Liberty University School of Divinity

Integrating Public, Private, and Homeschool Students
Into a Cohesive Youth Ministry

A Thesis Project Submitted to
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By

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Abstract

Parents make agonizing educational decisions for their children, and there are more options than ever before. Some opt to teach their children in the home; others pay handsomely to put their children in the best private schools money can buy. The remaining groups of parents select public, charter, or magnet schools based on those schools' particular merits or because those schools represent their primary educational option. These subtle lifestyle decisions are building blocks upon which students develop their personality, intellectual ambition, extracurricular interests, and social networks. Neighborhoods, schools, and community activities are often as influential in the formation of a student's identity as their socioeconomic background, cultural heritage, or family milieu. With the erosion of neighborhood relationships and detachment from traditional norms, educational institutions provide a comprehensive solution for busy families to organize the educational, social, and recreational aspects of their lifestyles. Schools, therefore, have become the new neighborhood in American life.

Pastors tend to be ill-prepared for the unique dynamics families bring to the church from their various walks of life. This paper will examine methods for assimilating public, private, and homeschool students into a cohesive student ministry where they can retain their identity, be enriched by other students' experiences, and, most importantly, be united by their faith in serving Christ in their student ministry and in the greater church body.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During any given week youth ministers find themselves in the unenviable position of balancing church expectations in the areas of growth, visitation, evangelism, discipleship, and counseling. Many of these criteria work against each other, and finding proper ministry balance can often prove elusive. Every family comes to the church with different expectations formed from their cultural and family identity. Depending on their religious background, parents may expect fun-filled programming, tight-knit community, or evangelistic zeal. While healthy youth ministries can offer elements of each of these points of view, youth ministers need to focus on creating an indigenous faith community for teenagers that is not beholden to any particular agenda.

Complicating this matter are recent cultural shifts that divide communities and confuse cultural consensus. As twenty-first-century American culture continues to evolve, communities are changing from homogenous towns with shared schools and community resources to diverse schooling options and travel-sports. There is a greater tendency for people to isolate and detach from society, preferring online communications to face-to-face relationships.[1] Americans base their social and family lives from their homes, replacing the local cinema with a laptop computer and neighbors with social media. Individualism reigns supreme, commitment is rare, and convenience is highly valued. Current trends also show that many Americans do not know their neighbors.[2]

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[1] Jasmine Fowlkes, "Viewpoint: Why social media is destroying our social skills," accessed October 3, 2015, http://college.usatoday.com/2012/10/11/opinion-why-social-media-is-destroying-our-social-skills/.

[2] Trulia, "1 in 2 Americans Don't Know Neighbors' Names," accessed October 4, 2015, http://www.forbes.com/sites/trulia/2013/10/24/neighbor-survey/.

In the middle of this cultural shift lies the premium placed on education and activities for children. Parents make agonizing educational decisions for their children, and there are more options than ever before. Some opt to teach their children in the home; others pay handsomely to put their children in the best private schools money can buy. The remaining groups of parents select public, charter, or magnet schools based on those schools' particular merits or because those schools represent their primary educational option. These lifestyle decisions are partially the building blocks upon which students develop their personality, intellectual ambition, extracurricular interests, and social networks. Neighborhoods, schools, and community activities are often as influential in the formation of a student's identity as his or her socioeconomic background, cultural heritage, or family milieu. With the erosion of neighborhood relationships and detachment from traditional norms, educational institutions provide a comprehensive solution for busy families to organize the educational, social, and recreational aspects of their lifestyles.[3] Schools, therefore, have become the new neighborhood in American life.

Statement of Problem

Student social relations are quite tribal. Within any school, students usually gravitate toward athletics, music, academia, and other pursuits that, while often positive in their influence, dominate their schedule and isolate them within that particular subgroup. The three "tribes" examined in this paper are not tribes within a particular school but are the schools themselves. The tribes observed will be public, private, and homeschool students. Each of these tribes represents a diverse group, but they carry with them a "DNA" that can make biblical community

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[3] Dacia Chrzanowski, Susan Rans and Raymond Thompson, "Building Mutually Beneficial Relationships Between Schools and Communities: The Role of a Connector," http://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/publications/publications-by-topic/Documents/Building%20Mutually%20Beneficial%20School-Community%20Relationships.pdf.

complicated. The impetus for this paper is self-reflection on a remark the author made in a moment of frustration. After serving more than a decade ministering to hundreds of students, he observed, "This group stays home to avoid this group, this group pays thousands of dollars to be away from this other group, and the third group looks at the other two groups and thinks they are weird. How am I supposed to build a biblical community of faith with these building blocks?"

Ministers often find it difficult to reach a proper balance between these tribes because of preconceived misconceptions and assumptions that prevent them from balancing each group's unique spiritual needs. Pastors also tend to be ill-prepared for the unique dynamics families bring to the church from their various walks of life. This paper will examine methods for assimilating public, private, and homeschool students into a cohesive student ministry where they can retain their identities, be enriched by other students' experiences, and, most importantly, be united by their faith in serving Christ in their student ministry and in the greater church body.

Statement of Limitations

Homeschool families are often fiercely independent and family-focused. This means that all other activities and commitments must work within the framework of their lifestyle and philosophy. Much of the homeschool lifestyle is custom-fit to meet the needs of the specific family. Problems arise when fitting multiple families together creates scheduling and philosophical dissonance that divides them and makes community problematic. At times homeschool families can be isolated, noncommittal, and individualistic. Access to homeschool families must be granted because their schedules do not match and are often set to be the opposite of the norm. Special attention has to be given to inviting, following up, and integrating homeschool families. Homeschool families enjoy the freedom of setting their own routine, vacationing when they want, and carefully choosing their extracurricular activities. Some

families shun commitment because of life philosophy and previous negative experiences. These factors demonstrate how difficult it can be to assimilate homeschool families, but this paper is not designed to be an exhaustive profile of homeschool culture. The factors listed above make homeschool families enigmatic and difficult to profile.

Private schools range from elite preparatory boarding schools to small, modest church-based institutions. The diversity within these schools can be as broad as within public schools. Often, local community demographics and economies set the tone for school quality in the same way as for their public-school counterparts. Schools also range from faith-based institutions where churches can experience doctrinal, denominational, and ecclesiastical dissonance to strict college-preparatory institutions that see church as an unnecessary distraction for their ambitious students. Considering the range of sizes and styles of private schools, a comprehensive profile is not attainable to summate all private schools.

Public schools vary from district to district and from state to state. Some states pour money into education, while others do not. Property taxes, busing, and socioeconomic surroundings have a bearing on the quality of these schools. At times, those factors create a disparity between community public schools in terms of academic preparation, facilities, extracurricular activities, environment, and discipline. Political considerations such as local governing bodies, rural versus urban settings, and demographic diversity provide community distractions that make administrative processes complicated and consistency across institutions implausible.

Due to these considerations, the author will limit this study to the southern region of the United States of America, focusing specifically on Southern Baptist churches in Tennessee.

Finding educational consensus nationwide and across multiple denominations would prove too time-consuming and too costly and would produce results too inconsistent for quality research.

Theoretical Basis

This paper is grounded in both the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39). When it comes to seeking students, churches should seek them and share the gospel with them regardless of their backgrounds. They also should love their neighbors and welcome them into a biblical community of faith where they will be valued and equal members of corporate worship. Each family, regardless of their educational choice, should have their place in the church body at large. In an age where different affinity groups plant churches based on style, music, and other subjective criteria, having a diverse congregation united through common faith can be advantageous.

Biblical unity, as demonstrated in Ephesians 4:1-16, sets the example of how congregations settle their differences and welcome people into the fold. "Walk in a manner worthy" (v. 1) exhorts believers to the highest level of personal conduct and sacrifice, rather than modern motivations such as convenience and style. Verses 3-4 call Christians to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (v. 5) is a phrase that may prove to be controversial considering the polarizing nature of twenty-first-century politics and culture.[4] Nevertheless, Christians are reminded of the fact that every believer—regardless of background, finances, or status—is in need of the saving grace of Christ.

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[4] Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Differences of opinion will always exist, but matters of faith should overcome extra-biblical preferences.

Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:14-21 will be utilized in setting the expectation of how all people fit together within local faith communities with their unique backgrounds and gifts. Cultural, social, and other external stimuli seek to emphasize how certain factions within the congregation are different and that one faction may be more valuable than the other. This paper will argue against this premise and provide evidence that all students have equal value. Further, it is necessary to find ways for people with different backgrounds and giftedness to help one another and to coexist in order for the local church to realize its full potential. This paper will demonstrate how the presence of each of these communities within the church helps make the local congregation stronger and capable of more varied ministry opportunities.

Cultural presuppositions, such as whether different factions can coexist or whether one type of school child tends to be more spiritual than others, will also be challenged. Stereotypes that imply, for example, that homeschool families tend to be Christian conservatives or that public school students tend to be worldly and unruly will be tested and examined for their validity. Churches are obligated to reach out to their entire community whether the community members reside in public, private, or homeschool settings. Focusing exclusively on one type of outreach limits a church's full potential to reach their community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This paper, therefore, will utilize popular youth ministry methodologies associated with each cultural group and evaluate the merits of each strategy. Among those methods are the family-based model, made popular by the D6 Conference; the Ecclesial Model, by Fernando Arzola; and the Evangelist Model, made popular by Greg Stier and Dare 2 Share Ministries. Numerous churches already employ these methods, which reflect the unique personality of each

congregation. Tim Keller's book *Center Church* will tie these methods together. Emphasis on gospel centrality will move the focus from temporal preferences to an eternal perspective for church ministry. Further, elements of each approach can be utilized to help fulfill the goals of a diverse congregation with varied schooling options.

The intent of this paper is to orient church leaders to biblical truths about the gospel that will inform their church philosophy. Without this biblical influence, deeply ingrained cultural backgrounds, political agendas, or family traditions will undermine church effectiveness. In some cases, convictions supported by Scripture need to be addressed and resolved in a godly manner. In most cases, gospel-centered believers are able to discern and sacrifice personal preferences in favor of biblical obedience. Once this is accomplished, congregations can be inspired to integrate local families into church, teach them the gospel, welcome new believers into worship, and enjoy seeing the full richness of God's people working together for the common good.

Statement of Methodology

The goal of this work is to provide a resource to pastors and church leaders who are unfamiliar with public, private, and homeschool cultures.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter will include the proposal of the scope and purpose of the project. It will include sections that will demonstrate the problems, limitations, and theoretical and biblical bases for the project, in addition to a statement of methodology and literature review.

Chapter 2 – Challenges of Integrating Public School Families and Relevant Methodologies for Reaching Them

Public schools represent a mission field that is diverse, intimidating, and, at times, hostile to outsiders. Public schools also have governmental, legal, and community red tape that is foreign to other types of schools. Members of the church must take great care in how they reach public schools because the public school system is also an institution that represents the community at large. The author will explore methodologies and models to effectively reach community schools with the gospel. Strategies are researched to help these students mesh with private school and homeschool teens who often do not share their culture or values.

Chapter 3 – Challenges of Integrating Private School Families and Relevant Methodologies for Reaching Them

In this chapter, private schools will be deeply investigated. From small, one-room facilities to sprawling, college-prep campuses, the author will explore the educational, socioeconomic, family, and religious motivations that lead parents to make economic sacrifices in order to have their children educated in these institutions. The author will also delve into how the opportunities and pressures can shape the character of the students. The author's desire is to anticipate areas where these students may struggle to relate with the world outside of their schools. Strategies will be suggested to allow private school students to bring the best qualities of their educational environment and be a valued member of a faith community without compromising who they are or intimidating other teens in the ministry.

Chapter 4 – Challenges of Integrating Homeschool Families and Relevant Methodologies for Reaching Them

This chapter will deeply investigate homeschooling, including motivations, methods, trends, demographics, and thoughtful rationale as to why homeschool students and families can be both faithful and helpful while also being one of the most difficult groups to understand and reach. Homeschool families will be specifically sought for guidance regarding their spiritual

needs and the methods utilized to attract and retain them in our local churches. Surveys, interviews, and other research material will present a "feel" for this group and a suggested approach for how to draw them into the congregation without preferential treatment or stipulations.

Chapter 5 – Blending Homeschool Families with Public and Private School Families

The focus of this chapter will be to examine the motivations each segment seeks in attending a local church. Three common youth ministry paradigms will be profiled and evaluated for effectiveness in addressing divisions. Also, church preferences and dissonances will be explored, common ground will be researched, theological entanglements will be profiled, and strategies will be suggested to blend each autonomous and unique group into a congregation united by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

The final chapter shall summate the findings and champion a congregation that welcomes but does not cater to any of these three school communities. The hope of this study is to enhance biblical community in a diverse culture where the church at large can grow spiritually, serve faithfully, and be a blessing in their local church congregation.

Review of Literature

Books

The following books state some problems facing twenty-first-century students. These books cover issues ranging from culture and worldview to biblical illiteracy and biblical community. These resources will offer insights for the faith communities that attempt to reach emerging generations.

Youth Ministry in the 21st Century: Five Views[5] will play a prominent role in this project. The five methodologies explored in this book will show how lifestyles, theologies, and expectations lead to divisive church attitudes. The book offers several means of resolution to these issues.

Accelerate: Parenting Teenagers Toward Adulthood[6] by Richard Ross gives practical mentoring advice to parents to enable them to work alongside their teenagers for effective spiritual formation. America is facing a generation of emotionally stunted young adults who are clinging to childish behavior and avoiding responsibilities that develop character and necessary life skills. The goal is to steer a generation mired in immaturity and delayed adolescence, into mature Christian adulthood.

Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do to Stop It[7] by Ken Ham and Britt Beemer asserts that while studies in the past twenty years show many young adults walking away from church upon adulthood, Ham and Beemer charge that this phenomenon is now happening at a much younger age, and at an alarming rate. This book tries to lead the church away from irrelevance into a new paradigm that will keep students from leaving the church. Emphasis on biblical teaching and laying a solid foundation will help students grow into mature adults.

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[5] Chap Clark et al., *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century: Five Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2015).

[6] Richard Ross, *Accelerate: Parenting Teenagers Toward Adulthood: How Not to Fnd Your 25-Year-Old Still Living in Your Basement* (Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2013).

[7] Ken Ham, C. Britt. Beemer, and Todd A. Hillard, *Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do to Stop It* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009).

Hurt 2.0: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers[8] by Professor Chap Clark is an exhaustive work detailing the millennial generation's attitudes, tendencies, and needs in hopes of preventing and healing hurtful choices. This paper will utilize methods from this popular resource (used by countless professors and pastors) to help integrate a diverse and elusive generation.

reThink: Decide for Yourself; Is Student Ministry Working?[9] by Steve Wright and Chris Graves asks difficult questions such as "Is youth ministry working?" and "What are some shortcomings of modern youth ministry?" These questions will be analyzed to determine whether the dominant youth ministry paradigm of the twentieth century will work in the twenty-first century. Methods will be scrutinized, and new models will be created in order to do twenty-first-century youth ministry in a more effective manner.

Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last and What Your Church Can Do about It[10] by Mark DeVries provides a voice of reason in the wake of the church-growth movement. In an age where churches have spent millions of dollars pursuing cultural relevance and popularity through tech upgrades, state-of-the-art facilities, and dynamic programs, some churches have found themselves financially and spiritually bankrupt. DeVries reminds the reader to embrace each church's unique mission instead of comparing themselves to others. This book stresses the need to emphasize what makes churches effective without getting bogged down following fads.

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[8] Chap Clark, *Hurt 2.0: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

[9] Steve Wright and Chris Graves, *ReThink: Decide for Yourself, Is Student Ministry Working?* (Wake Forest, NC: InQuest Publishing, 2008).

[10] Mark DeVries, *Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last and What Your Church Can Do About It* (Surry Hills, NSW, Australia: Read How You Want, 2010).

UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity and Why It Matters[11] by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons gives valuable insight into the preconceptions that will greet churches earnestly trying to reach their local communities. Non-Christians and community members are often put off by perceived negative Christian stereotypes. This book is a resource to help Christians shed hurtful traditions and attitudes that are not grounded in Scripture in favor of an authentic faith and ecclesiology that are more conducive to reaching people who are skeptical of churches. The book also exhorts Christians to learn other worldviews to better contextualize the gospel and communicate to the world around them.

When Church Kids Go Bad: How to Work with and Love Rude, Obnoxious, and Apathetic Students[12] by Les Christie addresses the various problematic behaviors that occur in youth ministries. He introduces insights into proper discipline and counseling to help apathetic and troublemaking students assimilate into a healthy youth program. This book is a tremendous resource to those struggling with students who are at risk or who have ADHD.

You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church and Rethinking Faith[13] by David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins addresses the cultural divide that exists between current generations and explains concerns about how those relationships will progress in the future. The book asserts that younger generations consider churches to be overprotective, shallow, anti-science, exclusive, repressive, and imbued with double standards. These qualities are currently

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[11] David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity—and Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2012).

[12] Les Christie, *When Church Kids Go Bad: How to Love and Work with Rude, Obnoxious, and Apathetic Students* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008).

[13] David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church ... and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016).

alienating younger generations and creating a rift within congregations. Differences in opinion on these matters often influence parenting philosophies. Thus, parenting styles greatly vary, and churches that are trying to be inclusive will need to navigate them carefully.

The Youth Worker's Guide to Helping Teenagers in Crisis[14] by Rich Van Pelt and Jim Hancock teaches youth leaders how to manage the moral, legal, ethical, medical, and spiritual crises that come about during the teen years. In a diverse biblical community, issues will arise where stakes are high. The church must be ready not only to render aid but also to instill a culture of love and support that can help students during their most vulnerable seasons of life.

Created to Learn: A Christian Teacher's Introduction to Educational Psychology[15] by William Yount demonstrates how educational psychology is a needed discipline for Christian teachers. Breaking down the various learning styles and methods for teaching will help the youth pastor to harness each student's learning style in order to draw them closer to faith in Christ. With the proper skills, teachers can transcend diverse learning conditions and speak truth in a way the masses can understand.

The 9: Best Practices for Youth Ministry[16] by Kurt Johnston and Tim Levert shares the nine best practices that will allow youth pastors to take care of themselves, to rely on God, to inspire spiritual maturity, to have evangelistic urgency, and to build healthy relationships with

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[14] Rich Van Pelt and Jim Hancock, *The Youth Worker's Guide to Helping Teenagers in Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

[15] William R. Yount, *Created to Learn: A Christian Teacher's Introduction to Educational Psychology* (Nashville, TN: B & H Pub. Group, 2010).

[16] Kurt Johnston and Tim Levert, The 9: Best Practices for Youth Ministry (Loveland, CO: Group/Simply Youth Ministry, 2010).

teens. Both veteran youth pastors and prolific authors, Johnston's and Levert's approach prevents burnout and allows youth pastors to lead by example to bring out the best in their ministries.

Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry: Nine Essential Foundations for Healthy Growth[17] by Doug Fields is the quintessential youth ministry resource of the last twenty years. An author, trainer, and youth pastor, Fields provides underlying principles that help youth ministers develop a unique, yet effective, ministry that will reach their local communities.

The Seven Checkpoints: Seven Principles Every Teenager Needs to Know[18] by megachurch pastor Andy Stanley and veteran youth worker Stuart Hall provides seven simple steps that can greatly improve students' spiritual lives. These checkpoints can help ground and challenge students during all phases of their spiritual journeys.

Student Ministry That Leaves a Mark: *Changing Youth to Change the World*[19] by Gary Zustiak, John Mouton, Kevin Greer, and Josh Finklea features sections on growing a family ministry and maintaining a healthy youth ministry balance. These resources will help formulate a balanced biblical community that fosters healthy family relationships without alienating different subcultures within the youth ministry of a local church.

Youth Culture 101[20] by Walt Mueller shares foundational cultural insights that are necessary for any youth minister. In an accessible manner, Mueller offers tools for understanding teen culture, making this book a popular training text in colleges and seminaries. In an age where

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[17] Doug Fields and Richard Warren, *Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry: 9 Essential Foundations for Healthy Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).

[18] Andy Stanley and Stuart Hall, *The Seven Checkpoints for Student Leaders: Seven Principles Every Teenager Needs to Know* (New York, NY: Howard Books, 2011).

