

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A STRATEGY TO EQUIP YOUTH LEADERS INTO DEVELOPING STRATEGIC,
BALANCED, AND STRONG LOCAL CHURCH STUDENT MINISTRIES

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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ABSTRACT

A STRATEGY TO EQUIP YOUTH LEADERS INTO DEVELOPING STRATEGIC, BALANCED, AND STRONG LOCAL CHURCH STUDENT MINISTRIES.

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Liberty Theological Seminary, 2007

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The purpose of this project is to provide a strategy for a youth leader to comprehend the needed administrative elements of a successful local church student ministry so thoroughly that the youth leader can equip his leaders. The sources used are the Word of God, personal youth ministry experience, and external research. The key phrase used is “building a strategic, balanced, and strong” student ministry. The metaphor used is the construction of a building as it correlates to building a local church student ministry. The project emphasizes two major areas needed in student ministry: the necessary foundational components and the actual construction components. From this project, the author’s long term goal is to develop a resource whereas the youth leader can take this material and use it to train his interns, paid staff, and/or volunteer leadership team.

Abstract length: 137 words.

DEDICATION

First, I must start with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is You who called me to Your side to become Your follower. It is You who called me into Your ministry as a youth ministry pastor and now a youth ministry professor. And it is You who has provided this simple man the gifts and abilities to lift up Your name and equip Your students to become the leaders to the next generation. For this reason, among so many others, I will forever worship You.

Second, I am indebted to my wife, Janet, for your constant encouragement during this time of preparing, researching, and writing of this work. Your name means “gracious gift” and God has graciously given you to me as my lifetime spouse, my best friend, my only lover, and my ministry partner. I am so thankful for you and I do not know what my life would ever be like without you. (Can we still be together in Heaven?)

Third, I must mention my parents, Richard and Daneth Brown. As long as I have known you both, you have demonstrated to me your genuine love for God, you have prayed for me, and you have encouraged me. I find it no coincidence that God placed student ministry on both of your hearts when you were both teenagers and through your desire to minister to youth, God has extended and expanded your years of youth ministry through me into the lives of many others. If in any way this work can be a blessing and resource to reach and teach more teenagers for the Kingdom of God, then it is because this work is an extension of you.

Finally, I must mention Dr. Rick Rasberry. You are the one which I am dedicating this project. Ever since moving to Lynchburg and joining the School of Religion faculty in 2003, it did not take me long to see you are a man of God, a man who sincerely cares about people, and a man committed to the Word of God and the work of God. Your friendship and mentorship have been truly amazing. There is no way I could ever repay you. You have been a rock in my life through the low times and a cheerleader during the high times (Romans 12:15). The reason I requested you to be my thesis mentor is because I knew you would sharpen me academically and encourage me relationally. You have done all of this and more. Yet, most important, the reason I requested you and have dedicated this book to you is because of my utmost respect for you. When I think of one who is a godly man, your name is the one that immediately comes to my mind. Thank you so very much for the absolute detail and care you have put into this project. May our Lord continue to bless you, your wife, and your two sons.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Basis for the Choice of Topic

The rationale of this project comes out of the heart and life of the author. During the early 1980s, the author obtained his undergraduate degree from Liberty University in the preparation for a desired lifetime in church youth ministry. In addition to the academic training, the author also received practical training in youth work during his years at Liberty University. He was involved in Youthquest, a traveling youth ministry team sponsored by his college, was involved in local church youth ministry at Thomas Road Baptist Church, and helped establish his own home church's youth ministry while home during school breaks.

Upon the author's graduation in 1985, he and his wife began an eighteen year career in local church youth ministry as he served Jesus Christ as being an ordained minister of the gospel in the role of youth pastor. This journey included the states of Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Washington.

In 2003, the author transitioned from serving as a Pastor of Student Ministries (Youth Pastor) to becoming Assistant Professor within the Department of Church Ministries at Liberty University. Within this new area of ministry, he teaches various

youth ministry classes to over five hundred residential students per year. He also has recently been given the privilege of developing and teaching a youth ministry course through the university's Distance Learning Program. In addition to the academic training of the next generation of youth leaders and workers, the writer is the Director of Youthquest, the traveling ministry team of which he was a part over twenty years ago. As the reader can see, the professional life of the writer has been solely given to the developing of the local church's youth ministries, leaders, and the youth themselves. Therefore, this topic is one that comes out of years of personal experience, observation, research, and commitment.

The Statement of the Problem

The actual thesis statement is, "A STRATEGY TO EQUIP YOUTH LEADERS INTO DEVELOPING STRATEGIC, BALANCED, AND STRONG LOCAL CHURCH STUDENT MINISTRIES." From this thesis will come the project.

In addition to the author's professional experience in youth ministry, the foundational basis for choosing this topic is seen in five presuppositions:

1. The Bible mandates the church and the home to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
2. The openness to the gospel of Jesus Christ among youths is statistically evidenced.
3. The current trend among youths in the United States of America demonstrates a staggering spiritual vacuum.
4. The church needs to be fully prepared to help today's youth become fully devoted, lifelong followers of Jesus Christ.
5. Strong biblical programming (the structure of a ministry) comes out of strong biblical philosophy, which comes out of strong biblical theology.

While the previous five presuppositions are foundational to the project's thesis, there specific basis for choosing this thesis has a threefold emphasis.

A theological problem—the first emphasis is on the theology within student ministry. Since the inception of modern student ministry, youth work has struggled with the perception of being weak in owning a strong theological foundation and a weakness in strong Bible teaching. The author has a great concern over this apparent perception. This lack of strong biblical teaching may lead to a shallow and weak ministry philosophy. This inevitably may also lead to a weakness in what the students themselves believe and how they behave.

The reasons the author believes this perception to be an overall reality are:

- The common feedback, often in sarcasm, ridicule, or even criticism, he has received from those outside his own profession of youth ministry.
- His own personal interactions with other youth pastors and leaders and observations of other youth ministries.

Through the project's research, the author will attempt to discover the planning ahead of teaching schedules, the visibility of Scripture in teaching, and the actual assessment of teaching topics within student ministries. Then within the project itself (the strategy which will be laid out), the author intends to saturate Scripture throughout this project's strategy; thus validating the desire to integrate theology within student ministry.

A philosophical problem—the second emphasis is on the philosophy driving student ministry. Similar to the first concern, the author has concern as to the absence and/or departure of strong ministry philosophy as it affects the programming aspects of

student ministry. A weak biblical philosophy of student ministry may lead to spiritually ineffective programming and even ungodly means of ministry.

The author believes current student ministry seems to be at a real crossroad. As western culture moves deeper into post modernity and post Christianity, there is a growing tension in the philosophy (and even theology) of student ministry. As the adolescent culture becomes more diverse in worldviews and has less knowledge of orthodox Christianity, youth workers are struggling with how much of the world one embraces in order to reach the culture.

Through the project's research, the author will attempt to discover the usage and/or strength of the philosophy used in current student ministries. Within the project itself the author intends to address how to formulate and incorporate a biblically based philosophy of student ministry; thus, creating a biblically centered paradigm of student ministry philosophy.

A programmatic (structural) problem—finally, the third emphasis is on the programming, or structure, of student ministry. The author believes that there is a definite busyness within today's student ministry but is wondering as to the effectiveness of the structure known as programming. The author has concerns that much of the programs currently being done in youth ministry may not be effectively leading students into becoming fully devoted, lifelong followers of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Through the project's research, the author will attempt to ascertain the volume and effectiveness of the various programs within current student ministry. Within the project itself the author intends to provide a biblically centered approach to developing strategic, balanced, and strong administrative structure to student ministry.

In addition to the above, this project will focus on teaching the youth leader how to build a strategic, balanced, and strong student ministry so the trained youth leader can train his leadership team. While there are a vast array of practical “how to” resources in contemporary youth work, the author believes there are very few resources of this nature. The author seeks to provide a comprehensive biblically based resource to the body of Christ that will focus on teaching the youth leader how to build the strategic, balanced, and strong student ministry so the trained youth leader can train his leadership team. In doing this, the author believes the ultimate goal of lifelong spiritual health among today’s students will have a greater chance in becoming a reality.

Specific Terminology

The term “student ministries” is more of the contemporary term being used among evangelicals in describing Christian ministry to teenagers. The term “youth work” can be a very broad term used by most secular youth organizations, such as youth sports leagues, community and civic organizations, and schools. Therefore, “student ministries” is a specific term attached to the youth ministry of the local church. While there may be an occasional reference in the project to “youth ministry,” the author will primarily use the term “student ministry/ministries” when describing youth work within the context of the local church.

The term “student ministries” will also be used in specific relation to the age groups of middle school through high school (6th - 12th grades). While sociologists suggest adolescence is possibly seen between the ages of 10-26, the author is focusing on youths between 6th - 12th grades.

The terms “pastor of student ministries”, “student pastor”, and “youth pastor” are describing the same ecclesiastical office of the key leader of the student ministry. The author at times may use any and all of these three terms in describing the same person and office but will primarily use the term “student pastor.” The author believes the youth pastor is part of a team of pastors for the local church. He is to be called of God, to be ordained by godly men, and to meet the specific qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. He is a pastor. While he is not the senior pastor, he is to be the shepherd and overseer of the students of that church. (While there are many in the church today who argue for the woman to have a pastoral role, the author maintains the gender in the masculine form.)

When referring to adolescents, the author prefers to use the term “student” over the term “youth” throughout the project. (However, the term “youth” may still occasionally be implemented.) This is due to a philosophical choice by the author. The term “youth” is more of a nebulous term whereas the term “student” refers to responsibility. The author recognizes the fact that most youth are in school (academic responsibility) and has the goal of each youth becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ (spiritual responsibility).

Finally, unless otherwise noted, the primary biblical text will be the New International Version.

The Statement of Limitations of this Project

The author understands that late elementary children are considered in the early stages of adolescence and the college aged person is in the later stages of adolescence, yet

the project will not focus on these age groups. As stated earlier, the project will focus on the middle school and high school ages of adolescents. The author strongly agrees that a weakness in many churches is an ineffective ministry to young adults (college age adolescents) but will not focus on ministry attention to this age group (and would trust that the reader could apply the principles of the project to such age group).

In reference to the person who is the “student pastor,” the author biblically holds to the male as the specific and only gender to be ordained to pastoral ministry. The author will not go into a biblical defense of this position.

There is a new movement which calls for the removal of any and/or all age-specific ministry approach within the church. This affects children’s ministry as well as student ministry. This also includes Sunday School. The alternative is called the “Family Integration Church” (also referred to as the FIC); one in which the entire church body meets together and does not separate for any age-specific classes or ministries. The author will address this issue in chapter two as he provides a significant but not exhaustive look into the FIC movement and will then provide a simple biblical and philosophical background as to the legitimate role of student ministry within the context of the local church.

The author is firmly committed to the spiritual formation of each student and will have this concept mentioned throughout the project. However, the author will not provide a specific detailed strategy to measure and/or develop such spiritual formation.

While the project will provide strategic ideas for programming, the project is not to be seen as the “final word” on student ministry, nor is it to simply be a “how to” resource. There are many resources available which already provide this service. The

project is to simply provide a biblically based strategy for the student pastor to be equipped well enough in the foundational areas of programming that he can use this strategy as a tool to equip his leaders. The project is to be biblically grounded and principally explained.

The Basis for the Project

This project will provide a strategy for a youth leader to understand the overall administrative picture of a local church based student ministry by using the Word of God as the initial and primary resource. The author will use the metaphor of constructing a building and relate this to building a local church student ministry. The key phrase used will be “building a strategic, balanced, and strong” student ministry as the project will emphasize the key components to be developed in order for a student ministry to be biblically balanced and successful. The project will consist of two major areas: the foundational components in student ministry and the actual construction of the basic programmatic components in student ministry.

The foundational components will include but not be limited to the need for organization, intentionality in purpose, ministry assessing and planning, developing an annual ministry calendar, addressing financial and budget issues, developing a team of ministry leaders, and building a safe student ministry. While these issues are foundational to any age appropriate church ministry, they are specifically designed with the church’s student ministry in mind.

The construction components will include but not be limited to teaching the youth leader how to develop weekly outreach and discipleship meetings, a biblically balanced

annual teaching schedule, various monthly events, weekend retreats, summer camps, and mission trips.

The basis for choosing this topic has already been laid out under “The Statement of the Problem.” The potential value of this topic on the author’s personal life and current ministry will be immediate in that the author currently teaches the youth ministry programming course (Youth 460) at Liberty University. The research and material developed will go right into the classroom where the author teaches and mentors college seniors preparing to enter student ministries.

There is also a longer-range potential which would come from this project. The author desires to get this work published as a youth pastor/leader training resource. The goal is to see this project developed into a tool whereas the youth leader can use to train his interns, paid staff, and/or volunteer leadership team.

This project will be approached as a leadership training manual and written as a university work text. There is little theory to this project. Much of the material will be based on twenty years of the author’s youth pastorate experience and will be used in the university class he teaches. It will be written from real life ministry and be written for real life ministry.

The Methodology Employed for the Project

The author will use four major resources for the project. The first resource is the Word of God. The author strongly believes the Bible gives clear commands and principles regarding the necessary ingredients to developing a strategic, balanced, and strong student ministry and will incorporate much Scripture into the project.

The second resource is personal youth ministry experience. The author will draw upon his own twenty years of working with students and leading student ministries as a local church youth pastor.

The third resource is the gleaning of the wisdom from hundreds of other youth ministry professionals. This will include a large number of youth ministry books, periodicals, audio/video resources, and conferences, along with personal relationships and interactions.

Finally, the fourth resource will be external research. This will be conducted among three groups; current Liberty University students who are in training for professional student ministry as well as current adult leaders, current professionals in student ministry (i.e., student pastors), and current volunteers in student ministry.

A Review of the Literature

Boshers, Bo. *Student Ministries for the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997
This book is written by the high school pastor at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. Using their ministry as a model, the book provides a programming overview which includes a look into the developmental stages of adolescents, developing mission and vision statements, developing healthy relationships with church leaders and parents, and developing both outreach and discipleship oriented weekly youth meetings. Strength would be that while it is written from one leading a very large ministry, it is not overwhelming or intimidating for the reader who leads a small group. This book is used in the Youth 460 course taught by the author.

Burns, Jim and Mike DeVries. *The Youth Builder*. Ventura: Gospel Light, 2001
This work is the second edition of the original work by Jim Burns. The new work included the co-author Mike DeVries. Mike was mentored by Jim Burns and truly adds a fresh perspective. The book is written practical and is easy to read. The book provides the reader with a broad overview of the necessary areas of youth work. Such areas include: relationship building, developing a ministry team, being family-based, evangelism, small groups, worship, discipleship, retreats and camps, missions, and budgeting.

Burns, Ridge and Noel Becchetti. *The Complete Student Missions Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990

This book was one of the first written for modern youth ministry in relation to student mission trips. It focuses on what should be done before the mission trip, during the trip, and after the trip. A strength is how it walks the reader through the need and means for choosing, organizing, and training the students.

Fields, Doug. *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998

What *Purpose Driven Church* did for the overall church, this book does for student ministries. At the time of the writing the author was the high school pastor at Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, California. This is a very thorough resource which gives good detail in equipping the youth leader in ministry organization. It relies heavily on using the student ministry of Saddleback Community Church as an example yet does not present the expectation that the reader should imitate the church.

Maxwell, John. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998

This is arguably the most popular of all of John Maxwell's leadership books. It is written with many stories and motivational language. The emphasis is on the 21 principles (laws) that each leader should strongly develop to become an influential leader.

_____. *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001

In the same style and manner of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Maxwell identifies 17 areas (laws) that are essential to a healthy team.

Murphy, Troy and Kim Anderson. *Programming With Purpose*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997

This book is an additional resource to the *Student Ministries for the 21st Century*. It focuses on the very specific details on how to produce a weekly student ministry program.

Olson, Ginny and Diane Elliot and Mike Work. *Youth Ministry Management Tools*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

The three authors are youth professors at a North Park University, Chicago, IL. The book's emphasis is on student ministry organization, both the individual leader's organization and the actual ministry itself. This book is used in the Youth 460 course by the author.

St. Clair, Barry. *The Magnet Effect*. Wheaton: Victor, 1994

The focus of this work is to provide the reader (youth worker) a practical step by step approach in designing outreach events for Middle and High School students. It also provides various planner forms which the reader can implement into their ministry.

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL REASON FOR THIS PROJECT

When considering the rationale of the author's thesis, the initial place to turn is God Himself as revealed in the eternal Word of God. The intention of this chapter is to demonstrate that God is serious about being strategic, balanced, and strong with what He builds. To support this, there will be five foundational areas investigated to lead the reader to the proposition that student ministries should be strategic, balanced, and strong.

First, the chapter will start with a brief look into the various demonstrations that God is a God of structure. Second, this will be followed with a brief look into God's design for His church to be one of structure. Third, there will be a theological support for viewing student ministries as a legitimate part of the local church. Fourth, there will be biblical rationale for the role of the student ministries pastor, especially in regards to organization. Fifth, there will be a biblical foundation given for each of the ten organizational areas which will be later developed in chapter four and five.

The Beginning of Structure is God Himself

Throughout Scripture one will see God in the work of developing and orchestrating projects. These projects are both of material and immaterial in nature. God

even provides many examples of actual projects He has done which illustrate that He is serious about being strategic, balanced, and strong with what He builds.

While the intention of this thesis is not to argue the theological or philosophical reasons for the existence of God, it truly is important to start at this point. When one sees a design, one assumes a designer. When one sees a building, one assumes a builder. When one writes a thesis using a computer complete with a hard drive and software, one assumes a computer engineer and a software programmer. Therefore, the author finds it no stretch for one to view creation and assume a Creator. From the beginning of creation itself, Genesis 1-2 revealed God's first "project" as the Master Designer put all things together. At the end of Day Three (vegetation), Day Four (sources of light), and Day Five (animal kingdom), Moses wrote, "And God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:12, 18, 25). God was pleased with the created work He had done. It was not accidental, but was intentional (strategic). It was not out of order, but was in harmonious order (balanced), and it was not weak or even average, but was effectively well-built (strong).

The cosmos, the harmony of the universe in relation to this planet, the beauty of a flower-filled meadow, and the migration of geese during the changing of the seasons all display the strategic, balanced, and strong aspects of Creator God. To this present time, science still cannot comprehend the vastness of His great cosmos and the intricacy of His finite details. Even well-known astrophysicist Stephen Hawking stated, "The universe and the laws of physics seem to have been specifically designed for us. If any one of about 40 physical qualities had more than slightly different values, life as we know it could not exist: Either atoms would not be stable, or they wouldn't combine into

molecules, or the stars wouldn't form the heavier elements or the universe would collapse before life could develop, and so on.”¹ Creation is good.

While this creation alone was spectacular and will never be paralleled by anything humankind can do, the next day brought the greatest of God's “projects”: the creation of an image bearer (Genesis 1:27). This project of creating a human being is so lofty and so complex that the more that science learns of the human body, the more in awe scientists become. One such example is within the area of DNA. Human DNA contains three billion pieces of information.² Earlier in the chapter the author gave reference to a computer needing an engineer and a programmer. There is great similarity between a computer and DNA. Bill Gates, cofounder of Microsoft, stated, “DNA is like a computer program, but far, far more advanced than any software we've ever created.”³ Even evolutionist Richard Dawkins said of the DNA in cells, “The machine code of the genes is uncannily computer-like.”⁴ With this marvelous creation is a Creator. It is interesting to wonder the reasons as to the push for humankind to duplicate the “forming” of life with its modern attempts of cloning. Yet even if this is ever achieved, the “creation” will have come from previously created matter.

When one considers the elements of just one human being: his physical dimensions, his ability to think and be creative, the way he can communicate and relate to others, and the deepest desire to worship something outside of himself, one should clearly

¹ As quoted in *Austin American-Statesman* October 19, 1997

² Mark Cahill, *One Heartbeat Away* (Rockwall, TX: BDP Publishing; 2005), 41.

³ Bill Gates, *The Road Ahead* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 228.

⁴ Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 17.

see why at the end of the creative week, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

Throughout the Old Testament, one comes across many physical projects that God gave specific directions to build. One is the holy project of God’s dwelling place, the Ark of God’s Covenant. Exodus 25 records the intricate details given by God regarding His specific dwelling place. This is followed by instructions for fashioning the surrounding tabernacle in Exodus 26 and the articles of worship in Exodus 27-30. God was greatly concerned with details and with excellence.

Centuries later, after the nation of Israel settled into their Promised Land and King David’s reign had concluded God’s holy dwelling place received a more permanent home when King Solomon built a magnificent temple dedicated to Jehovah. 2 Chronicles 2-4 records the exact details for this immense project. This temple was so magnificent that dignitaries from other nations were a gasp at this amazing project (2 Chronicles 9:1).

While not to belabor the point, there are other Old Testament examples of God being a great Project Builder. One must consider the story surrounding a righteous man named Noah. It was through this man’s obedience and courageous act of faith that God’s act of grace preserved His remnant. Yet even before God’s miraculous deliverance of Noah and his family in the midst of a global flood, God had preordained a detailed plan of protection. This story also includes God’s commitment to detail as He provided precise and descriptive details for the building of an ark (Genesis 6:14-21).

Another account of God’s commitment to detail is within the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem during the time of the Jewish exile in the sixth and fifth centuries BC. The story centers on the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple and the city walls of Jerusalem.

The book of Ezra provides a historical account of the rebuilding of the Temple while the book of Nehemiah describes the reconstruction of the city walls. These two stories are so interlocked that the two books are one in the Jewish Scripture (Ezra-Nehemiah).⁵

Through the book of Ezra, the Temple is restored in both its physical structure and its practical function. Most scholars would put the rebuilding of the Temple between 536 and 516 BC. The biblical account within Ezra shows much concern for detail, including the inventory of returned Temple articles of worship (chapter one), a listing of the persons returning (chapter two), and the details of the actual project and its completion (chapters three and five). Ezra's arrival and subsequent ministry of reestablishing worship occurred in 458 BC. These dates are easily available because of the historical details provided within the book.⁶

Within fifteen years of Ezra came the arrival of Nehemiah, in 445 BC. In this account one learns of the rebuilding of the city walls under Nehemiah's leadership. God providentially orchestrated this project as He placed it in the hearts of a godly Jewish official and a pagan Gentile king (Nehemiah 2:8). Throughout this book, the writer provides a journal account of Nehemiah's commissioning, the details of the actual project, and the subsequent events right after the completion of the wall. Within both accounts of these two building projects, one must understand God is concerned with details and with excellence. God is a God of organization and order.

Based on personal experience, the author has seen some in today's church take offense with the notion of organization, structure, and/or even planning ahead. They

⁵ Frank Gaebelin, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 4* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 572.

⁶ The dates provided are from the *NIV Study Bible, 10th Anniversary Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 667.

have stated that organization inhibits the working of the Holy Spirit. However, the Scripture never opposes structure. The case has already been made that God is a God of structure. Yet the Word of God does oppose the misuse of structure. Both the Old and New Testaments reveal that God demands His people to rely on Him, not on a “program” (the structure). This includes spiritual activity and national activity. Spiritually speaking, one may consider ancient Israel’s worship. A simple read of the Old Testament reveals the Jewish people began to revere the form of worship instead of the One they were called to worship. This was still taking place during the time of Christ. Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6 as He rebuked the Pharisees saying, “*go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners'*” (Matthew 9:13). God is the One who set up the worship structure, so He is not against structure. He is against His people forgetting the purpose of the structure.

Nationally speaking, one may consider ancient Israel’s military. God was not opposed to their military; quite contrary, He was the One who implemented the military. But God did warn His people not to trust in their military for the victory but to trust in Him. Psalm 20:7 states, “*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.*” Accordingly, organization (or structure) and implementation (or program), in and of themselves, are not evil. It is when one trusts in the structure or program that this becomes sin.

Moving through the New Testament one discovers that God’s new structure is not a building made with hands but His people He dwells within. All of those in Christ are new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17), and God has placed His Holy Spirit within each believer (2 Corinthians 5:5). The same Holy Spirit who previously indwelt the Ark of

the Covenant now indwells God's people as His people are His temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). Believers are God's adopted children and are His great Project, and God's plan is to make them into the image of His son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-29).

The Church is to be Structured

To make a people pleasing unto Himself, God has instituted His church. This church is depicted in the New Testament with the metaphor of a building. At the initial mentioning of the church, Jesus Christ told Peter in Matthew 16:18 that upon the great bedrock of the Lord Himself, *"I will build my church."* This passage teaches that 1) the church belongs to Jesus Christ and 2) the church is built by Jesus Christ. The son of a tradesman-carpenter is a Master Builder. Later, in his first epistle, Peter also referred to this building concept when he referred to each believer as, *"...like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house..."* (1 Peter 2:5a). Each follower of Christ is connected to every other in this great house called the church.

While the Apostle Peter spoke of the church as a building, so did the Apostle Paul. Taking a deeper look into this principle, Paul provided demonstration of this in the letter to the Ephesians. When one looks at 2:20 and 4:11-12, the text reveals the layout of this invisible building called the church. What began with Jesus Christ transferred to the Apostles and Prophets, then to Evangelists and Pastors/Teachers, with each believer being a significant part of the whole. The following table visually depicts this as read from the bottom-up.

Each individual believer	Each individual believer	Each individual believer	Each individual believer	Each individual believer	Each individual believer
An Elder (his modeling) <i>"Don't let anyone look down on you...but set an example...watch your life and your doctrine closely." (1 Timothy 4:12,16)</i>		An Overseer (his managing) <i>"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. "" (Acts 20:28)</i>		A Pastor (his ministering) <i>"Preach the Word...do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:2a, 5d)</i>	
Pastors-Teachers					
They started local churches.		They trained local leaders/pastors.		Upon training, they would start another church.	
Evangelists					
Jesus is the Great Cornerstone		Jesus trained & sent the Apostles to start His Church.		They wrote the Scriptures.	
They started the Universal Church.					
Jesus Christ, The Apostles and the Prophets					

As already mentioned, the author has heard it suggested that ministry should not have a structured system. The notion is that the church should simply rely on God's Holy Spirit to direct and dictate what is done in ministry. The thought continues by suggesting that planning is actually of the flesh and hinders God's work because programming and planning is not considered sensitive to the Spirit of God. This point may sound biblical. One of the verses commonly used for this thought is taken from Zechariah 4:6, "...*This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.*"

It could appear that Jesus Christ Himself would belittle and even downplay the need for structure. One can see His call to mercy and not sacrifice (Old Testament structure) in Matthew 9:13 and 12:7. There is also the apparent disregard for the Sabbath

with the picking of grain on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23) and the deliberate public healing of the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, intentionally done in front of the Pharisees (Mark 3:1-5). This drew such anger from the Pharisees that they “...*began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus*” (Mark 3:6).

Then more specifically for the Church itself, Scripture even seems to indicate a calling for a nonstructural approach. It is the Apostle Paul himself who writes in his first letter to the Corinthian church, “*What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church*” (1 Corinthians 14:26).

The passage seems to indicate a free-style approach to ministry; almost like, “Everyone simply come to church and do what you want!” So is programming biblically right or wrong? Is God “for” or “against” ministry programming?

Looking more closely at the passage, one sees that Paul needed to give instruction to a church that had become self-centered rather than others-centered. In the name of ministry, they were using the things of God in order to be seen of people. (It was for this same “look at me” issue that Jesus needed to rebuke the Pharisees.) In 1 Corinthians 14:40, Paul commanded “... *everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*” Therefore the idea set in motion of church expression (v. 26) does not mean a “free for all” service. Commenting of this passage Dr. Warren Wiersbe writes:

First Corinthians 14:26 gives us a cameo picture of worship in the early church. Each member was invited to participate as the Lord directed. One would want to sing a psalm (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Another would be led to share a doctrine. Someone might have a revelation that would be given in a tongue and then

interpreted. Apart from some kind of God-given order, there could never be edification.⁷

1 Corinthians 14:26-35 provides specific details as to how the various gifts should interact with each other during the time of assembly. Verse 33 in the New King James Version reads, “*For God is not the author of confusion but of peace.*” The New International Version renders it, “*For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.*” John MacArthur notes in the *MacArthur Study Bible*: “Here is the key to the whole chapter. The church at worship before God should reflect His character and nature because He is a God of peace and harmony, order and clarity, not strife and confusion (cf. Romans 15:33; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; Hebrews 13:20).”⁸

While there is to be some type of freedom of worship expression, there is also to be a structure in place and a “check and balance” to make sure the Word of God is being accurately taught and the people of God are truly being strengthened in their faith; thus, the Apostle Paul’s concluding verse on the subject, “*But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way*” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Finally, in addition to the local church having organization within its meeting, one must also consider the big picture of the church itself. Both the book of Acts and the Pastoral Epistles reveal specific structure laid out by God for His church. The book of Acts provides many principles for the church. Within the Pastoral Epistles, there is instruction on the calling, qualifications, and responsibilities of leadership (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9). There are instructions on worship, including the need for prayer (1 Timothy 2:1-2) and the ministry of the Word (1 Timothy 4:13-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:5).

⁷ Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989), 615.

⁸ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word Bibles, 1997), 1753.

There is even guidance as to the taking care of the qualified widows and the treatment of slaves (1 Timothy 5:3-6:2). In addition, when one observes the way God provides each believer with certain spiritual gifts to do His work as they labor in unison (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14), it is easy to see that God truly is a great orchestrator, harmoniously working out His master plan.

Student Ministry is Part of the Church

As the author steps into this issue, the reader must understand this specific issue could be a thesis in and of itself. As previously mentioned under the Statement of Limitations, this issue alone could become a major undertaking; thus, the area of the legitimacy of student ministry within the church will only be highlighted and not exhausted. This section will provide a brief look into the “Family Integration Church” (FIC) movement and will then provide a simple biblical and philosophical background as to its legitimate role of student ministry within the context of the church.

The author must point out that he has a deep respect for the commitment to the Word of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ that the leaders of the FIC movement appears to have. The author recognizes these persons are his brothers and sisters in Christ and loves them accordingly. While the author may have some philosophical disagreements with their conclusions on student ministry, the author greatly values their calling for fathers to be men of God and the priests of their homes.

There is a growing movement within the church today that speaks against and even calls for the removal of modern student ministry. This cause is being led by various persons and church leaders. One such leader is J. Mark Fox, pastor of Antioch

Community Church in Elon, NC. Pastor Fox has recently written the book *Family Integrated Church*. In promoting his book on www.amazon.com, Pastor Fox states:

What is a church like that does not divide families when they come through the front door? What is worship like when children and even infants are present? Can a church survive without "age-segregated programming?" (sic) What about a "youth group?" (sic) Church leadership? (sic) Outreach and missions? (sic)

There is a movement that is growing in this country, a movement back to the way things used to be as far as church is concerned. It is called by various names, the most common being the "family-integrated church."

This book is the story of how one church has been working to bring families back together. You will laugh, be encouraged, and your heart will be drawn back to what the Lord says about His church as you read this book. It will also serve some readers as a blueprint for change.⁹

Pastor Fox has provided this book as a manual for the FIC model, including the removal of age-specific ministries.

Another figure in the FIC movement is Scott T. Brown. Mr. Brown is the director of the National Center for Family Integrated Churches and is on the board of Vision Forum Ministries. These two organizations wonderfully address the need to rise up men to be the godly leaders and disciplers of their homes and to see families be one in the midst of the life of the church. (Again, the author is well pleased with this purpose.) Mr. Brown would also be a voice for the removal of today's student ministry. In his article, "Returning to Biblical Order in the Church and the Home," Mr. Brown speaks to the need for fathers to disciple their children. He then implies that age-specific ministries are unbiblical. In speaking to men abdicating their spiritual role with their families, Brown states,

⁹ Amazon.com Book Review of *Family Integrated Church* as submitted by the author, J. Mark Fox http://www.amazon.com/review/product/1600343147/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_helpful?%5 (accessed 02 March 2008).

And, in our creativity, we have amassed so many non-biblical structures, and have become so busy with them that they have forced us to push the biblical things to the periphery. It was a poor swap that has caused the mortgaging of the future for the present success.

What we gained was programmatic Christianity where everything is packaged in a professionally run program and measured by its numerical success.

What we lost in the process was the relational model of Hebrew discipleship where the father was the chief delivery system for scriptural truth to the next generation.

We gained youth groups, but lost our youth. We gained our Sunday schools, but lost our fathers. Collapse! (sic)

It is time for reformation. It is time for a return to the biblical order for the church and the home for the delivery of the message of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world, for the eternal joy of all who believe, to a thousand generations.¹⁰

The reformation Mr. Brown is mentioning is the removal of age-specific ministries. In his opinion, it is a matter of the church being biblical.

Possibly the most well know crusader of today's FIC cause is Dr. Voddie Baucham, the teaching pastor at Grace Family Baptist Church of Spring, TX. He is a dynamic speaker and is becoming the more visible leader of this movement. And he leads by example. On the church's web site, the philosophy toward any age-specific ministries is clearly explained.

One of the biggest distinctions of a FIC is the absence of age-graded ministries. We do not have segregated youth ministry, or children's ministry. First, these ministries are not part of the biblical church model. The Bible is clear on whose job it is to disciple children... parents. Second, these ministries can work

¹⁰ Scott T. Brown. "Returning to Biblical Order in the Church and the Home." http://www.visionforumministries.org/issues/uniting_church_and_family/returning_to_biblical_order_in.aspx (accessed 02 March 2008).

against the biblical mode. Parents who are relieved of their discipleship duties tend to become dependent on those who have taken over the job. Finally, these ministries have failed. We are losing 75-88% of Evangelical teens by the end of their freshman year in college. And as Dr. Alvin Reid has noticed, “The largest rise of youth professionals in history has been accompanied by a decline in youth evangelism effectiveness.”¹¹

According to the above statement, the blame for the tragic dropout rate among evangelical church students is current professional student ministry. Dr. Baucham candidly states, “Let me be clear... There is no such thing as ‘biblical’ Youth Ministry.”¹² In his book, *Family Driven Faith* Baucham makes this case with, as he calls it, three significant problems with today’s model of student ministry. The following are his quotes:¹³

1. My first concern is there is no clear biblical mandate for the current approach.
2. My second concern with youth ministry is that the current approach may actually work against the biblical practice of family discipleship.
3. My third concern with youth ministry is that the current approach isn’t working.

Baucham’s argument is first based on the notion that because the Bible does not specifically mention “youth group” or a “youth leader,” these ministries are unbiblical. It is also based on the presupposition that parents drop their kids off at the church to take care of the spiritual needs of their children; therefore they are abdicating this responsibility to the church. It is also based on the reality that the church is losing most

¹¹ Voddie Baucham. “Distinctives of a Family Integrated Church (FIC).” http://www.gracefamilybaptist.net/GFBC_/FIC.html (accessed 02 March 2008).

¹² Brian Keith Phillips. “One Thing” blog “Biblical Youth Ministry?” <http://psalm27four.blogspot.com/2007/11/biblical-youth-ministry.html> (accessed 03 March 2008).

¹³ Voddie Baucham, *Family Driven Faith* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007), 179-182.

of our evangelical youth. The conclusion is – youth ministry does not work because it is unbiblical.

The author has noticed one significant common thread within all of the proponents of the FIC. They all are fully committed to home school education. On his personal website, Dr. Baucham states, “To say that I am a proponent (or even an exponent) of the home school movement is to grossly understate the point. My wife and I home school our children. We have also had the privilege of walking other families through the process of becoming homeschoolers.”¹⁴ On Baucham’s church’s web site, the following statement is found:

Due to the philosophical similarities between the FIC and Home Education, the majority of families attending GFBC educate their children at home. Since we believe that education is inseparable from discipleship, it is natural for us to offer help and support in this area. From families who have been at it for years, to those considering home education for the first time, the GFBC Homeschool Support Group offers something for everyone.¹⁵

Baucham is not alone. Each of the gentlemen previously mentioned, J. Mark Fox, Scott T. Brown, and Doug Phillips (Vision Forum founder) states on his website his strong commitment to home school education. While it is not the author’s intent to denigrate or belittle home school education, the research does indicate a strong tie between home schooling and the FIC (no student ministry) movement.

(As this point, the author must state he realizes these examples do not and cannot speak for all of those who support home education. However, based on what the author

¹⁴ Voddie Baucham. <http://www.voddiebaucham.org/vbm/links.html> (accessed 05 March 2008).

¹⁵ Voddie Baucham. “The Home School Support Group is a Ministry of GFBC.” http://www.gracefamilybaptist.net/GFBC_/HSG.html (accessed 05 March 2008).

continued to see in the research, a significant number would be in agreement with the removal of age specific ministry, particularly student ministry.)

There truly seems to be a growing tension between the age-specific approach to church ministries and the recently growing multi-generational approach. While the author realized before his research that this “boycott” mentality toward student ministry exists in the church, he did not realize the extent and popularity of the FIC/ anti-student ministry. In the author’s opinion, there seems to be a cynical, smug, and even self-righteous attitude on the part of some of the FIC/anti-student ministry proponents. It has truly grieved the author to think that there are brothers and sisters in Christ who would consider his roles as a student pastor and as a trainer of future student ministry workers as being unbiblical. This author would never do anything intentionally to lead people away from the Scripture or to disobey the Lord Jesus Christ.

During the research for this project, this issue has forced the author to even more deeply look into the Word of God for validation of the ministry the church has toward today’s students. The author truly seeks to honor God’s Word.

So, does the Bible speak of the need of student ministry? There are four needed presuppositions that must be foundational in answering the question on the legitimacy of student ministry:

1. The Home is Important in Spiritual Formation of Adolescents

First of all, the author strongly recognizes that the home was God’s first institution created and is to be the primary place of spiritual reproduction. The Scriptures are overwhelmingly clear about this spiritual responsibility being in the home.

- Deuteronomy 6:1-5
- Psalm 78:1-7

- Psalm 127:1-4
- Proverbs 1:8-9
- Proverbs 4:1-11
- Proverbs 22:6
- Malachi 4:6
- Luke 1:17
- Ephesians 6:1-4
- Colossians 3:20-21
- 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

Next, not only does the Word of God teach paternal discipleship, the author also noticed its effectiveness within the students of his own student ministries over his years of student ministry. Those students who had biblically involved fathers and mothers seemed much more spiritually mature than those that did not have such a godly parent in their life.

Finally, on a personal note, at the time of this project, the author has three children all in various stages of adolescents. He and his wife both genuinely believe that it is his (along with her assistance) role to invest the Lord Jesus Christ into their children. As he has already stated to his children, “The evidence of whether I have done my spiritual job with you will be in how you raise your own kids.”

2. The Church is Important in Spiritual Formation of Adolescents

The author has the presupposition that most student ministry workers would agree that the church is important to the spiritual development of each student. This is not the issue. What is the issue will come down to the practical application of the church’s role with adolescents. Many questions should be raised at this point:

- Should student ministry not exist as a specific ministry as followed by the FIC model?
- Is the Bible truly against age-specific ministry?
- Is the home the primary (or even only) place of spiritual formation?
- Is student ministry to be done solely by the student ministry workers only in the context of the student ministry?
- Is there more of an integrated means to the achieving spiritual formation?
- What role should the church play in the lives of the students?

Having already taken a lengthy look at the FIC movement, the author will now draw attention to the other extreme of student ministry. This is sometimes referred to as a “silo” ministry approach. “Silo” ministry is a term used by some in the church which describes the environment where the children and youth of the church never integrate with the life of the whole body; rather, they always stay within their own age group. They simply move from silo to silo. If there is no college age group, statistically they are leaving church altogether upon high school graduation. If there is a college age group, they may attend this group and still may not integrate into the mainstream of the church body. This only seems to delay the inevitable departure from the local assembly.

As he considers the presupposition of the church’s importance in the spiritual formation of its youth, the author sees seven principles that affect this area. (Some of these will be addressed in the next few pages, and some will not.) They are:

- 1) Children and students are not the church of tomorrow but are part of the church today.
- 2) While the home is commanded to teach its children the Word of God, it is to be in partnership with the church.
- 3) The church is responsible to make disciples of everyone in the church.
- 4) The church’s teaching ministry is to include the teaching of its young.

- 5) The church should have adults utilizing their spiritual gifts.
- 6) The church is exhorted to have the older teaching the younger (Titus 2).
- 7) The children and students need to be aware they are part of a larger body than just their own age group and, to some degree, to be engaged in the total body.

The church's weekly ministry and teaching role has previously been mentioned and will be pointed out in greater detail in chapter six, yet as one looks at the Scripture, the church is to be engaging its people in the Word of God and the work of God. The author firmly believes this includes the children and youth of the church. The church is called to make disciples of all nations. This word in the Greek is *ethnos* and means "people groups." Everyone is to be taught "*...to obey everything I have commanded you*" (Matthew 29:20). This must certainly include the younger persons of the church.

So the question may remain, does the Bible specifically speak of church based youth ministry? In the specific (or program) sense, of course not. Yet neither does the Bible speak of many current areas of ministry those in the church carry out today, including those of the FIC movement. The Bible does not speak of church buildings. It does not speak of multi-media. It does not speak of book sales, conferences, and web sites, all of which those in the FIC movement are using. Technically speaking these things are "unbiblical" as well (meaning, they are not mentioned in Scripture.) Just because the Scripture is silent about a certain area, does this make it unbiblical? Even though the Scripture is specifically silent about a certain area, could the Scripture provide principle for that area of ministry?

The author will argue that while there is specifically no mention of the model of modern student ministry, he does believe there are biblical principles which do support its

existence. In doing so, later in the chapter the author will offer his personal thoughts on a biblically supported paradigm of student ministry.

