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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

**DISCIPLESHIP METHODS AND PRACTICES WITHIN THE YOUTH MINISTRIES  
OF THE CONVENTION OF ATLANTIC BAPTIST CHURCHES (1945-2010)**

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

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This dissertation research was completed in co-operation with the International Baptist Theological Study Centre Amsterdam, a collaborative partner of the Faculty of Religion and Theology at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

## Abstract

This research project answers the question ‘What does a historical analysis and evaluation of the youth ministries within the *Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada* (1945-2010) reveal about the presence or absence of the key markers of a discipling youth ministry as identified through the lens of the *theological turn*?’ I critically examine Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (CBAC) youth ministries from 1945-2010. Primary sources include archival material from yearbooks, annual reports, publications of the CBAC, and surveys and interviews with key CBAC youth leaders from this period.

This material was examined through the critical lens of the theological turn in youth ministry as identified and described by Andrew Root and Kenda Creasy Dean. They identified the theological turn as a grassroots movement beginning around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and characterized by theological reflection that led to correctional adjustments within North American youth ministry. I examine Root and Dean’s work, extracting and developing three markers of the theological turn in youth ministry: ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice. I use these markers as a critical lens throughout the remainder of the project.

I then present the historical background of youth ministry professionalization and the youth mission tour movement as I integrated these topics throughout the project. As well, I give significant attention to a critical examination of youth ministry resources that the CBAC endorsed, as well as to my survey and interview responses.

Youth ministry structures and even youth workers themselves often did not encourage young people's ecclesial integration. Youth ministry within the CBAC consistently placed a high value on relationships, but not usually to the point of place-sharing as identified by Root and Dean. Youth leaders regularly used spiritual practices, but young people were often encouraged to practice these individually or within the youth ministry community, rarely with the church congregation.

Through this research project, I demonstrate that the presence of the key markers of the theological turn increased within the CBAC, especially in the late 1900s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. After summarizing my conclusions in the final chapter, I highlight the academic

contributions of my research, interact with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and suggest a pathway toward a new understanding of youth discipleship within the CBAC.

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Dale O Stairs

Lower Coverdale, New Brunswick

December 22, 2021



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# 1 INTRODUCTION OF THESIS, RESEARCH SCOPE, AND DEFINITIONS

## 1.1 Introduction

Church ministry to young people, known as youth ministry, is a branch of ecclesial ministry that has grown and changed dramatically since the end of World War II. Within youth ministry, significant and extensive cultural and ecclesial changes occurred from 1945 to 2010 that shaped how churches would minister to their young people. Evangelical youth ministry is primarily concerned with two things, evangelism to young people and young people's discipleship.<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, I engage the latter, discipleship of young people. I answer the question, 'what does a historical analysis and evaluation of the youth ministries within the *Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada* (1945-2010)' reveal about the presence or absence of the key markers of a discipling youth ministry through the lens of the theological turn? In doing this, I demonstrate that the theological turn emerged at a grassroots level within the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (CBAC).

The writing of Andrew Root and Kenda Creasy Dean<sup>2</sup> on the *theological turn* in youth ministry provides a useful and appropriate critical lens for examining this material. Root and Dean suggest that starting in the 1990s, a movement toward theological reflection began at a grassroots level in youth ministries across North America. Dean states: "our writing reflects a 'turn' that youth leaders were already making as they began to acknowledge the theological

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Moser, and Malan Nel, "The Connection between Youth Ministry's Division of Evangelism and Discipleship, and the Lack of Retention of Youth in North American Churches," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 40, no. 1 (2019): 8. Although my primary focus is on discipleship, it is clearly related to evangelism, and throughout this research project I interact with both.

<sup>2</sup> I will introduce Root, Dean and their writing further on. They are practical theologians who both write about, and practice, youth ministry. Their identification and description of the *theological turn in youth ministry* is central to my research.

depth and possibilities of churches' ministries with young people."<sup>3</sup> As Root and Dean identify the theological turn, they describe a movement characterized by certain discipleship practices.

From studying their description of the theological turn in youth ministry, I propose three markers that signify the theological turn is occurring. Root and Dean do not specifically identify these three markers above others in their work on the theological turn; in fact, they do not specifically write about markers at all. However, I argue that within their work on the theological turn, several characteristics emerge. The markers that I identify, develop, and use to critically examine CBAC youth ministry are *ecclesial integration of young people*, *place-sharing*, and *communities of spiritual practice*.

In this chapter, I will first explain the research project, describing how I answer the research question and critically examine youth discipleship within the CBAC. Next, I narrow the research field by defining my research parameters historically, geographically, and denominationally. Following that, I provide some contextual definitions and explain my personal motivation for this research.

## **1.2 Explanation of Chapters**

As I research and critically examine youth discipleship within the CBAC, I do so through the lens of three markers of discipling youth ministry drawn from Root and Dean's theological turn. These markers are ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice. I provide a detailed explanation of these markers and the theological turn in

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Root, and Kenda Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 16.

Chapter Two. However, I need to comment on the rationale for using a lens developed from two youth ministry writers from mainline traditions in the United States to examine Baptist youth ministry in Atlantic Canada.

The critical apparatus that I use in this research project was developed from the work of two practical theologians from a decidedly different theological perspective than the CBAC. Root and Dean have served with youth ministries and taught from within mainline Christian traditions in the United States in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Despite the different contexts, I argue that they provide significant and important insights into the study of youth ministry across denominational lines. Their identification of the theological turn in youth ministry describes a move toward theological reflection and improved discipleship. Aspects of what they identify as the theological turn in youth ministry help critically examine CBAC youth ministry. Each of the markers drawn from the theological turn represents something that CBAC youth leaders identify as important. However, I demonstrate that CBAC youth leaders have fallen short of consistently seeing these markers within their ministries.

In Chapter Two, I introduce and explain the theological turn and the three markers of discipling youth ministry that I draw from it. Building on that, in Chapter Three, I provide historical context, explaining why an understanding of professionalization within youth ministry and the youth mission tour movement is essential for this research project. In Chapter Four, I use the survey of literature, source material, and methodology to narrow my research field and precisely clarify what I examine and what sources I use. Subsequently, in Chapters Five through Seven, I critically examine CBAC youth ministry through the lens of the markers of discipling youth ministry drawn from the theological turn in youth ministry. Each of these chapters builds on my arguments in the areas of ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice. In these chapters, I paint a picture of CBAC

youth ministries that often did not achieve their discipleship goals and, in most cases, did not integrate young people with the congregation of their church. In Chapter Eight, I pull together all the arguments from my dissertation. As I do this, I demonstrate both the presence and absence of the key markers of discipling youth ministry and argue that the lens of the theological turn in youth ministry has broad potential for application. I also highlight five areas where this research project makes helpful academic contributions. After introducing a possible response from Bonhoeffer to my research and suggesting a pathway toward a new understanding of youth discipleship within the CBAC, I conclude with four suggestions for future research and some final words.

### **1.3 Research Scope**

In this section, I will explain the scope of my research, as the history of youth discipleship is an extensive record that is much too detailed for examination in one research project. To conduct a critical analysis that is beneficial and of academic merit, I have significantly narrowed my research scope. I have confined this research in three specific ways: historically, geographically, and denominationally.

### 1.3.1 Historical Scope

Historically, in this study, I only examine the years between 1945 and 2010. This period is long enough to allow for the observation of ministry evolution by examining youth ministry in each successive decade. I selected 1945 as the starting point for this research because, with the end of World War II, Church ministry to young people changed dramatically. This change was anticipated during the war when one denominational report stated:

Our Young People's Work has been seriously affected by the demands of war. Latest reports from our secretary indicate that probably a hundred of the unions have ceased to exist. In a number of communities every eligible young man and woman has gone. This condition means that a younger age is making up the membership of the unions, and that programs must be built with this change in mind.<sup>4</sup>

After the war ended, another notable change occurred with the return of young adults. As the CBAC annual report in 1946 states, "The young men and women who have been engaged in war services are returning to us, and some of them are lining up with our Young People's groups."<sup>5</sup> The departure and return of those involved in the war effort contributed to changing demographics and youth ministry methodology.

I use 2010 as the end date for this research project because I started my research at that point. However, within the CBAC, 2010 conveniently represents a time when CBAC youth ministry was again changing. Denominational youth ministry leadership was about to change, and the number of young people attending CBAC youth events had begun to decline after a period of rapid growth.<sup>6</sup> Within the defined period of 1945-2010, there is such a large amount of material that I narrowed the research field in other ways.

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<sup>4</sup> Austin MacPherson, *Report of the Board of Christian Education* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces, 1941), 158.

<sup>5</sup> Freeman Fenerty, *Report of the Board of Christian Education* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces, 1946), 189.

<sup>6</sup> Numbers involved in the Tidal Impact youth mission tour peaked with 1300 participants in 2004 after steady increase from the time the movement began in the early 1990s. Numbers declined in 2006 to 1194, and to 791 in 2006. The annual CBAC youth conference, Springforth, increased until 2005, when it peaked with 1986



### 1.3.2 Denominational Scope

Denominationally, I focus on the group presently known as the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada. In 2010, this denominational organization was composed of 469 active churches located within the Atlantic Provinces of Canada.<sup>7</sup> The CBAC is a group of churches formed when three distinct groups merged to form the United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces in 1905-06. The Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces joined with the Free Christian Baptist Conference of New Brunswick and the Free Baptist Conference of Nova Scotia.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the history of the CBAC, the denomination had several different names: *United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces* (1905-1962), *United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces* (1963-2001), *Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches* (2001-2016), and finally, *The Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada* (2016-present). In this research project, I will consistently refer to the organization as Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (CBAC) to avoid confusion.

### 1.3.3 Geographical Scope

This research is confined geographically to the four easternmost provinces of Canada. These provinces are New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island, collectively known as the Atlantic Provinces. This geographical limitation is helpful for two reasons. First, the Atlantic Provinces are geographically separate and

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participants. It then began a steady decline that continued until 2017 when then event had 1202 participants. The next year it merged with a youth event from another denomination. Personal Correspondence, Tidal Impact and Springforth Registrar, Jacqueline Derrah, 2019 08 12.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Reid, *Directory of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches* (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> *The Basis of Union: A Statement of Agreed Upon Doctrine and Church Polity* (Saint John: 1906).

culturally unique from the rest of Canada as they are four small provinces separated from the other anglophone provinces by the francophone province of Quebec. Second, and more importantly, the CBAC is confined to these four provinces. This limitation, in addition to the two previous ones, narrowed the research field and established manageable research parameters.

## **1.4 Definitions**

To communicate clearly, I now explain the nuances of meaning associated with some of the most important words and phrases used in this research. In this section, I introduce these words and phrases and explain my meaning as I use them in this research project.

### **1.4.1 Defining ‘Youth’ and ‘Young People’**

As I examine youth discipleship, I frequently use the terms *youth*, *young people*, and *youth ministry*. Today in North American churches, youth ministry is quite clearly understood as that component of Church ministry that deals with young people in Junior High (or Middle School) and High School, or roughly those between the ages of 11 or 12 and 18. The words *teens* and *youth* are often used interchangeably to refer to those in this age bracket.<sup>9</sup> However, youth ministry means a very different thing in other parts of the world. A 2004 study of youth ministry throughout the European Baptist Federation points out this discrepancy, pointing to an average range of ages between 14 and 28. One country considered youth ministry to

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<sup>9</sup> Terry Linhart, *Teaching the Next Generations: A Comprehensive Guide for Teaching Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 184.

include people up to the age of 40.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, another source explains that in parts of Africa, youth can be any age between 12 and 40.<sup>11</sup> The diversity of meanings for these terms emphasizes the need to provide a contextual definition for my research.

While the geographical age differences are noteworthy, more significant for my research is the historical age differences within the CBAC. In recent decades *youth* has been used to describe only those who have yet to graduate from high school, while youth ministry writers refer to those beyond high school graduation as *young adults*<sup>12</sup>. Before World War II, those in their late teens or twenties primarily composed the young people's movement. The 1943 yearbook of the CBAC explained that with the number of people overseas with the war effort, the makeup of young people's groups shifted dramatically with the entrance of younger teenagers.<sup>13</sup> Those in their twenties and beyond continued to be a significant part of the young people's movement for years to come. However, those in their younger teen years were recognized as a unique group as well. In 1943 Nevin Harner published an article in the journal *Religious Education* that highlighted a new and broad awareness of distinct sub-groups within the category formerly described only as *youth*. After mentioning High School students, he identified young adults and intermediates, or Junior High students, as strategic groups for active ministry.<sup>14</sup>

Within the CBAC, all these societal factors led to a youth ministry structure with several distinct groupings. After the war, young adult groups separated from the groups that

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<sup>10</sup> Jeff Carter, *Youth Ministry Training Research Report* (Prague: European Baptist Federation, 2004), 115-16.

<sup>11</sup> Ronilick Mchami, and Benjamin Simon, *Church Ministry in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2006), 66.

<sup>12</sup> Don Posterski, Marv Penner, and Chris Tompkins, *What's Happening? The State of Youth Ministry in Canada* (Muskoka: Muskoka Woods, 2009), 134.

<sup>13</sup> Raymond Tingley, *Report of the Board of Christian Education* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces, 1943), 158.

<sup>14</sup> Nevin Harner, "A Decade of Youth Work in the Church," *Religious Education* 4, no. 2 (1943): 28-29.

were primarily composed of teenagers<sup>15</sup>. This research project does not focus on young adults. In the 1940s and 1950s, young adults sometimes continued to be referred to as *young people*, so a close reading of my sources was necessary to determine to whom the writers refer. A 1959 article in the denomination newspaper identified three groups: Junior High Fellowship (ages 12-14), Senior High Fellowship (Ages 15-17), and the young people's fellowship (18-25).<sup>16</sup> Just six years later, in 1965, articles in the same magazine wrote about youth ministry without mentioning those in the young adult category. In the Church, *young people* became interchangeable with *teenagers* or those young people in junior high or high school.<sup>17</sup> From this time to the end of my research period, 2010, youth ministry referred specifically to this age group. In this research project, I will use *young people* and *youth* interchangeably to refer to junior high and high school students.

#### **1.4.2 Defining Discipling Youth Ministry**

As this research project is concerned with discipling youth ministry, I will now briefly introduce the critical lens that I use to define discipling youth ministry and as an evaluative tool. In Root and Dean's work on the theological turn in youth ministry, they identify a movement toward more robust discipleship within youth ministry through the practice of theological reflection. As I examined their work, I drew out three markers of this theological turn in youth ministry and use them to critically examine youth ministry within the CBAC

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<sup>15</sup> Tingley, *Report of the Board of Christian Education*, 158. After referring to the impact of the war on young people's numbers, the report mentions younger groups for the first time. Over the coming years, mention of groups that worked with children and young people up to high school age gradually grew until they dominated the reports.

<sup>16</sup> Eugene Thompson, "Reorganization Underway," *The Maritime Baptist* 64, no. 7 (1959): 9.

<sup>17</sup> Fred Gordon, "Understanding Youth's World," *The Atlantic Baptist* 1, no. 15 (1965): 2.  
Fred Smith, "Youth Evangelism," *The Atlantic Baptist* 1, no. 6 (1965): 10.

between 1945 and 2010. These markers of discipling youth ministry are ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice.

Other characteristics of the theological turn that I choose not to use as markers for my critical apparatus are *invitational youth ministry* (youth ministry that invites young people to follow Jesus)<sup>18</sup> and *identification of calling* (youth ministry that provides a place for young people to discover their calling).<sup>19</sup> I decided not to use invitational youth ministry as a marker because, within the CBAC, youth ministries tend to be invitational in nature. I could have examined the nuances of how Root and Dean understand invitation differently than CBAC youth leaders, but with the different ministry contexts, I determined that this would not be as helpful as the markers I selected. I also decided not to use identification of calling as one of my markers. My study of CBAC youth ministry showed that an emphasis on this area had emerged within the CBAC in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, a similar pattern as was seen in the three markers that I decided to use. Adding an extra marker that identifies a similar pattern would not have added much of significant to my research conclusions.

This section on defining discipling youth ministry is brief, as, in Chapter Two, I provide a detailed explanation of the markers of the theological turn that I use to explain the concept.

### **1.4.3 Defining Professional Youth Worker**

One significant aspect of youth ministry that I critically examine is the connection between youth discipleship and professional youth workers, so I will now explain to whom this refers. Vocational youth leaders in the CBAC received diverse levels of training. Some

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<sup>18</sup> Andrew Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 180, 86.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 186-87.

had specific youth ministry training, many had general ministry training, yet some had only prepared through on-the-job experience. I will examine three categories of professional youth ministry within the CBAC. These are those church staff who had a job title that gave them the vocational responsibility of working directly with young people, denominational staff with specific duties in youth work, and those who taught youth ministry courses at one of the schools owned by the CBAC.

A look at North American youth ministry is necessary to establish context. Mark Senter points out that in the early years of North American youth ministry, because “no real training was available, many merely imitated what they had seen or done at Youth for Christ rallies or clubs.”<sup>20</sup> By 2002, when Jonathan Grenz studied the National Association of Youth Ministries' current and past members, he found that most had at least a graduate degree, and 83.8% were either ordained or pursuing ordination.<sup>21</sup> Despite educational differences, the constant among professional youth workers was that, for whatever reason, churches or denominations trusted them enough to hire them to lead ministries to youth. By this, they joined the vocation of youth ministry, becoming people whose profession it was to work with young people within the church. By this definition only, I will refer to them as professional youth workers. In this context, *professional* does not infer any level of vocational training or ordination to ministry; it merely denotes a person hired by a church to work with youth, by a denomination to assist churches in youth ministry, or by a school to teach youth ministry. In Chapter Three, I provide a more complete description of professional youth ministry.

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<sup>20</sup> Mark Senter, “The Youth for Christ Movement as an Educational Agency and Its Impact Upon Protestant Churches: 1931-1979” (Loyola University, 1989), 319-20.

<sup>21</sup> Jonathan Grenz, “Factors Influencing Vocational Changes among Youth Ministers,” *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 1, no. 1 (2002): 77.

## 1.5 Motivation for Research

My motivation for this research is personal, professional, and academic. I have been involved in youth ministry within the CBAC since I was a young person. I care very deeply for the well-being of young people, and as an active Christian, I am particularly concerned for their spiritual development. I have continually worked to disciple youth and young adults throughout my working career and various volunteer capacities. I did this first as a youth pastor, then a denominational youth director and adjunct lecturer at a Acadia Divinity College, and currently through an administrative and teaching role at both Crandall University and Acadia Divinity College. Throughout my adult life, I have also been a volunteer in several youth ministries. This topic is important to me, and research in this area continues to be a labour of love. My motivation for this research resonates with this quote:

For youth leaders strongly committed to the gospel of Christ and to their students, the ultimate goal is to foster the spiritual growth of students, leading them to be genuine life-long disciples of Christ. The challenge for youth workers is to discover how they can best lead students toward growth in their desire to follow Jesus above all else.<sup>22</sup>

I have come to believe that I have been part of the theological turn in youth ministry, and this realization has pushed me to further invest myself in theological reflection and critical analysis of youth ministry.

In addition to this personal motivation, but closely connected to it, is my academic motivation. Very little academic research has ever been conducted in the area of discipleship within youth ministry, and within the region and denomination where I lead, such research is almost entirely absent. In my literature and source material survey in Chapter Four, I introduce the existing material and demonstrate the need for my research. To my knowledge,

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<sup>22</sup> Laura Fleming, and Mark Cannister, "Assessing the Spiritual Formation Factors Most Effectual in the Renovation and Sanctification Process of Adolescents in New England," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 9 (2010): 55.

no study has taken Root and Dean's introduction of theological turn in youth ministry and applied it to a critical analysis of youth discipleship in a specific context.