[19] Gary Blair Zustiak, *Student Ministry That Leaves a Mark: Changing Youth to Change the World* (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 2003).

[20] Walt Mueller, *Youth Culture 101* (El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties, 2007).

students have complex feelings about media, sex, music, and substance abuse, this book proves to be a valuable resource.

The following are books that discuss some of the methodologies and influences popular to homeschool and house-church communities.

Family-Based Youth Ministry[21] by Mark DeVries emphasizes some of the shortcomings of past youth ministry models that separated teenagers from mature Christians and bred a culture of immaturity. These environments stunted the students' spiritual growth and created entitled and morally ambiguous adults. His remedy for this model is not only to ensure greater parental involvement in the lives of students, but for the church at large to be an extended family that helps foster and shepherd the students into adulthood.

Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry: The Practical Guide to Today's Family-Based Youth Ministry[22] by Jim Burns and Mark DeVries emphasizes the irreplaceable role parents play in vibrant youth ministries. Parental support and cooperation greatly help students gain the perspective and maturity necessary to build biblical community among teenagers.

Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity[23] by Frank Viola asserts that much of the modern evangelical church is more rooted in pagan traditions than in biblical truth. Many homeschool families favor the house-church movement. Attitudes and

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[21] Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

[22] Jim Burns and Mark DeVries, *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry: The Practical Guide to Today's Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Colorado Springs, CO: Gospel Light, 2003).

[23] Frank Viola, *Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity* (Colorado Springs, CO, CO: David C. Cook, 2008).

arguments from this book will be examined to see which of these arguments are valid and which ones the local church can overcome.

The following are books that provide objective insights and comparisons on the observed schooling options.

Perspectives on Your Child's Education: Four Views, [24] edited by Timothy Paul Jones, explores the differences between public, private, and homeschool education. Advocates for each method make the case for their preferred method. Each chapter allows for a rebuttal by the other perspectives, followed by a final word from the advocate. The result is a balanced and informed overview of these educational options delivered in a civil and respectful tone.

A study of the self-concept of older children in selected Texas churches who attend home schools as compared to older children who attend Christian schools and public schools[25] by Norma Hedin provides a quantitative look at how homeschool students compare with their public and private school peers in the area of self-concept. Dr. Hedin's study showed that there was not a significant difference between students who attended these different schools.

Articles

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[24] Mark Eckel et al., *Perspectives on Your Child's Education: Four Views* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009).

[25] Norma Sanders. *Hedin, A study of the self-concept of older children in selected Texas churches who attend home schools as compared to older children who attend Christian schools and public schools* (Fort Worth, TX: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Thesis (EdD), 1990.

"Homeschooling in Culture Wars: An Encyclopedia of Issues, Viewpoints, and Voices" offers a concise overview of the history of homeschooling and insights into the motivations, objectives, methodologies, and outcomes of this growing movement.

"Ministering to Homeschoolers: Assimilating Homeschool Families into Your Church"[26] by R. B. Ouellette offers practical insights into engaging, integrating, and keeping homeschool students and their families in the greater church body. His methods will be observed, analyzed, and evaluated for their effectiveness.

Brian Ray and Jacque Wilson's article "Unschoolers Learn What They Want, When They Want"[27] gives insight into a growing educational trend that serves as the antithesis of the traditional school model. Studying this trend will give ministry insights on how to reach out and incorporate these kinds of students in church ministries.

Websites

Www.barna.com provides statistics and information about current cultural trends that influence and affect churches and the communities they serve. Barna's extensive data regarding youth culture will be utilized to assess challenges to youth ministry and to help solve problems that arise in these environments.

Www.cru.org is the official website for CRU (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ). These pioneers in campus ministry provide insight on reaching public-school teens for Christ. These methods will be examined and compared to methods used to reach students in other schooling environments.

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[26] Accessed January 29, 2015

[27] Jacque Wilson, "Unschoolers learn what they want, when they want," CNN, August 03, 2011, , Accessed February 5, 2015, http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/08/03/unschooling.sudbury.education/index.html.

Www.hslda.org is the official site of the Home School Legal Defense Association. This organization provides legal assistance to homeschoolers nationwide.

Http://ies.ed.gov has the mission to "provide rigorous and relevant evidence on which to ground education practice and policy and share this information broadly." This site serves as the research arm of the US Department of Education.

Www.lifeway.com/studentministry provides articles and training about youth ministry from a Southern Baptist perspective.

Www.sbc.net is the official website of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Www.youthministry.com is the official website of *Group Magazine*, an authority in youth ministry and methods that influences thousands of youth ministers and youth volunteers.

Scriptures

Matthew 18:20 states, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." This passage is the essence of community that churches often complicate with traditions, attitudes, and prejudices. This section will examine the foundational passages of Scripture that encourage biblical community. The first passage is from Genesis 1:26–31:

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
> So God created man in his own image,
>   in the image of God he created him;
>   male and female he created them.
> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything

that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The heart of biblical community is *imago dei*, the fact that we are all made in God's likeness. In a postmodern era, and at such a crucial juncture in the human-development process, students need to be reminded that we all bear God's likeness, especially when schools, clubs, families, and social structures trend toward exclusivity, and at times, some are even hostile toward other groups. The theme of image bearing is continued in a narrative comparing each Christian to a part of the same human body. The next three passages focus on the uniqueness of each believer as a unit.

> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness (Rom. 12:3-8).

These verses from Romans show how spiritual gifts complement one another and by working together allow the church to accomplish an array of tasks. Christians should embrace their own unique areas of contribution rather than assimilating into a homogenous group.

First Corinthians 12 is the most common biblical passage dealing with believers' use of gifts and the journey toward biblical unity.

> Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of

God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first, apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Ephesians 4:11-16 emphasizes Christ as the head of the body. This passage exhorts

believers to grow not only in skill and aptitude but also in maturity, to allow those same

members to work alongside each other. The result is a great efficiency complemented by a

great sense of accomplishment. The church is able to serve with excellence and brotherly

love.

> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and
> teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of
> Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son
> of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried
> about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful
> schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into
> him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held
> together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working
> properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph. 4:11-16)

The second group of passages is from the book of Acts. Youths can draw inspiration from

the first-century church as they come to be changed by the gospel, putting aside differences and

working alongside one another for a higher calling.

> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the
> breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many
> wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed
> were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their
> possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had
> need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their
> homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God
> and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by
> day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

The selflessness and sacrifice demonstrated in this passage serve as a contrast to many twenty-

first-century churches, where consumerism can lead to entitlement. Here is an example of unity

and community where Christians not only meet one another's emotional and spiritual needs but

also their physical and financial needs.

> Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no
> one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had

everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their
testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.
There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands
or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the
apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Thus Joseph, who
was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a
Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the
money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:32-37)

The relationship between Paul and Barnabas offers an example of Christian brotherhood.
Barnabas not only provides greatly for his fellow believers, he also vouches for and mentors
Paul. Through Barnabas' influence, Paul goes from being Christianity's enemy to an influential
Christian missionary and prolific writer. Paul continually tests Barnabas, and they occasionally
clash and part company. Barnabas, however, continues to live up to his namesake as a son of
encouragement, showing patience in this relationship. This example inspires students to see their
counterparts as an opportunity to share the love of Christ with others. Students from other
schools might challenge and frustrate Christian youth, but they can still welcome and support
these students in the youth ministry. Barnabas likely never saw Paul's contribution to the faith,
but he nonetheless supported and influenced someone vital to the spread of Christianity.
Furthermore, Paul eventually mentors Timothy, which completes the discipleship cycle of taking
a new believer and equipping him until he can, in turn, do the same.

Youth leaders and pastors can draw upon this mentoring example to use with their
students and as a model for their emerging student leaders. The New Testament traces Paul's and
Timothy's relationship from their meeting in Lystra (see Acts 16:1-3). Paul serves in a paternal
role and calls him "my true child in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2). Through their ministry together,
Timothy grows in confidence and ability. Paul monitors his growth and guides his leadership.
Paul exhorts Timothy, "Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example
in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). The books of First and Second

Timothy encapsulate their mentoring relationship and demonstrate Timothy's progress from a young boy to a church leader through Paul's tutelage. If leaders expect their students to reach out with patience to unchurched students, adults must first model and disciple existing students to prepare them for this challenge. Similarly, new believers from different backgrounds will challenge churched youth. These encounters allow such church youths to draw inspiration from Paul's example. Youth ministries must have a discipleship strategy that will empower students to be unintimidated by students who are different. They need to see difference as an opportunity to help other students grow in their faith.

The third group of passages focuses on unity, humility, and cultivating an attitude conducive to biblical community. Personal devotion, accountability, and standards will assist believers in the way they relate to others and in how they relate to God.

Philippians 2:3-16 states,

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Ephesians 4:1-5 stresses our unity in Christ:

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

Finally, the heartbeat of the gospel is the Great Commission:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of *the Holy Spirit*, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matt. 28:18-20, emphasis added)

Community and unity are goals for each youth ministry but never at the expense of the gospel and evangelism. Once the leadership lays the foundation, a healthy, welcoming youth ministry will attract those needing to hear the gospel and provide an ideal environment for them to grow in their faith.

CHAPTER 2

PUBLIC SCHOOL MINISTRY

Introduction

American public school education began with noble intentions. In the New World,
education for all was an idealistic concept that flew in the face of wealthy, elite educational
systems abroad. The "common" or "normal" schools were established not only to produce a
competent workforce in a burgeoning country but also to instill the democratic principle to new
generations born in America.

Public School History

Public education in America began in the seventeenth century with the Boston Latin
School, founded in 1635.[28] This school is both the first public school and the oldest existing
school in the United States.[29] New England led the way, establishing schools for American
children during the Colonial period.

Several men greatly influenced the trajectory of public education. From the outset of
America's existence, education proved to be an invaluable resource in molding a great nation.
Thomas Jefferson was an early champion of public education.[30] He asserted that education was
essential to the Union and prevented dependence upon foreign dictators.[31] Jefferson wanted to

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[28] "History of Boston Latin School—oldest public school in America," accessed December 1, 2016, BLS website;
originally published May 2, 2007.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. New York: Penguin, 1999.

[31] Ibid.

use public education to identify emerging scholars and allow children to rise above family educational limitations.[32]

Horace Mann, dubbed the "Father of the Common School Movement,"[33] eventually became the first secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education.[34] His vision to use professional teachers to equip unruly children won the support of the Whig Party and spread throughout the United States.[35] His school agenda restructured failing local schools and made quality education available to disadvantaged children. He wanted education to be "universal, non-sectarian, and free."[36] He also wanted studies to focus as much on civic responsibility and character development as on academic disciplines.[37] Common schools emphasized the "three Rs" (reading, writing, and arithmetic), utilizing the McGuffey Reader,[38] and functioned predominantly under the control of local school boards. Common schools gave way to schools run by professional teachers and administrators near the turn of the twentieth century.

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[32] George H. Smith, "Thomas Jefferson on Public Education, Part 1," *Libertarianism.org*, April 03, 2012, , accessed August 23, 2017, https://www.libertarianism.org/publications/essays/thomas-jefferson-public-education-part-1.

[33] Thomas L. Good, ed., *21st Century Education: A Reference Handbook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008), 267.

[34] Merle Curti, *The Social Ideas of American Educators* (1951), New Jersey: Pageant Books, 107.

[35] Mark Groen, "The Whig Party and the Rise of Common Schools, 1837–1854," *American Educational History Journal* 35, no. 1/2 (Spring/Summer 2008): 251–60.

[36] Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States* (Houghton Mifflin, 1919), 167.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Samuel J. Smith, "McGuffey Readers," *Faculty Publications and Presentations*, article 101 (2008), Digital Commons, Liberty University; accessed October 29, 2011.

General Richard Henry Pratt is credited with spreading compensatory educational attendance.[39] Families were required to enroll children in school or face legal penalties. The first state to adopt this mandate was Massachusetts in 1852, and the last state to adopt compensatory educational attendance was Mississippi in 1918.[40] His work indoctrinating Native Americans and other ethnic minorities foreshadowed education's transformative power. These laws provided leverage to coerce cooperation and compel families to conform to societal norms.

While General Pratt changed the scope of public education, John Dewey's influence changed the emphasis of public education. He envisioned the public school system having a greater impact than even family history or cultural backgrounds.[41] For all of the immigrants coming to America, he fashioned school as a vehicle to create cultural uniformity in a less coercive manner.[42] Under this influence, Italian, Irish, and other immigration cultures blended into an American society that was more homogeneous. Dubbed the "Father of Progressive Education," Dewey focused on the whole child and made school a more hospitable environment in which to learn.[43] In his book, *The School and Society*, he criticized popular strict and repetitious methods for engaging children in the learning process.[44] His contemporaries expanded on Dewey's child-centered education by offering activities and subjects to keep

[39] Daniel E. Witte and Paul T. Mero, *Removing Classrooms from the Battlefield: Liberty, Paternalism, and the Redemptive Promise of Educational Choice*, BYU Law Review (2008): 377.

[40] Michael S. Katz, *A History of Compulsory Education Laws*, Fastback Bicentennial Series 75 (Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1976).

[41] Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

[42] John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," *School Journal* 54 (January 1897): 77–80; accessed November 4, 2011, http://dewey.pragmatism.org/creed.htm.

[43] Ibid., 6, 16.

[44] John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915).

students engaged and interested. Progressive education encouraged students who were weak in the classical education to find their talents and learn life skills such as manners and hygiene.

Following the Civil War and during the Reconstruction era, public schools were established utilizing the general tax base, though they remained segregated. The Freedmen's Bureau opened one thousand schools across the American South for black children.[45] There was a disparity between the resources of Caucasian and non-Caucasian students. Segregation and integration ranged from before the Civil War into the twentieth century.

In the twentieth century, Theodore Roosevelt continued the trend toward using schools for cultural synthesis.[46] In the years following World War I, there was a greater emphasis on assimilation. English-only curriculums that favored American history deemphasized the students' cultural heritage and taught patriotism through pledges, songs, and other customs to "Americanize" the child. Protestant influence was significant, with occasional Scripture reading and adherence to Christian holidays until later reforms removed prayer and sacred subject matter from the classroom.

The civil rights movement was instrumental in advancing educational equality in America. In the case of *Brown v. Board of Education,* the Supreme Court unanimously struck down "separate but equal" in 1954.[47] The court declared segregation unconstitutional and ended the practice over the next two decades.

The Great Society came about with a Democratic-controlled Congress in 1964. They passed numerous programs supported by President Lyndon B. Johnson to expand federal support

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[45] George R. Bentley, *A History of the Freedmen's Bureau* (Octagon Books, 1970). 172.

[46] Theodore Roosevelt, *Works*, vol. XXIV (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, memorial ed., 1926), 554.

[47] James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education, A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

of education.[48] The Higher Education Act of 1965 set up national scholarships and low-interest loans for college students and subsidized schools and universities.

The reform efforts of the 1980s worked to toughen standards, but these efforts met resistance. The No Child Left Behind Act of the twenty-first century emphasized testing and significantly shaped the curriculum and moved education in America forward.[49] Common Core emerged in the early twenty-first century in an attempt to synchronize the curriculum for all public schools. This curriculum met the resistance of districts that sought more local control over schools.

The American public school system has evolved through the years from these humble origins. It expanded to offer such educational options as trade school skills and university preparatory institutions that prepare America's best and brightest for future studies.

Controversies

Social

From its inception, public education has faced societal challenges that transcend classroom instruction. Students come from diverse national, geographic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds. Assimilation of these heritages and viewpoints into a united classroom setting is complicated.

Separation of Church and State

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[48] Lyndon B. Johnson: "Remarks Upon Signing the Higher Education Facilities Act" (December 16, 1963), Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed December 15, 2016, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26387.

[49] Alyson Klein, "No Child Left Behind Overview: Definitions, Requirements, Criticisms, and More." Education Week. April 10, 2017. Accessed August 23, 2017. http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-summary.html.

American history is marked by tensions between church and state. Thomas Jefferson pioneered American church and state separation. He fashioned a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association that read, in part, "I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State."[50] Ironically, early American schools used the Bible for reading purposes, said prayers, and observed Christian holidays. Catholics initially challenged these practices because they felt their children were proselytized by Protestants. Future clashes between church and state dealt with educational philosophy, political adversity, and atheistic influences. Notable cases include *The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scope* in 1925 that overturned the Butler Act and established the teaching of evolution in the public schools of Tennessee. Throughout the twentieth century, the church's role in the public school setting receded.

Social Work

Schools have access to most American children. Social services work hand-in-hand with public schools to provide lunches, health resources, tutoring, supplies, and before- and after-school programs and to meet other needs. Some districts do not need these resources, while other communities could not survive without them. The socioeconomic stigmas associated with some social programs limit the schools that participate. School security, birth control, public assistance, and other programs are associated with failing schools or declining neighborhoods; thus, some schools are reluctant to promote these resources.

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

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[50] Thomas Jefferson, "Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists: The Final Letter, as Sent," The Library of Congress Information Bulletin (June 1998), accessed December 22, 2016, http://loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html.

The ACLU is active in the American public school system. School districts fear litigation if they fail to comply with ACLU policies. A controversial organization, it wields considerable influence. The ACLU represents students who do not feel they have a voice. Likewise, the institution has been accused of pursuing frivolous cases or overstepping its boundaries. Considered a champion of racial and gender equality by some and a freedom-limiting bully by others, the ACLU continues its controversial work.[51]

<div align="center">Sexual Education and Gender Neutrality</div>

Sexual education has always been a controversial issue for public schools. Parents feel that some methods do not comply with their family values. Furthermore, many feel that school is not the appropriate place to discuss sexuality. School officials, however, have assumed a responsibility to provide helpful information regarding reproduction, contraception, public health, and domestic relations. Matters such as unplanned pregnancy, disease control, and domestic violence can adversely affect students, limit academic success, and drain the local community.

In the twenty-first century, sexual education has expanded from reproductive matters to sexual identity. The lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, and queer (LBGTQ) movement advocates equal treatment for people who identify as the gender of their choice. Subjects once considered taboo are now taught as normative, and debating the merits of this teaching can be construed as ignorant or abusive. A hot-button issue is the matter of bathrooms. After merchants, such as Target stores, allowed gender-neutral bathrooms, many public institutions followed suit. Public schools emerged as a battleground for opposing viewpoints. Some felt schools were an appropriate arena to teach the next generations about gender neutrality. Others argue that

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[51] "Historical Timeline - ACLU Pros & Cons - ProCon.org," Is the ACLU good for America? August 7, 2013, accessed October 20, 2017, https://aclu.procon.org/view.timeline.php?timelineID=000024.

subjecting children to coed bathrooms is irresponsible, inappropriate, and potentially damaging. As this issue moves through the court system, it may cause an exodus of parents who object to this kind of teaching.

Considerations

Schools have tremendous influence in local communities, and that position places schools at the center of political issues. Whichever side wins the schools' favor has the best chance of advancing its agenda. This influence, however, has created an educational system that can overstep many boundaries and delve into areas inappropriate for educational systems to dictate. Teachers and administrators should not be responsible for the social, religious, and societal issues that people face in everyday life. Furthermore, parents should be empowered to teach the children faith, family history, and cultural customs and provide a heritage for their children. This environment creates excellent educational opportunities for students, but it also creates a cultural subgroup that is as difficult to reach as their homeschool and private Christian school counterparts.

Academic

No Child Left Behind

On January 8, 2002, former president George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act, an update of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.[52] This "standards-based" education reform was designed to improve academic performance and prepare the maximum number of students for college-level education. The federal government tasked

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[52] Alyson Klein, "No Child Left Behind Overview: Definitions, Requirements, Criticisms, and More." *Education Week*. April 10, 2017. Accessed August 23, 2017. http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-summary.html.

states with setting appropriate student achievement standards and developing instruments to

measure student performance. State compliance and performance in the act were mandatory in

order to receive federal educational funding.[53] In theory, student performance would improve,

and instrument data would assist in improving curriculum assessment and financial stewardship.

In practice, the amount of testing exhausted the children, discouraged teachers, and failed to

produce the desired results. Some districts felt underfunded to produce their desired results while

other states felt that No Child Left Behind undermined state sovereignty over education. Though

it was initially a bipartisan sponsored bill, both parties eventually sought its removal due to

ineffectiveness. In 2015, Congress replaced this act with the Every Student Succeeds Act, which

shifts oversight of student standards and testing to local states and removes federal oversight.[54]

No Child Left Behind was a significant step in involving the federal government in attempting to

revamp the American educational system.