Student pastor and author Steve Wright has written an intriguing recent work titled, *Rethink*. In this book, Pastor Wright brings up some of the same issues this chapter has been covering. He speaks of the extremes of the “hyper-familism” (as he suggests some are referring to the growing FIC movement) as well as the silo movement of students always being away from the overall church body. In the view of this author, Wright seems to have a positive blended view. Student pastor Nick Kennicot gave a positive review of this book upon his own ministry website and provided some of the main points in summary form for the need for student ministry:¹⁶

- The church is needed to surround students with godly adults who can provide love and care, truth they can build their lives on and a model to follow.
- The church is needed to reach out and model Christianity to teens without Christian parents.
- The church is needed to reinforce a biblical worldview to teens. We have all seen how a teen will sometimes listen to a youth volunteer or Bible study leader, even though the parent has said the same truth.
- The church is needed to be a neutral third party, serving as an impartial advisor to parents and teens.
- The church is needed to connect young people with other Christian teens who support, encourage and hold each other accountable
- The church is needed to provide opportunities for teens to use and sharpen their gifts, serving the body in ways they cannot at home

¹⁶ Nick Kennicot. <http://reformingstudents.com/2008/02/15/rethink-purpose/> (accessed 09 March 2008).

Is there any biblical basis for age-specific religious instruction or is it truly unbiblical?

The FIC movement argues the Scriptures do not speak of age-specific ministries, yet is this true? When one considers age-specific ministries within the context of the church, one must carefully look into the Jewish customs and times in which the church was born. From the pages of the Old Testament through the Gospels, one needs to look into the system of Jewish education. In the article, “Jewish Education in Ancient Times,” Dr. Ron Moseley provides the following historical background:

The importance of education in ancient Judaism is clearly seen in the attitude passed down in the rabbinic dictum that *the world is poised on the breath of schoolchildren*. Rabbinic law still obligates the father to teach his sons Torah, as well as a trade. The duty to instruct the people has its roots in the Torah with such precepts as Deuteronomy 6:7 where the parents are required to diligently teach the children.

According to Jewish writings literacy was widespread in ancient Israel (Judges 8:14). Toward the end of the First Temple Period there is evidence of formal religious instruction under the direction of the Levites (II Chronicles 7:7). The institution by Ezra of regular public readings of Torah, as well as the emergence of a non-priestly class of scribes and scholars, gave a new impetus to education. The liturgical reading of the Torah was accompanied by exposition and instruction. According to the Talmud, Simeon Ben Shetah (103-76 B.C.E.) established local schools for boys between the ages of 15 and 17, while High Priest Joshua Ben Gamala is said to have instituted elementary education for boys from the age of six. Later, higher rabbinic education was given in the *Bet Ha-Midrash*, which was usually close by the synagogue and tended to overlap in some of its functions. In Babylonia, non-professional scholars left their farms or trade for the semi-annual study/retreat known as *Kallah*. This was a month during which study conventions were held in the Babylonian academies at the time of the *amoraim* and *geonim*. (An attempt to revive the idea of the *Kallah* has recently been made by leading *yeshivot* in Israel.) Elementary education was given in the *bet ha-sepher* school known later as the *heder*, which was normally maintained by the community.

The Stages of Life in Education

The basic stages of one's life are listed in the *Mishnah Avot* 5:21 which gives some idea of how the ancient individual was educated. Many of these date from ancient times. We see them applying to the life of Yeshua as detailed in the gospels. At age five one is ready for the study of Scripture. We are told that the children were taught first from the Book of Leviticus for ritual purity and how to approach God by sacrifice and then from the Book of Psalms concerning the nature of God, before they went on to other things. Possibly this is what Yeshua meant when He referred to people's coming to Him as a child (Matthew 18:2-4) in child-like purity. At the age of ten one was fit for the study of the words of the Oral Law, and at the age of thirteen one was old enough to fulfill the commandments. Some scholars believe it was the Oral Law which the ancient boys were questioned about on the steps of the Temple, as in the case of Yeshua (Luke 2). At the age of fifteen one was ready to study of the sages, at the age of eighteen, for marriage, and at the age of twenty, for pursuing a vocation. Yeshua is called both the *son of Joseph the carpenter* and *Yeshua the carpenter* (*Book of Mark*). Obviously, Joseph had followed this pattern and taught his son his vocation. At the age of thirty one entered the full vigor of his ministry. It was at this point in Yeshua's life that we see Him entering the full ministry. At age forty one reached a place where he had understanding, and at age fifty the individual was worthy to counsel others. It is in this setting that the Biblical injunction for the older (age fifty) men to counsel the younger men and the older women to counsel the younger.

The ancient Jews were so careful to treat the Biblical text as a delicacy that they instructed their young children by placing honey on the tablets as they were taught the alphabet and the Torah. This left the young student with the lasting impression of the Torah's having the quality of sweetness. This idea of the Torah sweetness is echoed throughout the Biblical text with such references as Psalm 19:11; 119:103.

The goals of Jewish education may be broadly summed up: (1) to transmit knowledge and skills from generation to generation; (2) to increase knowledge and skills; and (3) to concretize cultural values into accepted behavior. The three main orders of study in ancient Israel consisted of religious education, occupational skills

and military training with the essence of all knowledge being the fear of the Lord (Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 1:7).¹⁷

It is interesting to see the various stages of life that the Jewish make would go through as one transitioned from childhood to manhood. The following points are a review of some of the abovementioned stages:

- Age 5 – the young child was taught ritual purity as he studied Leviticus and the nature and character of God as he studied the Psalms.
- Age 10 – the young boy was taught the oral traditions from the elders and was tested on this material on the Temple steps.
- Age 13 – the boy was now considered morally responsible for his actions.
- Age 15 – the young man would study the sages.
- Age 18 – the young man was able to marry.
- Age 20 – the young man was able to pursue a vocation.
- Age 30 – the man was allowed to begin ministry.
- Age 40 – the man was considered of the age of understanding.
- Age 50 – the older man was old enough to counsel younger men.

The author would like to point out that the educator who was involved in the earlier stages of religious instruction were those men of the Jewish tradition. They were priests, scribes, and/or Levites. Within this context, the safe assumption is they worked alongside the Jewish parents as both the religious institution and the home taught their children in the ways of God. However, these men did have a valid spiritual role in the life of the children.

¹⁷ Ron Moseley. "Jewish Education in Ancient Times."
http://www.restorationfoundation.org/volume_3/32_6.htm (accessed 10 March 2008).

Continuing this concept of those outside the home having a legitimate role in the spiritual formation of children and youth (the community), one should consider Christ's pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Passover when He was the age of twelve.

⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

⁴⁷Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

⁴⁹"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he was saying to them (Luke 2:46-50).

It was with this Jewish background that Jesus entered the Temple and dialogued with the teachers. One must point out that Jesus was twelve. As previously noted, it was at thirteen a young boy ceremonially became a young man, fully responsible for his own moral actions. It was also at this age that the boy moved to the next level academically within the context of religious instruction. One could say the child went from elementary school to middle school. From the historical background provided, the concept of age-specific education and biblical instruction goes back thousands of years. In addition, Jesus Himself never criticized the system or abolished it. Contrary, one could argue the New Testament continues to use the cultural language of the abovementioned stages. Age-specific education is not a product of a 20th century humanistic philosophy (as many in the FIC movement indicate in their writings); it was the model being used when the church was born; thus, the Scripture has no negative issue with age-specific education.

But is the family the most important (or even the only) place of spiritual formation, even to the point that the church solely exists to "back up" the home?

When considering this question, the author has already spent time arguing for the family's role in spiritual formation. Continuing to look into the life of Jesus, one will readily note that as a boy, Jesus obeyed His parents (Luke 2:51). As a teacher, Jesus defended marriage (Matthew 19:1-12). He mentioned and affirmed the family unit as He provided rabbinical blessing upon the children (Matthew 19:13-15). He also taught that adult children are to honor their aged parents by taking care of their physical needs and strongly rebuked the Pharisees for their selfish disobedience of this command (Matthew 7:11). And at his own crucifixion, he commanded young John to take care of his mother (John 19:26-27). Obviously Jesus defended the family.

Yet it must also be pointed out Jesus spoke of loyalty to Him as being more important than loyalty to the family unit. In calling people to become His followers, He demanded of the crowd, *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:26). Of course Jesus is employing hyperbole as the text is referring to choice. A follower of Christ is to choose Jesus above all relationships, including the most intimate of relationships - the home.

Mark 3 records a time when Jesus was home in Nazareth. While there Jesus taught in the local synagogue. It was here the local people began to truly investigate the claims of Jesus and wonder if he, the hometown boy, truly was the Promised One. While some did put their faith in him, his own family did not. Mark 3:20-21 explains that His own family thought Jesus was insane.

Right after this event, the Pharisees accused Jesus of being possessed by Satan. Jesus responded with His own argument as to why this is not even logical (Mark 3:22-30). It was during this heated exchange that Jesus had visitors. Mark 3:31-34 reads,

³¹Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³²A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." ³³"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. ³⁴Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Of course Jesus is not condemning the family unit and obviously this story does not prove “Sunday School” or student ministry, but one must see that Jesus is identifying with His followers (and the future church) as His spiritual family. The church body is to be significant in the life of each disciple. The family is not superior to the church.

Should the children even be in the church service? And must the family sit together during the worship service?

To answer these questions, one should consider two different recordings of Jesus teaching the crowds while outdoors. Both of these instances are famous for the miraculous meals that followed the teaching, and in both of these feedings the two posed questions are answered. When Jesus fed the multitudes, on both occasions the Gospels record only the number of men. (While the feeding of the 5,000 is in all four Gospels, the feeding of the 4,000 is only in Matthew and Mark.) Mark recorded both miracles, with 6:42 noting the feeding of 5,000 men and 8:9 noting the feeding of the 4,000 men. Matthew adds the detail “besides women and children” (Matthew 14:21; 15:38).

Obviously the women and children were present during the teaching. This is also evidenced in the fact that the source for the meal was the boy's five loaves and two fish (John 6:9). It must be noted that the women and children were present but they were not sitting with the men during the meal. Whether they were sitting as families during the teaching is not clear, but both of Matthew's accounts indicate that they were organized, with the men being separate from the women and children. As noted in the *NIV Study Bible*, "Matthew alone notes this. He was writing to Jews, who did not permit women and children to eat with men in public. So they were in a place by themselves."¹⁸

While not trying to stretch the text, the author notes the principles. One can see that as families attended the teaching ministry of Jesus, there was some place in this "service" where the families were split up; including Jesus (the chief shepherd) having the twelve apostles (his assistants) provide ministry to men, women, and children in the context of a teaching service. This time of separation did not bother Jesus. He commanded it. While this may seem trifling or even stretching, the author does wonder if the FIC movement would have considered Jesus "anti-family" had they been present.

3. The Community is Important in the Spiritual Formation of Adolescents

While God established the context of the home and the church, there is a third context of relationships He created about which the author has not heard much discussion. It is the context of the community. It must be noted at this point that community will be defined by relationships, both with whom one has personal interaction

¹⁸ Kenneth Barker, *The NIV Study Bible, 10th Anniversary Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 1460.

(i.e., family, friends, neighbors), and also with those outside of personal interaction (i.e., citizens of a specific area or nation).

In the Old Testament God had prepared His people to live in community. He had them travel together for forty years before He settled them down in their own land. To do this effectively, He provided rules and policies to work and live together in peace and under civil law. He provided rules in how to deal with one another in a helpful and cooperative way. In addition, He also gave rules in how to deal with those who were not part of their community. What took place during the years of wandering and the times of the Judges also was true during the times of the kingdom of Israel.

One must consider the Jewish way of life. Yes, the people of God were responsible to teach their own children the ways of Jehovah. This was seen at every Passover season. Yes, the people were to go to the Temple (and later to the local Synagogue) for the various feasts and weekly Sabbath. But the people of God also lived in community. They traveled together during the pilgrimages. This was not only true during the Old Testament but was also true during the life of Jesus Christ:

⁴¹Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. ⁴³After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. (Luke 2:41-44).

Looking at verse 44, one can see that it was customary for the children and families to mingle as they were all “in their company.” The text states this company included both “relatives and friends.” They allowed their family units to “blend” with each other. One must also consider that this event was all a part of their worship

experience for it was along the road that the father would speak to his children of the things of Jehovah (Deuteronomy 6:7).

During His ministry, Jesus Christ provided both in His teaching and His example the need for community. He spent three years interacting and even living with disciples with over half of this time specifically being the Twelve Apostles. Living with twelve other people for any extended time is most assuredly community! His ministry is one of constant mingling with people.

Community means living with people and loving people. Jesus desperately loved people. On five different occasions in the Gospels the writers use the word “compassion” in relation to Jesus. In each of these occasions, his compassion led to action. It was Jesus who continually gave to the crowds, even when He was broken hearted and exhausted (Mark 6:30-44). It was Jesus who taught to love one’s neighbor as oneself (Luke 10:27). When the listening scribe then asked who his neighbor was, Jesus gave the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35). In this story, Jesus taught that love is meeting needs and this includes the needs of both those within the “community” and without the “community.” Ultimately, Christ showed supreme love by dying a horrific death for those who would love Him and those who would not, for as the Scripture states, *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

Jesus never taught His followers to become isolationists. He went to the crowds. He spent time and cared for those with immoral reputations, even at the expense of His reputation among the religious elites (Mark 2:15-17). He even became a human being (John 1:14). Even at the end of His earthly ministry during His prayer for His followers,

Jesus prayed that the Father would not take them out of the world but would keep them from becoming like the world (John 17:13-17). This is where many use the phrase for believers to “be in the world but not of the world.”

This being in the world also includes the civil government. Jesus understood the role of government and taught his followers to respect the government, including the paying of taxes to the local Jewish authorities (Matthew 17:24) and to the Roman Empire (Matthew 22:21). While his kingdom was not of this world, he taught his followers to interact within the community they lived in, including local, religious, and state.

In reference to community, the rest of the New Testament simply builds itself upon the foundation laid by Christ. Both the Apostle Paul and Apostle Peter give commands for believers to respect their government and to live according to its laws (Romans 13; 1 Peter 2:18). Believers are also to show respect for nonbelievers (1 Peter 2:18). Believers are to work hard for unbelieving masters (1 Thessalonians 4:11, Colossians 3:23). It is through a life of integrity, including hard work, which a believer may influence the unsaved to come to Christ (Titus 2:9-10). Believers are called to share physical items with unbelievers and meet their needs (Romans 12:17-21; Galatians 6:10). Finally, believers are called to live in community with one another. While the listing may vary, there are over at least twenty “one-another” commands to believers in the New Testament. Community is important to God. He made humans relational beings and gave each person requirements and roles so as to best function within community. After all, God Himself is three in one!

The author realizes the previous section on community deals much with the “adult” areas of community and, other than the story of Jesus at twelve, does not mention

the adolescent even once. Yet the author truly believes these same principles of community most definitely apply to today's students, and he would argue that community may be even more important to students than adults. Students crave relationships. They long for friendships. With the availability of the Internet and the continual technological explosion, students are more "relational" than ever before. Any casual walk through the mall would demonstrate that students travel in groups, if one looks carefully, he will see that the vast majority have cell phones. It is not just a means of talking, for the cell phone has become a major means of communication through texting. Along with texting, students are also reaching out for community via the Internet through such popular web sites such as www.myspace.com and www.facebook.com.

Facebook is a phenomenon like none other in recent times. In the Internet article titled, "Facebook – The Complete Biography," contributor Sid Yadav writes:

Facebook is the second largest social network on the web, behind only MySpace in terms of traffic. Primarily focused on high school to college students, Facebook has been gaining market share, and more significantly a supportive user base. Since their launch in February 2004, they've been able to obtain over 8 million users in the U.S. alone and expand worldwide to 7 other English-speaking countries, with more to follow. A growing phenomenon, let's discover Facebook.

Originally called thefacebook, Facebook was founded by former-Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg (while at Harvard) who ran it as one of his hobby projects with some financial help from Eduardo Saverin. Within months, Facebook and its core idea spread across the dorm rooms of Harvard where it was very well received. Soon enough, it was extended to Stanford and Yale where, like Harvard, it was widely endorsed....

A large number of surveys and studies have been conducted around Facebook - some with interesting results. For instance, according to an internal September 2005 survey, approximately 85% of the students in the supported colleges had a Facebook account, with 60% of them logging in daily. A survey conducted by Student Monitor revealed Facebook was the most

“in” thing after the iPod and tying with beer, and comScore Media Metrix discovered users spend approximately 20 minutes every day on Facebook. Another 2005 survey said 90% of all undergraduates in the U.S. use either Facebook or MySpace regularly, and a detailed questionnaire analysis by Chris Roberts revealed that 76.2% never click on its ads. Perhaps the most amazing statistic of all may be that Facebook is the 7th most trafficked site in the U.S.¹⁹

Both as a father of three adolescents and as a university professor, the author can personally attest to the immense popularity that Facebook enjoys among students. It is because of this popularity, the almost addictive usage of the site, that the author will not allow open computer notebooks in his classroom. While the naïve professor “thinks” the student is ferociously typing out jewels of truth; in reality, students are checking out and working on their Facebook. The social popularity test for today can be “How many friends do you have on Facebook?” Or, “What group(s) do you belong to?” This website is the students’ site of choice. It is how they stay connected. Based on the author’s interactions with his students, they have expressed that Facebook and text messaging via the cell phone has even replaced email as their primary non-speaking form of communication.

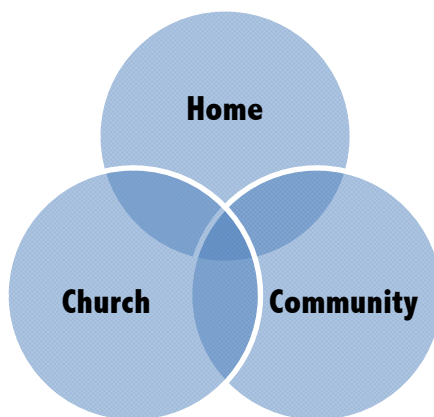
While it may look different than even five years ago, today’s students do crave community, and the Word of God does provide guidance about how this community should interact. From the negative aspects of “cyber bullying” and trash talking in Internet blogging to the positive aspects of spiritual discussion with lost people and staying connected with brothers and sisters in Christ, the Scripture gives the correct

¹⁹Sid Yadav. “Facebook – The Complete Biography.” <http://mashable.com/2006/08/25/facebook-profile/> (accessed 10 March 2008).

principles for life in “cyber” community as well as the still needed personal touch of relationships with each other.

4. The Importance of all Three in the Spiritual Formation of Adolescents

By now one can see the need and biblical support for all three relational contexts in which God intends for people to interact with one another. The author seeks to point out all three should interact in harmony with one another; not in separation, but in synergy.



To display the blending of the above paradigm, as previously promised, the author will provide two biblical examples of the home, church, and community blended together. One example will be taken from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. This will validate that adolescents were involved in the life of the whole assembly of believers; thus, showing that the Bible does speak of pre-adults being in the gathering times of God’s people.

The Story of Nehemiah and the Dedication Service

Nehemiah 8 provided the story of the dedication service in honor of the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem. This was a glorious time for God’s people to begin again the worship of Jehovah as they all

...assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law (Nehemiah 8:1-3).

As the Book of the Law was being read the Levites were integrated among the people and were *"making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read"* (v.8). The people responded with brokenness and later rejoicing.

But who was present in this revival service? Verse two states there were *"men and women and all who were able to understand"* and verse three refers to the *"men, women and others who could understand."* So who were those who were neither men nor women but who could understand? Obviously they were the children (and this would include the teenagers). There are two similar stories of a general assembly like this found in Deuteronomy 31:12 and Joshua 8:35. In both instances it mentions the participants being men, women and children.

There are two points of interest in this account, especially from verse 8. First, one may infer that there were those who not understand and they would not have been present. Apparently small children may not have been in the assembly. Second, other leaders stood beside Ezra and explained the law to the people. This would suggest, just like Jesus with the twelve apostles, there can be more than one church leader speaking truth and ministering into the lives of the children and youth. This observation runs

contrary to the contention of many in the FIC movement that families must sit together and only the senior pastor is to teach in front of the families.

In conclusion of this example, the families were present (home) under the leadership of Ezra the Scribe and the other Levites as they submitted themselves to the teaching of the Word of God (church). It was from this revival, that the people of God would live in harmony and be a light to the Gentiles (community).

The Story of Paul and Timothy's Call to Ministry

Acts 16 opens up with the Apostle Paul visiting churches that he had started on his earlier missionary journey. Yet Paul's mission of strengthening the churches (Acts 15:41) may not have been his only goal. It would appear he was rebuilding his ministry team. Silas had replaced Barnabas as a peer in Paul's life. Now as Paul visited the church at Lystra, he was introduced to Timothy. This passage indicates that Timothy was a strong follower of Jesus, for he is called a disciple and the church spoke well of him (Acts 16:1-2). He was well involved in the life of the church for the people knew of him and recommended him to Paul for ministry.

Timothy would take the place of John Mark. In both circumstances, it would appear that John Mark and Timothy were teenagers. This is noted in the *NIV Study Bible*, "Since Paul addressed Timothy as a young man some 15 years later (see 1 Timothy 4:12), he must have been in his teens at this time."²⁰ While Paul was smart in having a partner relationship with Silas, he was just as smart to have a mentoring relationship with

²⁰ Kenneth Barker, *The NIV Study Bible, 10th Anniversary Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 1679.

Timothy. To this author, this is significant because this is “church approved student ministry.” For the next 15 years Paul would invest the good deposit into Timothy.

At the end of Paul’s life, he admonishes Timothy “*to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands*” (2 Timothy 1:6). He then charges him to “*...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus...Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus*” (2 Timothy 2:1, 3). Apparently Timothy was losing heart and wanted to leave his pastoral responsibility. Paul invested so much in Timothy and wanted Timothy to know of the seriousness of the situation. Paul is soon dying, and Timothy must carry on the work of Jesus Christ (4:9-11).

The author must say that over the past few years, 2 Timothy has become his favorite book of Scripture. It has challenged the author to his own sense of weakness and the need to maintain calling of ministry. But this letter, especially 3:10-17, has become extremely valuable. It is what the author calls “the matrix of student ministry.”

This passage speaks to the need for Timothy to stay on target with his ministry. Paul calls him to reflect on his childhood, spiritual heritage, and youthful journey, including both his home life and his time with Paul in ministry. Below are excerpts of a presentation the author has given in student ministry leadership training sessions.

(Paul represents the church.)

10 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them.

(The reality is that ministry is tough.)

12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

(Lois and Eunice represent the home)

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

(The Scriptures provide the strength to successful ministry.)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.



The point to be made is the home and the church should be in partnership. They should not be in competition but in cooperation. Timothy had a godly upbringing from his mother and grandmother. Paul called him to remember this. In addition, Paul had a personal ministry relationship with Timothy as a teenager. It was out of this discipleship relationship Paul called Timothy to remember the things he had learned from Paul over the years of their doing ministry together.

Continuing on, in the opinion of the author, verse 14 IS student ministry!!!

*But as for you, **continue** in what you have **learned** (what-doctrine) and have become **convinced of** (why-apologetics), because you **know those** (how-intentional godly relationships) from whom you learned it,"*

After reflecting on this passage, the author concluded the presentation with the following principles that he encouraged leaders to pursue in their own student ministries:

Sources:

- Students need both church & home.
- Both the home and church must build godly, intentional relationships.

Scriptures:

- Teach students to know God's Word (doctrine).
- Teach students to trust God's Word (apologetics).
- Teach students to apply God's Word (application).

Salvation:

- Make sure the students are genuinely saved.
- Salvation must lead to godly living and ministry.

In reflecting on Acts 16:1-3 and Paul's letters to Timothy, one can see the family was present in the nurturing of Timothy. One can also see the church was present in the nurturing of Timothy as he was under the leadership of the church leaders in Lystra and later the Apostle Paul. It was from this background, that Timothy strengthened the churches where he served and brought unbelievers to Jesus Christ (community).

The Role of the Student Pastor

Within the first generation of the church, the apostles ordained elders to lead the church. The first mention of this leadership paradigm is when Paul and Barnabas, finishing their first missionary campaign in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch *"...appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust"* (Acts 14:23). The author has five basic presuppositions of pastoral leadership that he sees within the study of the New Testament study which are essential to this section of the thesis:

- 1) The elders (also referred to as overseers and shepherds [pastors]) were the leaders of the local church.
- 2) Each local church always had a plurality of elders. There is never a mention of “the pastor” (one pastor) of a specific church. Leadership was in community.
- 3) While there appears to be some elders who held more authority in leadership than others, (i.e., they were leaders of leaders), there was cooperation among the leaders. They seem to have functioned as a team of leaders.
- 4) There is no mention of the specific pastoral titles in the New Testament that are used in the church today. For example, there was no senior pastor, discipleship pastor, worship pastor, and student pastor. However, simply because these roles are not mentioned does not make them “wrong” or “unbiblical” roles because these roles today are fulfilling biblical principles which were in the New Testament church.
- 5) It does appear that there were both teaching pastors and non-teaching pastors (1 Timothy 5:17).

The author would argue that from the first generation of the church this paradigm was in place. This is evidenced from the Apostle Paul’s words in Acts 20:17, 27 and the Apostle Peter’s words in 1 Peter 5:1-2.

¹⁷From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church... ²⁸Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. (Acts 20:17, 27).

¹To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the

glory to be revealed: ²Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers... (1 Peter 5:1-2a).

One could not think of too many more prominent figures in the establishment of the church. Peter was the apostle to the Jews and Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. These men carry tremendous weight as to how one “does” church organization and church leadership. From the beginning, the two texts teach that the elders were also called overseers (also referred to as bishops in 1 Timothy 3:1) and shepherds. As one studies these pastoral scriptures, one sees these three roles are interconnecting and these terms are interchangeable. A pastor cannot pick and choose what role he is to fulfill.

This issue of three titles for the same pastoral office can also raise two questions:

- 1) Why would there be three titles given for the same pastoral office?
- 2) Would the use of three titles become confusing?

In response to the first question, the reason there are three different titles for the same person is because they all had a specific rationale for the title. By analyzing the Pastoral Epistles, Acts 20, and 1 Peter 5, one discovers the three pastoral roles are to be:

1. Modeling (elder)

"Don't let anyone look down on you...but set an example...watch your life and your doctrine closely." (1 Timothy 4:12, 16)

2. Managing (overseer/bishop)

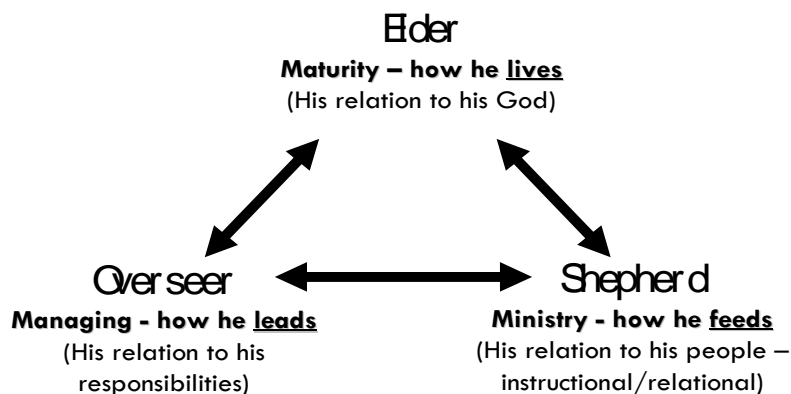
"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers." (Acts 20:28)

3. Ministering (pastor/shepherd)

"Preach the Word...do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:2a, 5d)

While it is apparent that each pastor has a certain giftedness and/or skill set toward relationship, teaching, or administration, he must guard his **godly lifestyle** (elder) as he **oversees** the ministry (bishop) and clearly **teaches** God's truth (pastor).

Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2



In response to the second question, regrettably there does appear to be confusion over the use of the three titles given for pastoral ministry. The author would strongly contend that it is directly because of the confusion over these three terms that there is so much gridlock and disharmony within so many churches. Whereas in the New Testament these three titles all referred to the same person, in more recent times these three titles became three different roles. One now has churches that have elder boards but the elders are not pastors. There are pastors who are not on the elder board. There are bishops who oversee various churches but do not oversee and/or pastor specific flocks. The confusion typically may come down to two questions:

- 1) *“Who is in charge of the ministry of the church?”*
- 2) *“What is the role of those on pastoral staff?”*

The author knows this confusion from firsthand experience in his various church ministries where he serves as student pastor. In his last student pastoral position, the author respectfully asked his senior pastor about the rationale as to why the author was not on the elder board, although he was an ordained pastor on staff. The response was,

“Yes, this is how it was done in the Bible but the times have changed.” The author would believe this confusion is either due to ignorance and/or an unwillingness to follow the Scriptural model (as just noted in the recent quote).

With the above as foundation, it is the author’s biblical conviction the student pastor is part of a team of pastors for the local church. The student pastor is to be called of God, to be ordained by godly men, and to meet the specific qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. He is to be a legitimate pastor. While he is not the senior or lead pastor, he is to be the shepherd and overseer to the student ministry of that particular church. This is an incredibly serious responsibility. With these three biblical roles for a pastor defined, the author would argue the student pastor should be that overseeing church leader whom God uses in the lives of today's student. While he must be a man of character (his elder role), the author wants to emphasize the other two areas of his calling: his ministry (his shepherd role) and his managing (his overseer role).

1. The student pastor’s role as shepherd

Within his pastoral role of feeding the people of God, the pastor is to teach the people the Word of God. Part of this teaching is to help God’s people begin to grasp godly belief (doctrine), which is to lead to godly behavior. This is evident in 2 Timothy 3:16 where Paul reminds Timothy of the source of Scripture and the purpose of Scripture. *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”* In addition to godly belief and godly behavior, another purpose of teaching God’s Word is to teach God’s people how to serve the body of Christ. It is the author’s opinion that there is a direct link between the constant use of the word “teach” in Titus 2 (it is used twelve times) and the command for the Cretans to be

given to good works (mentioned five times throughout the book). Pure service to others, both in motive and in action, comes from those having a pure view of God and a pure lifestyle.

2. The student pastor's role as overseer

Within his role of overseer, the pastor is to mobilize and train the people of God to do the work of God. Ephesians 4:12 lays out the specific purpose of the pastor-teacher with the command to *"prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."* The New American Standard Bible renders it, *"for the equipping of the saints for the work of service."* Pastors are to prepare the people for ministry. Another way of describing the word "prepare" is to organize. Pastors are to equip the people for ministry. This could also be seen in training. Pastors are to mobilize the people for ministry, to train the people for ministry, and to provide opportunities for people to minister. This demands he fulfill his duty as overseer.

Based on personal observation of fellow student ministry leaders and even the observation of many of his own university students, the author sadly believes that the average student ministry pastor seems to be lacking as an overseer (administration). It greatly encourages the author when he sees his students do well in his programming youth class (Youth 460). These are the students who, based on their work ethic and commitment to follow through, for whom he has high aspirations and high recommendations. Equally true, it greatly grieves the author as he watches each semester some students who just do not seem to care about hard work, following instructions, and fulfilling responsibility. They appear to not care about being professional in their approach to their overseer role.

This apparent logic on the part of some students is one the author does his best to change. Yet the perception that youth ministry students are lazy, and/or unorganized is not only observed by this author. His colleagues in the other courses in the School of Religion at Liberty University also make comment about it. The author referred to this perception by his colleagues in chapter one under the section “The Statement of the Problem” where he gave as one reason for the thesis “the common feedback, often in sarcasm, ridicule, or even criticism, he has received from those outside his own profession of youth ministry.” The sad reality is the perception that youth ministry students do not seem to take their academics seriously. (However, many of the author’s students have been on the Dean’s List and have been in the Honor’s Program.)

It is because of this concern that the author chose this topic of “building a strategic, balanced, and strong student ministry” as his thesis. Student pastors need to recognize their God-given responsibility to oversee effectively.

The author is not alone in this concept of calling student workers to effectively administrate and oversee the student ministry. The author had the opportunity to interview Dr. Doug Randlett, the executive pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia.²¹ The significance of this interview to this project is profound because Doug Randlett was the author’s youth ministry professor at Liberty University and would be considered by the author his first “ministry mentor.” In addition, Pastor Randlett developed and taught the original Youth 302 course (which is now Youth 460); one of the three courses the author had Pastor Randlett as professor. Doug Randlett taught the author about student ministry programming. Therefore, this interview had both personal significance and topical significance.

²¹ The interview with Pastor Doug Randlett was on March 20, 2008 in Lynchburg, Virginia.

During the interview, Pastor Randlett mentioned that many youth workers get involved with student ministries “because of their own youth ministry experience...and their romantic inclinations” as to what youth ministry was like for them. (He and the author both strongly teach this involvement must be based on God’s calling.) He went on to say that while many have a high giftedness in shepherding (relationships come easy to them), “historically, many youth workers are not organized.”

But this lack of personal giftedness in administration does not negate their responsibility. Pastor Randlett stated that those who are more relational than administrative must be taught to administrate. Along with this education, the “shepherding youth pastor must complement himself by developing a team of volunteers who can provide where he is lacking in organization.” He mentioned that “those who don’t recruit to their weaknesses wash out in youth ministry.”

Pastor Randlett mentioned that the administration needs within youth ministry must be made visible beyond those specifically in the student ministry. Three areas in the church which are vital to experiencing the positive aspects of an organized student ministry are:

1. The congregation
2. The senior pastor
3. The parents of the students

Finally, Pastor Randlett spoke of the benefits of an organized student ministry. He first mentioned the “parental payoff.” The next benefit is “the active support by the senior leader.” The author mentioned to Pastor Randlett that he shares with his students that when the student ministry leader loses the confidence of either of these two

mentioned parties, he ceases to be the leader of the student ministry. It is only a matter of time until the resignation takes place. He concurred with the author's assessment.

In conclusion of the interview, the author provided a typed copy of his abstract to this project, including the key phrase from the thesis, "A Strategy to Equip Youth Leaders into Developing Strategic, Balanced, and Strong Local Church Student Ministries." Both Randlett and the author commented on the need for youth leaders to be balanced in both their pastoral and overseer responsibilities. Fulfilling the organizational aspects of student ministry will keep the student ministry strategic, balanced, and strong.

In conclusion of this section, the author firmly believes the student pastor must recognize the soberness of the calling to maintain his relationship to God (elder), his relationship to his ministry of the Word of God and the people of God (shepherd), and his relationship to his organizing the ministry (overseer). Hebrews 13:7, 17 speak well of these three roles and the tremendous stewardship that is required of those in leadership.

⁷Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you (pastor - ministry). Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith (elder – maturity)...¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to their authority (overseer – managing). They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."

A Biblical Support for the Project's Outline

As stated in the project's abstract, the purpose of this project is to provide a strategy for a youth leader to comprehend the needed administrative elements of a successful local church student ministry so thoroughly that the youth leader can equip his leaders. The key phrase the author continues to repeat is the need to be "building a strategic, balanced, and strong" student ministry. The author is using the metaphor of the construction of a building

as it correlates to building a local church student ministry. The project emphasizes two major areas needed in student ministry: the necessary foundational components and the actual constructional components. Chapter four will provide the needed foundational components and chapter five will provide the needed constructional components. The breakdown is as follows:

Foundational Components of a Strategic, Balanced, and Strong Student Ministry

1. Foundations of Programming
2. Foundations of Planning
3. Foundations of Payment (Budgeting)
4. Foundations of the Players (Leadership Team)
5. Foundations of Protection (Safety)

Constructional Components of a Strategic, Balanced, and Strong Student Ministry

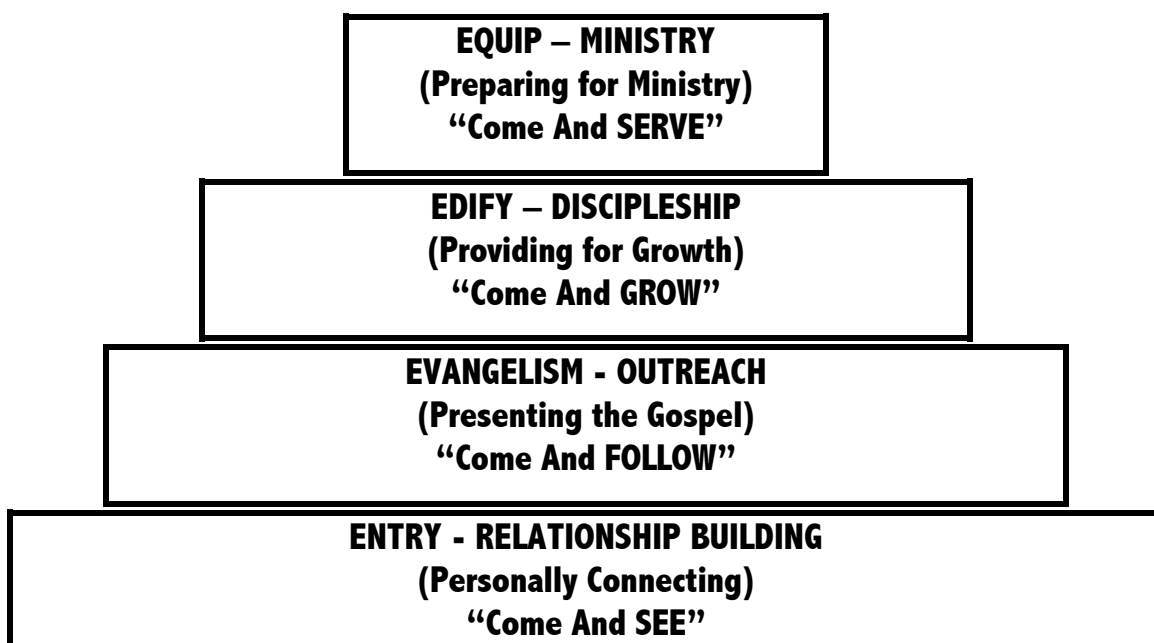
1. Weekly Series (Meetings)
2. Curriculum Map (Teaching Schedule)
3. Monthly Events
4. Retreats and Camps
5. Mission Trips

The actual outlines of these components all have a biblical foundation. With this chapter being given to the theological and philosophical aspects of the project, the author believes it best to provide these biblical precepts (theological) and principles (philosophy) within this chapter and section. He will then provide the actual practical strategy and/or layout to each component within the appropriate chapter.

Foundational Components of a Strategic, Balanced, and Strong Student Ministry

1. Foundations of Programming

The author believes there are four specific levels, or areas, of ministry. These four areas of ministry are true and needed for the entire church, including the specific area of student ministry within the church. These four are: 1) relationship building with lost people (entry), 2) outreach to lost people (evangelism), 3) growth for saved people (edify), and 4) ministry opportunities for saved people (equip). During His own earthly ministry, Jesus Christ even used these four levels (areas) of ministry.



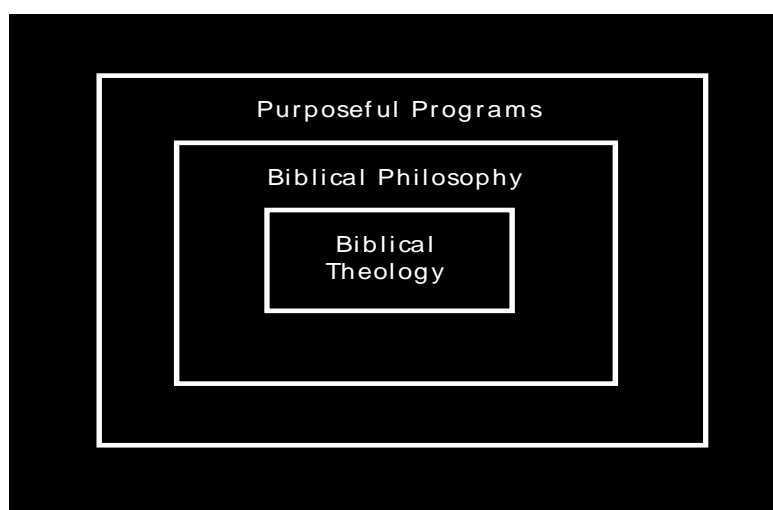
The author would argue that Jesus Christ even implemented all four of these areas ministry levels in his encounter with the Samaritan woman as seen in John 4.

Ministry Level	Verses	Where Christ fulfilled this
I. Entry (Relationship Building)	v.4, 6 v.7 v.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ He put himself in the position to meet her. ▪ He asked her for a drink (humility). ▪ He talked to her, in spite of their differences.
II. Evangelism (Outreach)	v.10 v.16-24 v.26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ He transitioned into spiritual dialogue. ▪ He used questions to grab her attention. ▪ He used the natural to transition to the spiritual. ▪ He brought up the issue of her real need (intimacy), her sin, and her call to worship God in spirit and truth. ▪ He revealed Himself as the Messiah.

III. Edify (Discipleship)	v.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ He stayed for two more days and spent time with the new believers in the town of Sychar.
IV. Equip (Ministry)	v.34-38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ He put His ministry team in the position to do ministry. ▪ He told them to look and see the harvest. ▪ He had them join Him in this great harvest.

The wise student pastor must recognize that programs, philosophy, and theology all work in unison. The following is taken from the author's Youth 460 workbook.²²

“As a youth pastor, I was committed to the foundation of **correct biblical theology**, which birthed a **correct biblical philosophy** of ministry, which then translated into **purposeful programs** to fulfill this ministry philosophy. My theology dictates my philosophy which guides my programs. Notice the boxes below.”



Let me provide a case study/example of the paradigm boxes above.

MY THEOLOGY: I believe that Christ's death is efficacious (effective and available) for all. I believe that I am under the commandment of Christ to present the gospel and make disciples. This is my God (biblical) view of beliefs.

MY PHILOSOPHY: This means I need to be serious about reaching lost people and bringing them into a discipleship process. This is my personal view of beliefs.

²² Richard Brown. *Programs for Youth Ministry* (Virginia Beach: Academx, 2007), 39-40.

MY PROGRAMS: So I will have a Wednesday night student ministry committed to being an open door to unsaved students, a Sunday morning committed to basic growth for believers and a Sunday evening ministry committed to training students to be ministers for Christ. This is my structure to carry out my God beliefs and personal beliefs.

