper provides a brief overview of each stage, the implications for ministry to people in that stage, and some examples used in the Netherlands Union Conference.

Youth ministry is one of the most challenging ministries in the Adventist church. Traditionally the youth department deals with children as young as three up to the official youth age of 35. The first two decades are characterized by enormous physical, emotional and mental changes. Furthermore, the first decade is crucial for the development of healthy habits, a well-rounded character and worthwhile relationships. Understanding basic developmental expectations equips youth leaders to be more effective in ministry by applying their understanding to the young people in a given stage.

Instead of a creating a development model in place of other youth ministry models, it could prove more helpful to describe developmental characteristics and apply those to existing models of youth ministry. When it comes to matters of faith, the supernatural and the natural connect. We are limited by our senses to observe and experience any spiritual matter. "All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me completely" (1 Corinthians 13: 12b). Our knowledge has and will always be limited, yet God has always been able to communicate to us. God challenges us to reach higher, but this is done within a human's capability. But what is a person capable of at any given stage of development?

Forcing a spiritual experience or spiritual knowledge that is incompatible within a cultural or developmental phase could distort

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spiritual development or simply miss the mark. Because of the large number of developmental stages in most youth ministries, attention must be given to carefully craft our ministries to match the development phase of the groups we serve. The incarnational ministry of Jesus shows that God descends to our "level" to minister to us. He adapted his message of hope to our level of understanding, development and knowledge. Paul used this fundamental characteristic of Jesus' ministry to underpin his own ministry: "Yes I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22b).

Matthew, Mark and Luke record the incident in which Jesus rebuked his disciples for stopping the children from approaching Him. Christ's incarnation includes God reaching children. Using the very words of Jesus, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children" (Luke 18:16). In Christ's day, and in many places today, adults are the ones who matter; not children. But Jesus turned the social expectation upside down by placing children as the model of trust before all others. Jesus accepts children for who they are. Jesus did not view children as miniature adults or expect them to behave as adults. He accepted and honored them as children and even identified kingdom qualities they exhibited. Children can have a spiritual experience, but an experience that fits their developmental stage. Effective children, youth and young adult ministries accept children for who they are, at their developmental level, with the limitations and advantages that are part and parcel of childhood, puberty, adolescence and adulthood.

Going through the different ages I would like to show a brief overview for each age-group, implications for ministry to that stage, and then list a few examples of ministries that

we use in the Netherlands Union. Similar examples are being used or could be used in other areas of the world.

Childhood (3-6 years)

Overview: The characteristic of this phase is "fantasy." The child uses fantasy to fill up the gaps to understand reality. Experiencing so many different impressions, a child does not have the capacity to explain these impressions or phenomena. Fantasy and intuition fill the gaps. The child uses one's fantasy world to express and to understand everything encountered. Stories, fairy tales and strong imagery are common avenues for the child to deal with experiences. Language develops rapidly and children tend to copy their parents or other authority figures in everything. Behavior solidifies by enacting different situations with friends or alone. Children slowly achieve some autonomy from their parents and should be encouraged to do more tasks on their own, but with intense guidance of parents or teachers. Children learn the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior at this stage through positive reinforcement and not so much through punishment.

Implications: Any form of children's ministry should tap into the child's fantasy world. A story from the Bible with strong positive imagery can be used as a framework. Extra-biblical characters who experience different biblical stories can serve as adaptations of stories which were originally written for adults. Acceptable or desired behavior can be linked to characters in the story, encouraging children to copy that behavior. Do not expect the child to understand the logic or rational for the behavior. The part of the brain which deals with logic does not fully develop until the age of eight. At this earlier stage, children could be taught to pray, which includes the behavior of prayer even though the understanding of

prayer might be limited. Ministry at this stage should also focus on teaching children the behavioral side of faith; teaching them how to sing, how to be friendly, how to help each other, how to pray, etc. Encourage an extensive use of their fantasy world. Do not expect a child to plan ahead since time durations might be difficult to differentiate. Promises of future programs, retreats or other special occasions should be kept within a week or two.

Examples: Kids in Discipleship, Beaver program (Adventist Scouting Program).

Preadolescence (6-11 years)

Overview: Brain development at this stage allows children to develop some logic. Stories, fantasies and fairy tales are still the main mode of channeling everyday experiences, however these get a more logical content and become more coherent. Fantasy gives way to concrete experiences. Symbols as extensions of stories are of great value but only one-dimensional; e.g. a symbol can have only one meaning and that meaning might get memorized. Children at this stage find safety in small numbers or small groups and view the world as a logical state of action and reaction. The concept of right and wrong, which started to develop at the beginning of this stage, comes to flourish by the end of it. Previously taught behavior slowly gets connected to rational thought and understanding. The endless desire for movement also characterizes this stage, which means it's very difficult to just sit still.

Implications: As stories remain important to establish a framework for your ministry, the stories can become more realistic and logical. Search for symbols within the stories. These can be used to establish a small group or encourages certain behavior or group involvement. Since symbols at this stage can have only one meaning, their meaning should remain constant. Encourage children to see

the logic of certain behaviors: why we should pray, why we should sing, why we should be good to friends, etc. Faith still develops in a one-dimensional manner. Not surprisingly, the true depth of faith cannot be experienced at this phase. But faith certainly exists and grows at this time. Parents still have a large influence on the development and behavior of their children at this time. This is the stage where parents can form their children's faith. Therefore equipping parents in faith development should be included in ministry to preadolescents.

Examples: Gideon's Gang, Cup-scouts (Adventist Scouting Program).

Puberty (11-14 years)

Overview: The safety that was found in the small group in the previous stage becomes crucial during this phase. Puberty is a time where everything changes—physically, emotionally and mentally. In this world of change a teenager is looking for stability and often finds this in a group of friends. A teen might feel that belonging to such a group is crucial in order to survive all the changes in life. One's personal identity is not clear until puberty has ended or even later. Because of this ambiguous individual identity, the group identity becomes the anchor point in a teenager's life. A youth or teen group can become one of these anchor points where faith and fellowship can be binding forces in the group. Parents will lose their influence on the behavior of their children as the influence of the group increases.

Implications: The youth or teen program should be focused on establishing positive peer groups. Provide these groups with a clear identity, initiation rites and group behavior. The initiation rites should be transparent and open for parents' observation in order to prevent excesses. Baptism at this stage is seen as an initiation rite and often done collectively. Identity confirming group

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activities should be initiated. At this stage teens do not question their group's identity or faith. Questioning these things will only take away the stability they seek. This is the final stage whereby a ministry can establish a collective faith identity. At this point faith takes place in a group more than in a person. It is extrinsic rather than intrinsic.

Examples: Teen camps with competition elements, Survival programs, Team building events.

Adolescence (15-18 years)

Overview: The group identity becomes stronger during this stage; however, the role of the group changes. Due to the development of abstract thinking towards the end of this stage, youth start to reflect upon and question the group's faith. This marks the budding of personal faith by slowly establishing one's own identity through testing, feedback and questioning. Relationships tend to have these characteristics, too. During the previous stage the group would consist of the same sex. Now the group awkwardly forges into coed experiences. By probing the group's identity, young people try to establish their own standards and values. Parental influence might seem non-existent. As a result, parents might feel that their children do not have any standards or values. This is largely because parental standards and values are stable in contrast to their children's standards. At the same time, the ability to start thinking in abstract ways means youth are also able to manage long-term goals and projects.

Implications: A youth program at this stage should encourage group identity. But as the young people age, it should also encourage discussions about the group's faith, standards and values. Plan and foster programs that encourage personal reflection, testing and feedback. Being a youth leader includes placing one's self in the position of a role model. Space should be given in the

program for youth to experiment with standards and values so they can establish their own. As the youth mature, exposure to different groups identities (i.e. other denominations) can help to stimulate an intrinsic faith. Group projects should be developed to encourage group independence.

Examples: Mission programs (exposure to different cultures), interdenominational exchange programs, Church of Refuge, Faith Challenge Programs (Dutch initiative)

Young Adulthood (18-25 years)

Overview: Brain maturation continues through young adulthood. The physical, emotional and mental developments make intrinsic faith not only possible, but preferable. At this age young people can have full independence from their parents. Many will leave home because of their studies, find a partner, and move into another realm by starting their own family. Patterns, behaviors, standards and values obtained in the previous stages will now be solidified and eventually transferred to a new generation. The personal responsibility and accountability is expected. The identity of the person is no longer formed by the group. This can create tension between the self (identity) and the larger group (paradigm). Symbols, readily accepted in the previous stages, can be demythologized or transformed to mean something new. As a result, symbols become shallow images of immaturity or else powerful new markers for meaning. For example, the rite of baptism might be relegated to an earlier stage and therefore inadequate for one's current spirituality. On the other hand, a decision to be baptized (or re-baptized) at this stage can create a new meaning beyond that of adolescence if the symbol takes on a broader meaning.

Implications: Programs which encourage discussion and reflection upon an intrinsic faith should be created at this stage.

Encourage programs that help young adults establish and blend standards and values in marriage. Additional insights will be needed to transfer these when children are added to the family. Church services and group gatherings should include meaningful, spiritual symbols and acts. Despite the demythologization of religious symbols, we should try to maintain the power of these same symbols. The original meaning of symbols might change, however the inherent power should be held dear.

Examples: Discussion and debate programs. Symposia and conferences. Taizé meetings.

Summary

In order to do justice to our children and youth in our church, leaders need to understand developmental stages of young people. This equips leaders to be proactive rather than reactive, which enables them to guide young people towards an intrinsic and autonomous faith. Youth ministry needs input regarding developmental stages and their implication for ministry. When we expect children and youth to be or behave differently from their development stage, we risk stopping them from coming to Jesus. Christ's rebuke to his disciples could be applied to us today. Instead, let's give our children, youth and young adults the place in church they deserve.

Adventist Rather Than Emergent

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Abstract

Today there are strong feelings of dissatisfaction with the superficiality of contemporary life. Many now leave mainline and megachurches in search of an authentic, deep spirituality. This means the door is wide open for a church that holds uncompromisingly to the authority of the Bible as the Word of God and unfailingly proclaims the message of salvation through Christ alone. The Seventh-day Adventist Church offers this. But a wide, open door means access for other religious phenomena, such as the Emergent Church Movement. Adventism and the Emergent Church provide two disparate models for youth and young adult ministry.