<div align="center">Common Core</div>

Common Core emerged in the early twenty-first century to synchronize curriculum for all

public schools. Through new standards, the creators of the curriculum hoped to make American

students more competitive with their international counterparts. This curriculum was not only

met with resistance from "small government conservatives" and proponents of private schools

and voucher programs, but many teachers also did not support it.[55] Opponents argued that

Common Core was created without the input of classroom instructors and that the curriculum's

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[53] Lyndsey Layton, "Obama signs new K-12 education law that ends No Child Left Behind," *Washington Post*, December 11, 2015.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Joseph P. Williams, "Who Is Fighting Against Common Core?," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 27, 2014, http://www.usnews.com/news/special-reports/a-guide-to-common-core/articles/2014/02/27/who-is-fighting-against-common-core.

inflexibility frustrated both teachers and students, further widening the disparity between privileged and underserved districts.[56] Private schools and homeschool groups are capitalizing on this controversy by positioning themselves as an alternative to this methodology. Common Core remains controversial in both the educational and political arenas.

Public School Types

Charter

Charter schools are an "institutional hybrid" and a form of alternative education. They can be exclusively private or contracted through a school system.[57] These schools also can be "for profit" or "not for profit" enterprises, offered beside existing school systems. This freedom allows charter schools to deviate from traditional pedagogy and emphasize specific learning initiatives. While many charter schools provide a quality educational alternative to the benefit of families, some have experienced fraud and failing scores. Time will determine the value of this form of education.

Magnet

Magnet schools are public schools with a specialized curriculum.[58] These schools earned the nickname "magnet" because students were drawn to the school's specialty, often from outside their districts.[59] These schools emphasize academic interest over geography, and the

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Sarah Knopp, "Charter schools and the attack on public education," *International Socialist Review* 62 (November–December 2008), accessed January 28, 2011, http://www.isreview.org/issues/62/feat-charterschools.shtml.

[58] Dr. Donald Waldrip, "A Brief History of Magnet School," Magnet Schools of America, accessed June 23, 2017, http://www.magnet.edu/resources/msa-history.

[59] Grace Chen, "What is a Magnet School?," Public School Review, June 22, 2017, accessed June 23, 2017, http://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/what-is-a-magnet-school.

student body is recruited from a larger area as opposed to a local community. Students with aptitudes for subjects such as the sciences, fine arts, and vocational technology can pursue those disciplines in schools uniquely designed to teach the subject matter. Magnet schools feature diverse student bodies because they draw from beyond their local neighborhoods, and these schools desegregate more easily because academic preference is the motivator for enrollment.[60]

Busing

Where magnet schools utilize curriculum to promote school desegregation, busing and redistricting prevent hyper-segregation in American public schools.[61] These practices date back to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and they can be controversial at the local level. Many American metropolitan areas still bus students from one community to another to create an opportunity for underserviced neighborhoods and to promote diversity among the school districts. While providing a quality education to deserving students has noble intentions, separating the bond between the school and the local community can limit resources, negatively affect enrollment, and breed resentment between the school and the local neighborhood. Bused students rarely spend time outside of class in the school community. Therefore, little meaningful bond is created between students, parents, and the school.

Advocate for Sending Children to Public School

Troy Temple, the lead pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Indiana and director of the International Center for Youth Ministry, supports sending Christian students to public school.[62]

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[60] Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945–1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

[61] Charles T. Clotfelter, *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[62] Mark Eckel, ed., *Perspectives on Your Child's Education: Four Views*, Perspectives Series (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009).

In preparing to make a choice, he offers five suggestions: "Entrust your child's education to God, never forget that every parent is called to teach their child, serve your school, network with other believers in the school, and be a witness in that environment."[63] Temple asserts that, as image bearers of Christ, they are to project that image in a fallen world rather than retreat from it[64] (2 Cor. 4:1-6). He believes that God empowers Christians to live in their communities and influence them for Christ.

Public School Challenges

Youth pastors will find two key challenges in integrating public school students into local youth ministries: access and worldview. Regarding access, twenty-first-century schools have stricter visitation and volunteer guidelines. Legal and political pressure also cause schools to distance themselves from faith-based organizations. In addition to impregnable facilities with limited visitation, schools now offer an expanded slate of extracurricular activities, many of which meet virtually every night of the week, including Sundays. Pastors are not only discouraged from influencing the school, but their church activities also must compete with a robust school schedule. Youth pastors should be relentless in their follow-up and visitation in order to mentor their teens.

The public school worldview might also create tension at church. Many private school and homeschool students favor a theistic worldview, which can include creationism, eschatology, and moral stances. The problem is not so much that the public school students disagree; it is that their entire point of reference may be different. Secular institutions often teach a worldview that is either indifferent or antagonistic toward theistic worldviews. In comparison to their

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[63] Ibid., 8–9.

[64] Ibid.

counterparts, students immersed in naturalistic perspectives of their core subjects might have additional barriers in embracing Scripture, doctrine, and church teachings. An agnostic point of view can taint their opinion of Christians and cause them to approach spiritual matters with skepticism. To the naturalist, a theistic worldview can appear naive, sheltered, or strange. Youth pastors provide discipleship that is prepared to answer their questions, settle their concerns, and show them how the gospel can change their lives for the better. Public school students who are properly discipled view their environment as a fertile mission field rather than a negative influence. Youth pastors, however, need to make sure these students have the support they require. Many public school students have faith that thrives in that setting, but others struggle to reconcile biblical truth with their educational environment.

<div align="center">Outreach and Integration</div>

On most weekdays, more than fifty million minors attend public school in the United States.[65] The primary complication in reaching public school students for the gospel is availability. Legal and educational policies frequently prohibit the access of clergy onto school property during school hours. Public schools are a challenging mission field in scope and methodology. Most public schools now prohibit clergy from visiting school grounds and serving in official capacities. Youth pastors find themselves unwelcome on public school campuses, and they must be careful not to create legal ramifications for the church. Lawsuits and community unrest are at stake when youth pastors decide to forgo guidelines and abuse the privileges. Pastors should be appropriate in their relationship to the school, or they may face sanctions.

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[65] "The NCES Fast Facts Tool provides quick answers to many education questions (National Center for Education Statistics)," National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Home Page, a part of the U.S. Department of Education, 2016, accessed August 23, 2017, https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372.

In addition to limited access to students because of strict visitation laws, closed campuses, and public scrutiny, youth pastors also have cultural issues to address with the public school system. Not every part of society welcomes Christian influences. These difficulties can manifest themselves in areas such as school curriculum, social norms, political opposition, and peer pressure. Those with a Christian lifestyle often find themselves at odds with local culture, and Christians might find themselves unwelcome in certain social situations. Learning to contextualize one's faith is paramount in reaching public school campuses for Christ.

To prepare their students, the local church may design and implement an intentional discipleship plan. Students not only will face the onslaught of contradictory information that can damage their faith; they also might be able to speak into the lives of their fellow students to preach truth in a hostile environment without compromising their witness through frustration and ignorance.

<p style="text-align:center">Gospel-Advancing Youth Ministry and Dare 2 Share</p>

Youth ministry student leaders are commonly part of the effective ways to reach others in public schools. This strategy can be accomplished through clubs, prayer groups, and influence of the teenagers and is often associated with the Dare 2 Share methodology by Greg Stier. He advocates a *Gospel-Advancing Youth Ministry* that is less grounded in passive meetings and more rooted in participation through hands-on experience.[66] This process focuses heavily on evangelism training for students that results in empowered students who share their faith.

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[66] Chap Clark, *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century: Five Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

Stier bases this method in the Great Commission,[67] which says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). This method also is undergirded by Luke 19:10: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Christ's mandate to make disciples exhorts youth pastors to equip the next generation of evangelists and Christian leaders.

Stier's resources and training teach students the gospel—how to tell their story— how to naturally initiate spiritual conversations, how to answer objections without coming off mean or condescending, and how to inspire and train friends to do likewise. Vital elements of a *Gospel-Advancing Youth Ministry* include equipping teenagers for relational evangelism, teaching teens how to share stories, presenting the gospel relentlessly in youth group meetings, starting this project with 10 percent of the group and growing from there, "gospelizing" everything, and making prayer a big deal.[68]

There are many advantages of *Gospel-Advancing Youth Ministries.*[69] Not only does this style of ministry advance the kingdom; it also engages the students and gives them confidence through experience.[70] Another advantage of Dare 2 Share, beyond the obvious evangelism and church growth implications, is leadership development and self-reliant/self-multiplying Christians. If a student's faith is going to survive a hostile worldview, the student must view his or her faith as a personal responsibility and take ownership of his or her spiritual growth.

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[67] Greg Stier, *Dare 2 Share: A Field Guide to Sharing Your Faith* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2006).

[68] Clark, *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century*, 9-12.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

Adults are a crucial element in implementing this model.[71] Adult sponsors must be examples of these principles for students to emulate.[72] Further, parents ideally should coach students in evangelism.[73] This process not only equips students but also helps parents grow in their spiritual life and boldness.[74] Finally, church leaders must embrace these teachings in order for this model to be effective.[75] Evangelical churches produce students who share their faith. Youth pastors will struggle to overcome church cultures that are resistant to evangelism.

The end goal of this strategy is to saturate public school campuses with evangelism via trained students. These students share the gospel, invite people to church events and activities, and even personally disciple people one-on-one. Using their sphere of influence with their peers and within their activities, these students can be powerful advocates for the gospel.

<div align="center">Dare 2 Share Challenges</div>

Dare 2 Share methodologies are useful and dependable tools that have served youth ministries for decades. This method, however, does not translate to all students. Much of the Dare 2 Share philosophy involves contextualizing the Christian worldview with naturalists or other secular worldviews to present the gospel in those contexts. While teaching presuppositional apologetics and evangelism to students can ignite a passion for them to share their faith, some homeschool and private Christian school families may find some of this material remedial or repetitive. Therefore, these families may need a different curriculum to challenge them beyond the Great Commission, so they can be spiritually edified while also serving their church. Seeker-

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[71] Ibid, 13-14.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

sensitive and highly evangelistic churches run the risk of catering to the unchurched. When church families feel like they are simply the workforce to accomplish a church-growth vision, they might disengage and find other worship venues.

<div align="center">Public School Student Integration</div>

Public school students may feel uncomfortable with students in faith-based educational systems. Going to church with students who have religious education as part of their school curriculum can make public school students feel insecure or judged.

Chapter six of this project will examine whether public school students can integrate with their private school and homeschool counterparts[76]. Of particular interest is whether public school students can overcome their worldview differences and coexist with students from different environments and value systems. Chapter six will examine survey data to see if public school students in Joelton Youth Ministries can make friends they did not expect, appreciate the multiple schooling methods participating in their youth ministry, and get along with those who have different ideas and backgrounds. If successful, that chapter will then explore the activities that were most successful in connecting public school students with other students in the ministry.

<div align="center">**Chapter Summary and Conclusion**</div>

American public school education has a long and storied history featuring exciting breakthroughs and heartbreaking controversies. From its humble beginnings, the American public school system served as an influential and powerful resource for American children to learn crucial life skills, important trades, and academic pursuits. As schools transformed from modest local schoolhouses to expansive, federally-run institutions, the dream of a quality

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[76] Appendix B.

education became more accessible to the masses. With that expansion came divisive policies, questionable curriculum choices, and political pressure. Controversial issues such as zoning, taxes, testing, and social service programs often splinter and alienate communities that passionately want the best possible education for their children. The current educational landscape is the result of centuries' worth of advances, setbacks, arguments, and decisions that are not easily modified. Hurt feelings and resentment linger from educational growing pains, and they do not show signs of healing. Philosophical, political, and pedagogical differences created discord through the years that resulted in many different schooling options. Some parents flee the public school system for educational reasons, some object to excessive testing and federally-mandated programs, others leave over worldview differences of opinion, and others feel that compulsory education violates their right to serve as their children's primary teachers. In spite of these issues, public schools remain the main source of education in America.

Public schools represent an immense and intimidating evangelism field that churches should carefully engage. Youth ministries are called to be "salt and light," reaching their communities for Christ. That means youth ministries should think creatively and devise plans to have a gospel presence on their local school campuses. Further, they need to carefully plan how those students become valued members of their ministries and how their church can meet their unique spiritual needs. Public school students may create tension between students of different backgrounds, but churches should have patience with their community so they can reach them for Christ. Christians should not be intimidated by the task of reaching out to their community schools. Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." Christians must rely on God and trust His sovereignty in difficult times to accomplish great things for His glory.

In future chapters, other schooling types will be contrasted with public schools to find the differences that impede biblical community. The hope of this project is to find enough common ground to allow these factions to worship together in biblical unity.

CHAPTER 3

PRIVATE SCHOOL MINISTRY

Private School History

The National Center for Educational Statistics describes an American private school as "any school for which the facilities and funding are not provided by the federal, state or local government; as opposed to a 'public school,' which is operated by the government or in the case of charter schools, independently with government funding and regulation."[77] Due to funding restrictions, private schools tend to answer to their constituency, accrediting agencies, faith-based organizations (if applicable), and state regulations. Private schools are exempt from federal guidelines,[78] but their survival depends upon adherence to an ideology or educational excellence.

In colonial America, schools were primarily available in larger towns or cities. Schools in rural communities were neither free nor public, and some towns did not have schools at all. Fortunate towns would collaborate, pool their resources, and hire a teacher. Only the privileged went on to study beyond elementary grades. Colonial America depended on private schools that were community-based. Homeschooling and private tutors provided needed instructional resources. Much of these schools' resources focused on educating boys. The Catholic Ursuline Academy opened in 1727 in New Orleans, providing educational opportunities for girls.[79]

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[77] Http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/tables/table_whs_01.asp. Accessed November 13, 2016.

[78] "State Regulation of Private Schools," US Department of Education (2009), accessed November 10, 2016, http://www2.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/regprivschl/regprivschl.pdf.

[79] Robenstine Clark, "French Colonial Policy and the Education of Women and Minorities: Louisiana in the Early Eighteenth Century," *History of Education Quarterly* 32.2 (Summer 1992): 193–211; http://www.jstor.org/stable/368985?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

In the nineteenth century, Catholic parochial schools emerged to provide quality

education to rapidly growing Catholic populations throughout the United States. The schools

were necessary to preserve their Catholic heritage and to provide students with a quality

education. Colonial America was predominantly Protestant. Hence Catholics felt proselytized

and marginalized in existing common schools because of biases against their traditions and their

translation of the Bible.

<div align="center">Controversial Court Decisions in Private School Education</div>

In 1875, the Blaine Amendment recommended separation of church and state and forbade

tax money from being used to fund parochial schools, stating,

> No State shall make any law respecting an establishment of religion, or
> prohibiting the free exercise thereof; and no money raised by taxation in any State
> for the support of public schools, or derived from any public fund therefor, nor
> any public lands devoted thereto, shall ever be under the control of any religious
> sect; nor shall any money so raised or lands so devoted be divided between
> religious sects or denominations.[80]

While this proposed amendment failed to achieve the two-thirds vote to become law, it was more

successful at the state government level. All but ten states have amendments that enforce the

fundamental concepts of this document.

In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* struck down "separate but equal," legally ending

segregation.[81] During this time, many private schools served as a legal escape for families who

resisted this decision. Especially in the American South, "segregation academies" continued

unabated by court rulings because private schools were exempt. As the twentieth century

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[80] https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/quotes/the-blaine-amendment.

[81] James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education, A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

progressed, most private schools eventually integrated, bringing an end to widespread segregation.

In 1968, *Epperson v. Arkansas* struck down laws that forbade the teaching of evolution in the public school system. This decision led to increased enrollment in private schools from families who felt this decision violated their worldview. Evolution continues as a controversial academic subject for private Christian schools.

In spite of several key court cases, American courts continue to support educational choice. Cases such as *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925)[82] and *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972)[83] prevented the federal government from exercising compulsory educational attendance laws on private school students or religious dissenters.

While American private schools were not immune to controversy or challenges, these schools have a storied history, and they have provided quality education since the country's inception.

Private School Trends and Relevance to Study

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, "private school enrollment fell from a high of 6.3 million students in the 2001–2002 school year to 5.5 million in 2009–10."[84] Though some private schools already price themselves out of the reach of many middle-class families, they now also face competition from the homeschooling community.[85] In spite of these

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[82] Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510 (1925), accessed November 17, 2016, https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/268/510.

[83] Wisconsin v. Yoder, No. 70-110, 406 U.S. 205 (1972), accessed December 15, 2016, https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/406/205/case.html.

[84] Sarah D. Sparks, "Report Charts Enrollment Drop in Private Schools," May 26, 2011, accessed November 11, 2016, *Education Week*, http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/05/26/33condition.h30.html.

[85] Ibid.

circumstances, they remain an attractive option in American education and culture. The private school student body ranges from five to six million students nationally.[86] Many of those are grades pre-kindergarten through sixth grade and would not be directly relevant to this study. Grades nine through twelve held static, representing the relevant school populous of this study.[87]

For Protestant families, the figure is even lower because, on average, Catholic schools dominate the private Christian school statistics nationally. Though Catholic schools tend to be more urban in their sphere of influence, youth pastors may need to be ready to interface with these students. Independent fundamentalism is another influential player in private Christian education. These students demonstrate a unique culture and worldview that can prove elusive. Youth pastors would be wise to verse themselves in some Catholic or independent-fundamentalist Baptist doctrine because they will interface with these concepts on a daily basis when reaching into these contexts.

Subgroups

College Preparatory Schools

Elite private school institutions throughout the United States provide academic rigor suited for college admittance and scholarship. These schools can be secular or parochial in nature, and they usually have a competitive admissions process. They also can be expensive, with tuition rivaling that of the collegiate institutions the students aspire to attend. A college preparatory school's unique culture and demanding schedule create an environment that challenges students and expects excellence.

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[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

Pedagogy

Some private schools adhere to a specific curriculum or pedagogy that provides a unique educational experience for students. These institutions can range in price as well as in delivery method and represent a variety of learning environments and styles from which parents may choose.

Montessori

Montessori schools, developed by Italian physician and educator Dr. Maria Montessori, provide students a quality education in a self-directed, autonomous delivery method.[88] Students help choose their own curriculum, and they tend to excel in creativity, entrepreneurial ideas, self-motivation, and reliance. This method is attractive to students and parents who find traditional schooling too rigid.

Classical

Classical academies focus on the great works of Western civilization with emphasis on language, literature, art, and philosophy.[89] The curriculum began with great works from the Middle Ages and classical antiquity but now represents an education steeped in the liberal arts as well as the sciences. This method is attractive to parents who grew up with the classics and want those traditions passed to their children. The classical model also organizes the subject matter in a way that gives meaning and purpose to the content.

Language Immersion

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[88] American Montessori Society, accessed November 21, 2016, http://amshq.org/Montessori-Education/Introduction-to-Montessori.

[89] Harlow G. Unger, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Education* (New York: Facts on File, 2007), 1:239.

Language immersion schools produce students who are bilingual or speak multiple languages. Teachers instruct class members in languages other than English. In spite of learning in a foreign language, studies show that students still keep pace in other subjects while they achieve fluency in another language.[90] The varying levels of this program are two-way immersion, partial, or total immersion.[91] This method is attractive to parents who desire bilingual children and families who have roots outside of the United States.

University School

Founded in 2002, university schools blend elements of traditional school and homeschool instruction to provide a cost-effective and convenient private school experience. Like college, students only show up for their classes, and less emphasis is on extracurricular events, school meals, and childcare. The result is tuition up to half of what a private school would charge. This method is attractive to those looking for a balance between private school and homeschool or for families unable to afford full-time, private school tuition.

Boarding School

In rare cases, boarding schools meet the needs of particular families. In these cases, families desire academic expertise that cannot be achieved in a traditional setting. Some private boarding schools focus on removing at-risk students from dysfunctional environments so they can achieve their potential. There will always be demand for schools designed to give their student body an advantage in accessing the world's premier colleges and universities. By immersing in these environments, students can work unencumbered by distractions, poor

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[90] Tara Williams Fortune, "What Research Tells Us about Immersion," Asia Society's Center for Global Education, accessed December 21, 2016, http://asiasociety.org/china-learning-initiatives/what-research-tells-us-about-immersion.