2. Foundations of Planning

Student ministries must have a ministry purpose (one of the four levels previously mentioned). A purpose and a plan go hand in hand. The *purpose* has to do with *what is the ministry about* whereas the *plan* gives the details *how the ministry will fulfill the purpose*. The beginning of this chapter confirmed that God is a God of order. He wants things structured. Yet, what about being organized to the point of creating plans? What does God think about us being organized and planning ahead?

Over the years the author would read “a proverb a day.” The book of Proverbs is filled with short, pithy sayings that contain simple, common sense thoughts. Many of them have to do with the concept of **planning the work** (conception) and **working the plan** (completion). At this point, the author will lay out key verses from Proverb, organized around the acronym “PLANS” that demonstrate God wants His people to plan ahead. (Unless otherwise noted, Scriptures are from the New Living Translation.)

Prepares in Advance

“A prudent person foresees the danger ahead and takes precautions; the simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences” (Proverbs 22:3).

“Develop your business first before building your house. Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house” (Proverbs 24:27 NIV).

“She gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household and plan the day's work for her servant girls” (Proverbs 31:15).

Leads to Success

“Wise planning will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe” (Proverbs 2:11).

“If you plot evil, you will be lost; but if you plan good, you will be granted unfailing love and faithfulness” (Proverbs 14:22).

“Commit your work to the LORD, and then your plans will succeed” (Proverbs 16:3).

Accompanies Hard Work

“Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones. Learn from their ways and be wise! Even though they have no prince, governor, or ruler to make them work, they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter. But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep? When will you wake up? I want you to learn this lesson: A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest--and poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber” (Proverbs 6:6-11).

“Good planning (plan your work) and hard work (work your plan) lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty” (Proverbs 21:5).

Needs to Involve Godly People

Individuals

“My child, don't lose sight of good planning and insight. Hang on to them, for they fill you with life and bring you honor and respect” (Proverbs 3:21-22).

Team of Counselors

“The plans of the godly are just; the advice of the wicked is treacherous” (Proverbs 12:5).

“Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many counselors bring success” (Proverbs 15:22).

“Plans succeed through good counsel; don't go to war without the advice of others” (Proverbs 20:18).

Submits to God

“Commit your work to the LORD, and then your plans will succeed” (Proverbs 16:3).

“We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps” (Proverbs 16:9).

“You can make many plans, but the LORD's purpose will prevail” (Proverbs 19:21).

“Human plans, no matter how wise or well advised, cannot stand against the LORD” (Proverbs 21:30).

“The LORD preserves knowledge, but he ruins the plans of the deceitful.” (Proverbs 22:12).

Hopefully, one can see biblical validation that God wants His people to plan ahead. God is a planning God. Salvation, itself, demonstrates this as one sees in Romans 8, where it is easy to see His plans for the elect, included choosing them, saving them, perfecting them, and bringing them to His home.

3. Foundations of Payment (Budgeting)

There seems to be a suspicion with some believers that money is evil and Christians should do their best to stay away from it. This begs the question, “Are money and ministry bad partners?” In other words, can one be spiritual and also be involved with money? Below are four biblical case studies regarding the partnership of ministry and money. As the reader will notice, two are in the Old Testament and two are in the New Testament.

Passage	Exodus 25:1-9; 35: 4-36:7 (39:42-43; 40:33-35)
<i>Who are the Players?</i>	▪ Moses and the people of Israel
<i>What is the Story & Need?</i>	▪ Gathering the resources to build the Ark of the Covenant
<i>How is Money (or Gifts) Used?</i>	▪ A “free will” offering. The people provided the resources to build and the skilled labor to do the project.
<i>What is the Result?</i>	▪ People were involved. The needs were met. God visited them and His glory filled the place.

Passage	Nehemiah 1:3-11; 2:1-9; 4:6; 6:15-16
<i>Who are the Players?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nehemiah, King Artaxerxes, the people
<i>What is the Story & Need?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to rebuild the wall. Need the supplies and permission to do it
<i>How is Money (or Gifts) Used?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The king provided the money, resources, and the “building permits.” The people provided the labor.
<i>What is the Result?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The wall was built in fifty two days. The people of God rejoiced. The enemies of God began to fear Him.

Passage	Luke 8:1-3
<i>Who are the Players?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jesus Christ, the Twelve, various women who followed him including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna.
<i>What is the Story & Need?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The preaching and healing ministry of Jesus. ▪ Who will take care of the team as they travel?
<i>How is Money (or Gifts) Used?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The women were using their own money to support the ministry of Jesus Christ.
<i>What is the Result?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ministry went forward!

Passage	Philippians 4:10-19 (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:1-7)
<i>Who are the Players?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Apostle Paul, the people of the church at Philippi.
<i>What is the Story & Need?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paul writes a thank you letter to these people for providing for his ministry in northern Greece (Macedonia and beyond during Paul’s second journey).
<i>How is Money (or Gifts) Used?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The church gave over and again to Paul as he left their church and moved further west to share the gospel.
<i>What is the Result?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They were blessed. God would meet their needs in this life (v.19) and this gift would be added to their account in the next life (v.18). These gifts pleased God. These gifts were used to teach others to give.

Hopefully the reader will understand that God does affirm the use of money in ministry. Money itself is not evil; on the contrary, God uses money to advance His Kingdom. But the author desires to make it clear that the student worker must realize the money he uses in ministry does not belong to him; it belongs to God. One must be a wise steward with what God has provided. As Professor Ginny Olsen warns, “You’re spending money that was contributed as a sacrifice to God”²³

²³ Ginny Olson, Diane Elliot, Mike Work, *Youth Ministry Management Tools* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 103.

4. Foundations of the Players (Leadership Team)

Proverbs 11:14 advises, *“For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.”* The ministry will only be as strong as the team involved in carrying out the vision. When one thinks of developing a leadership team in student ministry, the case of Jethro and Moses typically comes to the forefront. Student pastor Bo Boshers writes, “Moses thought he could do it all. He tried to meet his peoples’ needs, but then he learned from his father-in-law, Jethro, a crucial leadership lesson that altered the way he did ministry.”²⁴ And because Moses took the advice of a wise older man, not only Moses was blessed but the people of God were blessed. The victory was made sure.

Below are four biblical case studies on teamwork. Two examples are from the Old Testament and two examples are from the New Testament.

Passage	Exodus 18
<i>Who is the Leader?</i>	▪ Moses
<i>What did He Lead?</i>	▪ The people of God. The new nation of Israel.
<i>Why Did He Build a Team?</i>	▪ He was burning out taking on all of the court cases. His father-in-law told him Moses would have to raise up leaders or he would die!
<i>What were the Benefits?</i>	▪ More work got done. Moses stayed effective leading the people.
<i>What was the Result?</i>	▪ The people survived their forty years and became a nation!

Passage	Nehemiah (especially Chapter 2)
<i>Who is the Leader?</i>	▪ Nehemiah
<i>What did He Lead?</i>	▪ The rebuilding of the city walls. From this came the reestablishment of the city’s Jewish population.
<i>Why Did He Build a Team?</i>	▪ He realized he could not do this massive project alone. He would need laborers, resources, and security.
<i>What were the Benefits?</i>	▪ The building project was finished in 52 days!
<i>What was the Result?</i>	▪ The wall was built in fifty two days. The people of God rejoiced and inhabited the city.

²⁴ Bo Boshers, *Student Ministry in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 151.

Passage	The Gospels (especially Matthew 9-10; 28:18-20)
<i>Who is the Leader?</i>	▪ Jesus Christ
<i>What did He Lead?</i>	▪ A group of twelve men he called “sent out ones”
<i>Why Did He Build a Team?</i>	▪ He knew he would return to the Father and they would carry on the work he had started.
<i>What were the Benefits?</i>	▪ From these men, the church was born. These men became capable leaders even with their leader no longer physically with them.
<i>What was the Result?</i>	▪ Within their lifetime, Christianity grew across the Roman Empire. Its effect was felt on culture then and it still is today. We are followers of Christ because of these men.

Passage	Acts & Pastoral Epistles (especially Acts 16:1-4; 17, 2 Timothy 2:2)
<i>Who is the Leader?</i>	▪ Paul
<i>What did He Lead?</i>	▪ A team of co laborers for the gospel; specifically a young man named Timothy.
<i>Why Did He Build a Team?</i>	▪ He knew this multiplying process was the model set up by Christ. He also knew Timothy must carry on the work that he had started in many of the churches.
<i>What were the Benefits?</i>	▪ Timothy remained faithful after Paul’s death. Timothy also was faithful in multiplying himself into others.
<i>What was the Result?</i>	▪ It was through the influence of Paul that the Gentile world became introduced to Christianity.

Bo Boshers observes, “When Moses acted upon the wise counsel of Jethro and incorporated a leadership team by selecting ‘capable men who fear God, trustworthy men and hate dishonest gain,’ he learned to work smarter, not harder.”²⁵

5. Foundations of Protection (Safety)

This area of student ministry does not seem to get the attention it deserves. When considering safety in student ministry, three facts seem to stand out:

- 1) In student ministries, there will be injuries, accidents, and property damage.

“Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox” (Proverbs 14:4, KJV).

²⁵ Ibid., 152.

- 2) The student pastor is to do what he can to protect the flock. The author realizes this Scripture is directed toward doctrinal purity but he is confident the principle of physical safety is within scope.

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock” (Acts 20:28-29).

“Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care” (1 Timothy 6:20a).

- 3) The student pastor is given a stewardship responsibility over these students when they are involved in the student ministry. (Previous Scriptures)

Constructional Components of a Strategic, Balanced, and Strong Student Ministry

As this section will provide the theological and philosophical reasons for the various constructional components of student ministry, the author must note that this section will not explain the practical application of each of these five areas; only the biblical foundation. The actual construction of these five areas will be reserved for chapter five.

1. Weekly Series (Meetings)

As Jesus developed the foundation to the church with His own disciples, one can see the principle of the weekly series (meeting). His entire three year ministry was a series, except Christ’s “meetings” were not held weekly, but daily. As one reads through the Gospels, one could begin to wonder if Jesus had made the right choice in men to carry out His plan for the church to reach the world for Him. After all, they seemed so “unstable” in their faith. What always causes the author to shake his head is when he reads Matthew 28:17b. This passage is right before the post-resurrected Lord of life gave

the Great Commission. Even as the eleven worshipped their Messiah, Matthew had to comment, “*but some doubted.*” They had just witnessed the greatest miracle since creation itself and yet there were still some who doubted. It could easily cross one’s mind if Jesus had a reserve plan to carry out the mission of the church in case these eleven men did not complete the mission. What would happen when Jesus would leave?

The book of Acts begins with the apostles, their wives, and some others (120 people - Acts 1:15) gathered together, waiting for the Holy Spirit to come upon them just as Jesus commanded. The promised Spirit came upon them with power! As the church was birthed in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit used these simple followers of Christ to make instantaneous impact. The thousands of out of town guests who came to worship God at Pentecost heard that the true way to worship Him was through embracing Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Christ. Over 3,000 repented and identified themselves with Jesus Christ through their immediate baptism. This small following exploded in size in just one day! What should this new church now do? As one reads through the rest of Acts 2, he will note verses 42-47 give the blueprint for what the church should be. The immediate growing power of this new movement is seen in verse 42 as the new disciples “*devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to breaking of bread and to prayer.*” As one learns about utilizing a weekly series in student ministry, the author believes this verse is the foundation to developing a series that will honor God.

The new believers devoted themselves to these four basic areas of Christian duty. This word **devote** is essential! One must consider to *what* the new church devoted themselves, *when* they did these duties, and *where* they met to fulfill these functions.

What did the new believers devote themselves?

Looking at this verse, the reader will see the four major areas laid out. The people committed themselves:

- *to the apostles teaching*
- *to the fellowship*
- *to breaking of bread*
- *to prayer*

The essential core of their daily meeting was their devotion to the **apostles' teaching**. The apostles were simply obeying what Christ told them to do in Matthew 28:19-20, "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...*" They were teaching the truths of Jesus, and they had so much to share. The core of the meeting was the teaching of the Word of God. **They were devoted to teaching the Word.**

Second, the people were committed to the fellowship. Notice it does not say they were committed to fellowship. They were committed to the fellowship. This little determiner is a significant word within this sentence. These people were committed to the body of Christ, the church. This small word (and the rest of the books of Acts) speaks of structure. **They were devoted to the local church.**

Third, they devoted themselves to the breaking of bread. This suggests they observed the Lord's Supper and ate meals together (v.46). **They were devoted to spiritual and authentic interpersonal relationships.**

Fourth, during these same times together, they would also spend time in prayer. This discipline of prayer is something seen throughout Acts. These people had powerful times of prayer (see Acts 4:23-31). Prayer was a natural part of their church life. **They were devoted to prayer.**

When and where did the new believers gather together?

Verse 46 clearly states they did these activities on a daily basis and they met in the temple courts and in their homes.

If one continues the journey through Acts, the reader will see this devotion by the early believers continued. Acts 5:42 speaks of the continuation of the daily times both in the temple and in homes as the Word of God was both preached (“impact” – evangelism) and taught (“insight” – growth). The author would argue this should definitely be pointing out the Bible does speak of having a series of organized meetings.

As Acts and the New Testament continued to unfold, the church regarded Sunday (the first day of the week) as the Lord’s Day. Luke referred to this day in Acts 20:7. Here Paul’s ministry team met with the church at Troas for the breaking of bread (the Lord’s Supper), followed with Paul’s teaching the church. This passage refers to teaching and communion. By the time Paul admonishes the Corinthians about their need to correct their wrongdoing with the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-22), he was using phrases like, “*your meetings*” (v.17) and “*when you come together as a church*” (v.18). In this passage there is: 1) the direct reference to a structure of church meetings, and 2) rebuke for violating the spirit of body life established in Acts 2. By the end of this letter, he spoke to the need of taking up the collection when they came together “*on the first day of the week.*” (1 Corinthians 16:2). Sunday was established as the Lord’s Day. One can easily assess the early church had intentional weekly meetings which were carrying on the commands of Jesus Christ.

2. Curriculum Map (Teaching Schedule)

There are two key areas that the author believes are needed foundations for student leaders to keep in mind when preparing their teaching schedules. The first is to remember what one teaches, keeping the teaching based on Scripture. The second is to remember why one teaches, to see students brought to full maturity in Christ. The following four areas are Scriptural reasons for the previous two foundations:

Based on Matthew 28:19-20, the church is to make disciples.

In the context of student ministry, this is done as the student ministry leaders teach students to obey everything Christ taught the twelve. The two basic presuppositions in this command are:

- 1) Teachers must teach all of the information (the truths of the Gospels).
- 2) Teacher must teach for transformation (Christ-like character).

Based on Colossians 1:28-29, the church is to teach with all wisdom with the goal of each student coming into full maturity in Christ.

As one reads through Colossians, one quickly realizes this foundational wisdom is not based on the teacher's strengths, talents, or knowledge, but on the Word of God (3:15-16). The reason student pastors teach the Word is to present the students to God as fully mature in their faith. This is a serious stewardship issue and should never be taken lightly (Hebrews 13:3, 17).

Based on the Pastoral Epistles, pastoral leaders are to teach the Word boldly and clearly (1 Timothy 4:13-16; 2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Student pastors must understand the immense responsibility to teach the Word of God through the lifestyle they live and the lessons they teach (1 Timothy 4:15).

Based on Acts 20:28, pastoral leaders are to teach the whole counsel of God.

Paul equipped the Ephesians' church leaders so well through the Scriptures that he was free of the blood of that city. He taught them the encompassing foundational truths which would prepare those leaders to carry on ministry. Paul equipped these people for ministry because he knew he would not always be with them. Obviously Paul had a comprehensive teaching strategy. Paul stated he taught these people daily for two and a half years. The author sees a tremendous student ministry principle within this passage. To start, student pastors have the students for only a brief time each week and for only a few short years before they graduate. These students must be equipped for ministry while they are in school and prepared life after the graduate high school. The author believes these reasons calls for a comprehensive teaching strategy.

3. Monthly Events

The author understands the Scripture never states, "Verily, verily, student ministry must have monthly events or thou art not fulfilling the Great Commission." Therefore, is there a theological or philosophical reason for all of the events that make up much of modern student ministry? For that matter, does the Word of God call for any of the various church ministries to have such events?

To begin this section, the author will briefly establish two presuppositions: 1) the definition of an event, and 2) the purpose of an event.

The Definition of an Event. As given in the author's Youth 460 workbook, a monthly event is "*an activity presented within a short period of time on a specific*

day.”²⁶ This would be seen as a group oriented ministry occurrence apart from the weekly meetings (series). In the traditional sense, these are what student ministries typically provide during the weekend night. The events may also go by such names as activities or socials. They may include specific theme events internally administered by the student ministry (i.e. sports events, food events, lock-ins, road rallies, etc...) or supportive travel events externally administered by an outside organization in which the student ministry attends (i.e. amusement park, concert or music festival, youth rallies ...).

The Purpose of an Event. To assist this, the author would like to call the reader back to the material in chapter two, section five (A Biblical Support for the Project’s Outline), and 1. Foundations of Programming. It is in this segment the author gives the four levels of ministry programming. (The reader must retain these ministry levels as they are crucial to student ministry monthly events.) They are:

- Level 1 - Entry (relationship building)
- Level 2 - Evangelism (outreach)
- Level 3 – Edify(discipleship)
- Level 4 - Equip (ministry)

In reference to the questions asked in the opening paragraph, no, the Scriptures do not command the church (or church ministries) to necessarily have events (as current church culture defines them). Yet the author will argue that the Scripture does provide license and even examples of events.

Consider the Old Testament. According to the *NIV Study Bible*, in the chart “Old Testament Feasts and Other Sacred Days,” there were nine various annual events in which God’s people were to participate.²⁷ These events were separate from the weekly

²⁶ Brown, *Programs for Youth Ministry*, 66.

²⁷ Barker, *The NIV Study Bible*, 174.

times to be spent in the Temple and, eventually, the Synagogues. These events were planned in advance, were organized, and had specific spiritual purposes.

Consider the New Testament. Many of these annual events were still in operation during the time of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, Jesus strongly participated in these events. The author would argue that Jesus used the principles of events in his own ministry. For example, when one considers the events recorded in Mark 6 and Mark 8 (traditionally referred to as the “Feeding of the Five Thousand” and the “Feeding of the Four Thousand”), he can see the principles of events. The author identifies three basic principles used by Jesus:

- 1) The event was outside the normal activity of the Temple and/or Synagogue.
- 2) The event had the primary purpose of discipleship (level 3 – to the crowd) with a supportive purpose of ministry (level 4 – to the twelve apostles).
- 3) The event had organization. (Jesus had the twelve organize the people into groups for food distribution and used the twelve for cleaning up the leftover food after the event.)

Moving throughout the New Testament, the author would argue there are the principles of events given as one looks at the birth and early years of the church. It is interesting to consider that the greatest “outreach event” ever recorded in the New Testament was during an Old Testament event. As the crowds gathered together for the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost, also called Harvest), the stage was set for the Apostle Peter’s preaching and the birth of the Church as over three thousand people repented of their sin and believed that Jesus of Nazareth was truly their promised Messiah (Acts 2:42-47). If one considers the definition of an event previously given (*“an activity presented within a short period of time on a specific day”*), he can see this great day of Harvest as an event.

These annual feasts eventually faded away as the church began to grow but the purposes of these events continued. Events with purpose continued throughout the times of the early church. One could arguably see in Acts example of the ministry in the temple courts as large group evangelism (level 2) and the ministry in the homes as Christian growth (level 3).

4. Retreats and Camps

The author's definition of a student ministry camp or retreat would start with, "*a continuous, multiple day activity*"²⁸ but yet the author would add "*...in which students are assembled apart from their daily routine for a designated purpose.*" Just like the previous point on events, the author would argue that both the Old and New Testaments, in principle form, contain examples of camps and retreats.

One must consider the nomadic lifestyle of the Hebrews during the forty years in the desert. While some may question the author as stretching the text, the author does believe these events would fit the criteria of his definition. The "wilderness wandering" certainly was a continuous, multiple day activity (forty years) in which students (the people of God) were assembled (organization) apart from their daily routine (this was a temporary arrangement) for a designated purpose (initially to bring them to the Promised Land, but also to spiritually purify the people.)

The reader can draw his/her own conclusions as to the parallels of the Hebrew camp and student ministries camps:

- 1) The Hebrew camp was organized into groups (tribes).
- 2) The Hebrew camp had leadership in place.

²⁸ Brown, *Programs for Youth Ministry*, 66.

- 3) The Hebrew camp had rules and regulations in regards to relationships, civil law, hygiene, etc.
- 4) The Hebrew camp had the basic needs of food, water, and even sanitation met.
- 5) The Hebrew camp had times of meeting with God.
- 6) The Hebrew camp had times of spiritual and physical discipline for disobedience.

The author would argue that Jesus Christ used the principles of camps and retreats with both Himself and His apostles. During His three year ministry He gathered to Himself many followers, yet His intention was to begin to focus on the training of twelve men. Most scholars would suggest it was into Jesus' second year when He chose out of the many the specific men to become His apostles. Luke records this event:

¹²One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. ¹³When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: ¹⁴Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

While this was not a time of continuous days, one could call it a prayer retreat. Jesus spent a time alone with His Father out of the ordinary routine in preparation for the coming leadership training and eventually the birth of his church. It was out of this initial time that His many "retreats" with these men would come.

During their last year together, Jesus drew aside the Twelve into Galilee for uninterrupted teaching in preparation of the things to come. Yet achieving this goal was difficult due to the crowds continuing to find them (Matthew 14-18). Matthew 16 records one of the times Jesus was able to have a significant occasion with the Twelve. It was during their time of travel in the region of Caesarea Philippi that Jesus asked His disciples,

"Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (v. 13). This was Peter's defining moment of his future role in the church as he declared that Jesus was the *"Christ, the Son of the living God"* (v. 16). Upon hearing this confession, Christ told him that upon *"this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it"* (v. 18).

What the author finds interesting is Matthew's comment right after this event, *"From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life"* (v. 21). Jesus was using this sacred time to prepare his men for the future.

Yet what immediately followed this event is another example of a camp or retreat. All three Synoptic Gospels give account of what is referred to as "The Transfiguration." Matthew 17:1 reads, "After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves." The traditional mountain suggested is Mount Tabor but it's height of 1,800 feet high and its occupation by a fortress makes it an unlikely site for the nature of this private occasion. Based on the location where Jesus and the Twelve were during Matthew 18, most scholars would suggest this high mountain is Mount Hermon, just northwest of Caesarea Philippi.²⁹ According to the *NIV Study Bible*, "Mount Hermon fits the context much better by being closer (to Caesarea Philippi) and higher (over 9,000 feet)."³⁰

The reason for the geography lesson is obvious when remembering the context of this section of the thesis. The author would suggest that this trip truly would equate to a

²⁹ Barker. *The NIV Study Bible*, 1464.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1555.

modern day student ministry retreat or camp. In the same fashion as the parallel of the Exodus to student ministry camping, one can observe:

- 1) This experience was inclusive of Jesus and his three closest followers (His “inner circle” of leaders)
- 2) This experience would be one in which they were all alone, were free from outside distractions, and the three could focus on their time with Jesus Christ.
- 3) This experience was an outdoor experience and would be very physically demanding (the mountain’s being over 9,000 feet could explain why the three were sleeping [Luke 9:32]).
- 4) This experience would be one that focused on spiritual intimacy (fellowship) and where Jesus wanted to teach them of His supremacy (doctrine). This teaching time focused both on the facts (worship in truth) and the feelings (worship in spirit).
- 5) This experience with such a spiritual elevation was immediately met with the reality of ministry issues as soon as they came down the mountain.
- 6) This experience would be a “mountain top” experience of which both Peter and John would later write in their epistles (2 Peter 1:17; 1 John 1:1). While they both later stumbled spiritually (Peter’s denial; John arguing as to who would be the greatest) after this event, no one could take away from them their experience they had on that significant day.

With a culture today that is so appealing and calling for students’ attention, the author trusts one can see that both testaments provide examples of the purposes, principles, benefits, and even some strategic means of providing positive camping experiences for today’s students.

5. Mission Trips

The author realizes that the ministry of Jesus has provided this thesis example of various events and camps and he could easily use the ministry of Jesus to provide examples of mission trips. One familiar story would be the sending of the Twelve out on their first missionary journey in Matthew 10. Another mission trip Jesus instituted would be the sending of the seventy (some manuscripts have seventy two) in Luke 10. Yet the most significant mission trip would be of a lifelong nature with the eventual commissioning of the apostles just prior to the Lord's departure (referred to as the Great Commission.)

Before Jesus sent the twelve out on their first mission trip, they were already with Him in ministry. In Matthew 9:35-38 Jesus showed them the need of the mission and told them to pray for workers. It was directly after that experience they were given training instructions to go out and fulfill their mission (Matthew 10). After the mission experience they continued on with Him until His task was complete. Now it was their turn (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus prepared these men to bring His kingdom to the lives of multitudes by following three simple principles. The author is not exactly sure of the origin of these three, but he knows they have been used by Campus Crusade for Christ. The simple but brilliant phases of Christ's training the Twelve for ministry are as follows:³¹

- Jesus taught them how.
- Jesus showed them how.
- Jesus let them do it.

The author has noticed an explosion of "mission trips" in the western church in the last twenty years. This is especially true among student ministries, and he rejoices in

³¹ Campus Crusade for Christ, *How to Make Your Mark* (San Bernardino: Here's Life, 1983), 189.

this outburst of ministry. But he does have a philosophical concern. His question would be, “Are many of these trips truly a biblically based mission trip?”

As one looks at the word *mission*, certain thoughts may surface. A mission is an assignment, a task, a job, or an operation. A mission also has to do with the idea of delegation. Also, a mission refers to a calling, a purpose, a certain goal, or an objective. This is where one would get the idea of a mission statement. In simplistic terms, a mission is the point of what one is doing in. What is the purpose of today’s student mission trips? Is it building houses for poor people, providing disaster relief in the aftermath of tragedy, evangelism, etc...?

The author would suggest six different purposes of student ministries mission trips. He also sees where the Scriptures provide positive examples of each one. Below is a listing of some different purposes, including a biblical example and a basic description:

- 1) Work projects (Nehemiah) – The focus would be physical labor with a specific goal and is task oriented.
- 2) Service projects (Jesus Christ) – The focus is doing good deeds with flexible goals (i.e., helping out where needed), and is service oriented.
- 3) Support projects (Barnabas, Priscilla and Aquila, Luke) – The focus is on encouragement and is ministry related with flexible goals and is relational oriented.
- 4) Training projects (Timothy with Paul) – The focus is to come alongside a ministry in order to learn ministry and is equipping oriented.
- 5) Evangelistic projects (the Twelve in Matthew 10) – The focus is to connect with lost people and share the gospel with a specific goal and is evangelistic oriented.
- 6) Church Planting projects (Paul in Acts) –The focus is intense work with a specific goal and is evangelistic, discipleship, and leadership oriented.

Jesus Christ's and Paul's ministries were a hybrid of many of these. Even by reading through these six the author desires the reader can identify the intensity and time each trip may take. While each one has a valid mission, the author encourages his own university students to focus on the evangelistic emphasis in their mission trips. When the author hears of a student ministry going to paint a building or help an orphanage build a school, he rejoices the students are doing something constructive. But he internally asks, "Is this truly missions as taught by Christ?" As he sees it, a mission trip should be one that looks to strategically share the gospel. The author believes many of the current student ministry mission trips are actually ministry trips (about service) rather than mission trips (about salvation). The author must state he is not suggesting a student pastor take his students out to leap on a group of people they do not know with God's truth without first connecting with those people in some tangible way. He recommends they build bridges to lost persons. But he also desires that students not forget why one builds the bridges. It is to give people the chance to hear and understand the message of forgiveness only provided by Jesus Christ. A great example of this is seen in John 9. Jesus Christ first provided ministry with healing the man's physical blindness and then provided mission by returning to the man to heal his spiritual blindness.

As the author pointed out earlier in this chapter with Paul's invitation to young Timothy to join the mission team of himself and Silas (Acts 16), the author truly believes students can play a significant part in reaching the world for Jesus Christ. He has observed it firsthand in his own ministry.

In conclusion of both this section (A Biblical Support for the Project's Outline) and the entire chapter, the author concludes with expressing the reality that terms such as,

“student pastor,” “student ministry,” “budgets,” and camping ministry” are not specifically mentioned in Scripture. While he understands these terms are not in the Bible, he believes he has demonstrated significant verification that there are biblical truths (theology) and biblical principles (philosophy) from God’s Word which express the need for his thesis in developing “A Strategy to Equip Youth Leaders into Developing Strategic, Balanced, and Strong Local Church Student Ministries.”

As time marches on, student ministry must find new(er) ways to be more creative and effective in reaching future generations for Jesus Christ. However, the precepts laid out in this chapter could be foundational for these future student ministry workers. While the source is anonymous, the author finishes this chapter with a rhyme that Dr. Elmer Towns frequently uses in his lectures in the Doctorate of Ministries courses at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.³²

*Methods are many,
Principles are few,
Methods may change,
But principles never do.*

³² As quoted by Doctor Elmer Towns in the Evangelism 851 course taught at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary during June 5-, 2006. The author was present in the class to hear this quote.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMMING IN STUDENT MINISTRY SURVEY

The Background of the Survey

For the purpose of assessing the programming (administrative) efforts in contemporary student ministry, the author and mentor both believed it necessary to draw data from current student ministry students and workers. In doing this, the author would be able to determine the level of effective organization within current student ministry and demonstrate if there was a need for a leadership resource which is the eventual goal of the author from this project.

The author was able to obtain permission from Mr. Scott Pleasants of Liberty University's Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence and instruction from Liberty University's Digital Information Service Center to design an online survey. This survey was then designed by the author (with the assistance of a current Youth Ministry student of the author's) and placed on Liberty University's Survey Administrator location.

While the author recognizes the benefits of parachurch student ministry organizations, the focus of this survey local church student ministries. Many of these questions could only be answered by church ministries.

The Layout of the Survey

The survey consists of questions that encompass the ten major areas of the actual project (as laid out in chapters four and five). The original survey was composed of 100 questions with 10 questions per section. The survey was pared down to 30 questions, with three questions per section of the project. The author and mentor both greatly struggled with this decision. While 100 questions would provide some much needed data about the current organizational condition of student ministry, the author and mentor were concerned a 100 question survey would ward off potential respondents from taking the survey. Therefore, the author reduced the survey to a 30 question survey.

The survey was set up to be brief and extremely user friendly. From this online location, individuals would anonymously check the preferred answers. All of the questions were answered in a “click” fashion similar to other current online surveys. The questions were written to be as objective as possible, knowing that much of the desired research would have a subjective nature. There were to be no written answers. The author also enjoyed the fact that using the university’s online survey system, the survey was set up to gather and finalize the data itself.

The survey was sent out via email with the link to the survey imbedded in the email. This survey was sent out and made available to over 1,000 persons. In addition, the author encouraged the respondents to forward the email to other youth workers.

The Rationale of the Survey

The survey focused on three categories of current student ministry workers:

1) Current residential Liberty University students – These are students who are studying youth ministry and presently in the 400 level (senior) courses. These students were to take the survey based on their home church experience when they were students. One rationale of surveying this group is they have been saturated with student ministry academic training and can potentially have positive idealistic insights. Another rationale is that these students can provide feedback from an adolescent/young adult perspective.

2) Current student ministry professionals – These are adults who are currently the professionals leading the local church student ministry. One rationale of surveying this group is they, being the key leader, ought to be able to provide the most legitimate answer to each of the questions. The author's assumption is that the key leader will know the ministry better than anyone else involved in the student ministry.

3) Current student ministry volunteers – These are the adults who are currently serving in student ministry in a supportive and/or volunteer role. One rationale of surveying this group is they may be able to provide less biased answers to the questions. Whereas the leader may have some blind spots to the ministry, the volunteer may be able to provide some insight the key leader does not see (or chooses not to see). Another rationale is one of communication. For example, the key leader may think his leadership team understands the mission of the ministry, but the responses of the volunteers taking this survey can reveal the true communication of the leader to his leadership team.

The survey consists of three segments. The first segment, the introduction, consists of six questions about the background of the participant. The second segment, the actual survey, consisted of 30 questions. The third segment, the conclusion, includes two questions.

The Introduction – The rationale for this segment was to discover the background of the individual surveyed. Compiling all of these responses together would then provide a whole picture of the demographics of the survey itself. The areas of interest were: the roles of student ministry workers, the ages of the workers, the national location of the ministry surveyed, the years of ministry experience, the size of the church, and the size of the student ministry. The desire was to provide a survey that would be a healthy cross section of student ministry workers and the ministries they represent. (The actual six questions are part of the survey which appears later in the chapter.)

The Survey - The rationale for this segment was to discover the desired research for the project. While the author would obviously have his own pre-research thoughts and premises in regards to the need for the thesis project, the survey would provide a more objective means of measuring the strategic, balanced, and strong elements of contemporary student ministry right from the individuals who are currently engaged in such.

The project itself (chapters four and five) will consist of ten major areas (called components) of student ministry. Chapter four will focus on the five foundational components while chapter five will focus on the five constructive components. Thus, the survey will provide basic research dealing with each of the ten components.

In this segment, the author will list each of the ten components followed with a brief rationale for the component. The description of each component has already been presented within chapter two under “A Biblical Support for the Project’s Outline.” Under each component will then be a listing of the three questions accompanied by a brief

rationale for each question. Some of the questions the author believes are self-explanatory, thus, he will not provide much rationale.

Foundational Component 1: Ministry Philosophy

These questions were designed to discover whether it is guided by an explicit philosophy of ministry. The author presumes every ministry has a philosophy of ministry. It may or may not be written down or even known, but even an unplanned philosophy is a philosophy.

1. Your philosophy of ministry is:
 Nonexistent
 Verbalized but not written
 Written but not verbalized
 Both verbalized and written

This question was to determine if the respondent's ministry has a philosophy that is written and communicated to those within the ministry.

2. Your ministry has:
 Only written ministry statements (i.e. purpose, mission, vision, etc.)
 Only a written strategy for accomplishing your purpose/mission
 Both a written ministry statements and a written strategy
 No written ministry and/or written strategy

The author wanted to see if the ministry had some form of written ministry statements, such as a purpose or mission statement. Along with this, the author wanted to see if the ministry had a written strategy to carry out its mission.

3. Not ideally but in reality, your ministry is honestly determined by (or motivated by):
 Tradition (i.e. "We've always done it this way...")
 Personalities (i.e. "I need to get permission from...")
 Programs (i.e. "Because my denomination uses this...")
 Principles (i.e. "Everything we do is based on...")

With the recent popularity of the book, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, the author was concerned many, if not all, would say they have a purpose-driven ministry. Therefore, he and his mentor greatly worked through the wording of this question. This is why the author opened the question with the phrase, “Not ideally but in reality.” The author desired to see what decided what factor led the ministry. Would it be various traditions, certain strong personalities, a commitment to church or denominational programs, or principles? The author chose the word principle instead of purpose because of the concern over the potential for many to simply check this answer.

On a personal note, based on the author’s own ministry experience, he realizes the “ideally versus the reality” issue. While he personally (ideally) had a purpose-driven model of student ministry (even before the book came out), in many of the churches he served, the reality was this was not always the driving factor. This is another reason why he was careful to craft the question, “Not ideally but in reality.”

Foundational Component 2: Planning Ahead

The questions were intended to determine the overall level of organization, preparation, and communication within the respondent’s student ministry. This would also include the proactive level of preparation within the student ministry.

4. Your ministry is prepared, organized, and communicates well in a timely manner throughout the entire ministry:
 Strongly agree
 Somewhat agree
 Somewhat disagree
 Strongly disagree

The author wanted to discover the level of each ministry’s preparedness. He realizes that effectively planning ahead includes preparation, organization, and communication. He realizes that a student ministry leader may think he plans ahead yet

fails to effectively organize and/or effectively communicate his plans in a timely manner with others; thus, not truly fulfilling proper planning.

5. In regards to annual planning of the entire ministry year, your ministry:
plans itself before the beginning of the ministry year
plans itself during the year (just prior to each event)
does not plan itself in advance at all

This question was to discover if and when the student ministry was planned.

6. Does your ministry utilize some type of planning forms in preparing for monthly events, camps, mission trips, etc.?
Yes
No
Do not know

Using these types of forms is an integral part of the author's Youth 460 course and the author truly believes in the benefits of using them. This question was to ascertain how many student ministries utilize some type of planning forms. This research would indicate the level of written planning.

Foundational Component 3: Leadership

This component will provide a basic overview of the steps taken by the student ministry to facilitate the entrance of leaders into the ministry, the written responsibilities and expectations for said leader, and the provision of training opportunities. This component has great value to the author because of his deep commitment to seeing student ministries fulfill Ephesians 4:12 as pastors develop effective leaders who will carry out the ministry.

7. There is a specific application/interview process for each leader (paid or volunteer):
Yes
No

Very simply put, the goal of this question was to see the percentage of ministries that have some type of leadership application and/or interview process before bringing leaders into the student ministry. This question is important to the author because of his great concern for student ministries to qualify the individuals they are bringing into the ministry.

8. Each adult leader (paid or volunteer) has:
a specific role/responsibility with no written job description
a specific role/responsibility with a written job description
no specific role/responsibility

This question was developed to ascertain how many leaders have some type of reason for being in the student ministry. The author wonders if the adults, especially volunteers, that are giving of their time are truly being used effectively. Do they have a specific task? If so, do they know what they are to be doing? Also, is there a means of measuring to see if leaders are being effective?

9. There is some form of continual leadership training for all of the adult leaders:
Yes
No

This question was to discover the percentage of leaders who are or who are not getting the necessary leadership training in order to be effective leaders. This question is the foundation of much of the author's stated thesis.

Foundational Component 4: Budget

These questions were designed to determine the role that budgeting plays in student ministry. The responses would indicate how student ministry financially operates. They would also indicate the church's role in the financial matters of the student ministry.

10. The dominant means of paying for the operation of implementing the student ministry is:
 Self-paying
 Support/Fundraisers
 Sponsors/Scholarships
 Special offerings
 Submitted church budget
 Blended of two or more of the above

Responses to this question will provide a strong indication of the church's role in the financial matters of the student ministry. Does the church expect the student ministry to take care of itself or does it have an active role in providing for the student ministry?

11. Must the student ministry prepare a proposed student ministry budget for church leadership before the fiscal year?
 Yes
 No

As with Question 10, responses to this question will indicate what role the church has in the financial matters of the student ministry and whether the student ministry has some ownership in drafting its own budget (subject to approval or rejection by the governing powers.)

12. In relation to financial matters, the student ministry:
 keeps its own financial records and/or reports of its events but does not need to turn any records or reports into the church
 keeps its own financial records and/or reports of its events and must turn any records or reports into the church
 does not keep any financial records

In keeping with the previous two church involvement indicators, the question will show the percentage of student ministries that keep accurate financial records, and some inference can be drawn regarding steps to be taken towards financial accountability.

Foundational Component 5: Safety Issues

This component will provide a simplistic overview of the steps taken by the student ministry in providing a safe environment and ministry. The author mentions to his class that in his opinion this is an area that is very weak within current student ministry. He is very interested in the outcome of these questions. The first two are more objective, while the last one is subjective. The first two focus on emergency strategies and medical forms, the last question asks for the respondent's opinion as to how safe he believes his student ministry is.

13. In regards to an emergency, your ministry has an emergency plan that is:

- Written but not communicated
- Communicated (verbalized) but not written
- Both written and communicated
- Nonexistent

The answer to this question reveals if there is any emergency plan currently in place. The author believes an emergency plan is an absolute essential within student ministries. Other than the obvious, some reasons why the author believes this is the reality that student ministries are more active than prior generations, students are more extreme in their actions, and culture is becoming increasingly more violent. While the culture seems more dangerous than in the past and the author's personal impression is that student ministries do not take this area that seriously, the author's question seeks to find out the level of proactive planning for emergencies.

14. Does your ministry require your students to have filled out some type of Parental Medical Release form for traveling purposes?

- Yes
- No

15. Do you believe your ministry is proactive in safety issues and is a safe ministry?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree
 Somewhat disagree
 Strongly disagree

The question will provide a subjective view of how safe the respondents believe their student ministries are. The author's pre-results impression is that the ministries will think they are safe but in reality (due to a lack of planning) they actually may not be. The author truly desires to see the responses to this question.

Constructive Component 1: Weekly Meetings

This is the first of the five constructive components. These five components are the five areas one typically uses in putting together a student ministry. The first one is the weekly meetings traditionally referred to by many as "youth group." The author strongly believes in this component. He teaches his students that it is during this time that the spiritual health of the group is formed (through its teaching) and carried out (through its ministry's purpose). The author hopes to see a balance of both reaching out to lost students and the deepening of the saved students. These three questions are to ascertain the purpose of the meetings, their level of organization, and their effectiveness.

16. Your weekly meetings are designed for (target audience):
- Only outreach to the lost
 - Only growth for the saved
 - One (or more) specific meetings for each audience
 - A combination meeting for both audiences

This question is in the plural (meetings) because the author leaves open the possibility of more than one meeting a week. He is seeking to discover the spiritual level of the students that the ministry is pursuing. He is seeking to discover if the ministry is (in his opinion) balanced in targeting both the saved and the lost. Finally, the author is

seeking to discover if their meetings that are designed to reach only one spiritual level of student or if there are meetings that are trying to reach both groups in one meeting.

17. In your opinion, your weekly meetings are:

- Very well organized
- Somewhat organized
- Somewhat disorganized
- Not well organized

This subjective question is an obvious one of the perception of organization.

18. In your opinion, your weekly meetings are:

- Very effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
- Somewhat effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
- Not effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
- Lacking in specific purpose
- A waste of time, money, and resources

This question is also subjective in nature and is based on the respondent's perception of the student ministry's fulfilling its intended purpose for each specific meeting.