I am also motivated by reading and discussion about the effectiveness of North American youth ministry. Youth ministry has experienced some harsh criticism in recent years, and on both a practical and academic level, my research speaks to the controversy about discipleship effectiveness. Kenneth Moser and Malan Nel's article 'The Connection Between Youth Ministry's Division of Evangelism and Discipleship, and the Lack of Retention of Youth in North American Churches' highlights the need for a total restructuring of youth ministry.<sup>23</sup> They point out that significant methodological change has been called for by youth ministry leaders Mark Senter (1992), Mike Yaconelli (2003), Mike King (2006), Chris Folmsbee (2006), Mark Oestricher (2008), Andrew Root (2011), and Andrew Zirschky (2012). Moser and Nel argue that the design of North American youth ministry attracts newcomers to the church. However, it does not teach the spiritual practices necessary to keep young people engaged with faith and church as they grow up.<sup>24</sup> My research searches for discipleship within CBAC youth ministry and identifies a growing trend of discipleship and spiritual practices resulting from theological reflection.

Youth ministry within the CBAC has had many strengths. First, it is large. In 2002, a comparison discovered that more young people were involved in CBAC youth ministries than any other Atlantic Canadian organization except the public-school system.<sup>25</sup> Second, it included opportunities for large worship, mission, and Christian growth gatherings of young

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<sup>23</sup> Moser, and Nel, "The Connection between Youth Ministry's Division of Evangelism and Discipleship, and the Lack of Retention of Youth in North American Churches," 8. Moser is currently Professor of Youth Ministry at Briercrest College and Seminary in Saskatchewan, Canada, and Nel is a Senior Research Fellow in Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>25</sup> Bruce Fawcett, Personal Correspondence, 2019 08 16. Fawcett served as the Director of Youth and Family ministries for the CBAC from 1999 to 2006.



people.<sup>26</sup> Despite these strengths, I argue that my critical analysis of CBAC youth ministries demonstrates they often fell short of the discipleship toward which they aimed. In both vocational and academic pursuits, I am motivated to offer youth discipleship critique that is hopefully helpful to youth ministry practitioners

## 1.6 Summary

In this introduction, I have presented the topic and thesis of this research project. I will answer the question, what does a historical analysis and evaluation of the youth ministries within the *Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada* (1945-2010) reveal about the presence or absence of the key markers of a discipling youth ministry through the lens of the theological turn? In doing this, I will demonstrate that the theological turn emerged at a grassroots level within the CBAC. I limited the scope of research historically, geographically, and denominationally to the youth ministries of the CBAC between 1945 and 2010. I also provided contextual definitions for some of the key terms and phrases that I use. I briefly introduced the research project and explained both my personal and academic motivations for this research. I now proceed to Chapter Two, where I establish the critical lens that I use throughout my research to critically examine CBAC youth ministry.

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<sup>26</sup> Bruce Fawcett, "Mission Tours: William Carey to Tidal Impact," in *Roots and Resurgence: Atlantic Baptist Youth Ministry at the Turn of the Millennium*, ed. Bruce Fawcett, Dale Stairs, *Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada Series* (Wolfville: Acadia Divinity College, 2013), 137.

## 2 DEVELOPING A CRITICAL LENS FROM THE THEOLOGICAL TURN IN YOUTH MINISTRY

*Once we see the world through theological lenses, we may wonder what illusion of faithfulness we were operating with before. We will be changed in the way we relate to God, the task he calls us to, and the young people we serve.<sup>27</sup>*

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe, discuss, and defend the critical lens I use for analyzing youth discipleship within the CBAC from 1945-2010. This lens emerges from an explanation of discipling youth ministry drawn from Root and Dean's work. I introduce what has become known as the *theological turn*, a movement that Root and Dean are part of and which they also work to identify and explain. After introducing the theological turn, I introduce my primary sources pertaining to the theological turn, then show how discipleship is an integral part of this movement and demonstrate that it provides an appropriate and helpful lens for critical engagement. Finally, I extract and argue for three key markers<sup>28</sup> of discipling youth ministry from within the theological turn. I do not claim that these three markers are the most important aspects of youth ministry, but I use them to analyze and critique some areas of CBAC youth discipleship that may have been neglected. Throughout this research project, I

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<sup>27</sup> Dave Rahn, "Thinking Theologically as a Right Start," in *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*, ed. Kenda Dean, Chap Clark, and Dave Rahn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 390.

<sup>28</sup> The meaning 'marker' should be understood as both something precise, and something that is the combination of factors that lead to something that is directional but much less precise. It might be helpful to think of a person hiking in the wilderness who sometimes makes use of markers that are very distinct and precise (property lines, electrical power grids or other clear points of reference), at other times the markers are much less precise (general topography, stream location and direction, or distant visible points of reference).

then use these key markers as the primary part of the critical apparatus used to examine youth ministry within the CBAC from 1945-2010.

### **2.1.1 Explanation of the Theological Turn**

In this subsection, I explain what the theological turn means. I will first introduce the books that I use as primary source material to present how Root and Dean understand the theological turn. Then I demonstrate that the theological turn is primarily concerned with the discipleship of young people.

The theological turn is a descriptive phrase for a movement that has been identified and popularized by Root (Carrie Olson Baalson Professor of Youth and Family Ministry at Luther Seminary), and Dean (Professor of Youth, Church and Culture and Princeton Theological Seminary). Together, they identify the theological turn as a youth ministry movement of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century with a new intentional turn toward theological reflection. They explain it as a grassroots movement of youth ministry practitioners who intentionally respond theologically to the issues and challenges of ministry to young people.

Without naming the movement, Dean introduces the core of the theological turn in her 2001 book, *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry*. In this volume, she writes:

Practical theology is concerned with Christian action, with the way we enact faith in the life of discipleship and ministry in the church and in the world. Sometimes, when we begin to recognize the deep connections between our theological convictions and the way we do ministry, we change our actions. Sometimes we change our convictions instead. In either case, we engage in practical theological reflection in order to discover more faithful ways of *doing* faith.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Kenda Dean, Chap Clark, and Dave Rhan, *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 17.

Here, Dean places youth ministry within practical theology, and as such, she convincingly argues that it informs actions and convictions through reflection. She then states that, in consequence, both the way youth ministry practitioners understand their context and go about their ministry tasks should emerge from theological reflection.<sup>30</sup> I argue on the same side as Dean, who believed that this intentional theological reflection within youth ministry was primarily absent prior to the theological turn's emergence. Dean, who served as Root's PhD supervisor at Princeton Theological Seminary<sup>31</sup>, credits Root with naming the movement and taking the theological lead in explaining it.<sup>32</sup> Root describes

... a slowly evolving movement of youth workers... who, in response to their previous ministry of the larger ethos of American youth ministry's 'industrial complex,' have sought to move into the theological. They have turned to the theological not for the sake of the academic or the intellectual but for the sake of the ministerial. They believe that turning theological can give them frameworks and direction in doing ministry with and for young people.<sup>33</sup>

This is a deeper understanding than is found in Dean's writing, who primarily focuses on improved ministry through reflection on practice.

### **2.1.2 Primary Sources for the Theological Turn**

A decade after Dean first introduced the concept, if not the name, of the theological turn, together with Root, she wrote *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*.<sup>34</sup> This book describes what they understand as the most significant change in youth ministry over the past few decades, intentional theological reflection on youth ministry practice. They understand this not only as something they actively promoted but something that has arisen from other

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 15.

<sup>33</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 3-4.

<sup>34</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*.

youth ministry practitioners and something that is changing both in the exercise of youth ministry and the way those outside the discipline regard it.<sup>35</sup>

The primary books I draw from to develop the markers for discipling youth ministry are *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*,<sup>36</sup> *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*,<sup>37</sup> *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*,<sup>38</sup> and *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*.<sup>39</sup> *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry* provides the most in-depth and precise description of Root and Dean's meaning as they identify the theological turn. Drawing their previously written articles, the book identifies contexts from which the theological turn has emerged and identifies the key components of the theological turn.

*Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker* complements *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, as in it, Root interacts with some of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's work, which was formational for Root's identification of the theological turn. Throughout this book, Root explains his understanding of the key aspects of the theological turn. Root's book *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry* is essential for my research as it clearly distinguishes between place-sharing and relationships between youth leaders and young people that involve a strategy of influence. Even though Dean's book, *The Godbearing Life*, was written much earlier (1998) than the others, it is very important as it is the earliest writing from either Root or Dean that begins to identify the themes of what they would later call the theological turn. As such, it specifically provides an important description of communities of spiritual practice, one of the core topics of my research.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.,16.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*.

<sup>38</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*.

<sup>39</sup> Kenda Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1998).

The ideas in these books have not been without criticism. J. Bradley Wigger highlights a concern in his review of *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, stating, "...the arguments verge on overstatement, especially in relation to earlier work in youth ministry and Christian education."<sup>40</sup> Despite this, he recognizes the value of the book and goes on to point out the strength of the work in "nesting youth ministry within the larger field of practical theology."<sup>41</sup>

There has also been some reaction specifically directed at Root's book *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*. Mark Dodrill is critical of Root's perceived "removing any need for proclamation of the Gospel from interpersonal relationships,"<sup>42</sup> with his focus on a theology of incarnation that supersedes intentional evangelism. Dodrill states that this is "not a small adaptation for evangelical thought but rather a fundamental change."<sup>43</sup> While this is a serious criticism, I do not believe it to be a fair critique of the book. Root demonstrates a concern for intentional evangelism, just not in a manner that Dodrill recognized as valid evangelism. In the introduction, Root calls the reader to move "beyond seeing relationships as tools for influence and into seeing the beautiful inner reality of relationships as the invitation to share each other's place, to be with each other in both joy and suffering, and in so doing to witness Christ among us."<sup>44</sup> In a rejoinder that addresses Dodrill's criticism, Root states, "The hope of youth ministry is NOT to get young people to assimilate information, but encounter and follow the living person of Jesus in their very real lives."<sup>45</sup> In *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*, Root offers some corrective advice to evangelical youth ministry,

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<sup>40</sup> Bradley Wigger, "The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry by Andrew Root and Kenda Dean," Book Review, *Theology Today* 69, no. 3 (2012): 349, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0040573612453228b>.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

<sup>42</sup> Mark Dodrill, "A Call for More Critical Thinking Regarding the 'Theological Turn' in Youth Ministry," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 12, no. 1 (2013): 13.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Andrew Root, "Evangelicalism, Personalism and Encounters with the Person of Jesus: A Rejoinder," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 12, no. 1 (2014): 60-61.

and in doing so, provides a very helpful lens for my own examination of youth ministry within the CBAC. Because I argue that the key markers of the theological turn are a critical lens that will be useful within a wide variety of denominational and theological contexts, nuances of theological difference strengthen my critical lens.

Both Dean and Root have other writings to which I will at times refer, but these primarily serve to supplement the primary sources that I have introduced in this subsection.

### **2.1.3 The Theological Turn is Concerned with Discipleship**

Having provided a brief introduction to the theological turn and introduced the related primary sources, I now move on to establish that discipleship is one of the concerns of the theological turn. In the introductory chapter of *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, Dean writes, “ ‘The handing on of faith’ was never intended to be a dogmatic exercise but rather provided a route for spiritual transformation through practices that demonstrate trust in the risen Christ.”<sup>46</sup> Shortly after this, she states, “Faith practices allow young people a way to encounter God.”<sup>47</sup> From these statements, the book proceeds to identify how theological reflection by youth leaders can improve youth discipleship. Concern for youth discipleship is also evident in *The Godbearing Life*, where Dean writes:

if we do our job faithfully, we will not only prepare the earth to receive the seed; we fertilize it so that it bears fruit. Youth ministry as mission creates missionaries, healthy seedlings to be sure, but also Christians who, like Timothy, will mature to bring God’s good news to their own culture.<sup>48</sup>

Here, it is evident that she values the spiritual growth of young people that takes them from the point of being a new Christian toward maturity. This description resonates with my

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<sup>46</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 32.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>48</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 36.

understanding of discipleship. As part of the theological turn, Dean identifies a grassroots movement that she calls a “rhetoric of hope.”<sup>49</sup> She goes on to state that one of the critical components of this is the stress on discipleship.<sup>50</sup>

Root, through his writing, also advocates for discipleship. In *Bonhoeffer as Youthworker*, he primarily focuses on proposing a discipleship model for young people that he builds from the teaching and example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.<sup>51</sup> This book, written after *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, builds on discipleship themes within the theological turn, specifically fleshing out his understanding of place-sharing and ecclesial integration of young people. In his rejoinder to Dodrill’s criticism, Root writes,

I’m interested in how (young) people encounter (experience) the presence of the living God. This is a reality that cannot be influenced by assimilating it as an idea, but can only experience it as he or she has, yes, an *evangelical* encounter with the personhood of Jesus Christ himself who calls their person to come and follow.<sup>52</sup>

As I will explain in 2.3.2, Root consistently argues for authentic place-sharing relationships that are not primarily motivated by a desire for influence, but this quote demonstrates that his understanding of discipleship allows for an evangelical encounter with Jesus Christ.

As Root and Dean present it, the theological turn's core is that ministry practitioners should have a theological response to the discipleship issues and challenges of youth ministry. Both Root and Dean understand the theological turn as a movement focused on strengthening youth discipleship through theological reflection. As well, they both believe that a concern of the theological turn is discipleship, and through their writing, they demonstrate this concern. Having introduced the theological turn and the texts that Root and Dean use to describe it, and having showed that the theological turn is concerned with

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<sup>49</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 28.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>51</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 19.

<sup>52</sup> Root, "Evangelicalism, Personalism and Encounters with the Person of Jesus: A Rejoinder," 66.



discipleship, in the next section, I will proceed to argue that the theological turn provides a helpful and appropriate critical lens for this research project.

## **2.2 Justifying the Theological Turn as a Critical Lens**

There are several reasons why the theological turn offers an appropriate and helpful critical lens for evaluating youth discipleship within the CBAC. In this section, I justify the appropriateness of extracting markers from the theological turn to develop a critical lens for this research project. This justification is foundational for the final section of the chapter, where I will identify and explain key markers of a discipling youth ministry that emerge from within the theological turn. The four reasons that the theological turn is appropriate and helpful as a critical lens are that the theological turn comes from youth ministry theology and theory, it brings a particularly academic theological perspective, it is concerned with the Church and the life of the Church, not just with young people, and it fits nicely in contexts of diverse theological and denominational perspectives. I will now examine each of these reasons in turn.

### **2.2.1 The Theological Turn comes from Youth Ministry Theology and Theory**

The first reason that the theological turn makes an appropriate and helpful critical lens is that it is a concept that emerges at a grassroots level from youth ministry theology and theory. In the introduction to the theological turn in the preceding section, I demonstrated the connection between youth ministry practice, intentional theological reflection, and youth

ministry theory.<sup>53</sup> Theological reflection sets this movement within local church youth ministry and distinctly apart from previous youth ministry that had been more reactive or programmatic.<sup>54</sup> I demonstrate this distinction in Chapter Four, where I give attention to the writing about youth ministry produced during the period of this research project. There I argue that literature written before what Root and Dean refer to as the theological turn lacked the theology and theory that became a more common feature of youth ministry writing during the movement.<sup>55</sup>

### **2.2.2 The Academic and Theological Perspective of the Theological Turn**

A second reason that the theological turn is an appropriate and helpful critical lens is its particular academic and theological perspective. It is important to stress this because, as I show in the Chapter Four literature review, earlier youth ministry writing lacked the academic edge, particularly in areas related to theology. During the theological turn, this began to change. Youth ministry writing emerged that was written for a more academic audience, containing theological themes and reflection.<sup>56</sup> Even more than lacking an academic edge, some earlier youth ministry writers seemed to take pride in the fact they were separate from the academy and perceived as being on the front lines of ministry. In *The Youth Builder* (1988) preface, Jim Burns (PhD) wrote, “I have written as a youth ministry practitioner, not a theorist.”<sup>57</sup> In *Back to the Heart of Youth Work* (1994), Dewey Bertolini

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<sup>53</sup> The connection is made in the preceding section, that inspired partially from the writing and ministry of Bonhoeffer, Root and Dean are theologians who intentionally immerse themselves in youth ministry to become better practitioners. They also describe others in the movement as doing the same thing.

<sup>54</sup> Mark Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010).

<sup>55</sup> Dave Hyles, *Successful Church Youth Work* (Murfreesboro: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1976). This book is a good example of an early youth ministry survey text that is virtually devoid of theology or theory.

<sup>56</sup> Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 293.

<sup>57</sup> Jim Burns, *The Youth Builder* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1988), 11.

refers to his book as “training from the trenches.”<sup>58</sup> Appreciation for in-depth study from youth leaders seemed to be primarily limited to the area of youth culture, as demonstrated by the popularity of the writing of sociologists Tony Campolo and Walt Mueller.<sup>59</sup> In the sphere of youth ministry theory, youth writers tended to value practical experience more than the academy's contributions.

Within the theological turn, youth ministry academics and youth ministry practitioners began to recognize the value of the academic study of ministry to youth in a new and widespread way.<sup>60</sup> The proliferation and popularity of youth ministry books and texts took youth ministry reflection to a much deeper level. I explain this more fully in Chapter Four.

### **2.2.3 Ecclesial Concern within the Theological Turn**

The third reason that the theological turn makes an appropriate and helpful critical lens is that the movement demonstrates ecclesial concern. Within the theological turn, there is a significant emphasis on Church health and growth. The theological turn has implications far beyond youth ministry itself. Both Root and Dean suggest that aspects of the theological turn have significance for ministry among all age groups.<sup>61</sup> They both suggest that a theologically sound discipling ministry to young people necessarily involves and has implications for the entire church.<sup>62</sup> As Dean describes the theological turn, she explains that youth ministry never happens in a ministry silo separate from the rest of the church.<sup>63</sup> While allowing that

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<sup>58</sup> Dewey M. Bertolini, *Back to the Heart of Youth Work* (Wheaton: Victor, 1994), 15.

<sup>59</sup> Tony Campolo, *The Church & the American Teenager* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989).  
Walt Mueller, *Understanding Today's Youth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

<sup>60</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 28.

<sup>61</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 213.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>63</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 92, 99.

Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 108-10.

there may be a place for some age-segregated ministry,<sup>64</sup> she promotes an ecclesiology in which most church ministry, leadership development, and discipleship happen with people of various ages serving and worshipping together.

One thing that emerges as a core belief of the theological turn is that young people's ecclesial integration is not merely for their spiritual formation and leadership development. The integration of young people contributes much to the congregation's leadership, vision, and direction.<sup>65</sup> This focus is evident in the writing of Dean as she encourages church leaders to look to young people for some of the much-needed visionary spark, creative energy, and ministry passion that may be lacking in established churches.<sup>66</sup> Root also argues for youth ministry and young people having a vital role in the church congregation. In the concluding chapter of *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*, he explains that how young people are integrated will look different in different contexts, but that it is the role of church leadership, specifically youth pastors, to advocate for this integration.<sup>67</sup>

#### **2.2.4 Diverse Theological and Denominational Perspectives**

The final reason that the theological turn makes an appropriate and helpful critical lens is that it is a lens that fits within diverse theological and denominational perspectives. There are significant differences between the mainline denominational contexts of Root and Dean and the evangelical context of the CBAC. Root's ecclesial ministry experience is within the

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<sup>64</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 197.