[91] Brianna Flavin, "The Ultimate Guide to 13 Different Types of Schools Across America," July 4, 2016, accessed December 20, 2017, http://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/education/blog/types-of-schools/#s13.

teaching, and low expectations. This method is attractive to families who pursue academic excellence and who sacrifice to put their children in an environment that allows them to gain access to educational resources unavailable in their community.

Parochial Schools

Parochial schools range from Catholic schools to strict, Protestant fundamental institutions. While educational quality is important, many of these schools provide a cultural or spiritual environment designed to support ideologies consistent with family religious traditions.

Types of Parochial School Admission

Open-admission private schools do not require students to adhere to doctrinal agreements nor belong to an ecclesiastical body.[92] These schools teach the students and desire to have an impact and influence on students seeking a good education. They also offer spiritual enrichment and encouragement for believers who belong to their religious heritage, but there is room for "seeker" students to attend without facing proselytization.

Covenant private Christian schools require a statement of faith, church attendance, or other prerequisites for enrollment.[93] They highly value the school's ideological foundations and traditions. This group takes the approach of preserving their worldview and protecting it from external influences. The main difference between covenant and open-enrollment private Christian schools is that open-enrollment schools seek to change the worldview of the community, while covenant schools strive to protect their students as they develop their academics and character to influence the world at the conclusion of their studies.

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[92] Mark Eckel, ed., *Perspectives on Your Child's Education: Four Views*, Perspectives Series (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009).

[93] Ibid.

Motivations

Like homeschooling, private schools are the result of several different motivating factors. Parents must discern the proper culture, size, method, and environment where their children will thrive academically and personally. They value their children, and nothing is too good for their educational environment.

Prestige

Parents want their children to be challenged, and they are drawn to the prestige associated with private educational institutions. Competitive private schools boast of acceptance rates into Ivy League schools, percentages of students receiving college scholarships, elite scores on standardized tests, and athletes who are playing at the collegiate level. These schools use the logic that parents can receive a return on their investment in private school through their children earning college scholarships. Schools of this nature are usually competitive, requiring testing, portfolios, and interviews to gain admittance.

Religion

Religious heritage also plays a role in private school education, especially if the school is a ministry of an existing church. Often churches that have private Christian schools draw heavily upon the congregation for their student body. Private Christian schools can also be a haven for families who feel that the subject matter students learn in the private school setting would not make them uncomfortable. Christian denominations start schools to preserve their particular doctrinal stance and worldview, ensuring that students retain what they learn throughout a given week.

Family or Tradition

Tradition also plays a role in many private Christian institutions and secular organizations. Generations of family members attend the same private school and pass that tradition on to their children. Much like colleges, these schools preach loyalty and tradition to encourage parents to continue to take part in the school. These families sometimes prop up the institution through giving toward endowment and paying tuition.

Athletics

Athletics can serve as an attractive recruiting tool for private schools. Playing time can be a motivating factor for students desiring more opportunities to compete and to get noticed by college scouts. Some private schools recruit public school athletes and offer them scholarships to bolster their winning tradition. Private schools offer players a quality education and a platform to showcase their talents. In exchange, the school gains athletic accolades that raise the school's visibility in the community.

The opportunity for less-gifted players to make the roster and participate in team sports can warrant enrollment in smaller private schools, especially when the public school is too competitive. Athletics is a rite of passage that many parents desire for their children. The uniform or letter jacket serves as a status symbol for the child and the parents.

Special Programs

To attract local families and entice students to enroll, private schools might create programs that local public schools do not offer. Academic, athletic, creative, and social organizations are designed to offer experiences that will elevate the school's prestige and appeal to families.

Advocates for Private Christian School

Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, warns parents about exposing their children to secular education. Mohler specifically points to the changes in educational structures that have happened in the last century. The community-based public schools of the early 1900s, which featured local governance and instruction tied to the local community, gave way to unionized, heavily politicized, and nationally structured public institutions that do as much social work as actual teaching. He criticizes public schools in his book, *Culture Shift: Engaging Current Issues with Timeless Truth*.

> The American educational system is in an undeclared state of disaster, with competing ideologies and shifting worldviews undermining the very nature of education itself. In the state controlled school systems, ideologies of naturalism, secularism, materialism, and moral relativism shape the prevailing culture and worldview. A pernicious new imposition of "tolerance" as an ideology threatens to silence all voices resistant to absolute relativism. Herbert Marcuse, the radical philosopher of tolerance from the 1960s, would no doubt be thrilled to know that his ideology of intolerant tolerance has become so dominant.[94]

Mohler argues that the public school system is beyond repair. Political, financial, and societal pressure has molded these schools into institutions that do more harm than good. He is rallying parents to choose other options for their children's education. "I am convinced that the time has come for Christians to develop an exit strategy from the public schools. Some parents made this decision long ago. The Christian school and homeschool movements are among the most significant cultural developments of the past thirty years. Other parents are not there yet. In any event, an exit strategy should be in place."[95] He goes on to say, "This strategy would affirm

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[94] Albert Mohler, "America's Educational Crisis—A Christian Response," August 17, 2004, accessed December 20, 2016, http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/08/17/americas-educational-crisis-a-christian-response/.

[95] Albert Mohler Jr., *Culture Shift: Engaging Current Issues with Timeless Truth* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2008). 53.

the fundamental and ultimate responsibility of Christian parents to take charge of the education of their children. The strategy would also claim the responsibility of churches to equip parents, support families, and offer alternatives."[96]

Dr. Mohler is concerned about the "evaporation of the Christian worldview"[97] caused by oppressive educational tactics and biblical ignorance. He quotes Psalm 111:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom," advocating that a Christian worldview should be the foundation of a Christian education.

E. Ray Moore agrees with these sentiments. He runs Exodus Mandate, based in Columbia, South Carolina, which is designed to remove children from public schools so they can be free to homeschool or attend a private Christian school.[98] Their motto is "Christian Children Need Christian Education," and their imagery echoes that of Israel leaving Egypt and Pharaoh's rule and applies it to the public education system.[99] This sentiment is gaining popularity in parts of the country that value Christian worldview and where people are concerned about national trends.

Wayne Grudem, research professor of theology and biblical studies from Phoenix Seminary, also joins Mohler in championing a private Christian school education. He utilizes Scripture to validate sending children to Christian educational institutions.[100] He begins with a verse in Ephesians, which tells fathers not to "provoke your children to anger, but bring them up

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[96] Ibid.

[97] Mohler, "America's Educational Crisis—A Christian Response."

[98] "Our Mission," Exodus Mandate, accessed December 20, 2016, http://exodusmandate.org/about/mission.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Wayne Grudem, "Biblical Reasons for Sending Children to a Christian School," accessed June 31, 2017, http://www.biblechurchoflakeshore.org/clientimages/55859/lsca/christianschooldefense_grudem.pdf

in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (6:4). He feels that the Christian schools can help reinforce this truth. What other New Testament Scripture encouraging private school instruction would also be shared with public schools? Matthew 5:13-14 says, "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

Grudem asserts that "All of a child's education should be Bible-centered and God-centered, education should be positive and truthful, peer influence should be positive and Christ-like, every teacher's pattern of life should be worthy of imitation, only God-centered education gives true wisdom, and Christian schooling is the best hope for transforming society."[101] The last point highlights his goal. Real transformation comes from Christ. The best hope for the future of American society is to raise up a generation of godly children.

While public school families might focus on lifestyle evangelism and being the "light of the world" in a dark community, the private Christian school concentrates on preserving children's innocence and being the "salt of the earth." Private Christian school parents do not want their students to lose their "saltiness" early in life. The greatest difference of opinion regarding private versus public school choices is the age of evangelism and discipleship. Those who feel their families can impact culture choose public schools, while those who believe their children need time to incubate and grow in faith before being witnesses in their community might consider private school.

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[101] Ibid.

Rebuttal of These Views

Ideally, Christian education should be affordable, high quality, and biblically sound. Christian schools can fight the stigma of being small, underfunded, poorly taught, and doctrinally unsound. Bloggers such as Brian Jones assert that many of the same problems present in public school exist in private Christian schools.[102] Christian parents could raise concerns that their children are learning moralism and legalism versus authentic Christianity. Finally, a quality Christian school that matches parents' doctrinal stance might not be available for their children. Parents must make reasoned and researched decisions for their children's education based on their community, their budget, their expectations, and their availability. Not all Christian schools are equal. Therefore, parents must make prudent choices.

Barriers

Community

Some of the complications of integrating private Christian school students into community church youth ministries are the feelings of abandonment carried by public and homeschool students. In many cases, private Christian school students formerly attended public educational institutions or were valued members of the local homeschool community. When these families opt to transition students into a private school setting, their former classmates might feel abandoned, left behind, or judged. When these same families integrate into the church setting, these circumstances are still present, and they can make for awkward interactions and hurt feelings.

Relationships are particularly awkward if school rezoning is the catalyst for neighborhood transitions. When rezoning, redistricting, or economic changes occur, each school

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[102] http://brianjones.com/blog/2014/02/26/5-reasons-dont-send-kids-christian-schools-might/ accessed December 20, 2016.

is affected. Community responses might result in negativity because people feel deserted in the face of a crisis. As covered in the public school chapter, pastors must speak into the lives of their communities and help make peace in these tense situations. The families must realize that they are all made in the image of God. While institutional choices are difficult and changes in schooling can produce hurt feelings, they can still worship together.

Socializing private Christian school teens is challenging sometimes, especially if they are less available due to academic rigor and a myriad of school-based activities. Youth pastors need to take into consideration their schedules so they can create plans that will integrate them properly. Students become leaders and valued members of the group if "employed" and assimilated properly. Youth pastors can build bridges with the schools and anticipate their scheduling issues so students can take advantage of church biblical community.

Private schools must avoid isolating from the community. Private Christian schools tend to absorb the student body into a one-size-fits-all, separate society. These institutions wrap everything from activities to athletics to religious education into one facility, assimilating students and families alike. In these instances, private school students might experience awkwardness with students who attend rival public schools or homeschool. This subculture can be as impenetrable as homeschool families who value family culture above all else. Youth ministries might experience tension if members of their church school see that program as a recruiting opportunity. Parents might feel pressured to enroll students in the Christian school, particularly if enrollment numbers are lower than the administration feels they should be.

To keep school matters from interfering with church ministries, youth pastors must have a working relationship with school staff. If the headmaster of the Christian school does not view the school as a vital part of the local community, it could become tough to integrate those

students into the community around them. Worse yet, those schools might become a bubble, artificially separating students from the realities of everyday life. While a nurturing and safe environment might seem an ideal place to teach students and allow them to develop undeterred by distractions and drama, those conditions could become an artificial environment that stunts their emotional growth and sets unrealistic expectations for the future.

Civic-minded, private Christian schools do an exceptional job of grounding the students in the faith, teaching them academic disciplines, and producing excellent students who are successful in the future. These schools also teach students to take pride in their community and to utilize their gifts and education to give back and build bridges with their neighborhood. This results in students serving in a community that takes pride in their local Christian school. When schools fail to accomplish this, they risk becoming elite structures the surrounding neighborhood resents and have a hard time gaining community support.

<div align="center">Academic</div>

As with homeschoolers, ministers should anticipate that private Christian school students have class time to study the Bible. Problems arise when students mistake Christian academic study for personal devotion and spiritual growth. Schools cannot replace the church. Churches provide private Christian school students with needed application to what they are learning in school. Ministers must tap into the students' sense of yearning and help them find their calling in life. The church helps define the call that is then refined and supported by Christian education. This advantage might frustrate public school students because their Bible study must happen in the midst of their coursework, chores, and activities. Furthermore, their parents might not value spiritual pursuits. Youth pastors, therefore, should anticipate different levels of biblical literacy and help the group grow together.

Worldview

The private school worldview can be either vast through academic rigor or limited due to isolation and coddling. Private schools are sometimes referred to as "bubbles," much the way some churches are, because children spend so much of their time there, whether in class, at play, or in the church. This worldview sometimes clashes with public school students in particular because of their perceived worldliness or their lack of academic pedigree. In the case of religious private school students, their theistic worldview takes issue with the naturalistic curriculum taught in public schools. Students may have legitimate disagreements about evolution, sexual ethics, and popular culture. Youth pastors must create an environment where students can grow without open hostility.

Students in secular, college preparatory private schools might have an extended or expanded academic worldview and be tempted to emotionally and intellectually belittle students from other academic backgrounds. In this case, secular private school students might question biblical perspectives and culture. These students sometimes prove more perplexing than public school teens because they are prone to intellectually challenge the leaders as well as their peers. Special care must be made to respect each group and move them toward God.

Methods of Integration

One of the key methods that I would use to reach private school students is Fernando Arzola's Ecclesial View.[103] He encourages churches to rediscover the four creedal characteristics of the church.[104]

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[103] Eckel, *Perspectives on Your Child's Education*.

[104] Ibid.

1. The church is *One*.[105] Jesus' prayer for church unity is found in John 17:20-21 and serves as the foundation of this method. "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." Seeking unity within the group will strengthen the bond and help us accomplish its mission. Christian schools are not meant to serve as a faction within a church. They are called to edify the body with their gifts and experiences.

2. The church is *Holy*. Youth ministries should strive to teach students to be more like Christ, but first they should seek holiness as advised in 1 Peter 1:13-16: "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

They will discover that the church should seek holiness together as a body of believers, not simply as individuals. This corporate pursuit not only builds up the church, but it also provides accountability as believers seek God together. Churches should remind private school students that passing the mandated biblical academic curriculum, while foundational, does not equate to personal piety and holiness. Youth ministries prove valuable in teaching students to apply the truths they learn in class.

3. The church is *Universal*.[106] Students need to understand that they are part of something much bigger than their congregation or school. They are part of a worldwide movement that

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

wants to see the nations come to worship God. Students who know their proper place in the global church will understand that they are a part of something bigger than themselves and will rejoice in the global work at the church. This area plays to the strength of private Christian schools that teach church history and doctrine as part of their curriculum. Youth pastors can use these classes as a bridge to participation in their local church. Mission trips and service projects also reinforce a global church worldview and steer students away from an isolated existence.

4. The church is *Apostolic*.[107] Students must understand apostolic succession, and their generation must commit to training so that one day they can take the mantle of leadership and lead the church into the future. This characteristic means that youth group activities do not always need to be fun or silly. Youth must learn to do the work of the church, sharing their faith and building upon one another.

Arzola recommends reinforcing the four characteristics of the church, re-appropriating the incarnational visible understanding of the body of Christ, and developing a more formal teaching of ecclesiology.[108]

This method is particularly important when teaching private Christian school students. These students are likely to be confused about the role of the church because they live every day surrounded by Christian teaching and other Christians, and they might mistake that for the church. Churches must teach private Christian school students their important place in their local congregation so that they do not graduate from the Christian school and then have a difficult time finding their place in the church.

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

Challenges of Using This Method

The Ecclesial model is an effective way to teach students about their rightful place in the universal church. Church history, church traditions, and church polity serve as ways of inspiring students to embrace their religious heritage and not take their faith for granted. Congregationalist churches, in particular, might find this model new and exciting because many of them do not emphasize church history or centralized forms of church governance. Knowing the church's lineage gives a greater sense of identity to the students but in itself does not produce disciples. This method shores up the disengagement from the church that could happen with private school students. The church should challenge them in their evangelism, in their growth, and in their mentoring relationships so that they can become fully formed disciples of Christ who will, in turn, lead future generations toward Christ.

Private School Integration

Private school students range from sheltered children raised in the church to students who resent that environment and wish they could attend another school type. Chapter Six will look at the factors that prevent private school students from assimilating into a blended youth ministry with other schooling types[109]. The survey data will provide feedback on their experiences in Joelton Youth Ministries. In addition to discovering if they can connect with students of different backgrounds, the study will examine if those students helped the private school students in their faith. Stereotypes suggest that public school or homeschool students might hold the private Christian school student back through distraction or simplifying the church curriculum. It is of interest to see if the presence of public and homeschool students deepens the religious experience

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[109] Appendix B.

of private school students. Integration methods of assimilation are also assessed for effectiveness in the survey.

Chapter Conclusion

Private schools birthed American education. These schools represent a proud tradition and a rich evangelistic opportunity. As with homeschooling, students from a variety of families attend these schools, and the types of private schools vary as well. Whether sacred or secular, open or covenant, private schools service a diverse spectrum of families trying to provide a quality education for their children. In secular private schools, the children might share worldviews with public school students as well as with homeschool students who are irreligious. Private Christian school students may come with a theistic worldview shaped by their school and their families. This background, coupled with unique curriculum in private Christian schools, creates an exciting challenge for youth pastors. The private Christian school worldview might clash with that of their public school counterparts in the church. These cultural frictions, coupled with the religious emphasis of private Christian schools, is likely to discourage students from embracing church. This is why teaching them the church's vital role in their faith helps them embrace their religious heritage and prevents them from isolating into a private Christian school world that inadequately services both their educational and spiritual needs.

CHAPTER 4

HOMESCHOOL MINISTRY

Homeschooling has made great strides in America in the past thirty years. In particular,

due to issues in public school education, homeschooling vaulted from 850,000 students in the

late 1990s to nearly 2 million students in 2009.[110] Homeschool students tend to academically

outpace their public school counterparts by 34 to 39 percent and are beginning to draw the

attention of collegiate academic institutions that would have been skeptical a decade before.[111]

With the advancement of umbrella accrediting organizations, homeschool students now have the

opportunity to experience expanded extracurricular activities such as athletics, music, art, and

other mediums. Tutorials and co-ops offer students a classroom experience and relief for parents

unfamiliar with certain subjects within the curriculum. Unschooling provides academic freedom,

independent of traditional instruction.[112] With these advancements, along with the flexible

scheduling, homeschooling is surging as an option to failing local public schools and as an

affordable alternative to expensive private schools. If trends continue, homeschooling will

continue to grow—representing a new and unique subculture within the American ethos that

churches need not ignore nor take for granted.

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[110] Brian D. Ray, PhD, "2.04 Million Homeschool Students in the United States in 2010," January 3, 2011, accessed February 5, 2014, http://www.intellectualtakeout.org/library/articles-commentary-blog/204-million-homeschool-students-united-states-2010?library_node=25141.

[111] Michael F. Cogan, "Exploring Academic Outcomes of Homeschooled Students," accessed February 5, 2014, http://www.intellectualtakeout.org/library/chart-graph/homeschool-college-gpa-and-graduation-rates?library_node=25141.

[112] Jacque Wilson, "Unschoolers Learn What They Want, When They Want," August 3, 2011, accessed February 5, 2014, http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/08/03/unschooling.sudbury.education/index.html?eref=time_us.

Homeschool families represent a fast-growing but an enigmatic segment of the American society that is diverse, elusive, and often misunderstood. The author has seen homeschooling evolve over the past two decades through relationships with homeschool students in a variety of geographic and church dynamics. The burden to see families hold to their principles, yet serve as a vibrant part of the local church, serves as the motivation for engaging this group.

Churches that reach homeschool families tend to cater to them and, in turn, risk excluding public school families. Homeschool families sometimes view community kids as unruly and a bad influence on their children. By the same token, public school kids often assume that homeschool kids are isolated, ignorant, or weird. The goal of this project is a cohesive youth ministry where both groups are represented yet retain their unique personalities. Much like the body of Christ (see Rom. 12:3–8), the families in each of these groups need to find their unique areas of contribution and enjoy biblical community. Instead of separate churches with a narrow focus, Christians can benefit from attending a church where public, private, and homeschool families can worship side by side. In order to accomplish this mission, homeschool culture must be examined and better understood.

Characteristics

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines homeschooling as "to teach your children at home instead of sending them to a school."[113] As concise as this definition sounds, homeschooling is an umbrella term with a wide array of subgroups, motivations, and challenges.[114]

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[113]. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "home school," accessed April 2016, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/homeschooling.

[114]. Penelope Trunk, "Five homeschool parent types," January 3, 2012, accessed April 2016, http://education.penelopetrunk.com/2012/01/03/the-five-types-of-homeschool-parents/.