Adventism: A Unique Spirituality

Many might argue that Adventism is primarily propositional. However, the heart of Adventism is Jesus Christ, who invites His creation to come into relationship with Him. Since Jesus said, "I am the Truth" (John 14:6), we could deduce that truth can be equated both with doctrine and a relationship with the Person who is the Source of that doctrine. In a sense, both justification and sanctification are highly experiential since both are dependent on a living, working, dynamic consociation with Christ. Because Jesus declares Himself to be God (John 8:58), the Word (John 1:1-4, 14), and is declared by Paul to be the Creator God (Colossians 1:13-17), He offers a way to God that is superior to any other religion or methodology (John 14:6). Adventists come into special relationship with God every seventh day Sabbath when we rejoice in His dual creation (Exodus 20:8-11, Ephesians 1:7).

The genuine spiritual need of all Christians, including Seventh-day Adventists, is to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the endowment of the Spirit was Jesus' favorite topic (White, 1958). The reception of the Holy Spirit into the heart of the believer "brings all of heaven's blessings in its train" (White, 1940, p. 672). The authentic and deep spirituality that the Spirit brings is given by God to those who obey (Acts 5:32), and God's grace instills a joyful response of obedience.

God wants to use Adventists as His agents to call people out of Babylon, so that they can become new creatures in Jesus and

not receive Babylon's plagues. The Holy Spirit calls His people to conversion and holiness, to a complete transformation from one way of life to another. This is accomplished through repentance, forgiveness, and cleansing from our sins through the blood of Jesus. Christ's atoning grace, worked out in our lives through the agency of the Spirit, is not legalism or dead formalism! It is victory, liberation, and joy! Jesus calls us to belief, commitment, and certainty in His power to transform our lives and redeem us at last. This is the depth of the call to authentic spirituality that we are to make in these uncertain and chaotic times.

We engage in social activism, obedience, and moral living as a response to Christ's grace; not merely as a search for meaning in life. God's goal for our spirituality is transformation of all that we are (Colossians 3:1-17; White, 2002). This stands in contrast to making spirituality an end in itself. Christ alone is the indisputable, anchored center for Seventh-day Adventist Christians. He is Substitute, Savior, and Model. Because he served, we serve. Because He loved, we love. We recognize in Him the exclusive means of salvation. The Adventist Church has modeled a Christ-centered approach to education, healing, and publishing. However, it does not always sustain proactive opposition to the ills that permeate and destroy society in areas such as media violence, gambling, human trafficking, and pornography. There is need for more Adventist churches to model both strong community outreach and strong biblical preaching.

Adventism is a faith community with biblical boundaries (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) that help to prevent chaos within the community, disintegration into disputing factions, and heresy. Adventists have stated beliefs, doctrines and ethical parameters (1 John 2:22, 1 John 3:14-15; Matthew 7:15-20). We are unabashed in declaring that belonging to the family of God entails both responsibilities and privileges. The early church modeled an ecclesiology that included elders and deacons as overseers (Acts 14:23). That need for accountability continues today.

We are not immune to the beckoning of the decadent aspects of our culture (Romans 12:2), and God has in His graciousness sent a "lesser light" to point to a "greater light" that reminds us of our accountability to Christ and His Way (White, 2011). Seventh-day Adventists have the contemporary voice of Ellen White rather than church tradition that serves as an outside marker to help us know when we have moved from biblical fidelity. The sanctuary model in Scripture illustrates worship stemming from respect and awe of our Creator God. It leads to grateful acknowledgement of His power and holiness through prayer and praise and proclamation. It reminds us of our need of His redemptive grace and prompts us to accept His loving, atoning sacrifice. This motivates us for service.

Seventh-day Adventists embrace this model given by God both of a representation of his presence in this world and His ongoing mediation for us in the heavenly sanctuary. (Exodus 25:8; Hebrews 8:1-4,). Although initiated thousands of years ago, the relational element of God being with us and Christ interceding as our high priest remains constant. The books of Exodus and Leviticus, Hebrews, Daniel and Revelation use the artistic symbols and sanctuary services to convey truth for our theology and even our liturgy. Rather than permitting anyone to do whatever they please in worship, Scripture presents principles of worship that are acceptable to God. (2 Chronicles 29:25-30).

Adventist worship services should be "intensely interesting," and participatory, while not rigidly formal (White, 1948, p. 609). Ellen White promotes a healthy enthusiasm in

the presence of God, coupled with reverent, expectant joy. Many Adventist churches could strengthen their practice of these injunctions.

The Emergent Church

The recent "Emergent Church" came out of evangelical Protestant Christianity in the late 20th and early 21st century as a reaction to both the dead formalism of traditional worship and the slick marketing of megachurches. Adherents sometimes refer to the movement as a "conversation" that is fluid, non-structured, and focused on one's story, or narrative. While Emergents advocate new forms of worship as a means of experiencing deeper connection with each other and with God, many also advocate a change of Christian theology in order to better explain theological concepts such as love, forgiveness, suffering, death, and grace (Gibbs & Bolger, 2005; Jones, 2008; Rohr, 2009). The Bible may be a conversation partner in the community dialogue, but it is only one voice among many, with minimal or no authority for establishing and living out truth. The outcome is determined progressively by participants in a dynamic dialogue. As a result, new theology may also emerge. Instead of identifying truth as one thing rather than another, Emergents are more likely to include one thing as well as another. The resulting pluralism leaves truth in a state of relativism or flux.

There are areas in which the Emergent movement and Adventism find commonality, and areas in which Adventism could learn from the Emergent model.

Emerging thought resists the idea that Christ's death was in any way to "appease" the Father. They reject the concepts of eternal suffering in hell fire, inerrancy, and the dead formality of many mainline denominations. Emergents welcome persons of all persuasions, and seek to establish a sense of community among the "walking wounded."

They allow space for seekers, skeptics, and persons at various points in their faith journey.

Emergents ardently advocate social justice, missional community activism and compassionate action for the marginalized. They are open to the exploration of new truths found through open dialogue, and are eager to find answers for human suffering. Emergents want spirituality to touch them at their deepest levels and provide an antidote for disappointment and abandonment. They are concerned with the preservation of God's creation and often care passionately for the environment. At this time, they refuse to align with the traditional political movement of most evangelicals in the United States who push for an integration of church and state in the culture wars.

Adventist or Emergent?

Currently, some within the Adventist faith show an interest and involvement with the Emergent movement or certain elements of it. While both groups share some things in common, obvious differences exist. The very name "Adventist" brings to mind the Advent—the return of Christ. Emergents emphasize the current kingdom of grace rather than an imminent kingdom of glory. Seventh-day Adventists place a high value on the authority of Scripture over and against tradition, experience, and reason that conflicts with Scripture (such as when science appears to conflict with Scripture). For many emergents, experience and subjective revelation trump Scripture. Absolute truth does not exist; all truth is relative to each person's experience. Thus, no moral judgments can be made about evil. This could include even a reluctance to call Hitler evil (Rosenbaum, 1998, p. xvi, xxi). Where there is no evil, there can be no call to repentance and no freedom from guilt through the blood of Jesus because there is no sin.

Ethics for Adventists find their root in Scripture. God's dealing with humanity over the years of biblical revelation demonstrates law and grace, obedience and forgiveness, judgment and mercy. In Emerging thought, ethics is constructed within community. With no biblical anchor to Emergent thought, community determines worldview rather than the Bible. Lacking a high view of Scripture could make the Emergent Church susceptible to seeking spirituality through ancient mystical practices.

Every culture and society has diabolical elements that must be challenged. Seventh-day Adventists have a history of being counter-cultural, such as promoting temperance and preventative medicine, being apolitical and yet pacifists, and eschewing worldly entertainment. While recent trends may have blurred this, it does describe the historic Adventist position. Emergents often fail to see that the Gospel may mandate a countercultural message. In some cases, an uncritical contextualization of the Gospel has introduced syncretism. It has sometimes even become difficult to distinguish emergent from the theory of universalism. The belief of nobody left out, ever, or nobody judged, ever, is non-biblical and at direct cross-purposes to the three angels' messages of Revelation fourteen.

In biblical worship, the worshipper is drawn to a sense of his or her own unworthiness and need of a Savior (Isaiah 6:1-5) and finds release from guilt and burdens through the preaching of repentance and forgiveness provided through the crucified and risen Christ and the burden-bearing Christ (Acts 2:21-36). Singing, then, becomes a paean of praise and adoration from worshippers who have been saved by grace and found release from their burdens at Calvary. On the other hand, Emergent worship claims to be communal, but is highly individualistic in the sense of placing greater value on meeting personal felt needs and interpretations than on worshipping God through the biblical model of repentance, forgiveness, and praise. Worship that integrates culture without sifting out its diabolical elements becomes irrelevant because it is merely a continuation of the untransformed life. God then becomes what humanity makes him to be and ceases to be holy, omnipotent, transcendent.

Adventists who focus worship more on contextualization and the self than on Christ and His Word may in actuality become mere mirrors of the culture, particularly the more diabolical aspects of music, art, and film. Some Emergent authors and speakers use profanity, sexual innuendo, uncritical references to the most lowbrow elements of postmodern culture, and often indicate inappropriate approval for ungodly aspects of secular culture (MacArthur, 2007).

What about young people who seek spirituality through a variety of ancient rituals and practices in hopes of finding a multi-sensory experience of worship that will deepen their experience with God? Some may simply be going "retro" in order to experiment with something new. However, the practice of ancient rituals could replace direct access to the Personhood of our Heavenly High Priest with the trappings of a human-centered experience that is based on works. Retreat centers, seminars, and worship experiences that focus on mystical rituals and ancient practices are often seeking to find "the God within." In the ensuing blur of sacred, secular, and mystical, the God who transcends the universe vanishes and is replaced by pantheism or panentheism. Thus, the Creator God cannot be distinguished or worshipped over creation. As a result, each person's interpretations or ideas are as valuable or perhaps more valuable than the expressed Word of God in Scripture.

