

## ***YOUTH MINISTRY***

- 1. There is a war between God and Satan over the hearts and minds of youth.**
  - a. Christian youth in the West and New Zealand often:
    - (1) Do not receive biblical and theological instruction from their parents.
    - (2) Do not fully understand the biblical worldview and cannot defend it.
    - (3) Struggle with doctrines such as the exclusivity of Jesus, the inerrancy of Scripture, and hell.
    - (4) Feel outnumbered and believe it is easier to just give in and conform.
    - (5) Walk away from the Christian faith even before they leave home.
  - b. Non-Christian youth in the West and New Zealand often:
    - (1) Grow up in broken homes and have learned to distrust everyone.
    - (2) Don't get a lot of guidance from their parents.
    - (3) Never hear the gospel message from someone they trust.
    - (4) Become agnostics, skeptics, atheists, and pantheists at an early age.
  - c. Youth in New Zealand face unthinkable temptations today, including:
    - (1) Alcohol.
    - (2) Drugs.
    - (3) Pornography.
    - (4) Sex.
    - (5) Social media bullying.
    - (6) Video gaming.
  - d. Youth must exercise more self-discipline today than at any time in human history.
  
- 2. Youth ministry must be a priority in our local churches.**
  - a. If one doesn't believe in Jesus before age 18, he or she probably never will.
    - (1) The most common age for conversion to Christianity in the U.S. is 13.<sup>1</sup>
    - (2) 67% of believers receive Jesus by the age of 18.<sup>2</sup>
  - b. To make youth ministry a priority, some advise local churches to:
    - (1) Spend \$1000-\$1500 per youth per year on youth ministry.
    - (2) Hire one full-time staff person for every fifty youth.
    - (3) Recruit one adult volunteer for every five youth.
  - c. Expect the youth group to be ten percent of the worshipping population.<sup>3</sup>
  
- 3. Youth have tremendous energy and enthusiasm and are usually undervalued.**
  - a. "God can and does use children and young people—their prayers, their insights, their words, their initiatives—in changing hearts. They represent 'new energy' to transform the world. Let us listen and not stifle their childlike spirituality..."<sup>4</sup>
  - b. Samuel, David, Jesus, John, and Timothy are examples of youth whom God used mightily.

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<sup>1</sup> Barna Research Group.

<sup>2</sup> Sonlife Ministries and Barna Research Group.

<sup>3</sup> Mark DeVries, *Sustainable Youth Ministry*.

<sup>4</sup> Lausanne Movement, *The Cape Town Commitment* (2011).

- (1) **1 Ti 4:12** 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.
  - c. The humble, innocent faith of youth is a lesson to skeptical adults in the church.
    - (1) **Mt 18:1-6** 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
  - d. “Youth are the church of today, not the church of tomorrow.”
- 4. At the same time, adults, not youth, know what’s best for youth.**
- a. Youth lack the capacity, experience, and maturity to understand what is best for them.
  - b. Adults abdicate their responsibility when they fail to lead youth and instead allow youth to lead them.
  - c. Youth need goody leaders to lead them to spiritual maturity. They need examples to follow.
    - (1) See *Imitation*.
  - d. The goal of youth ministry is to produce spiritually-mature adult believers.
- 5. Youth ministry must honor the jurisdiction of the family.**
- a. Youth ministry must not supersede the spiritual role of parents.
    - (1) **Dt 6:4-9** 7 You will teach [these words] diligently to your sons and will talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ...9 You will write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
    - (2) Ultimately parents, not the church, are responsible for the raising of children.
  - b. For information on family-church integration, see <https://ncfic.org>.
    - (1) “God did not ordain youth ministry. There is zero pattern for it.”<sup>5</sup>
    - (2) For another approach, see: <http://thinkorange.com>.
  - c. Youth ministry must not be an independent entity, effectively separate from the local church. Beware of creating a “two-eared Mickey Mouse,” the ears being children’s ministry and youth ministry.<sup>6</sup>
- 6. Youth ministry should follow a build-equip-win-multiply approach.**
- a. Use Sonlife’s building, equipping, winning, and multiplying approach, which follows Robert E. Coleman’s *The Master Plan of Evangelism*.
    - (1) See slides in *Church*.
    - (2) Determine which youth are the grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric stages of education.
    - (3) Every youth activity must accomplish one thing only—either ministry training, growth, group outreach, or leadership. Don’t try to tackle two things at once.
  - b. The key to the building phase is inductive Bible study.
    - (1) Acquaint youth with the sacred writings, that they may become wise for salvation.