Types of Homeschooling

There are six broad types of homeschooling; traditional, classical, technological, unit studies, *Charlotte Mason*, and *Unschooling*.

The traditional homeschooling approach bases a child's education around a particular publisher or boxed curriculum.[115] Parents follow a specified scope and sequence of material that is convenient and economical and matches their particular set of values.

The classical method is rooted in the liberal arts and dates back to the Middle Ages.[116] This approach features trivium, which examines grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and quadrivium, which features arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.[117] After mastery of these disciplines, students pursue advanced study in the areas of philosophy and theology.[118]

The technological approach uses online resources to advance children's education. Recent advances in video-based and Internet-based learning allow students to receive excellent instruction delivered to their computers.[119] Parents can use virtual tutors, classrooms, and other resources.[120] This approach trains students in self-paced online education that is commonplace at the university level. Experience in this method helps the student master the subject matter and easily transition into dual-enrollment classes or college and university studies.

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[115] Mark Eckel, ed. *Perspectives on Your Child's Education: Four Views*, Perspectives Series (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009).

[116] Harlow G. Unger, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Education* (New York: Facts on File, 2007), 1:239.

[117].Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Eckel, *Perspectives on Your Child's* Education, 104.

[120] Ibid.

The unit studies approach involves taking a theme or topic in which a child has a great interest and exploring it over an extended period.[121] This method exposes the student to a variety of subjects and then encourages further study based on the student's interests. This method argues that students excel in subjects of interest.

The Charlotte Mason method takes a participatory and active role in learning. Teaching through play, creativity, and experiences is a hallmark (for example, activities, field trips, and nature walks). The student's ability to explain and interact with the subject matter is preferred over conventional testing in this model.

The Unschooling method taps into children's natural curiosity and focuses on child-initiated learning.[122] Unschoolers resist structure and primarily teach their children through life experience.[123] The children usually set the tone for the subject matter and pace of study.

Parents often utilize a combination of these methods to teach their children, as the teaching possibilities are endless.[124]

Problems Within the Homeschooling Community

There are two common problems within the homeschooling community. The first is *Unschool* versus homeschool. The second is first-generation homeschool parents versus second-generation homeschool parents.

The pastor must be a student of the local community. Much like their traditional school counterparts, the type and style of homeschooling family is going to vary in communities.

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[121]. Ibid.

[122]. Ibid.

[123]. Ibid.

[124]. Ibid.

Homeschool families can range from affluent evangelical Christian families with deep convictions to noncommittal community members who elected to homeschool their children as a matter of convenience. Special care should be taken in identifying the differences between homeschool families and unschool families. John Holt says, "When pressed, I define unschooling as allowing children as much freedom to learn in the world as their parents can comfortably bear."[125]

Homeschool families teach their children in the home. At times, they are more rigorous than their community school counterparts.[126] Unschooling families can have an adversarial relationship with traditional institutions of higher learning.[127] Where homeschool families often use curriculum and college preparatory methodologies to teach their children in a classical manner, unschoolers prefer to teach by experience. They favor field trips, artistic expression, and service projects over classroom study.[128]

These two styles of home education are technically the same but differ greatly in philosophies and social implementation.[129] Greater disparity could be the result of these two groups socializing together versus them interacting with their traditional school counterparts. Traditional homeschool families and unschool families may find themselves at odds in educational, political, and lifestyle decisions for their children. These differences can cause

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[125].John Holt, *Growing Without Schooling*, (Holt Associates, 1977.)

[126] Gwen Dewar, PhD, "Homeschooling outcomes: How do they compare?," 2011, accessed April 2016, http://www.parentingscience.com/homeschooling-outcomes.html.

[127] Mary Griffith, *The Unschooling Handbook: How to Use the Whole World As Your Child's Classroom* (Three Rivers Press, 1998).

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

resentment within their greater community, and pastors might unintentionally insult or frustrate these groups by lumping them together. Avoiding assumptions and stereotypes is essential in reaching the homeschool community and assimilating its members into church. Each family should be treated as individuals, and effort should be made to find common ground.

Pastors must be careful in discerning between first- and second-generation homeschool parents. Some parents were homeschooled themselves and elect to pass that traditional rite of passage on to their children. Others are first-generation homeschooling parents who are seeking a better way of life for their children, whether for the convenience that homeschooling brings or as a means of breaking the cycle of generational dysfunction from their own childhood. These parents can also be referred to as "transitional homeschool parents" as they are migrating from their upbringing to a new style of parenting.[130] Some parents who lived difficult lives often decide to make their children their life's work and their first priority. They utilize homeschooling as a vehicle to right the wrongs of the past. Second-generation homeschool families might either find this process comfortable or resent the process as they feel obligated to carry out this lifestyle for their families.

First-generation homeschool families often find great comfort in this process but carry the pressures of venturing into new experiences. Parents must make things up as they go and turn to mentors in this journey to help their children achieve beyond the parents' capacity to teach in some areas. These parents sometimes feel inadequate or pressured because they are attempting a sense of normalcy and nurturing that they never experienced. This type of parent can be high-

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[130] Amy Roberts, "The Growing Pains of First Generation Homeschool Moms," January 17, 2012, accessed April 2016, http://www.raisingarrows.net/2012/01/the-growing-pains-of-first-generation-homeschool-moms/.

strung and unsure of themselves. They require mentors for reassurance and need support from other homeschool families.

Second-generation homeschool families may struggle with arrogance or overconfidence. They may end up being critical of other parents, the church, the pastor, and other church members. They may subscribe to a rigid family methodology that can isolate them and make them feel as though the church is capable of contaminating their children. With the right mentoring, these parents can be empowered to offer encouragement and resources to struggling families, taking their focus off of unconstructive pursuits and repurposing those energies into helping families in need.

Motivations

Motivation serves as the key identifier among the various homeschool subgroups.[131] Ranging from positive to negative, there are dozens of reasons why families choose to homeschool their children.

Positive Motivations

Parents sometimes homeschool their children for academic promise, athletic giftedness, musical expression, or other creative motivations. These families find institutionalized school either too strict or too inflexible to accomplish their educational goals. By the same token, they may be looking for programs their community school does not offer, and they use homeschooling to make those programs accessible to their family. In the arena of academia, homeschool families often turn to outside means if advanced placement and dual enrollment are not part of their local school's planned curriculum. For athletes, musicians, and other gifted

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[131] "Reasons Parents Home School," Coalition for Responsible Home Education, accessed April 2016, http://www.responsiblehomeschooling.org/homeschooling-101/reasons-parents-homeschool/.

students, traditional school involvement might prove to be too much of an obstacle to pursuing artistic or athletic success. Homeschooling includes flexible scheduling and can prove to be a powerful advantage by streamlining students' schedules and allowing them more time to spend in their areas of giftedness and interest. When students spend only four to five hours per day completing their studies, time during the remainder of the day can provide opportunities to advance themselves through additional study, private lessons, gym time, or travel athletics. A more open schedule also helps in the attainment of honors such as the rank of Eagle Scout, an Awana Citation Award, a black belt in martial arts, or other extracurricular endeavors.

Some families desire a private school education, but they either cannot afford it or do not want to pay the tuition.[132] These families often live in neighborhoods with failing schools, and they refuse to put their children into those institutions for academic, disciplinary or cultural reasons. They see the home as a safe environment where their children can gain valuable schooling and life skills, without "mortgaging" their child's future with private school tuition.

Other families desire the rigor of private school but would rather pay college tuition than private prep school tuition. They are able to pass the savings into a college plan and encourage their children to become participants in paying for their postsecondary education. They want students to develop a work ethic and plan their college education. At the high school level, homeschool students can take advantage of full-time work because of the flexibility homeschooling offers. They can save money to pay for college, and they can also get as much advance placement and dual enrollment credit as possible to avoid paying for those courses once they enroll. Many homeschooled students have found ways to transfer up to two years in college

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[132] Miranda Marquit, "Could Homeschooling Save You Money?," accessed April 2016, http://moneyning.com/kids-and-money/could-homeschooling-save-you-money/.

credits when they enter their chosen institution as freshmen, saving thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of study while making graduate education more of a reality by accruing less debt.[133] These financial advantages make homeschooling an attractive alternative.

The aforementioned transfer credits and dual enrollment are major motivations for homeschooling. Bright students who desire advanced placement classes, college credit, and academic competition and achievement often find homeschooling a flexible alternative to brick-and-mortar institutions.[134] News stories feature this method's popularity and tell of students graduating with high school diplomas, associate degrees, and even bachelor's degrees at the same time.[135] Homeschooling also provides the flexibility to pursue scientific, technological, literary, and other internships and interest groups. "Gifted and talented" might include artistic and musical students who spend time creating, displaying, and sharing their art. More free time allows access to additional instruction and practice time.[136]

Special education is often a key motivation for students to homeschool.[137] Students who have disabilities or behavioral issues can avoid bullying and social awkwardness.[138] If the child

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[133] "What's the Deal with Dual Enrollment?," October 8, 2009, accessed April 2016, https://homeschoolcollegecounselor.wordpress.com/2009/10/08/whats-the-deal-with-dual-enrollment/.

[134] "Homeschooling vs Public School," accessed April 2016, http://www.mommyedition.com/homeschooling-vs-public-school.

[135] Laura T. Coffey, "'Not hard; just hard work': Girl, 16, graduates from high school and college in same week," May 8, 2014, accessed April 2016, http://www.today.com/news/not-hard-just-hard-work-girl-16-graduates-high-school-2D79637124.

[136] Tracy Chiniewicz, "Parenting Musical Prodigies," accessed April 2016, http://www.homeeddirectory.com/blog/parenting-musical-prodigies-naomi-aldort.

[137] Christopher J. Klicka, "Homeschooling and Special Needs Children," updated October 2009, accessed April 2016, https://www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner/sn_Klicka.asp.

[138] Laura Brodie, PhD, "Homeschooling to Escape Bullies: What's Wrong with That?," May 3, 2010, accessed April 2016, https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/love-in-time-homeschooling/201005/homeschooling-escape-bullies-whats-wrong.

has attention deficit or dyslexia issues, the child might greatly benefit from private tutoring and improve at a faster pace on their own and with fewer distractions. Not all districts are equipped with adequate special education resources, and sometimes it is easier to tackle these challenges in the home than to have the child struggle in the school setting. When a child requires medications, homeschooling makes that regimen easier as well. Families who have children with special needs are often at the mercy of the school district for resources to help their child succeed in the classroom. When those resources are not available, homeschooling might be a family's only recourse.

America's obsession with athletics makes training and practice a large part of many students' lives. The increased competition, elite travel leagues, and parental expectations can make balance between academics and athletics difficult. Homeschooling can provide flexibility to fit these commitments into family schedules.[139] Also, the Tim Tebow Bill makes participation in local athletics, music, and other extracurricular activities open to homeschoolers who live in the district.[140] This allows the parents to educate their children as they see fit yet ensure that they are members of the community and have the same opportunities as everyone else. This rule led to resentment and problems in the past, but most students now accept these stipulations and welcome homeschoolers on the team if they're willing to contribute and be part of the community.

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[139] Penelope, Trunk, "You should homeschool your student athlete," April 5, 2013, accessed April 2016, http://education.penelopetrunk.com/2013/04/05/you-should-homeschool-your-student-athlete/.

[140] Leada Gore, "What you need to know about the 'Tim Tebow' bill," May 7, 2015, accessed April 2016, http://www.al.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/05/what_you_need_to_know_about_th_1.html.

The most publicized reasons associated with homeschooling in the past have been religious or political convictions.[141] Many homeschool families have strong political, moral, and religious convictions that differ from mainstream views. Differences of opinion regarding sexual education, age of the earth, evolution, and political issues have caused many parents to withdraw from public schools in order to teach their children in the ways that they see fit. Results can range from political engagement, candidate endorsement, championing of parachurch organizations, eschatological zeal, and the role of women. Each issue can be divisive and can divert the focus away from worship and discipleship. Families often look for churches that share their point of view. Pastors must be wise when welcoming these families into their fellowship. They must tread lightly, search Scriptures, agree to disagree when appropriate, and be prepared to lose these families at any time.

Many political and parachurch organizations depend heavily on the children of their members. In these cases, homeschooling allows freedom to volunteer long hours on campaigns, projects, and other endeavors. In many cases, this is not inherently bad. Students can nurture a strong sense of civic service and leadership development through these experiences. The only concern stems from the two polar experiences of their children. When students do not share their parents' convictions or when their service in these organizations becomes their primary identity, it can lead to resentment or a distorted self-image. Pastors must be ready to help families keep a healthy dynamic where they can balance their convictions. They must be able to make sure those students' identity comes from Christ and not from temporal organizations or personalities.

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[141] Rosemary Salomone, "Home Schooling and Religious Freedom: Who Owns the Child?," October 19, 2004, accessed April 2016, http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/10/20/08salomone.h24.html.

Vacations, family time, and work-life balance also serve as motivations for some families to take advantage of homeschooling's schedule flexibility.[142] These families see homeschooling as a tool to keep their family tight-knit as schedules become more complex and jobs become more demanding. They may vacation off-season or during the workweek to save money. If parents travel for work, the rest of the family often accompanies them. If a parent works odd hours, the family can accommodate to that schedule. When properly planned and implemented, homeschooling can help retain family closeness in an age when that is exceedingly rare.

<p style="text-align:center">Negative Motivations</p>

On the negative side, some parents' motivations for homeschooling children range from relaxed lifestyles to stemming deviant behavior.

While many homeschool families cite the reasons of flexibility, family time, and personal convictions, some parents may turn to homeschooling because they are overwhelmed with life or because their children exhibit unhealthy behaviors. Parents who are overcome with mental illness, physical illness, or addictions sometimes abuse the flexibility of homeschooling to avoid truancy issues involving their children.[143] Homeschooling can offer an alibi and public explanation to hide parents' personal demons, including abusive behavior, marital problems, and other issues that create a dysfunctional family environment. Robin L. West states, "Parents in many states have full authority, free of all state oversight, to determine the content of their children's education."[144] In these instances, families expect children to keep family secrets and suffer in silence.

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[142] "Advantages of Homeschooling," accessed April 2016, https://www.homeschoolacademy.com/a/articles/advantages_homeschooling/#Advantages_of_homeschooling_4.

[143] "Parents Use Homeschooling to Avoid Truancy Charges," KOTA TV, 2013. Viewed online, June 13, 2016.

[144] Robin L. West, "The Harm of Homeschooling," *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly* 29, no. 3/4 (Summer/Fall 2009), 8.

Broken, dysfunctional families often homeschool their children as a means of covering their neglect.[145] Students are often left alone with a computer or textbook to perform their academic work unsupervised. Some parents lack the ability to properly educate their children and give up on nurturing their academic needs. These students might find themselves far behind their peers, and they might not realize their academic shortcomings until they venture into adulthood. Many of them eventually settle for earning a GED.[146] Churches with homeschool enrichment programs or after-school tutoring (community-wide or homeschool) can be effective in helping these students.

In some instances, homeschooling is used to hide abusive or illegal behavior. For some families, it is an issue of control. While not illegal, the church can speak into the lives of these families and provide access to professional counseling and other resources. In extreme cases, where students are exposed to belligerent, illegal, or abusive situations, churches are often the only lifeline to emancipate them from harm.[147] In these cases, pastors may find themselves in the awkward situation of having to report these parents to child services. Pastors must work with community leadership and law enforcement to protect the children and help the family.[148]

Church Challenges

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[145] Ibid., 9.

[146] Kristin Rawls, "Barely Literate? How Christian Fundamentalist Homeschooling Hurts Kids," March 14, 2012, accessed April 2016, http://www.alternet.org/print/story/154541/barely_literate_how_christian_fundamentalist_homeschooling_hurts_kids.

[147] "Homeschooling's Invisible Children," accessed April 2016, http://hsinvisiblechildren.org/.

[148] Velmarie L. Albertini, *Synergistic Collaborations: Pastoral Care and Church Social Work* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2011).

The traditional methods of evangelism and outreach most churches use are largely ineffective in reaching homeschool families because they assume that people will all gather in a specific location at a specific time. Schools, activities, and sporting events have been prime visitation venues for youth pastors for decades. Homeschool families function on a more independent basis, spurning the rigidity of community school schedules in favor of those that match their lifestyle. While groups within the homeschool community can be reached, and churches can design specific groups to target homeschool families, homeschool families are largely reached family by family, which can be time consuming and frustrating.

Where churches can more easily reach out to their community via school functions, block parties, and other events, being a presence in homeschool functions and making home visits may need to be part of the outreach philosophy and methods as well. Foresight is necessary to create a discipleship plan for homeschool students that will challenge and stimulate their faith. Whether the studies are through the church or whether the minister assists in building homeschool Bible curriculum for credit, the church needs to help foster the spiritual needs of its flock.[149]

Like their private and public school counterparts, homeschool families ascribe to worldviews that can be difficult to integrate into the church. While irreligious homeschool families tend to take on a naturalistic worldview, religious homeschool families may be passionate advocates for a variety of theistic worldviews. Issues related to creation, eschatology, Old and New Testament interpretation, and gender roles may clash with church tradition or denominational doctrine. Further, their passionate theistic worldviews may lack patience for students who struggle to embrace Christian teachings.

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[149] "8 Reasons to Start a Small Group," accessed April 2016, http://rickwarren.org/connect/why-start-a-small-group-.

Homeschool worldview inherently originates from the home. Ideally, this view is one born of nurture, cultivated carefully with love and support and commissioned into the world upon reaching adulthood. In less-than-ideal circumstances, this worldview can be narrow, wary of others, and overly dependent on family. Churches have an opportunity to build bridges between these groups while preserving their unique cultures.

Homeschool families who integrate into churches tend to be dependable workers with can-do attitudes whose work ethic and serving mentality are great assets to any church.[150] However, like every other subculture, families commonly have agendas. Some families may come to the church as active participants in organizations that target churches as prospective places of influence. Others subscribe to points of view that might conflict with the church's stated purpose. These differences can lead to discord as the parents' suggested programming begins to undermine, distract, or displace existing or planned ministry. Pastors must be shrewd as an inviting and positive force in the lives of these families. Pastors often serve as gatekeepers and can become the leveraging point to advance various causes. Pastors might feel pressured to endorse policies, activities, and organizations to keep the peace and, possibly, their jobs.[151] Straying from personal and political agendas that may rise up within the homeschooling community is difficult but necessary to maintain balance and objectivity.

The church is first and foremost a house of worship and a means of spreading the gospel, not a community center or school. As long as that community complements the stated purpose of the church, then it becomes a valued part of the church family. If it tries to overshadow or

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[150] Karen Campbell, "Where does a Homeschooling Family Fit into Church?," accessed April 2016, http://thatmom.com/articles/where-does-a-homeschooling-family-fit-into-the-church-2/.

[151] Benton Johnson, "Theology and the Position of Pastors on Public Issues," *American Sociological Review*, 32:3, (June 1967), 433–42.

supersede the ministry of the local church, then it begins to have an adversarial relationship with the church and its membership.

If some families prove unreasonable and conflict unavoidable, then pastors must have a working knowledge of their church's ecclesiological and governing structure to prevent uncomfortable or hostile interactions. No pastor ever wants to disfellowship families, but, through prayer and the counsel of trusted leaders, this option may be necessary to dissuade those who seek to create a grassroots movement to seize control of the church. Sometimes losing a few families and weathering inevitable gossip is preferable to a church split. If these disruptive families are allowed to become ingrained in the leadership fabric of the church and assume high levels of influence and responsibility, the pastor may be unable to prevent the church from losing its purpose.

Social Challenges

Homeschooled students inevitably have a different lifestyle than their institutional school counterparts. In some cases, they may have less social interaction, basing most of their lives in their homes. These students may range from shy, isolated teens who tend toward social awkwardness to students who yearn for social interaction but whose parents might be put off by their children's desire to participate in everything the church offers. These students might even pressure their parents into letting them go to school with their church friends. Finally, some homeschool students become the envy of public and private school students. Their flexible schedules, vacations, and other advantages might be seen as unfair by some while others might desire to be homeschooled themselves. Tribal youth culture emphasizes sameness and community. Living in a different environment than that of peers can be an obstacle, but it is not an insurmountable problem.