Constructive Component 2: Teaching

Similar to Component 1, the author strongly believes in this component as well. The two must go together, for if both are not strong, neither one is strong. If the spiritual health of the group is formed during the weekly meetings, it is the content and effectiveness of the teaching that makes this possible. The author has a great concern about the local church youth group's reputation as being shallow in its teaching.

In this component, the author seeks to find out the level of planning ahead which goes into the topics being covered, the visibility of the Word of God within the lesson itself, and an opportunity for the participant to rate the author's four areas of teaching.

19. Your student ministry has:

- a written comprehensive teaching plan/schedule (including overall grades, annual and/or quarterly)

only a written annual teaching plan/schedule
 only a written quarterly teaching plan/schedule
 no teaching plan/schedule

To begin, the author wants to explain that the teaching plan also can be described as a teaching schedule. This question will indicate the level (and commitment) of planning ahead which goes into the teaching plan. The author is looking to see just how far ahead the ministries are planning out their lessons.

20. During the actual lesson, the Bible is:
 Very visible, core to the lesson
 Somewhat visible, part of the lesson
 Not that visible, referred to in the lesson
 Invisible

While this is a subjective question, there is a level of objectivity involved in this question. The author is seeking to find out the visible role of the Bible in student ministry teaching. Due to the condensing of questions, there were certain questions the author originally had but removed from the survey. One area the author wanted to discover was the use of technology (i.e. PowerPoint) showing the Scripture in lieu of actually using the Bible itself. The author has a deep concern as to the apparent “disappearing” of the Bible within both student and adult meetings. This would include the teacher as well as the worshipper. The author even hears this from his own children when he reminds them to bring their Bible to church. They will say, “Why should I bring it? They don’t use it. They show the verses on the screen.”

21. In your opinion, rate the effectiveness of the following teaching categories with the following rating system:
 Strong presence (4)
 Some presence (3)
 Little presence (2)
 No presence (1)

Doctrine

Apologetics
Growth/Disciplines
Christian Worldview

This question is the most comprehensive of all 30 questions in the survey. The respondent is to rank each of the four areas of teaching (doctrine, apologetics, growth, Christian worldview) with the above ranking system. These four are not in a ranking competition with each other; contrarily, they are ranked within themselves. For instance, each area could score with a 4 (strong presence). The author states publicly many times he is concerned about the levels of doctrine and apologetics today's students are receiving. Therefore, this question is of immense importance to the author.

Constructive Component 3: Activities/Events

The vast majority of student ministries provide the traditional monthly event, also called activities. The author will spend much of his teaching time in the Youth 460 course going over this aspect of student ministry. This is because so much of ministry seems to be centered on these types of events. Within this component, all three questions are of a subjective nature. One desired outcome has to do with purpose. The respondent will consider whether his ministry is balanced as he compares it with the four listed purposes of events. The other desired outcome has to do with organization and effectiveness.

22. Based on your recent ministry calendar, do you believe your ministry provides a balance of events with the specific purposes relationship building, outreach, growth, and ministry opportunities?
Strongly agree
Somewhat agree
Somewhat disagree
Strongly disagree

This question should indicate if the surveyed ministry is balanced in the purposes of its monthly events. The one item that may have been lacking in the question was a definition for the word “balance.” The author left this open to the respondent’s discretion.

23. Overall your events are:
 Very well organized
 Somewhat organized
 Somewhat disorganized
 Now well organized

The question is very subjective but will provide organizational feedback.

24. In your opinion, your events are:
 Very effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
 Somewhat effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
 Not effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
 Lacking in specific purpose
 A waste of time, money, and resources

The question is also very subjective but will provide effectiveness feedback.

Constructive Component 4: Retreats/Camps

Camping and retreats has been a staple of student ministry for years. This component is similar to the previous one (activities/events) with the last two questions similar to the last two questions from the previous component. The desired outcome has to do with organization and effectiveness. However the first question seeks to discover if the student ministry provides a camp and/or a retreat and, if so, who produces the event.

25. Does your ministry: (check answer that best applies)
 Produce its own Retreat and/or Summer Camp (staffing, program, sessions, etc.)
 Produce its own Retreat and attend another organization’s Summer Camp
 Produce its own Summer Camp and attend another organization’s Retreat
 Attend a Retreat and/or Camp both produced by another organization
 Not attend a Retreat and/or Summer Camp

The question will indicate the percentage of student ministries which produce their own annual retreats and/or summer camps. It will also indicate the percentage of groups that attend camps and/or retreats produced by other organizations. The author has a pre-survey opinion that the majority of surveyed ministries will not choose the first option. In other words, the majority will not put on their own camps and/or retreats. He is definitely interested in the results of this question. Within the Youth 460 course, the students are made to develop their own camps and/or retreats within their senior project. The author personally believes that providing one's own camp and/or retreats can offer a greater long term benefit to the specific student ministry rather than simply taking one's students to an outside camp.

26. Overall your retreats/camps are:
- Very well organized
 - Somewhat organized
 - Somewhat disorganized
 - Now well organized

The question is very subjective but will provide organizational feedback.

27. In your opinion, your retreats/camps are: (check only one)
- Very effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
 - Somewhat effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
 - Not effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
 - Lacking in specific purpose
 - A waste of time, money, and resources

The question is also very subjective but will provide effectiveness feedback.

Constructive Component 5: Missions Trips

In the author's opinion based on his personal observation, mission trips among student ministries seem to have become very popular in the recent ten or more years. This component will offer some basic feedback to see how popular they actually are. Almost identical to the previous component, the first question will discover how many

student ministries are providing a mission trip and, if so, who produces the trip. The last two questions are identical to the ones asked in Events and Camps as they focus on organization and effectiveness.

28. Does your ministry: (check only one)
 Provide and produce its own Mission trip (organizing, staffing, program, etc.)
 Provide and attend another organization's Mission trip
 Not provide a Mission trip (if this is your answer, proceed to next set of questions)

The author's pre-survey conjecture is that the majority of ministries will do some type of missions trip but possibly half or more student ministries will not provide their own. In other words, they will utilize an outside organization to provide the trip.

29. Overall your mission trips are:
 Very well organized
 Somewhat organized
 Somewhat disorganized
 Now well organized

The question is very subjective but will provide organizational feedback.

30. In your opinion, your mission trips are: (check only one)
 Very effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
 Somewhat effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
 Not effective in fulfilling their specific purpose
 Lacking in specific purpose
 A waste of time, money, and resources

The question is also very subjective but will provide effectiveness feedback.

The Conclusion – The rationale for this segment was one of a personal nature. The author asked two final questions designed to find out if the individual surveyed was aware of an evangelical Christian resource that will help a youth leader to equip his team of leaders in the specific organizational details of student ministry. This was followed with a question asking the individual surveyed if there were such a resource available, what his level of interest would be. The final question was to be answered only by the

key youth leader of the student ministry and/or if the individual was planning on becoming one. The rationale for these two questions was to see the level of interest in the long term goal of this project – to produce a marketable resource for student ministry leaders to equip their own leaders.

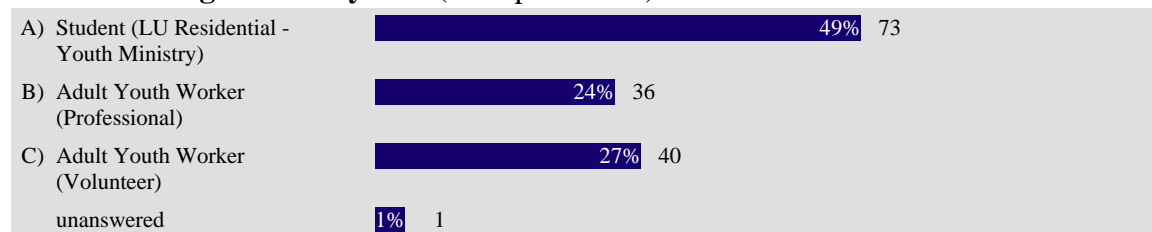
The Results of the Survey

The survey was sent out via email with the link to the survey imbedded in the email. This survey was sent out and made available to over 1,000 persons. In addition, the author encouraged the potential participant to forward the email to other youth workers. The original goal for student ministry participants was 100. It was very gratifying for the author to have 150 participants take the survey. The actual survey with the results is found in Appendix A. The results are also imbedded within the next section where the author will provide his interpretation of the survey.

The Interpretation of the Survey

INTRODUCTION: Background Information

The one taking the survey is a: (multiple choice)

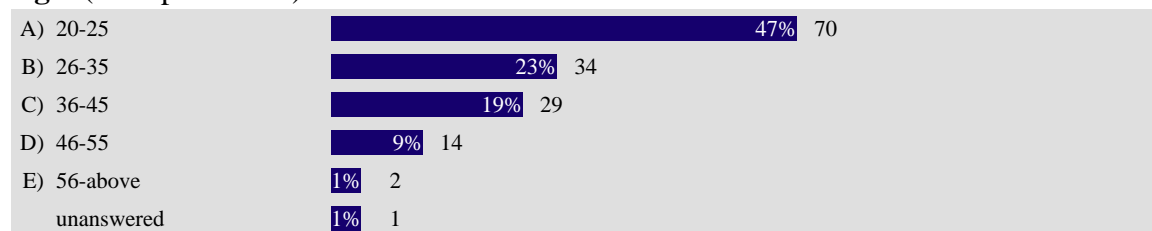


The author is grateful for the number of the Liberty University residential students who participated in the study. There are two reasons the author considers their participation to be significance. First, many of these participants are the author's

students. A number of them were taking his courses during the time of this research. The majority of them are currently in the course in which much of this project is based. The personal relationship between the author and his students is strong. From this relationship, the nature and passion of the author for his topic is experienced firsthand by his students. Second, using these students provides a keen perspective. Young adults can be very critical and idealistic; thus, their evaluation of their former student ministries has the potential for being more objective than the perspectives of the other two groups of participants.

The author is also pleased with the amount of participation from both professional student workers and the volunteer student workers. These numbers were a healthy blend of the author's Liberty University Distance Learning students, the Center for Youth Ministries (the Youth Ministries department of Liberty University) alumni, and the author's personal contacts.

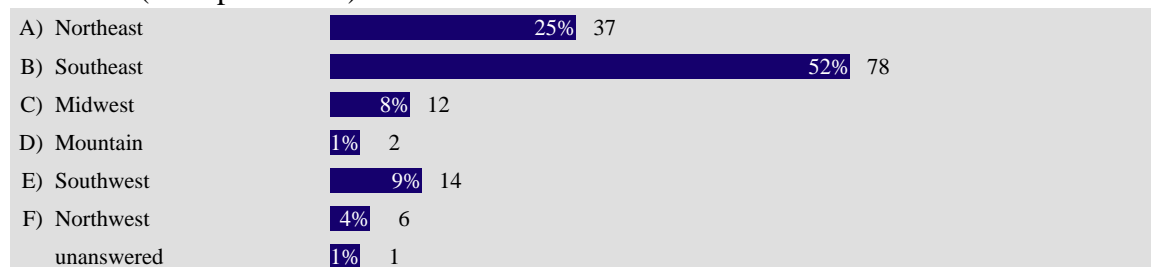
Age: (multiple choice)



Obviously with half of the participants being residential Liberty University students, it is easy to understand why the largest category of respondents was between the ages of 20-25. It must be noted that over half (53%) of all respondents were over the age of 25 and 29% of all respondents were over the age of 35. This demonstrates that student ministry is not only for those in their twenties. When one considers that the majority of

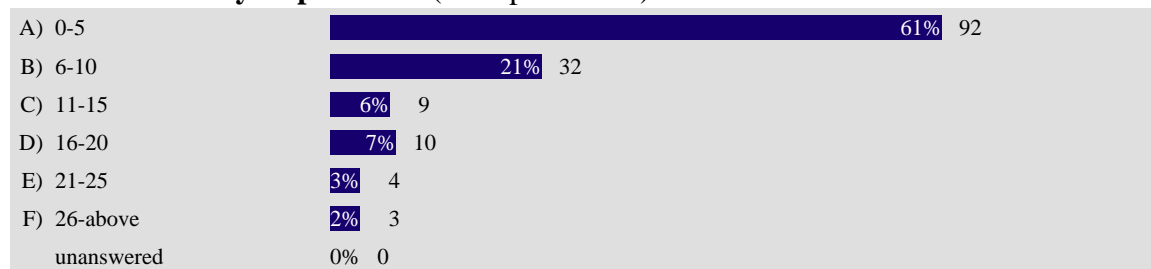
those between the ages of 20-25 are current university students, so the percentage of student ministries leaders who are old is actually quite large.

Location (multiple choice)



It is not surprising that over half of the participants are from the Southeast since Liberty University draws heavily from this location. With this in mind, the author was somewhat satisfied with the other regions represented. Ideally, the author would have desired to have a strong representation from each area; thus, providing a more sound depiction of the survey.

Years of Ministry Experience: (multiple choice)

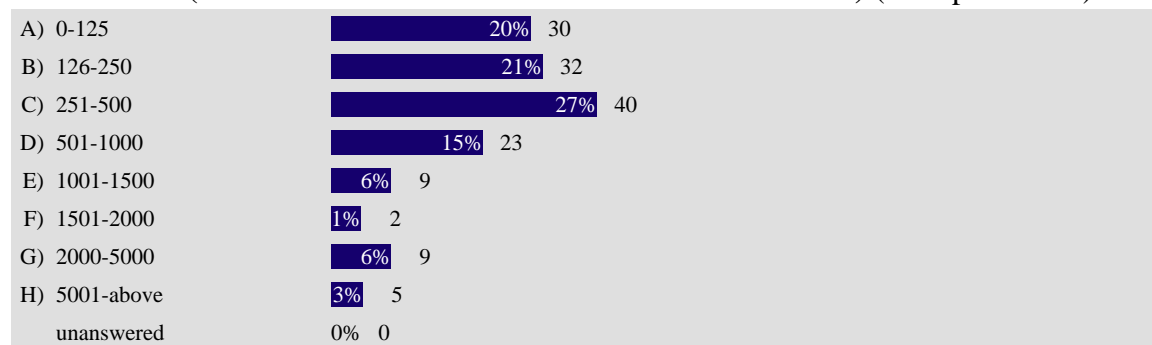


What first stands out is the large number of respondents with fewer than five years of experience (92 participants – 61%). Considering the reality that 70 participants (47%) are residential students of Liberty University, it stands to reason that the extreme majority of participants have less than five years experience in student ministry. Yet there is still a difference of 22 (14%). Obviously these 22 would come from either the Adult Professional or Adult Volunteer groups. Knowing that some of the 22 may come from the Adult Professionals, the author would tend to believe the majority of the 22

would come from the Adult Volunteer group. This conjecture is partially based on various inputs he has received from his Distance Learning students. Within their online introductory discussion boards, many of them explain they are looking forward to the course because they are volunteers in student ministry who are new(er) in their involvement in student ministry.

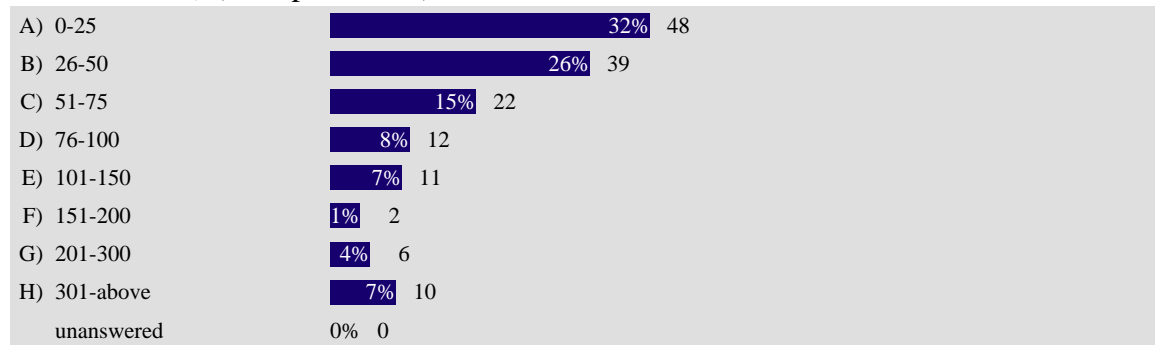
Of the other ages, the next largest group (21%) had 6-10 years experience. Taking these two together, 82% of the participants have ten years or less of student ministry experience. One may think this suggests the majority of student ministry workers do not have much experience, or that most student ministry workers do not stay in student ministry that long. While the data may suggest this premise, the author doubts if this number (82%) is genuinely this large among all current student ministry workers. One must keep in mind that half of the survey's respondents are college students. In addition, as the survey was sent out to "veteran" youth workers in the later stages of the survey, the author observed the number of longer term workers was actually increasing.

Church Size (Total weekend attendance. Do not double count.) (multiple choice)



Nothing in this segment came as a surprise to the author. The consensus of most "church growth experts" is that the majority of churches have fewer than 100 attendees. With this as perspective, the author was pleased with the number of responses from as many of the categories as he received.

Student Ministry Size (Middle school and High School weekly attendance. Do not double count.) (multiple choice)



The author realizes there is a common 10% “rule” (or formula) that has been around student ministry for many years. This formula is that for every 100 attendees in a church, the student ministry will have 10 attendees. Keeping this number in mind as one compares this data (Student Ministry Size) with the previous data (Church Size), the author seeks any validation of the unofficial 10% “rule.”

For this assessment, the author is going to place all of the churches into three categories: small (0-500), midsize (501-1000), and large (1001-above). Within the small church category, 68% of the respondents’ churches would have 500 or less total attendees while 58% of the student ministries have 50 or less students attending. Within these churches, the student ministries would appear to be less than 10% of the total church population. Within the midsize category, 15% of the respondents’ churches have 501-1000 total attendees while 23% of the student ministries had 51-100 attendees. Within this group, the mid-sized churches showed more than 10% of the total church population. Within the large category, the percentage of larger churches was almost exact with the larger categories of student ministries.

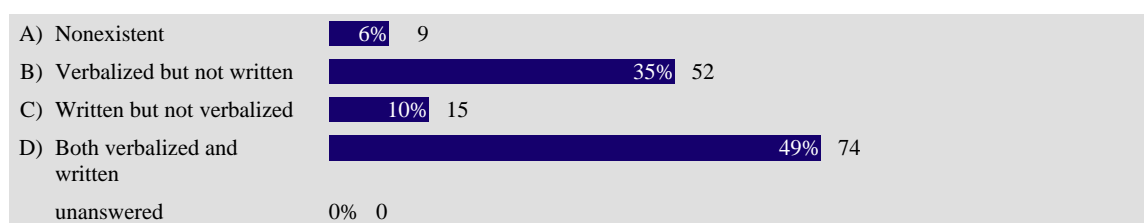
This causes the author to wonder if the smaller the church, the percentage of students attending will be less than 10% of the total church attendance while the midsize

and larger churches seem to have at least 10% if not higher. This “10% rule” could lead to a survey in itself. The author does wonder if the higher number of students attending the midsize and larger churches has anything to do with the availability of these churches to hire student ministry pastors and/or staff persons while many of the smaller churches may not be able to afford such staff persons.

ACTUAL SURVEY

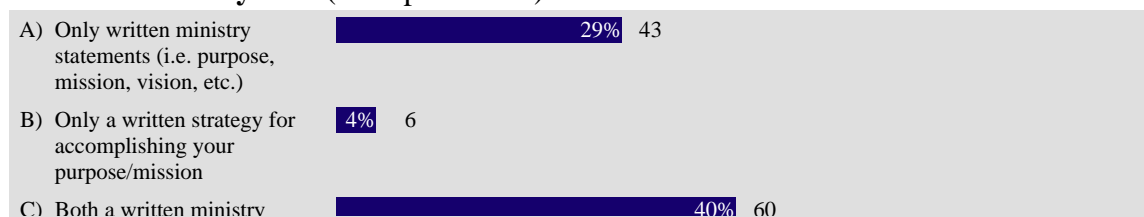
Philosophy of Ministry

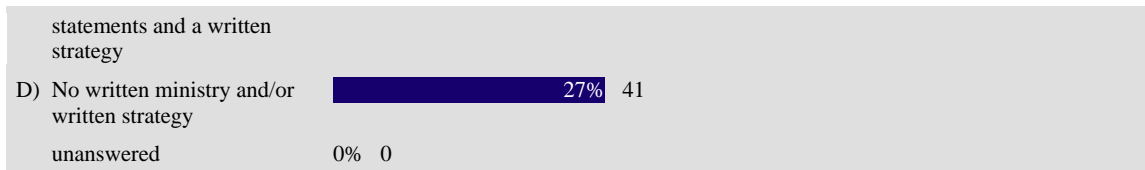
1. Your philosophy of ministry is: (multiple choice)



Half (49%) of the student ministries have a written and communicated philosophy. Of the half (51%) that do not have both, the majority at least have some communicated or written philosophy. Combining C) and D), 59% have a written philosophy. The author believes this is good. Looking at B), the author does wonder why a student minister would say he has a philosophy yet not write it down. Another question he has is, “Why would a ministry write out a philosophy and not communicate it?” (This is true for 10% of the respondents.)

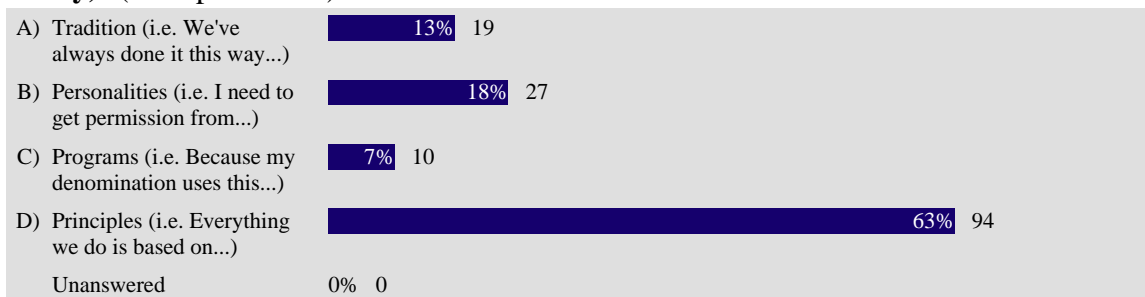
2. Your ministry has: (multiple choice)





The author was hoping to see if the ministries had written ministry statements along with a written strategy. 40% said they have both. 44% have at least a written strategy. 73% say they at least have something written. 27% indicate they have nothing written. There is something of a discrepancy between the 27% that have no ministry statements and/or strategy (Q.1) and 41% who have no written philosophy (Q.2). Yet if you take both together, roughly one-third of the ministries are operating on no written plan.

3. Not ideally but in reality, your ministry is honestly determined by (or motivated by): (multiple choice)



That 63% of the respondents state that their ministries are guided by principles does not surprise the author. As previously mentioned under the rationale for this question, the author expected this strong of an answer due to the popularity of the books *Purpose Driven Church* and *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*. If anything, the author was surprised the number was not higher. He fully expected more leaders to choose response D). But of the three remaining, it is interesting to note that B) Personalities was the next highest at 18%. This would stand to reason based on the feedback he receives from student ministry workers who struggle with senior leadership and/or church members

(including church boards) that determine much of the direction of the student ministry.

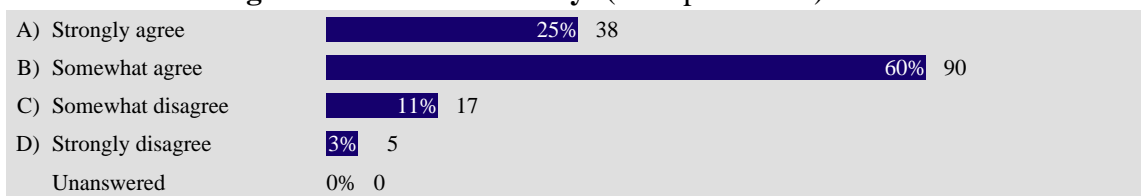
Philosophy Wrap-Up

59% of the student ministries have some kind of written philosophy of ministry.

73% have type of written ministry direction (statements and/or strategy). This would indicate that well over half have some means of written direction to the ministry.

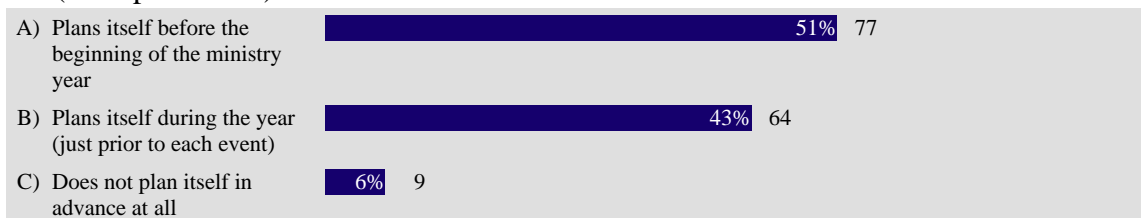
Organization

4. Your ministry is prepared, organized, and communicates well in a timely manner throughout the entire ministry: (multiple choice)



While Q.2 and Q.3 indicates the strong majority would agree they have some form of a written plan and are led by principles, Q.4 reveals only 25% strongly agree they are prepared, organized, and communicate well in a timely manner. With 60% stating they only somewhat agree their student ministry is prepared, organizes, and communicates well in a timely matter could indicate a deficiency between what is written and what is actually accomplished. It may suggest good intentions are not always successfully carried through. With this in mind, what is very encouraging is 85% would agree their ministry has a level of preparedness, organization, and communication.

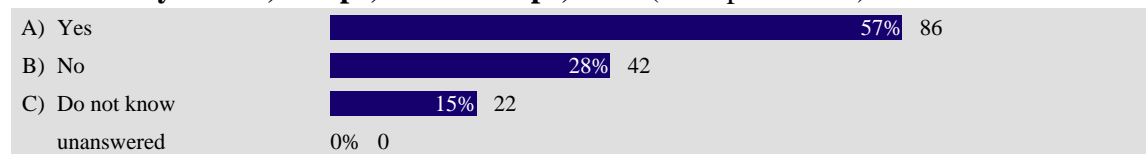
5. In regards to annual planning of the entire ministry year, your ministry: (multiple choice)



unanswered 0% 0

Only half (51%) of the respondents plans their ministry prior to the ministry year, with 43% planning just prior to each event. This could indicate why 60% would only somewhat agree their ministry being prepared, organized, and communicating well (Q.4).

6. Does your ministry utilize some type of planning forms in preparing for monthly events, camps, mission trips, etc.? (multiple choice)



Just over half (57%) can confirm the ministries use some type of planning forms to organize their events. The author assumes that many of the 51% that plan out their ministry year ahead of time (Q.5) are in the group using planning forms while those who seem to plan at the last minute or do not plan at all (49%) would be those who answered B) or C). Obviously there is no way to validated this but it does seem likely.

Organization Wrap-Up

While the majority of ministries have some form of a written philosophy, it appears as if the ministries are not as organized as they could (or should) be. Only half (51%) plan their ministry year before the year begins and just over half (57%) use planning forms for their events. This could explain why the slight majority (60%) expressed only “somewhat agree” that their student ministries are organized as opposed to strongly agree (25%).

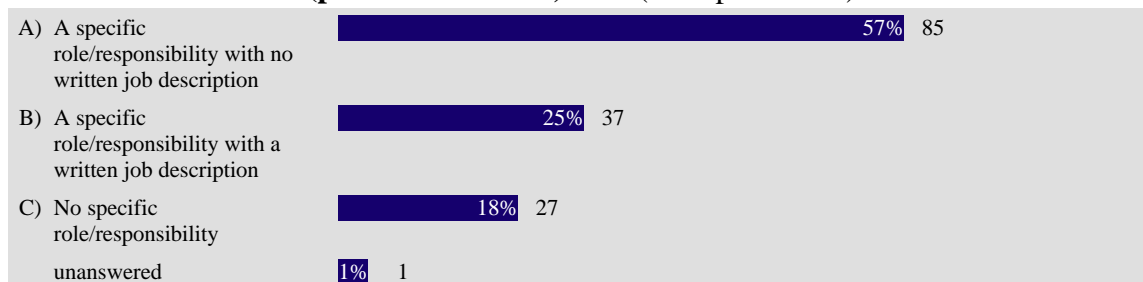
Leadership

7. There is a specific application/interview process for each leader (paid or volunteer): (yes/no)



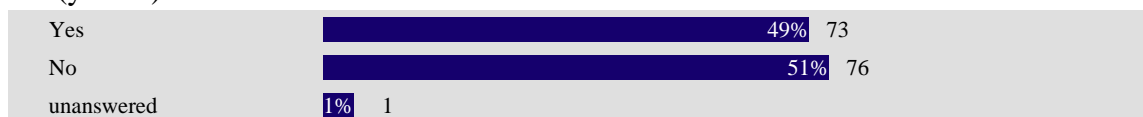
The answers to this question surprised the author. He sincerely believed there would be more ministries than 53% that have a specific application/interview process. A great concern the author has with this response is that many ministries are engaging adult leaders within the student ministry on blind trust. As will be pointed out within this component in chapter four, the author is concerned about the spiritual aspects of leadership as well as the safety (or liability) aspects of leadership.

8. Each adult leader (paid or volunteer) has: (multiple choice)



The author is pleased that 82% of the student ministries have specific roles/responsibilities for each leader. Yet the reality is only 25% of the ministries represented actually have written job descriptions. This means only one out of every four leaders have a written depiction of what their responsibility is within the student ministry. In addition, while 18% may not seem to be a high number, this indicates that one out of five leaders has no defined role or responsibility when he or she comes to a student ministry meeting.

9. There is some form of continual leadership training for all adult leaders: (yes/no)



This question is answered almost completely even. It is encouraging to know that half of the ministries are training their leaders yet is discouraging to notice that half do not have continual training.

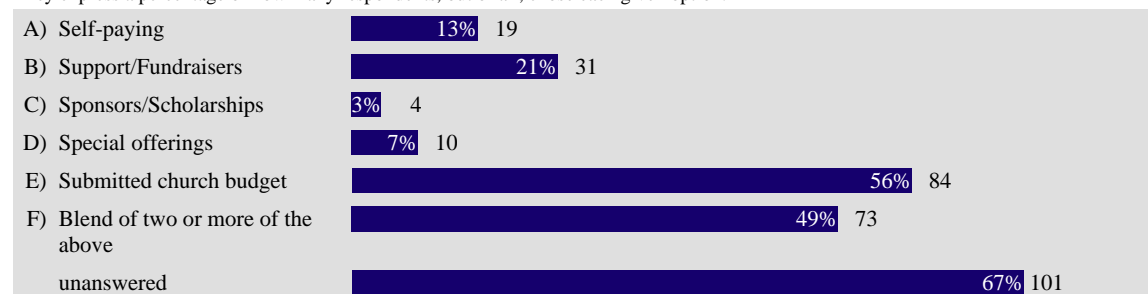
Leadership Wrap-Up

It would appear that, in the opinion of the author, leadership cannot be considered a strength within many of these student ministries. There is weakness in the entry phase – only 53% have some form of application and/or interview. There is weakness in the ministry phase – only 25% actually have written job descriptions. Finally, there is a weakness in the equipping phase – 51% do not have continual training. Knowing the strong value of a leadership team, the author sees this average approach to leadership within student ministry as badly in need of change.

Budgeting

10. The dominant means of paying for the operation of implementing the student ministry is: (check boxes)

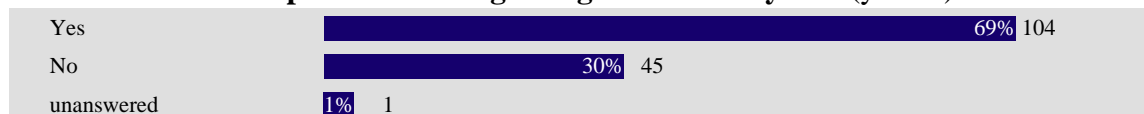
Note: since this is a checkbox question and respondents are able to select more than one option, these values will not always add up to 100. They express a percentage of how many respondents, out of all, chose each given option.



To be honest, this question is somewhat confusing to interpret. The author recognizes he should have pursued another format to achieve the same goal. The author was seeking to discover the most prevailing means of paying for the student ministry. This question was laid out to be able to provide more than one option.

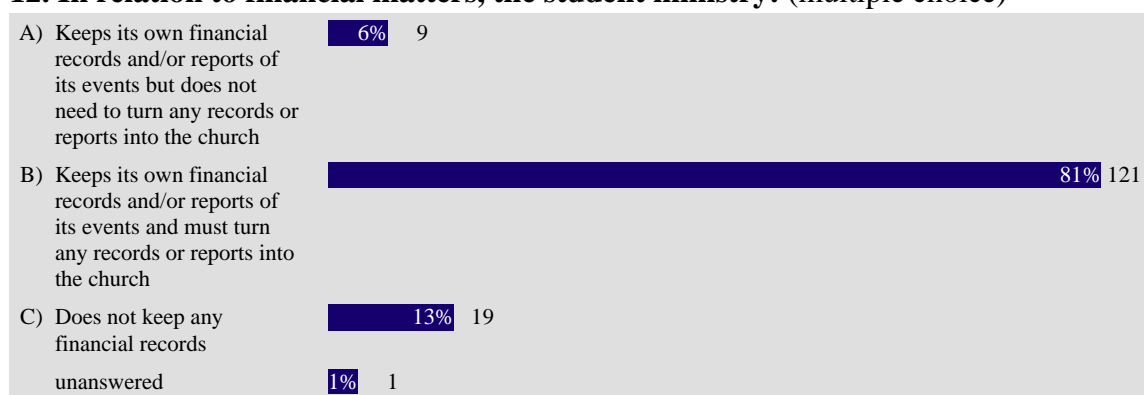
What data the question does provide is the dominant means of paying for ministry is, by far, through a submitted church budget. The next would be a blending of more than one means. B) (fundraising) was the third choice selected. There does appear to be a variety of means how the ministries are paying for themselves.

11. Must the student ministry prepare a proposed student ministry budget for church leadership before the beginning of the fiscal year? (yes/no)



Due to the fact that 56% selected a submitted church budget as their primary means for paying for the student ministry, it would stand to reason that a large majority (69%) need to submit this budget to church leadership before the beginning of the fiscal year. Also, since this choice is so strong, much stronger than the 56%, it would also stand to reason that more than 56% of student ministries are financed through their church budgets.

12. In relation to financial matters, the student ministry: (multiple choice)



This answer is one of the strongest of any of the 30 questions. 81% have some form of financial reporting and accountability with their churches. This indicates that even those who use other means (Q.10) to pay for the ministry are still required to

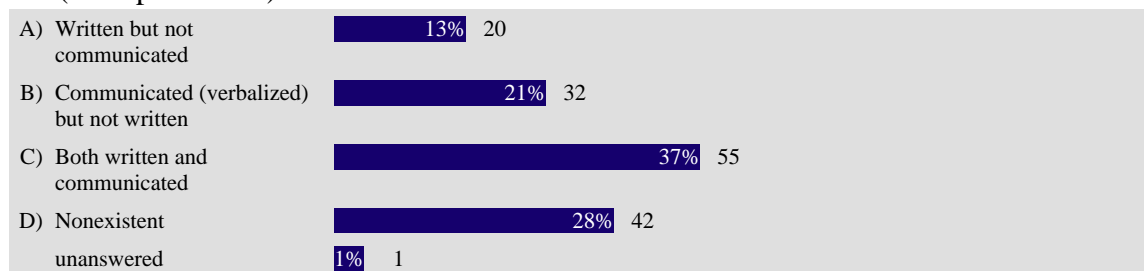
demonstrate their management of finances.

Budgeting Wrap-Up

The author believes there is a more proactive approach on the part of the church when it comes to finances than when he first started out in student ministry in the 1980's. One reason for this belief is the author's education. During his undergraduate work, he was not taught in his youth classes how to develop an annual student ministry budget. Another reason for this belief is the author's ministry experience. Within most of his first decade of ministry, he did not have to prepare a student ministry budget because the church did not provide such a resource. The student ministry was responsible to provide for itself. It was not until the 1990's that his churches desired and expected the student ministry's finances to be attached to the church budget. The data seems to indicate this is the case for today. The large percentage of the student ministries are expected to develop and utilize a church budget, in addition to maintaining and submitting financial records to the church.

Safety Issues

13. In regards to an emergency, your ministry has an emergency plan that is: (multiple choice)



It is encouraging to see that over a third of respondents (37%) have both a written and communicated emergency plan. If one combines the two responses that indicate a

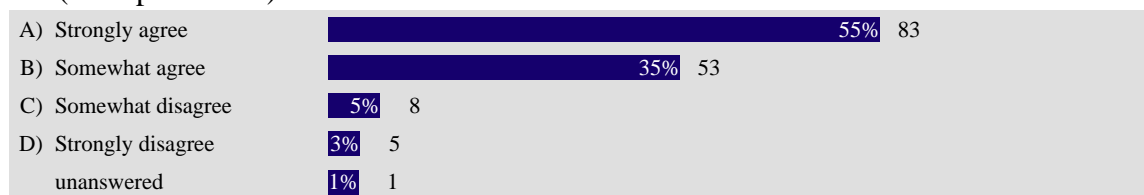
ministry has a written emergency plan, the total is 50%. This also means 50% of the ministries do not have a written plan. What should be pointed out is the second highest answer is the most alarming. 28% do not have any written or communicated emergency plan.

14. Does your ministry require your students to have filled out some type of Parental Medical Release form for traveling purposes? (yes/no)



Of all 30 questions, this is the strongest of all answers. 88% stated they have their students fill out some type of Medical Release form for traveling purposes.

15. Do you believe your ministry is proactive in safety issues and is a safe ministry? (multiple choice)



When the reader combines responses A) and B), he discovers that 90% believe their ministries are proactive when it comes to safety and believe they have safe ministries. This is a strong vote of confidence.

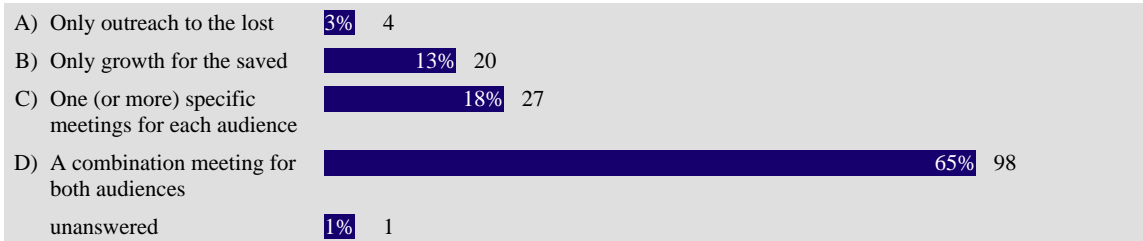
Safety Issues Wrap-Up

With the vast majority believing their ministries are safe, the author wonders why they have this much confidence. The reader must keep in mind 50% do not have a written plan and 28% do not even have a verbal plan, yet 90% believe they are safe. Is it because they have filled out Medical Release forms (88%)? Does this paper make them safe? Or is it because they have had nothing negative happen to them yet? It is hard to know for sure, but the author desires to provide his own conjecture at this point.

He suggests it would be like the family who believes their home is safe from burglary without any alarm system simply because they have not yet had their home vandalized.

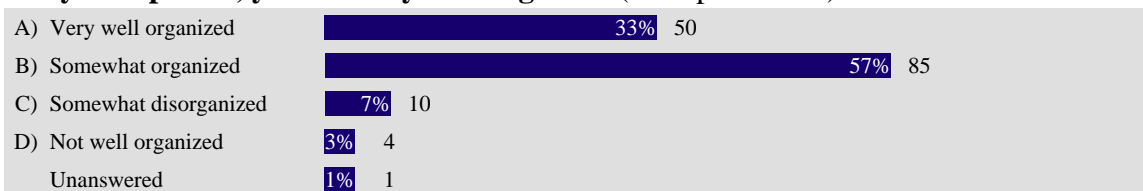
Weekly Meetings

16. Your weekly meetings are designed for (target audience): (multiple choice)



When it comes to the purpose of the meeting and the identity of the audience the ministry striving to reach, the combination of reaching lost students and teaching the saved students in the same meeting is the most common approach (65%). This does not verify but suggests there may only be one student meeting a week. Answer C) gave the option of more than one specific meeting a week yet only 18% chose this option. (The author allows the possibility that some groups are not counting the tradition Sunday School as one of their weekly meetings. If each group is counting Sunday School as a weekly youth meeting, this possibly means many groups do not meet after that throughout the week.)

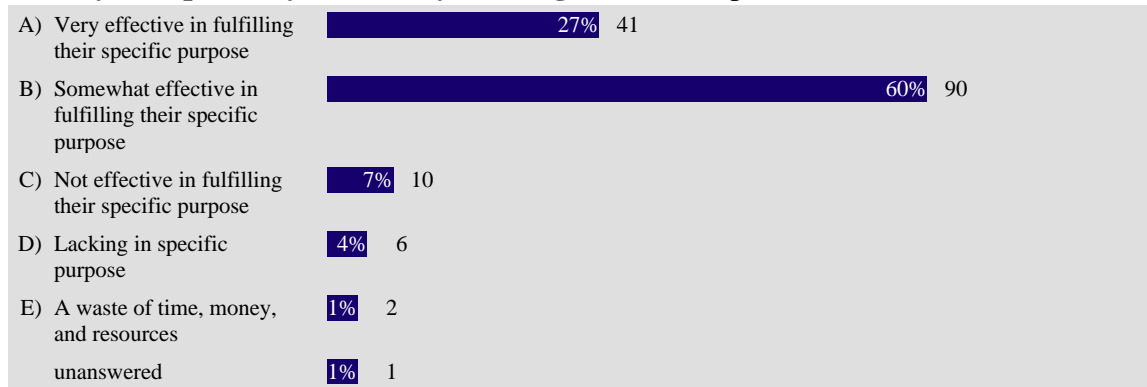
17. your opinion, your weekly meetings are: (multiple choice)



When combining A) and B), the results are that the vast majority (90%) believe their weekly meetings are organized. Only 10% sense disorganization in their meetings.