The postmodern emergent is in danger of mixing the sacred and the profane, the holy and the unholy, God and culture in ways that make it impossible to call individuals out of false worship (Revelation 14:8; 18:1-4). Truth becomes culturally conditioned and there is therefore no such thing as "false worship." Further, if God is "in" Babylon, why would there be a necessity of calling individuals out of it? This inclusiveness is in direct opposition to the biblical teaching of differences between sacred and common, good and evil (Leviticus 10:8-10; Ezekiel 22:26, Isaiah 5:20).

Adventists, particularly those in youth ministries and seeker-friendly church plants, are looking for ways to "cast the net in new directions" in the laudable effort to win a postmodern culture to Jesus Christ. If we are uncritical in our efforts to be innovative, however, there is danger of losing the heart of the gospel, the authority of Scripture, and our identity as Seventh-day Adventists. At the same time, Adventists could deepen their own worship experience as they recognize and practice the elements of Emergent that are in harmony with Scripture.

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Triangulation: A Biblical Relational Model for Local Church Youth Ministry

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Abstract

Local Church youth ministry formations tend to emphasize one of three dominant characteristics: (1) primarily functional (activities and events oriented); (2) primarily relational (people and spiritual relationships oriented); or (3) composite – functions are the vehicle to build and enhance relationships. This paper explains a relational model for local church youth ministry that is formulated on the author's "Triangle of Life Relationships" model – an application of Jesus' reply to the young lawyer in Luke 10:27. Three areas of relationships are outlined for local church youth ministry: faith, family, and fellowship. Specific targeted strategies to implement these relationship pathways in the local church youth are explained. Key points: (A) God's relational plans for every individual; (B) The Triangle of Life Relationships; (C) Relational vs. functional youth ministry; (D) Faith relationships defined; (E) Family relationships defined; (F) Fellowship relationships defined (G) Implementation steps.

God's Relational Plans for Every Individual

Scripture attests from Genesis to Revelation that God's primary purpose for every human is to exist in an eternal relationship with the Triune Godhead (1 Timothy 2:3,4) This relationship affects purpose and boundaries for temporal life and assures of immortality in the world to come (Ephesians 2:1-8)). This God-human relationship is necessary because of the sin problem (Romans 6:23). Eternal death is the

consequence of living apart from a saving relationship with God. (John 15:6). Ministry is the process of leading humans into eternal relationships with God through Jesus (Ephesians 4:12-16). Saving relationships are sustained through the accepted actions of the Holy Spirit into lifestyle (Ezekiel 36:27; John 16:7-13). Relational local church youth ministry guides its members into an eternal relationship with God that is reflected in all life areas. In this process, the local church youth ministry partners in relationship building with the family unit and the local congregational

unit. The local congregational unit may or may not include a Christian education component. A Biblical goal for youth ministry in this context is to facilitate relational maturity between an individual and the Godhead. From that relationship one can expect the development of spiritual fruit in one's experiences with family, others, and self.

The Triangle of Life's Relationships

Jim Rayburn pioneered relational youth ministry through Young Life in post World War II America. "The success of Young Life led the church to follow this model, which cemented the supremacy of relational ministry (Wright and Kinser)." Some refer to "relational" youth ministry as "transformational" youth ministry.

In the decades since Jim Rayburn, relational youth ministry has garnered a top focus for youth ministry know-how. Recent publications such as *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation* (Root, 2007) *and Youth Ministry 3.0: A Manifesto* (Oestreicher, 2008) reiterate the primacy of relationships in youth ministry. Google "relational youth ministry" and note dozens of posts on this topic. One post states the kernel of these discussions: "..working together to navigate youth ministry well through relationships-where every teenager matters…: (Haugh, 2008). Hebenton (2010) presents a theology of relational youth ministry beginning with the need for a personal relationship with God that is taught and modeled through the communal life of the church's ministry to youth.

Few would argue against relational youth ministry. But what measurable components should be included and what elements facilitate relationships? To make relational youth ministry a viable model, it needs end points. The manners in which these areas of relationships are integrated and sustained is illustrated by what I term "The Triangle of Life Relationships". When Jesus answered the

young lawyer's questions regarding the certainty of salvation, He instructed him to grow in relationships with God, with self, and with others with these words: "So he answered and said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27).

An equilateral triangle can illustrate the interdependence of these relational areas . When one relational area of life is compromised, the other areas are compromised as well. It is the harmonious integration of each relational area that leads into sanctification. It is sanctification that prepares one for the second coming of Jesus and eternal glorification. Through the Christian home and the community of believers a child can grow up learning how to experience and sustain relationships with God, with others, and with self. If these relationships are not taught and internalized in either the Christian home or the community of believers (which includes Christian education when available), then the deficits can result in negative consequences in life choices and future relationships. Here is the model for the Triangle of Life Relationships:

The Triangle of Life Relationships

The foundation for all relationships is one's saving and sanctifying relationship with God. Relational youth ministry begins when the Holy Spirit leads a sinner into a saving relationship with God through Jesus

(Codrington, 1996). Effective relational youth ministry leads members into a maturing experience with the Triune Godhead—first salvation and then sanctification that results in spiritual maturity and kingdom growth.

Placing God as the foundation enables healthy relationships with self and others. These reciprocate by helping to reinforce the God relationships. Through experience and instruction one develops relationships in all three areas. An over-emphasis on one area to the neglect of the other has the potential to result in a "lopsided triangle" approach to life. Who hasn't seen or been impacted by individuals that promote a strong God consciousness but are weak in filial or collegial relationships? Youth can see the disparity quickly and conclude that something is amiss in what is advocated to them.

Relational vs. Functional Youth Ministry

As stated earlier, youth ministry models emphasize either relationships, functions/activities, or a blend of both. A relational youth ministry brings individuals into connection with salvation and leads them deeper into sanctified living. This can be messy, irregular, and difficult to measure. Success comes through experiences that result in personal and interpersonal growth.

In contrast, a functional youth ministry stresses activities—events, scheduling, promoting, etc. Success gets measured in terms of numbers—more events and higher attendance.

But a person's spiritual journey is not as easily decoded as attendance records or activity participation. A functional ministry requires numbers to be deemed "successful". Just getting them to show up seems to be the first push. There might be some validity in these pursuits. Youth congregate with other youth and will be more readily participative

with increased doing. The danger in a functional ministry is in the perception that numbers represent spiritual achievement and more is better (Youthworker Coach, 2007). Relational ministry brings individuals into connection with salvation and leads them deeper into sanctified living.

It is no secret that great numbers can participate and never grow in spiritual relationships. Whereas a functional ministry is more dependent on numbers for success, a relational ministry can be highly successful with as few as two people—a caring mentor and a seeking youth. Indeed, one of the benefits of relational ministry is that the youth leader does not need to be a charismatic or glitzy person. A caring mentor of any age can profoundly impact a youth for Jesus. (Oxner, 2010). For these reasons small congregations can host a highly successful ministry that surpasses a larger congregation's functional prowess.

An ideal youth ministry is one that utilizes functions as a means to help leaders and members grow in their relationships. In order for this to be recognizable, ministry leadership must constantly and intentional integrate life's three critical relationship areas in each group member. Any activity can be a conduit for spiritual awareness and growth. Leadership intention makes the difference between this blended ministry and purely functional ministry. What are the outcome results for this blended ministry? Ministry bathed in prayer for spiritual growth in the areas stipulated by Jesus will combine the best of functional options as a means for relational enhancement.

Faith Relationships Defined

Faith is more than cognitive understanding. Lasting faith must be experiential. A youth ministry that seeks faith development illustrates it by modeling faith. Such modeling begins with transparent

leadership. Youth ministry leaders must be growing in faith in order to help youth grow in faith. Spirituality is caught more than taught. As youth leaders grow in their faith and seek teachable moments to transmit their experience to youth, the youth will more easily grow in their own relationships with God. To experience faith through a growing relationship with God lends credence to any attempt of leading youth into a God-focus in their lives. Assumption and integration of a personal faith provides stability for all areas of life development. (Ephesians 4:12-5). The power of a relational youth ministry comes when a caring adult, rich in faith, powerfully influences a youth. This enables the young person to establish a strong foundation for all of life's relationships by establishing a personal walk with God. When relationships with God are nurtured and cemented into lifestyle realities, any dissonance in the areas of self and others can be corrected because of the God-element in a life.

Family Relationships Defined

The family is God's first environment for intentional relationship building. The Christian home is still the best medium for youth ministry. Congregational ministry seeks to support and enhance home ministry. A local church youth ministry that does not partner with families of their youth is incomplete (Williams, 2010). The triune Godhead gets replicated in parent-child relationships. Youth will learn most aptly God's relational designs for them when they can experience comparative relationships in a Christian home. It is within family that self is learned and nurtured. People learn to love themselves as a result of their family environments.

Supportive influences from outside one's family can support or replace negative filial relationships so one can still grow into adulthood with a positive self relationship. "Family" can be experienced in the church

family setting. One's congregation or school can become the family dynamic that nurtures a healthy self image. In this sense, youth ministry is communal ministry, with a responsibility of all members of the body of Christ. (Hebenton, 2010). Youth ministry supports the development of self through family—either the filial or congregational relationships. Because one's self is ultimately defined through family relationships, family becomes the most significant relational area to develop for the "self" side of the triangle.

Fellowship Relationships Defined

Fellowship creates an atmosphere of trust; a place in which I am not afraid. Fellowship creates a climate in which failure gets tenderized as a learning path for growth. Fellowship forms the "Others" side of the triangle. Youth ministry facilitates opportunities for youth to be in fellowship with other youth. This includes young people they already know as well as others God brings into their lives.

Fellowship includes the tri-commands for all who live in faith with God: witness, evangelize, disciple (Zanzig. 2010). A maturing youth ministry leads members beyond personal horizontals to accountability for the lateral dimensions in daily contacts. Fellowship is more than friendship based on common interests or other factors. Fellowship is the awareness that those in my circle of contacts have a common destiny as do I— eternity. Fellowship opens the door for courage as one embraces the Gospel Commission.

Youth ministry outreach in relational terms is not about projects or activities, but connecting with others with the prayer that they will be welcomed into the same sense of destiny as I. Relational youth ministry helps its members to become aware of God's call in their lives to participate in the Gospel Commission in whatever lifestyle areas God

leads them into. When people see others from the perspective of eternal fellowship together, others become a more coveted part of daily relationships.