Criticism of Youth Ministry

Former youth speaker Voddie Baucham has recently taken modern youth ministry to task, saying that youth ministry has no biblical precedent.[152] The 2012 movie *Divided*,[153] which prominently features Baucham,[154] takes aim at the effectiveness of age-appropriate church education ministries and lobbies for the eradication of church educational ministries and the integration of all ages. He is a proponent of family-integrated ministry, where parents serve in the role of youth pastor and families worship as one. Proponents of this view quote Malachi 4:6 and claim that traditional youth ministry turns "the hearts of children" away from their fathers.[155] They feel as though youth ministry has, in its quest for cultural relevance, undermined the influence of godly parents on their children. Led by Scott Brown of the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches, this movement refers to youth ministry as a "fifty-year-old failed experiment"[156] and points to recent statistics implying that most youth ministry graduates fall away from their faith at an alarming rate.

Family Ministry

Family ministry has come on the scene in recent years as an alternative to conventional age-appropriate ministry. This methodology encourages family worship and teaching times that

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[152] "Is Youth Ministry Biblical?," broadcast September 25, 2007, accessed May 2016, http://mikecorley.org/2013/03/11/dr-voddie-baucham-is-youth-ministry-biblical/.

[153] ."Modern Youth Ministry is Contrary to Scripture," accessed April 2016, http://www.dividedthemovie.com/.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Drew Dixon, "The Minority Report: Is Youth Ministry Unbiblical?," May 8, 2012, accessed May 2016, http://www.patheos.com/blogs/christandpopculture/2012/05/the-minority-report-is-youth-ministry-unbiblical/.

[156] "Youth Ministry: A 50-Year-Old Failed Experiment," accessed May 2016, https://defendingcontending.com/2009/12/31/youth-ministry-a-50-year-failed-experiment/.

the father leads, predominately. Homes become the primary location for Bible study, and

facilities and worship times take on a much simpler structure and scope. Advantages of this

method are that it tends to be less expensive and more family centric.

Referring to Deuteronomy 6:4-7,[157] the D6 methodology is popular among adherents to

the family-integrated church model, which has strong homeschool ties.

> "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. *You shall teach them diligently to your children,* and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (emphasis added).

The D6 method features multigenerational programs emphasizing rites of passage and

integrating families into the youth area. Where parental involvement is always encouraged and is

always a plus within the homeschool community, it is an absolute necessity to involve, empower,

and utilize parents in their children's spiritual development. The more ministers champion

parents, the better parents are able to become spiritual mentors for their children. The strategy

asserts that parents have much more access to their teens; thus, they have a greater potential for

influence than any teacher, pastor, or program.[158] This movement is a great resource because it

addresses the parental void in the spiritual lives of children. Strong families help youth pastors in

their calling to reach and equip the next generation for Christ. Integrating this method has initial

challenges, but the benefits greatly outweigh the costs. Ministers must befriend these families

and, through acts of service to their community, win them over to help the greater church body.

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[157] D6, http://d6family.com/dna/.

[158] Ron Hunter Jr., *The DNA of D6: Building Blocks of Generational Discipleship*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 2015), 10.

Issues

The primary reason that integrating homeschool students is an area of research stems from the fact that most families choose churches based on the model that appeals to their specific needs, rather than focusing on how all of the various groups fit together. In analyzing the motivations, characteristics, and preferred church methods of the homeschooling community, pastors can address concerns, meet needs, and find middle ground that will allow these families to feel embraced by the church.

Family, faith, education, leadership, socialization, service, and worship are all values that homeschoolers hold dear. When reaching homeschool families, the minister must identify the values most important to them and build programs that can meet these needs and bring them into the greater church community. Assembling a team of influential homeschool leaders can provide valuable insight into specific ministries that will draw them into the fold while encouraging them to worship alongside other community members. Tutorials, service projects, mentoring programs, specific homeschool outings, and house church cell groups are methods that can work in concert with existing church ministries to provide family-based discipleship options while keeping the evangelistic and missional practices that also reach public and private school students.

While family ministry has great appeal and has produced some positive results, it is better used in concert with other methodologies, instead of as a stand-alone option. To reach students from dysfunctional upbringings and to reach unchurched people in each community, traditional church greatly complements family ministry. Not all families are capable or willing to disciple their children, and the need will always exist to produce spiritual mentors and a sense of community to welcome them into faith.

Other issues that might hinder the family ministry model include the fact that churches can become dominated by primary families and can be difficult to break into. The structure also might be too fluid, making it difficult to assimilate great numbers of people. While increasing group ministries through home teams is effective for church growth, maintaining a centralized congregation is difficult using this methodology.

Integration

Homeschool students present the most challenging teenagers in the church integration process because they are less common and more misunderstood then their counterparts. Chapter Six will look at whether their worldview creates barriers to biblical community in Joelton Youth Ministries. That section will examine whether other relationships added to their faith, whether they had patience with people from different viewpoints, whether those bonds deepened, and whether they made friends they did not expect. Theological and programmatic elements will also be evaluated for their affectedness in integrating homeschool students into the youth ministry.

Chapter Conclusion

While many of the criticisms of traditional youth ministry are valid, youth ministry continues to evolve and address many of the areas of concern. Whereas the generation X former youth ministry tended to isolate teens from other generations in the church, generation Y and generation Z youth ministries look markedly different. Parental involvement, volunteers, and greater generational interaction are now employed to give the youth ministry its own space but also feel like a vital part of the church at large. A family ministry model can be assimilated into this traditional church model and also help accomplish these goals. Involving fathers in the spiritual lives of their families accomplishes many of the same directives and strengthens the ministry as a whole.

Modern youth ministry critiques have merit and have been addressed, but they do not warrant abolishing youth ministry altogether. These methods can be added to thriving youth ministry models to reach a more diverse group of people while not alienating committed, Bible-believing families. Homeschool families represent a fertile mission field filled with a wealth of experiences, ideas, and talent that can be an asset to any church. Pastors must be vigilant in seeking, understanding, encouraging, equipping, and empowering this group to not only grow themselves and their families toward Christ but also to take their rightful place among the church body. (See 1 Corinthians 12.)

CHAPTER 5

INTEGRATION AND WORLDVIEW

Previous chapters evaluated the types of schools, the worldviews associated with them, and the preferred ministry methodologies. Each of the school models represents important mission fields that churches should identify and reach, and the methodologies all have strong merits and application to twenty-first-century youth ministries. Worldview, however, appears to be the primary sticking point when integrating students into a cohesive youth ministry. Postmodern culture and naturalistic worldview are pervading the American landscape and ethos, causing many Christians to retreat into their lifestyles and houses of worship and influencing their educational decisions. This chapter will discuss how to synthesize different people with different worldviews and different methodologies into a cohesive ministry. "Cohesive" doesn't mean uniform or homogenous; it means diverse people worshipping in the same venue, working alongside one another, and serving God while ascribing to Christian orthodoxy.

Integration Issues

Public School

Dare 2 Share methodologies are useful and dependable tools that have served youth ministries for decades. This method, however, does not translate to all students. Much of the Dare 2 Share philosophy involves sharing the Christian worldview with naturalists or other secular worldviews to present the gospel in those contexts. While teaching presuppositional apologetics and evangelism to students can ignite a passion to share their faith, some homeschool and private Christian school families may find some of this material remedial and repetitive. Therefore, these families may need a different curriculum to challenge them beyond the "Great

Commission"—they can be spiritually edified while also serving their church. Seeker-sensitive and highly evangelistic churches run the risk of catering to the unchurched. When church families feel as if they are simply the workforce to accomplish a church-growth vision, they can disengage and find other worship venues.

Youth ministry blogger Tim Schmoyer, of "Life in Youth Ministry," critiqued Dare 2 Share by suggesting that it can be too methodical and can deemphasize the Holy Spirit in the discipleship process.[159] Dare 2 Share founder Greg Stier gives practical advice to mobilize teens to embrace evangelism and reach their communities. While valuable, methods must align with divine direction, or they undermine church vision and hinder progress. Youth leaders need to discern whether they are relying on methodology over spiritual guidance.

<div align="center">Private School</div>

The Ecclesial model is a wonderful way to teach students about their rightful place in the universal church. Teaching church history, church traditions, and church polity serves as a way of giving students value and preventing them from taking their faith for granted. Congregationalist churches, in particular, might find this new and exciting because many of them do not emphasize church history for fear that it will lead to doctrinal questions and other issues. Knowing the church's lineage gives a greater sense of identity to the students but, in itself, does not produce disciples.

Youth ministry blogger Austin McCann argues that this model offers some helpful insights for students, but it lacks application. Building a youth ministry on ancient principles, especially when those ministries thrive on progress and creativity, proves idealistic but difficult

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[159]. Tim Schmoyer, "My response to Dare 2 Share's 'Deep & Wide' ministry strategy," *Life in Student Ministry* (blog), May 7, 2008, accessed August 20, 2017, www.studentministry.org/my-response-to-dare-2-shares-deep-wide-ministry-strategy/.

to integrate.[160] These principles are better absorbed into another model than functioning as a stand-alone strategy.

This method shores up the disengagement from the church that could happen with private school students. The church needs to challenge them in their evangelism, in their growth, and in their mentoring relationships so they can become fully formed disciples of Christ who will, in turn, lead future generations toward Christ.

Homeschool

The D6 discipleship model provides a holistic, family-based ministry where parents actively participate in their children's spiritual growth. This method is grounded in biblical truth, and it provides a strong foundation that will serve their students well as they enter adulthood. This model, however, struggles to balance quality instruction with evangelistic community influence. Like their private school counterparts, homeschool families need not neglect those in their community without a Christian heritage or a functional family structure; homeschool families need to advocate for their neighbors.

Chap Clark, professor of youth ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary, critiques the D6 model by saying, "If we are not careful, the D6 approach could unintentionally become a holy huddle of Bible-bubbled Christians who are so sheltered from the world that they are completely irrelevant to changing society."[161] His Adoption model could supplement the D6 model by having families "adopt" struggling students and provide much-needed Christian influence and direction.[162] The fusing of these methods balances biblical parenting with community influence.

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[160]. Austin McCann, "Book Review: Youth Ministry in the 21st Century" (blog), September 16, 2015, accessed August 15, 2017, https://austinmccann.com/2015/09/16/book-review-youth-ministry-in-the-21st-century/.

[161]. Chap Clark, ed., *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century: Five Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

[162]. Ibid.

Gospel-Centric Worldview

This study now focuses on some of the methods made famous by pastor Timothy Keller in reaching New York City for Christ. The rationale of using this gospel-centric plan stems from his success in planting a church in one of the most diverse and worldly settings yet producing great results and engineering an expanded gospel presence in a city that was less than 2 percent evangelical Christian upon his arrival.[163] The diversity of New York demonstrates that people of all walks of life and nationalities can worship together and embrace sound doctrine.

Churches that seek to reach various communities should be flexible regarding methodology but unified in their theology. Existing decades-old strategies need to be evaluated and upgraded or replaced with more effective methods.[164] Student pastors, leaders, and volunteers ought not settle for ministries that pander to specific groups or placate the masses. They should be brave enough to challenge the status quo, make necessary changes, and advance their ministry in the face of cultural and spiritual opposition. Student ministries should help participants of all walks of life understand their faith, defend what they believe, and bear witness in their contexts.[165] This author suggests that a gospel-centric worldview can unite the subgroups, removing distractions based on cultural and lifestyle preferences, and the hope of this study is to have a similar result with students of varying worldviews and educational backgrounds.

Gospel Centrality vs. Pluralism

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[163]. "A gospel movement is rising in New York City," Rise, accessed July 25, 2016, http://rise.redeemer.com/.

[164]. Steve Wright with Chris Graves, *reThink, Decide for Yourself: Is Student Ministry Working?* (InQuest Ministries, 2007, 2012), 43.

[165]. Ibid., 53.

Pluralism is defined as "a condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., coexist."[166] New York City, in particular, has functioned as a historically pluralistic location due to the vast diversity of its inhabitants. From its inception, New York welcomed immigrants of all nationalities from all over the world. In New York, Eastern and Western people live, work, and play side by side in tight quarters. From a social point of view, pluralism is a means of allowing diverse people from different backgrounds to live and work peacefully together without causing problems. Politically this can be advantageous, making a city work more efficiently with less unrest between segments of the population. Separation of church and state, gender neutrality, and public policies provide an atmosphere of equality for each American to choose his or her career, lifestyle, and faith.[167]

From a religious point of view, pluralism emerges from and relates to Eastern thought. Pluralism tends to have strong advocacy from Hindu, Buddhist, and irreligious citizens. In the twenty-first century, "fundamentalism" conjures images of extremism and violence. Advocates for pluralism seized on this narrative and offer new converts a tranquil alternative to the ugliness associated with religious radicals. However, it could be dangerous to believe all religions with definitive theologies and practices are "noninclusive." In monotheistic faiths, pluralism can undermine and cheapen the doctrines of the religions that it seeks to unite. The goal within a megacity is not to mesh the religions into a single faith; it is to create a sense of respect among different points of view.

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166. *Oxford Dictionary* (US English), s.v. "pluralism," accessed July 25, 2016, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/pluralism.

167. E. H. Prodromou, "Religious Pluralism in Twenty-First-Century America: Problematizing the Implications for Orthodoxy Christianity," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 72, no. 3 (2004): doi:10.1093/jaarel/lfh065.

Keller's commitment to gospel centrality in his teachings and practices offers a stark contrast to pluralism's views. In a lecture entitled "What Is the Gospel?," Keller describes the gospel as his worldview:

> The gospel is not just a set of beliefs that you have to agree to in order to get into the club—in a sense that is true. The gospel is not just a set of beliefs. It is a grid, a whole distinct worldview. A worldview is a set of beliefs so basic that they determine how you look at everything else. The gospel is a grid, a way of looking at everything differently.[168]

Pluralism's worldview seeks many "grids," or ways of looking at the world, while Keller argues that one's faith should be so ingrained that it influences the thoughts, feelings, and actions of believers. God's sovereignty and the gospel are at the center and heart of everything that Keller teaches. He does not view the gospel as the first step in the relationship to God, such as the simple ABCs. This elementary view of the gospel trivializes Christ's sacrifice and does not empower Christians.[169] In contrast, Keller preaches the sufficiency of the gospel as "A through Z," and he illustrates it as an essential hub of a wheel rather than as the bottom steps of a staircase.[170] Without the gospel of Jesus Christ, everything falls apart.[171] Keller sees regeneration as the first step in the process of sanctification toward glorification.[172] The believer's relationship with God begins with justification but must continue into a thriving faith that inhabits all facets of his or her life.[173] Keller argues that the gospel is growing within each believer and is powerful

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[168]. Timothy Keller, "What Is the Gospel?," taught August 12, 2003 (CD); also available as an e-book.

[169]. Timothy Keller, "The Centrality of the Gospel," Gospel in Life, accessed July 22, 2016, http://www.gospelinlife.com/the-centrality-of-the-gospel-9160.

[170]. Ibid., 2.

[171]. Ibid, 2-4.

[172]. Ibid, 2-4.

[173]. Ibid, 2-4.

enough to be trusted in the face of obstacles.[174] Growing Christians can engage an uncertain future with the confidence of God's sovereignty. When believers know that God is sovereign in all circumstances, even in harsh conditions, this knowledge empowers them to have a positive influence on their community.

Schools fear merging with other educational entities because they feel it's going to create a pluralistic culture. They think it means each of the schools has to lose its particular hard-earned culture to accommodate the views and perceptions of other groups. Keller does not champion the concept of pluralism. He values the cultures of the diverse surrounding communities as opposed to homogenizing or assimilating those cultures into a one-size-fits-all spirituality. He counters this view with gospel centrality, which shapes each particular culture and allows the gospel to influence the culture without necessarily coercing that religion. Hence, schools can remain unique in their academic and intellectual cultures while also experiencing the gospel influence. Each school culture can become the godliest version of itself, which will inspire its members to love and respect other parishioners from other walks of life. This philosophy breaks down the largest barrier to school integration. The fear of losing their uniqueness and hard-fought successes often prevents school students from embracing one another in Christ. When students and families know that they can retain their God-given identities, adhere to biblical truth, and share in a body of Christ, they are more likely to embrace biblical fellowship.

<div align="center">Moralism and Relativism</div>

Moralism and relativism are two barriers within the various school systems. Moralism can seduce private Christian schools and homeschool movements. This works-based philosophy of pleasing God with lifestyle and works often alienates these kinds of groups as they feel

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174. Ibid, 2-4.

contaminated by their surrounding communities, causing isolation and mistrust. Moralism is seductive to high achievers because it places them in control of their spirituality and they are rewarded with feelings of pride and exclusivity. This trait also puts other groups on edge because they feel objectified and judged by moralistic people. Pastors continue to point these members toward Christ, while filtering curriculum and speakers that espouse this philosophy.

If moralism plagues homeschool and private Christian school families, relativism proves to be a problem in public schools, which are so steeped in relativism that to some degree it inevitably influences families with children who attend. Policies embracing naturalistic worldviews, pluralism, and other philosophies often indoctrinate students with relativism, who, in turn, might try to force them on people with theistic worldviews. These disagreements usually manifest themselves during class discussion. Pastors, Sunday school teachers, and small group leaders should manage these discourses carefully and with compassion while steering the conversation toward the gospel.

At the center of these two philosophies lies a quest for the moral high ground. Members of one group feel they own the high ground because of their discipline and actions, while members of the other claim the high ground because of their openness and tolerance. These two philosophies are often rooted within schooling methods and cause some of the divisiveness that youth ministries experience. Church members motivated by moral high ground rarely assimilate into biblical fellowship. They also could undermine church leadership and cause unneeded discord.

Keller's criticism of what he calls the "two thieves" speaks to moralism and relativism. According to Keller, these views steal joy and rob power.[175] Moralism represents what most

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[175]. Ibid, 2-4.

seekers and irreligious people think of Christianity. This view focuses on rules and moral

conduct that tends to focus on behavior modification. Due to this view's reliance on human

willpower, it is associated with moral failure and misery. When people choose a pluralistic view

over Christianity, they are usually rejecting moralism. Relativism tends toward a liberal

interpretation of religion that is similar to pluralism. Relativists are put off by moralism and find

orthodoxy inhibiting. People who subscribe to this view feel that each individual should

determine his or her own view of right and wrong.[176]

While these views seem contrary to one another, Keller asserts that they are similar.[177] He

observes that both views distort God, deny sin, and avoid a deep commitment to Christ.[178] Both

of these views are designed to allow each person to rule his or her own life—one view with rules

and disciplines and the other with individual philosophy.[179] Moralism denies sin and our

dependence on God, and relativism only focuses on symptoms, so their adherents often find

those views lacking. The gospel-centered worldview rightly puts our hope and loyalty in

Christ.[180]

Keller's Christ-centered worldview is the foundation on which his ministry and influence

rest. He first establishes human need for the gospel. He then lets that empower and change new

believers. Then, as people become more like Christ, many personal demons and societal ills fall

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[176]. Ibid., 3.

[177]. Ibid, 3.

[178]. Ibid, 3.

[179]. Ibid, 3.

[180]. Ibid., 4.

by the wayside, and God's people become agents of change and hope in their communities. For this reason, teaching and preaching are integral parts of Keller's ministry.

Teaching church members that neither of these "two thieves," as described by Keller, is a goal within church community helps put members at ease and gives the pastor a chance to bring them into the fold. Gospel-centric worldviews put Christ first and allow Christians to see and follow Him first and foremost. When believers achieve this strategy, barriers come down, and they find themselves working and seeking God side by side. Forming these groups into a biblical community is not natural. It is supernatural, and only God can do it.

Steward Leadership

Keller proposes a form of leadership called "Steward Leadership."[181] He states, "The most fundamental definition of a steward leader is one who has power and authority to cultivate and develop resources entrusted by God. But the essence of Christian leadership is to humbly develop those resources for God's glory, not for our own."[182] Leadership of this kind is a form of servant leadership, and it fits well with his advocacy for building community, serving locally, and championing social justice. Keller asserts that every congregation member has a role to play in changing the community. This philosophy begins with creation.[183] In Genesis 1, Adam and Eve are given dominion over the earth.[184] While other theologies use this passage to excuse their poor treatment of the environment, Keller argues that believers are held accountable for their use

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[181]. Timothy Keller, "The Steward Leader: A Biblical Model for Leadership (with Q&A)," Gospel in Life, accessed July 22, 2016, http://www.gospelinlife.com/the-steward-leader-a-biblical-model-for-leadership-with-q-a-4585.