<sup>65</sup> Mark Yaconelli, "Focusing Youth Ministry through Christian Practices," in *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*, ed. Kenda Dean, Chap Clark, and Dave Rhan (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 161.

<sup>66</sup> Kenda Dean, *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 68-72.

<sup>67</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 208-17.

Presbyterian Church (USA),<sup>68</sup> and Dean's is within the United Methodist Church.<sup>69</sup> Yet, I propose that even though the differences are noteworthy, with a good understanding of the bridging similarities, the critical lens remains appropriate and helpful for my study.

Two reasons justify the transferability of the lens to the CBAC. First, Root and Dean are not just writing from their own denominational experience. Second, they both see their writing as having a broader significance than the contexts of their ecclesial involvement.

Within the primary writing that examines the theological turn, both Root and Dean demonstrate that they write from a broader and more theologically diverse perspective than their personal denominations. In *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry*, Dean edits and writes alongside youth ministry writers from many denominational backgrounds. Through this text, she calls for theological reflection on ministry practice in all youth ministries.<sup>70</sup> In *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, Root and Dean write a book that they envision supporting and encouraging youth workers from diverse contexts, strengthening the call for theological reflection and a move toward the theological.<sup>71</sup>

Root and Dean teach and speak widely and interact with many Church traditions. In addition to being full professors at their respective seminaries,<sup>72</sup> they write extensively for academic and practical audiences. Also, both frequently present at youth ministry conferences.<sup>73</sup> Through their writing and international speaking, Root and Dean demonstrate that they believe they have a wider audience than their churches or denominations.

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<sup>68</sup> <http://andrewroot.org/partial-curriculum-vitae/> (accessed 2020 03 31).

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.ptsem.edu/people/kenda-creasy-dean> (accessed 2017 06 14).

<http://ia-pt.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Dean-CV.pdf> (accessed 2017 06 16).

<sup>70</sup> Dean, Clark, and Rhan, *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*, 17-19.

<sup>71</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 15-16.

<sup>72</sup> Dean teaches at Princeton Theological Seminary (New Jersey, USA) and Root Teaches at Luther Seminary (Minnesota USA).

<sup>73</sup> <http://yminstitute.com/the-academy/keynote-speakers-and-musical-talent/> (accessed 2020 03 31).

<https://cultivate2020.sched.com/speaker/kenda2> (accessed 2020 03 31).

Root and Dean do not just write from their own denominational experience; they write for a very broad audience. Because of this, their identification of the theological turn is descriptive of overall North American youth ministry, not merely the denominations where they serve. Therefore, the critical lens that I draw from their descriptive work on the theological turn is appropriate and helpful for my study of CBAC youth discipleship. Throughout my research project, I demonstrate that despite the differences in important areas like the theology of baptism and liturgy styles, the critical lens of the theological turn is very useful for my examination of discipleship within the CBAC. I also argue that as I interact with the critical lens within the confines of the CBAC, I strengthen the lens as an evaluative tool for diverse contexts.

### **2.2.5 Conclusions about the Theological Turn as a Critical Lens**

In this section, I have demonstrated why the theological turn makes an appropriate and helpful critical lens for this research project. I have argued that the theological turn emerges from youth ministry theology and theory, and it brings a particularly academic theological perspective to bear on my research. It is also concerned with the church and the life of the church, not just with young people. Perhaps the most powerful argument for the theological turn as a critical lens is that Root and Dean identify the diverse denominational and theological perspectives within the movement, making this lens particularly useful for my research within the CBAC.

In the next section, I introduce and critically examine the three key markers of a discipling youth ministry that I identify and develop from the theological turn. I use these

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[https://nywcmemphis2017.sched.com/speaker/andrew\\_root.1wge83l4](https://nywcmemphis2017.sched.com/speaker/andrew_root.1wge83l4) (accessed 2020 03 31).  
<http://andrewroot.org/calendar/> (accessed 2020 03 31).

markers throughout the entire research project. Through this process, I examine the situation of the CBAC, but on the other hand, I also reflexively test the value of the lens for this context.

### **2.3 Key Markers of Discipling Youth Ministry in the Theological Turn**

Having explained the theological turn, as identified by Root and Dean, as an appropriate and helpful critical lens for this research, I now proceed to identify the key markers of a discipling youth ministry within the theological turn. I examine the nuance of meaning that will allow my use of this critical lens for the remainder of my research project.

As Root and Dean describe the theological turn, they do not specifically list markers of discipling youth ministries that characterize the movement. They do not use the term *markers*. This is a term that I use to identify the most prominent characteristics of the turn that emerge from their descriptive material. Root and Dean identify and describe these characteristics. I adopt and develop them as markers within my critical apparatus. Their works describe the following three youth discipleship markers that emerge from the theological turn: ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice. I will now introduce each of the key markers that I have chosen to use, with some interaction about the degrees of similarity and difference between Root and Dean's contexts and that of the CBAC.

### 2.3.1 Ecclesial Integration

The first marker of a discipling youth ministry that I identified within the theological turn is the ecclesial integration of young people. For both Root and Dean, the integration of young people into their church's life is one of the contributions of the theological turn as it speaks to a prevalent youth ministry style that often segregated young people. Root builds his argument directly from the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In a small document that Bonhoeffer wrote, *Thesis on Youth Work in the Church*, two of his eight points directly speak to the importance of young people being a full part of the church community. I will briefly introduce two of Bonhoeffer's points here as they are important for Root.

In Bonhoeffer's *Thesis on Youth Work and the Church*, his second point states, "Our question is not: What is youth and what rights does it have, but rather: What is the church-community and what is the place of youth within it?"<sup>74</sup> This de-emphasis of the rights of young people within the church and movement toward the promotion of youth being at the center of the church's life stands in contrast to most recent North American youth ministry. North American youth ministry has often moved toward ministry models that elevate youth's rights while removing them from the church's center. Chap Clark wrote a helpful article in 2000 highlighting this segregation and countering it with a theological response. He suggests that a twofold theological correction in youth ministry, a proper theology of family (as the primary system for raising children), and a proper theology of the Church (called to unity instead of fragmentation) should counter the segregation of young people.<sup>75</sup> As will be evident, Root tends to agree and work toward these corrections.

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<sup>74</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, trans. Larry Rasmussen, vol. 12, 16 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 515.

<sup>75</sup> Chap Clark, "From Fragmentation to Integration: A Theology for Contemporary Youth Ministry," *American Baptist Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (2000): 51, 53.



Bonhoeffer's fourth point claims that youth have no place of privilege in the church-community but are a very important part of it.<sup>76</sup> Root builds on this by stating:

So the theological turn claims that youth ministry is *not* seeking to affiliate the spirit of youth with the institutional church. Nor is youth ministry simply a hanging appendage of the church. Rather, youth ministry stands at the centre of the church-community, for youth ministry seeks to participate with youth in the Word of God in the church-community.<sup>77</sup>

Root goes on to state that “The job of the youth worker, according to Bonhoeffer, is not to re-create an institutional church for youth but to help and advocate for the young to be found at the center of the church-community's life.”<sup>78</sup> The word “center” must be understood as Bonhoeffer intended, not as a position of privilege, but as an integrated portion of the church. Bonhoeffer clearly stated that young people should enjoy no special privilege in the church-community.

Root also stresses the importance of ecclesial integration of young people elsewhere, most directly in the final chapter of *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*. As he brings the chapter to a conclusion, he states:

Throughout this chapter I have made a plea that we see the youth ministry and adolescents as having a vital part of the overall life of the congregation. I have argued against youth ministry as a satellite ministry that is attached to, but autonomous from the rest of congregational life... If we follow Bonhoeffer and assert that Christ is concretely present in relationships within the church, then it is essential that we consider how to invite our children into the center of the church's life, opening it up as a context in which they can know themselves as they encounter the transcendence of God in the lives of others.<sup>79</sup>

Root demonstrates that the ecclesial integration of young people is very important for him, and that it is closely tied to the second marker, place-sharing.

Like Root, Dean is also a champion of integrating young people into the local church's life. She states, “Godbearing youth ministry helps church members and governing boards own that it takes an entire church to raise a Christian.”<sup>80</sup> She points out that smaller churches

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<sup>76</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, 516.

<sup>77</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 124.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 213.

<sup>80</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 99.

can often do better in this area as they tend to be more intergenerational in nature.<sup>81</sup> In *The Godbearing Life*, Dean persuasively argues for a church model that integrates young people and pulls them into relationships with adults from the church. She argues against the “one-eared Mickey Mouse model,” an approach that she describes as having the youth ministry attached as an appendage on the outside of the church.<sup>82</sup> Speaking of Dean, Root stated in personal correspondence, “Kenda even wants young people to lead the way,” as she believes that young people “are really open to be an incredible gift of leadership and direction for the church.”<sup>83</sup> We see then that youth integration is essential within the theological turn, but its goal must be the dual goal of growth and development for both the young people involved and the entire church. There must be a recognition that young people have much to give, as well as to receive.

In summary, then, I understand the marker of ecclesial integration as the involvement of young people in a church's life so that they are both participants who receive from others and leaders who contribute in various ways to ministries and the direction of the church. Their integration must be more than having young people serve in mundane tasks, but something that provides them with significant involvement and leadership opportunities to contribute in the present and prepare them for the future.

This marker of the theological turn is a fascinating one to examine within the youth ministries of Atlantic Canada. Throughout the historical period that I am studying, there has been a stated desire to integrate young people into the local church, but the motivations, methods, and results have varied widely. During much of this period, the focus seemed to be

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 29-31.

<sup>83</sup> Andrew Root, Personal Correspondence, 2017, 03 02.

on preparing young people for when they would lead or contribute to the church,<sup>84</sup> as opposed to the perception of the theological turn that they have much to contribute while they are still young people. Dean's observation that young people are often more involved in the church's leadership and life within small churches is particularly relevant within the CBAC, where the average congregational attendance in 2010 was only 72.7 people.<sup>85</sup> Throughout the historical record, there are some early glimpses of a desire for youth integration. In Chapters Five and Six, I will examine the motivations and integration practices through this critical lens of the theological turn.

### 2.3.2 Place-Sharing

The second marker of a discipling youth ministry that I draw from the theological turn is place-sharing. Dean speaks of the necessity of the ministry of presence, or “offering a supportive, caring presence that helps draw youth into the presence of God.”<sup>86</sup> However, it is Root who introduces place-sharing as a term (developed from Bonhoeffer's idea of *Stellvertretung*) and provides an extensive explanation of the concept. In Root's words, “Youth Ministry seeks, through *Stellvertretung*, to invite young people to join in the ministry of Jesus's own person.”<sup>87</sup> He explains that place-sharers are people who enter deeply into each other's lives, not to obtain influence or leverage over them, but so that Christ may be fully present to those in the relationship.<sup>88</sup> “One person,” he states, “must stand in the place

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<sup>84</sup> From the 1940s to 1960s there was a very clear separation between ministry to young people and ministry to adults. CBAC annual reports show young people's programs (Tuxis, BYPU, BYF, Tyro-Sigma, Sigma C, CGIT or others) designed to foster leadership skills that were used first within these ministries, and then within the broader church when the young people were grown up.

<sup>85</sup> Peter Reid, *Yearbook of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches* (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2011), SM-1-22. Of the 469 Active churches in the CBAC in 2010, 325 submitted membership and attendance statistics.

<sup>86</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 140.

<sup>87</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 186.

<sup>88</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 125.

of the other, acting fully on his or her behalf... place-sharing takes shape when we place  
ourselves fully in the reality of the other, refusing to turn away even from its darkest horror.”<sup>89</sup>

When I asked him if he considered place-sharing to be one of the things that the theological  
turn is turning toward, Root responded, “Place-sharing, or in German *Stellvertretung*, is  
probably the core concept for me.”<sup>90</sup>

Building on this basic understanding of place-sharing, Root expands it to what he  
believes is the next logical step. When young people have experienced place-sharing in the  
context of their church, the young people should enter their personal world as place-sharers.  
He explains,

Youth Ministry seeks, through *Stellvertretung*, to invite young people to join in the ministry of  
Jesus’s own person, to *Nachfolge* (follow) out into the world, to minister to the world as Jesus  
does, through the personal act of *Stellvertretung* (place-sharing).<sup>91</sup>

Youth leaders entering the world of youth is another area where Root develops his  
understanding of youth ministry practice from the influence of Bonhoeffer. *Stellvertretung*  
for Bonhoeffer did not keep him within the church’s confines; it meant that, in addition, he  
went to young people where they were. He visited his young people’s homes and invited  
them into his home when he was their pastor or confirmation leader.<sup>92</sup> Root suggests that  
contemporary youth leaders should follow a similar pattern of place-sharing, intentionally  
entering the homes and communities of young people, and in return, inviting them into their  
lives.<sup>93</sup>

It would be hard to find any writing or teaching about ministry to youth that did not  
emphasize relationships. However, the type of emphasis varies greatly. In *Revisiting  
Relational Youth Ministry*, Root emphasizes three characteristics of place-sharing:

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>90</sup> Andrew Root, Personal Correspondence, 2017 03 02.

<sup>91</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 186.

<sup>92</sup> Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2001), 226.

<sup>93</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 64.

transformation, unconditional friendship, and advocacy. Root often speaks of transformation, explaining that it is an important part of place-sharing.<sup>94</sup> He explains that “the incarnational youth worker must become a place-sharer to adolescents, for in such relationships persons are transformed by the presence of God in the humanity of Jesus Christ.”<sup>95</sup> Thus, transformation does not just mean change, but for Root, and in my dissertation, it will always refer to transformation through an encounter with God in relationship with another.

He also places emphasis on advocacy, explaining that “to act ethically as place-sharer is, therefore, to act in a manner that takes responsibility for the other...”<sup>96</sup> Root explains that this advocacy is both within the church and within societal structures.<sup>97</sup> Within the church, he suggests that youth pastors should act as a bridge between young people and the congregation and to “call for parishioners to see, listen to and act for the adolescents.”<sup>98</sup> Beyond the church, he believes that place-sharers must, while suffering with adolescents whose humanity has been abused, also advocate for them and “take responsibility for poor schools, violent neighbourhoods, broken families, racism, sexual abuse, and the deep psychological trauma brought forth by these systems...” Thus, we see that advocacy is integrally connected to place-sharing, as it should be an outcome of it.

Root also encourages the characteristic of unconditionality within place-sharing relationships, expecting youth leaders to remain present with young people in the most difficult situations,<sup>99</sup> and encouraging them never to use relationships with young people only to bring them into a relationship with God. He explains that within strategies of influence,

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<sup>94</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 127.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 124, 29.

<sup>98</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 214-15.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 80, 117, 27, 35.

young people are only “important inasmuch as he or she comes to know and accept the gospel message.”<sup>100</sup> Unconditional friendship for Root means the relationship will not be abandoned, but allows for the adult to put limits on their availability. He speaks about *openness* and *closedness*. Closedness allows the youth leader to have personal time when they are not available to young people, while openness communicates that they are fully available to the young person within defined times or settings. These limits on the time and place of the relationship allow the youth leader to be an unconditional friend without becoming a possession of the young person.<sup>101</sup>

For place-sharing to be characterized by unconditional friendship might seem to indicate that these relationships are devoid of a desire to change the other. However, the Christian who develops relationships with a young person will naturally want what is best for them, and they will presumably believe that deepening their relationship with God is best, so they will desire that end. As mentioned above, Root understands this as a person being drawn to God through the presence of Jesus in relationship, and thus toward transformation. A place-sharing relationship does not come from a desire to influence but from a desire for both leader and young person to encounter God in each other.

Dean also demonstrates this desire for change within the young people with which youth leaders work. She suggests that they should regularly encourage young people to take a new step in their faith journey through some sort of opportunity for public or private commitment.<sup>102</sup> She avoids the language of conversion for those already within the church in favour of faith “growth spurts.”<sup>103</sup> The fact that Dean so clearly articulates this desire for spiritual growth is significant, as it complements and fills out Root’s understanding of a

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>102</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 166-67.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 166.

Christian place-sharer's role. A place-sharer should be understood to include desiring the best for young people through them encountering Jesus in place-sharing relationships and experiencing spiritual growth and transformation.

Within the CBAC, as an evangelical denomination, working toward spiritual growth usually includes a focus on conversion, often including a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>104</sup> This focus was most clearly articulated<sup>104</sup> by those involved in youth ministry before the 1980s. These early leaders that I interviewed used words and phrases like *saved*,<sup>105</sup> *conversion*<sup>106</sup>, and *accepted Christ*.<sup>107</sup> Those who were active in youth ministry from the 1980s onward never mentioned any of these words or phrases. However, throughout, they continued to speak of spiritual growth and commitment to following Jesus. Respondents used phrases like “fully functioning follower of Christ who is making disciples,”<sup>108</sup> “spiritual growth,”<sup>109</sup> and “nurture”<sup>110</sup> to speak about the change that they worked toward in the lives of their young people. An adult entering a place-sharing relationship with a young person can demonstrate unconditional friendship, offering friendship that desires, but is in no way dependant on either the young person being led into the ministry of Jesus or taking steps toward conversion. In this way, an adult can be unconditional in their friendship.

I argue that this CBAC concept of spiritual growth is more like Root’s understanding of transformation than it might first appear. He explains that reducing his understanding of place-sharing to presence only is to “flatten [his] theological perspective and not grasp what [it is] about.”<sup>111</sup> He goes on to state that he has “every desire for [young people] to encounter

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<sup>104</sup> Structured Interview #38, “Rick” 2012 10 03, 38.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>106</sup> Structured Interview #15, “Jeffrey” 2013 02 06, 16.

<sup>107</sup> Structured Interview #36, “Peggy” 2012 11 06, 75.

<sup>108</sup> Structured Interview #33, “Dan” 2013 03 04, 22.

<sup>109</sup> Subject #26, “Caleb”, Survey Question #19, “If you were going to develop a discipleship strategy for youth, what would be the primary components of this strategy?”

<sup>110</sup> Subject #10, “Donald”, Survey Question #9, “How would you define effective discipleship of youth?”

<sup>111</sup> Root, “Evangelicalism, Personalism and Encounters with the Person of Jesus: A Rejoinder,” 60.

the living Christ, who calls them to follow him, to find life (salvation) in his person.” Dean’s understanding of spiritual transformation strengthens the lens in this area, building a better description of the spiritual transformation process before and after a conversion experience. Given that a significant number of young people point toward a conversion experience<sup>112</sup> and that the conversion experience is significant as a concept within the evangelical tradition, its inclusion strengthens the critical lens of place-sharing for my analysis of CBAC data.

In summary, place-sharing within the theological turn is built on adults within the church developing strong relationships with young people. Transformation, unconditional friendship, and advocacy characterize these relationships. Adults intentionally enter young people's lives and invite young people to enter their life and the church's broader life so that in these relationships, they might encounter God. This relationship should naturally include encouragement toward spiritual growth through encounter with Jesus. I argue that for the Christian who believes that a relationship with God is desirable, these place-sharing relationships should be places where transformation, spiritual growth and conversion are encouraged.

Examining the concept of place-sharing within the youth ministries of the CBAC is a very rewarding venture. Throughout history, there has been a long and robust emphasis on the relationships within youth ministries.<sup>113</sup> Some youth leaders appear to have understood and tried to introduce something similar to place-sharing as part of their ministries. Still, many did not move to the deep, potentially redemptive relationships that Root and Dean call for, and they identify as part of the theological turn.