Implementation Steps

Relational youth ministry can be implemented through the following steps:

1. Leadership awareness of and accountability to relational youth ministry.

2. Seeking opportunities to enter into relationships with youth through the agenda of presence, not manipulation. (Relationships are for being, not a "hook" for doing.)

3. Develop a potpourri of activities and events that will strengthen relational growth in each of the Triangle of Life Relationships. Most common youth activities such as creative worship,

outreach, spiritual studies, recreation, social, prayer ministries, meetings and events, etc., can be channels for relational development.

4. Arrange for feedback with youth and adults: What is happening and why? What should be changed, corrected, disbanded, introduced?

5. Keep focused. Utilize ministry to enhance the God/Faith; Family/Self; and Others/Fellowship dimensions in life.

A relational model for youth ministry is simple: Together learn to love God with everything you've got (faith); be positive about yourself (family); and reach out to others to build an alliance for eternity (fellowship). Regardless of the size of your group, this model for local church youth ministry works.

Developed in *Family*

Self **Others** **God**

***Fellowship* From Common Goals**

THE TRIANGLE OF LIFE RELATIONSHIPS

***Faith* Resulting in Sanctification**
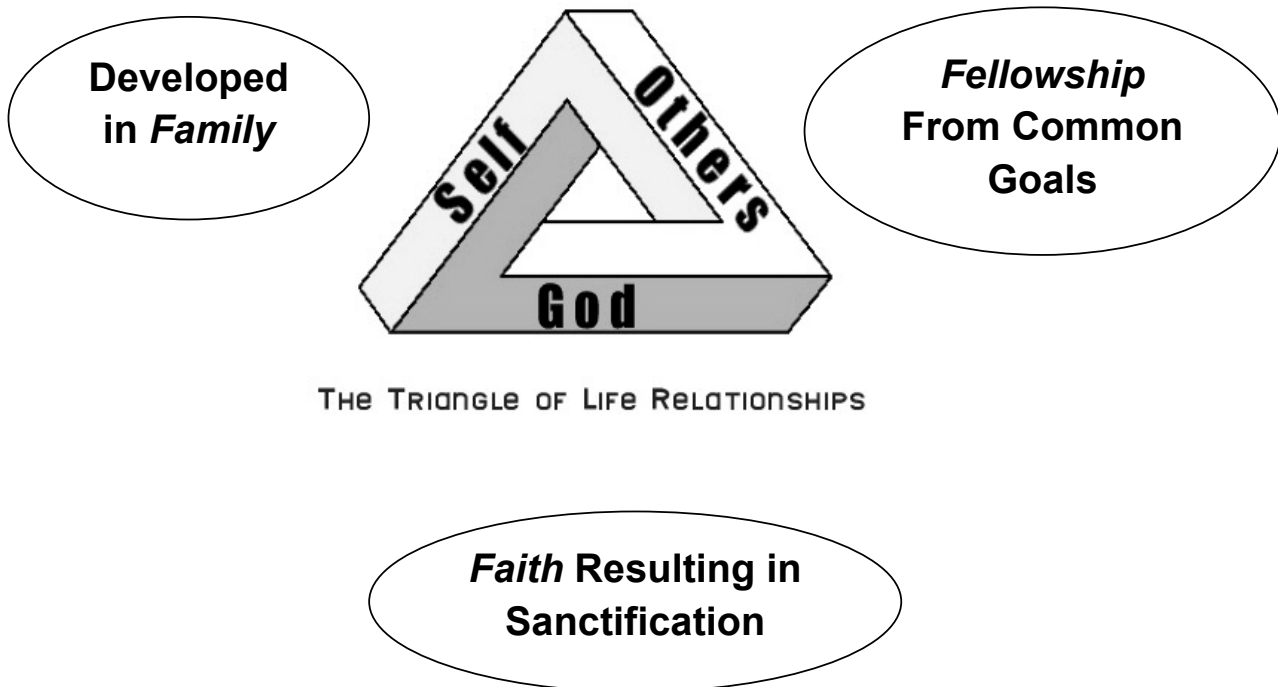
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Relationship Theology in Campus-Based Ministry

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Abstract

One of the most pervasive themes in Scripture is that of relationships. First, God created people in His "image" because He wanted to live with them and have intimate relationships with them—knowing them personally. Second, God intended for people to spend time together with each other in relationships, knowing each other personally as well. The natural combination of these two facts is that people are best introduced to God by people they know who already have a personal relationship with Him rather than through the impersonal conveyance of information. Campus-based Ministry is the best model for reaching youth and young adults that attend school because it engages young people where they spend most of their time and have most of their relationships—on campus—at school.

In the Beginning…

In the beginning God was lonely. Right? He had thousands of angels surrounding him, and in addition to angels, the author of Hebrews refers to other "worlds" (Hebrews 1:2, 11:3) implying that God has created other kinds of "beings" somewhere out there to interact with as well. Job 2:1 refers to the "Sons of God" coming to present themselves before God and Satan being among them. Satan was representing planet earth—which leads us to assume that the others were representing other populations from other places, too. And yet in Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us (NLT)." So, even though there were other creatures, one can't help but wonder if they bore God's image specifically.

It seems that there was still more that God wanted in his life—creatures more like himself. Ezekiel chapter one uses bizarre language to describe what angels look like. Could such amazing descriptions be due to images so far beyond what human words and concepts can grasp? One thing seems certain—they don't naturally look the way they do when they take on human form and appear to people here on earth! They are amazingly complex and intricate according to Ezekiel's depiction; but clearly not bearing God's image.

Creating Adam and Eve in God's image was something new and revolutionary. When Ellen White comments on what it means to be made in God's image she says, "Man was to bear God's image, both in outward

resemblance and in character (White, 1940, p. 45)." Since God's character is one of love—when we act in loving ways we are acting consistently with His character that is also revealed by God's law. The law is summed up in scripture as "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind. And, love your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10:27 NLT)." This law is intentionally stated in relational terms of how people are to interact with each other and with God—making love the highest goal. To have God's character means one is loving and kind to all creatures, people and God. To be loving and kind is a very personal act. It cannot be cold, indifferent or aloof; but warm and intimate.

We don't know what the characters of God's other creatures are like, but these passages of Scripture reveal how He created to us to be. The special, unique creation of humans very likely sparked the jealousy that caused Lucifer to rebel in heaven and eventually be cast down to earth (White, 1958). There is no Scriptural record of Satan tempting other creatures. Humans seem to be the first. God cast Satan from heaven and then allowed him to present his "alternative" lifestyle to Adam and Eve upon God's completion of earth's creation. Satan sets the example of how "not to be" loving, and God, through Jesus, sets the example of how "to be" loving. The "Great Controversy" of good pitted against evil can be couched in the relational terms of whom we will choose to listen to, spend time with, and follow.

We find evidence of God's close personal relationship with people in Genesis 3:8 (NLT), "Toward evening they heard the LORD God walking about in the garden…" Evidently God Himself came regularly to walk and talk with the people He had created because they recognized the sound of Him coming. Scripture nowhere indicates that humans were an experiment, or pets, or merely created to

be subjects. John 15:15 (NLT) says, "I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn't confide in his servants. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me."

The Gospels show a clear record that Jesus came to earth to be with, laugh with, hug and care for His children that he had created so many years before. He longed to walk with his people again lead them to choose to live with him for eternity. He healed, taught and mentored them tirelessly all the way to his dying breath on the cross. Even with death at the door he thought not of himself but of his people. Hanging on the cross Jesus forgave the soldiers gambling for his possessions, asked John to care for his mother and promised the repentant thief next to him eternal life. A few hours before being nailed to the cross Jesus lovingly gave a look of forgiveness to Peter after his prophesied denial. This one act of forgiveness forever changed Peter's life.

These are just a fraction of the myriad personal interactions between God and his people recorded throughout Scripture. God's recorded history with his people is a very personal and relational one. The incarnation of Christ demonstrates that God not only wanted to know us personally, but he wanted us to know him as well.

God revealed himself personally to all humankind, not just those present when He had opportunity to walk and talk with people on planet earth. God gave us his written Word to record his time on earth. It also details many of his other interactions with people through divine providence and miracles, and he communicated all of this in a way we could understand. God didn't write a book of interesting tales of his life in heaven with angels and drop it from the sky in order to help us learn more about him. Instead, he miraculously spoke to prophets who were dedicated to him and were engaged in

committed relationships with him. He spoke to them with language and illustrations they could relate to and understand. He used practical illustrations that everyone understood so that we could know him in the best and most personal way possible.

The obvious lesson here is that God created us to be relational beings. It is our nature and it is God's nature. Made in his image, we relate best to each other when we reflect his character of love. God speaks to us and interacts with us through our daily relational patterns and rhythms because we naturally communicate this way. Shouldn't it be obvious to us that since God chose a personal, relational methodology for reaching out to us, we would do best to reach out to people around us in the same way? How in the world would anyone be converted to anything worthwhile by receiving a flier in the mail (along with all the other junk mail) from strangers inviting them to listen to a visiting preacher for a few weeks? People in the past got away with it during the information-driven modern era, but in the relational postmodern era, the impotence of this impersonal approach is unmistakable.

Using Christ's Method of Ministry

How do we apply relationship theology to our lives and ministries today? The foundation for ministry must be laid by using Jesus' methodology of old to reach into the future of our world. Our Creator knows our deepest, truest nature. When His approach "to us" gets used "by us" to reach out to others, success in leading these others to Christ is certain. One of Ellen White's most often quoted passages states that, "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'" (White, 1942, p. 143) This pervasive theme in Scripture presents a sure prescription

for success in fulfilling the Gospel Commission. Note the emphasis on making disciples rather than merely throwing information at people. This reveals the difference between a personal and impersonal approach to ministry. It's the difference between genuinely loving others and acting out of a merely legalistic obligation.