Considering the nature of constantly having to organize meetings week after week, the author was delighted (and surprised) to see this number as high as it is. Yet it also is interesting that when comparing weekly meetings against monthly events, camps/retreats, and mission trips, the weekly meetings received the smallest percentage in regards to being very well organized.

18. In your opinion, your weekly meetings are: (multiple choice)



Combining A) and B) and the results were almost identical to Q.17. 87% indicate that their meetings are effective in fulfilling their specific purpose. However, the majority (60%) could only say their ministries were somewhat effective. This would not be a strong vote of confidence. In addition, just like with Q.17, when comparing the effectiveness of the weekly meetings against monthly events, camps/retreats, and mission trips, the weekly meetings received the smallest percentage of effectiveness.

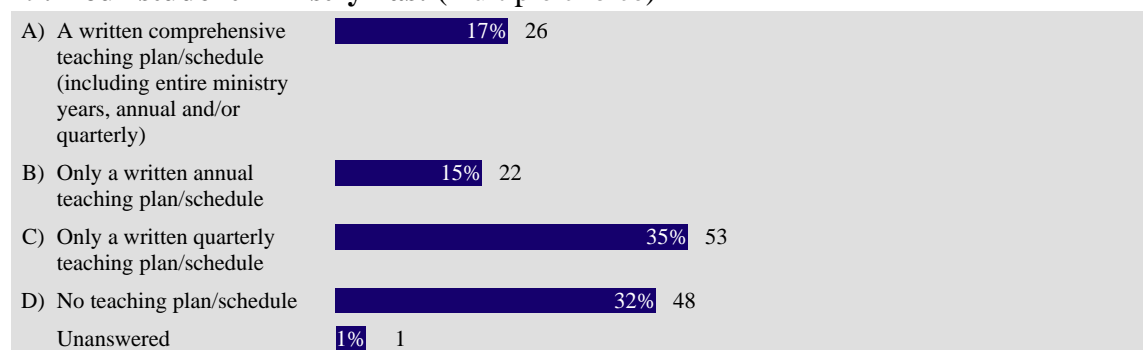
Weekly Meetings Wrap-Up

The majority of student ministries have a combined purpose of outreach and growth for their weekly meetings. It also appeared the ministries only have one meeting a week. While there is a consensus that the meetings are organized and effective in accomplishing their purposes, the effectiveness is largely taken from the “somewhat effective” option. The author offers that possibly there is not a larger percentage that

believe their meetings are very effective because the ministries are trying to minister to both the saved and the lost in one meeting rather than having specific meetings for each audience.

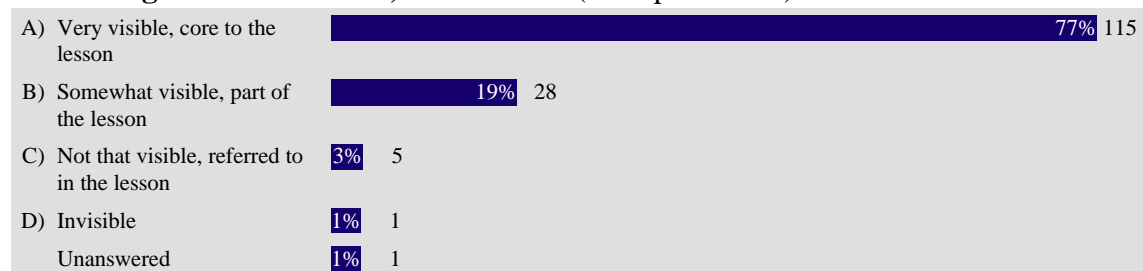
Teaching Schedule

19. Your student ministry has: (multiple choice)



When it comes to providing a teaching schedule, the majority of student ministries do not plan that far in advance. 35% have a written teaching plan that is prepared three months in advance. 32% have no teaching plan or schedule. This did not surprise the author in the least. When he mentions in his Youth 460 course the need to have a comprehensive teaching plan for the entire ministry (6th-12th grades), he can see his students do not understand what he means. When he refers to preparing an annual teaching plan, there is still a look of uncertainty. This concept of planning far ahead is unfamiliar. This data can obviously indicate why the students are not familiar with such a method.

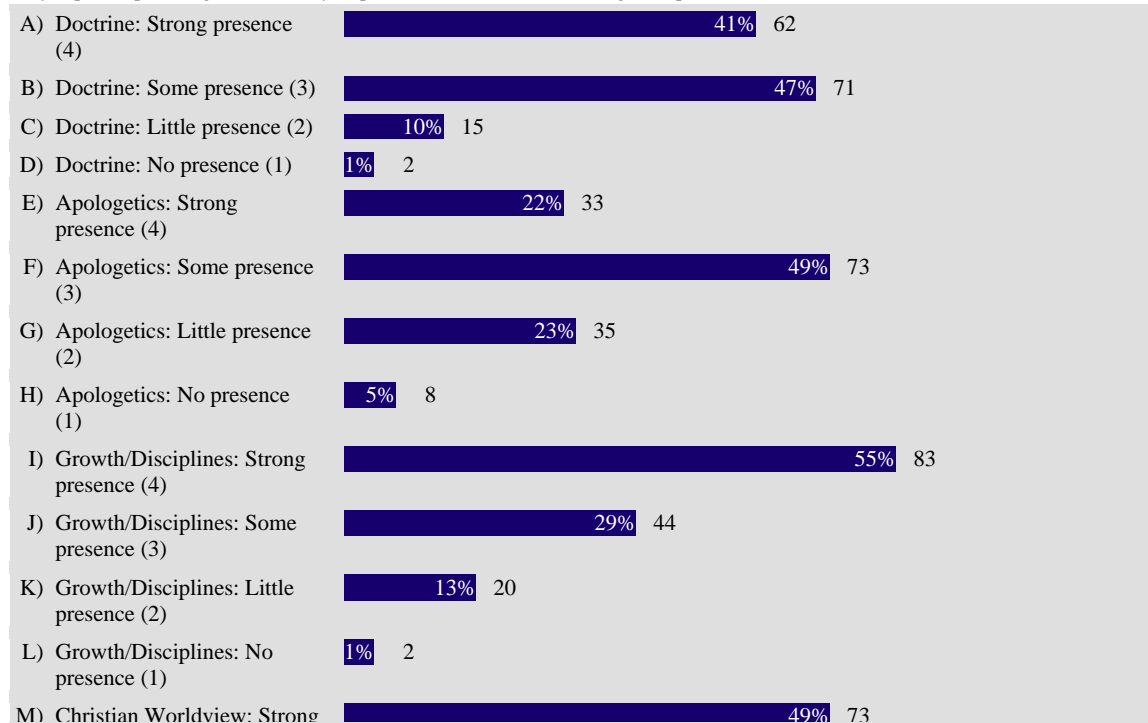
20. During the actual lesson, the Bible is: (multiple choice)

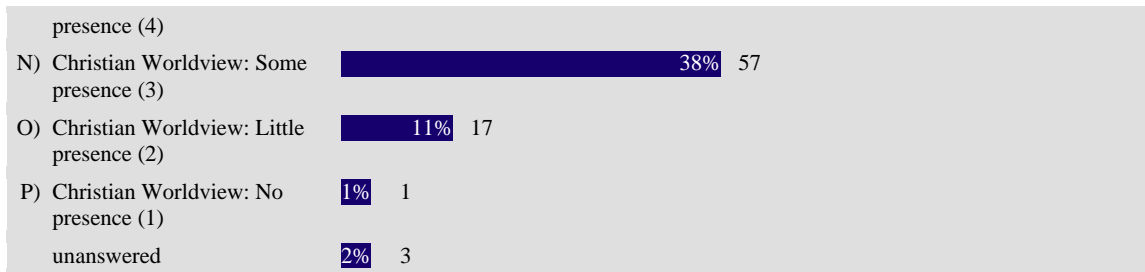


The author was greatly impressed to see such a large percentage of ministries (77%) that indicate the Bible is very visible and core to the lesson with another 19% indicating the Bible is somewhat visible and part of the lesson. This honestly surprised the author. He was expecting the dominant response to be the Bible is a somewhat visible part of the lesson. The reason for this was already stated in the rationale for the same question. In addition, when the author will speak in student ministry settings, he repeatedly notices the lack of Bibles in the audience due to the projection of the Scriptures on screen. The author wonders if the respondents could have answered A) because they implement the projection of the Scriptures on screen and yet in reality the respondents may never even use an actual Bible as the speaker and/or not see their students bring copies of the Bible.

21. In your opinion, rate the effectiveness of the following teaching categories with the following rating system (please check one per category): (check boxes)

Note: since this is a checkbox question and respondents are able to select more than one option, these values will not always add up to 100. They express a percentage of how many respondents, out of all, chose each given option.





This result did not come as much astonishment to the author. He fully expected to see within the four subjects a high rating for Growth and a low rating in Apologetics. He was surprised that Doctrine and Christian Worldview came in as high as they did. If the first two options of each category (strong presence and some presence) are added together, Doctrine would have 88%, Growth would have 84%, Christian Worldview would have 87%, and Apologetics would have 71%. All four of the subjects do appear to be somewhat close, with Doctrine, Growth, and Christian Worldview extremely close. Yet if one only takes the first option (strong presence), Apologetics only has a 22% strong presence rating compared to Doctrine at 41%, Growth at 55%, and Christian Worldview at 49%. Apologetics is less than half in strength of presence when compared to the other three subjects.

Teaching Schedule Wrap-Up

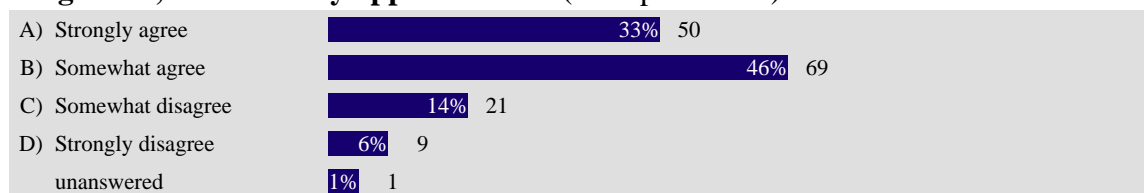
Overall, the student ministries do not plan that far in advance. 35% of the respondents plan their teaching topics three months ahead for each week's meetings while 32% do not plan ahead at all. There is a strong consensus that the Bible is visible and core to the teaching times. In reference to the actual subjects being taught, topics on spiritual growth is the most popular category of teaching contrasted to topics on apologetics being the least popular category. When one combining all three questions, it does appear to validate that apologetics is the least likely subject matter that is taught.

The author wonders if one reason for the apparent ranking of subjects could have something to do with the teacher's preparation time. Apologetics typically takes more preparation time while subjects on spiritual growth may be easier to prepare. Preparing for a doctrinal and/or Christian Worldview lessons may have a preparation time in between Apologetics and Growth.

The author also wonders if the leaders may be intimidated by an area such as apologetics. They may feel their students would find such topics boring. In addition, they also may be personally intimidated because they may not feel confident with such subject matter.

Monthly Events

22. Based on your recent ministry calendar, do you believe your ministry provides a balance of events with the specific purposes of relationship building, outreach, growth, and ministry opportunities? (multiple choice)



One-third strongly agrees they provide a balance of events for the accomplishment of the four purposes listed in the question. When one adds in the 46% who somewhat agree that they are achieving this balance, almost eight out of ten believe they have events that provide a balance of purposeful events. Considering the four purposes listed, the author is pleased that this high a percentage consider their ministry's events balanced. The author speculates that maybe a leader considers his ministry strong in one area but weak in another, so he chose the "somewhat agree" response.

23. Overall your events are: (multiple choice)



C) Somewhat disorganized	4%	6
D) Not well organized	3%	5
Unanswered	1%	1

These responses were very similar to those with Q.22. When one combines both A) and B), 92% of the respondents believe their events are organized. The author finds these responses very positive, especially in light of how many events a typical student ministry is administering in a given year.

24. In your opinion, your events are: (multiple choice)

A) Very effective in fulfilling their specific purpose	33%	49
B) Somewhat effective in fulfilling their specific purpose	55%	83
C) Not effective in fulfilling their specific purpose	3%	5
D) Lacking in specific purpose	7%	10
E) A waste of time, money, and resources	1%	2
unanswered	1%	1

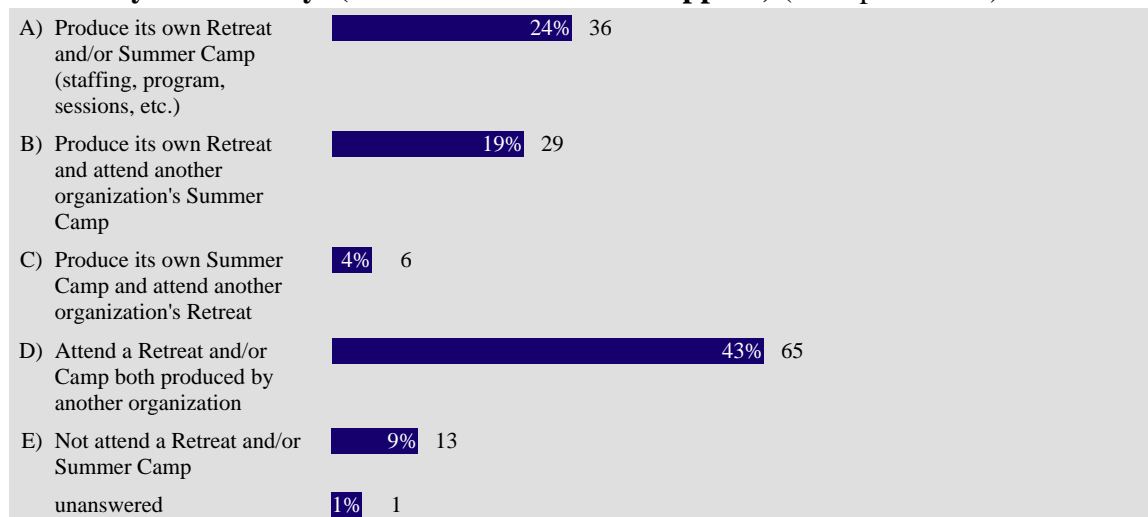
When one compares the effectiveness in purpose (Q.24) to their organization of the event (Q.23), there is a drop of 8% in the highest answer possible. Only 33% considered themselves very effective in their purpose while 41% considered themselves very well organized. The option B) (somewhat effective) also went up 4% higher than option B) in the previous question (somewhat organized). This is not a positive. Another aspect to consider was the response to D) in which 7% believed they were lacking in a specific purpose. This was twice as high as the better perceived option of C). While overall it is a positive that one third believed their ministry to be very effective in fulfilling their specific purpose, the other answers given indicate to the author a real lacking of success in purpose.

Monthly Events Wrap-Up

Overall, the respondents believe they are somewhat balanced, somewhat organized, and somewhat intentional in regards to their monthly events. The fact that only about one third believe they are very successful at all three, does tell the author that the monthly events seem mediocre and need some serious attention.

Summer Camps and Retreats

25. Does your ministry: (check answer that best applies) (multiple choice)



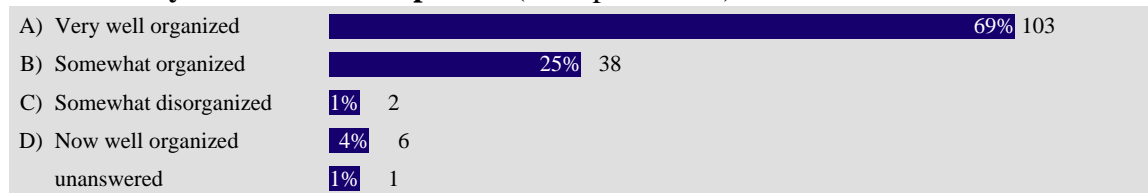
Almost one fourth of the ministries produce their own retreats and summer camps. (Having served as a student pastor, the author does know how much work this entails!) If a ministry only produces one and attends another, it is five times more likely to produce its own retreat and attend another organization's camp than to produce its own camp and attend another organization's retreat. Interestingly, over half do not produce either a retreat or camp with 9% not even attending either one. 43% attend both camps and retreats that are externally produced by another organization.

Quite honestly, the results were not any surprise to the author. Youth camps and camping organizations have been around for decades. Also, when asking his Youth 201

(the large introductory course in youth ministry) students during class how many have attended a youth camp, almost every hand will be raised. In addition, the extreme majority of his senior students in Youth 460 are very familiar with camps when this subject is covered in the course.

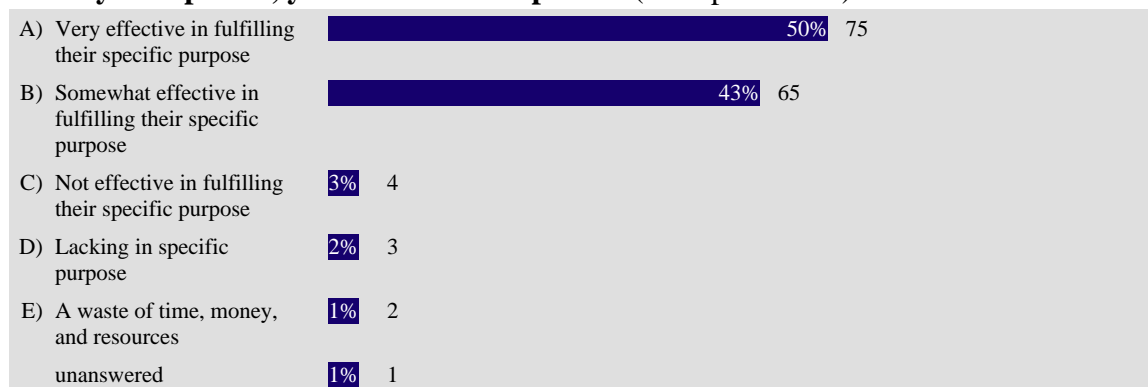
The author is pleased that the large percentages of ministries represented do involve themselves in camps and/or retreats. He personally believes that camps and retreats do have value in student ministry.

26. Overall your retreats/camps are: (multiple choice)



The ministries are very positive when it comes to the organization of said events. Seven out of ten find them very well organized. The author is not surprised with this answer when compared to Q.25, especially considering the large majority do not produce their own.

27. In your opinion, your retreats/camps are: (multiple choice)



While it is a real positive that 50% believed the retreats/camps to be very effective, this is a drop off from the previous question where 69% believed them to be

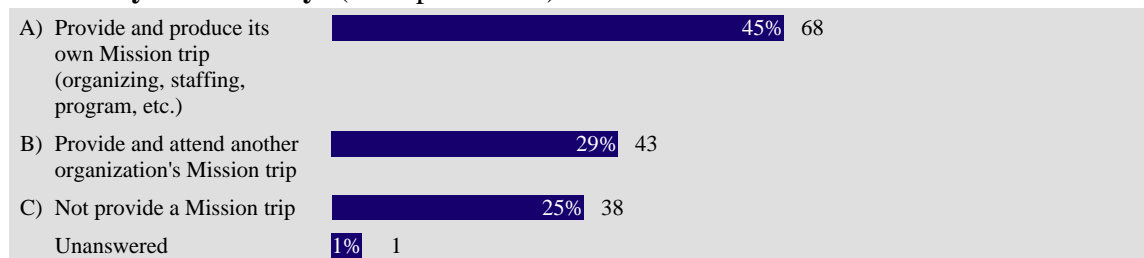
very organized. This is almost a 20% drop. Thus, there is a perceived disparity between the organization of the camp or retreat and its effectiveness. However, overall the participants are pleased with the camps and retreats fulfilling their specific purpose.

Summer Camps and Retreats Wrap-Up

The majority of ministries does not organize their own camps and retreats, but attend camps/retreats produced by other organizations. Only 25% produce both their own. They seem very pleased with the organization and are mostly pleased with the results.

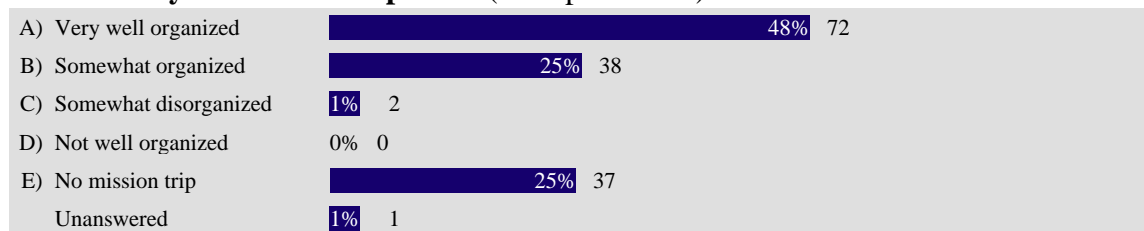
Mission Trips

28. Does your ministry: (multiple choice)



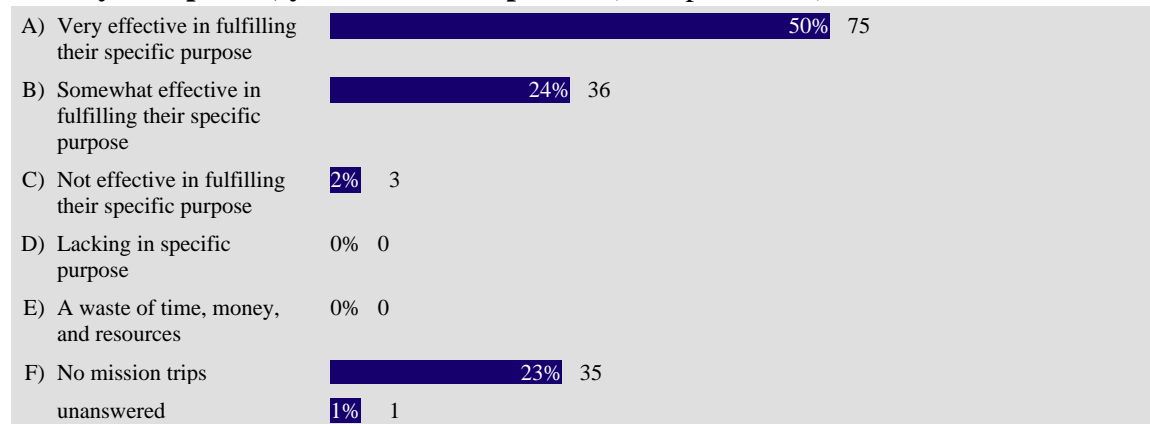
76% of the respondents participate in mission trips. This is very encouraging to the author. Interestingly, of the three choices, the highest is that the ministries provide and produce their own trips (45%). This means more ministries produce their own mission trips than produce their own camps and retreats. This could also explain why many ministries attend another camp. They produce their own mission then attend another camp.

29. Overall your mission trips are: (multiple choice)



(As the following numbers are given, the reader must keep in mind 25% do not attend a mission trip.) The author speculates that the 48% who rate their mission trips as “very well organized” are essentially the 45% who stated in the previous item that they produce their own mission trips. Are they the ones that also produce their own trips or the ones who attend another organization’s? Of course he does not know this as a fact but since the numbers for both options are so close, he speculates that the ministry who does their own trips is the ones who believe they are very well organized. (This is also human nature.)

30. In your opinion, your mission trips are: (multiple choice)



Just like Q.'s 28 and 29, Q.30's responses are almost identical. Exactly 50% believe their trips are very effective in fulfilling their specific purpose. This is double to those who find their trips somewhat effective. Thankfully, only 2% would see their trips as not effective. If one added the options of those who do go on mission trips, 98% of those attending are to some level pleased with the trip's effectiveness in purpose.

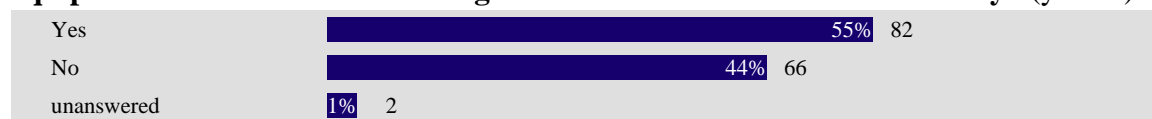
Mission Trips Wrap-Up

The author is pleased to see the high number of student ministries that are involved in mission trips. This did not surprised him for when he asks his Youth 201

student to raise their hands if they (or their home student ministry) have gone on a mission trip, over 90% of the hands go up. He does this “hand raising” survey every semester with every section of the Youth 201 course and this answer has been consistent for five years. What did surprise the author was the majority of ministries put on their own trips. It also surprised him that 25% do not attend a mission trip. When the author compares the 25% who do not go on trips to the overwhelming majority of students in his Youth 201 who acknowledge they have gone on mission trips, his speculation is there are many students who go with another church or parachurch organization on their own since their church did not either provide a trip or at least attend as a group with an outside organization.

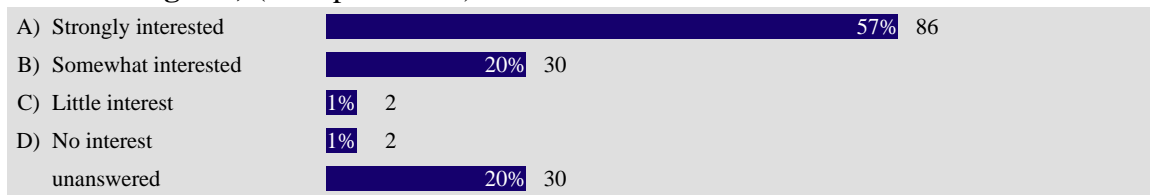
CONCLUSION:

Are you aware of any evangelical Christian resource designed for a youth leader to equip his team of leaders in the organizational details of student ministry? (yes/no)



This “Yes” answer of 55% did surprise the author since he has not seen any such resource in the Christian market for over 15 years. He wonders if many of the affirmative answers could be in reference to his own Youth 460 workbook since 73 of the 82 participants were Liberty University students, with many of these students either having already taken the Youth 460 course or currently taking it. He also wonders whether many would consider books, such as *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*, as fitting this definition. The author does not see this book or other good books as fitting this model. He sees them as books to equip the actual leader but not a resource designed for the leader to equip his leaders.

If there were such a resource available, what would be your interest in utilizing such a resource? (Answer only if you are the key youth leader and/or are planning on becoming one) (multiple choice)



This answer was somewhat encouraging to the author because of those who did answer; the majority stated they would be strongly interested. Only 2% would have little or no interest. The reason for the encouragement goes back to the author's abstract to this thesis. He desires this project to develop into a resource for the key student ministry leader to equip his leaders in the aspects of structuring a "strategic, balanced, and strong" student ministry.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FOUNDATIONAL COMPONENTS TO A STRATEGIC, BALANCED, AND STRONG STUDENT MINISTRY

Introduction

Within the next two chapters the author will provide the actual project to his thesis. This will be the steps needed for a student pastor to teach his leaders the needed components for him and his leadership team to develop a strategic, balanced, and strong student ministry. The material is written in a style which combines a teaching layout with a narrative explanation. The reason for this style is to demonstrate the long term purpose of the project being to provide a leadership resource for the leader to teach others.

Rick Warren states, “Every church is driven by something. There is a guiding force, a controlling assumption, a directing conviction behind everything that happens. It may be unspoken. It may be unknown to many. Most likely it’s never been officially voted on. But it is there, influencing every aspect of the church’s life. What is the driving force behind your church?”¹ While Warren’s context is the overall church, the author believes this principle includes student ministry. Every church, or student ministry, does have a purpose but is the “driving force” one that is strategic, balanced, and strong? Therefore, one must

¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995) 77.

define the three key words: strategic, balanced, and strong. The following definitions as provided by the author are necessary to comprehend the following thesis project.

- 1) *Strategic* refers to direction.

Being strategic is having a specific purpose. The author seeks to see student ministry have a proactive strategy which plans well ahead rather than a reactive strategy which plans right on time or even too late. Strategic refers being led by principles rather than being led by personalities, programs, traditions, or other means.

- 2) *Balanced* refers to consistency.

Being balanced is concentrating on the various principles which guide the student ministry. It also refers to having a healthy ministry. It is a ministry which seeks to be productive in all of its basic purposes rather than good at some and poor at others.

- 3) *Strong* refers to effectiveness.

The author desires to see student ministry be vigorous and healthy. This includes but is not limited to organizational health. It also speaks of spiritual health. It is experiencing God's power through the ministry. It is seeing God desiring His children victorious as He provides the strength.

This chapter will provide the five Foundational Components to the strategic, balanced, and strong student ministry. The author believes that if these five components are implemented with excellence, the construction of the ministry will have excellence. To create a student ministry structure without these five areas would be futile and eventually counter-productive. The author also believes these five Foundational Components are timeless principles which could be foundations for other ministries as well. The following five areas are the Foundational Components and will make up the sections of the chapter.

The Foundation of Programming

The Foundation of Planning

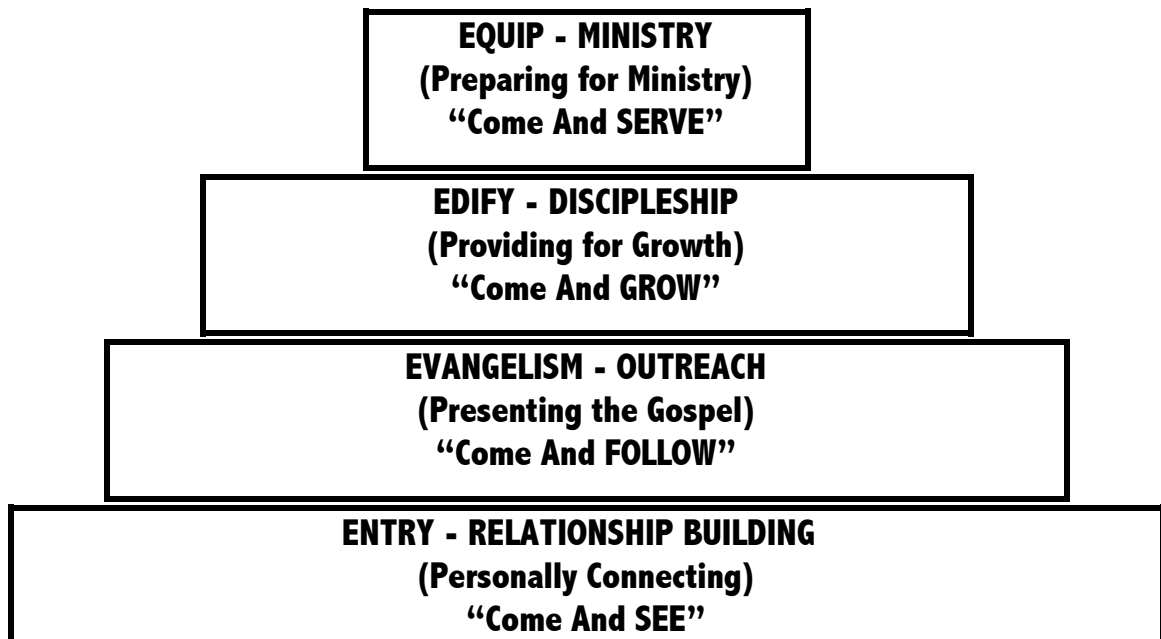
The Foundation of Payment (Finances and Budgeting)

The Foundation of the Players (Leadership Team)

The Foundation of Protection (Safety Issues)

The Foundation of Programming

As described in chapter two, one must establish the four specific levels, or areas, of ministry. These four areas of ministry are needed for the entire church, including the specific area of student ministry within the church. These four areas are: 1) relationship building with lost people (entry), 2) outreach to lost people (evangelism), 3) growth for saved people (edify), and 4) ministry opportunities for saved people (equip). During his own earthly ministry, Jesus Christ Himself used these four levels (areas) of ministry.



Using the metaphor of engineering to demonstrate this project, the author seeks to incorporate this metaphor into the steps of building a strategic, balanced, and strong student ministry. Over the years the author has seen various incorrect responses to programming. One incorrect response is a lack of effective programming within student ministry in which there appears no or little intentional purpose. A second incorrect response is where there are too many directions in programming. A third incorrect response is the constant changing of directions in programming. Finally, a fourth incorrect response is where the direction in programming is not taken directly from God's Word or leading students to God's Word.

In addition to incorrect responses to programming are also the negative repercussions that may take place due to poor programming within student ministry. These have to do with mismanaging God's resources He provides for His children. One is a waste of God's investments (money that could have been better spent). A second is a waste of time. A third is the misuse of people and their talents. Yet what greatly saddens the author is the lack of what could have been done in the lives of students.

The temptation for student pastors is to use the student to build the structure. The author firmly believes this to be insensitive, counterproductive, and even wrong. The wise student pastor should use the structure to build his students. As Dann Spader writes,

Do not be deceived; programs are not neutral elements in our ministry. They are the means by which we structure ourselves to accomplish the work god has called us to. They are the vehicles that carry us toward our goal of Great Commission disciple making. We must learn to let the programs of our ministry serve as tools to help us. Not as taskmasters that control us.²

² Dann Spader and Gary Mayes, *Growing A Healthy Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991),23.

In connection with this, the author suggests three basic statements that are simple but necessary as one develops his student ministry.

1. Ministry is about building people.

“My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Galatians 4:19).

“For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy” (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).

Ministry is not about structure and programs. Ministry is about people. As expressed in the verses above, Paul’s heart for people was the ministry. This was true as well in Jesus Christ. He had compassion on the multitudes and He turned that compassion into action by meeting the needs of people (Matthew 9:26-29). A simple reading of the Gospels will reveal that the heart of Jesus was wrapped around people.

2. Ministry is about building the Church of Jesus Christ.

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church...” (Matthew 16:18a).

“It was he (Jesus Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:11-12).

(In reference to Paul’s authority) *“The authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down” (2 Corinthians 13:10).*

Too many pastors get wrapped up in building the church as if it belonged to them and it gives them some sense of self-accomplishment. Ministry must never be about helping a leader advance his career or personal status. It greatly saddens the author to hear these leaders use the phrase, “**my** people” or “**my** church.” Pastors are instructed to, “*Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood*” (Acts 20:28,

emphasis added). Student ministry is not about a student pastor building a personal youth kingdom separate from the whole body (as argued in chapter two, student ministry is part of the whole church) nor about personal ownership. The ministry belongs to Jesus Christ.

3. Ministry is to be done for the glory of God.

“To him (Father God) be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen” (Ephesians 3:21).

The need for the church to give God all of the glory radiates throughout Scripture. The glory is not about anyone but God. And when anyone makes it about oneself, he is robbing God of His deserved glory.

With these admonitions in mind, why would one use programs? Are there any benefits to programming? Before providing his own, the author draws upon three specific principles of programming from Dann Spader’s book, *Growing A Healthy Church*.

- 1) Our effectiveness in winning, building, and sending disciples will be either enhanced or hindered by or programming structure.
- 2) The goal of our programs is do develop a well-balanced ministry—the kind that can minister to people at various levels of spiritual maturity and interest.
- 3) Doing a few things well is more effective than doing many things in mediocrity.³

In addition to these specific principles from Spader, the author will provide his own benefits to programming.

1. Programs keep the ministry focused on the mission.

It is good to have lofty dreams about what can happen in ministry. It is equally good to have those dreams consist of well meaning intentions. But so many dreams never translate into reality due to the lack of follow through. What causes the breakdown between good intention and good implementation is usually a lack of a competent course

^{3 3} Ibid., 23, 26, 30.

of action. This is where programs are beneficial. There are four benefits a focused program can provide the student pastor:

- 1) Programs can clear the leader's way in fulfilling his stated purposes of student ministry.
- 2) Programs will commit the leader to seeing these purposes are met.
- 3) Programs will contribute to the leader developing a means to accomplish these purposes.
- 4) Programs will communicate to others the seriousness of the leader's commitment to fulfilling these purposes.

Without the structure in place, the leader may simply forget or move on to something else. Good intentions will fail without good structure; however, programs can keep the leader focused on his mission and provide the necessary direction.

2. Programs keep the ministry fulfilling the mission.

Programs provide the means to carry out the purpose of the mission. As a student pastor provides a ministry focusing on the mission, there is also the need to make sure one is fulfilling the mission. There are two basic benefits of fulfilling one's program:

- 1) Programs will help the leader consistently work toward fulfilling his stated purposes of student ministry.
- 2) Programs will help the leader carry out these stated purposes.

To help illustrate these two needed ingredients (focusing and fulfilling), the author is going to provide a real life illustration from his previous student ministry.

Because the author truly believed in equipping the believers for ministry, he wanted to provide an opportunity to build strong and effective leaders. This was his intention. But in ministry intentions fail without follow through. So to take this intention to reality, he

provided the high school students with a summer leadership class. This class had the purpose of training potential leaders (focusing). Instead of just assuming leadership would automatically occur, he offered this class to take specific action steps in developing potential leaders (fulfilling). Offering this class showed intentional **focus** on the mission of training leaders and enabled the author to **fulfill** a basic step in leadership development. Subsequently as the school year started off, he had a field of over twenty students who were feeling good about entering leadership positions within the high school ministry.

Programming Definitions

There are some basic programming definitions that must be established as these terms will be used throughout this and the next chapter. The first set of definitions will focus on the ministry structure as a whole. They are the macro-program and micro-program. The next set of definitions will focus on the program types. They are the events, marathons, and weekly series. These definitions are taken from the author's Youth 460 workbook.

Macro – program—*“The entire ministry vehicle, everything done through the ministry year to fulfill my objectives for my youth group.”* The macro is the sum of the entire ministry programs you use within your student ministry.

Micro-program *“One activity of the ministry vehicle which has a specific objective and is proposed, organized, prepared, and presented in a professional manner.”* The micro is the individual ministries (programs) of the overall program.

Events — *“an activity presented within a short period of time on a specific day.”* There could be **specific theme events** internally planned by the student pastor (sports

events, food events, lock-ins, and road rallies) or **supportive travel events** where the students are taken to something planned by an outside organization (amusement park, concert or music festival, a youth rally).

Marathons – “*a continuous, multiple day activity.*” A marathon could be an activity such as a retreat, a camp, or a mission trip. It is a three day or more events.

Series – “*a network of continuous weekly or monthly events.*” These would typically be the Sunday School ministry, a Wednesday night outreach rally, a discipleship program, and leadership teams.⁴

Programming Foundations

The author suggests there are ten basic areas which he calls Programming Foundations. These areas are listed below and are written in a format which accompanies questions the student pastor needs to consider as he plans for any specific ministry within the overall ministry.

1. Program with the BIG PICTURE
 - How does this program fit into the layout of the entire ministry?
 - How does it fit long term? (three to five years)
 - How does it fit in this ministry year?
 - Does it support the big picture or take away from it?
 - Is this the best day, time, and location to use this program in this way?
2. Program with PURPOSE
 - What is the specific ministry purpose of the program?
 - Does the purpose fit with the big picture of the entire student ministry?
 - Does the purpose fit with where the group is currently spiritually and socially?

⁴ Brown, *Programs for Youth Ministry*, 65-66 (The definitions were originally developed by Dr. Matt Willmington in an earlier version of the Youth 302 course at Liberty University.)

- Does the student pastor and leaders remember this ministry program is always expendable and not above being changed and/or pulled?
3. Program with a PLAN
- Does the student pastor have an overall written plan to this ministry?
 - Does the student pastor have an areas breakdown within this ministry?
 - Does the student pastor have the specific details written down?
 - Does the student pastor have job descriptions written for each participant?
4. Program with PURITY
- Is the student pastor doing this ministry with all honesty and integrity?
 - Is the student pastor doing this ministry in a way true to Scripture?
 - Is the student pastor treating others in this ministry with dignity and respect?
5. Program with PRAYER
- Was this ministry dreamed into existence with prayer?
 - Is the leadership continuing to pray when putting the ministry together?
 - Is the leadership continuing to pray about the ministry as it operates?
 - Is the leadership continuing to have others praying for the ministry?
6. Program with PARTICIPATION
- Is the student pastor receiving the input of others with this program? Others would include adult leaders, parents, students, church leadership, and other ministries within the church.
 - Is the student pastor continuing to surround himself with a team of competent people with like fervor for the ministry?
 - Is the student pastor empowering and entrusting others to carry out the ministry?
 - Is the student pastor involving parents and students?

- Is the student pastor correctly matching up the right people to the right responsibilities?

7. Program with PASSION

- Does the student pastor exemplify enthusiasm for this ministry?
- Does the leadership team exemplify enthusiasm for this ministry?
- Do the students exemplify enthusiasm for this ministry?
- Does the leadership provide the students reason(s) to be enthused about this ministry?

8. Program with PERSISTENCE

- Is this ministry being done with excellence?
- Is this ministry being given opportunity to be inspected and tweaked?
- Is this ministry being given a fair chance to be implemented and evaluated before it is disbanded?
- Does the student pastor keep changing the program so quickly that he is losing confidence with leaders, students, or parents?

9. Program to the needs of PEOPLE

- Who is the target audience for this particular ministry?
- What is this the best time, location, and means to reach this target audience?
- Is the value of the program the people or the program?
- Do the people involved in this ministry know that Christ loves them and the leadership loves them?
- Is the ministry building the students while using the structure or using the students to build the structure?

10. Program with PROGNOSIS

On an immediate, small scale evaluation

- Does the student pastor evaluate the program on a consistent basis?

- Does the student pastor have others evaluate the program on a consistent basis?
 - Is the student pastor and leaders evaluating and comparing the program to the:
 - *Student Ministry mission, vision, strategy statements*
 - *Specific purpose for this program*
 - *Student Ministry core values*
 - What is working and what is not working?
 - Is the student pastor maintaining weekly evaluations of the program?
- On a semi-annual to annual, larger scale evaluation*
- How does the program compare to the:
 - *Student Ministry mission, vision, strategy statements*
 - *Specific purpose for this program*
 - *Student ministries core values*
 - Is the specific program reaching the desired target audience?
 - Is the specific program worth maintaining in the entire ministry structure?
 - How can this program make better the entire ministry?
 - Is the program desired but needs some reworking? If so, what?
 - Does the program need to be terminated?