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<sup>112</sup> Mark Regnerus, and Jeremy Uecker, "Finding Faith, Losing Faith: The Prevalence and Context of Religious Transformations During Adolescence," *Review of Religious Research* 47, no. 3 (2006): 218.

<sup>113</sup> Subject #31, "Brandon", Survey Question #14, "As you reflect on the youth ministry/ministries in which you led, what were the most significant factors that led toward proper discipleship of youth?" Structured Interview #30, "Jason" 2013 02 20, 67.



### 2.3.3 Communities of Spiritual Practice

The final marker of discipling youth ministry in the theological turn is communities of spiritual practice. While Root does discuss the importance of spiritual practices, in this section, I will draw more heavily on Dean's work. As Root explains, Dean believes that the practices of the church are a place where the human and the divine interact.<sup>114</sup> In *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, she writes:

Perhaps the most noticeable change in youth ministry in the early twenty-first century is the diminished role of denominations, youth programs and events in favor of relationships and spiritual practices – those ongoing activities of the Christian community that shape us in relationship to God and one another – as the primary vehicles through which adolescents recognize God encountering them.<sup>115</sup>

Dean's claim that relationships and spiritual practices have become "the primary vehicles through which adolescents recognize God encountering them"<sup>116</sup> is very significant as it underscores the importance of having the marker, communities of spiritual practice, as part of my critical lens. Historian Mark Senter also recognizes the importance of spiritual growth within community in North American youth ministries. He states, "The type of *being* reflected in twenty-first-century youth ministry requires a pursuit of God in a communal setting."<sup>117</sup> As I develop this marker, one crucial question is how to deal with similarities and differences in spiritual practices between Dean and those in a more evangelical tradition. Some of the practices are very similar in both the contexts of Dean and the CBAC, while others are significantly different. I will establish comparability between the two contexts that will maintain the usefulness of the lens and yet allow the context of the CBAC to push reflexively against it in some areas.

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<sup>114</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 223.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 67.

Dean writes about spiritual practices elsewhere, but is best known for her work on it, with Ron Foster, in *The Godbearing Life* and, to a lesser extent, in *Practicing Passion*. In the former book, she and Foster provide a list of 38 spiritual practices, listing Baptism and Eucharist as the first two.<sup>118</sup> She then presents six families of spiritual practices: Communion, Compassion, Teaching and Nurture, Witness, Dehabituating, and Worship.<sup>119</sup> Dean enfolds Eucharist into the Communion family. However, she does not again mention baptism as a spiritual practice. Elsewhere, she writes about baptism, stating, “Young people are especially open to the movements of God in their lives and in need of the traditional practices of Christian faith, including baptism.”<sup>120</sup> Within the CBAC, Bruce Fawcett demonstrated that believer’s baptism is one of the traditional ministry practices for youth. In the research conducted for his PhD, he discovered that of the young people he surveyed, who were participants in the *Tidal Impact 2002* youth mission tour, 62% had been baptized by immersion.<sup>121</sup> For this reason, and given the significance of believer’s baptisms as a practice in CBAC churches, I will integrate baptism into the marker communities of spiritual practice.

Even though Dean, like Root, is part of a mainline protestant tradition, four of the categories she provides in the area of spiritual practices are directly transferable to the context of the CBAC. First, the practices she introduces under the category of compassion are transferable. Within the CBAC, practices of compassion have been demonstrated through involvement in local and cross-cultural short-term mission experiences and in serving opportunities for youth. I will show that such practices of compassion have been an integral

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<sup>118</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 107.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>120</sup> Dean, Kenda. “The Baptism of Youth” <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4859/the-baptism-of-youth> (accessed 2020 04 01).

<sup>121</sup> Bruce Fawcett, “Recruiting Clergy for Canadian Baptist Churches: A Typological Understanding” (University of Wales, 2006), 178.

part of youth discipleship within the CBAC. CBAC youth leaders have identified both short-term mission and serving opportunities as youth ministry priorities.<sup>122</sup>

Again, in the area of witness, Dean is remarkably close to CBAC youth leaders' statements on the topic. She states, "Witnessing means telling others what we have seen and experienced in Christ in a way that makes sense to the person with whom we are speaking."<sup>123</sup> She goes on to say that "God bearers take Christ to the streets."<sup>124</sup> Root's understanding of witness is different from Dean's. He sees personal witness as an integral part of the place-sharing role, an outflow of an encounter with Jesus within relationship with another. While Root does believe in proclamation, his approach is also closely connected to place-sharing and seems to happen primarily within the church.<sup>125</sup> The difference of understanding between Root and Dean is significant as it shows that there is room for difference of belief and practice within the theological turn. This difference is a further argument for using these key markers to critically examine youth ministry within the CBAC, where there are differences in belief and practice from Root and Dean. My survey and interview respondents often spoke of the importance of sharing the gospel and evangelism.<sup>126</sup> In many cases, their words seemed quite close to the "take Christ to the streets" language that Dean uses.<sup>127</sup>

Another area where the family of practices that Dean discusses translates quite easily into the CBAC context is worship. Dean speaks of worship as "the primary act of the

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<sup>122</sup> Dan Ingram, "Adventures in Short-Term Youth Missions," *Atlantic Baptist*, February 2002, 16.

Gary Dunfield, "Convention Assembly 2002," *Atlantic Baptist*, September 2002, 16.

<sup>123</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 174.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Andrew Root, *The Relational Pastor: Sharing in Christ by Sharing Ourselves* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2012), loc 3334 of 4824.

<sup>126</sup> Subject #6, "Ronald", Survey Question #19, "If you were going to develop a discipleship strategy for youth, what would be the primary components of this strategy?"

Structured Interview #34, "Robert" 2013 02 15, 56.

<sup>127</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 174.

Christian community,” and therefore something that is of utmost importance for youth ministry.<sup>128</sup> She speaks of the challenges of engaging young people in traditional worship and endorses exploring various worship styles and searching for spiritual meaning within the current generation's popular music.<sup>129</sup> These challenges were also found in the churches of the CBAC.<sup>130</sup> Elsewhere, Dean suggests that struggles over worship style result from the Church's disconnect from the playfulness of worship, the interaction and use of the physical items like candles, oil, water, and other symbolic objects and physical movement.<sup>131</sup> Most of the churches of the CBAC do not use physical items in this way, and physical movement can be quite rare, but my research showed some interest in such things.<sup>132</sup>

Dean's fourth category of spiritual practices, Dehabituation, is also very relevant for the youth ministries of the CBAC. Dean speaks of deconstructing the rhythms of the secular to construct sacred rhythms with youth. By this, she means that young people need to be pulled out of their daily, worldly habits and routines and allowed to be stretched by spiritual practices. Two practices that she suggests for this are honouring of Sabbath and participating in retreats. In both, Dean understands the break in rhythm to be critical and suggests that these experiences have “transcendent practices’ power to relocate the self,” much like undertaking a pilgrimage.<sup>133</sup> Within the CBAC, youth leaders often used retreats, and these parallel Dean's desire to seek “to open fresh doorways to God in and through the unique possibilities that retreat settings offer.”<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 197

<sup>130</sup> Marilyn McCormick, “Understanding Generational Differences and Connecting Generations at Grace Memorial Baptist Church” (Acadia University, 2016), 97-98.

<sup>131</sup> Dean, *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*, 213-14.

<sup>132</sup> Structured Interview #11, “Cindy” 2013 02 06, 82.

<sup>133</sup> Dean, *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*, 205.

<sup>134</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 191.

The above four areas of developing communities of spiritual practice relatively easily connect, albeit with some ecclesial differences, what Dean describes and the practices of the CBAC youth ministries. There are, however, two areas that require further discussion and interpretation. The first of these is communion. Dean explains this as both the formal and informal spiritual direction that involves the ministry of presence and the ministry of direction. She understands the ministry of direction to be the action of pointing young people toward the cross of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, the tradition of the Church, and the way faithful believers live their lives. It also includes teaching and modelling spiritual disciplines such as “prayer and meditation, worship and service, study and compassion, solitude and community.”<sup>135</sup>

Most CBAC youth leaders would be in complete agreement with Dean about pointing young people toward the cross of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, and the way faithful believers live their lives, but from there on, a difference in belief and understanding emerges. CBAC youth leaders do not speak of pointing young people toward the church's tradition, and some of my research subjects did not speak of modelling spiritual disciplines.

While CBAC youth leaders do not speak about tradition, I argue that it is often central within CBAC churches. In Dean's United Methodist tradition,

Tradition acts as a measure of validity and propriety for a community's faith insofar as it represents a consensus of faith. The various traditions that presently make claims upon us may contain conflicting images and insights of truth and validity. We examine such conflicts in light of Scripture, reflecting critically upon the doctrinal stance of our church.<sup>136</sup>

Within Baptist beliefs, placing reliance on Scripture above any reliance on tradition is a distinguishing belief.<sup>137</sup> Despite this claim, tradition exists within the CBAC, and

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 140-42.

<sup>136</sup> L. Fitzgerald Reist, ed., *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2012* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 2012), 84.

<sup>137</sup> William Brackney, *A Capsule History of Baptist Principles* (Atlanta: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2009), 28.

congregations often place great value upon it.<sup>138</sup> Within this research project's scope, CBAC tradition in youth ministry is disseminated and endorsed through books, magazines, web-based information, and other mediums. Instead of understanding tradition as authoritative as Dean does, I would argue that within the CBAC, youth leaders understand tradition as a guide for practice.

Spiritual disciplines, such as those Dean listed above, have become integral components of some youth ministries within the CBAC, especially in recent years.<sup>139</sup> However, overall, and especially in earlier years, the main disciplines mentioned were Bible reading, Bible memorization, service, and prayer, what one respondent called “traditional, historic, evangelical spiritual practices.”<sup>140</sup> Thus, I argue that it is evident that while CBAC congregations have not traditionally availed themselves of some of the broader practices of spiritual disciplines, they have emphasized their traditional evangelical ones.

Dean’s grouping of spiritual practices, teaching, and nurture, is another area that needs some translation from the mainline tradition of Dean to the evangelical Baptist context of the CBAC. Dean focuses on the formal catechism that is part of her ecclesial tradition. She explores how to develop this into a catechetical method that is truly life-changing instead of a perceived graduation from the church.<sup>141</sup> Dean speaks of spiritual transformation as the goal of catechesis. The translation here is necessary but is relatively straightforward. Instead of Catechism, spiritual transformation in CBAC churches has happened in Sunday School, various youth programs, camps, mission experiences, and small group Bible studies. Although the contexts significantly differ, CBAC youth leaders also endorse good teaching

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<sup>138</sup> George Simpson, "Balancing Tradition with Lay Ministry," *Atlantic Baptist* 16, no. 5 (1980): 17.

<sup>139</sup> Structured Interview #34, "Robert", 53-54.

Structured Interview #3, "Cindy", 82.

<sup>140</sup> Structured Interview #2, "William" 2012 12 07, 8.

<sup>141</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 114.

and work toward transformation. With this basic understanding, Dean's concept of teaching and nurture is readily transferable.

I have now interacted with Dean's six categories of spiritual practices. I have demonstrated that I can navigate areas of difference in such a way as to make the marker, communities of spiritual practice, an appropriate way to analyze youth discipleship within the CBAC. Within the theological turn, the thing that makes communities of spiritual practice a key marker of the movement is not as basic as the presence or absence of all these categories of spiritual practices. Instead, it is the intentionality behind a community acting on the commitment to make spiritual practices an integral part of their life together. It is the intentional incorporation of spiritual practices, within community, as part of the discipleship process with young people.

For example, if a church community used variations of all of these practices at different times without intentionality focused on bringing young people into active participation with them in community, I would say that the marker is absent. On the other hand, if the church community intentionally worked toward involving young people in several different spiritual practices, I would say that the key marker was present. Even though they may not have actively used all the practices on Dean's list, it would be present. It is *communities* of practice that are the concern, not just people doing practices.

## **2.4 Summary**

I drew the three markers (ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice) that I introduced in this chapter from Root and Dean's work. The markers provide a significant description of what the theological turn is turning toward in

contemporary youth ministry. I do not claim that the three markers encompass all important or essential aspects of youth ministry but introduce areas of correction that have come through academic study and theological reflection on youth ministry praxis. As I adopt this critical lens for my research project, it is important to note that it has also pushed back some, forcing the lens to adapt, as I seek ways for Baptist belief and practice to fit within it. Even though the ministry contexts of Root and Dean are, in some ways, quite different from that of the CBAC, the commonalities are still remarkable. Root and Dean provide three substantial markers of discipling youth ministries that can be, and, in this research project, are used as tools to examine youth ministry in Atlantic Canada from 1945-2010.

Having established the three-fold critical lens of the theological turn (ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice), I will now examine the history of youth discipleship within the CBAC from 1945-2010, with specific attention to the professionalization of youth ministry and the youth mission tour movement.





### **3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CBAC YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP WITHIN THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF YOUTH MINISTRY AND THE YOUTH MISSION TOUR MOVEMENT**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

So far, in this dissertation, I have developed a critical lens for my examination of youth discipleship from the work of Root and Dean. In this chapter, I will introduce two interconnected historical movements within youth ministry that must be understood before I can critically examine youth discipleship within the CBAC. First, I introduce the professionalization of youth ministry within the CBAC. I argue that because of the rapid increase and influence of vocational youth ministry, understanding youth ministry professionalization within the CBAC is significant and essential for understanding the rest of my research project. Second, I introduce the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC. I establish that understanding this movement is also significant and essential for understanding youth discipleship within the CBAC.

Therefore, in this chapter, after briefly introducing the professionalization of youth ministry within North America, I also introduce how youth ministry became professionalized within the CBAC. Following that, as I introduce the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC, I will demonstrate that this movement was made possible because of a professionalized youth ministry.

## 3.2 Historical Survey of the Professionalization of Youth Ministry

During the period that I am studying (1945-2010), there were many changes in how CBAC youth ministries conducted their ministries. In this section, as I establish the historical context for CBAC youth discipleship, I argue that one of the most significant changes was the professionalization of youth ministry. As there is no writing specifically about youth ministry professionalization within the CBAC, I present a brief overview of North American youth ministry professionalization to examine it within the CBAC. The historical material in this chapter is necessary to bring context to the following chapters.

I now briefly summarize the professionalization of youth ministry in North America generally and within the CBAC specifically. I will demonstrate that the professionalization of youth ministry happened within the CBAC at a similar rate as in the rest of North America. Less than one century ago, youth pastors were unheard of, and any concept of a profession of ministry to youth within local churches would have been foreign.<sup>142</sup> However, by the turn of the millennium, professional youth workers were commonplace. Len Kageler conducted the *global youth pastor salary survey* in 2004 and discovered that youth pastors are present in most countries.<sup>143</sup> In this section, I will move from this global description to a position where I can examine CBAC youth ministry professionalization.

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<sup>142</sup> Harner, "A Decade of Youth Work in the Church."

Harry Stock, "A Decade of Young People's Work," *Religious Education* 26 (1931). In summarizing a decade of ecclesial work with young people, both these authors make no mention of a profession of church ministry to youth.

<sup>143</sup> Len Kageler, "A Global Youth Pastor Salary Survey: Sociological and Ecclesiological Perspectives," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 2, no. 2 (2004): 81. Kageler presents data from 40 countries, and in addition refers to many other regions where he did not gather data.

### 3.2.1 Professionalization of Youth Ministry in North America

In this subsection, I present a summary of the professionalization of youth ministry within North America. This summary will establish the context necessary for the following subsection, where I examine the professionalization of CBAC youth ministry. It is often hard to find out exactly when a historical development began, and this is true with the rise of youth pastors and denominational youth workers within North America. Isolated examples of denominational youth directors began to emerge early in the 1900s. However, it was not until the 1920s that the hiring of denominational youth staff emerged throughout various denominations in North America.<sup>144</sup> In a summary of young people's work published in *Religious Education* in 1931, Harry Stock states, "During the third decade of the century, denominations and interchurch agencies greatly strengthened their staffs."<sup>145</sup> From the late 1940s and onward, many churches adopted youth ministry models loosely based on the popular parachurch models of the day, led by youth who worked with adult advisors.<sup>146</sup> To support these fledgling youth ministries, denominations sometimes opted to hire youth staff who would travel to them to encourage and advise them and to speak both in churches and youth events. The CBAC hired the first youth worker in 1946.<sup>147</sup>

By the 1950s, some North American churches from both mainline and evangelical traditions began to seek out people to fill pastoral positions with an emphasis on youth. Garland and Fortosis suggest the first paid youth pastor may have been Jerry Yerian, who worked for Vista Community Church in San Diego in 1948.<sup>148</sup> Howard Worth's 1963 article

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<sup>144</sup> Senter, "The Youth for Christ Movement as an Educational Agency and Its Impact Upon Protestant Churches: 1931-1979", 393-94.

<sup>145</sup> Stock, "A Decade of Young People's Work," 521.

<sup>146</sup> Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 75.

<sup>147</sup> Burton Allen, *Report of the Board of Christian Education* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces, 1947), 172.

<sup>148</sup> Ken Garland, and Steve Fortosis, "Historical Origins of Professional Evangelical Youth Work in the Church," *Religious Education* 86, no. 2 (1991): 278-79.

in *Religious Education* on youth ministry from the past decade evidenced youth pastor positions. He states, “With a spirit of denominational competition and perhaps an underlying guilt on the part of adults, church members are erecting exquisite buildings for young people and are buying more professional leadership than ever before.”<sup>149</sup> In addition to building youth centers and rooms within churches, they also hired staff to work with young people. A 1960 editorial in *Christianity Today* criticized the church's educational practices and called for churches to employ full-time youth directors, expressing that the director should have the “educational background and native qualities of youth leadership” that would make them successful in this ministry.<sup>150</sup> Mark Senter writes that the number of youth pastors “mushroomed in the 1960s and 1970s.”<sup>151</sup>

The advancement of youth ministry in North America was evidenced in Canada as well. In 1964 an interdenominational meeting that included leadership from Anglican, United Church of Canada, and CBAC churches occurred in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Together, they concluded that there was “a need for: definite age-groupings, informality in meetings, up-to-date program material, a trained leadership, and more conferences on an interdenominational basis to discuss common problems.”<sup>152</sup> Only a year later, in 1965, a very significant event happened that impacted the way many churches, both in Canada and abroad, conducted their youth ministries. The *World Council of Churches* (WCC) essentially determined that churches should end age-specific youth programs.<sup>153</sup> Pushing for ministries with youth that gave young people space to build relationships with those of other generations and encouraged them to serve together, they hoped the tension between young people and adults

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<sup>149</sup> Howard Worth, "Youth Work in the Past Decade," *Religious Education* 58, no. 4 (1963): 392.

<sup>150</sup> Carl Henry, "Youth and the Church School," *Christianity Today*, Feb 29, 1960.

<sup>151</sup> Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 65.

<sup>152</sup> Fred Gordon, "Youth Work Considered," *The Maritime Baptist* 69, no. 9 (1964).