The New Testament presents Saul as a legalistic persecutor when he had only pharisaical "religion." He captured and tortured people who believed differently than he did. But once he met Christ personally on the Damascus road, it radically changed the way he applied the Scriptures that he had known all his life. Rather than persecuting those with a different understanding of God, he reached out to them with a heart that ached for their conversion. He longed for them to have the same peace and love that he had found in his relationship with Christ. His newfound, personal relationship with Jesus changed the relationships he had with everyone around him. Paul's conversion made a dramatic difference in how he lived his life. Having this kind of intimate relationship with Christ today will help us to develop this kind of heart for others. It will ensure that we use Scripture as a means to help people rather than condemn them.

Campus-based Ministry—Christ's Method for Students

Over the past 25 years youth ministry developed models designed to draw students into local churches. The "draw" consisted of games, bands, food, drama, movies etc. Oftentimes something devotional would be presented as well, but spirituality wasn't the focus. Friendships and fun were the focus. Recent books and articles declare this "fun and games" model bankrupt because it has proven itself impotent in the area of nurturing lasting discipleship (Oestreicher, 2008; King and Pickell, 2008; Kimball, 2007). The classic example of this is the "Willow Creek

Confession" in which Willow Creek Community Church leaders confess that merely getting people into a church building/complex doesn't make them spiritual (Hawkins and Parkinson, 2007).

Campus-based ministry seeks to do away with the gimmicks used to "draw" people into church facilities and instead seeks to go and meet students where they live so much of their lives—on campus at school. There are many college, university and high school campus ministry resources available but the basic concept is to "GO" like Jesus did rather than "draw" like megachurches do (King and Pickell, 2008; Ward, 2009). Instead of sitting in our churches waiting for students to come to us, the key is to get out of your box and go to them!

Here are some practical suggestions for applying relationship theology to a campus ministry setting:

1. Campus leaders must be connected to Christ personally themselves.

2. Develop good people skills for relating to others.

3. Get on campus. This one is obvious! It's the point of the whole thing yet there can be a temptation to stay in the campus ministry center office. Getting out of the church and to a campus center is the first step but you can't stop there. Get around and in and among those on campus, engage the student's world, meet them in the middle of their lives. Here are some examples of what you could do on campus:

    a. Campus faire booth asking for forgiveness (Miller, 2003)

    b. Pizza and Prayer—giving away pizza and taking prayer requests (Ward, 2009)

    c. Prayer walks, etc.—pray out loud as you walk; plead for people and campus issues

    d. Send notes to teachers letting them know the Christian club prays for them in tough times, etc.

Jesus went out to meet needs. No one ever came to His office—because He didn't have one! No one ever came to His church—because He didn't need one! He did run a small group for 12 people and oftentimes thousands came to listen to Him. But the point is that we have to get out there "into all the world" to see what the needs are. Then, when God reveals to us the needs of the world around us, we are to show love to the people we see and develop relationships with them that can make an eternal difference in their lives. The Gospel Commission challenges us to go out and meet God's children wherever they are and let them know we love them by introducing them to the one who has transformed our own lives—Jesus Christ—the One and only!

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An Incarnational Priesthood: Mentoring, Nurture, Outreach

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Abstract

Youth/young adult ministry must be an incarnational priesthood: (1) leaders immersing themselves within the group for discipleship mentoring, (2) the group itself having nurturing fellowship (koinonia) among its own membership and within the larger church body, and (3) the group also becoming incarnate with the outside community for service and evangelistic outreach. This presents a challenge for young Adventists and their leaders to be incarnational in this manner without compromising their mission, their message or their morals.

One Saturday night I was doing a police chaplaincy ride-along with a veteran sergeant. We checked on a lakefront nightspot that attracted crowds of carousing college students. Patrons had to be at least 21 years of age to gain entrance since the establishment sold liquor. Local high schoolers hung around outside the club, wistfully awaiting the night they could get inside to join the action.

As the old sergeant and I strolled past the loitering teens, making sure nothing illegal was happening, he suddenly stopped, turned to me and blurted, "All these kids! They're just waiting to get themselves into trouble." He paused and added, "I'm not religious myself, but I know they really need church."

He looked back in their direction and asked aloud, "Where are the churches? They should have something going for these kids;

some kind of community center to get them off the streets and have some safe, clean fun like games, music, refreshments—you know."

Then he looked at me. "Your church should be doing something here for them."

Maybe that grizzled old cop was onto something. Although unchurched himself, he had a vision that challenged organized religion—and specifically my Seventh-day Adventist congregation—to become incarnate with the community in reaching out to teens.

I confess that my church wasn't up to the challenge. We weren't ready to have our few youth and young adults (YAYAs) mingling with their neighborhood peers.

Many church groups take their teens and young adults overseas to do outreach ministry in the form of mission trips, while basically ignoring outreach in their own backyard. This

might not be an oversight. It may seem spiritually safer to let our YAYAs connect with people in faraway places, where we can more easily control or at least monitor their interaction. Then we whisk them safely home to live the rest of the year in a spiritually secure bubble of Adventist teaching and socializing.

But is it really safe for the souls of YAYAs to be quarantined from their neighborhood affinity group—basically living without the inspiration of an incarnational outreach mission? And how does a policy of minimizing their contact with community peers fulfill the Gospel Commission to serve as salt and light among the lost?

I concede that there is undeniable spiritual risk in close contact with the community. In the book of Genesis we read how Lot learned that the hard way. But Lot was more commercially-minded than missional, and he connected with the Sodom community in compromise rather than through purposeful outreach. Despite the dangers of interaction with local lost people, it may be even more risky to quench the spirit of incarnational outreach in our YAYAs.

Can we establish safeguards to minimize the risk of community interaction for YAYAs while at the same time maximizing their outreach potential? I think so. My thesis is that the optimal model for YAYA ministry is not a babysitting, entertainment service but an incarnational priesthood that includes three key strategies: (1) mature leaders immersing themselves as discipleship mentors within the YAYA group; (2) the group itself nurturing fellowship (koinonia) among its own membership and within the larger church body; and (3) the group also becoming incarnate with the outside community for service and evangelistic outreach. This presents a challenge for YAYAs and their leaders to be incarnational in this manner

without compromising their mission, their message or their morals.

First I will address the missiology of incarnational priesthood and then describe a 2002 youth ministry project in Canada that found success with such a model. Finally I will offer some suggestions for praxis and safeguards.

Christ Modeled Incarnate Ministry

Jesus came to this earth incarnate, not just in flesh but in the human experience of His own local culture. When it came time for him to leave this world, he commissioned his church to go into the world the way he had. He prayed to His Father: "As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18 ESV), in the world but not of the world (verses 15 and 16).

This word "sent" is *apostello,* the Greek verb related to our noun "apostle." The church community is the apostle of Jesus, dispatched into the world as His corporate ambassador—just as our heavenly Father had sent Christ as His representative.

When saving our individual souls through faith in Christ, God's Spirit puts us in relationship not only with Himself, but with each another. (See 1 John 1:3, 7.) This relational element is not quarantined within the Body of Christ. It bubbles and springs like a fountain of living water that overflows from within the church into neighborhood service and outreach. No wonder Christ will be able to discern his sheep visibly from those outside his flock in the final judgment. His sheep courageously and unselfishly involved themselves in the needs of outsiders. (See Matthew 25:31-46.)

Don't make the mistake of thinking church life as a perpetual picnic enjoyed with good people who don't curse in front of our kids, suffer hangovers or fornicate. And to switch metaphors, the church is not a luxury cruise

ship but a lifeboat, with all hands on deck. We are the Body of Christ, his hands and his feet and his heart. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:10). The apostle Paul further said, "You show that you are a letter from Christ" (2 Corinthians 3:3). To a lost and confused world, we are Christ's ambassadors—incarnate representatives of heaven.

Christ is our high priest (Hebrews 4:14), a term that implies lesser priests here on earth. Protestants have known this as theological theory for the past five centuries, ever since Martin Luther discovered forgiveness directly from personal prayer to God without a human priest. The whole church is Christ's priesthood, Luther thundered. Yet the church, from that time forward, has mostly missed the full meaning of that sanctuary truth. We regard "the priesthood of all believers" mostly as a defensive, passive doctrine. We seem to overlook that priests don't just sit there; they do something. Priests are Christ's living, loving connectors. Writing to a broad range of believers, Peter wrote, "You are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God" (1 Peter 2:5, NLT).

The heavenly sanctuary is Christ's human resource center, His employment agency for His people, young and old. On Pentecost, the same day of his inauguration as heaven's high priest, Christ sent forth the Spirit from the sanctuary to empower his church with spiritual gifts for ministry. Thus, to be saved is to join the priesthood of all believers. Vacation from guilt is vocation for ministry—incarnational nurture and outreach. Just as Jesus lived among us to connect us with the Father, we now seek to connect our community to him.

Koinonia is inherently incarnational, since its essence is mutual participation in the Spirit for worship and service in the Body of Christ. True priests don't just share the theory of the Gospel, they invest themselves into the community of need, as Jesus did.

To summarize: The same day Jesus became our high priest in heaven's sanctuary, He empowered his church as a priesthood for ministry. This moves beyond believing the sanctuary truth and behaving ourselves within our Adventist bubble. New covenant priests are heaven's incarnate ambassadors, infused as salt and light within a lost world. What a contrast to the disconnected evangelist, Jonah, who watched for God's judgment from the hillside outside Ninevah.

Furthermore, there is no safety in sequestering YAYAs within a sterile spiritual environment. When they are mentored and empowered for spiritual service, they discover meaning and purpose that fosters fulfillment, maturity and stability for them in the Body of Christ.

All this may be credible missional theory. But how does it work out in the life of the church, specifically with YAYA?

Practical Priesthood: A Field Experience

One example of incarnational ministry for youth and by youth, to which I can personally attest, happened in 2002 at camp meeting in the Canadian province of British Columbia. I served as the evening speaker for the young adults. Early in the week, a call went out at the morning pastors' meeting for volunteers to mentor youth and accompany them in a day-long evangelistic outreach to the city of Vancouver.

Youth leaders invited all teens who wished to participate to skip recreation events and get trained for the evangelistic adventure. Scores responded to the challenge, including teens

who had not previously been interested in religious activities. Leaders laid a foundation with several days of insightful instruction about living for God missionally and unselfishly, also fortifying them through fervent worship and interaction with one another.