[182]. Ibid., 1.

[183]. Ibid, 1.

[184]. Ibid, 1.

of creation: "As stewards, Christian leaders cultivate the resources in their care for the glory of God and the good of others."[185] This form of leadership transitions believers from consumers of creation to caretakers of creation. Interpretation of the word *creation* should be broad and extend beyond natural resources. Because God created everything, our caretaking should include humanity and the communities where they live.

In the New Testament, the concept of the steward is further explained. In Luke 12:42–46, Jesus references the steward as both ***oikonomos,*** which translates into "master of the house," and ***doulos,*** which denotes a slave, or someone who would belong to the steward.[186] In dealing with the word *slave*, Keller is careful to differentiate between first-century slavery, where the people were not permanent property and were treated more fairly, and the brutal New World slavery of the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries that the church helped abolish.[187] The interpretation of the word demonstrates that while the pursuit of worldly idols entangles believers and enslaves them to harmful desires, devotion to Christ frees believers and brings them peace.[188]

Keller uses this passage to demonstrate the tension of being a steward leader. On the one hand, the leader must correctly rule his or her area of authority to achieve excellence.[189] On the other hand, the leader cannot abuse his or her power.[190] A master provides accountability to the leader and provides repercussions to discourage abuses of power.[191] The desired result of this

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185. Ibid, 1.

186. Ibid, 1.

187. Ibid., 2.

188. Ibid., 3–5.

189. Timothy Keller, "The Centrality of the Gospel," Gospel in Life, , accessed July 22, 2016, http://www.gospelinlife.com/the-centrality-of-the-gospel-9160.

190. Ibid, 4-5

191. Ibid, 4-5

model is a form of leadership that both rules and serves. The power granted to the leader comes with high expectations. Christians are expected to comply with God's commands in his Word, accept whatever comes into their life as part of God's plan, depend wholly on God, and expect God to do great things. Within this framework, Christians accept both their role as image-bearing children of God who have dominion over the earth and the role of servants who are accountable to God and his sovereignty.[192]

For New Yorkers and other urban Christians, this is a concept that is readily synthesized and applied to their local context. Words like *stewardship* and *community* relate to environmentally conscious urbanites looking for human connection in a bustling metropolis. Keller adeptly creates common ground for those seeking faith, and he avoids many of the presuppositions that usually discourage seekers from embracing Christianity. His fresh presentation of a familiar Christian concept both invites new seekers to participate and avoids running off those who are dissatisfied and have considered leaving the church. Steward leadership built the church Keller leads, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, into a thriving urban church, and that principle is beginning to rise in popularity throughout the United States and abroad. Keller's influence is preparing a generation that will attempt to embrace their leadership role under God's authority to serve as better stewards of their communities. Keller hopes that, through steward leadership, communities will begin to feel a gospel presence, one person at a time.

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[192]. Ibid, 4-5.

Keller addresses four primary Christian worldviews: countercultural, culture controlling, culture assimilating, and cultural tipping point.[193] The countercultural worldview retreats from society and holds a dualistic mind-set.[194] It creates a competing culture that is influenced by people's convictions.[195] The weakness of this view is the loss of influence on society.[196] The culture-controlling worldview tries to bend the will of society to adherents' convictions[197] and is most associated with political action and moral initiatives. The weakness of this view is the fact that morality cannot be effectively legislated.[198] Government can keep order in society, but it cannot replace religious conviction. Culture assimilating often begins with the right intentions. Well-meaning Christians reach out to their local community, but without gospel-centrality, they eventually become assimilated or fall into syncretism.[199] The cultural-tipping-point worldview promotes evangelism and asserts that Christians can achieve a moral majority through soul winning that would then lead to positive peer pressure.[200] This view, although idealistic, is unattainable.[201] Further, gospel proclamation ought not be about promoting moralism; it should be about giving glory to God.[202]

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[193]. Keller, "What Is Christian Cultural Renewal?," Gospel in Life, January 4, 2010, http://www.gospelinlife.com/what-is-christian-cultural-renewal.

[194]. Ibid., 1-3.

[195]. Ibid, 1-3.

[196]. Ibid, 1-3.

[197]. Ibid, 1-3.

[198]. Ibid, 1-3.

[199]. Ibid, 1-3.

[200]. Ibid, 1-3.

[201]. Ibid, 1-3.

[202]. Ibid, 1-3.

The gospel-centered worldview leads to a lifestyle of forgiveness and reconciliation. Christians should embrace the grace and forgiveness that they have received and, in turn, share that grace with others.[203] The Christian worldview is something that believers must have in order to make a difference in their culture.[204] Keller employs the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of kingdom to demonstrate the final change that will be felt through the church.[205] In creation, humans must realize they are image bearers of God and stewards of all he has made.[206] Furthermore, the kingdom of God demonstrates believers living out their faith and showing God's grace to their neighbors and friends.[207] Keller's worldview should change the way we look at ourselves and the world around us and makes us want to be better people. We were created in God's image, and we were called to a world full of poor, suffering, and downtrodden who do not know they are children of God.

Youth pastors should create a culture of steward leaders whom God empowers to serve others in his name. This type of leadership brings out the best in leaders because it does not focus on title, power, or preferential treatment. These leaders need to be trained and sent out to the group to practice pastoral care and service and to promote unity. When youth pastors create mentoring relationships similar to that of Paul and Timothy, with adults and students, they are able to reproduce themselves and expand their influence. Servanthood must be modeled from the top of the organization to the teens, themselves. Student steward leaders offer a powerful

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203. Ibid., 4–7.

204. Ibid, 4–7.

205. Ibid, 4–7.

206. Ibid, 4–7.

207. Ibid, 4–7.

influence on youth ministries. When students understand that they are temporary stewards of a ministry that lives beyond them, they treat the ministry with greater respect and focus more on kingdom impact than on personal preference. When a culture of servant leadership is modeled, emphasis is redirected from the individual to Christ.

Gospel Centrality and Youth Ministry Methods

Gospel-centrality provides the proper worldview to encapsulate and redeem conflicting youth methodologies. Whether D6, Dare 2 Share, or the Ecclesial model, a gospel-centric worldview provides a means of employing multiple strategies to reach distinct student groups while retaining a worldview that unites church members. Homeschool families can passionately champion family ministry while maintaining compassion for non-Christians. Private Christian school families can blossom in their respective institutions but care deeply about their local community. Public school families can reach their campus with evangelistic zeal but also experience biblical community with homeschool students. (Greg Stier has recently implemented some of Timothy Keller's methods into his resources.[208]) These methods, with a gospel-centric worldview, can allow churches to employ effective strategies and methodologies and also lead these groups to Christian unity. Ephesians 4:1–6 challenges students to serve one another.

> I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

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[208]. Greg Stier, *Gospelize Your Youth Ministry: A Spicy "New" Philosophy of Youth Ministry (That's 2,000 Years Old)* (Pennsauken, NJ: BookBaby, 2015).

This worldview, and the attitude of a steward leader, leads students to serve one other and then serve alongside one another in unity and peace.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the implementation issues when attempting to blend private, public, and homeschool students into a cohesive youth ministry. Chapters 2 through 4 profiled different types of public, private, and homeschool students and the methods most commonly used to attract them to church. Methods examined included the D6 family ministry, Fernando Arzola's Ecclesial model, and the Dare 2 Share evangelist model. Chapter 5 recommended a gospel-centric worldview to redeem and unify methods that can fall into pluralism, moralism, relativism, and harmful worldviews. This chapter also examined the work of Timothy Keller and how he successfully unites a diverse and pluralistic congregation without compromising orthodox Christianity.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

Case Study: First Baptist Church

In the fall of 2008, Joelton Youth Ministries (JYM), the youth ministry of First Baptist Church, Joelton, Tennessee, was comprised of roughly sixty percent homeschool students, almost forty percent public school students, and virtually no private Christian school students. The statistics reflected a lengthy interim where many students had vacated the program, and a core of supportive homeschooling families had kept the ministry afloat. The dynamics were tense, with rhetoric going back and forth between the public school and homeschooling communities regarding matters of education and faith. The ministry was, for all intents and purposes, two youth ministries that tolerated each other. This setting was a battle between competing worldviews. Each group promoted their lifestyle, methodology, and ideology. Rival viewpoints were not appreciated. The author's challenge was to build biblical community in an environment divided by competing lifestyles and worldviews. Since then, the author worked diligently to correct this problem as the ministry grew in scope and numbers. This chapter will analyze his progress and introduce subjects for further research.

Purpose

Previous chapters outlined the different cultural and spiritual needs of families represented in different schooling options. This chapter will reveal data and analyze findings from the author's qualitative research. A survey will assess the effectiveness of strategies employed to create biblical community among students from differing schooling methods at Joelton Youth Ministries. The author consulted methods from more than two decades of youth ministry experience to encourage participation, teamwork, and mentoring in the First Baptist

Church Joelton youth ministry. Curriculums, camps, conferences, and other resources from nationwide publishers such as LifeWay and Group Magazine, Southern Baptist entities, in-house innovation, and respected authors were employed to encourage student growth and participation.

The author organized these resources into William Yount's research model. He popularized the "Teacher Triad" that encouraged multiple cycles to help make disciples.[209] The author theorized that thinking, feeling, and doing exercises helped students connect with their peers while also growing in holistic discipleship. Whether using their head (teaching), their heart (worship and prayer), or their hands (serving and missions), Joelton Youth Ministries tried to connect students of all schooling methods through discovering their passions and empowering the students to use them for the gospel.[210] Yount's methods were augmented by Timothy Keller's teachings on *Gospel Centrality*, Richard Ross's *D6* Family Curriculum, Lifeway's *The Gospel Project*, Rose Publishing's *Church History Made Easy*, and *Dare 2 Share* ministry resources.

<center>Research Design</center>

The author chose to make a survey available to recent alumni. The author's thesis hinged on employing particular methods to create common interests and community in a formerly non-unified ministry. The last five years of the student pastor's nine-year tenure were selected as a sample size because it allowed for changes made in strategy to take hold and produce measurable results. The study was narrow in its participant base because only former students could determine whether changes in methods led to increased group unity.

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[209] Yount, William. *Called to Teach*. B&H Publishing Group, 1999.

[210] Ibid.

Data Collection

The author compiled rosters from church records. *Shelby Administrative Software* searched for Joelton Youth Ministries alumni from the last five years via First Baptist Church's database. This query complied with Liberty University IRB standards. The author compiled the list of alumni from 2013 to 2017 and found contact information for each graduate. Social media was determined to be the best means of contact due to the participants' age and online activity. Facebook Messenger proved to be the most useful social media tool for sending the survey due to the number of alumni who use that platform. The author sent a direct message to each student with the IRB invitation and a link to a survey hosted through SurveyMonkey.com[211]. Of one-hundred and twelve alumni for that period, contact information and eligibility were found for eighty-five former students[212]. Each of these students received a direct message with the survey. During July and August of 2017, thirty of the eighty-five students took the survey for a response rate just over thirty-five percent. The results featured twelve homeschool responses, twelve public school responses, four private school responses, and two responders replied, "Other[213]." Eighty percent of the respondents took the survey following the initial invitation with fifty-six percent of them taking it within the first seventy-two hours. The other twenty percent required a reminder via Facebook Messenger. Three of the responders took the survey after being personally reminded by the author. Though the survey ran for two months, all of the responders took the survey in the month of July.

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[211] See Appendix A.

[212] Appendix B, Table 22.

[213] Appendix B, Table 1.

Participants

Participants of this study were students who graduated from Joelton Youth Ministries within the last five years. These students were comprised predominantly of students who lived within the tri-county area footprint of First Baptist Church of Joelton. These participants represented three counties and three schooling types. Students were homeschooled or attended public or private school. The church sits at the intersection of Davidson, Cheatham, and Robertson counties. Most students match Joelton's 89 percent Western European demographic, although efforts were made to diversify the ministry during this period. While ethnically homogeneous, the group differed in their political and educational values.

The Survey

The author engaged younger *Millennials* and rising *Homelanders* with mentoring, training, and teaching executed in a participatory format. The author felt that activities steeped in relationship-building and teamwork could break down barriers and bond students from various walks of life. Supplementing these methods were gospel-centric teaching and adult mentors. The author designed the survey to identify which methods were most efficient and looked for additional factors that led to student unity.

Questions one, two, three, eleven, twelve, and thirteen collected specific personal information about the responders. Questions four through ten asked about their view of Joelton Youth Ministries and their fellow students. Questions ten through twenty asked about the effectiveness of different methods used to promote group unity. The author employed methods from *Dare 2 Share*, *D6*, Tim Keller, and William Yount. Question twenty-one determined respondents' participation in activities in Joelton Youth Ministries.

The author built the survey on the Lickert scale[214]. He wanted the survey to be a convenient multiple-choice quiz to promote participation, and still provide measurable results. Seventy-three percent of participants finished the survey in less than five minutes. Only two participants took longer than ten minutes to complete the survey. The author imported the data into IBM SPSS statistical software to examine data trends in the context of his thesis[215].

Analysis

Question one: What kind of high school did you attend[216]?

This question sets up the thesis. Based on survey responses, the author determined the educational background of each participant as he gathered data. This information allowed the author to cross-reference each student's reply with his or her answers to the rest of the questionnaire to gain insight on the student's experience from his or her point of view. In the study, twelve public school students replied for forty-one point three eight percent of the sample. Homeschool students responded at the same rate. Private school students comprised of ten percent of responses while those who experienced multiple schooling options from the list represented almost seven percent of the sample. The author will reference this data later in the chapter to correlate student experiences.

Question two surveyed gender[217].

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[214] "Likert – Data Revelations," Data Revelations, , accessed October 21, 2017, http://www.datarevelations.com/tag/likert.

[215] "IBM SPSS Software," IBM SPSS - IBM Analytics, March 17, 2016, , accessed October 21, 2017, https://www.ibm.com/analytics/us/en/technology/spss/.

[216] Appendix B, Table 1.

[217] Appendix B, Table 2.

The author wanted to know the gender of each respondent in order to cross-reference this information with schooling methods and educational background to determine any differences between the data from each gender. A point of particular interest is whether students of the same schooling type had different experiences with Joelton Youth Ministries methods based on gender. Sixty percent of the respondents were female, and forty percent were male. These responses are consistent with the demographics of Joelton Youth Ministries. There were not enough female private school responses to produce meaningful data for analysis. This was a setback for the author's research.

Question three: "How many years did you attend Joelton Youth Ministries before graduating from high school[218]?"

This answer determined whether longevity played a role in students' responses to the questions. The author wanted to know if newer students had a different experience than those who grew up at First Baptist Church, Joelton. Most of the responders had longer tenures at Joelton Youth Ministries. There were no responders who attended First Baptist Church youth ministry for less than two years. This statistic proved disappointing to the author as he wanted to assess data on students who experience Joelton Youth Ministries for a short time.

Question four: "Describe your relationships with other students in Joelton Youth Ministry[219]."

The author desired to gain feedback from students regarding their experience at Joelton Youth Ministries. With fifty-six point six seven percent saying they experienced close

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[218] Appendix B, Table 3.

[219] Appendix B, Table 4.

friendships, thirty percent saying they had casual friends, three percent neutral, and ten percent having acquaintances. Zero percent of responders indicated that they kept friendships exclusively within their group from school. Surprisingly, homeschool students represented the highest and lowest levels of satisfaction. The homeschool girl responders recorded that one-hundred percent of them had close friendships with students from other schools. Homeschool boy surveys indicated that forty percent of them mainly spent time with their friends. The homeschool girls' result exceeded expectations while the homeschool boys' result was consistent with integration concerns from Chapter four.

Question five: "You liked having students from multiple schools and schooling methods in the same youth ministry[220]?"

This question was important to the author's thesis. It asked if students like having multiple schools represented in the same youth ministry. The answers to this question also came back in the affirmative. Nearly eighty-seven percent of the students either agreed (thirty-six point six seven percent) or strongly agreed (fifty percent) that having students from all schools was beneficial to them. Thirteen percent of the students were neutral, and no students indicated that they would prefer a youth ministry with only their schoolmates present. Private school boys had the strongest approval, with one-hundred percent of them strongly agreeing to seeing the benefit of multiple school types. Sixty percent of homeschool boys were neutral regarding the presence of students from other schools. This report surpassed the expected outcomes for public school students, private school students, and homeschool girls. Given the cultural differences shared in

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[220] Appendix B, Table 5.

chapters two through four, it was reasonable to expect negative feedback. The homeschool boys'

sixty percent neutrality, while lower than their peers, did not express outright dissatisfaction.

Question six: "Relationships with students from other schools added depth and

perspective to your faith[221]."

The question of whether students from other schools added additional perspective yielded

forty percent in strong agreement, thirty-six point six seven percent in agreement, twenty percent

neutral, and three point three percent in disagreement. No student strongly disagreed with this

statement. Private school boys were the highest score with one-hundred percent. By contrast,

twenty percent of homeschool boys strongly agreed with the questions, forty percent agreed,

twenty percent were neutral, and twenty percent disagreed (which represented most of the overall

disagreement). Though the homeschool boys continue to be an area of concern, the affirmative

statements from other schooling types prove encouraging. Of particular interest was the high

agreement from private school boys and homeschool girls. This result answered chapter three's

question whether other schooling methods would distract or irritate students with bible as part of

their school curriculum. Determining the reason for twenty percent disapproval from homeschool

boys will serve as a topic of further study.

Question seven: "Your relationships with other students deepened or improved during

your time in Joelton Youth Ministries[222]."

The author wanted to know whether students' relationships deepened or improved during

their time in Joelton Youth Ministries. The answers revealed that fifty-three point three percent

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[221] Appendix B, Table 6.

[222] Appendix B, Table 7.

strongly agreed, forty percent agreed, and six point six seven percent were neutral. No students

indicated disagreement or strong disagreement with this statement. Private school boys

represented the highest agreement with sixty-six point six percent responding "strongly agree" as

opposed to public school females, with thirty-seven percent indicating that they strongly agreed.

Twelve and one-half percent of public school girls chose "neutral."

Question eight: "Relationships with students from other schools taught you to have

patience with people who don't agree with you[223]."

This statement yielded thirty percent strong agreement, fifty-three point three percent

agreement, and sixteen point six seven percent neutrality. No students indicated disagreement or

strong disagreement with this question. The results of this question suggest that dissenting

opinions can make for a stronger youth ministry. Chapters two and four asked whether

homeschool and public school students had the patience to co-exist. The lack of negative

feedback implies that they can demonstrate respect and patience with students of varying

backgrounds.

Question nine: "Relationships with students from other schools allowed you to make

friends that you did not expect."

The statement "Relationships with students from other schools allowed you to make

friends that you did not expect" yielded forty-three point three percent strong agreement, fifty-

three point three percent agreement, and no neutrality. The question generated three point three

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[223] Appendix B, Table 9.

percent disagreement and zero percent strong disagreement. Male public school students

outpaced the rest with one-hundred percent of responders answering "strongly agree" while

female public school students had a "strongly agree" result of forty-two point nine percent. The

student who disagreed was the lone private school female. The public school responses affirm

the question asked in chapter two. These students looked beyond stereotypes and cultural divides

to make friends and avoid superficial barriers.

Question ten: "Relationships with students from other schools inconvenienced you or

made you resent people from those schools[224]."

This statement yielded three point three percent strong agreement ten percent agreement,

no neutrality, forty-six point six seven percent disagreement, and forty percent strong

disagreement. Sixty-two and one half percent of female public school students strongly disagreed

with this statement while twenty-five percent of male homeschool students agreed with this

sentiment. The male homeschool response to this questions serves as this survey's most troubling

result. Homeschool males appear to react to their circumstances differently than their peers.

Possible reasons may be a reaction to demographic changes in Joelton Youth Ministries, a

reaction to compulsory church attendance from their parents, or they disliked the survey.

Question eleven: "Emphasis on the Gospel and/or Christian service blended people

together[225]."

This statement yielded thirty-three point three percent strong agreement, fifty-six point

six seven percent agreement, and ten percent neutrality. No students indicated disagreement or

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[224] Appendix B, Table 10.