The Foundation of Planning

To be a proactive planner of student ministry means one must have a large view of student ministry. Below are five steps the author used in his own student ministry and now teaches to his current Liberty University student to implement in their own future ministries.

1. Philosophy – He developed and wrote his own “Philosophy of Student Ministries” booklet. (This is now in publication.)
2. Ministry Statements – Next he developed ministry statements (a basic purpose statement, a mission statement, a vision statement, and a strategy).

3. Annual Ministry Plan – Each year there was a specific ministry plan which included the purpose, target audience, dates, and budgets of every area of the ministry.
4. Specific Ministry Description – This would be a written description of the weekly or monthly series. For each specific ministry, there was a detailed handout as to the philosophy of the ministry and the organizational breakdown of the ministry. The plan was in place and covered with the people it involved. This was done for direction communication within the ministry.
5. Specific Event Descriptions – For each event, the author filled out an event planner form, an action time line form, the needed organization charts, the budget, and the promotional flier.

In conclusion, each Event and Series came directly out of the annual ministry plan. The ministry plan came out of the ministry statements. And the ministry statements came right out of the philosophy.

Steps Taken to Plan Ahead

In order to plan ahead, the author suggests a three step approach using an acronym to the word “ACT.”

Assessment – Where Has the Ministry Been?

To start the process, the student pastor should take a diagnostic test of where the ministries and programs have recently been. In the case of the macro phase, one should take a candid look back at the most recent ministry year he has been currently involved.

Is the specific program (ministry):

- *Strategic* in its implementation? Is the ministry intentional or accidental?

- *Balanced* with the levels of ministry? Is the ministry structure providing places and resources for relational ministry, evangelism, discipleship, and ministry/leadership to be happening?
- *Strong* in its effectiveness? What ministry is strong? Weak? Why? Why not? Should it be kept, tweaked, overhauled, or eliminated?

While the direct application of this assessment is in reference to the structure (program), one must also look at the students. The reminder to student pastors is that student ministries must be about building students through using the structure. While the structure should be assessed, the wise student pastor is keeping in mind the ministry exists to build up the students in Jesus Christ. Using the Bible as guide, one must ask, “Is the ministry producing mature disciples of Jesus Christ?”

Calculate – Where is the ministry heading?

Once the honest assessment is completed, it is time to begin strategizing where to go. This is the calculation. Similar to an organization, a business, a sports team, or even a marriage, one needs to be aware of the current status, the anticipated status, and the necessary changes for the desired status in order to effectively calculate the direction of the student ministry.

- **Current Status** – The student pastor and his team have already done an objective assessment. Next, the leader should pull in various people to get their subjective “feel” to where they believe the ministry is currently. He should provide a basic questionnaire which will be completed by all the adult leadership team members, the students, and the parents. He should meet with the senior pastor (and any other staff members) and receive feedback from them. The questionnaires should be specific to the audience.
- **Anticipated Status** – Next, the student pastor should gather the completed “objective” assessment and the “subjective” data from those the student pastor

has talked with. He will need to take some time and look over it. Are there any common areas of wins and losses? Are the adult leadership's perceptions as a team different than the perceptions of the others? As the student pastor and leadership team look over the current status of the student ministry, they must ask, "If there are no immediate changes, what will happen to the student ministry in:"

- One month
 - Six months
 - One year
- Necessary Changes for the Desired Status – The student pastor would then have a good picture of where the ministry has been (assessment), where the ministry is currently at (current status), and where the ministry is heading (anticipated status). This is the step where the brainstorming begins to appear. The student pastor should have the team begin to dream, get direction, and design the plan:
 - Dream – The emphasis is to visualize. The leader must consider what overall change(s) need to take place in the ministry. These include both reality and perception. The reality (objective) areas would include: group identity; group name; logo; location of meeting room, etc. The perception (subjective) areas would include: group attitude; group behavior; perceptions of parents, leaders, attending students, new students; etc.
 - Direction – The emphasis is to strategize. What specific change(s) need to take place within specific ministries and programs that would align the ministry to their biblical goals? They must take a look at the current programs and ministries. What do they need to tweak, to rebuild, or even to bury? Do they need to start a new ministry which would better meet their biblical goals? The student pastor should create the environment where ideas are encouraged and these ideas can become reality.
 - Design – The emphasis is to organize. The next move would be to incorporate the strategic ideas into an actual organized plan. This would include the purpose/mission statement of the ministry, the organizational

flow charts, the action item time line, and promotional pieces. The student pastor and team could now look at the ministry, from top to bottom, beginning to end, and totally see it. Once the ministry can see its new direction, the author suggests they attempt to tear it apart! They need to look for any mistakes and see where it could fail. Where are the weak and/or blind spots? One thing the author would say to his own former student ministry leaders was “Let’s make the mistakes on paper.” It is better to see the error(s) before one begins something than during the execution of the strategy.

Target – How does the ministry move ahead?

Now the student pastor must begin to put the proposed dream into a strategic reality. It is time to begin actually implementing the ministry program. The actual specifics of what would go into the events, marathons, and series will be covered later in the next chapter. Below are general principles that one must include in all of his ministries and programs. This is especially true for the new programs. To provide a simplistic plan to moving ahead, the author provided a four step approach using an acronym to the word, “MOVE.”

Mobilize - The student pastor must get the key people excited and bring them together.

Organize - The student pastor must get the logistics together and match the right people to the right tasks.

Visualize - The student pastor must get the entire group of people to see what is going to happen when they work together.

Exercise - The student pastor must get the ministry started.

Putting Together a Ministry Calendar?

Former Liberty University professor Matt Willmington wrote the initial work text for the Youth 302 course. Dr. Willmington provided ten action steps needed in putting

together an annual ministry calendar. He entitled these, “Macro-Planning the Calendar in Ten Steps.”⁵ (NOTE: The author has added comments under each one.)

1. Assemble the Participants

The question will arise as to who should be in this group and how many participants is a healthy amount. Some suggestions for the planning team would be:

- *Two leadership oriented students (one male, one female)*
- *Two parents (from separate households)*
- *Three to five key leaders on the adult leadership team (possibly the ones already on the ACT team)*
- *The student pastor*

Obviously if one used everyone the author suggested one would have ten people on the calendar planning team yet ten may be too many. The author would suggest five to seven persons. However, depending on the size of the ministry, this number may even be too many. For a smaller ministry (under 50 students) he would recommend three to five persons. For a larger ministry (over 50) he would recommend five to seven persons.

If the student ministry is running a separate middle school and high school ministry, they may choose to utilize two planning teams. This way each team can work specifically on their own choosing of events and dates. The author strongly recommends the middle school leader and the high school leader keep open communication during this process so as to have the calendars (both the events and the dates) complement and not conflict with each other.

2. Pray and Conduct a Ministry Forecast

⁵ Matt Willmington, *Building God's House: A Youth Ministry Programming Manual* (non-published material), 32-33.

7. Complete an Event Planner Form for Every Program and Event

The author strongly suggests using some means of an Event Planner Form. He has used these for years in his own ministry experience and requires his students to do the same in his Youth 460 course. This is the actual means to plan ahead the necessary details for each event.

8. Confirm the Calendar

Before one goes public with the new agenda, one must go through the appropriate channels in a professional, respectful, and timely manner. The student pastor should make sure he has the right people aboard to give a greater chance of success. This means he has properly communicated. Once the supervisors have given the needed permission, the next step is for the student pastor to properly communicate with the necessary adult leaders. Once everything has the needed clearance and communication, the leader must secure these events and dates on the church calendar. Doing any verbal promotions of events without this necessary step of confirmation could be very embarrassing and costly.

9. Complete an Action Item Time Line for Every Program and Event

This is very similar with the seventh step. The time line was divided into the various areas of the event (i.e., promotion, finances, refreshments, etc.). These forms were designed to be a check list of everything needed to be accomplished accompanied with the individual responsible and a target due date.

10. Publish the Calendar

Once all of these steps are completed, the calendars should be published. Then one is free to begin publicly announcing and promoting the coming year's events. The Student pastor should make these available for parents, students, and the church body.

The Foundation of Payment (Finances and Budgeting)

While Jesus spoke much of the misuse and love of money, He never condemned money. Actually, He spoke much about it. In chapter two, the author gave biblical precedent for the need and usage of money in ministry. Therefore, one may ask, “How does one pay for ministry?”

- Self-Providing: *The ministry is provided from within the student ministries.* Students (or usually the parents) pay for all the events, programs, and materials.
- Support / Fund Raisers: *The ministry is provided from within the student ministries but the resources are received from external sources.* Students (and parents) raise money for some events or for the entire youth budget.
- Sponsors / Scholarships: *The ministry is provided for by church people and/or outside sources (businesses, organizations, etc.)* This is what many parachurch ministries may do. This is typically based on pledges.
- Special Offerings: *The ministry is provided by the church, or smaller groups within the church.* This may be based on specific needs; i.e. for summer camp or a mission trip.
- Submitted Church Budget: *The ministry is provided by the church as part of its entire church budget.* The student ministry submits its own budget requests to the church and has its own accounting system within the church.

Four Ministry Principles in Regards to CASH

There are specific principles that one must need to know about finances before beginning to prepare a budget and spending money. Using an acronym to the word “CASH,” the author will provide four principles relating money within ministry.

Collect – How does the ministry gathers the finances?

While some use only one means, the author suggests a diverse approach to gathering your financial resources. He also saw this amalgamated approach used by the majority of

student ministries within his research. Yet his suggestion is to have the church budget be the primary source of the finances. This connects the student ministry more closely to their local church and is also a steady source of revenue. However, using a variety of means does provide some benefit. To provide some examples of each of the five means listed, the author will refer to his student ministry experience. The church budget provided for many of the weekly programs, supplies, leadership needs, any curriculum used, and offset much of the camp and missions expense. But he also sees merit in using some of the previously mentioned areas as well. Many of the monthly events were either completely self-paying or mostly self-paying. He would also recommend occasionally utilizing various donations for refreshments and/or supplies for areas such as camps and missions. There were also various times some adults would make a “scholarship” donation to help specific students go to a camp or a retreat. Finally, there were the occasional times the church took special offerings for specific needs. .

Here is a side thought on fund raisers. In that last few years the author has seen a move in many churches away from fund raisers. Without explaining their reasons, he personally agrees with many of the reasons the churches state. This has become a very sensitive matter so it would be best to know the culture of the church. When he did use fund raisers, he attempted to make them low key and low pressure.

Approach – How does the ministry see their finances?

As the student pastor looks at the finances, below are some points to remember:

- *Ministry can happen without money.*
- *More money does not always guarantee more ministry.*
- *This money does not belong to the ministry or the leader.*
- *This money belongs to God and should be seen this way.*

- *One is accountable to God for how it is used.*
- *One must be above reproach in all financial matters.*

Something that every student ministry worker needs to remember is, “You’re spending money that was contributed as a sacrifice to God.”⁶ This should make the student worker think twice before he spends money frivolously.

Spend – How does the ministry use the finances?

1. The finances should be handled with frugality – Frugality does not mean cheap. It does mean one should do his best to save money. There is a balance with not always needing the extreme best of everything without having to buy junk. The student pastor should not buy compulsively. He should check around the church to see if another ministry or church member already has the item that is needed. Possibly another church may have this desired item and one could share resources.
2. The finances should be handled with responsibility – The student pastor must be a good steward with the finances and resources he has. He should take care of what resources the ministry does have. He should label them and guard them. When it comes to the ministry events, the ministry should at least break even.
3. The finances should be handled with sensitivity – This is a mindset of the ministry’s overall picture. The student pastor should know the ministry, know the students, and know the purposes. For example, the author suggests that the student pastor know how much to charge for events before it becomes too taxing on the families.
4. The finances should be handled with familiarity – The student pastor must be aware of the financial health of the ministry. He should not fall behind in these matters but

⁶ Ginny Olson, Diane Elliot, Mike Work, *Youth Ministry Management Tools*, 103.

stay on top of them. If he does not understand financial matters, then he must find someone who is competent to assist him.

5. Use the finances with integrity – The church people should know where the money is being used and that they can trust the student ministry leaders as good stewards.

In regards to personal integrity, the student pastor must be above reproach. The Apostle Paul went out of his way to make sure no one could adequately charge him with financial wrongdoing. In reference to the carrying of the love gift for the Jerusalem church, Paul states, “*We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men*” (2 Corinthians 8:20-21).

In the book, *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, contributing author Nick B. Nicholaou states, “In a unique way, pastors and church leaders are stewards of the resources of God’s kingdom. This demands of pastors their best efforts at making every dollar count. One way church leaders can spend ministry dollars with confidence is by adapting a carefully formulated purchasing strategy.”⁷ He then provides a listing of five rules for wise shopping:

- Plan ahead
- Buy informed
- Don’t make church membership or faith the (purchasing) issue
- Get three bids
- Don’t pay unnecessary sales tax⁸

Handle – How does the ministry manage the finances?

⁷ James D. Berkley, *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 486-87.

⁸ Ibid., 487.

1. Requests - In procuring money one will inevitably need to make requests. When it is from the budget, the church may have the student pastor fill out the correct forms the church uses, for example a Check Request form. When a special need arises the author recommends the student pastor going to the appropriate person and presents the need, either in more of a relaxed atmosphere or with a prepared proposal, depending on the working environment.
2. Reimbursements – Normally, the churches will require reimbursements to be turned in to the appropriate person. Q.12 of the thesis survey reported that 81% of the ministries surveyed stated they must do this step. There are also times that other leaders will need to turn in receipts to the student pastor. Below are a few simple rules the student pastor should remember:
 - Only reimburse what has been previously approved.
 - Only reimburse what can be accounted for via the correct receipts. The receipts must be attached to the reimbursement form.
 - Make sure one utilizes some type of reimbursement form.
 - The reimbursements should be done in a timely manner. It would be wise to have a policy (if the church already does not) that reimbursements must be turned in within one or two weeks of the purchase.
3. Reports - Depending on the church, one will typically receive monthly financial reports and/or statements. The author suggests the leader should find out from the church accountant if it is wise to keep these in a specific file or notebook. The leader should review these and be familiar with them.

In chapter five of this work, the author will speak to the developing of specific events. But it is here that the author wants to suggest the student pastor should have some type of financial report prepared by himself (or a qualified leader) right after the event is

finished. While the church may or may not require him to account for each of the events, it is wise for these records to be kept. The author was glad he kept these records because they provided him with:

- Financial record of each event.
- An “above reproach” instrument in case it was needed.
- A measuring device in preparation for the next year’s budget as well as for a particular event if it was done again.

Preparing and Using a Budget

When one thinks of a budget, there are three types of budgets that come to mind: 1) the annual budget, 2) the monthly budget, and 3) the specific event or program budget. The annual budget can be both the cause and effect of the monthly and specific event/program budgets. The annual budget can dictate what one spends monthly and within the specific programs and events and yet the ministry needs hopefully will influence what his annual budget looks like. So how does one arrive at an annual budget?

Basic Budgeting Questions:

- What is the budget history of the church and the student ministry?
- What is contained and covered in the youth budget?

Basic Budgeting Insights:

- The student pastor should estimate the costs based on the program calendar.
- He should then break the budget down into the various ministry categories.
- He should next divide these numbers into monthly sums.
- He should be fair yet be bold in his budget proposal.
- Finally, the leader must be thinking ahead 1 to 2 fiscal years because many events (such as expenses for mission trips and camps) will have expenses due months before the actual date of the trip.

The Foundation of the Players (Leadership Team)

Developing leaders should begin even before the student pastor arrives at his new situation. Even before accepting the position, the author suggests the potential student pastor should find out:

1. Has there previously been a student pastor(s)? Some basic questions:
 - If yes, what was the history?
 - What were his wins and/or losses?
 - What did he bring to the ministry?
 - What was his personality like?
 - What was he most known for?
 - Why did he leave?
2. Was there previously an adult leadership team? Some basic questions:
 - What were their role and/or responsibilities?
 - Were they happy with this?
 - Did they feel over used and/or underused?
 - Did they feel confident and competent in ministry?
3. Who helped the student ministry through the transition between youth pastors? Some basic questions one could ask would be:
 - Were they previously in the ministry before the youth pastor left?
 - Are they planning on staying involved?
 - How involved do they want to be?
 - Are they open to new adults joining the team?

The author believes that the leaders involved in the transition between student pastors will determine much for the new student pastor. He suggests:

1. The student pastor should publicly affirm and thank the leaders.
2. He should also privately express gratitude to them as well.
3. The student pastor should communicate commitment to building and empowering a team (Nehemiah 2:17).

4. He should have the leaders storyboard the entire history of the youth ministry. What were the wins and losses, dreams and fears? He should talk about the health of the student ministry, rather than focus on certain personalities. One could consider using a survey in addition to and/or instead.
5. The student pastor should share his vision of what he would like to see God do in the lives of the students. He should stay away from the laying out a program but focus on building the people.
6. He should find out who wants to stay with the ministry and in what capacity.
7. Finally, he should have everyone go through the leadership application process.

Why Would a Student Pastor Build (or need) a Leadership Team?

Jim Burns and Mike DeVries stat, “Perhaps the most important (and most overlooked) aspect of youth ministry is building a dynamic youth ministry team. In fact, we would go so far as to say that beyond your programs – and even beyond the students themselves – your most precious commodity is your volunteer team.”⁹

To be honest, building a leadership team will take time and hard work. The author suggests three reasons student pastors fail to build a leadership team:

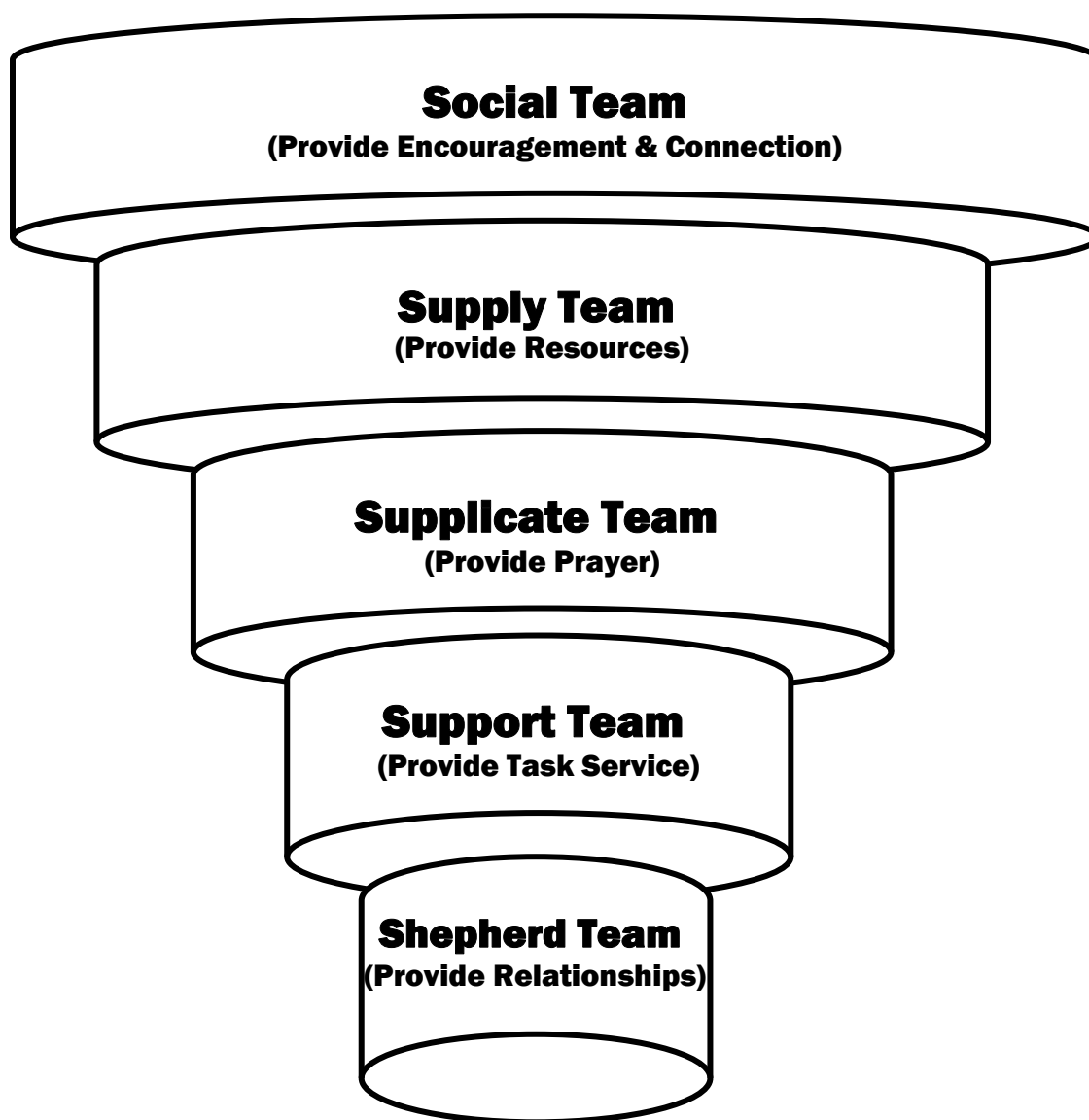
- Leaders do not see the need for it.
- Leaders do not take the time to do it.
- Leaders do not know how to do it.

What Does a Leadership Team Do?

The author has put together the following visual which provides a five stage involvement chart for student ministry. T author desires to have each adult in the church perceive him/her in a position of influence in the lives of students; in other words, he desires to see each adult believing they are on the student ministry team and they each have some

⁹ Jim Burns and Mike DeVries, *The Youth Builder* (Ventura: Gospel Light, 2001), 156,

specific role to play in developing the next generation. If this vision could be caught, he believes this could greatly contribute to the elimination of the student dropout rate in the church. With this presupposition in place, what role can each one play?



Role:	SOCIAL TEAM
Who:	Every Christian adult in the church body.
Focus:	Mindset: The desire is to have every Christian adult begin to see the student ministry in the church as their student ministry. Ministry: Encourage the adults to socially reach out to the students.
Commitment:	Simply be willing to seek out students and talk with them before or after the church services.

One of the negatives in this age of “professional student ministry” is the church has simply let the youth professionals do the work. As the author reflects on the tragic dropout rate, he implores the church to truly reach out and pull in today’s students.

Role:	SUPPLY TEAM
Who:	Adults who are willing to share their resources.
Focus:	Mindset: People willing to share resources that they already have. Ministry: This may include opening up their home, a cottage, make meals, provide snacks, share physical resources (sports equipment, camping equipment, vehicles, etc), financial resources, etc.
Commitment:	Simply being willing to share what God had given them.

Role:	SUPPLICATION TEAM
Who:	Adults who are willing to commit to prayer.
Focus:	Mindset: People that love to pray and believe in the power of prayer. Ministry: This would be prayer for overall ministry needs, specific events, and specific leaders and students.
Commitment:	Simply being willing to honestly pray!!!

Role:	SUPPORT TEAM
Who:	Adults who are willing to serve in specific roles.
Focus:	Mindset: People who enjoy projects and task-oriented ministry. Ministry: This could include leading a ministry team, office help, organizing refreshments, audio/video needs, etc.
Commitment:	This would depend on the specific task ministry. This level of ministry should be considered part of the actual “leadership team” and should be committed to their tasks and adult leadership commitments.

Role:	SHEPHERD TEAM
Who:	Adults who are good at developing relationships that will lead students to growth in Christ.
Focus:	Mindset: People who enjoy being with students and are relational-oriented. Ministry: They may lead small groups, discipleship, contact work, spend time on school campuses, etc.
Commitment:	This would depend on the specific relational ministry. This level of ministry should be considered part of the actual “leadership team” and should be committed to their tasks and adult leadership commitments.

How Does One Develop a Leadership Team?

A strong leadership team starts by developing strong leaders. Using an acronym from the word “LEADER,” the author will provide a six step strategy to develop leaders. The six steps are entitled “Turning Potential Leaders into Powerful Leaders.”

Look for potential leaders.

“For whom should the student pastor look for?”

- College age students (They have great enthusiasm, can easily relate, and may have more available time.)
- Young married adults (They can provide the above but also provide some maturity and stability.)
- Thirty something’s (They typically have smaller children. They can be taken seriously by older adults in the church.)
- Forty something’s (They typically have teenagers of their own. Due to this, they have tremendous youth ministry wisdom.)
- Those who are older (They provide great life experience and wisdom. They possibly have more time available.)

In addition to what is already mentioned, there is another benefit to developing a leadership team with leaders from each of these stages in life as the adult leaders are displaying to the students what it looks like to love the Lord Jesus Christ and live a godly life throughout one’s entire life. It shows the students a life of faithfulness. After all, the author believes in developing students into fully devoted, **lifelong** (emphasis added) follower of Jesus Christ.

“How and where can the student pastor find potential leaders?”

- He can have the students make suggestions.
- He can have the current leaders talk to potential leaders.

- He can ask the church leadership of anyone they are aware of that they would recommend for the ministry.
- He can have the current adult leadership develop a list of potential names.
- He can personally ask potential leaders to consider serving in the student ministry.
- He can search out the local colleges (both Christian and Secular).
- He can have the current leadership team build a potential list and go over the names together.

Expose the potential leaders to the student ministry.

This can be done in various ways. Someone could talk the ministry up to the potential leaders. They could be shows some of the ministry promotional materials, furnish them with some of the handouts, and show them see the student ministry room. They could even meet some of the students in a non-threatening and unassuming manner. But probably the most effective way is to have the potential leader visit a weekly series event and a monthly event. If the ministry has two weekly meetings, it may be wise to have the potential leader visit both meetings. This provides the potential leader the chance to see the entirety of the ministry.

Another means of exposure is to hold a “Potential Leaders Information Meeting.” The author provided this during the pinnacle of the enlisting season (which for the author was late spring). The recommendation is to have a 60-75 minute meeting approximately one hour after the Sunday Worship service. One could provide a catered meal and child care. Have the current leadership team present and integrating among the potential leaders. Once the meal is completed, take some time to explain the basic philosophy of the student ministry and the opportunities of service. During his own ministry experience, the author would utilize some of his other volunteer leaders and, sometimes students to provide a brief

word. The strong recommendation would be to shy away from a massive emotional appeal or creating a high pressured environment but instead simply to provide a response card for all to fill out, thank them all for coming, and have application packets available for those interested. The author firmly believes God must be the one to send laborers into the field (Matthew 9:38). While one presents the ministry and may take steps to persuade, he must allow God to pick and choose the leaders He wants for the student ministry. The most healthy and most long term leaders the author had were ones who joined the ministry because they believed God wanted them to, not because there was a need or pressure.

The author utilized and recommends a three phases process: the application phase, the assimilation phase, and the activation phase. The following is a brief explanation of each phase.

Application filled out by each potential leader – (Application Phase).

The research in chapter three revealed that only half of the ministries surveyed even have any application process. The author finds this disheartening and tragic. This step is where many ministries could be won or lost. As the author believes, this step is the one part of the leadership process that separates healthy youth ministries from unhealthy.

“What are some benefits to a strong application process?” As student pastor, one is:

- Assuring the parents one is doing his best to guard the flock.
- Doing his part to make sure he knows whom he is getting.
- Deciphering if this person is truly a good fit for the ministry and where he would best fit.
- Helping the potential leader by communicating with him what is required before he commits to the ministry.
- Receiving a well informed and intelligent commitment from the potential leader.

- Demonstrating an atmosphere of professionalism, courtesy, and excellence.
- Discovering who is sincerely interested. While this may sound odd, it does demonstrate truth. If a person does not fulfill this step or finds it unnecessary, will they be faithful in the ministry and/or be a team player?

There are many different ways the application phase can be accomplished. There are some good written works on this subject. Two of the more national figures in student ministry have written excellent books describing their philosophy and strategy of student ministry. They both have a positive description of this application process. Bo Boshers of Willowcreek Community Church describes his process in his book, *Student Ministries for the 21st Century*.¹⁰ In addition, Doug Fields of Saddleback Valley Community Church has an even more extensive layout in his book, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*.¹¹ The student pastor should also peruse through various local church student ministry web sites specifically looking for materials on how one can become involved within the student ministry. Finally, the author would encourage a student pastor to speak with other seasoned student pastors to find out what they do.

The interested potential leader should be provided an application packet. The application packet includes the following:

- Cover letter
- Staff Process Sheet
- Adult Leaders Qualifications
- Adult Leaders Guidelines Agreement
- Spiritual Gifts test
- Philosophy of Student Ministries Booklet

¹⁰ Boshers, *Student Ministries for the 21st Century*, 155-62.

¹¹ Doug Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*, 275-97.

- Philosophy Review
- Application

Once the paper work is filled out, the student pastor should meet with the potential leader and go through the material together. If both parties are confident to move on, the potential leader should move to the next phase. Therefore, the application phase should ideally be finished by the end of the school year so the summer season may be utilized for the activation phase.

In his own ministry, the author did not allow short cuts with this process. While it sounds legalistic, it certainly served well. The author would be asked by various church members why it was so difficult to get involved serving in the student ministry when in other ministries he simply needed to show up and he would be put to work immediately. The answer was a simple one. While he could not answer for other ministries, he could only answer for himself. Student ministries are probably the most demanding area of ministry in a church. In addition, the author took the safe guarding of the ministry extremely serious. This would include both doctrine and character (1 Timothy 4:12-16).

The timing of these first three phases was crucial. The author truly desired to have the coming school year's leadership team chosen, bonded, and trained during the summer so the ministry could start strong in the fall. Everything was in place. This way the school year could start off strong.

Directly Involve the potential leader into the student ministry. (Assimilation and Activation Phase)

The summer can be very strategic for integrating the potential leader into the student ministry. During this phase, the student pastor should have the potential leader become involved with the responsibility they are seeking to be given. It is during this phase the potential leader is becoming a probable leader. As the new leaders are moving ahead, make sure they are not left alone in their responsibilities. It would be wise to bring them alongside current leaders who will be able to assist them. This would be especially beneficial for new small group leaders. The ideal would be to have the new leader sit within a group as a silent observer led by a current leader. In doing this, the current leaders are able to reproduce themselves during the school year so the potential new leader is more apt to be comfortable with the role even before he enters this assimilation phase.

At the end of the summer, the student pastor should meet again for another interview. This interview can provide a time for the new leader to have an opportunity to speak about their summer ministry and be able to ask any questions they had to the student pastor. This allows for the student pastor to give his feedback, especially in regards to his sensing if God was in this joint partnering in ministry. Finally, the student pastor will discover if the new leader will sincerely commit for the approaching school year. The author encourages the student pastor to make sure he has met again with the new leader and everything is agreed before publicly announcing the new leader. Once the person has gone through this process, it is time to publicly announce the leader to the students and parents.

Each leader should have a specific written job description which he agrees beforehand. The following areas should be incorporated into the job description:

- A detailed description of the role and responsibilities.
- The expectations of the specific role.
- The adult leader's commitment to the role.

- The legitimate time commitment required from the leader.
- The student pastor's and student ministries' commitment to them.

Equip the adult leader for the ministry.

This area is crucial to the development of the healthy team. This would be the “feeding” and “leading” side of the student ministry. Whereas the success of the “directly involved” stage depends on both the student pastor and the individual student ministry leader, the equipping stage depends solely on the student pastor. This is his responsibility based on Ephesians 4. As one looks into 1 Thessalonians 2:6-13, one can see the Apostle Paul's design for discipleship.

⁶We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, ⁷but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. ⁹Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

¹⁰You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹²encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

¹³And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

This passage provides the two components of effective discipleship: a relational ministry (v.7-9) joined with an instructional ministry (v.10-12). Using this model, the wise student pastor must strive to fulfill both of these roles with his adult leaders. Below are some examples as to how one can facilitate these two needed areas.

Having a Relational Ministry with the Adult Leaders

- The student pastor should create a “family” atmosphere among the leaders. The emphasis is on the entire ministry team. No matter how big or small the leadership team is the leader must create a healthy team environment. They should spend time playing together and praying together.
- The student pastor should connect with the leaders. The emphasis is on the individual leader. He can write them encouragement notes, meet with them for coffee or lunch (obviously one must be smart about men with women), spend time in each other’s homes, simply put, build a genuine friendship with them. While this may look different with each student ministry depending on the size of the ministry team, the leader must have some form of positive touch with each one on the leadership team.
- The student pastor should congratulate the adult leaders both publicly and privately. Doug Fields mentions, “Recognition does not have to be saved for the spectacular. There is power in affirming people for their normal and ordinary acts of ministry. Your leaders probably aren’t being shown much appreciation by students, so your kind words won’t be easily forgotten.”¹² The student pastor should make it his goal to personally say thank you to each leader at the conclusion of the weekly meetings and events. The leaders should believe they are sincerely valued by their student pastor.

Having an Instructional Ministry with the Adult Leaders

- The student pastor should provide the individual leader with the resources for personal youth ministry development. He can develop a resource library for his leaders where they can have access to such needed items. This may include compact discs, DVD’s, books, and periodicals. The student pastor can furnish his leaders with the actual resources or give them the information where they can search things for themselves.

¹² Ibid., 302.

- The student pastor should provide the team with the resources for group youth ministry development. He can set aside part of the monthly student ministry leader meetings for leadership development. For example, the author would either write his own material or use other's written material but the team would learn ministry together. The student pastor can take the leadership team to various youth conferences or conventions. Maybe the student pastor can bring in an outside speaker to speak to the leadership team. He could also join alongside other student ministries and together they could produce their own seminar or workshop. Another suggestion would be to have professionals (i.e., educators, police officers, counselors, and social workers) in the church body to give insights into the world of adolescents from their vocational expertise.

Review the adult leader at the end of the year of ministry.

While many ministries may have an open ended format, the author encourages having a specific time attached to the commitment. For example, some student ministries ask for a two year commitment. He recommends a one year commitment. Whichever time frame one chooses, following this format allows a natural place for the leader to step out if needed and also allows the student pastor a natural place to let someone go. Either way, the recommendation would be to close the school year with a personal interview between the student pastor and each leader. The interview should provide the following:

- The student pastor should thank the leader for serving in the ministry and their specific role.
- The student pastor should point out the contributions made by the leader to the ministry and to the team.
- The student pastor should ask the leader how he can served the leader more effectively.
- The student pastor should deal with any areas that need to be discussed, either positive or negative.

This should not be viewed as an intimidating or negative experience. The student pastor must be sensitive to the reality that many adult leaders have annual reviews built into their jobs which are not good experiences. While the student pastor may need to face some unpleasant issues, overall he should use this as a building time. Some student ministries even have a specific form or survey to be filled out before the meeting by the volunteer.

By the time of the review, the student pastor will already have a strong sense of the future role of the adult leader. If the leader wants to continue for another year, the student pastor has two options:

- Renew the leader for another year of student ministry.
- Release the leader and attempt to provide him another area of ministry.

The Foundation of Protection (Safety Issues)

What's the Big Deal about Safety?

As student ministry has grown over the last thirty years it has become busier in the amount of events, broader in the number of students involved and bolder with the emergence of the extreme sports and recreation along with students' feeling invulnerable. In light of this, the author suggests that the risks of injury are higher now than ever before.

The wise student pastor should consider the potential consequences. What can take place if he fails to protect the student ministry?

- Loss of trust with parents.
- Loss of trust with church and church leadership.
- Loss of church credibility within community.
- Loss of money, personal possessions, or property.
- Loss of job.

As the author takes a basic look into this section on safety, he desires to stress that this material is not meant to be comprehensive and/or to replace legal counsel. One would be wise to perform his own research into these matters.

In football one will hear coaches say that the best offense is a good defense. In baseball it is said that pitching and defense wins championships. Student ministries need to be ready to defend their students and their ministries before they ever have issues. Using an acronym of the word “SAFETY,” the author will provide six basic areas of providing a safe student ministry.

Staffing – So much depends on the Leadership Team.

Previously in the leadership section it was mentioned that many of the leadership problems and issues within the student ministries leadership team can be traced back to the nonexistent or poor procedure of bringing in new adult leaders. The student pastor cannot afford to neglect the application and screening process or too quickly bring in adults without following some systematic means of screening. Any cautions must be addressed. To put it simply, if the student pastor or another trusted current leader has doubts about the potential leader, it may be best to not bring him/her into the ministry. This could become a tough issue due to personal relationships and/or church politics (especially in a smaller church); however, being careful at this point may save the ministry later. Therefore, one must be careful to choose his potential leaders wisely and screen the potential leaders thoroughly.

During the tenure of the author as student pastor, he would state to the church people that the two safest places in the world should be the home and the church. To create a safe environment, the author offers four areas of safety in which the adult leaders must guard:

- Emotional – The leaders will seek to affirm each student. They should never publicly mock, make fun of, or ridicule any student.

- Social – The leaders will seek to make sure each student is accepted and valued. They will not allow other students to mock, make fun of, or ridicule any student.
- Physical – The leaders will keep the activities and games as safe as possible. They will not put the students in danger of being hurt.
- Sexual – The leaders will guard themselves from inappropriate language or touch. They will not cross any lines or barriers which would be or even could appear impure.

Just like there is the sinful reality of domestic violence and harm, so there is the sinful reality of church wrongdoing and harm. It is such a tragedy that children and youth will go to church, thinking of all places this should be a safe place, only to then have this trust violated, their lives and their families' lives being changed for years to come. The student pastor must:

- Call the adult leaders to a standard of purity and holiness.
- Commits him to guard against even the suggestion of wrong doing.

Activities – Create a Safe Place to Play.

When it comes to the activities and events, one must also be thinking safety first. In the article “A Shield About You,” Professor Ginny Olsen writes,

Mud football, spaghetti wars in the narthex, ‘Honey, If You Love Me,’ Chubby Bunny. All fun games. And all can get you into trouble. Some are a danger to kids, others are a danger to property. Some place students in awkward and embarrassing—and sometimes compromising—positions. What was considered humorous in youth ministry 20 years ago can get you into a serious predicament today. But it’s difficult to say no to students who’re begging to run around the car in the middle of an intersection.¹³

The wise student pastor must think through such matters of safety before he executes various elements of the ministry. The author concurs with Professor Olsen’s comments in

¹³ Ginny Olsen. “A Shield About You.”
<http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/management/shield.php> (accessed 15 November 2005).

regards to the previous actions of student work years earlier. He still has some of the old student ministry books from the well known youth ministry publishers and it almost horrifies him to read of the games leaders were encouraged to play. While he is not suggesting an extreme of staying away from any activity, he does think student ministry leaders need to think through what they do before they do it. This would include the events carried out and the games played. This calls for sensible balance. Professor Olsen speaks of this apparent tension when she writes, “We often find ourselves balancing a fun ministry that students want to join with a safe ministry to which parents repeatedly entrust their children.”¹⁴

The Christian insurance company, Brotherhood Mutual, has prepared many resources for the student worker to use in the ministry. The author displays much of their material in his Youth 460 course when speaking to this subject. In their article “Youth Ministry: Combining Safety and Fun,” Brotherhood Mutual addresses the issue of balancing safety and fun as well. According to Jack Crabtree, executive director of Long Island Youth For Christ and author of “Better Safe than Sued,” one must:

Understand the difference between perceived danger and real danger. You can keep the atmosphere of fun and excitement in your youth program if you sponsor activities that look and feel dangerous but that are, in fact, quite safe. A ropes course (walking a single wire 20 feet off the ground) is both terrifying and thrilling to most kids. In reality, the ever-present safety lines and high-quality supervision of a well maintained and well run ropes course make this a safe experience. On the other hand, most adults and students feel relaxed and complacent about safety around water when, in fact, the danger is much higher than they might suspect.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ginny Olsen *Youth Ministry Management Tools*, 203.

¹⁵ Jack Crabtree. “Youth Ministry: Combining Safety and Fun.” <http://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/pdf/dBench/db14-1.pdf> (accessed 17 April 2008).

The wise student pastor will use parents as a great safeguard. Typically a younger student ministry leader may consider parents as ones who seek to destroy fun in the ministry, people who do not know how to accomplish student ministry, and/or cannot relate to students. This is absolutely an immature (and possibly an insecure) attitude and typically changes when the student ministry leader has a child of his/her own. Parents are not enemies of student ministry. The student pastor and leaders must see parents as allies. If one is planning a game or an event that is questionably safe, the author strongly suggest the leader acquire some parental input. This is another reason the student ministry should have parents on the leadership team.

Before moving ahead with an event or game, the student pastor and leaders must think through these important questions:

- What can break?
- How could someone get hurt?
- If there is a high risk, how can the game be made safer?
- Are there enough leaders for logistics and supervision?
- Are there established boundaries and have these been communicated?
- Has everyone filled out one of the ministries Medical Release forms?
- Are the proper first aid supplies secured for the trip?
- Are parents aware of what is being done and what do they think about this?
- Would the student pastor (or adult leader) let his own child be involved in this (especially if the leader was not there)?

Forms – Having the correct paper work filled out.

While many people do not enjoy filling out and maintaining forms, this is an absolute must. This is for legal protection and the need for any medical attention.

When the author first began his student ministry career in 1985, this step was not mentioned. He did not have students fill out any forms. Reflecting on the time, the author began to see the shift toward filling out forms during the early 1990's. Thankfully 88% of the ministries surveyed (chapter three) do utilize some form of Parental Medical Release form. Therefore, most ministries are now proactive when it comes to paperwork.

During the author's last student ministry, he would have every student fill out a "Permission and Medical Release Form" before they went on any outing with the ministry. This step was absolutely guarded. There were no exceptions. There was no acceptance of a verbal agreement. The student could not leave on any of the offsite events unless this was filled out and signed by his parent or guardian. This meant the forms were available at the registration (check in) area for each of the events.

The consistent attendees would fill out a new "Permission and Medical Release Form" at the beginning of the summer. These forms were dated from the time they were initially signed until June 30 of the following year. The forms were kept on record for the entire ministry year. This way the student did not have to fill out a new one for each event.