Participants forsook summer fun (swimming, tubing, canoeing) at one of the most beautiful campgrounds in the North America for a high stakes outreach adventure on East Vancouver's Hastings Street, a dysfunctional and depressing hotbed of ugliness and evil within an otherwise beautiful city. What an opportunity for missional youth!

After morning worship, big yellow school buses loaded up with kids and their adult mentors to head downtown. Adults throughout the campground offered prayer support; pastors and some parents came along as trainers and chaperones. Since Hastings Street is one of Canada's worst crime districts, vigorous safeguards were in place. No groups had fewer than four members, as I recall, and each had at least one male teen. Each group had to stay within sight of an adult mentor. They could not share contact information with people on the street. If a street person was obviously drunk, stoned or angry, they should avoid engagement. Despite all the cautions taken, there remained considerable risk in this outreach project. But the teens seemed energized by the challenge and thrilled with the joy of connecting directly with souls for Christ.

It proved to be a wonderful experience! Inspired and energized youth returned to Hastings Street day after day during camp meeting week, ignoring the recreational activities they had been looking forward to all year. Many who just came to camp meeting for the summer fun discovered the deeper satisfaction of serving in Christ's priesthood. And they became heroes among many supportive adults at the camp ground. Not

surprisingly, the usual teenage behavior problems at camp meeting were greatly reduced.

The Vancouver outreach story exemplifies several important elements previously presented as missional theory in this paper:

1) Incarnational mentoring – Adults who mentored the youth were more than babysitters. They functioned as discipleship mentors who modeled within the group the incarnational outreach they taught. For example, in my group I invited the teens to first observe me engage a person on the street. I told them to just jump in and take over the conversation if they felt so impressed. And they did! At first they just offered prayer, but soon they were leading people to accept Christ. Words can't explain their excitement at seeing souls saved through outreach.

2) Nurturing fellowship – Not only did the teens receive discipleship mentoring from experienced leaders, they also nurtured each other. Instead of rivalry, showmanship, or jockeying for position, these young people watched out for and supported one another, behaving with maturity far beyond their years. Leaders among them emerged, suddenly confident in the Spirit, to become mentors themselves. Teens still too timid to interact with street people maintained the refreshment tables at a concert in the neighborhood park that the musically talented ones presented.

3) Incarnate with local community – Local street people and the cops who monitored them couldn't believe all the love that unloaded from the yellow buses onto Hastings Street. Many had prayers offered for them by teenage intercessor priests. Clearly, that neighborhood hadn't experienced such a community outreach event in a long time.

Conclusion: Are We Ready to be Radical?

The Vancouver youth evangelism project is one more story that confirms what youth and young adult leaders are increasingly reporting: YAYAs are eager and capable in the Spirit to become a priesthood for incarnational service. They are learning the Adventist fundamental belief about the sanctuary in practical terms—not just as doctrine but as a living experience.

Heaven's great high priest has commissioned his church to be that kind of holy priesthood, as seen on Hastings Street: "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16 ESV). Yes, we must be wise—prudent to take all appropriate precautions to preserve our mission, message and morals. But we must also be courageous in the Spirit.

Nothing might seem more risky than sending out our YAYAs to do radical warfare against the devil's wolves. But there is greater spiritual risk in not sending them out at all, as attrition studies show. The most vulnerable YAYAs are those who lack a compelling mission in which they can lose their own lives for the sake of experiencing and sharing the life of Jesus. If they fail to find meaningful mission in the church, the world has no shortage of counterfeits.

Remember the old cop's question posed at the beginning of this chapter? Where is the church when our neighbors really need us? YAYAs are willing to be radical incarnational servants of the sanctuary. Are we willing to radically encourage them?

Delegating and Nurturing Youth Ministry

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Abstract

Using delegation in youth ministry is not simply a practical matter of getting more done. It is a way to increase the potential for spiritual growth in youth, training young adults in ministry as well as modeling a loving, nurturing relationship in the leadership team. Being a nurturing leader sets the example of Christian love that inspires youth, leaders and support staff alike. Nurture often functions as the oil that keeps the wheels turning in ministry, not only between leaders, but also inspiring youth in feeling loved and noticed.

Theology of Ministry

Jesus tells us to love another (John 13:34-35). He says that when others see our love, they will know that we belong to him. Jesus himself taught his disciples the kingdom of God is built on God's love that we receive freely, and then give freely to others.

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God (1 John 4:7)." Knowing God means seeing others with his eyes. This drives us to nurture the people we come in contact with, meeting their needs. Working together for the kingdom of God means humbling ourselves as Christ did and sharing the responsibilities with others according to the spiritual gifts and talents we have been given. Christ's training of his disciples exemplifies a blueprint for delegating leadership. He selected them, trained them by watching his example, sent them out on shorter trips to teach people about the kingdom, and then left them with a mentor, the Holy Spirit, when they were ready to lead on their own.

Introduction

A delegating ministry means giving young leaders ownership of the process of organizing youth ministry, together with a youth leader mentor. In this way, the youth ministry is enriched with the input and creativity of the young volunteer leaders. And while the job gets done, they also receive training during the process. This is important for the practical and training aspects as well as the impact a good team of leaders can

make on the youth. When the leaders enjoy spending time together and form a cohesive unit of mutual respect, the teens and youth notice. "The youth in your church and community will often judge the attractiveness and validity of the gospel by the relationships which the staff members have with one another (Gane, 1997, p. 196)." Combining delegative leadership with nurture prevents this youth ministry model from becoming a detached and distant.

Explanation – It Really Is That Simple!

The reason I combine delegation and nurture is that both complement each other in making this model of youth ministry work. As leaders, we need to always be open for training more leaders, and they are often found among the young adults or youth in our churches. But it involves being a youth leader who places the good of the youth ministry higher than one's control of the ministry. If authoritarian control is your leadership style, this will be very difficult to accomplish. But a leader who appreciates and shares with the youth will find that the youth ministry gains incredible enrichment from the insights of the volunteer leaders. They know the youth and have a variety of experiences that make a greater array of ideas and contacts.

Barry Gane describes the process of delegation and training in this way, "To begin with you, as the leader, will be concerned with the task, making things happen. You will become more and more supportive of the individuals in the group who are carrying responsibility and finally as they move toward maturity you will be able to step back and allow the group to grow under its own leadership (Gane, 1997, p. 76)."

Delegating really can be easy, provided the leader's perspective and style trains and enables other leaders rather than being the self-appointed benevolent dictator! A

delegating and nurturing leader is almost always open to feedback.

Youth leaders need to be aware of the importance of gender balance in the leadership group. Simple gender stereotypes expect males to be doers and females to be nurturers. As a woman and a youth leader, I have maybe been even more aware of this. Taking in a situation, seeing which people show the need for someone to talk to, comes naturally to me, yet I have seen several male colleagues ignore a person for the process. Sometimes male teens find it difficult to open themselves to a woman, but easier to a 20-somethings male. Similarly, many young girls need female role models in ministry in order to see that there are many ways they also can serve God. A good leadership group needs to have leaders of both genders in a good balance. "Since good discipleship is good role modeling, one of the basic ingredients of discipleship is to have positive role models of both sexes in front of your kids (Burns, 1988, p. 70)."

Nurture

"Good youth ministry with a real impact takes time and nurture (Burns, 1988, p. 19)." Being a delegating leader must involve nurturing your volunteer leaders and seeing their needs. It also includes making sure they are not overwhelmed or burned-out, which can happen if they get too much responsibility too quickly. Having a nurturing mindset also means the leader clearly perceives which gifts the trainee leaders have and where they fit in the youth ministry. A nurturing culture in the leadership team results in leaders that are happy in their tasks, enjoy being together and improve their own nurturing skills.

Volunteer leaders learn how to nurture by observing a youth leader modeling the desired attitude and behaviors. They, in turn, begin to see the individual needs of young people around them. Making this part of leadership

team meetings further enhances a nurturing environment. This approach helps the social and emotional development of the teenagers, and especially their spiritual development. In the youth ministry setting they encounter youth and young adults who are deeply spiritual and personally interested in them, which encourages them to get involved practically and spiritually.

Application in a ministry setting

I am using the example of camps for this way of leading youth ministry, but it can just as well be used in running youth ministry week to week in a local church setting. My own experience is in a smaller, European context, with smaller groups of both participants and leaders, as well as less funds. This is far from the North-American "mega-camps." But leadership style will always influence the whole group, trickle down from the top, and influence atmosphere, attitude to rules, and human interaction.

Because the volunteer leaders are so involved in the process and details of the youth ministry as well as the overview and mindset of the leadership, there is a cohesiveness that creates a team approach to the camp environment. Leaders interact with youth and teens with an awareness and purpose for the spiritual goals of any particular day as well as the uniqueness of the individuals at camp, since this has been part of the leadership team discussions. This type of environment creates trust with the youth and teens who attend youth ministry events. With confident leaders setting the tone and implementing nurture, the young people feel safe, noticed as individuals, and they have loads of fun.

Stages in Delegation

This model includes delegation in all stages for a national teen camp.

1. **Planning.** The camp leader selects leaders to assist as leaders. Youth can apply or request to be on the leadership team. The camp leader schedules regular planning sessions so the leadership team receives instruction as well as the experience of developing into a team for ministry.

2. **Preparation.** The time leading up to the start of camp presents an opportunity for the delegating leader to show confidence in the volunteer leaders. This includes checking up on them to monitor progress, affirming them, and providing support where needed. At times this involves problem-solving as well.

3. **Camp-time.** This is when the team-building, delegation and nurture really pay dividends. By this time, the leadership team should be a group of people who know each other, pray together, laugh together and work well together. During the sleep-deprived week of camp, this provides a tremendous reservoir to accomplish the desired goals. With a fully developed team and an awareness of each other's gifts, dividing up the duties becomes an easy task. However, the youth leader must remain vigilant in maintaining the atmosphere and practice of nurturing with the other leaders in order for that to continue to the campers.

4. **Post-camp evaluation.** This is a crucial, often-neglected tool for both leadership growth and nurture. Take your team out for at least a meal, if not a weekend, where you look at the results of the camper evaluation sheets, take time to let everyone have input—positives and negatives, things to be improved, dreams for the next year. This is the camp leader's opportunity to show appreciation for the leaders as well as to heal wounds, listen to concerns and build the foundation for a team for next year's camp.