<sup>153</sup> Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 190.

would fade away.<sup>154</sup> The WCC did not want youth to be an appendage on the outside of the church with tenuous connections to the larger body but to be full participants who could influence the direction and ministry of the church.<sup>155</sup> Desiring this complete integration of youth into ecclesial life, many mainline denominations across North America took the radical step of disbanding their youth departments. The result was certainly not consistent with the goal, as, in most of these churches, their ministry to youth all but disappeared, and it took decades before the rebuilding of any sort of viable youth ministry occurred.<sup>156</sup> Until this 1965 action by the WCC, youth ministries in mainline churches had looked very similar to the ministries in the more evangelical denominations. However, this was a point of departure that separated the two ecclesial traditions for many years and arguably to the present.<sup>157</sup>

Professionalization proliferated within evangelical churches in North America as time went by. For example, in 1979, 25 Christian youth workers from the United States met in Colorado and laid the foundation for the *National Network of Youth Ministries*.<sup>158</sup> There were over eight thousand people in the Southern Baptist Convention in “youth ministry-related positions by 1980.”<sup>159</sup> This number is remarkable given that the first known youth pastor had been hired only 43 years earlier.<sup>160</sup> A study in 1988 states that in the United States, there were 9,000 Southern Baptist youth pastors, 400 in the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, 280 in the Evangelical Free Church of America, and 200 in the Church of God.<sup>161</sup> Only three years later, in 1991, Richard Ross demonstrated continued growth as he wrote that among

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<sup>154</sup> Ans Van der Bent, *From Generation to Generation: The Story of Youth in the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 78.

<sup>155</sup> Oduyoye. Mercy, "Youth in God's World: A Response after Twenty-Four Years," *Ecumenical Review* 44, no. 2 (1992): 235.

<sup>156</sup> Mercy, "Youth in God's World: A Response after Twenty-Four Years," 235.

<sup>157</sup> Warren Benson, and Mark Senter, *The Complete Book of Youth Ministry* (Chicago: Moody, 1987), 71.

<sup>158</sup> Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 253.

<sup>159</sup> Merton Strommen, Karen Jones, and Dave Rahn, *Youth Ministry That Transforms* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 32.

<sup>160</sup> Garland, and Fortosis, "Historical Origins of Professional Evangelical Youth Work in the Church," 278-79.

<sup>161</sup> Eugene Roehlkepartain, *The Youth Ministry Resource Book* (Colorado: Group, 1988).

Southern Baptists, “an estimated 10,000 churches pay a person full-time or part-time to coordinate the church’s ministry to youth.”<sup>162</sup> The prevalence of youth workers shows that by this time, in North America, youth ministry was widely accepted and endorsed as a central component of ecclesial life within evangelical churches.

A few years after the initial emergence of youth pastors, seminaries and colleges began to create faculty positions for youth ministry professors. The earliest known position was in 1949 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.<sup>163</sup> Many Bible schools and seminaries started offering a few youth ministry courses in the decades that followed, but it was not until the mid-1970s that schools began to provide majors in youth ministry.<sup>164</sup> In 1976, *Campus Life*’s ‘Guide to Christian Colleges’ only listed one (Sterling College), but by 1984, 30 of the 64 listed colleges offered youth ministry majors.<sup>165</sup> From the early academic beginnings, it took 30 years for the first person to graduate with a doctorate specializing in youth ministry. The degree was a Doctor of Education (EdD) in Youth Ministry, earned by Doug Wood from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1979.<sup>166</sup>

In a 2003 study of those teaching youth ministry in North America, Mark Cannister found they were primarily youth ministry veterans.<sup>167</sup> He asked 153 youth ministry instructors to participate and received 120 responses. Cannister found that those who taught youth ministry were located in various types of institutions (52% Christian Liberal Arts Colleges, 21% Seminaries or Graduate Schools, 21% Bible Colleges, and 5% Other).<sup>168</sup> It is

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<sup>162</sup> Richard Ross, "The Minister to Youth in Southern Baptist Life," *Baptist History and Heritage* 26, no. 4 (1991): 15.

<sup>163</sup> Karen Jones, *A Study of the Difference between Faith Maturity Scale and Self-Concept Scale Scores for Youth Participation in Two Denominational Ministry Projects* (Louisville: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998), 2.

<sup>164</sup> Mark Senter, "History of Youth Ministry Education," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 12, no. 2 (2014): 97.

<sup>165</sup> Senter, "History of Youth Ministry Education," 97.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>167</sup> Mark Cannister, "The State of the Professoriate: An Empirical Study of Youth Ministry Professionals in North America," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 1, no. 2 (2003): 66.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

significant to note that in both undergraduate and graduate youth ministry studies, there was a consistent increase in student enrollment in the previous five years (93% and 92% of the schools respectively reported an increase). While lesser, the schools that had seen an increase in doctoral students were still very significant at 73%.<sup>169</sup> In the conclusion of Cannister's article, he nicely sums up the enthusiasm about youth ministry education at the time of writing (2003). He states:

The state of the youth ministry professoriate in North America seems very healthy. The youth ministry faculty is well credentialed with masters and doctoral degrees in youth ministries or related fields. Their experience as practitioners in church or para-church ministry surpasses that of faculty in almost every other discipline other than Law and Medicine.<sup>170</sup>

As is evident from this brief description of the rapid growth of youth ministry educators, the professionalization of youth ministry occurred in the academy and local churches.

With so much professional commitment to adolescents' spiritual nurture, one might expect to find an abundance of thriving North American churches filled with youth and young adults, but this is not the case. A 2000 study conducted by *James Penner and Associates* of the University of Lethbridge found that approximately 60% of Canadian young adults (aged 18-34) brought up in evangelical churches had since disengaged from their faith.<sup>171</sup> Reginald Bibby found that the percentage of Canadian teens attending church at least monthly dropped from 44% in 1984 to 33% in 2008.<sup>172</sup> To my knowledge, no studies on youth and young adult church attendance were conducted within the CBAC, but from personal experience, I expect it would be in line with broader trends.

The situation in the United States was similar. Kara Powell and Chap Clark from the *Fuller Youth Ministry Institute* state that their "conclusion is that 40 to 50 percent of kids who

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>171</sup> James Penner et al., *Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults Are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church* (Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable, 2012), 22.

<sup>172</sup> Reginald Bibby, *The Emerging Millennials* (Lethbridge: University of Lethbridge, 2009), 179.



graduate from a church or youth group will fail to stick with their faith in college.”<sup>173</sup>

Professionalization had not served to be the magic bullet for effective youth discipleship. Despite the number of professionals that churches hired to work with youth, research showed that many young people left the church. Professionalization has been a significant part of youth ministry during the timeframe of this research project. However, the relationship between discipleship and professionalization bears examination.

In this subsection, I have briefly introduced the professionalization of youth ministry in North America, noting that the movement grew and developed from the 1920s until the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. This movement toward youth ministry professionalization occurred within the period I am examining (1945-2010). I demonstrate in the following subsection that the CBAC has a similar pattern of professionalization.

### **3.2.2 The Professionalization of Youth Ministry in the CBAC**

In this subsection, as I continue to establish the historical context for CBAC youth discipleship, I will demonstrate that youth ministry within the CBAC followed a similar pattern of professionalization as it did throughout North America. Both the denomination and local churches hired youth ministry professionals, publications slowly increased, and later, the two denominational schools developed youth ministry programs. In this subsection, I briefly highlight how some of this professionalization happened, demonstrating that a significant number of professional youth workers were active in CBAC churches, and others served in leadership for the denomination and its schools. This history has never been recorded, and as this movement of professionalization provides the backdrop for my research,

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<sup>173</sup> Kara Powell, and Chap Clark, *Sticky Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), Loc. 87 of 2862.

I must present it here. After recording this brief history, I will be able to examine how professionalization impacted youth discipleship.

The impact of World War II was monumental for youth ministry within the CBAC. Before the war, youth ministry existed mainly in youth societies that were primarily led, organized, and attended by young adults and older youth. In 1940, there were 374 societies within the CBAC.<sup>174</sup> From this significant number (65% of all CBAC churches at the time),<sup>175</sup> the number of groups plummeted, and their composition changed drastically with the onset of World War II. In my introductory chapter, I used the following quote, and because of its relevance, I repeat it here. In the 1943 Annual Report for the CBAC, it states the tragic reality:

Our Young People's Work has been seriously affected by the demands of war. Latest reports from our secretary indicate that probably a hundred of the unions have ceased to exist. In a number of communities every eligible young man and woman has gone. This condition means that a younger age is making up the membership of the unions, and that programs must be built with this change in mind.<sup>176</sup>

This demographic shift in youth ministry and the recognition that youth programs needed modification foreshadowed the changes that would soon come. One of these changes was youth ministries led by paid professionals instead of only volunteer young adults. Tracing the development of professional youth ministry within the CBAC is quite difficult. Over the span of a few generations, the CBAC went from having no professional youth workers to having a significant number. As is typical of historical descriptions, there is much more information about more recent times than previous decades. In the following description, I gather some general information about professional church youth ministry within the CBAC to examine its connections with youth discipleship more accurately.

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<sup>174</sup> MacPherson, *Report of the Board of Christian Education*, 163.

<sup>175</sup> This percentage is doubtless a lot higher, as quite a few churches worked together in cooperative ministries called 'field ministries'. With this considered, it is quite probable that nearly all the churches of the CBAC had active youth societies.

<sup>176</sup> MacPherson, *Report of the Board of Christian Education*, 158.

The earliest known youth pastor within the CBAC was Arthur Pyke, who served in Moncton in the 1940s.<sup>177</sup> Robert Berry (1931-2020), a pastor, who went on to become the Executive Director of Canadian Baptist Ministries, writes,

During my time in pastoral ministry in Atlantic Canada in the late '50s and the '60s, I only recall one church that had a youth pastor on staff. That was Mike Steeves at Brunswick Street Baptist Church in Fredericton. I know there had to be others, but I cannot recall.<sup>178</sup>

This quote demonstrates that the number of youth pastors within CBAC churches increased, something that Robert Wilson, Baptist historian and former Professor of Practical Theology and Church History at *Acadia Divinity College*, further demonstrates. Reflecting on the 1960s, he wrote, "Increasing numbers of churches began to seek full-time youth leaders or turned youth leadership into a part-time paid position."<sup>179</sup> My analysis of CBAC denominational directories demonstrates steady growth in youth pastors, as demonstrated in Chart 3.1.

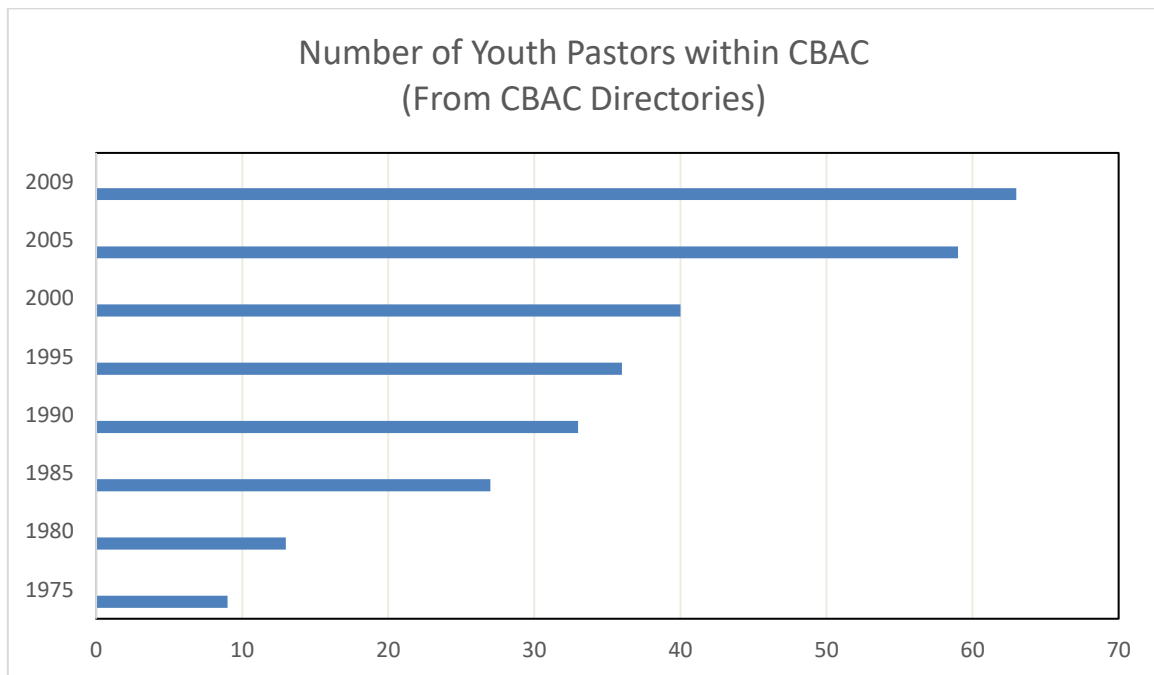
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<sup>177</sup> Robert Berry, *Youth Pastors Info* (Grand Bay: 2012).

<sup>178</sup> Berry, "Youth Pastors Info."

<sup>179</sup> Robert Wilson, "The Changing Role of Ecumenical and Trans-Denominational Maritime Baptist Youth Ministries in the Middle of the Twentieth Century," in *Roots and Resurgence: Atlantic Baptist Youth Ministry at the Turn of the Millennium*, ed. Bruce Fawcett, Dale Stairs, *Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada Series* (Wolfville: Acadia Divinity College, 2013), 96.

Chart 3.1<sup>180</sup>



These reported numbers must have been reported low, as in 2000, when the CBAC directory only reported 40 youth pastors, the annual report of the Christian Training Commission of the CBAC stated that 60 denominational youth pastors attended a youth pastors' event.<sup>181</sup> Regardless of this inconsistency, these numbers demonstrate steady growth.

<sup>180</sup> While these numbers were graphed in five-year increments, the directory for 2010 could not be located due to a move to online records, so 2009 was used instead.

Keith Hobson, *Directory of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1975).

Keith Hobson, *Directory of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1980).

Eugene Thompson, *Directory of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1985).

Eugene Thompson, *Directory of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1990).

Eugene Thompson, *Directory of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1995).

Harry Gardner, *Directory of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches* (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2000).

Harry Gardner, *Directory of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches* (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2005).

Reid, *Directory of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches*.

<sup>181</sup> Marilyn McCormick, *Report of the Christian Training Commission* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 2001), D9.

In 1990, CBAC youth pastors gathered for their first leadership forum. A second forum followed in 1993, and a third in 1994, demonstrating both the numbers and interest in this type of professional gathering.<sup>182</sup> Bruce Fawcett points out that the emphasis on youth ministry came at the expense of regional and international mission, as churches allocated more of their resources locally to “hold onto their own youth.”<sup>183</sup>

I also observed numeric growth in professional youth pastors within my research sample. Of those active in youth ministry in the 1960s, only 43% would ever serve as youth pastors. Of those engaged in youth ministry between 2000 and 2010, 85% at one point served as a vocational youth pastor. This increase further demonstrates how integral the professionalization of youth ministry is to my research project.

While professionalization was taking place in local churches, it should also be noted that there is also evidence of professionalization at a denominational level. The CBAC, early and consistently, offered some denominational youth ministry leadership for churches by the permanent staff of *The Board of Christian Education* (1933-1974), *The Christian Training Commission* (1974-2001), and the *Youth and Family Ministries Department* (2001-Present). In addition, at various times, the CBAC hired specific people to work directly with youth.<sup>184</sup> The first full-time vocational staff person in such a role was Dorothy Dykeman, who served from 1947-1949.<sup>185</sup> During her two years in the role, she travelled extensively and spoke 267 times. She blazed new trails for youth ministry and women in leadership positions within the

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<sup>182</sup> Margaret Crouse, "Youth Leadership Forum 2," *Tidings*, February 1993.

<sup>183</sup> Fawcett, "Recruiting Clergy for Canadian Baptist Churches: A Typological Understanding", 23.

<sup>184</sup> Bruce Fawcett, and Dale Stairs, eds., *Roots and Resurgence: Atlantic Baptist Youth Ministry at the Turn of the Millennium*, vol. 18, *Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada* (Wolfville: Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada Series, 2013), 208-09, Appendix E.

<sup>185</sup> Burton Allen, *Report of the Board of Christian Education* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces, 1948), 172.

CBAC.<sup>186</sup> A decade later, the CBAC hired Eugene Thompson to support churches in their efforts to establish youth ministries.<sup>187</sup> Thompson also served for only two years. However, in that time, he started the *BYF*, prepared the *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook* that I will examine in Chapter Five, and did extensive speaking and training in churches.<sup>188</sup> Thompson's service initiated a period of CBAC history that saw a consistent denominational staff emphasis on supporting youth ministries. This denominational support gradually expanded until 2010, at which time there were two full-time and two part-time staff members.<sup>189</sup>

After the professionalization of local church and denominational youth ministry was well underway, the two CBAC schools, Acadia Divinity College and Atlantic Baptist University (now Crandall University) developed some specific training in youth ministry. The founding director of both programs was Bruce Fawcett. Crandall University was the first to explore youth ministry training. As a Liberal Arts University, it opted to develop a Youth Leadership Certificate that students could take concurrently with their undergraduate degree.<sup>190</sup> It involved a combination of university courses, three years of internships, and a mentor's supervision. The certificate did not specifically prepare students to be vocational youth pastors but instead to become trained lay leaders.<sup>191</sup> However, many who completed the certificate program did become vocational youth pastors, either with or without additional education.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Dale Stairs, "One Hundred Years of Denomination Ministry to Youth (1912-2011)," in *Roots and Resurgence: Atlantic Baptist Youth Ministry at the Turn of the Millennium*, ed. Bruce Fawcett, Dale Stairs, *Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada Series* (Wolfville: Acadia Divinity College, 2013), 150.

<sup>187</sup> Harry Renfree, *Yearbook of the United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces, 1959), 188.

<sup>188</sup> Stairs, "One Hundred Years of Denomination Ministry to Youth (1912-2011)," in *Roots and Resurgence: Atlantic Baptist Youth Ministry at the Turn of the Millennium*, 151.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 151-161.

<sup>190</sup> "Youth Leadership Certificate," 1996-97 Academic Calendar, Atlantic Baptist College.

<sup>191</sup> Bruce Fawcett, *The Certificate in Youth Leadership: A Proposal by Rev. Bruce Fawcett* (1995).

<sup>192</sup> Based on personal knowledge of those who served in youth ministry positions within the CBAC.

A few years later, in 2001, Acadia Divinity College introduced a Youth Ministry specialization option within their Master of Divinity degree. Fawcett made a general reference about "...the principal's commitment... to strengthen its youth ministry offerings..."<sup>193</sup> in an *Atlantic Baptist* article in the summer of 2000, and the following year, the specialization launched. This program gave students the option of taking some core courses in youth ministry and then some additional electives in the field.<sup>194</sup> Through a partnership with the *Youth and Family Ministries Department* of the CBAC, Fawcett served as the new Youth Ministry Specialty Director and the Director of the *Youth and Family Ministries Department* of the CBAC. This structure kept classroom teaching very closely related to grassroots youth ministry.<sup>195</sup> Mark Cannister argues that this close connection between the academy and Church is a strength in youth ministry training.<sup>196</sup>

As I demonstrated above, most of those surveyed for this research project are considered professional youth workers by the definition I established in 1.4.3. I stated that I would consider youth workers professional only because a church or denomination hired them to work with young people, not because of specialized training. Despite this definition, it is noteworthy that most of those surveyed for this research project had received formal training in ministry. None of them had received either undergraduate or graduate degrees in youth ministry, but a significant number (22 of the 32 surveyed) had taken general theological or ministry training. Only four of them had taken undergraduate courses in youth ministry, and 11 had taken graduate courses in youth ministry (see Chart 3.2).