The forms were inserted and alphabetized in a separate middle school and high school notebook. These original forms (which were in the notebooks) stayed in the author's office. Copies were then made of each form and were kept in separate traveling notebooks. The traveling notebooks went along on the trips. When traveling in separate cars or vans, each driver was provided with copies of the forms within that particular vehicle. One may think this was excessive, but the ministry was prepared in case of an emergency.

Emergencies – Being strategically prepared just in case.

No one wants an emergency at anytime, especially when he is in the leadership position. The following may sound morbid, but one must approach the ministry as if an

emergency is going to happen. The author teaches his Youth 460 students, “While you pray for nothing to go wrong, you plan for something to go wrong.”¹⁶

In the previously mentioned article from Brotherhood Mutual, Jack Crabtree states:

Plan for the worst case scenario. Before an event, discuss potential problem situations. For example, as you train counselors and drivers for the winter retreat, ask them what they would do if their van (with 10 students aboard) were separated from the rest of the caravan and developed engine problems. If they were 10 miles from the nearest town, it was nighttime, and it was 5 degrees above zero, how would they handle the situation? Or when you train leaders for your summer bike trip, ask what they would do if they realized they had made a wrong turn on the route and were 10 miles from the destination. What should they do if it’s almost dark? Help them think through the options and prepare them to make decisions when real-life events occur.¹⁷

As Jesus gave his concluding story in the Sermon on the Mount, he pictured for the people the reality that life is filled with storms, both for the just and the unjust. While his spiritual application is about building one’s life upon Christ and His words, the author suggests there is a life principle within this story. Righteous people are not exempt from difficult times. Therefore, student ministry leaders must be prepared for the storm. Again, while one prays for nothing to go wrong, one must plan for something to go wrong.

To better communicate how one can plan ahead, the author has put together a simple strategy. This strategy is specifically designed for traveling, especially on overnight trips; however, some of these principles can apply to ministry within the church site as well. To describe the strategy the author will use an acronym to the word “PLAN.”

Preparation

- Do the student pastor and leadership have a good understanding of the event and how it fits within the landscape of the environment?

¹⁶ Brown, *Programs*, 143.

¹⁷ Jack Crabtree. “Youth Ministry: Combining Safety and Fun.” <http://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/pdf/dBench/db14-1.pdf> (accessed 17 April 2008).

- Have the student pastor or leadership visited the site prior to the event?
- What risks are involved and what are potential problems?
- Does the ministry have the proper insurance coverage?

Lines of Communication

- Are there means of communicating with each other, such as working cell phones, walkie-talkies, telephone service, etc.?
- Does each leader have a list of every other leader's cell phone numbers?
- Is there someone at the "home base" (i.e., the church) that is your Emergency Contact Person (hereafter referred to as the ECP)?
- Does the ECP have a means of contacting the specific supervising leader of the church (executive pastor, senior pastor, etc.)?
- Is there a strategy in place to contact the parent(s) in case of an emergency, a delay, etc.?
- Is there a list prepared of every student attending the event, complete with parent's names and phone numbers? This list should be given to the ECP, and leave a copy on the desk of the church secretary.

Action Steps

- Is there an actual strategy in place in case of an emergency?
- Does the student pastor have the needed assignments matched up to the correct adults? The following is recommended:
 - Emergency Contact Person (at the home site). This person is already described above in the section on "Lines of Communication."
 - Emergency Coordinator (on the trip). This person is directly responsible for the logistical oversight of the emergency. He contacts the ECP at home. He is also responsible for contacting any needed outside medical assistance (911, law enforcement, etc.). This person can keep a cool head under pressure and can stay focused on the task.

- Medical Coordinator (on the trip). This person takes care of the actual medical need. This person is a medical professional. The author was fortunate to have on his leadership team some Registered Nurses.
- Student pastor or Leader of the group (on the trip). This person is the recognized leader of the group. While the others are taking care of the needed logistics and medical assistance, the student ministry leader is overseeing leadership to the rest of the group. This person must maintain a cool head and focus on the whole group.
- Does the student pastor have informed replacements for each of these persons just in case something happens to them?

Need to Follow Through

- Does the student pastor stick to the plan?
- In case the strategy breaks down, does the student pastor stay to it as close as possible?

Stay Calm

- Does the student pastor stay calm under pressure? If he and the adults panic, the students will panic. He must stay in control of the situation.

Transportation – Traveling as safely as possible.

This issue is both practical and crucial. So much of student ministry is getting students from place to place. Obviously this will raise many questions. Before these questions are addressed, the author will list his “Ten Transportation Tips” that he incorporated into his ministry and are listed in the Youth 460 workbook.

1. Think safety at all times. This includes all people in a vehicle must wear a seat belt.
2. Do not allow students to ride on a motorcycle or in the back of a pickup truck.
3. Students remember how you drive so drive smart, drive safe, and drive legal.

4. It is a great benefit to have a cell phone with you. If you are traveling in a caravan of vehicles, get the other drivers cell phone numbers.
5. While driving, you have a great opportunity to develop relationships. While maintaining safety first, do what you can to have the students interacting with you and others. Who knows! You may even want to have the radio off!
6. This is also a great opportunity to expose our students to Christian music. I would ask that while you are with students you listen to Christian music. Engage them in discussion about how Christian music encourages you in your walk with Christ.
7. Try to limit driving in bad weather or after 11:00p.m. Never drive sleepy!
8. Do everything in your power to honor the return time. This is not only sensitive to parents, but this is how you can either build trust & credibility with parents or hinder it. Call parents if for any reason you are running late.
9. Do not drive alone with members of the opposite sex unless there is another adult of the same sex as the student that you are transporting.
10. Please do not leave your car keys in the ignition or let the students have your car keys.¹⁸

Are students to drive on the events?

This question is already answered by most insurance companies. Absolutely not! Most insurance companies have an age limit of 21 years of age and some now even require drivers to be 25 years old. The church leadership must be aware of this and supportive of the student ministry. This policy should be written down and explained at the parent meetings.

Should the ministry allow non-leadership adults to drive?

One suggestion is to utilize the driving record of the applying adult leader as part of his background check. Therefore, any unsafe persons will be discovered and not be

¹⁸ Brown, *Programs*, 147.

allowed to drive. But what about allowing adults who have not gone through this screening process to drive on events? Obviously, this is at the discretion of the student pastor; however, the recommendation would be to use this only sparingly.

Does the student ministry ever borrow personal vehicles?

This should be avoided if at all possible. The better choice is to have the driver be the owner of the vehicle. The best choice is to rent a vehicle or use a transportation service. In these circumstances, typically the insurance of the renting company covers the vehicles in addition to the insurance the church.

What about insurance?

One must have all of the insurance transportation questions already answered before one travels anywhere. If the student pastor has any doubt or questions, he should have the church secretary or church financier provide him with this information. Finally, the student ministry should go nowhere without the correct insurance coverage.

You – Ultimately, this issue rests on the leader.

As many prominent leaders often say, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” While the statement may or may not be consistent in every situation, the principle does hold true in many circumstances and the author does see this principle within this chapter. So much of the safety component will come right down to the student pastor. What is his approach to safety? Is he careful and cautious? Has he set in motion the necessary steps to provide a safe ministry setting?

It is easy for any student pastor or leader, to assume the adults in the church, especially parents, should give the student pastor the trust or respect the position deserves.

However, a careful reading of 1 Timothy 4:12 speaks of trust being earned. Trust is earned as the leader exemplifies to others his speech, life, love, faith, and purity. As the leader demonstrates a commitment to safety, his credibility will rise. In contrast, if he acts immature and irresponsible, his credibility and his ministry's potential impact can be damaged or even destroyed.

The conclusion of the matter would be to follow the example of the good shepherd as Jesus taught in the Gospel of John. The good shepherd would build a wall each night on the hillside and have his sheep enter through the door, counting each one to make sure every sheep was inside the protected circle. But the shepherd did not carry a door with him for he was the door. Each night the shepherd would lie within the doorway so as to make sure no sheep wandered out and no predator would come in. The shepherd would lay his life down for the sheep. The author's admonition is for the future student pastors to commit to being a pastor who will know the sheep, love the sheep, feed the sheep, and protect the sheep.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONSTRUCTIVE COMPONENTS TO A STRATEGIC, BALANCED, AND STRONG STUDENT MINISTRY

Introduction

Continuing from the previous chapter, the author will carry on the project aspect of his thesis. In this chapter the author will incorporate the foundational components covered in chapter four into the constructive components. Using the same format as chapter four, the material is written in a style which combines a teaching layout with a narrative explanation. The reason for this style is to accomplish the long term purpose of the project, to provide a leadership resource for the leader to teach others.

The following five areas are the Constructive Components. They will make up the sections of the chapter.

The Construction of the Weekly Series

The Construction of the Teaching Schedule

The Construction of the Monthly Event

The Construction of the Retreat and Summer Camp

The Construction of the Mission Trip

The Construction of the Weekly Series

Introduction

Three questions may arise as one considers constructing a weekly teaching series:

- 1) What is a weekly series?
- 2) Why have a weekly series?
- 3) How does one develop a weekly series?

Before considering the “what” and “how” aspects, the author would like to remind the reader that much of the “why” question was dealt with in the theological material of chapter two.

One of the main reasons this subject is so important to the author is because he has been so frustrated with the shallowness he has personally seen and/or about which he has heard in so many student ministries. There is a widespread perception that student ministry is mostly entertainment, with games, refreshments, and a brief , inspirational talk about God rather than strong teaching from the inspired Word of God. While the author cannot defend or deny this perception, his desire is to teach future student ministry leaders how to provide a structure which integrates the principles of strong Bible teaching, healthy relationships, and worship (Acts 2:42).

What is a Weekly Series?

A “weekly series” is “a network of continuous weekly or monthly events.”¹ In the context of student ministry, the weekly series would be weekly programs such as Sunday School, and/or the traditional evening youth group meeting. From this definition, the author will provide the necessary input and ingredients to create such a series.

¹ Brown, *Programs*, 227.

The student ministry must keep their meetings balanced. Before providing the steps to design an effective weekly student ministry series, the author will identify three principles to consider.

1. Balance of the group dynamic must be maintained.

Just as the early church provided both large group and small group meetings, the Student Pastor should provide a balance of both large group and small group opportunities. There are advantages and disadvantages to using each of these types of meetings. Those who only attend a large group meeting may feel the synergy and strength that takes place when many come together, yet they may never relationally connect. Those who only attend a small group may develop strong relationships but not glean from what God is doing on the larger scale.

2. The student ministries purposes must be kept in balance.

The student pastor should provide a balance of spiritual purposes to the meetings. As one looks back at the early church in Acts, it appears that the large group meeting (the temple courts) had more of an evangelistic purpose while the small group meeting had an accountability/growth purpose.

If the student ministry has two or more meetings in the ministry week, each program (series) should have a definite and diverse purpose and structure. One should make sure each program compliments the other but does not copy the other.

3. A balanced approach should be taken to the content of the teaching.

The Scriptures speak of various stages of Christian growth. 1 John 4 refers to children, young men, and adults. The Scriptures also speak of various levels of teaching. The Apostle Paul speaks of spiritual milk and spiritual meat. This may sound rather

simplistic, but years ago the author would attach a teaching emphasis of milk, vegetables, or meat to a specific weekly series. For example, Wednesday evening was designed for those new to Christianity; thus, the spiritual meal was “milk.” Sunday morning (Sunday School) offered a “vegetables” diet; and Sunday evening had “meat.” The design was to have a healthy and balanced spiritual diet. Students are all at different spiritual levels so one must reach them where they are so as to bring them into full maturity in Christ (Colossians 1:28). This leads into the next point.

The student pastor must understand where the students are at in their spiritual journeys. The wise student pastor recognizes that everyone is on a spiritual journey whether he realizes it or not. Even Jesus Christ used this analogy as he spoke of persons either being on the broad road or the narrow road. Below is a simple chart to describe at least six spiritual stages may be on their journey. Obviously there are ultimately only two groups (the saved and the lost), but within these two groups are smaller subcategories. The goal would be to move students from left to right.

Lost			Saved		
Lost and don't care	Lost and interested	Lost and seeking	Newly saved and hungry	Saved and struggling	Saved and maturing
<i>This does not include one category the author is very concerned is present in today's evangelical churches: lost and thinking they are saved</i>					

So how can a student pastor and ministry leaders effectively reach all spiritual stages in one setting? It is virtually impossible. If the student ministry has only one meeting a week, some groups of students will be neglected. If they continually focus primarily on the saved, they are neglecting to provide a place for people to come and understand the truth of God in a cultural language they can understand. Yet if they focus

primarily on the lost, they are neglecting to feed and equip the saints. Thus, one must recognize how all three of these balance points (group dynamics, purpose, content) should work well together.

The terms “impact” and “insight” have been used by many over the years in student ministry. One student ministry that has visibly made this known is the high school ministry of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. This ministry would “offer two different programs, Student Impact (for seekers) and Student Insight (for believers).”² The reason has to do with purpose, “If we attempted to meet the needs of both targets within the same program events we would frustrate both believers and seekers, as well as ourselves.”³ It is with this context that one can understand the following explanation of the two dynamics.

What Are the Fundamental Differences in the Two Dynamics?

The student ministry should have a definition of a large group and a small group. Dr. Matt Willmington provides the following as the meeting definitions.

Large Group – “a gathering of 13 or more teens which facilitates a collective effervescence, providing security and excitement for its members, serving as a bridge to the church and/or a small group experience, usually with the goal of basic spiritual growth.”

Small Group – “a gathering of 3-12 teens which focuses on the individual, providing acceptance, attention, and accountability through the process of teaching (cognitive) and training (experiential), usually with the goal of in-depth spiritual growth.”⁴

² Troy Murphy and Kim Anderson, *Programming with Purpose*, 57.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Willmington, *Building God’s House*, 44.

The student ministry should have a biblical foundation for a large group and a small group. In reading Colossians 1:28-29, the author sees the Apostle's commitment to evangelism and discipleship. A student ministry should carry out this same commitment. The weekly series (programs) should help assist in these efforts. While not true in every case, it is typical within student ministry for the large and small group to have a definite and diverse purpose and look. Using Colossians 1:28-29 and 2:6-7, the author will suggest the following as a model of ministry:

1. *"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord,"* (Colossians 2:6a). The Large Group can be designed to provide exposure to and explanation of Christianity to lost students. This can lead to a student's commitment to Christ.
2. *"...continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."* (Colossians 2:6b-7). The Small Group can be designed for spiritually educating and equipping saved students. This can lead to a student's completeness in Christ.

The author would like to point out that within his previous student ministry experience; he made sure that for each large group meeting there was a structured small group break out time. This was either used at the beginning of the lesson to help introduce the students to the lesson or at the end to transition them from the lesson into the application. The end time slot was used more often than the beginning. This assisted in the assimilation of newer students and application of the lesson to all students.

The student ministry must be aware of the various means to fulfill each dynamic. There is a variety of structures the student ministry could incorporate for each dynamic (large group and small group). Below is a list providing several examples:

1. For Large Groups

- The entire student ministry (6th-12th grades)
- The entire department (Middle School or High School)
- One could partner with other student ministries

2. For Small Groups

- Home groups
- Campus groups
- Assigned groups (grades, schools, geographic, leaders choose)
- Discipleship groups
- Accountability groups
- Relational (care) groups
- Breakout (discussion) groups
- Ministry (service) groups
- Support groups

The student ministry should have a specific purpose for the large group and the small group. Returning to the principle previously mentioned it does appear the early church in the book of Acts used the larger gatherings for evangelism (impact) and smaller gatherings for Christian growth (insight). The author does suggest this model as a good one to pursue. This will be the model in this project.

The student ministry must be aware of the positives and negatives of each dynamic. While each dynamic (large group and small group) has various positive benefits, with each positive there are potentially negative drawbacks as well. Below is a chart providing some examples:

1. Impact Meeting (the large group)

<u>Positives</u>	<u>Negatives</u>
New students may like being anonymous	New students may feel lost
More excitement, hype, “fun” feel	Can become shallow
Great program structure, staging, decorations	Can have many distractions
Crowds can be exciting	Can be hard to make connection, possibly impersonal
Uses the strength of personality (Student Pastor, other leader)	Can become reliant on one individual
Greater involvement of people and resources	Takes a lot of work if done right
Can create excellent programming	Can create feeling of program is ministry
Provide “full sound” worship experience	Easy to “watch” worship
Can use students in leadership positions	Can create “superstars” instead of servants

2. Insight Meeting (the small group)

<u>Positives</u>	<u>Negatives</u>
New students should be noticed	New students can feel uncomfortable if no one reaches out to them
Very simple programming	Could become boring
Create potential for great discussion	One or two can dominate discussion or lose focus of lesson
Strength of using many in ministry	May not be as good as key leaders
Greater involvement in training leaders	Will take much time; easier to do it oneself
Create a relaxed atmosphere	Can become so relaxed they neglect to do lesson
Great means to the end (grow larger by growing smaller)	Group can become the end (forget they are part of the larger body)
Establish strong relationships	Can become cliquey
Group can become effective in reaching students with specific needs	Can become a renegade group and even critical of the larger body

What Elements are needed in Creating a Weekly Series?

The student ministry should have some basic components that go into creating a specific weekly program. The following is a suggested outline of such needed components with simple descriptions.

1. Program Name

The program should be given an appealing name. It should be attractive enough that the students will like it, but it also must communicate the purpose of the weekly meeting.

2. Type of Meeting

The student pastor should decide if the meetings will be a large group impact meeting (outreach) or a small group insight meeting (growth).

3. Purpose

While the author has been suggesting the benefits of using the large group for outreach and small groups for growth, these distinctions are not absolute. As mentioned, it is possible to use the large group for spiritual growth. Conversely, some may use small groups for outreach. Some examples of this would be a seekers Bible study, a biblically based recovery group, and support groups. One must be careful not to try to accomplish too much within one specific meeting. The ministry should seek to have one of the four ministry levels as the primary focus of each meeting.

4. Group Dynamic

One must ask several questions relating to the dynamic of a planned group meeting. Is the meeting meant to attract a large group or a small group? Will this

particular meeting be the best setting for this dynamic? Will the stated purpose for the meeting be best served by this dynamic?

5. Audience

Audience-related questions to be asked include: What age is to be attracted? How many are expected to attend? Will this be only middle school or high school? Will this be a combined middle school and high school meeting? While the author has sometimes incorporated both departments together, the consensus of many veteran student ministry workers is to keep the groups separate.

6. Date

On what day of the week will the meeting take place? When deciding this, the leader should consider the purpose of the meeting and the spiritual level of the students to be reached. For example, some youth ministries may have their outreach meeting (impact) on a Sunday morning while others during a midweek evening. If the ministry is attempting to use the meeting to reach unsaved students, consideration must be given to when a lost student would most likely be willing to attend their student ministry meeting.

7. Time

One needs to decide the times the meeting will start and when will it end. How much time does one need to accomplish their purpose without making the meeting too long? When it comes to evenings, the student pastor must consider that students are in school. Finally, the ministry should start on time and finish at the time as advertised.

8. Location

When considering the best location for the meeting, all possibilities and their positives and negatives must be measured. Some suggestions for locations would be:

- The church property, especially if the ministry has its own designated area.
- A neutral setting such as a school gymnasium or youth center.
- Various homes.

9. Staff

What functions are needed to make the program operate smoothly? Some possible areas would be registration, games, refreshments, worship, audio-video, and small group leaders. Each person who is involved in these areas should have a written job description. The student pastor should make sure each adult has a legitimate role while present at the meeting, is competent at his role, and is fulfilling that role.

10. Equipment

The student ministry should prepare a check list of needed items for each category in the program (i.e. registration, games, refreshments, worship, etc.) This should assist the ministry in being fully prepared to be effective for each meeting.

11. Finances

The cost to administrate this weekly program must be considered. Some possible needed areas may be snacks (refreshments), game supplies, decorations, door prizes, and curriculum. These items should be well thought-out when preparing the annual budget.

12. Promotion

When it comes to promotion, one should think both internal (inside the church) and external (outside the church). Along with promoting the weekly series to the students, the leader should also be providing the parents and church body with current information. This will help the continual building the needed bridge between the student ministry and the adult body. Some suggestions would be to let the adults know the topics

being covered. This can be done through personal stories of students, providing informative handouts, and displaying pictures. A designated announcement board and/or an information booth, or the church web site may also be used.

13. Meeting Schedule (Agenda)

Every element of the program should be placed on a time sheet. This production sheet is to keep the meeting running smoothly and effectively. This sheet should be given in a timely manner to all of the participants in the weekly meeting.

14. Evaluation

Evaluations for each weekly meeting should strongly be considered. For his entire student ministry career, the author maintained a written (typed) report of each of the weekly meetings. This evaluation report also included the attendance records of the meeting. These went in the filing cabinet and in a series notebook. In addition to the above, he also received verbal evaluations from key adults and key students. Doing these evaluations right away will make the ministry better for the next week. In addition, this allows the leader to create a journal of the ministry and will allow future leaders to learn from the history of the ministry.

The Construction of the Teaching Schedule

Introduction

In chapter two, the author provided a theological basis for a teaching schedule within student ministry. The previous material is foundational to this section. The two basic abstracts of the previous material are that: 1) the concept of the teaching schedule has a basis

within Scripture (Acts 20:28) and 2) the student ministry must derive its teaching content right from the Scriptures.

The Spiritual Health of the Student Ministry

The student ministry should be concerned about the current spiritual health of the ministry. Before one develops a teaching schedule, it would be most advantageous for the student pastor to understand where the students are in their knowledge of Scripture (belief) and application of Scripture (behavior). This is imperative because of the nature of the responsibility of the pastor.

The student ministry should create a vehicle to discover the current spiritual health of the ministry. As pastor to the students, the student pastor (shepherd) should know the needs of the sheep (the students) so they can be adequately provided with spiritual nourishment. Jesus Christ spoke of this principle in John 10. Many years later, Peter referred to the same principle in 1 Peter 5. In keeping with this, the student pastor should be aware of the spiritual health of the entire student ministry as well as the spiritual health of each individual student. Below are some suggestions to create a diagnostic of the students' belief and their behavior.

1. Behavioral Health of the Group:
 - As the leader, the student pastor should intentionally observe the group during its times together.
 - In addition, the adult leaders also should be intentionally observing the group.
 - An anonymous group survey can be conducted, asking behavioral questions.
 - Someone from the "outside" can be invited to watch the group.
2. Behavioral Health of the Individual:

- The methods used to assess the behavioral health of the group can also be used to assess the individual member's behavioral health. (One could use a tool similar to the chart shown earlier in the chapter to identify the spiritual stage of each student.)

Lost			Saved		
Lost and don't care	Lost and interested	Lost and seeking	Saved and hungry	Saved and struggling	Saved and maturing

- The student pastor could personally meet with each student. .
- The adult leaders can provide a spiritual assessment of each student in their small group.
- The students could take their own spiritual assessment.

3. Belief Health of the Group:

- The methods used to assess the behavioral health of the group can also be used to assess the belief health of the group.
- The student pastor could implement an interactive "game show" which can provide a fun means to test the biblical knowledge of the students.

4. Belief Health of the Individual:

- The methods used to assess the belief health of the group can also be used to assess the individual's belief health. Much of the questions asked relating to biblical knowledge can be restated but made on a personal level.
- The student pastor could incorporate a written Bible trivia survey in which the students turn in to the leaders.

The Spiritual Direction of the Student Ministry

The student ministry should be proactive in directing the teaching phase of the ministry. Gathering all of the previous information is only beneficial if it leads to action. This information should be foundational to assist in the discovering of the

starting point of where the teaching could begin. However, wherever one starts, the leader should seek to build a comprehensive teaching strategy which should stimulate students to full maturity in Christ. As observed in the author's research, only 32% of the ministries surveyed had at least a one year teaching plan. This validated to the author the stereotype of the student ministry worker who does not plan ahead long term what he will be teaching the students.

The student ministry could begin by focusing on four basic categories. In his own student ministry experience, the author developed and utilized the chart below. He also strongly encourages his own university students to consider this template as well.

DOCTRINE	APOLOGETICS	GROWTH	MINISTRY
"How I BELIEVE"	"How I KNOW"	"How I GROW"	"How I SERVE"

The student pastor can consider how some of the above topics can be addressed on the insight meetings and some can be addressed on the impact meetings. He should also consider how to incorporate these topics within different times of the year. No matter how one lays out the teaching plan, the encouragement is to provide some significant focus to each one of the four areas throughout the school year. To assist this, the author strongly encourages the reader to create a listing of the many topics which could flow out of these four categories.

The student ministry should develop an intentional teaching plan. The project's survey showed that 32% of those ministries surveyed do not utilize any teaching plan whatsoever and 35% only plan ahead within the actual quarter. If one combines the two categories, it would appear that two-thirds of student ministries are just getting by

with preparing the teaching lessons each week. How can this lead to successful teaching? Would it not be better if instead of the student pastor choosing the weekly topic days before the presentation that he worked backwards? In other words, what if he derived his talk for the week out of a longer term strategy? The following would be the principles to building and implementing a strategy for teaching preparation.

A Five Level Strategy for Teaching Preparation.⁵

1. An overall (comprehensive) teaching plan

The student pastor should begin by asking the question, “What do we want our students to learn during the time we have them from 6th–12th grades?” He must then begin to creatively think and write out a list of topics and ideas. To assist in creating this list, the suggestion would be to start with the desired goals one wants to see accomplished in students. For the author, this was seen in his written philosophy (mission, vision, and strategy statements). Then, one must also consider utilizing the four previously mentioned categories of doctrine, apologetics, growth, and ministry. As one blends the two together, it can become obvious what direction to take.

2. A departmental teaching plan

The overall plan should be broken down by departments. What does the ministry seek to accomplish within the lives of middle school students followed by high school students? As one plans this out, he should keep in mind that student ministry should be in connection with the entire church body. For example, the middle school ministry should be actively connected with the children’s ministry. Partnering with the children’s

⁵ The author realizes there are very few footnotes within this teaching component. It is for the reason that he could not find any material in student ministry which addresses this topic. This also includes searching the Internet. There is much material on teaching methods and communication but not in relation to a long-range teaching plan. He realizes there are various curriculums which do have such a plan with their material but there is not much resource in regards to showing one how to put together such a plan.

ministry will provide connection and cohesion. This should be evidenced both relationally and educationally. The author is not suggesting a combination of ministries, but rather, a working relationship to “pass the baton” successfully. The middle school should be an extension of the children’s ministry, and the high school, an extension of the middle school ministry.

Some examples of middle school teaching areas to be covered would be:

- Thoroughly explaining the doctrine of salvation, making sure there is a genuine understanding and personal application of salvation.
- Teaching the basic doctrines at their level of comprehension.
- Reviewing the basic Bible stories they learned as children and helping them understand the greater application of these stories.
- Beginning to formulate the foundation to Christian character.

Some examples of high school teaching areas to be covered would be:

- Continuing to cover the ten major doctrines.
- Providing various biblical book studies and Bible surveys.
- Teaching apologetics, both theological (objective areas such as the resurrection) and social (subjective areas such as homosexuality).
- Incorporating practical growth areas including the Christian disciplines.
- Equipping in the areas of ministry.

3. An annual teaching plan⁶

Even if one is not ready to build a total ministry picture, the author suggests at least starting at this point. Many senior pastors have a yearly teaching schedule and the author believes this should be no different within student ministry. There are so many needs, issues, and doctrines that must be taught to the students and one only has (at the most) seven years to do his best to equip these students for life. A student pastor will

⁶ Dewey Bertolini, *Back to the Heart of Youthwork* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989), 189-90, 93-94. This resource provides an annual teaching schedule. The author read this book in 1991 and it greatly influenced him to do the same.

either teach with a reactive method or a proactive method. Having a yearly plan within one's ministry will keep one focused and strategic throughout the year.

If the student pastor has two different weekly series (i.e., Sunday morning, Wednesday night), then he will utilize two different teaching schedules. As already mentioned in the Weekly Series section, these two different programs should have different purposes and different target audiences. This should be kept in mind when creating the teaching plan.

When is it best to build the Teaching Schedule?

The personal suggestion is that the student pastor should first develop the summer teaching plan during the early spring. This allows time to develop the logistical needs of the teaching lessons/series'. While developing the summer schedule, it would be wise to also begin developing the ideas for the school year schedule. From the list of ideas, a rough draft should be completed by the end of the current school year. The schedule should be finalized during the summer so there is time to be preparing for planning the individual series' at the beginning of the school year.

How does one build the Teaching Schedule?

The author will provide a suggested pattern he used in his ministry. First, the student pastor could write out the series/topic ideas. He may choose to put the ideas on note cards and spread them across the desk. Second, as he looks at them, he can begin to contemplate which would better fit for the Sunday series and for the midweek series. Third, he should consider which series would go best seasonally and during what part of

the school year. Fourth, he should consider any special days (i.e., Christmas time) he would want to build around.

While doing this step, one must consider the following two points. First, one should maintain a balance in the topics. Next, one should gather needed input from others. Some suggestions would be various adult leaders and spiritually mature students.

What would be the focus of the Teaching Schedule?

While planning, the student pastor must keep in mind the purpose of the series. An outreach based series should be different than a growth based series. This will determine so much of what one will teach. While the author realizes others may do things differently, his emphasis for Sunday mornings was more for deeper Christian growth; therefore, he concentrated on doctrine, exegetical teaching, or ministry training. The midweek's emphasis was on life issues with which all teenagers (both saved and lost) were dealing. These would be the areas such as destructive behaviors, family issues, and questions about Christianity. Sunday was more instructional. Wednesday was more practical. Again, each student pastor may select a different day of the week for their impact or insight but the series' should truly target the spiritual needs of the audience and at the most effective time of the week to reach that target audience. As Bo Boshers states, "We work hard to understand how the mission and our targets work together. Whether trying to reach the seeker with the message of God's love or helping the believer connect with God, we program to meet specific target needs."⁷

What would one then do with the Teaching Schedule?

⁷ Boshers and Anderson. *Student Ministries*, 212.

The first step would be to organize the teaching schedule into an attractive handout. Once this is done, the second step would be to distribute this in advance to the student ministry adult leaders, church leaders, parents, and the students. Obviously the third step is to implement the schedule.

There will be times God would have the leader change direction. Then obviously one must heed to the Spirit of God and not hold on too tightly to the series or lesson. This can only come by the leader staying sensitive to the Holy Spirit and He will let the leader know what God is doing.

4. A series plan

This step has to do with the individual series. For years the traditional Sunday School curriculum has been the standard thirteen week period. This has been referred to as “the quarterly” (obviously $13 \times 4 = 52$). While many pastors and Christian educators have moved away from this format, the author still thinks it is beneficial in the context of a strong Level 3 (growth) program. It allows the teacher and student the time to cover the material at a deeper level without having to rush through it. This type of series also has benefits in the context of a discussion oriented learning environment.

However, for a larger, outreach based program, the author recommends the use of the short, three to five week series. The lessons of the short series are built to connect together and communicate an overall theme. By doing this, one has time to communicate the theme. With a longer series, it may be more difficult to maintain continuity due to the reality that many of today’s students are busy and may not be consistent attendees. This would especially be true if nonbelievers are the target audience.

There are many great resources on how to put together a series. One such resource is *Student Ministries in the 21st Century*. The sequel to this book, *Programming With Purpose*, is specifically designed to plan a weekly series and develop a thematic series. (The reader may be aware these books have already been quoted from within this chapter.) The author would also recommend the student pastor look through various youth curriculum books for ideas. This will allow him to see how various youth workers have put together their material into short series. The author personally recommends materials from some long-established publishers such as David C. Cook, Gospel Light, and Youth Specialties. He also recommends some newer visual materials (Greg Stier, Doug Fields, etc.) but does want to point out that visual resources tend to “age” rather quickly.

5. The individual lesson

One book the author personally recommends is *How to Speak to Youth* by humorist and speaker, Ken Davis. This work literally walks the youth worker through the needed steps in preparing the actual talk. In the book Davis uses the SCORRE method of teaching.⁸ This acrostic is:

S=Subject
C=Central Theme
O=Objective
R=Rationale
R=Resources
E=Evaluation

What setting should one use for the actual lesson?

As one prepares the series, he must consider the setting where the lessons will be delivered, asking where or what the best setting is for fulfilling the lesson aim. As one

⁸ Ken Davis, *How to Speak to Youth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 40-72.

considers this, he should begin to think outside the normative classroom. As one looks into the teaching ministry of the Master Teacher, one can quickly see that Jesus taught in many different settings.

- In the Synagogues (Luke 4:15)
- In homes (Luke 10:38-42)
- Outdoors (Matthew 5-7)

Therefore, as the student pastor considers the teaching location and set up, he must process through the:

- Structure – Is the lesson more serious or more relaxed?
- Style – Is the lesson more educational (master teacher), experiential (inductive), or relational (group discussion)?
- Setting – How much time is the meeting and actual lesson? Does the environment assist or hinder the lesson aim?

What should be the timing of the actual lesson?

Finally, when putting together the lesson plan, there are some various issues to be considered. Considering these ahead of time will greatly benefit the overall teaching schedule. The student pastor should:

- “Think Seasonal” – strategically plan lessons to coincide with the various holidays and/or seasons.
- “Think School Year” – consider the highs and lows of students during the school year and be asking when a topic most effective and appropriate or when one needs to be serious and when one needs to be light?
- “Think Special Days” – take advantage of such events as See You At The Pole, True Love Waits, or graduation.
- “Think Siesta” – consider planning a week off once every quarter i.e., at the end of the summer.

In closing, as one puts together the teaching schedule, he must never forget his purpose. The Apostle Paul provided a picture of his shepherd’s heart for the believers in Galatia when he wrote this little phrase, *“My dear children, for whom I am again in the*

pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,” (Galatians 4:19). The author truly yearns for the day when student ministries become passionate about seeing their students develop Christ-like beliefs and Christ-like behavior. Ultimately, this is what the teaching ministry should be all about.

The Construction of the Monthly Event

Introduction

This component will focus on the administrative steps needed to develop an organized and effective monthly event. Before moving into the actual construction of the event, one must consider some needed preliminary issues. After these issues are addressed, the material will take the reader through the principles of putting together a monthly student ministry event. In addition, the author presupposes the reader be aware that the following principles are designed to be practical and transitional to any type (purpose) of event in any situation.

Purpose – What are the four purposes of events?

The student ministry must have a biblical and intentional reason for producing an event. One should be thankful that within the past ten years in the church, much attention has been drawn to ministries being purpose driven. Before one plans a student ministry event, the question must be raised and answered, “Why are we having this event?” This is where planning should start. What biblical purpose would God have the ministry accomplish as it plans out its various events? While there are a myriad of

student ministry events to choose, the event must have a specific purpose. The author suggest four purposes (he refers to as ministry levels) of student ministry. They are:

1. (Entry) A relational event – one that begins and/or develops relationships with unsaved students with the eventual goal being evangelism.
2. (Evangelism) An outreach event – one that calls unsaved students to become followers of Christ.
3. (Edify) A growth event – one that calls a disciple into greater steps of Christ likeness.
4. (Equip) A ministry event – one that gives growing students an opportunity to serve and eventually take on leadership responsibility.

The student ministry must communicate the purpose of the event to key people. Once the ministry strategically chooses the purpose of the event, that purpose must be successfully communicated to the right people. Successfully communicating the purpose will lead to triumph. Failure at communicating the purpose will lead to tragedy. This point is crucial to the success of the event. If the right people do not understand and/or do not support the event, the potential for failure is significant. Below is a list of people the student pastor should communicate the purpose of the event:

1. The adult leadership team
2. The students
3. The church leadership
4. The parents of the students
5. The church body

Planning – How does the student pastor plan out the event?

In order to transition from purpose to planning the author strongly recommends that the person administrating the event utilize some type of an Event Planner Form.

(Such forms are available on software and various web sites.) Throughout this section on

Monthly Events the author will provide a simplistic explanation of the form he used in his own student ministry (and currently teaches his Liberty University students to incorporate into their Youth 460 senior portfolio). Throughout the following four areas, the words using the bold font style are the actual words used in the form. The form is divided into four main areas:

I. The INFORMATION

II. The DESCRIPTION

III. The PROMOTION PLAN

IV. The DETAILS

I. INFORMATION:

This first step in planning is to define the basic elements of the event and provide a brief overview of the event. This is typically centered on the planning form with a single word description.

Activity: *What is the name of the event?*

Type: *Is this an event, marathon, or series?* (Definitions are in chapter two.)

Purpose: *What is the purpose (level) of the event?* (entry, evangelism, edify, equip)

Intensity: *Is this event major or minor?* (This is based on the work involved, details, cost, group size, promotion, and any distance traveled.)

Group Dynamic: *Is this event targeting a large group or a small group?*

Target Audience: *What is the spiritual level of the targeted audience?*

Comparable to what Doug Fields displayed in *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*⁹ the author developed a similar model of various target audience groups. These five are:

- *Community (never have visited our student ministry)*

⁹ Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*, 87.

- *Crowd (have visited our student ministry)*
- *Churched (comes to one of our weekly series)*
- *Committed (involved in a discipleship group)*
- *Core (involved in a ministry team)*

Grades/Gender: *For what grades and gender is the event designed?*

Estimated Attendance: *How many students are honestly expected to attend?*

Date: *What is the specific date and day?*

Time: *What time is the event going to start and finish?*

Location: *Where is the event going to be?*

Ticket Fee: *How much are the students being charged for the event?*

II. DESCRIPTION:

The second step of planning for an event is to think through it completely enough to be able to provide a written narrative describing what should take place. The author's form guides the event planner. To view a blank copy of the Event Planner Form, see Appendix B.

We are doing this event because:

While the brief answer is seen in the first section under **Purpose**, this question gives opportunity for the leader to provide a narrative of the personal passion of why he chose this event.

The theme to this event is:

This is for the student pastor to communicate any special theme that would be tied to the event. He can administrate his entire program through this theme. This should display creativity and ingenuity.

This event will look like (big picture of the event itself):

This is a narrative walk through of the event based on the schedule of the event.

Our spiritual goal is:

What is the spiritual goal the leader desires to see God accomplish through this event? For example, while the basic goal of the event may be at Level 1 (entry), it is here the leader can provide a narrative description of the spiritual desires he has in seeing believing students connect with lost students at this event.

This event will be a success if:

While the previous question is to provide more of a narrative answer, this question is to provide more of a bullet point response. What exactly does the leader want to see God do at and through this event? What does he want to see God do in the lives of the students? What does he want to see happen in the life of the ministry?

III. PROMOTION PLAN:

The next step of planning an event is the planning of the event's promotion. The next section of the planner provides an organizational table that the leader can complete.

Strategy Ideas: *What are the possible means of promoting the event?*

One of the traditional means of promotion is the handout, otherwise known as the flyer. While more current means are electronic, the author still finds some value in the handout.

What does one put into a flyer?

Today's culture is inundated with a constant barrage of information, especially "junk mail." While the students may or may not read the handout, parents will still

appreciate the information. The student pastor should make sure the handout is both professional and attractive. He also needs to keep the flyer balanced. This means when he is developing the flyer, he keeps in mind the two potential audiences that will be reading the handout: 1) the students and 2) the parents. The flyer must be attractive enough that the student would want to come to the event yet professional enough for the parents to take the event seriously. The students are asking, “Why should I come?” and the parents are asking, “Why should I let them come?”

There are seven key areas one must address in any type of written communication piece (flyer, brochure, etc.)

1. Who? (What is the specific targeted age group?)
2. What? (What is the name or theme of the event?)
3. When? (What is the date and time of the event?)
4. Where? (What is the location of the event?)
5. Why? (For what reason would the student want to come?)
6. Worth? (How much will it cost to attend?)
7. With? (What church is sponsoring this event?)

What are some means of electronic promotion?

This must be addressed because the Internet is the first place many students go to receive their information. It is because of this reality that many student ministries have web sites. One can also send out group emails and group text messages. As mentioned in chapter two, the most current trend among students today is their use of Facebook and MySpace. Today’s students are electronic and visual. These areas must be utilized in order to best promote one’s events.

What are three areas that any promotion should provide?

Very simply, each promotion piece should provide:

1. A hook (to capture the student's attention)
2. A look (to cover the information)
3. A took (to convince the student to attend)

What is the most effective means of promotion?

While the student ministry should have effective means of promoting the ministry, the author honestly believes the most effective means of promotion is still person to person. It is what worked in the Gospels and the book of Acts. If the students are excited about the Lord Jesus and their student ministry, they will want to bring their friends. The student pastor must use effective means to promote the event outside the church while also doing what is needed to energize his own students. People typically will not attend a function unless they know someone that will be there. The public promotion will typically be a supportive means to the personal promotion done by the students.

Strategy Promotion: *What is the timeline of these possible means?*

IV. DETAILS

This next section of the planner form provides various tables to be filled out. Some of these areas may not always be used in each event.

Event Schedule: *What is the time breakdown of the actual event?*

Game Description: *What are the games to be used and are there any needs?*

Game Equipment: *What are the specific items needed, their cost, and the source where one is procuring the needed items?*

Decoration Description: *What are the specific items needed, their cost, and the source where one is procuring the needed items?*

Miscellaneous Equipment: *Are there any other needed items that may not fit into one of the categories? What are the specific items needed, their cost, and the source where one is procuring the needed items??*

Refreshments Description: *What are the specific items needed, their cost, and the source where one is procuring the needed items?*

Program Description: *Similar to the previous description, this should be especially used for the spiritual needs areas.*

Budget Roll-Up: *What are the various costs to all of the previous categories?*

This is the simple roll-up budget based on each previous category. The detailed budget should be completed on a separate form. To view a blank copy of the Budget Form, see Appendix B.

Adult Leadership: *What are the various roles needed to produce this event?*

Each leader will need a specific responsibility and role. Some of these leadership roles may be more tasks oriented while other leadership roles may be more relational. Whichever the case is, the leader should have all adults prepared for what to do and have a place prepared for them to do it.