A solution to a problem we had at camp illustrates the value of a leadership team with delegation and nurture. While planning communion at a teen camp, the leadership team had trouble seeing how the foot-washing component could work. We had quite a few un-churched teenagers at camp who had never experienced foot-washing, yet we wanted to keep that as part of the program. We anticipated it could easily become a joke instead of the humble and spiritual experience it is meant to be. Under the Holy Spirit's influence, the team came up with an idea that worked incredibly well. As the teens came in from a hot day in which many had been running in sandals or barefoot, the leaders were all waiting with basins and towels to wash their feet. The candlelit hall became very quiet as leaders washed the teenagers' dusty feet, prayed with them, and hugged them. Later, when I told them the Bible story of the first Communion, a hush came over the room as the teenagers had just experienced what a servant-leader, following Christ's example does. I am sure one reason this idea came to us was that the group was already a cohesive unit through nurture and sharing responsibilities as our way of doing youth ministry.

Nurturing Camp Support Staff

Youth ministry includes support staff in addition to the youth and their leaders. Local churches as well as camps have support personnel who prepare food, open churches, provide transportation, set up and later clean up facilities. They are important to youth ministry, too! Nurturing and empowering support staff broadens the atmosphere of nurture and delegation, and models consistency throughout a camp or a church.

I have seen well-planned and creative camps destroy support staff for lack of a nurturing leader. It is crucial to catch problems before they happen. For example,

touch base with the kitchen every day to see that everyone is working well together. Find out if the kids are behaving well towards the kitchen staff, communicate if the food is appreciated. Simply listening and showing that you as a leader care about the concerns of the support staff, can prevent many crises.

Finding the Balance

As a youth leader and camp director, one must be willing to share the spotlight, to let volunteers in on the process, and not be controlling. Delegating and sharing responsibility does not mean letting the "lure" of being one of the gang blind you into letting go of your judgment. You are the adult, the leader at camp. "Finding that balance between being like the youth you would lead, and providing a role model they can follow, is often a confusing task…Accept the young people you would lead – exactly as they are – and give them an example of what they can become (Gane, 1997, p. 70)."

Delegating and nurturing leadership has to be very intentional. Do not fool yourself into thinking that you can just let youth in the leadership team do everything while you do nothing. Pray for them, pray with them, notice them, take time for them, be a visible leader who is open.

We once had a young 17-year old join the leadership team at the last planning session before camp. He came with his church youth leader and was going to work as a camp assistant. It was not altogether a positive outcome. He had not been part of the process of building the team. He didn't yet embody the full spirit of the team. He was a bit immature for his task and bragged to the other teenagers during the camp about being staff. I was worried at the time. But we continued to nurture him and give him responsibilities that fit his gifts. The selection process of building the leadership team necessitates great caution. But taking that risk proved to be

simply a beginning for the young man. Today that same young man is a youth leader with a team in his church, running a monthly youth meeting in which many un-churched youth come regularly to church. Who is to say what effect the example of the other youth leaders had on him? "The Christian Community (the church), in assuming the responsibility of nurturing its youth, will actively involve itself in the growth and development of every young person under its care (Gane, 1997, p. 196)."

Conclusion

The youth leader who is intentional about delegating to trainee leaders and has a nurturing approach to interaction in ministry will find this model useful. I have found it a successful way of doing youth ministry by modeling respect for each other. It also develops skills and nurtures the emotional and spiritual aspects of the youth. They learn Christianity from the example of the youth leaders and are inspired in their personal relationship with God.

Delegation Model
From Youth Leader Onwards
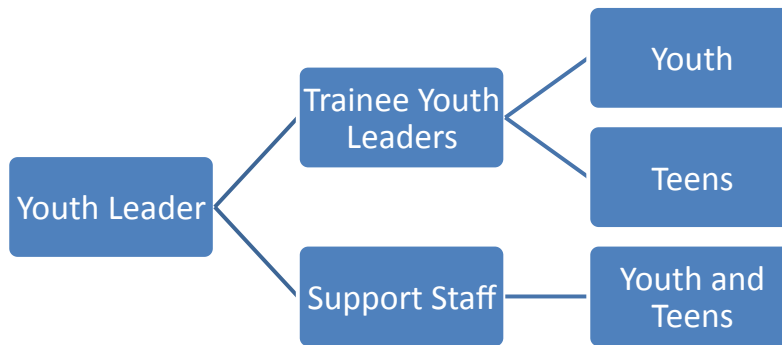
Nurturing Cycle
Continuous in all Directions
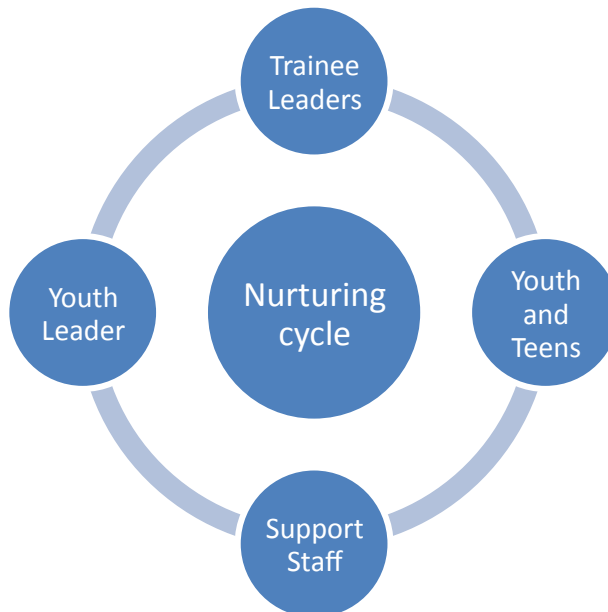
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From Cool to Competent: A New Model for Culturally Responsive Youth Ministry

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Abstract

A cultural competence model of youth ministry provides an alternative to the more familiar lens of cultural relevance, which has become equated with watered-down, market-driven Christianity. Cultural competence focuses on creating inclusive organizations that are responsive to cultural difference. This makes it an ideal approach for churches that wish to attract and retain emerging generations.

Relevance

After teaching a seminary course in youth culture for over a decade, I find myself choking on the word 'relevant.' I'm not any less passionate about the intersection of faith and culture. It's just that the term, once informed by contextualization, now seems overrun by commercialization. When someone speaks of 'being relevant' it leads others to assume you'll be spicing up next week's Bible study with clips from the latest movie, just to keep the youth coming.

How did relevance collapse into cool? 'Cool hunting' is a term coined in the late nineties to describe marketers' pursuit of the next youth trend, brought to life in Rushkoff's (2001) documentary, Merchants of Cool. In fact, ever since the post-WWII rise of the teenager, "youth culture and marketing have been historically intertwined" (Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006, p. 233). Late consumer capitalism, "the penetration of market values into areas of personal and social life where they do not belong" (Hamilton, 2007, p. 3), now creates a climate where even youth programs have become consumer products. This has turned cultural relevance into the practical equivalent of market relevance.

McCracken (2010a) lit up the blogsphere with his book Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide. In a companion article in the Wall Street Journal he warned:

If the evangelical Christian leadership thinks that 'cool Christianity' is a sustainable path forward, they are severely mistaken. As a twentysomething, I can say with confidence

that when it comes to church, we don't want cool as much as we want real.

If we are interested in Christianity in any sort of serious way, it is not because it's easy or trendy or popular. It's because Jesus himself is appealing, and what he says rings true. It's because the world we inhabit is utterly phony, ephemeral, narcissistic, image-obsessed and sex-drenched—and we want an alternative. It's not because we want more of the same. (McCracken, 2010b, p. 14-15)

He is not the first to challenge the church on the issue of relevance. Guinness (2003) asked: "How on earth have we Christians become so irrelevant when we have tried so hard to be relevant?" (p. 11). Many, including Guinness, would say we've gotten here by accommodating ourselves to the whims of culture. One leading youth specialist charged that youth ministry is trapped in its own state of adolescence. "Obsessed with cool. Trendy. Impulsive. Self-focused…. We're not just working with teenagers; we're starting to think like them…. I'm concerned that in our efforts to make the gospel more relevant, we're in danger of dressing up and dumbing down a message that Paul described as inherently foolish to those who are perishing" (Robbins, 2009, p. 1-2, 6).

Given that relevance has become equated with watered-down, market-driven Christianity, perhaps it's time for a new model of culturally responsive youth ministry, one that engages youth culture from a different point of view. The cultural competence model developed by Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs (1989) may provide the way forward. Here are several reasons why.

Relevance or Competence?

Segmentation vs. Integration Market relevance divides the population into segments in order to hone in on consumers' preferences. In her book, *The $100 Billion Allowance: How to Get Your Chare of the Global Teen Market,* Moses (2000) divided the youth demographic into six "value segments," with tips on how to cash-in on each one (pp. 79-104). Youth ministry often adopts this divide-and-conquer strategy. It has drawn on the literature of generational segmentation, while compromising the theological vision of unity set forth by Jesus (John 17).

Rather than segregating groups, the cultural competence model seeks to integrate diverse groups into an organizational scope by creating inclusive environments and respectful practices. Ongoing research in Fuller Youth Institute's College Transition Project supports this approach. It reveals a strong link between students' intergenerational involvement and their decision to remain in the church after graduation (Powell, 2009).

Surface vs. Deep In their search for the next big thing, cool hunters have gleaned from what Weaver (1986) pictured as 'surface culture' - that fifteen percent of the 'cultural iceberg' above waterline. This is made up of a group's observable behaviors, language, and preferences. Much of what passes as relevance in youth ministry relates to these visual and auditory elements of popular culture. It's easy, quick, and doesn't require much thought. Channel surfers make the broadest swath, as do those who know which blogs report the tips of the icebergs, including the latest ones. Cultural competence, on the other hand, gives careful consideration to 'deep culture.' This larger, submerged part of the iceberg is made up of a group's sub-conscious beliefs, values and assumptions. The Bible speaks to this deep level of culture, while for the sake of relevance, many youth ministries remain on the surface. Being relevant to the tip of the cultural iceberg, however, is not the same as competently responding to what lies beneath.