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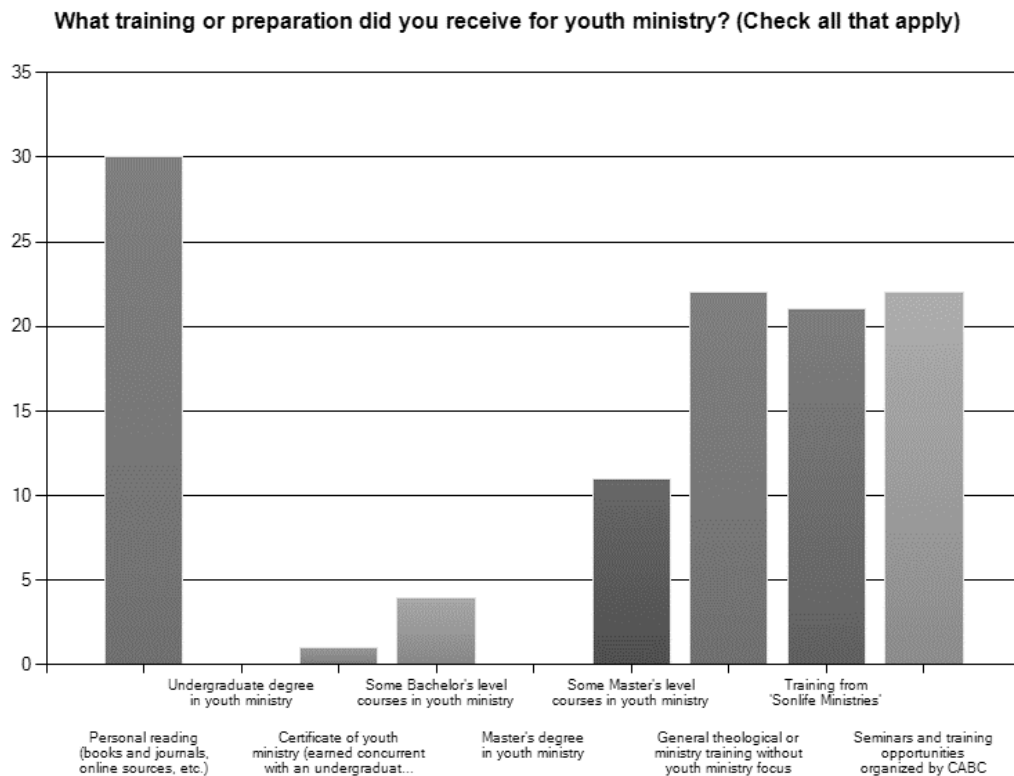
<sup>193</sup> Bruce Fawcett, "Effective Youth Ministry in Atlantic Canada," *Atlantic Baptist*, Summer, 2000, 16.

<sup>194</sup> Gary Dunfield, "Acadia Divinity College Launches Youth Ministry Program," *Atlantic Baptist*, March 2001, 18-19.

<sup>195</sup> Bruce Fawcett, *Report for Youth and Family Ministries* (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2002), D4.

<sup>196</sup> Cannister, "The State of the Professoriate: An Empirical Study of Youth Ministry Professionals in North America," 77.

Chart 3.2



In this section, I have demonstrated that a significant number of youth workers, many with specialized training of some sort, led church youth ministries within the CBAC, provided denominational leadership and university instruction. I have also established that youth ministry professionalization within the CBAC occurred at an ever-increasing rate from 1945-2010. Clear evidence shows that, both within the broader context of North America and within the CBAC, youth ministry professionals emerged within local churches, denominations, and the academy. As professionals devoted to youth ministry emerged within denominational and church staff, they dramatically changed youth ministry leadership within the churches of the CBAC. I have also shown that youth ministry professionals were present in both CBAC denominational and academic spheres. This historical context is necessary for the analysis of Chapters Five and Six. In Chapter Five, I critically examine discipleship within the resources, curriculum, and books written and endorsed by youth ministry



professionals serving the denomination. In Chapter Six, I critically examine the discipleship practices of key CBAC youth leaders, most of whom were professional youth leaders.

However, before my critical examination of youth discipleship within the CBAC can occur, I must introduce the history of the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC. Understanding how this movement started and came to dominate the youth ministry landscape of the CBAC is necessary for the following chapters, especially Chapter Seven, where I critically examine youth discipleship within the youth mission tour movement.

### **3.3 The Growth of Youth Mission Tours in the CBAC**

So far in this chapter, to establish the historical context for CBAC youth discipleship, I have introduced and argued for the importance of an understanding of the professionalization of youth ministry within North America, generally, and the CBAC specifically. I will now demonstrate that the growth of youth mission tours within the CBAC is also a significant development area for youth discipleship, and therefore must be examined.

Almost all my survey respondents (96%) rated youth mission tours as excellent or very good discipleship settings. In this section, I use information gathered from my interviews and CBAC archival records to support and fill out this broad support for discipleship through youth mission tours. To accomplish this, I trace the development of the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC, with some references to the broader context of North American youth ministry. Only after establishing the historical development of youth mission tours within the CBAC can I critically examine discipleship within the youth mission tour movement.

The youth mission tour movement, according to Root, became a core component of youth ministry in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. He critically describes the movement as global tourism, explaining that the movement involved teams of young people travelling across North America and around the world. Churches annually sent their youth to be involved in mission, hoping that they would be changed through their serving and evangelism.<sup>197</sup> In 7.5, I respond to Root's criticism and how it might apply to CBAC models of youth mission tours.

Before youth participation on mission teams became a widespread North American movement in the 1990s, some isolated occurrences emerged within the CBAC. One of my respondents reports that when she was a teen in the mid-1960s, she went with her church in Middleton, Nova Scotia, to partner with a church in New Brunswick, where they did evangelistic outreach.<sup>198</sup> Also, in the late 1960s, a pastor from Moncton, New Brunswick, reported that he took a team of youth on a work mission trip to Edith Lank Camp on Campobello Island, New Brunswick. He explains their trip:

it was a big old farmhouse... and we took a dozen kids and only one guy who was good with a hammer and saw, but we improved their camp for them, and we had a wonderful time that profoundly impacted the kids that were there.<sup>199</sup>

Additionally, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a senior pastor who worked extensively with youth organized the *Bethlehem Bus Company* at West End Baptist Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and then the *Shine Singers* a few years later at Middleton Baptist, Nova Scotia. Both were youth musical ministries that they developed and then took on the road, sometimes locally and sometimes in other provinces. The pastor states, "We'd take the choir and do a week of mission in Newfoundland and various places."<sup>200</sup> These references demonstrate that isolated

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<sup>197</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 187.

<sup>198</sup> Structured Interview #11, "Cindy" 2013 02 06, 77.

<sup>199</sup> Structured Interview #38, "Rick" 2012 10 03, 41.

<sup>200</sup> Structured Interview #15, "Jeffrey" 2013 02 06, 13.

youth mission teams emerged within the CBAC by the 1960s and became more common by the 1970s.

Before youth mission trips were seen within the CBAC, local service projects were an early part of CBAC youth ministry life. In 1945, there was encouragement in the denominational magazine for young people to serve in their local communities.<sup>201</sup> However, in the early years of the youth mission tour movement, a shift from young people serving to doing ministry and evangelism emerged. In 1967 and again in 1974, teams of young adults (age 17-24) from the CBAC went on six-week mission experiences to Bolivia. While the team spent most of their time on work projects, they also did some singing and ministry in the Bolivian churches.<sup>202</sup> Some early youth mission tours were work trips, others were composed primarily of church ministry experiences, and some had a blend of both. Despite these early examples of youth mission experiences, it appears that they did not occur widely. Don Fraser, who worked as the Associate Secretary for the Board of Christian Education of the CBAC from 1970-1974, explained that taking young people on short-term mission trips was simply not something they did at the time. He did indicate that there had been a few longer international trips.<sup>203</sup>

During the 1970s, young people continued to be involved in local service experiences. However, along with service involvement, they exhibited an expanding interest in youth mission experiences.<sup>204</sup> From the 1970s and onward, Mission tours were encouraged from a denominational perspective. In *The Atlantic Baptist*, there is a brief mention of a youth

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<sup>201</sup> F.S. Crossman, "Youth Training for Service: The Need," *The Maritime Baptist* 49, no. 10 (1945): 10.

<sup>202</sup> George Simpson, "Project Bolivia '74: Work Team Prepares to Leave for 8 Week Term in Bolivia," *Atlantic Baptist* 10, no. 1 (1974): 6.

Don Fraser, *Operation Bolivia, The Bridge* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1973).

<sup>203</sup> Structured Interview #13, "Joe" 2012 10 24, 18-19.

<sup>204</sup> Simpson, "Project Bolivia '74: Work Team Prepares to Leave for 8 Week Term in Bolivia," 3.

program called “summer of service,” which trained and provided young people with opportunities to be involved in evangelistic projects.<sup>205</sup> Part of *Keys to Successful Youth Work* (examined in 5.3) that the CBAC distributed in the 1970s was a full-page description of mission tours. This article explains that mission tours could “be used as a building tool or preparation for spiritual growth.”<sup>206</sup>

Despite their introduction through denominational publications and the isolated examples noted above, mission trips were not standard practice in CBAC youth ministry activities. One youth leader stated, “Mission opportunities were not something we used, [in] the mid-70s through to the mid-80s.”<sup>207</sup> She states that there were plenty of examples of brief one-day service projects, but partially due to finances, there were no more extended mission trips.<sup>208</sup>

The youth mission tour movement in Atlantic Canada began to pick up momentum in the 1980s. The Secretary of the Christian Training Commission of the CBAC from 1978-1983 states that during her time of leadership, she

...was able to use Main Street Baptist Church as one of my models for a youth mission trip, and for training. This was a means to an end, and training our youth for discipleship and for doing Bible stories and other things, and Dartmouth was the first church that copied this model and began to do mission trips and training the youth in discipleship.<sup>209</sup>

As explained in this quote, she shared this model with others, and Rev. David and Florence Watt were among those who adopted the practice. The Watts built the youth mission tour model into their ministries at two churches where David pastored, Woodstock Baptist in Woodstock, New Brunswick, and First Baptist Church in Dartmouth, NS.<sup>210</sup> They organized

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<sup>205</sup> George Simpson, "Summer of Service for Youth," *Atlantic Baptist* 13, no. 6 (1977): 12.

<sup>206</sup> Byron Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1972), 21.

<sup>207</sup> Structured Interview #14, "Marlene", Grand Bay, 2012 09 20, 5.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 5.

<sup>209</sup> Structured Interview #36, "Peggy" 2012 11 06, 72-73.

<sup>210</sup> Structured Interview #15, "Jeffrey" 2013 02 06, 14-16.

*Metro Mission* in 1987, inviting other youth groups to come to Dartmouth and do mission work alongside their church. Although the event only had 50 participants, it became an early example of youth ministries collaborating in mission projects. This model evolved and grew dramatically over the coming decades.<sup>211</sup> Rev. Watt states that the idea of mission tours “really caught on with us, and we started taking our kids on mission tours everywhere from the South Shore [Nova Scotia] to New Brunswick. I think the first one was Prince Edward Island.”<sup>212</sup>

Around this time, the late 1980s and onward, an increasing number of youth leaders began to organize youth mission tours. A pastor who worked with youth in the Saint John area from 1983 to 1998 speaks of the *Salt and Light Company*, which included drama, singing, puppets, and other initiatives that he and his youth developed to take on the road.<sup>213</sup> In 1987, Dartmouth Baptist Church invited young people from different areas to do urban ministry with them for a week. Capping the group at 50, they performed a musical and taught with puppets, worked with the poor, and organized recreational activities.<sup>214</sup> In the late 1980s, Bruce Fawcett records that there “were youth ministries in perhaps a dozen Baptist churches across the Atlantic Provinces that were regularly sending out youth mission teams each summer.”<sup>215</sup> In the same year, at the CBAC’s annual youth event, *Springforth*, Rev. David Watt offered a workshop on “Mission Touring and Youth Ministry.”<sup>216</sup> The presence of this further demonstrates the developing interest in youth mission experiences at the time.

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<sup>211</sup> David Watt, "Atlantic Baptist Youth - Reaching Out," *Christian Training Commission Communicator*, March-April 1987, 28.

<sup>212</sup> Structured Interview #15, "Jeffrey" 2013 02 06, 13.

<sup>213</sup> Structured Interview #34, "Robert" 2013 02 15, 54.

<sup>214</sup> Watt, "Atlantic Baptist Youth - Reaching Out," 28.

<sup>215</sup> Bruce Fawcett, Mike McDonald, and Rob Nysten, *Mission Tour: Successfully Leading Youth on a Short-Term Mission Experience*, 2nd ed. (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2005), 189.

<sup>216</sup> Harold Arbo, "Springforth Schedule," *Christian Training Commission Communicator*, May 1987.

The youth mission tour movement grew rapidly through the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. During this time, the CBAC facilitated a biennial event called *Tidal Impact*, which, in its promotional material, claimed to be the largest youth mission tour in Canada and even in North America.<sup>217</sup> *Tidal Impact* is noteworthy because of its size and widespread CBAC church participation. It became common practice for CBAC youth ministries to participate in annual youth mission tours. Most of these were local, but some were to other parts of North America, and some to different continents. It is significant to note the link between the professionalization of youth ministry and the youth mission tour movement.

Bruce Fawcett states:

Youth pastors became the primary leaders of local church youth mission teams. *Tidal Impact* 2000 registration records indicate that youth pastors led 54 of the 67 mission teams. Similarly, *Tidal Impact* 2002 registration records indicate that youth pastors led 52 of the 65 mission teams.<sup>218</sup>

With professional youth pastors who had time to dedicate to planning and leading mission experiences, the youth mission tour movement flourished within the CBAC.

In this section, I have introduced the youth mission tour movement and established that by the 1990s, it was an integral part of CBAC youth ministries. I have demonstrated how the movement grew from small grass-level events into a strategic and central component of youth discipleship within the CBAC. This growth happened primarily because of professional youth pastors within so many churches that provided leadership to the movement.

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<sup>217</sup> Bruce Fawcett, and Rob Nysten, eds., *Effective Youth Ministry* (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2003), 27. Here, in an advertisement between chapters, *Tidal Impact* is spoken of as “Canada’s largest youth mission tour.”

*Tidal Impact* 2011: *The Wave is Building*, (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2011). Here *Tidal Impact* is spoken of as “the largest known youth mission tour in North America.”

<sup>218</sup> Fawcett, “Recruiting Clergy for Canadian Baptist Churches: A Typological Understanding”, 24.

### **3.4 Summary**

In this chapter, I introduced two movements within the history of youth discipleship: the professionalization of youth ministry and the youth mission tour movement.

Understanding both these movements is significant and essential to critically examine youth discipleship within the CBAC in the following chapters, as they are substantial developments that shaped youth ministry within the CBAC and the discipleship that happened therein.

From this examination, I demonstrated that professional youth leaders gradually emerged within North America from the 1940s and onward. Within the CBAC, the movement began in the 1950s, and following the same pattern as within North America, it rapidly grew until the turn of the century. The professionalization of youth ministry had a profound impact on the leadership of CBAC youth ministry at the local church, the denomination, and the academy.

I also demonstrated in this chapter that one part of the youth ministry landscape that professional youth workers primarily shaped was youth mission involvement and the development of the youth mission tour movement. In this chapter, I introduced the development of this movement within North American and the CBAC. In Chapter Seven, I will build on this historical foundation by critically examining youth discipleship within the youth mission tour movement.

The establishment of these two movements as significant parts of CBAC youth ministry is essential for my critical examination of youth discipleship that will occur in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. The next chapter will explain and narrow my research field through a survey of literature, source material, and methodology.

## 4 SURVEY OF LITERATURE, SOURCE MATERIAL, AND METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I do three primary things. First, I survey literature from the fields related to my research, second, I introduce the primary sources that I will be using in my research, and third, I present my empirical research methodology. These three areas all build upon the establishment of the critical lens from Chapter Two and the introduction of the professionalization of youth ministry and the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC in Chapter Three. The material in Chapters Two, Three, and Four will allow me to then move on to a focused critical analysis of youth discipleship in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven.

Through the survey of literature, I demonstrate that there is a need for study in this particular area and that I have a solid grasp of literature related to this topic. In the sources section, I introduce the primary sources that I use in this research project. In the final section of the chapter, I will explain and justify the methodologies used to gather and work with my research material. I explain the entire process of gathering this information, with particular attention to the survey and interview procedures. I use Bruce Berg's work on qualitative research methods as a primary tool to justify the methods that I employed.<sup>219</sup>

First, however, I want to position myself in relation to the research. I am a participant-observer from within. My motivation for this research comes from a lifetime of participation and leadership within the youth ministries of the CBAC. From my childhood, I have been an

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<sup>219</sup> Bruce Berg (1954-2009) most recently served as faculty at California State University – Long Beach. His book *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* is now in its 9<sup>th</sup> edition (2017). The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> editions have been edited and updated by Howard Lune. It is widely used as a teaching tool as well as regarded as an authority in scholarly works.



active participant in the life of CBAC churches and have attended and led camps, events, and regional youth programs. Some of the youth ministry-related roles I have served in over the years include volunteer youth leader, summer camp staff, Youth Pastor, Associate Pastor, Denominational Youth Director, and Youth Ministry Lecturer at Crandall University and Acadia Divinity College. I started this research because of my desire to learn about and help shape the ministry that I have invested so much in over the years. Also, I am co-editor of the only CBAC book about youth ministry history. I have also written and published some other items that will serve as source material in this research project. As I explain my methodology, the steps that I took to maintain distance from the material will be apparent.

## **4.2 Survey of Literature**

An important component of this research project is the in-depth examination of scholarly literature about North American Christian youth ministry. In this section, I critically survey this broad and very diverse youth ministry context, breaking down this material into four categories: general, historical, discipleship, and theological. Through this survey, I narrow down and more clearly define what I will and will not include in this research project. Through this process, I demonstrate three things. First, I show that I have an informed working knowledge and understanding of writing about this topic. Second, I demonstrate that much of North American youth ministry writing is not or is only loosely connected to my project research. Third, I will show that my research contributes to addressing the gap in the literature about Canadian youth ministry.

Through this section, it will become evident that writing related to these topics increased exponentially during the time I am studying (1945-2010). I also demonstrate that youth ministry writing progressively took on a much closer connection to youth discipleship

and theological reflection. In the early years of this research project, writing about youth discipleship and youth ministry is either found buried within the sparse publications dealing with Christian Education, practical how-to manuals, or within writings and publications that specifically focused on denominational or parachurch ministries. Very few articles and books related directly to youth discipleship exist from the 1940s to the 1960s.

#### **4.2.1 Survey of General Youth Ministry Literature**

To systematically and beneficially work through the many books written about North American youth ministry from 1945 to 2010, I will organize general youth ministry writings into three groups: practical resources, survey or introductory-style writings, and resources related to sociological or cultural issues.

##### ***Practical Resources***

Most youth ministry writing from 1945-2010 falls into the category of practical resources. This category varies from extremely practical resources that provide samples and ideas for youth leaders to those specifically targeting one issue related to youth ministry. Among the earliest and most practical was the work of youth ministry practitioners Mike Yaconelli and Wayne Rice. In 1968-1969 they put together the first of many *Ideas* books. *Ideas* eventually grew into a large series that *Youth Specialties* regularly published until the 1990s.<sup>220</sup> These books provided very practical ideas to make youth ministry more attractive, fun, and effective. Because books of this sort are so practical and not directly related to youth discipleship or theology of youth ministry, they are not relevant or helpful for my research.