As pointed out in chapter three, 27% of the ministries surveyed do not have any written or verbalized roles defined in their student ministries. 57% have a verbalized role

but no written description. The author strongly encourages the student pastor to have responsibilities both written down and explained to the leaders.

Transportation: *Is transportation needed? If so, what means of transportation and how many vehicles?* Some of the various options are listed below:

- The student ministry (or church) may own vehicles (vans or bus).
- The student ministry may rent vehicles which the adult leaders will drive.
- The student ministry may rent a bus service where the driver is hired.
- The student ministry may use privately owned vehicles. (*For various legal reasons, the author does not recommend this option.)

Preparation – How does the student pastor prepare for the event?

The above material has to do with the necessary essentials of planning the event. This next step is the micro-organization of the event. To help assist this process, one can benefit from a “to do” list. The author was first introduced to this concept in reading the book *The Magnet Effect* by Barry St. Clair. He referred to this list as a Flow Chart.¹⁰ The author developed a similar list which he calls the Action Item Timeline Form. To view a blank copy and a filled out example of the Action Item Timeline Form, see Appendix B.

Payment – How does the ministry pay for the event?

The five various means of payment were listed in chapter four. According to the project’s survey, most ministries do primarily use a submitted church budget but also use a blending of the other means as well. Of course, this question was directed toward the whole ministry, not just events.

¹⁰ Barry St. Clair, *The Magnet Effect* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1994), 170-175.

When it comes to events, each event may be approached differently. Some events are financed by using an admission charge (self-providing). Others may be completely free to the students and is either completely underwritten via donations or the submitted church budget. However, the cost of many events can be best covered by using a combination of some or all of the five areas. The author would prefer to see the primary source of revenue be the students' paying an admission fee, supplemented by the use of some of the other four means. His simple rule was to *use the submitted church budget more heavily for the actual ministry programming and use the students to pay for the events.*

How Do I Know How Much to Charge?

The event should pay for itself. The plan must account for each expense item. In determining how to charge the students, the planner should carefully consider the following questions.

- What is the means of paying for the event?
- What are the total expenses of the event?
- What is the legitimate estimate of how many students are attending?

It then becomes a matter of simple math. In using the self-providing method, one would take the total expenses and divide by the estimated number of paying students. This would be the ticket price. For a combination approach, arriving at the number would be a little more complex. This is where the Event Planner Form and the Budget Form come into play. The first step would be to fill out the Event Planner Form. This form provides for the initial listing of all expenses. This information (both budget expense line items and estimated costs) is transferred to the first two columns of the Budget Form. The Budget Form was actually designed not only to be a budget planner

but also to serve as a detailed expense report of the event. This is the rationale for the third column, the actual expense column. Therefore, when the event is over, one could complete this form allowing it to become the budget report for the student ministry recording system.

This step is a crucial one. Not only is it wise stewardship, but it is also practical because 81% of the surveyed ministries answered yes to Q.12 in which they “keep its own financial records and/or reports of its events and must turn any records or reports into the church.”

Pulling It Off – What does the student pastor do during the event?

As the purpose, promotion, planning, and preparation have been completed, the day of the event will finally arrive. During the implementation of the event, what should the student pastor be doing?

- As the leader, he must keep his **eyes** open.
- As the leader, he must make sure the event is **effective**.
- As the leader, he must **enjoy** the event.
- As the leader, he must **encourage** those around him.
- As the leader, he must exude **enthusiasm** during the event.

Packing It Away – What should the student pastor do when the event is over?

While strategic, balanced, and strong student ministries are typically busy, the urgency of the next event or weekly series can take the student pastor quickly away from the just finished event. However, there are three more administrative steps which should be fulfilled before moving ahead.

1. **Review** the event – There should be some means to evaluate the event by:

- The students
 - The adult leaders
 - The student pastor
2. **Report** the event – An event report should be completed which should include:
- general information
 - financial overview
 - donation list accompanied by the date the thank you notes were sent out
 - written subjective evaluations
3. **Record** the event – All of the event reports should be kept in an organized filing system. The author recommends:
- An organized filing system of events on the computer.
 - An event notebook in the office that contains the basic forms to the event.
 - The traditional hanging files system.

Prayer – How could a student pastor have an event without this?

Just because this is the last area mentioned, this does not signify prayer is to be an afterthought. Quite the contrary, the event should be birthed in prayer during the initial annual planning; there should also be prayer for the event during the actual promotion and planning stages; and there should be people praying over the event even as the event is taking place. As Dr. Jerry Falwell would repeatedly state, “Nothing of eternal consequence happens apart from prayer!”¹¹ The wise student pastor will involve many of the church body, including the students, in effective and intentional prayer.

¹¹ Jerry Falwell, *Building Dynamic Faith* (Nashville: World Publishing, 2005), 68.

The Construction of the Retreat and Summer Camp

Introduction

Much of what would be necessary within this section has already been communicated in the previous section regarding the Monthly Event. Therefore, the reader must keep in mind this section will not focus on all of the administrative aspects previously provided. These aspects will be assumed within this section.

Another assumption will be that when the author refers to camps, he is also including retreats. While he realizes they are separate in function, he does believe the two are very similar in regards to their construction.

The purpose of this section will be to assist the reader with the specific issues that should be addressed in order for a student pastor to develop his own camp.

Why Would a Student Ministry Provide a Camp?

The question almost humorously asked is, “Why would anyone want to spend an extended period of time with adolescents?” In other words, why would a ministry have longer events, referred to in this project as marathons, such as a weekend retreat or a weeklong camp? In response, the author suggests five benefits to camping ministry.

1. To give students a change from the familiarity of the daily routine.
2. To get students away from the distractions of everyday life.
3. To give students and leaders an intense time to develop deeper relationships.
4. To give students an opportunity to respond to what God has for them.
5. To give student ministries an opportunity to have significant spiritual impact on the students.

The author is not alone on this subject. Veteran youth worker Jim Burns writes in his book, *The Youth Builder*,

“It is within the environment of camps and retreats that students can be brought face-to-face with God Almighty. Campus Crusade for Christ says that 75 percent of their 10,000-plus personnel made a first-time commitment to Jesus Christ at a camp or retreat. How many times have we seen students do the same...It’s not that God speaks louder at our camps or on our retreats; it’s that we place ourselves in a position to hear His voice more clearly.”¹²

What Are Some Types of Camps?

There are many options today in Christian camping. Each one has both positive and negative aspects. Below is a listing of five various types of camp:

1. Traditional Camps
2. Sports/Theme Camps
3. Wilderness Camps
4. Seminars/Conferences
5. Self-Produced Camps

As stated in this section’s introduction, the emphasis of this project will focus on the student pastor and his planning team producing their camp. The author greatly benefited from a hard working committed team in assembling such camps. The three groups of camp leadership were:

1. Senior Leadership (student pastor and two co-directors)
2. Area Leaders (oversight of specific responsibilities)
3. Entire Camp Staff (every adult attending camp)

¹² Jim Burns and Mike DeVries, *The Youth Builder* (Ventura: Gospel Light, 2001), 128.

What Are Some Ways to Successfully Prepare for Producing One's Own Camp?

The senior leadership must answer some preliminary questions. Just like with the monthly event, the leader must think through the process of preparing an event.

- *What is the spiritual purpose?*
- *Who is the target audience?*
- *Where is the best place and location to reach the spiritual goal?*
- *How does this event fit in with the rest of the calendar year?*
- *What type of camping situation will be used and why?*

The senior leadership should choose a theme. There are three fundamental themes that can and should be blended together for effective impact.

- Spiritual theme
- Recreational theme
- Atmosphere(decoration) theme

To give an example of this, the author will explain a high school winter ski retreat he led many years ago. The spiritual purpose was evangelism (Level 2). The target audience was community and crowd students. The location was in Mount Rainier National Park, Washington and very close to one of the area's best ski resorts. The timing was in February which was one of the prime times for skiing. The setting was a rented Christian retreat center in which they provided the food and lodging needs and the ministry provided the program. The spiritual theme was titled "Fillin' the GAP" which was a study of Ecclesiastes that ended with a call to find real life in Jesus Christ. The recreational theme was the skiing. The atmosphere (decoration) theme had to do with a

parody of the clothing store “GAP,” using many of their posters. The author’s encouragement is for student ministries to synergize the entire camp experience with the overall theme, just as the previous example suggests.

The senior leadership should choose their programming ideas. Taking the eight areas already explained, the team should then consider:

- Will the camp’s emphasis be more serious, lighter, or a combination?
- Will the camp look more like a conference and/or seminar or have lots of free time and/or game time?
- Will the camp emphasize the larger group, smaller groups, or a combination?
- Will there be certain activities (sports, outdoors, recreational) around which to build the camp?

The senior leadership should now begin to develop the programming ideas.

These would include:

- The daily schedule
- The choice of daily events and activities
- The spiritual strategy
- The recreation ideas
- The opening and closing ceremonies

What are Some Necessary Steps to Assemble the Camp?

The senior leadership begins to lay out all the areas of the entire camp and select the right area leaders. The student pastor should consider having the camp responsibilities split into two main categories, logistics and programming. Logistics can cover three main areas (promotion/registration, miscellaneous, staffing) and Programming can cover three main areas (spiritual emphasis, atmosphere, recreation). At this stage, the Area Leaders need to be chosen and brought into the planning, with each

leader taking one of the six areas. Within these six areas should also be more specific areas that other adults will be brought in to develop. The author affirms that following this route was a strong reason he believes the camps he led were so successful. Quoting Jim Burns, “When people have clear-cut responsibilities spelled out on paper, they will generally follow through better than with unexpressed expectations.”¹³

The leadership team should begin to actively promote the camp. The need and means of promotion were covered in the previous component on monthly events and will not be stated again. The author does want to reiterate the need to get the students excited about camp and the need to keep the parents informed about camp.

The leadership team should build an effective daily schedule. The various program elements that go into a camp include meals, devotionals, team competition, sessions, and free time. So much of the success or failure of camp depends on what elements are used. One must also consider not only what elements one includes but also when those various program elements are used in the daily schedule and why each particular programming element is scheduled in a particular time slot. Some basic questions to consider when developing the schedule are:

- When is the best time for...?
- How long should... be?
- Where should...fit in connection with...?
- Is there sufficient margin of time in between elements?
- What are the house rules if renting a camp facility?

The leadership team should develop the needed recreation and team competition. This area can make or break the camp. Games and healthy competition

¹³ Ibid., 131.

can be a tremendous asset. They can build unity. They can break down barriers between people. They can actually help people become connected. And they can be fun! When planning for recreation during the camp, provision must be made for adequate free time with actual fun things to do; for non-competitive fun activities where everyone is involved; and for structured competitive teams for competition. In the daily schedule, the morning can be used for team competition, the afternoon for free time, and the late evening for non-structured fun events.

The leadership team should develop the atmosphere and decorations. This is a great opportunity to artistically make the spiritual theme come alive. Students today are very visual and experiential. They are also in creative arts. So in doing this extra aspect, the student ministry is enhancing the spiritual topic. One idea would be to decorate the stage and the chapel area. The author was truly amazed at the creativity of the decorating team when he observed how the stage looked just like the set of a drama presentation. It brought the spiritual theme to life and captured the attention of the students.

The leadership team should develop the necessary food plan. When considering the food, there are three areas which must be considered. The first area is the daily meals. Will the camp provide the meals or does the student ministry need to provide them? The second area is the traditional “snack shack.” One has to honestly consider if all the time, expense, and work is truly worthwhile the effort. The third area is providing evening snacks. These can be donated by various people in the church and incorporated into the schedule after the evening chapel service or the evening game.

The leadership team should develop the transportation plan. One must consider how the group will be arriving at camp and returning home. The basic options on transportation were previously covered in the monthly event component.

The student pastor and senior leadership team should develop the camp staff. The suggestion is for most (if not all) of the adults who are on the planning team should also be going to camp. The leaders can be at camp to implement what they helped create before camp. Besides the specific roles, the camp may also need camp counselors. The author is aware many groups who use outside adults (those who are not involved in the student ministry) as counselors on their camps. In years past he has done this as well. There is some benefit(s) to this means. But he truly encourages the student ministry to utilize its own current adult leaders as camp counselors. Since one of the key purposes of camps is building significant relationships, who better to engage in the student's life than his/her small group leader?

In the student ministry text book *Reaching A Generation For Christ*, Dr. Chap Clark, Associate Professor of youth, family and culture and director of youth ministry programs at Fuller Theological Seminary states,

The adult leaders already know the students. Getting acquainted time is, therefore, unnecessary. The campers already know and trust their leaders, so they do not have to waste valuable hours or even days "winning the right to be heard."¹⁴

This not only benefits the student ministry during the week of camp can also be a key ingredient in the follow up strategy. Continuing from the same article, Clark states,

¹⁴ Chap Clark, "How Should We Use Retreat Ministries?" in *Reaching A Generation For Christ*, ed. Richard Dunn and Mark Senter III (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 588.

The leader who was a part of the experience is able to go home with the students, so that after God has moved in their lives the leader can continue to remind them of what God has done and is doing in them. This is the most solid antidote for the typical “mountaintop high and ultimate valley low” syndrome so common in Christian camping.”¹⁵

What Are the Ingredients That Go Into the Teaching Ministry of the Camp?

The student pastor and senior leadership team should develop the spiritual theme. The ideal goal of the student pastor can be to have the theme for summer camp already chosen by January 1. Obviously, he should be seeking God for this wisdom. The author would pray something like, “Father, what does Your group need at this time?” Along with prayer, the student pastor should be observing the spiritual level of the overall group. After seeking God and getting His direction, the student pastor and leadership can begin to package the theme into a catchy theme that will clearly communicate the spiritual goal to both leaders and students. From the overall theme, they should begin to develop a daily theme. Next, they should develop a spiritual goal for each day. The sessions, topics, memory verses, etc. should all be directing students to the daily theme, which should be directing students to the overall theme.

The student pastor and senior leadership team should develop the spiritual format. One must consider the needed elements to developing a successful spiritual format. Next are some areas to consider along with some helpful questions.

1. Primary Format – the sessions
 - Will there be a primary speaker?
 - Will there be morning sessions, evening sessions, or both?
 - Will the sessions be indoors or outdoors?
2. Secondary Format – the supportive aspects

¹⁵ Ibid.

- Will there be worship, dramas, or any other added elements to the sessions?
 - Will there be the use of small groups?
 - Will there be electives in addition to the main sessions?
 - Will there be a campfire time?
3. Relational Formant – the staffing
- Will there be “one-on-one’s”¹⁶ between the adult leaders and the campers?
 - Will there be official counselor appointments between the adult leaders and the campers?

How Can the Camp “Fire” stay after the Campfire Dies Down?

While the phrase “camp commitment” does seem to be an oxymoron, the author does believe many of the students do make honest decisions about their relationship with Jesus Christ while at camp yet something does seem to get lost between the campfire and the school campus. What if the student ministry spends just as much effort on the follow through of camp as it did on its preparation? Below is a plan for getting the students to stick with their decisions.

Eight Ways To Build a Strong Follow Through Strategy

1. Emphasize to the students to walk by faith and not their feelings.
2. Encourage the students to communicate what God has done in them to someone before leaving the camp.
3. Toward the end of camp have each student write him/herself a letter. The student ministry should mail this to the student right after school starts.¹⁷

¹⁶ The Student Impact Team, *Creative Programs for Life-Changing Camps and Retreat* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 12. The idea of a “one-on-one” can be used student to student and/or adult to student. This idea was used by the author during various camps and received tremendous student approval.

¹⁷ Duffy Robbins, *The Ministry of Nurture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 78. The author incorporated this idea many times. The students made comment how the timing of the letter was right when they needed this encouragement.

4. Connect the student to someone at home who can work with them. This is especially needed if the student is a guest to the ministry or the counselor is not one of the current adult leaders in the student ministry.
5. Have each counselor do some form of connection with each one of the students who is in their camp group (small group).
6. Have each counselor do a camp group (small group) reunion within the first week (or two) after camp.
7. As a ministry, have a camp celebration the next week after camp. This can be done during one of the weekly meetings.
8. Ultimately, the student ministry should be a spiritually feeding and nurturing ministry all year round. The author firmly believes healthy groups are not developed during a camp; healthy groups are developed during the weekly meetings.

The Construction of the Mission Trip

Introduction

This construction element will bring the reader to the final element. As was true for the summer camp element, the mission trip will not focus on all of the administrative aspects previously provided. These aspects will be assumed within this section.

A definition the author wants to communicate is that of the term “mission trip.” He realizes and is concerned that with the current explosion of short term (short also meaning one week) mission trips there appear to be a lowering of the concept of career missionaries. He believes all believers are on a mission (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:21), but God has called some to be vocational missionaries where they are engaged in cross-cultural church planting ministry (2 Timothy 4:5). Thus, the term “mission trip” will be used to describe the brief exposure trip to mission work, realizing the true mission is to be carried

out by the host local church. The author would be concerned about calling the high school students on these trips “missionaries”.

The purpose of this section will be to assist the reader with the specific issues that should be addressed in order for a student pastor to develop his own mission trip. He will be emphasizing the rationale for a mission trip, the biblical strategy of such trips, the four aspects of preparation, the needed logistics, and the need to transition the experience from the mission site back to the home site.

Why Would a Student Ministry Provide a Mission Trip?

The author has led many student mission trips and is also familiar with such student mission trips through various ministry colleagues. The following reasons (or benefits) for such trips are taken from his mission trip description handout he would provide to his church, the parents, and the students. The benefits of such trips are:

- The developing of spiritual disciplines through the time of team training.
- The training of possible skills needed for ministry.
- The recognizing of spiritual gifts and talents that God has given the students.
- The understanding of teamwork in the midst of stretching circumstances.
- The personal satisfaction that comes from an accomplished task.
- The exposure to Christian ministry, especially vocational mission work.
- The opportunity to be a blessing to the lives of others.
- The seeing of God's view for the entire world.
- The joy of beginning to understand Matthew 28:19-20.

What is a Basic Strategy for Student Ministry Mission Trips?

Jesus told believers to go into the entire world to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). This was the mission. In Acts 1:8 Christ gave His simple strategy. The believers were to start in Jerusalem, move to Judea and Samaria, and finally go into the ends of the earth.

While this is modeled throughout the book of Acts, the author believes the strategy is still commanded today. But the author will suggest another application of this strategy. While Christ spoke of the three phases in geographical terms, the author's suggestion is the three phases of Christ's strategy can also be applied in cultural terms. A term he uses in his own classroom is "geocultural." *Geo* refers to where one lives and *cultural* refers to how one lives. How this would translate into a student mission trip would be as follows:

- A local trip (Jerusalem – same country; same culture)
- A national trip (Judea/Samaria – same country; different culture)
- An international trip (Ends of the earth – different country; different culture).

As a student pastor, the author desired to implement a strategy to fulfill all three trips. His eventual goal was to see the mission aspect of the student ministry begin to offer trips fulfilling all three of these phases each year. The strategy was to offer a progressive plan for students to move from one trip to the next. He also has known of other student ministries who have successfully followed similar strategies.

What Are Some Ways to Successfully Prepare the Mission Team?

1. Spiritual Preparation

The student pastor must be committed to spiritual preparation. One of the responsibilities of a student pastor is to be an equipper. This is a much needed area but is one that is possibly overlooked. During a meeting between the author and a local church

leader about this subject, the author stated the student ministry should be providing biblical training before students were given responsibility. The response was a deemphasizing of training and the assertion that “people will grow if you simply let them go and serve.”¹⁸ While this is true to a degree, the Word is very clear pastors are to equip God’s people for ministry. The author does understand that part of equipping is giving students the ministry opportunities, but one must provide at least some training before the opportunity.

Student ministry veteran Paul Borthwick has written much material on youth mission trips. In regards to training, Borthwick writes, “Training is the most important variable in the preparation process. In general, we have seen that increased training yields increased growth as a result of the mission outreach.”¹⁹ While each student pastor will have his own style and each trip may dictate various training experiences, training should take place.

The duration and depth of the training will depend much on the actual mission and the leader. The author valued three months of training. The three reasons for the length were: 1) to develop the necessary spiritual preparation in the lives of each student, 2) to develop the students from individuals into a team, and 3) to have the students engaged in ministry as a lifestyle when they returned.

The student pastor must have a strategy for spiritual preparation. Below are some suggested steps which should take place in a time table format as one develops the training process.

- Four months out (further out if the trip is international) – There should be a Mission Trip Information Meeting for all interested students and parents of

¹⁸ This interview will be kept anonymous but it was in August, 2004 in Lynchburg, Virginia.

¹⁹ Paul Borthwick, “How Can Mission Outreaches Be Effective in Youth Ministry?” in *Reaching A Generation For Christ*, ed. Richard Dunn and Mark Senter III, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 625.

the students. Applications and a trip fact sheet should be available at this time.

- Four months out - The student pastor selects his key student leaders. This would include the Student Shepherd (spiritual leader) and the Student Director (logistics leader).²⁰
- Fifteen weeks out – Interviews should be held with potential students. This is for the student pastor to go over the mission team application with the student. This should be done within one week.
- Three months out – Training sessions should be held. The sessions should include the spiritual training, the logistical aspects to the trip, and the assignment accountability as done in their peer-led accountability groups.

The student pastor must have assignments for spiritual preparation. Provide each team member with a student notebook and a student assignment sheet. This assignment sheet should communicate a listing of everything required including: 1) an application 2) attendance records of team meetings, and 3) assignments (Scripture reading, assigned books, and Scripture memory). The author suggests the assigned books be different each year; however, the author would use the same three categories each training season. He would choose one book on spiritual passion, one on ministry training, and one on the life of a great Christian missionary.

2. Relational Preparation

The student pastor must have a strategy for relational preparation. There should be opportunities for the group to do things together. The students need to learn to

²⁰ Burns and Becchetti, *The Complete Student Missions Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 67-68.

enjoy one another and to have fun together because they need to learn to trust one another. Some suggestions the author has are:

- Have an overnight prayer retreat four weeks prior to the trip.
- Provide some smaller service projects for the team to achieve before going on the actual trip.²¹
- Take the team on a brief wilderness type adventure where the team learns to trust each other physically, socially, relationally, etc.

The mission team must be committed to unity. The author strongly recommends the team develop its own “Team Covenant.”²² This can be developed during one of the training sessions. The author implemented this in two venues. One was a listing of team core values which he chose, and the students chose the Scripture verse that best reflected each core value. The other was a student designed paragraph describing how they would treat others. This was transferred to a large poster, and the students would sign their names to this covenant. This poster was brought on the trip.

3. Cultural Preparation

The mission team should be culturally aware. The student pastor or student leaders should find out as much as they can about the demographics, religions, politics, history, and culture of the place where the team will serve. The Apostle Paul did this in Acts 17 when he entered Athens. He discovered the culture so he could use the culture in order to effectively reach the culture.

²¹ Burns and Becchetti, *Complete Student Missions Handbook*, 44-48.

²² Ibid., 52.

The mission team should be culturally sensitive. This area should not be left to chance. The leaders should find out from the host site what is proper and what is not within their culture. The team members need to be familiar with their manners, habits, and customs. The question should be asked of the host, “If we are going to connect with these people, we need to....”

The mission team should be culturally humble. The temptation for Americans is to make other people like them. This is what European colonization was all about for centuries. Acts 15 teaches that Gentile people did not need to become Jewish. Godliness did not mean the converts needed to be just like those who brought them the good news. The student pastor must train the students to be humble servants, not aristocratic rescuers. Even Jesus asked the Samaritan woman at the well for a drink of water (John 4). Philippians 2:1-5 lays out the correct attitudes of service as the Lord Jesus displayed.

4. Physical preparation

The mission team should be responsible for the physical needs of the team.

This topic of safety has already been addressed in chapter two, and a biblical defense was provided in chapter three where the research indicated that only 25% of the student ministries surveyed have a written and verbalized plan. The leadership must recognize they are responsible and must take all steps necessary to be physically prepared.

Before the trip takes place, the student pastor and leadership should:

- Secure a medical record of each attendee.
- Secure an adult to attend who is a certified medical professional.
- Secure a thorough first aid kit. The medical profession would oversee this.
- Secure the commitment of the team to genuinely think safety!

During the trip, the student pastor and leadership should focus on four areas:

- Safety – This includes being aware of one’s surroundings and keeping the group from getting lost. While this may sound childish, there should be some type of buddy system.
- Sleep – The team should be getting the needed sleep to be at their best for ministry. The students need to remember this trips is not about them; it is about effective ministry.
- Staying Healthy – A list can be found on the Internet of various things of which to be aware. This would include certain diets, insects, etc.
- Sustenance - The students must be eating healthy and getting plenty of fluids.

What Are Some of the Needed Logistics?

1. Communication

There needs to be strong communication on the team and with the team. The leaders must be providing much communication during the preparation stages. The student leadership (student shepherd, student director) and the accountability groups can be used to provide basic team information. The weekly training sessions can be used to communicate the trip’s vision and other needed details. Electronic means such as email and Facebook can be utilized for weekly updates.

During the trip the communication must continue strong. There should be a morning meeting to go over: 1) details for the day and 2) spiritual input (scripture, worship, prayer). The accountability groups should still be active for daily sharing and accountability. The evening time can be used to reflect as a team on the day and rejoice in what God has done.

There needs to be strong communication with the parents of the students.

This can begin with the first information meeting. During the training, the student pastor should send letters out to the parents to let them know where the team is at in the process. When on the trip, the students should write home to share with their parents what they are doing and how God is using them. (Obviously there will be some students who do not have Christian homes. The leadership should assist them with what and how to communicate to their parents).

There needs to be strong communication with the church body. The student pastor should think how he could get the church excited about the mission trip. He could even make the church a part of the trip before it happens. One suggestion is to have the church commission the team off at the conclusion of a Sunday morning service.²³

During the trip one could call the church office throughout the week to bring reports. Today there are Internet capabilities from almost anywhere in the world so this is also a possible means of communicating. There are some mission organizations that actually use their web sites to provide daily pictures and updates.

One tremendous means of communication is having the church communicate with God through prayer. The student pastor could partner an adult at the church who is praying for a specific student on the trip. He should also provide a general prayer list for all of the church to have.

There needs to be strong communication with the host site. This should take place from the beginning. As the leader is led by God to partner with an existing ministry, he will want to discover the heart of the host pastor for this church and area. If

²³ Ibid., 117-18.

possible, he should visit the site and spend significant time with the pastor and other leaders. This is wise both logistically and relationally.

During the trip, the lead pastor should talk with your team sharing his heart for the ministry and the burden God has placed within him. He should also be invited to join the team for meals. Have the pastor pray with the team. The author has many fond memories of using these suggestions. By the end of the week, the students felt like they were all the “pastor’s kids.”

The team should get to know the people of this church joining in their worship services, stay in their homes, listening to their stories, and incorporating the host church member into the ministry of the team.

Finally, the team should see themselves as an extension of the host church into the lives of their community. The author would remind his team, “During this week do not think of yourselves as servants of (their own church at home) but see yourselves as servants of (the host church).”

2. Transportation

The two basic questions to be addressed regarding transportation are:

- How will the team travel to their destination and then back home?
- Once the team is at the destination, how will they travel around?

Another area which must be considered with travel has to do with passports, visas, and any needed identification papers. These issues would arise with international travel. One suggestion would be either utilize a travel agent or to partner with a mission agency. In either case, the student pastor should procure the assistance of a professional.

3. Lodging and Meals

While some of these questions have been raised within the component of the Retreat and Summer Camp, there are some questions that should be addressed which are specific to mission trips:

- Where will the team be staying?
- Will the lodging be in a large group setting? If so, will the guys and girls be completely separate?
- Will the lodging be in smaller groups such as host homes?
- Will there be showers available? If not, is there a place to clean up?
- Will there be a meeting area that the team can use as a meeting place?
- Will the team provide its own meals? If so, who will be preparing the meals? If not, who will be providing and preparing the meals?
- Will the team have any “kitchen duty”?

4. **Daily Schedule**

In addition to the previous principles on scheduling, here are some basic things to consider when preparing the mission trip schedule:

- Provide time for personal devotions or quiet time.
- Provide margin in between the scheduled elements of the day.
- Provide some down time each day.
- Provide the team time for feedback, prayer, and worship.
- Provide balance in the schedule. While one seeks to make the most of the opportunity to minister, keep a steady pace.
- Provide a special event for the team to do or to visit before coming home.

What Can Be Done to Transport this Experience Back Home?

The heartbeat of any shepherd is the continual growth of his students, which is not based on events but on the daily filling of the Holy Spirit. While this entire thesis has been about developing administrative strength in student ministry, this is not the goal. The goal is to use the structure to build the students. What God did in the lives of His students should not be left at the mission site. This experience should have:

- Taught spiritual habits that will continue.
- Taught the power of teamwork.
- Opened the eyes of the students so they see the world as Jesus does (2 Corinthians 5:16)
- Taught a lifestyle of servant hood.
- Given them a hunger and boldness for ministry.

Six Ways To Help the Mission Team Assimilate Back Home

1. The student pastor can follow some of the same ideas that were offered in the camping material.
2. He could host a debriefing meeting before leaving the site. He should make them aware there will usually be an emotional “let down” and the students should be ready for it.
3. Prior to the trip, he can ask the church leadership if the team can provide a church report within the first one to two weeks of its return.
4. He should remind the team to reach out to the rest of the student ministry back home. While the team should display enthusiasm about the trip, they need to make sure they communicate humility to the rest of the group.
5. The student ministry could provide a smaller ministry project within two months of the return from the trip. The students could do much of the detail work but they incorporate the students who did not go on the trip.
6. The student pastor should keep reminding the students the real ministry is right here at home in their church, on their campus, and at their home.

APPENDIX A

REQUEST LETTERS FOR SURVEY

The next three pages are the actual electronic letters sent to the three groups who were surveyed. They include an electronic letter sent to current Liberty University residential students who were concentrating in youth ministry, Liberty University Distance Learning students who were enrolled in the Youth 201 DLP courses, and various friends of the author and alumni of the Liberty University youth ministry department.

Dear LU Student,

As many of you are aware, I am working to finish up my thesis this spring and graduate with my doctorate this May. In order to provide current research, I am surveying three categories of youth workers: 1) current CYM student from LU; 2) current volunteer youth workers; and 3) professional youth workers (i.e. youth pastors). I have prepared a ten minute, thirty question survey which will be available very soon online. This current email is to give you a “heads up” that the survey is soon coming. In a few days another email will be sent to you with a link to the survey. Simply open the link and the survey will appear. You only need to fill it out and you are done! (There’s no writing...just “voting”!!!)

My doctoral thesis is “A STRATEGY TO EQUIP YOUTH LEADERS INTO DEVELOPING STRATEGIC, BALANCED, AND STRONG LOCAL CHURCH STUDENT MINISTRIES.” It is based on much of our YOUT 460 course material. My desire in this survey is to get a picture of the level of organization within as many local church student ministries as possible. From this thesis, my long term goal is to provide a resource to the Church in which the key student ministry leader can thoroughly equip his leaders in the areas of organization.

By being students in our youth ministry program, you are nearing the end of an incredible education, one in which many professional youth leaders never received. As you take the survey, I request that the ministry you use would be **your home student ministry when you were a student in the program**. If you did not attend a student ministry in high school, then please think of one you are most familiar with.

I deeply appreciate and am honored if you would take ten minutes to fill out my survey. As you participate in the survey, you are assisting me in finishing up my DMin degree at Liberty. You are helping make “Doc Brown” a reality. Praise God!

God bless each of you,

Professor Brown
Colossians 1:28-29

P.S. Feel free to forward the coming email to any youth workers/pastors you know. With the coming email, they can also access the survey.

The only way to access it is through the hyperlink below:

<http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?pid=12951&sid=39>

Dear LU DLP Student,

My name is Richard Brown and I am the Course Creator and Primary Course Manager for YOUT 201 DLP. I am also a fulltime residential faculty at Liberty University teaching in youth ministry. Currently, I am working to finish up my thesis this spring and graduate with my doctorate this May. In order to provide current research, I am anonymously surveying three categories of youth workers: 1) current residential students from LU; 2) current volunteer youth workers; and 3) professional youth workers (i.e. youth pastors). I have prepared a ten minute, thirty question survey which is available online through the hyperlink at the end of this email. You only need to fill it out and you are done! (There's no writing...just "voting"!!!)

My doctoral thesis is "A STRATEGY TO EQUIP YOUTH LEADERS INTO DEVELOPING STRATEGIC, BALANCED, AND STRONG LOCAL CHURCH STUDENT MINISTRIES." It is based on much of our YOUT 460 residential course material. My desire in this survey is to get a picture of the level of organization within as many local church student ministries as possible. From this thesis, my long term goal is to provide a resource to the Church in which the key student ministry leader can thoroughly equip his leaders in the areas of organization.

I value your input as you are in the weekly trenches of student ministry. Your participation would be tremendously appreciated. You will possibly either be in the category of a student ministry volunteer or a student ministry professional. As you take the survey, I request that the ministry you use would be **your current student ministry in which you serve**. If you are not currently involved in a student ministry but you have been in the past, you may also take the survey based on your most recent experience.

I deeply appreciate and am honored if you would take ten minutes to fill out my survey. As you participate in the survey, you are assisting me in finishing up my DMin degree at Liberty.

God bless each of you,

Professor Brown
Colossians 1:28-29

P.S. Feel free to forward this email to any youth workers/pastors you may know. By accessing the hyperlink, they can also access the survey.

The only way to access it is through the hyperlink below:
<http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?pid=12951&sid=39>

Dear Youth Pastor/Worker,

My name is Richard Brown and I am a fulltime residential faculty at Liberty University teaching in youth ministry. In addition to this, I also teach youth ministry in LU's Distance Learning Program. Currently, I am working to finish up my thesis this spring and graduate with my doctorate this May. In order to provide current research, I am anonymously surveying three categories of youth workers: 1) current residential students from LU; 2) current volunteer youth workers; and 3) professional youth workers (i.e. youth pastors). I have prepared a ten minute, thirty question survey which is available online. You only need to fill it out and you are done! (There's no writing...just "voting"!!!)

My doctoral thesis is "A STRATEGY TO EQUIP YOUTH LEADERS INTO DEVELOPING STRATEGIC, BALANCED, AND STRONG LOCAL CHURCH STUDENT MINISTRIES." It is based on much of our residential YOUT 460 course material, which I was honored to create a few years ago. (This course focuses on the programming and administrative side of student ministry.) My desire in this survey is to get a picture of the organizational level within as many local church student ministries as possible. From this thesis, my long term goal is to provide a resource to the Church in which the key student ministry leader can thoroughly equip his leaders in the areas of organization.

I value your input as you are in the weekly trenches of student ministry. Your participation would be tremendously appreciated. You will possibly either be in the category of a student ministry volunteer or a student ministry professional. As you take the survey, I request that the ministry you use would be **your current student ministry in which you serve**. If you are not currently involved in a student ministry but you have been in the past, you may also take the survey based on your most recent experience.

I deeply appreciate and am honored if you would take ten minutes to fill out my survey. As you participate in the survey, you are assisting me in finishing up my DMin degree at Liberty. Praise God!

God bless each of you,

Professor Brown
Colossians 1:28-29

P.S. If you are the key youth leader, feel free to forward the coming email to any of your leadership team. You may also forward this to other youth workers/pastors you know. With the coming email, they can also access the survey.

The only way to access it is through the hyperlink below:

<http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?pid=12951&sid=39>

APPENDIX B

SAMPLES FORMS FOR EVENTS

The following are the three event forms referred to in chapter four. These forms would include the blank copies of the event planner form, the budget form, and the action item time line form. There were many blank lines reduced in the blank forms for the sake of space. The author designed these during his time in student ministry and utilizes these in his current Youth 460 course. When using these electronically, one can build the form to the amount of information as needed.

In addition, there is a filled out example copy of the action item time line.

BLANK FORM of EVENT PLANNER WORKSHEET

I. INFORMATION:

ACTIVITY:		DATE:	
TYPE:		TIME:	
PURPOSE:		EST. ATTENDANCE:	
TICKET FEE:		TARGET AUDIENCE:	
GENDER:		GRADES:	
DYNAMIC:		INTENSITY:	
LOCATION:			

II. DESCRIPTION:

(Provide a narrative description of what will take place by filling out the following statements)

We are doing this event because:

This event will look like:

Our spiritual goal is:

This event will be a success if:

III. PROMOTION PLAN:

<u>STRATEGY IDEAS:</u>	

<u>SCHEDULE OF PROMOTION:</u>	
WEEK SIX - FOUR:	
WEEK THREE:	
WEEK TWO:	
WEEK ONE:	

IV. DETAILS

EVENT SCHEDULE	

GAME DESCRIPTION:	
Games	Needs

GAME EQUIPMENT/ITEMS DESCRIPTION:		
<u>ITEMS NEEDED:</u>	<u>COST:</u>	<u>SOURCE:</u>

DECORATIONS DESCRIPTION:		
<u>ITEMS NEEDED:</u>	<u>COST:</u>	<u>SOURCE:</u>

MISC. EQUIPMENT/ITEMS DESCRIPTION:		
<u>ITEMS NEEDED:</u>	<u>COST:</u>	<u>SOURCE:</u>

REFRESHMENTS DESCRIPTION:		
<u>FOOD/BEVERAGE:</u>	<u>COST:</u>	<u>SOURCE:</u>

PROGRAM (SPIRITUAL NEEDS) DESCRIPTION:		
<u>ITEMS NEEDED:</u>	<u>COST:</u>	<u>SOURCE:</u>

ROLL-UP BUDGET	
ADVERTISEMENT:	
GAME SUPPLIES:	
DECORATIONS:	
MISC. EQUIPMENT	
FOOD & BEVERAGE:	
PROGRAM:	
INSURANCE:	
TRANSPORTATION:	
MISCELLANEOUS:	
TOTAL INCOME:	
TOTAL EXPENSE:	
NET GAIN OR LOSS:	

<u>ADULT LEADERS:</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY:</u>

<u>TRANSPORTATION:</u>	
Drivers:	Number of Seats Available: (S/A)

<u>FINALIZED:</u>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	LOCATION SECURED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EQUIPMENT
<input type="checkbox"/>	PROGRAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADULT LEADERS
<input type="checkbox"/>	REFRESHMENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/>	TICKETS	<input type="checkbox"/>	HOMES

<u>EVALUATION:</u>	
Who?	
When?	
How?	

BLANK FORM of ACTIVITY BUDGET

Event Name: _____

Date: _____

Estimated Attendance: _____ Ticket Fee: _____

Budget Expenses	Estimated	Actual
ADVERTISEMENT:		
EVENT RECEIPTS:		
EQUIPMENT:		
FOOD & BEVERAGE:		
PROGRAM:		
INSURANCE:		
TRANSPORTATION:		
MISCELLANEOUS:		
EXPENSE TOTAL:		

CHURCH BUDGET:		

Income	Estimated	Actual
INCOME TOTAL:		

NET GAIN OR LOSS:		
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BLANK FORM of EVENT ACTION/TIMELINE LIST

Event Name: _____ Date: _____

Estimated Attendance: _____ Ticket Fee: _____

Target Date	Date Completed	Person Responsible	Action Item
			Administration
			Budget
			Dates
			Program
			Site/Facility/Location
			Registration
			Audio/Video
			Promotion
			Refreshments
			Decorations
			Hospitality
			Games
			Music/Worship
			Drama
			Speaker (Message)

			Follow-up
			Wrap-Up/Evaluation

EXAMPLE of EVENT ACTION/TIMELINE LIST

Event Name: _____ Date: _____

Estimated Attendance: _____ Ticket Fee: _____

Target Date	Date Completed	Person Responsible	Action Item
			Administration
			Organize administrative team
			Have initial planning meeting
			Have basic direction (information section of planner form) finalized
			Have second meeting
			Begin to share big picture with all adult leadership/key students
			Fill out planner form
			Fill out responsibility flow chart
			Budget
			Fill out budget planner
			Budget confirmed
			Dates
			Date chosen
			Checked with church office/calendar
			Date confirmed
			Program
			Develop concept and theme options
			Develop flow of segments
			Begin communicating with program leaders
			Finalize segments
			Site/Facility/Location
			Review options for facilities
			Choose priority of options
			Initial contact of facility
			Discuss fees
			Finalize fees & date
			Sent in application to

			Application approved/facility confirmed
			Visit facility – walk through
			Communicate needs to facility
			Registration
			Choose registration needs
			Choose registration process
			Secure people to assist
			Gather registration needs
			Audio/Video
			Decide on what the needs and direction are
			Make up comprehensive needs list.
			Organize who will cover what
			Secure any/all needed equipment
			Promotion
			Develop promotion strategy
			Fliers
			Refreshments
			Types of refreshments needs
			Plan to get refreshments
			Refreshments secured
			Decorations
			Choose decorations
			Secure all decorations
			Gather all decorations
			Decorate
			Hospitality
			Choose team
			Go over strategy
			Games
			Choose games
			Choose equipment needs
			Secure equipment needs
			Gather equipment
			Music/Worship
			Decide on what the needs and direction are
			Make up comprehensive needs list
			Organize who will cover what
			Confirm needs with Sound techs
			Initial rehearsal
			Final rehearsal
			Drama
			Decide on what the needs and direction are
			Make up comprehensive needs list
			Organize who will cover what

			Confirm needs with Sound techs
			Initial rehearsal
			Final rehearsal
			Speaker (Message)
			Review options for speakers
			Secure speaker
			Secure transportation (as needed)
			Communicate with speaker (provide ministry & event information)
			Secure lodging
			Secure personal host
			Secure remuneration from church office
			Follow-up
			Choose strategy
			Confirm strategy
			Enter new visitor cards in data base
			Write all new attendees
			Connect new attendees to follow-up people
			Wrap-Up/Evaluation
			Complete financial report
			Complete event report
			Send thank you notes to proper individuals/businesses
			Have evaluations done by key leaders/students
			Send reports to proper individuals/businesses

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VITA

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