Attractive vs. Effective Creating relevance in the marketplace is about making products attractive to consumers. Marketers design strategies to influence consumer behavior and increase sales. Youth ministries have followed suit, packaging the Gospel with the latest trends and then measuring success by the vanload. According to Root (2007) these 'strategies of influence,' once popular in 1940's and 50's youth ministry, have slowly lost their appeal. What's more, they fail to serve the most troubled youth . The cultural competence model, however, emerged out of a commitment by health agencies to serve diverse populations. The goal was to develop people and systems that could provide assistance to cultural groups in an effective and respectful way rather than to merely attract customers.

Borrow vs. Invest Over the years, marketers have tried to borrow 'cool' from youth culture. Not to be outdone, evangelical youth ministries have drawn heavily from popular culture. Radosh (2008) documented an entire "parallel universe" of Christian pop culture, including everything from Christian theme parks to a Christian wrestling federation. More recently, companies have been advised to invest in culture, by weaving their brand into the "cultural DNA" of their target market (Popcorn, 2006). Culturally competent organizations have understood this need to invest all along. They pour significant amounts of time and energy into a cultural community. And they empower members of that community as part of building the organization's capacity for competence.

Stuff vs. Structure Finally, market relevance focuses on creating culturally savvy products and programs. While cool stuff may bring young people in the door of a church, it does not guarantee them a voice on the board or give them a place to use and develop their talents—things that could keep them around for the long haul. This is where the cultural competence model excels. By definition, competence focuses on structure—on developing behaviors, policies and attitudes within an organization that allow it to be effective in working with another culture (Cross et al., 1989). Quite simply, if the church wants to succeed with younger generations, it needs to stop throwing cool stuff at them and start paying attention to structure.

Five Elements of Culturally Competent Churches

What do culturally competent churches look like? Cross et al. (1989) list five elements that contribute to an organizations' ability to become more competent. I've adapted these elements to fit the multi-generational church context.

1. Culturally competent churches value generational diversity. These churches value younger members just as much as they do older ones. Young people bring a number of differences to the table, many of which could be viewed negatively or positively. For instance, some have criticized 'digital natives' for their short attention spans, even calling them *The Dumbest Generation* (Bauerlein, 2008). Others, meanwhile, have praised their ability to multi-task, to negotiate multiple perspectives, and to collaborate in unprecedented ways (Jenkins et. al., 2006). The key is to look for the best in each generation and not to assume that different is necessarily deficient or dangerous.

2. **Culturally competent churches conduct self- assessment**. These churches willingly take a long, hard look at themselves by evaluating their policies, practices and attitudes related to youth and young adults. They ask questions similar to those found in the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment

Questionnaire (Mason, 1995):

- How much do we know about the emerging generation?

- How much personal involvement do we have with youth and young adults?

- Does our paid and volunteer staff represent all age brackets?

- Do our church budgets and committee structures carve out a place for the young?

- What does our church do to invest in schools and youth agencies in our community?

Providing honest answers to questions like these will give congregations a sense of how competent they are and where they may need to grow.

3. **Culturally competent churches manage the dynamics of difference**. These churches understand that each generation approaches life differently, including how they learn, communicate and problem-solve. They realize that each generation may come to the table with certain expectations or stereotypes about the others. These differences can be a source of misunderstanding and tension, and competent congregations learn how to manage these dynamics. A recent study by the Pew Research Center found that today's generation gap is even wider than it was forty years ago, just after the social upheaval of Woodstock. But the results also indicate that the public is now more accepting of generational differences and handles them with less conflict than before (Taylor & Morin, 2009, pp. 5-6). This bodes well for churches who wish to bring generations together.

4. **Culturally competent churches incorporate cultural knowledge**. These churches channel useful knowledge about

emerging generations into every part of the organization. A well-known example of this is Beloit College's Mindset List, a set of generational markers compiled each year by two Beloit professors. They first generated the List in 1998 to acquaint their colleagues with the changing outlook of the incoming class. Since then, it has received nearly half a million hits on the internet annually (Nief & McBride, 2010, para. 2). Competent churches will follow the lead of Beloit College by finding creative ways to keep their members in tune with the changing world of youth and young adults.

5. **Culturally competent churches adapt to diversity**. These churches adapt their programs, structures and services to fit the needs of emerging generations. The military is a good example of this. It would be hard to find a more hierarchical organization. Yet the military depends on the skills and commitment of young people to carry out its mission. Consequently, they have learned how to adapt to new generations of soldiers. As one military expert notes, "It can be a very high pay-off for an organization if you figure out how to utilize, how to lead, how to integrate this generation. And that's the big question for organizations – be it the military, be it businesses, be it schools, be it churches. How do you deal with this new generation?" (Singer, 2010, 6:19-6:38). Competent churches wrestle with this question. And they understand, like the military, that the only real choice is to either adapt or lose the battle.

Cultural Brokering

Cross et al. (1989) envisioned competence on a six-point continuum, with cultural destructiveness at one end and cultural proficiency at the other. The purpose of the model was to encourage organizations

to find their place on the continuum and then move toward greater levels of competence. But how does an organization move from one level of competence to another? The answer: cultural brokering.

Cultural brokering is the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons from different cultural (or generational) backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change (Jezewski, 1990). In church settings, a broker may be an adult youth worker who has spent time observing and listening to young people, a parent who understands the struggle their teenager is going through, or a young person who produces a video about their generation's views on a topic.

Goode, Sockalingam & Snyder (2004) described cultural brokers as those taking on the roles of 1) liaisons, 2) cultural guides, 3) mediators, and 4) catalysts for change. Here are their descriptions, which I adapted for multi-generational church settings.

Cultural Brokers as Liaisons. Cultural brokers are knowledgeable in two realms: 1) the spiritual values, beliefs and practices of an emerging generation and 2) the established system of the church. They serve as points of contact and communication between these two worlds. In immigrant families, it's the children who serve as the conduit between the new culture and that of their parents. In churches, young people or youth workers often serve as links between a rapidly changing culture and the traditional environment of the church.

Cultural Brokers as Guides. Cultural brokers lead adult members into an understanding of a young person's world. Like tour guides in a distant land, they must provide insights into youth culture by referring to real-world experiences as well as drawing on the latest research. Most importantly, guides must have the trust of those they lead.

Youth workers who win the respect of parents as well as the friendship of young people make good cultural guides.

Cultural Brokers as Mediators. Cultural brokers can ease the inherent distrust many youth have of the church by putting an honest and caring face on the organization. They can also calm the fear and suspicion that many adults have of young people by representing them in fair and compelling ways. As advocates and go-betweens, cultural brokers must again devote sufficient time to building trust with both groups in order to work through conflict and misunderstanding.

Cultural Brokers as Catalysts for Change. Cultural brokers become change agents by creating collaborative environments that bring members of all generations into contact with one another. Serving together is an excellent way to build bridges and creates changes in climate and behavior. As catalysts, brokers model and mentor the change they wish to see in others, and take sensible risks when necessary.

Conclusion

In the end, it comes down to leadership. For a model of culturally competent youth ministry to take hold in churches, youth leaders must make the move from being cool hunters to serving as cultural brokers. We must invite others to bridge the gaps between generations, as well. When we do this, we will create congregations that achieve greater levels of cultural competence. And the more competent a congregation, the healthier, more connected and inclusive it will be for young and old alike.

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Cultural Competence Continuum: Church and Youth Edition
Adapted from Cross et al. (1989)

Culturally Destructive

The church acknowledges **only one way** of doing things and purposefully denies or prohibits other generational approaches.	The church assumes that older generations are **superior** to younger ones and may seek to silence or subdue them.	**Power differences** allow the dominant adult group in the church to exclude, control, or exploit youth and young adults.

Culturally Incapacitated

The church **lacks the capacity** to respond effectively to the needs, interests and preferences of youth and young adults.	The church distributes **resources** disproportionately in a way that benefits adults.	The church may send **subtle messages** to young people that they are not welcome or valued.

Culturally Blind

The church claims to treat all of its members **equally**; believes age and generations should make no difference.	The church focuses on **assimilating** youth into adult ways, ignoring the culture and contributions of younger members.	**Institutionalized bias** toward adults continues in the church despite occasional efforts to rescue youth and young adults.

Culturally Pre-Competent

The church recognizes its **weakness** in serving youth and young adults and seeks to **improve** its service to them.	The church tries **experiments** such as hiring a summer youth worker or electing junior deacons.	The church has a tendency toward **tokenism** and offering up **single-solution** approaches to complex generational issues.

Culturally Competent

The church respects generational **differences** and is attentive to the **dynamics of difference**.	The church continually assesses, expands and updates its **youth culture knowledge**.	The church adapts its **ministry models** in order to meet the needs of younger members.	The church includes young people in all areas of **leadership** and attracts **youth-inclusive pastors**.

Culturally Proficient

The church **values** and routinely **solicits** the insights and contributions of emerging generations.	The church leads by innovating **new approaches** to serving and involving young people and **shares** those with other churches.	The church **advocates** for youth and young adult issues in the community and at the conference and national level.

A model provides structure for ministry. Like the skeletal system of the body, it offers shape and support. You don't want your bones to be broken or to show themselves, just like you don't want your model for ministry to be broken or to show itself. It serves the ministry rather than vice versa.

This book is the result of the 180° Symposium hosted by the Center for Youth Evangelism. Nineteen papers were presented during the symposium and the group wrestled to come up with its "Top 10 Models" for youth and young adult ministry. An additional seven common models have been added. In this book you will find the results of this work, including:

Top 10 Models
The Lost and Found Model
The Wholistic Worship Model
The Discipleship Model
The Family-Based Model
The Missional Model
The Social Advocacy Model
The Small Groups Model
The Cross-Cultural Model
The Relational Model
The Leadership Model

Additional Common Models
The Entertainment Model
The Charismatic Leader Model
The School-Based Model
The Traditional Model
The New Thing Model
The Bi-Lingual Model
The One Thing Model

As you read this book, ask yourself which model(s) would work best in your ministry setting. It is not a matter of right or wrong, but rather different pathways to lead people to the kingdom of God. Look for ways to adapt these models so your ministry can become more purposeful and effective.