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<sup>220</sup> <http://youthspecialties.com/about/history/>. Accessed July 18, 2017.

However, the fact that they are practical and show a lack of theological reflection contributes to my overarching argument about the development of the theological turn.

Other practical youth ministry materials abound from the 1980s and onward. Books like *Organizing a Youth Ministry to Fit Your Needs* (1983)<sup>221</sup> fit into this grouping. Others such as *Called to Care: Youth Ministry for the Church* (1985)<sup>222</sup> *Starting a Youth Ministry* (1991),<sup>223</sup> *Back to the Heart of Youth Ministry* (1994),<sup>224</sup> *Youth Ministry that Works* (1991),<sup>225</sup> and *Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry* (2002),<sup>226</sup> are some of the many others. These may provide general youth ministry support and training but are not relevant to my research because of their lack of focus on youth discipleship or explicit theology.

There is also an abundance of literature that introduced an approach to, or component of, youth ministry. Examples of this are *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (1994),<sup>227</sup> *High School Ministry* (1986),<sup>228</sup> *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry* (2003),<sup>229</sup> *Worship Centred Youth Ministry: A Compass for Guiding Youth into God's Story* (2000),<sup>230</sup> *Youth Ministry Nuts and Bolts: Mastering the Ministry Behind the Scenes* (1990),<sup>231</sup> and *Practicing Discernment with Youth: A Transformative Youth Ministry Approach* (2005).<sup>232</sup> These books, and others of the sort, each focused on one narrow aspect of youth ministry. As they

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<sup>221</sup> Jeffrey Jones, and Kenneth Potts, *Organizing a Youth Ministry to Fit Your Needs* (King of Prussia: Judson, 1983).

<sup>222</sup> Doug Stevens, *Called to Care: Youth Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985).

<sup>223</sup> Larry Keefauver, *Starting a Youth Ministry* (Loveland: Group, 1984).

<sup>224</sup> Bertolini, *Back to the Heart of Youth Work*.

<sup>225</sup> Duffy Robbins, *Youth Ministry That Works* (Wheaton: Victor, 1991).

<sup>226</sup> Doug Fields, *Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry: A Personal and Practical Guide to Starting Right* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002).

<sup>227</sup> Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004).

<sup>228</sup> Mike Yaconelli, and Jim Burns, *High School Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986).

<sup>229</sup> Jim Burns, and Mike DeVries, *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry* (Gospel Light, 2003).

<sup>230</sup> Jon Middendorf, *Worship Centered Youth Ministry: A Compass for Guiding Youth into God's Story* (Kansas City: Word Action Publishing, 2000).

<sup>231</sup> Duffy Robbins, *Youth Ministry Nuts and Bolts: Mastering the Ministry Behind the Scenes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990).

<sup>232</sup> David White, *Practicing Discernment with Youth: A Transformative Youth Ministry Approach* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2005).

concentrate on specific areas like working with parents or worship in youth ministry, they may have helped youth leaders. However, they are not relevant for my research, as they do not relate directly to youth discipleship in the way I am approaching it.

### ***Introductory Survey-Style Youth Ministry Books***

The second group of general youth ministry literature I want to deal with is the introductory survey-style books. Authors designed these to be either the primary text for a college or seminary youth ministry class or a guide for youth leaders to implement in their ecclesial settings. These books focus on a wide range of youth ministry topics, from the vision, philosophy, or foundational theology to such practical details as running a youth night, communicating with parents, or staying connected with young people. An early book of this sort was Lawrence Richards' book *Youth Ministry: Its Renewal in the Local Church* (1972).<sup>233</sup> Plenty of others followed this, such as *The Complete Youth Ministries Handbook* (1979),<sup>234</sup> *The Complete Youth Leader's Sourcebook* (1983),<sup>235</sup> *The Complete Book of Youth Ministry* (1987),<sup>236</sup> *The YouthBuilder* (1988, 2001),<sup>237</sup> *Reaching a Generation for Christ: A Comprehensive Guide to Youth Ministry* (1997),<sup>238</sup> and *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* (1998).<sup>239</sup> There were other books in this genre, but these are among the best known.

These introductory, survey-style youth ministry books emerged when youth ministries and youth ministry education were expanding rapidly.<sup>240</sup> While I use some of these books in

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<sup>233</sup> Laurence Richards, *Youth Ministry: Its Renewal in the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972).

<sup>234</sup> David Stone, ed., *The Complete Youth Ministries Handbook, Vols 1 & 2* (Abingdon, 1979).

<sup>235</sup> Gary Dausey, ed., *The Youth Leader's Sourcebook* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

<sup>236</sup> Benson, and Senter, *The Complete Book of Youth Ministry*.

<sup>237</sup> Burns, *The Youth Builder*.

<sup>238</sup> Mark Senter, and Richard Dunn, *Reaching a Generation for Christ: A Comprehensive Guide to Youth Ministry* (Chicago: Moody, 1997).

<sup>239</sup> Doug Fields, *Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry: Nine Essential Foundations for Healthy Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998).

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000020286&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>240</sup> Senter, "History of Youth Ministry Education," 96-98.

this research as secondary sources to establish context, for the most part, their relevance is minimal. The portions of these books that deal with discipleship or youth ministry theology are limited and superficial, so generally are not helpful for this research.

### ***Sociological/Cultural Youth Ministry Writings***

One category of youth ministry literature that was sometimes academic yet not relevant to this research is sociological and cultural writings. An example of this is *High School Ministry* (1986), a book by Mike Yaconelli and Jim Burns.<sup>241</sup> Other examples are Tony Campolo's 1989 book, *The Church and the American Teenager*,<sup>242</sup> and Donald Ratcliff and James Davies' edited *Handbook of Youth Ministry* (1991). Contrary to the name, this book is purely a sociological work about adolescents and the Church.<sup>243</sup> Walt Mueller<sup>244</sup> has done significant work in this area, including *Understanding Today's Youth* (1994)<sup>245</sup> and *Youth Culture 101* (2007).<sup>246</sup> George Barna is also a prominent name in this genre, having written, among other things, *Baby Busters: The Disillusioned Generation* (1994)<sup>247</sup> and *Real Teens: A Contemporary Snapshot of Youth Culture* (2001).<sup>248</sup> Other works of the sort are Chap Clark's *Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teens* (2004),<sup>249</sup> as well as Christian Smith's *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (2005)<sup>250</sup> and *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (2009).<sup>251</sup> While some of

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<sup>241</sup> Yaconelli, and Burns, *High School Ministry*.

<sup>242</sup> Campolo, *The Church & the American Teenager*. Also Published as *Growing up in America: A Sociology of Youth Ministry*.

<sup>243</sup> Donale Ratcliff, and James Davies, eds., *Handbook of Youth Ministry* (Birmingham: REP Books, 1991).

<sup>244</sup> In addition to these two landmark books, Mueller has written extensively on youth culture, and is the president of the *Center for Parent/Youth Understanding*. (<https://cpyu.org/> accessed June 28, 2017).

<sup>245</sup> Mueller, *Understanding Today's Youth*.

<sup>246</sup> Walt Mueller, *Youth Culture 101* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

<sup>247</sup> George Barna, *Baby Busters: The Disillusioned Generation* (Chicago: Northfield, 1994).

<sup>248</sup> George Barna, *Real Teens: A Contemporary Snapshot of Youth Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

<sup>249</sup> Chap Clark, *Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

<sup>250</sup> Christian Smith, and Melina Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford, 2005).

<sup>251</sup> Christian Smith, and Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (New York: Oxford, 2009).

these books were among the first to introduce a more academic edge to youth ministry literature, they are not relevant to my research as they do not touch directly on the themes of youth discipleship or theology of youth ministry.

The books introduced in this subsection are but a small portion of general youth ministry literature, but they represent many written resources. By organizing the material in the categories of practical resources, survey or introductory-style literature, or sociological/cultural youth ministry writings, I have dealt with a vast amount of material in a compressed manner. As I have indicated, while there is a large amount of this material, it has little direct relevance to my research. It represents the broader and more general category of literature on youth ministry.

#### **4.2.2 Survey of Literature about Youth Ministry History**

Some more useful writings than those introduced above are related to youth ministry history in North America. Although such resources are limited, most of those that exist are quite helpful. This subsection will identify this useful literature and demonstrate in the process the academic void in the area I am researching.

Mark Senter's *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America* is the most useful book dealing with youth ministry history. Divided into five parts, the first three focus on the time before my research, but the last two provide helpful contextual information about youth ministry in North America from 1933 to 2010.<sup>252</sup> While Jon Pahl's book, *Youth Ministry in Modern America: 1930 to the Present*, is specifically about youth ministry, it is not valuable for my research.<sup>253</sup> He traces youth ministry through

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<sup>252</sup> Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*.

<sup>253</sup> Jon Pahl, *Youth Ministry in Modern America: 1930 to the Present* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Pubs, 2000).

four youth ministry movements: The Walther League, The Young Christian Workers, Youth for Christ, and African-American youth ministries. Of these four foci, the most relevant to my study is in the Youth for Christ movement, but it is not specific enough to be helpful.

Beyond these two books, there are several insightful and helpful chapters or sections in books. One that is useful is Mark Cannister's contribution in *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry*.<sup>254</sup> Here he provides a history of evangelical youth ministries, with particular attention to the early history. In *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*, Root introduces the development of relational youth ministry in the twentieth century.<sup>255</sup> This selective historical account is beneficial for this research project, especially since it was written by Root, who is so prominent for his description of, and participation in the theological turn.

A few journal articles are also beneficial for this research. One journal article written in 1963 by Howard Worth, *Youth Work in the Past Decade*,<sup>256</sup> provides a perspective on North American youth ministry in the 1950s. This article speaks of the cultural contexts and challenges of the time, and in a very frank manner, identifies what Worth sees as the shortcomings of youth ministries.<sup>257</sup> This article is helpful as it provides a rare glimpse into youth ministry at a time when there was little written other than denominational reports. *Historical Origins of Professional Evangelical Youth Work in the Church*, by Ken Garland and Steve Fortosis, is helpful for my examination of the professionalization of youth ministry and youth discipleship.<sup>258</sup> Mark Senter's *History of Youth Ministry Education* is also helpful

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<sup>254</sup> Mark Cannister, "Youth Ministry's Historical Context: The Education and Evangelism of Young People," in *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*, ed. Kenda Dean, Chap Clark, and Dave Rahn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

<sup>255</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*.

<sup>256</sup> Worth, "Youth Work in the Past Decade."

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>258</sup> Garland, and Fortosis, "*Historical Origins of Professional Evangelical Youth Work in the Church*."

as it examines the development of youth ministry training, which I critically examine in Chapter Six.<sup>259</sup> *The Place of History in Youth Ministry Education*, written by Thomas Bergler, was somewhat useful in establishing a bibliography of source material on the history of youth ministry. However, beyond that, its contribution is mainly outside the focus of this research.<sup>260</sup>

In this subsection, I have demonstrated that there is some material related to the history of youth ministry. The absence of material that approaches the subject matter from a theological or discipleship perspective is notable. Also absent are any Canadian sources whatsoever. When I introduce source material in section 4.3, I present a youth ministry history text that Bruce Fawcett and I edited. However, aside from this one source, there are no other known books or published articles on Canadian youth ministry history. There is a need for more academic research and writing in this field.

### **4.2.3 Survey of Literature about Youth Ministry Discipleship**

Having reviewed literature that is helpful for me from a historical perspective, I now introduce the sources that pertain to youth discipleship. Literature directly related to youth discipleship is quite limited. While some of the books mentioned in the subsection on general youth ministry literature may have references to discipleship, the emphasis is tangential, and finding sources that deal directly with how young people are, or have been, disciplined is very difficult. One relatively early book that deals directly with discipleship is Paul Fleischmann's edited book, *Discipling the Young Person* (1985).<sup>261</sup> This book has notable authors like Bill

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<sup>259</sup> Senter, "History of Youth Ministry Education."

<sup>260</sup> Thomas Bergler, "The Place of History in Youth Ministry Education," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 1, no. 1 (2002).

<sup>261</sup> Paul Fleischmann, ed., *Discipling the Young Person* (San Bernardino: Here's Life, 1985).



Bright,<sup>262</sup> Josh McDowell,<sup>263</sup> and Barry St. Clair, who had close connections with the CBAC.<sup>264</sup>

Also helpful is Mark Senter's edited 2001 book, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*.<sup>265</sup> This book provides an example of good practical theology in youth ministry. Each of the four contributing authors proposes a different model or approach for effective youth ministry and then critiques the theological premises and practices of the other methods. The presentation of these four views and the interaction between the four writers is quite valuable for this research project as the first three models go into a fair amount of depth on the implications of youth discipleship. Also, Mark Yaconelli's work in youth discipleship is very helpful, as five survey respondents said Yaconelli's speaking or writing was formative for them. His books *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Christ*,<sup>266</sup> and *Growing Souls: Experiments in Contemplative Youth Ministry* and some articles and other writing on related topics, were influential for some youth leaders within the CBAC.<sup>267</sup> His work is especially helpful in researching the third key marker of the theological turn, communities of spiritual practice.

Many books related to youth discipleship were for young people themselves. Two examples of this genre are Jon Ortberg's student edition of *The Me I Want to Be*<sup>268</sup> and Doug Fields and Erik Rees' book, *Congratulations... You're Gifted: Discovering your God-Given*

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<sup>262</sup> Bill Bright was the founder of *Campus Crusade for Christ* and one of the most prominent evangelists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/julyweb-only/7-21-11.0.html>, Accessed August 29, 2017.

<sup>263</sup> Josh McDowell has been with CRU (formerly *Campus Crusade for Christ*) or its affiliate organizations since 1961, has written or co-authored 148 books, and delivered over 27,000 talks in 125 countries. <https://www.josh.org/about-us/joshs-bio/>, Accessed August 29, 2017.

<sup>264</sup> Structured Interview #36, "Peggy" 2012 11 06, 72.

<sup>265</sup> Mark Senter, ed., *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

<sup>266</sup> Mark Yaconelli, *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Christ* (El Cajon: Youth Specialties, 2006).

<sup>267</sup> Structured Interview #10, "Donald" 2012 11 19, 107.

<sup>268</sup> John Ortberg, *The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You (Teen Version)* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

*Shape to Make a Difference in the World.*<sup>269</sup> While literature of this sort might yield interesting information about youth discipleship, it does not speak of youth discipleship within ecclesial or denominational settings, which is my research's primary focus.

In this subsection, I have introduced some of the literature related to youth discipleship, focussing on the writings most closely connected to my research topic. I have demonstrated that some of this material is quite relevant and helpful to my research.

#### **4.2.4 Survey of Literature about Youth Ministry Theology and Theological Reflection**

In addition to books on youth discipleship, another group of useful books for my research is related to youth ministry theology and theological reflection. In recent years, an increasing amount of research on this topic has emerged, but there is still only a small amount from which to draw. In some earlier writings, such as Glenn Ludwig's 1979 book *Building an Effective Youth Ministry*, there were suggestions of the importance of theological reflection.<sup>270</sup> He writes, "Intentional youth ministry begins with the whys and wherefores. It means creating from a solid foundation."<sup>271</sup> Elsewhere, he states, "our attitudes and practices are outward expressions of what we believe."<sup>272</sup> However, Dean Borgman first articulated a clear call for more intentional theological reflection in youth ministry in his 1997 book, *When Kumbaya is Not Enough*.<sup>273</sup> In 2001, Kenda Dean, Chap Clark, and Dave Rhan built upon this when they published *Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry*.<sup>274</sup> In addition to these

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<sup>269</sup> Doug Fields, and Erik Rees, *Congratulations... You're Gifted: Discovering Your God-Given Shape to Make a Difference in the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

<sup>270</sup> Glenn Ludwig, *Building an Effective Youth Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979).

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>273</sup> Dean Borgman, *When Kumbaya Is Not Enough: A Practical Theology for Youth Ministry* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997).

<sup>274</sup> Dean, Clark, and Rhan, *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*.

three general editors, the 22 contributing authors were among the most well-known and respected youth ministry experts of the time.<sup>275</sup> In his review of the book, Robert DeVries states,

This book is about practical theology – that theology that takes seriously the Word of God, the Christian tradition, and the contemporary cultural setting of the Church. The editors pull no punches in stressing the need for a solid theological foundation for all ministry, including that of our ministry to youth.<sup>276</sup>

This text's unique contribution is to present the work of a large selection of well-respected youth ministry thinkers as they apply theological concepts to the practice of youth ministry.

In Chapter Two, *Establishing the Critical Lens*, I extensively examined the work of Root and Dean in the area of theological reflection upon youth ministry practice, so I will say little about them here. *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry* (Root and Dean), *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry* (Root), *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker* (Root), and *The Godbearing Life* (Dean) are works that are of critical importance to this research project. They relate to practical theology in youth ministry in a very direct manner. I use other writings of theirs as well, but these will be my main sources.

Some very significant journal articles speak to theological reflection in youth ministry. Chap Clark's 'From Fragmentation to Integration: A Theology for Contemporary Youth Ministry' in *American Baptist Quarterly* is foremost, offering solid arguments for the full integration of young people into ecclesial life.<sup>277</sup> Powell, King, and Clark's, 'The Needs of Youth Ministry at the Turn of the Century' in *Journal of Youth Ministry*, identifies theological foundations as one of five "core areas of content needed to improve the training

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<sup>275</sup> Among the contributors to this book were scholars who taught at some of the most recognized seminaries of the time: Tony Campolo (Eastern College), Mark Cannister (Gordon College), Darrell Johnson (Regent College and Fuller Seminary), Soren Oestergaard (University of Copenhagen), and Duffy Robbins (Eastern College).

<sup>276</sup> Robert DeVries, "Review of *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*," *Calvin Theological Journal* 38, no. 1 (2003): 196.

<sup>277</sup> Clark, "From Fragmentation to Integration: A Theology for Contemporary Youth Ministry."

in youth and family work.”<sup>278</sup> In ‘Youth Ministry Education: Where Practice, Theology, and Social Science Intersect,’ Pamela Erwin proposes that all theology is practical theology and should be reflective, active, communal, and continual.<sup>279</sup> Another very relevant article is ‘Youth Ministry as Practical Theology.’ Written by Chap Clark in *Journal of Youth Ministry* in 2008, this builds on what he and others wrote before but emphasizes the necessity of a continual process of practical theology development within youth ministry.<sup>280</sup> Root’s contribution is also significant in ‘Youth Ministry as an Integrative Theological Task,’ where he argues forcefully for a strong connection between theology and interdisciplinarity in youth ministry.<sup>281</sup> These articles contribute to rounding out the field of knowledge in theological reflection on youth ministry. Taken together, they demonstrate that a growing interest in theology within youth ministry emerged at the very end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Individually, each provides specific evidence of theological reflection on the practice of youth ministry. Further, I would argue that my work contributes to the literature that focuses on a theological approach to youth ministry, albeit concerning a historical period and context that has thus far received little attention.

### **4.3 Introduction of Source Material**

Having introduced the broad field of literature related to North American youth ministry, I will now introduce my sources of information about CBAC youth discipleship. There are two primary groups of source material used in this research project. One is the

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<sup>278</sup> Kara Powell, Ebstyn King, and Chap Clark, "The Needs of Youth Ministry at the Turn of the Century: Hearing the Voice of the People," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 4, no. 1 (2005).