[225] Appendix B, Table 11.

strong disagreement on this question. Public school males expressed seventy-five percent strong agreement, while homeschool males expressed twenty percent strong agreement and twenty percent neutrality. The gospel served as the unifying force in bringing these groups together. They needed something bigger than their personal styles, tastes, and worldview to unite them into a community of faith.

Question twelve: "Did you serve in a leadership role with Joelton Youth Ministries[226]?"

Seventy percent of students who responded reported that they served in a leadership role, while thirty percent did not. One hundred percent of homeschool male responders indicated that they served in leadership. The author will examine this statistic later in the chapter. Only forty-two percent of public school female responders indicated they served in leadership. These statistics demonstrate that Joelton Youth Ministries has a tendency to place more homeschool and private school students in leadership. The high number of homeschool boys, coupled with some of their negative feedback, suggests that parents may drive their church involvement. Considering their level of group influence, they may see other groups as a threat to their positions of importance.

Question thirteen: "Relationships with students from other schools gave you a better understanding of the body of Christ[227]."

This question yielded thirty six point six seven percent strong agreement, fifty three point three percent agreement, and six point six seven percent neutrality. No students disagreed with this issue, while three point three percent strongly disagreed with this issue. Seventy-five percent

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[226] Appendix B, Table 12.

[227] Appendix B, Table 13.

of public school males strongly agreed with this statement versus 33 percent strong agreement from homeschool females, who also reported twenty-five percent neutrality and twelve point five percent strong disagreement. Similar to the gospel emphasis, the body of Christ was central to teaching students to look beyond themselves. They understood that the church needs everyone to reach its full potential.

Question fourteen. "You would best describe your attendance at Joelton Youth Ministries as.[228]."

With ninety percent of responders indicating they attended Joelton Youth Ministries weekly and ten percent responding that they attended at least once twice a month, these results indicated that the responders consider themselves involved in the ministry. These students would outpace the average American church attender in constituency and be regarded as active in Joelton Youth Ministries.[229] The author preferred more responses from less-involved alumni for richer data results.

Question fifteen: "Prayer helped with group unity[230]."

When surveyed about whether prayer helped with group unity, thirty-six point six seven percent strongly agreed, forty-three point three percent agreed, and twenty percent of the students indicated neutrality. No students stated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Seventy-five percent of public school males reported strong agreement. Females

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[228] Appendix B, Table 14.

[229] http://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/139575-7-startling-facts-an-up-close-look-at-church-attendance-in-america.html

[230] Appendix B, Table 15.

expressed more neutrality on this subject. Twenty-five percent of public school females and forty-two point nine percent of homeschool females expressed "neutral" on this question while all of their male counterparts replied in agreement or strong agreement.

Question sixteen: "Worship helped with group unity[231]."

Thirty percent strongly agreed that worship helped with group unity, fifty percent agreed with the statement, and thirteen point three percent responded neutrally. Nearly seven percent disagreed with the statement, and no responders strongly disagreed with the statement. Seventy-five percent of public school males strongly agreed. Only fourteen point two percent of homeschool females strongly agreed. The same number felt neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed, while thirty-seven point five percent agreed.

Question seventeen: Missions experiences helped with group unity[232].

The statement that missions experiences helped with group unity yielded seventy-three point three percent strong agreement, twenty-three point three percent agreement, and three point three percent neutrality. No responders indicated disagreement or strong disagreement with the statement. Private school males narrowly edged out homeschool females with one-hundred percent strong agreement, while fourteen point nine percent of public school females expressed neutrality. Missions was an integral part of integrating students in Joelton Youth Ministries. Acts of service served as a catalyst to unite students from different backgrounds. Working alongside

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[231] Appendix B, Table 16.

[232] Appendix B, Table 17.

one another for a cause bigger than themselves gave students a mutual feeling of pride and fulfillment.

Question eighteen: "Sunday School or Discipleship helped with group unity[233]."

In response to the statement that Sunday school or discipleship helped with group unity, forty percent of the responders strongly agreed, fifty-six point six seven percent agreed, and no responders indicated neutrality. Only three point three percent of the responders disagreed with the statement, and none of the responders indicated strong disagreement. Most of the groups were consistent in their answers. The lone disagreement came from a private school female.

Question nineteen: "Special Events helped with group unity[234]."

The question of whether special events helped with group unity yielded sixty-three point three percent strong agreement, thirty percent agreement, and six point six seven percent neutrality. No students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. One hundred percent of private school males strongly agreed, as did seventy-five percent of public school males.

Question twenty: "Adult leaders helped with group unity[235]."

This question yielded thirty-six point six seven percent strong agreement, forty percent agreement, and sixteen point six seven percent neutrality. This question had three point three percent disagreement and three point three percent strong disagreement. Seventy-five percent of public school males strongly agreed, while twenty-five percent of homeschool males strongly

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[233]Appendix B, Table 18.

[234] Appendix B, Table 19.

[235] Appendix B, Table 20.

disagreed. The lone private school female disagreed. Adult leaders were an indespensible

resource in integrating Joelton Youth Ministries. Sunday School teachers, worship arts

volunteers, and chaperonnes reinforced the group culture. There was also a cross-pollination of

schooling methods among the adult volunteers. As parents and teenagers were able to make

friendships across

Statement 21: "I participated in the following actitivities with Joelton Youth

Ministires[236]."

This final question emphasized strategies from the author to help with group unity. The

highest participation was in Sunday school and discipleship along with missions and Wednesday

night worship services.

Based on the data and feedback, the most popular activities were mission trips, small

groups, Sunday school, camps, special events, worship, local missions, and teaching. These

participation methods represent a balance between the different ministry philosophies examined

in early chapters and Yount's teaching philosophy. Whether thinking (teaching, Sunday school,

small groups), feeling (worship), or doing (missions, activities, camps, serving), students had the

opportunity to grow in their faith and in their personal relationships.

Observations

Homeschool males and the private school female accounted for most of the negative

feedback. The lack of private school female participation signals the need to invest in that

demographic for further research. That missing demographic would add depth to this research.

The author did not anticipate as much negativity from the homeschool males, particularly

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[236]Appendix B, Table 21.

considering that one-hundred percent of these responders served in a leadership capacity. In particular, the twenty-five percent response on question ten, indicating some underlying resentment towards students from other schools, deserves more attention. Whether this disconnect is the result of missed programmatic opportunities or a cultural barrier, the author may create follow-up research to identify more effective methods of integrating this group.

Eighty-five percent of students who attended Student Leadership University served in a leadership role in Joelton Youth Ministries. Serving in those roles was not a prerequisite to attend. The author would like to find out whether that program created new leaders or attracted existing leaders. The author may explore whether this program could encourage more public school females to assume leadership roles.

Missions and activities played a vital role in student integration. These students did not spend time together during the school week, so shared experiences were crucial in building friendships and connection with one another. Activities allowed the students to enjoy each other's company and dialogue about important issues and concepts. Missions allowed the students to bond while working toward a common goal.

Most of the responders were active and served in a ministry role. While attempts were made to attract participants of all types and the return rate was thirty-five percent, the researcher wanted more casual participants to take the survey. If students who were critical of the ministry abstained from taking the survey, it could influence the data results. The author may introduce new research to target those new to the church.

Teaching and vision-casting should not be understated. The programmatic elements were helpful, but the gospel-centric emphasis provided vision. With no disagreement or strong

disagreement on survey question eleven, students affirmed the importance of the gospel in group unity. As the church moves forward, Joelton Youth Ministries encourages continuation of gospel-centric teaching with purposeful service opportunities that promote teamwork and cooperation.

Survey Considerations and Weaknesses

This study featured some unique considerations. Some environmental and ministry characteristics might not be reproducible. The church is located in the American South. Its cultural flavor might help students better integrate, and some of the successful methods might not translate in other parts of the world. The most unique consideration is the timeframe of the study, including the youth pastor's age and experience coupled with a longer timeframe. The youth pastor's tenure of nearly ten years provided an uncommon but advantageous perspective for measuring this hypothesis. A five-year sample size turned out to be an advantage not available to most churches. Most pastors' tenures last three to four years.[237] This particular pastor's project benefited from observing how a church culture can migrate from dysfunctional to functional over a longer period of time. These results might not always be reproducible if youth pastor tenures are shorter or if the youth pastor is less experienced. This project took several years, great patience, and careful implementation. Smaller churches might have different experiences as they gain critical mass to balance the different ministry cultures.

This study lacked the financial and human resources to examine this topic in a broader context. Therefore, the scope of this study was very narrow. This paper is not exhaustive. It is intended to introduce new research into the area of youth ministry. These findings, however, may

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[237] http://thomrainer.com/2014/06/dangerous-third-year-pastoral-tenure/

lead to future research with a more comprehensive range and a more extensive territory. The author desires to develop these observations at the local, regional, and possibly national level.

Though every context will differ according to their local culture, strides can be made to resource leaders struggling with these three unit cultures. The survey was limited in scope. The author desired to collect more data, particularly in the areas of private school students. This project depended on responses to support its thesis. Not all of the subjects responded to the invitation to take the survey. A two-month timeframe should have been ample; the non-responders did not heed the author's pleas to take the questionnaire. While within the guidelines and response rate, the author preferred a more robust sample size.

The survey also missed a few opportunities. The author could have been more specific in correlating methods to the results. Tying particular methodologies to specific schooling types would produce more compelling data and better connect early chapters of the thesis to chapter six.

Research Applications

Future applications for this research include denominational training, conference speaking, and a textbook entitled *A Youth Pastor's Guide to School Outreach*. This work will appear in youth periodicals, podcasts, and other forms of media. This project established the groundwork for other youth pastors to understand their local schools, feel more confident in reaching out to those various schools and anticipate the issues that come with integrating students from different schools.

Final Reflection

This project represents the culmination of over two-decades of student ministry experience. The communities examined in this study represent more than raw data and ministry strategies, they represent cherished friends and parishioners who have immeasurably blessed the author with their unique gifts, perspectives, and ideas.

After the *Church Growth Movement* of the late twentieth century, which emphasized narrow target demographics in suburbia, planning to reach groups of differing attitudes and opinions seemed counterintuitive. The twenty-first century, however, is trending in a more diverse and urban trajectory. This societal change will challenge narrowly focused churches to look at their neighborhood with a fresh perspective. Whether churches choose to start new churches to reach underserved communities or allow for stylistic fluidity in their existing church, they will realize that, aside from extremes, communities will need more than specialty churches focused on an exclusive platform. Building biblical community with these subgroups will not be unlike ministering in a pluralistic context. Pastors and youth pastors can employ a similar methodology to missionaries and church planters who provide a gospel presence in hostile environments.

Public schools continue to serve as a focal point of each local community. These institutions reflect the local culture and allow pastors an opportunity to engage in the lives of people from all walks of life. Public school students represent a window to the local community. Pastors should engage their parishioners to become part of PTO and other areas of influence to make the church's presence felt. Integration issues include worldview, skepticism, and other

possible behavioral problems. This group, however, represents the most fertile mission field and the most significant source of new believers and baptisms.

Private Christian schools range from modest church-based schools to lavish college preparatory institutions. These academies are unique in their community contribution. The students' presence at the schools usually comes at a sacrifice to a parent or family member. Integration issues include economic disparity, mistaking Christian school for church involvement, and rigid scheduling. Churches should reach out, mobilize families who attend these schools and encourage the students in to connect their Christian education to the local church.

Homeschool students represent a growing subculture that is diverse in its scope and methodologies. Whether they homeschool due to religious and cultural convictions or educational advantages, the students represent a fertile mission field and the excellent resource for churches. Integration issues include isolation, individuality and theological differences of opinion. Pastors should approach the students carefully. They need to understand their unique characteristics to minister to this group efficiently. If integrated, these students can be a powerful resource for the local church, and they can reach their communities for Christ.

Schools represent a fertile mission field with specific needs and challenges. Aside from their stylistic and cultural differences, schools resemble their local community or a particular sub-culture. As the world continues to urbanize, schools and churches may not have the luxury of maintaining a homogenous culture. Ministries should begin the painful process of defining their distinctive theology and practices while strategizing how to assimilate people according to their faith, rather than their preferences.

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Appendix A

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1.   **What kind of high school did you attend?**

A. Public School
B. Private School
C. Homeschool
D. Charter School or Magnet School
E. Other _____

2.   **Gender**

A. Male
B. Female

3.   **How many years did you attend Joelton Youth Ministries before graduating from high school?**

A. 0-2 Years
B. 3-4 Years
C. 5-6 Years
D. 6-7 Years
E. More than 7 Years

4.   **Describe your relationships with other students in Joelton Youth Ministry**

A. I made close friends with students from other schools.
B. I made casual friends with students from other schools.
C. I mainly spent time with friends from my school, but I had acquaintances from other schools.
D. I only spent time with friends from my school.
E. None of these options describe me.

5.   **You liked having students from multiple schools and schooling methods in the same youth ministry?**

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neutral
D. Disagree
E. Strongly Disagree

6.   **Relationships with students from other schools added depth or perspective to your faith.**

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neutral

D. Disagree

E. Strongly Disagree

7.   Your relationships with other students deepened or improved during your time in Joelton Youth Ministries.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Neutral

D. Disagree

E. Strongly Disagree

8.   Relationships with students from other schools taught you to have patience with people who don't agree with you.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Neutral

D. Disagree

E. Strongly Disagree

9.   Relationships with students from other schools allowed you to make friends that you did not expect.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Neutral

D. Disagree

E. Strongly Disagree

10.   Relationships with students from other schools inconvenienced you and make you resent people from those schools.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Neutral

D. Disagree

E. Strongly Disagree

11.   Emphasis on the Gospel and/or Christian service blended people together.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Neutral

D. Disagree

E. Strongly Disagree

12.   Did you serve in a leadership role with Joelton Youth Ministries? (Band, SLU, AXIS, etc.)
A.   Yes.
B.   No.

13. **Relationships with students from other schools gave you a better understanding of the "Body of Christ."**

C. Strongly Agree
D. Agree
E. Neutral
F. Disagree
G. Strongly Disagree

14. **You would best describe your attendance at Joelton Youth Ministries as:**

A. Weekly
B. Twice per month
C. One per month
D. Quarterly
E. Sporadic

15. **Prayer helped with group unity.**

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neutral
D. Disagree
E. Strongly Disagree

16. **Worship helped with group unity.**

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neutral
D. Disagree
E. Strongly Disagree

17. **Missions Experiences (Mission Lab, AXIS and World Changers) helped with group unity.**

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neutral
D. Disagree
E. Strongly Disagree

18. **Sunday School or Discipleship helped with group unity.**

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neutral
D. Disagree
E. Strongly Disagree

19.   Special Events (Camp, Conferences, SLU) helped with group unity.

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Neutral
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly Disagree

20.   Adult Leaders helped with group unity.

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Neutral
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly Disagree

21.   I participated in the following activities with Joelton Youth Ministries:

    A. Community Service/Local Missions
    B. Sunday School/Discipleship
    C. Wednesday Nights
    D. Worship Arts (Praise Band, AXIS, etc.)
    E. Missions (World Changers, AXIS, Staff Week, etc.)
    F. Camp
    G. Winter Xtreme
    H. Disciple Now
    I. YEC/Lift Tour
    J. Lock In/Lock Out
    K. Student Leadership University

Appendix B:

Table 1.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017
What kind of high school did you attend?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Public School	40.00%	12
Private School	13.33%	4
Homeschool	40.00%	12
Charter School or Magnet School	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	6.67%	2
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 2.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017
Gender

Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	40.00%	12
Female	60.00%	18
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 3.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017
How many years did you attend Joelton Youth Ministries before graduating from high school?

Answer Choices	Responses	
0-2 Years	0.00%	0
3-4 Years	20.00%	6
5-6 Years	26.67%	8
6-7 Years	43.33%	13
More than 7 Years	10.00%	3
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 4.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Describe your relationships with other students in Joelton Youth Ministry

Answer Choices	Responses	
I made close friends with students from different schools.	56.67%	17
I made casual friends with students from other schools.	30.00%	9
Neutral.	3.33%	1
I mainly spent time with friends from my school, but I had acquaintances from other schools.	10.00%	3
I only spent time with friends from my school.	0.00%	0
	Answered	**30**
	Skipped	**0**

Table 5.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

You liked having students from multiple schools and schooling methods in the same youth ministry?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	50.00%	15
Agree	36.67%	11
Neutral	13.33%	4
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered	**30**	
Skipped	**0**	

Table 6.

JYM Alumni Survey
2017

Relationships with students from other schools added depth or perspective to your faith.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	40.00%	12
Agree	36.67%	11
Neutral	20.00%	6
Disagree	3.33%	1
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 7.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Your relationships with other students deepened or improved during your time in Joelton Youth Ministries.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	53.33%	16
Agree	40.00%	12
Neutral	6.67%	2
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 8.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Relationships with students from other schools taught you to have patience with people who don't agree with you.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	30.00%	9
Agree	53.33%	16
Neutral	16.67%	5
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 9.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Relationships with students from other schools allowed you to make friends that you did not expect.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	43.33%	13
Agree	53.33%	16
Neutral	0.00%	0
Disagree	3.33%	1
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 10.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Relationships with students from other schools inconvenienced you. You resented them.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	3.33%	1
Agree	10.00%	3
Neutral	0.00%	0
Disagree	46.67%	14
Strongly Disagree	40.00%	12
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 11.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Emphasis on the Gospel and/or Christian service blended people together?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	33.33%	10
Agree	56.67%	17
Neutral	10.00%	3
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 12.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017
Did you serve in a leadership role with Joelton Youth Ministries? (Band, SLU, AXIS, etc.)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes.	70.00%	21
No.	30.00%	9
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 13.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017
Relationships with students from other schools gave you a better understanding of the "Body of Christ."

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	36.67%	11
Agree	53.33%	16
Neutral	6.67%	2
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	3.33%	1
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 14.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017
You would best describe your attendance at Joelton Youth Ministries as

Answer Choices	Responses	
Weekly	90.00%	27
Twice per month	10.00%	3
One per month	0.00%	0
Quarterly	0.00%	0
Sporadic	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 15.

JYM Alumni Survey
2017

Prayer helped with group unity.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	36.67%	11
Agree	43.33%	13
Neutral	20.00%	6
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 16.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Worship helped with group unity.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	30.00%	9
Agree	50.00%	15
Neutral	13.33%	4
Disagree	6.67%	2
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 17.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Missions Experiences (Mission Lab, AXIS and World Changers) helped with group unity.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	73.33%	22
Agree	23.33%	7
Neutral	3.33%	1
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 18.

JYM Alumni Survey
2017

Sunday School or Discipleship helped with group unity.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	40.00%	12
Agree	56.67%	17
Neutral	0.00%	0
Disagree	3.33%	1
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 19.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Special Events (Camp, Conferences, SLU) helped with group unity.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	63.33%	19
Agree	30.00%	9
Neutral	6.67%	2
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 20.

JYM Alumni Survey
2017

Adult Leaders helped with group unity.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	36.67%	11
Agree	40.00%	12
Neutral	16.67%	5
Disagree	3.33%	1
Strongly Disagree	3.33%	1
Answered		**30**
Skipped		**0**

Table 21.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

I participated in the following activities with Joelton Youth Ministries

Answer Choices	Responses	
Community Service/Local Missions	83.33%	25
Sunday School/Discipleship	100.00%	30
Wednesday Nights	93.33%	28
Worship Arts (Praise Band, AXIS, etc.)	66.67%	20
Missions (World Changers, AXIS, Staff Week, etc.)	96.67%	29
Camp	80.00%	24
Winter Xtreme	73.33%	22
Disciple Now	76.67%	23
YEC/Lift Tour	46.67%	14
Lock In/Lock Out	86.67%	26
Student Leadership University	53.33%	16
	Answered	**30**
	Skipped	**0**

Table 22.

JYM Alumni Survey 2017

Sample

Students	Responses
Total JYM alumni during sample period.	112
Number of JYM alumni with verifiable contact information	85
JYM Alumni Responses	**30**

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 3, 2017

Michael Wayne Cunningham
IRB Exemption 2922.070317: Integrating Public, Private, and Homeschool Students into a Cohesive Youth Ministry

Dear Michael Wayne Cunningham,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

> (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
> (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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