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<sup>5</sup> *Divided: The Movie*.

<sup>6</sup> Jay Sedwick, Dallas Theological Seminary.

- (a) **2 Ti 3:14-15** 14 But as for you [Timothy], continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Messiah Jesus.

## 7. Tips.

- a. Overall.
  - (1) Keep things simple. Establish a routine that is sustainable.
- b. Youth leaders.
  - (1) Recruit dedicated, passionate, reliable volunteers at a 1:5 adult to youth ratio. Ask:
    - (a) How do you feel about youth, and how do you feel about Jesus?
  - (2) Train and equip your volunteers while constantly praying for them.
    - (a) Host youth leaders for dinner twice per year.
    - (b) Hold effective team meetings: programming, problems, pastoral issues, purpose, planning, personal struggles, and prayer.
    - (c) Have regular individual meetings with youth leaders. Evaluate their participation and performance.
    - (d) Make decisions by consensus.
    - (e) Utilize the abilities, gifts, and talents of your leaders: visionaries, directors, implementers, carers, analyzers.
    - (f) Keep in mind four roles: pastors, teachers, organizers, and creators.
    - (g) Build community through care, compliments, correction, and camaraderie.
    - (h) Publicly recognize your adult volunteers. Send them thank you notes and gift vouchers.
- c. Youth.
  - (1) Believe in them.
    - (a) See potential in youth that they don't see in themselves.
    - (b) Low expectation mean youth never rise to meet their full potential. Too high expectations leave youth feeling discouraged and condemned.<sup>7</sup>
  - (2) Inspire them.
    - (a) Passion is contagious. The biblical worldview is caught, not taught.
    - (b) Keep things interesting, while not diluting biblical content.
    - (c) "It's a sin to bore a kid with the gospel."<sup>8</sup>
  - (3) Challenge them.
    - (a) "The idea of having young kids and youth sit through eight hours a day studying the Bible would be ludicrous to most people, but the odds have been defied. This past week, I have witnessed 40+ kids sit from 8:00 in the morning till 5:00 in the evening studying and gleaning truths from Galatians as it was taught chapter by chapter, verse by verse, and word by word. This is a testament to the fact the Word of God speaks for itself."<sup>9</sup>
  - (4) Encourage them.
    - (a) Urge them to form lifelong habits of Bible study, prayer, and evangelism.

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<sup>7</sup> M. Brown, Growing into Leadership (YouthTrain, 2010), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Jim Rayburn.

<sup>9</sup> Cody Hughes, Disciple Makers Multiplied.

- (5) Value them.
  - (a) Greet them by name every week.
    1. “The most beautiful sound in someone’s ear is the sound of his own name.”
  - (b) Let them know you missed them when they were absent.
  - (c) Talk to them, listen to them, and give them your time. Show genuine interest and concern for their wellbeing. Give them your full attention. Talk to each youth individually.
  - (d) Affirm them specifically with words, a note, an email, or a text, without exaggeration or hype.
  - (e) “Love is spelled T-I-M-E.” “Quality time is quantity time.”
- (6) Be honest with them.
  - (a) At appropriate times, share about your mistakes, sins, and weaknesses.
- (7) Correct them.
  - (a) Include affirmation when correcting.
  - (b) Correct the action or attitude, not the person.
  - (c) What do you think of what you did? How might you do it better next time?
- (8) Protect them.
  - (a) Establish clear guidelines about adult-youth and youth-youth interactions.
  - (b) Beware of causing a young believer to sin by misleading or tempting them.
    1. **Mt 18:5-6** 5 Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

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### **Websites**

- Center for Parent/Youth Understanding (<http://www.cpyu.org>).
- Generations with Vision (<https://generationswithvision.com>).
- GOD-Talk (<http://www.godtalk.nz>).
- Impact 360 Institute
- Immersion (<https://www.impact360institute.org/immersion/>).
- Propel (<https://www.impact360institute.org/propel/>).
- The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches (<https://ncfic.org>).
- Orange (<http://www.whatisorange.org>) .
- Sonlife (<http://www.sonlife.com>).
- WisdomWorks (<http://www.wisdomworks.com>).
- Youth for Christ (<http://www.yfc.net>).
- Youth Specialties (<http://www.youthspecialties.com>).

### **Podcasts**

<http://www.jonathanmorrow.org/1-are-we-raising-a-generation-of-almost-christians-podcast/>

### **Film**

- “The Demographic Winter” (documentary).
- “Divided: The Movie” (<https://ncfic.org/resources/view/divided-the-movie>).
- “The Merchants of Cool” (2003)(documentary).

*Notes*