<sup>279</sup> Pamela Erwin, "Youth Ministry Education: Where Practice, Theology, and Social Science Intersect," Article, *Journal of Youth Ministry* 4, no. 2 (2006): 13-17.

<sup>280</sup> Chap Clark, "Youth Ministry as Practical Theology," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 7 (2008): 20.

<sup>281</sup> Andrew Root, "Youth Ministry as an Integrative Theological Task: Toward a Representative Method of Interdisciplinarity in Scholarship, Pastoral Practice and Pedagogy," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 5, no. 2 (2007).

literature that will be my primary source material. Included are magazine articles, books, annual reports, and academic writing from and about youth ministry within the CBAC during the period 1945-2010. The second primary source is the collection of data that I gathered directly from CBAC youth leaders through surveys and interviews. Through this introduction of sources, it will become evident that no person has ever attempted a historical examination of youth ministry or youth discipleship of this magnitude within the CBAC. Writing about youth ministry within the CBAC has followed the same trajectory as that within the broader context of North America. The primary sources are scattered general comments in the denomination's annual reports from the early years, but there has been significantly more youth ministry writing in recent years.

In looking at the writing about youth discipleship within the CBAC, most of the material was written specifically for denominational publications. Over the years, the number and type of publications have varied widely. Some are in denominational newspapers or magazines, while others, explicitly designed to equip and train those working with youth, are in the form of folders, pamphlets, manuals, or books. In turn, I now examine each of these denominational publications concerning their content about youth discipleship and their relevance to this research project.

#### **4.3.1 Annual Reports**

Throughout the entire period of this research, the CBAC published annual reports, and these always included a specific report within the publication related to the youth ministry of the CBAC and its member churches. Most of these reports are quite general and primarily present youth ministry at the denominational level. However, they are quite informative concerning the endorsed priorities of youth ministry methods and models, the established

partnerships with ministry organizations, and in many cases, the personal convictions of those in leadership roles.

For example, the annual report of 1945-46 demonstrates a cautious optimism for the return of those who had served in the war: “The young men and women who have been engaged in war services are returning to us, and some of them are lining up with our Young People’s groups.”<sup>282</sup> Perhaps this is evangelical rhetoric, but this sense of optimism seems to be an omnipresent factor in the annual reports throughout the entire period under study. While other publications expressed frustration, the yearly report of youth ministries consistently provided an optimistic report and forecast. Even though these reports were consistently favourable and not critical of aspects of youth ministry, they provide valuable information about programs and resources and some names of people involved in CBAC youth leadership.

#### **4.3.2 The Atlantic Baptist**

Another valuable source is *The Atlantic Baptist* magazine, first called *The Maritime Baptist*. It provides numerous practical descriptions of what youth ministry looked like in CBAC churches and articles that demonstrate the priorities of denominational leaders. *The Atlantic Baptist* started in 1905 as the weekly newspaper of a group of churches that would later become the CBAC denomination. It gradually evolved to become a monthly denominational magazine. The CBAC regularly published it for 100 years until its publication terminated in 2005. The publication reported a wide variety of happenings within the CBAC and the broader Christian and Baptist worlds. During some periods, there seemed to be a strong focus on youth ministry issues, but at other times there were few or no

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<sup>282</sup> Fenerty, *Report of the Board of Christian Education*, 189.

references to ministry to youth. Most of the youth-related articles focused on youth issues or upcoming youth events. However, a few of them concentrated on the training and equipping of youth leaders or youth pastors.

Before 1982, the frequency of references to youth ministry within *The Atlantic Baptist* tended to build gradually. From 1945 to 1969, the primary component related to youth ministry was the feature article called *The B.Y.P.U. Topic*.<sup>283</sup> These were usually composed of advice for young people on doctrine or appropriate social behaviour issues written by pastors. Other common references to youth ministry were brief news stories about local or regional youth rallies, church services, or fundraising projects for missions. Direction for youth ministry gradually increased, and articles in *The Atlantic Baptist* demonstrate a distinct evolution, as this content gradually changed from primarily syndicated articles to locally written ones. Starting in the late 1960s, the programmatic side of youth ministry began to receive attention.<sup>284</sup>

From 1982 and onward, youth ministry became a regular part of *The Atlantic Baptist*. That year, an article by a local church youth pastor, Larry Matthews, encouraged churches to prioritize youth ministry.<sup>285</sup> This letter may have sparked the editors' interest in youth ministry, or it may have been part of a movement that emphasized youth ministry. In any case, from this point forward, there was a significant increase in youth ministry news, announcements regarding youth events, and articles encouraging and equipping people and churches for more effective ministry to young people. Some of the articles were written by international youth ministry experts, but local church or denominational youth leaders within the CBAC wrote many others. These articles help paint the picture of CBAC ministry to

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<sup>283</sup> BYPU stands for Baptist Young People's Union.

<sup>284</sup> This change is very evident, especially in the 1970 and 1971 editions of *Atlantic Baptist*.

<sup>285</sup> Larry Matthews, "Youth Ministry: Keep the Local Church First," *Atlantic Baptist* 18, no. 2 (1982): 4.

youth during the period that I am studying, and consequently, I refer to these frequently throughout this research project.

One of the strengths of the information found in *The Atlantic Baptist* is the diversity of perspectives. While denominational staff wrote some articles, youth leaders, pastors, lay leaders, or youth pastors wrote a significant number. The magazine also included editorials, letters to the editor, advertisements, and lists of upcoming youth-related events. For these reasons, *The Atlantic Baptist* is a very valuable source for my research.

### **4.3.3 Christian Training Communicator**

Another important publication for my research is the *Christian Training Communicator* (CTC). The CBAC office started publishing the CTC in 1979. Denominational staff regularly mailed this publication to CBAC churches until the year 2000. Throughout most of this time, the CTC was a monthly publication, although, at other times, the frequency was only quarterly. It is evident from CTC content that youth ministry was a primary area of reporting and interest. It provided regular event updates regarding leader training and youth events. These promotional materials contain much insight into the youth ministry priorities of the CBAC during this time. Some very significant articles also appeared in the CTC that specifically taught or instructed youth leaders in youth ministry and youth discipleship matters. Throughout this research project, I use these to show what youth ministry leaders historically learned and what denominational leadership emphasized. As with the annual reports mentioned above, the CTC tended to be very positive, serving as an inspirational newsletter for those working with youth. Thus, it does not contain much in the way of critical engagement with youth ministry practice.



#### 4.3.4 Books and Manuals

Within the CBAC, there are also some youth ministry books and manuals that are very important for my research. However, the list of youth ministry books published within the CBAC is relatively small. Denominational leadership provided only a few resources to assist churches in establishing or solidifying their ministry to youth.

The first publication of this sort was the *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook* (1959).<sup>286</sup> Eugene Thompson, who served as the Youth Work Secretary and would later become Executive Minister of the CBAC, was the editor. This handbook provided a complete template for local church youth ministry. It presented a very structured ministry model that was supposed to be flexible enough to fit into a church of any size. This handbook was a comprehensive, 42-page publication designed to help adults run a thorough program for young people. It borrowed significantly from a similar document produced by the American Baptist Convention,<sup>287</sup> but Thompson contextualized the material for the CBAC and added some completely new sections.<sup>288</sup>

The next attempt to develop a local resource for youth ministry came about 15 years later in a folder of material gathered under the name *Keys to Successful Youth Work*.<sup>289</sup> Like the previous handbook, this folder contained some material from outside the region and some locally prepared material. The approach was very different from Thompson's handbook, as instead of following in his example of providing a how-to manual, denominational leadership designed *Keys to Successful Youth Work* to answer the primary questions of importance for

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<sup>286</sup> Eugene Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook* (Saint John: Maritime United Baptist Convention, 1959).

<sup>287</sup> Forrest Fordham, *The Baptist Youth Fellowship* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Convention, 1951).

<sup>288</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 1.

<sup>289</sup> *Keys to Successful Youth Work* (Saint John: Atlantic United Baptist Convention, 1974-1978).

CBAC youth ministry. The handbook also included some practical tips that could help a youth ministry of any size or type.

Both Thompson's 1959 handbook and the 1974 folder of information are significant sources for this research project. They both provide specific resources and programming provided for youth leaders. In a very tangible way, each demonstrates the denominational priorities and ministry models that staff endorsed during these periods. The weakness of these resources is that it is usually unknown if youth ministry leaders put them into practice. As I demonstrate in Chapter Five, some clues point toward wide dissemination of both, but ultimately, I cannot definitively say that youth leaders followed the advice or put the models into practice.

In addition to these resources, several youth ministry books were also written within the CBAC. Around the turn of the century, as Bruce Fawcett directed the Youth and Family Ministries Department of the CBAC, he initiated several books to strengthen and equip local church youth ministries. Appendix F of *Roots and Resurgence* provides a comprehensive list of these recent publications.<sup>290</sup> As Fawcett recalls, the CBAC *Youth and Family Ministries Department* gave all these books away free of charge to as many leaders and pastors as possible.

Every book I was part of producing for the Baptist Convention was circulated to as many youth leaders, church leaders, and pastors as possible. This included providing copies as part of the registration fee for events like *Tidal Impact*, *Springforth*, the Youth Pastors Summit, and our annual CBAC gathering, Oasis. The print runs for each were between 1,500 and 2,000 copies.<sup>291</sup>

I now highlight some of these books and indicate why each is important for this research project.

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<sup>290</sup> Fawcett, and Stairs, eds., *Roots and Resurgence: Atlantic Baptist Youth Ministry at the Turn of the Millennium*, 210-11.

<sup>291</sup> Bruce Fawcett, Personal Correspondence, 2017 07 28.

*Youth Mission Tours* (2002)<sup>292</sup>: Fawcett and CBAC youth pastor Mike McDonald designed this book to guide churches planning to involve their youth in short-term mission opportunities. In 2005, with the help of Rob Nylen, Fawcett and McDonald published the second version of this book entitled *Mission Tour*.<sup>293</sup> Fawcett and McDonald also did a complete re-write in 2012, under the title *Building Young Leaders*.<sup>294</sup> This re-write was not as contextual to the CBAC as they wrote it for a wider audience. The book's first two editions looked specifically at the preparation and teambuilding process for the biennial *Tidal Impact* youth mission tour. They provided a discipling template called *The Discipleship Project* that Fawcett designed to prepare individual youth to be part of a youth mission team. Parts of this book will be beneficial in writing on the youth mission tour movement, but it also is very helpful in understanding the youth discipleship methods widely used in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Because my research shows that youth leaders widely used *The Discipleship Project* for youth discipleship, these three mission tour books will be beneficial for Chapter Five when I examine CBAC youth discipleship materials.

*Effective Youth Ministry* (2003)<sup>295</sup>: Fawcett and Nylen edited this book to provide guidance and training for those who worked with youth within the CBAC. Most of the contributing writers were CBAC youth pastors at the time of the book's publication. *Effective Youth Ministry* is valuable to this research project because of the variety of input from active leaders in local church youth ministry. My research pool included interviews with nine of the 15 contributing writers for the book. Their presence demonstrates a close connection between the book and my research project. Three chapters are of particular relevance: Mark Sypher

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<sup>292</sup> Bruce Fawcett, and Mike McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group* (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2001).

<sup>293</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nylen, *Mission Tour*.

<sup>294</sup> Bruce Fawcett, and Mike McDonald, *Building Young Leaders: Using Mission Experiences to Help Youth Grow as Leaders* (Saint John, NB: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2012).

<sup>295</sup> Fawcett, and Nylen, eds., *Effective Youth Ministry*.

wrote a chapter about youth ministry program models, I wrote about leading youth Bible studies, and Rob Nylén contributed a chapter on meeting the spiritual needs of teens. These chapters provide first-person descriptions of specific aspects of youth discipleship used when Fawcett and Nylén edited the book, so they are beneficial to this research.

*Roots and Resurgence: Atlantic Baptist Youth Ministry at the Turn of the Millennium* (2013)<sup>296</sup>: Edited by Bruce Fawcett and me, this text is the only book written specifically about the history of CBAC youth ministry. It contains several chapters that are particularly relevant to this research project. Fawcett contributed a chapter about the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC, and I wrote a summary of denominational youth ministry within the CBAC from 1912-2011. This book is strictly a history book, with its primary emphasis on recording, not interpreting history. Having a source that specifically describes some of the aspects of CBAC youth ministry that I will be investigating in this research project is of great value, leaving my current research project to do the critical analysis of youth discipleship set within this history.

*Missional Youth Ministry* (2004)<sup>297</sup>: Co-edited by Bruce Fawcett and Rob Patterson,<sup>298</sup> this book presents ministry to youth as a missional, cross-cultural endeavour. With contributing writers from across Canada, the voices of youth pastors, researchers, and ministry leaders all speak around this missional theme. The Youth and Family Ministries Department within the CBAC widely distributed it. This book's sections that deal with youth involvement in short-term mission will be very important as I examine the connections between the youth mission tour movement and youth discipleship. However, since it has

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<sup>296</sup> Fawcett, "Mission Tours: William Carey to Tidal Impact."

<sup>297</sup> Bruce Fawcett, and Rob Patterson, eds., *Missional Youth Ministry* (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2004).

<sup>298</sup> At the time they wrote this book, Patterson (D. Min., Carey Theological College) was working for Canadian Baptist Ministries; the mission agency of the CBAC and its sister denominations across Canada. He had worked as a missionary in Kenya for 11 years, and served as a pastor in Canada before that.

contributing writers from outside the region, and the authors wrote it for a national audience, the relevance for my research is lessened.

#### 4.3.5 Academic Writing

One additional type of writing that is very helpful and relevant to my research is academic writing from within the CBAC. Toward the end of the time I am studying, Bruce Fawcett wrote two youth ministry, peer-reviewed journal articles. These were the first such articles written by anyone involved in youth ministry within the CBAC. Fawcett based both articles on original research conducted on youth within CBAC youth ministries. One looked at the psychological type profile of CBAC youth, and the other examined the relationship between baptism and spiritual practices among the same data set.<sup>299</sup> Since 2010, Fawcett, Jody Linkletter, and I have cooperatively or independently written several other journal articles, but most of them do not examine topics relevant to this research project.

Fawcett and Linkletter based these articles on their PhD research.<sup>300</sup> Fawcett's is very valuable for the material contained within it about the devotional practices of CBAC youth. Linkletter entitled her PhD *Committed Baptist Youth in Atlantic Canada: Personal and Spiritual Profile*.<sup>301</sup> These dissertations are notable for their content and because they were the first such academic works connected to youth ministry within the CBAC.

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<sup>299</sup> Bruce Fawcett, Leslie Francis, and Mandy Robbins, "Psychological Type Profile of Religiously Committed Male and Female Canadian Baptist Youth," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 8, no. 11 (2009).

<sup>300</sup> Fawcett, "Recruiting Clergy for Canadian Baptist Churches: A Typological Understanding."

<sup>301</sup> Jody Linkletter, "Committed Baptist Youth in Atlantic Canada: Personal and Spiritual Profile" (University of Warwick, 2010).

#### **4.3.6 Survey and Interview Data**

The most significant and relevant information for my research comes from the survey and interviews that I conducted. This research material is one of the primary sources from which I build my thesis. When complete, I had a single-spaced document of transcribed interviews 118 pages long and many charts, graphs, and descriptive answers from the survey. These tools allowed me to hear directly from my research subjects on the topics I am researching, so their responses are incredibly valuable. In the final section of this chapter, I thoroughly explain both the methods used in obtaining this data and the strengths and weaknesses of the methods employed.

#### **4.4 Methodology Rationale and Explanation**

In this section, I will explain how I collected research material and data and the processes involved. Through a detailed description of the research methodology, I show that this research portrays an accurate description of youth discipleship methods used within the CBAC between 1945 and 2010 and demonstrates that I have accurately heard from those youth ministry leaders who were most influential.

Because this study's historical timeframe is relatively recent, a significant number of those who were active participants in youth discipleship are still living and able to speak directly into the research process. I asked many of these people to participate in an initial survey that examined their youth ministry involvement and their theology and practices related to youth ministry. Based on several factors that I will explain, I also invited some to participate in an interview built upon the answers received in the survey. In this section, I will explain these steps in detail.

#### 4.4.1 Ethical Considerations

In the initial stages of this research project, I carefully examined ethical considerations. After I presented these to the *IBTS Ethics Committee* in 2012, the committee granted approval. To protect those I surveyed and interviewed, I assigned each respondent a number and name that I designate using quotations (i.e., “Phil”). As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I need to address the issue of being a participant-observer from within. First, I must note that it is an acceptable practice for researchers to be participants in their areas of study.<sup>302</sup> In total, I was involved in youth ministry within the CBAC for 22 of the 65 years that I am examining in this research project. In recognition of this intense personal involvement, I took precautions to establish as much distance and impartiality as possible.

Because I have been an active participant in my subject field, I made every effort to be completely clear about my methodology and pre-existing relationships with most of the research subjects. Through my methodology, I attempt to bring out the voices and perspectives of those who worked in youth ministry. Distance and impartiality from the people involved in youth ministry were not difficult to achieve. Because of the nature of this research project, I do not critique individual youth leaders. Instead, I critically analyze discipleship trends and methods. While I use quotes and examples from individuals as part of the critical argument, these are usually anonymous, so neutrality toward individuals is easy to maintain, even for those people I know well.

Furthermore, during both the survey and interview process, I primarily asked participants standardized questions, thus contributing to the distance between myself as the researcher and the gathered qualitative material. Finally, I also achieve distance because, as of August 2013, I finished vocational youth ministry work for the denomination, moving into

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<sup>302</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 493-94.

an academic role. I satisfactorily met any concerns in this area by the combination of these factors and my continual awareness of the need to be vigilant to guard against the problems that can be associated with being a participant-observer from within.

#### 4.4.2 Selection of Survey Participants

The process of deciding whom I would invite to participate in the survey was a crucial part of this entire project as I drew both those I surveyed and interviewed from this initial list. Because of the importance of this part of the methodology, I now describe the process and explain my rationale for using this method.

To locate the most knowledgeable and influential people within the confines of this field of research, I used a method that combined some elements of both the purposive and snowball methods. To explain this *purposive snowball method*,<sup>303</sup> I must briefly explain both methods. This explanation will draw deeply from Bruce Berg and Howard Lune's work, whose book *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* was in its ninth edition in 2017.<sup>304</sup>

Researchers use a purposive research sample when they can “use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this population.”<sup>305</sup> A commonly recognized weakness of this method is that the small sample limits the research conclusions.<sup>306</sup> To offset the drawback of using a purely purposive research sample, after a purposive start, I used the snowball method to gather more of the desired research subjects.

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<sup>303</sup> I will use the phrase ‘purposive snowball method’ as the descriptive title for the initial methodological approach that I used to compile a list of potential subjects.

<sup>304</sup> Bruce Berg, and Howard Lune, *Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 9th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2017).

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*



After establishing a group of people to interview or contact, I asked these people to suggest others I could interview. Berg claims, “Snowballing is sometimes the best way to locate subjects with certain attributes or characteristics necessary in the study.”<sup>307</sup> For this study, I concluded that those who had been involved in youth ministry would have the best knowledge of others who were similarly involved. With my knowledge of those involved in youth ministry as the starting point, and the snowball method used to build the research sample, I argue that this method successfully obtained the desired research sample. This method was desirable because the goal was to build a purposive sample,<sup>308</sup> not a representative sample. I determined that the desirable subject within this purposive sample was a highly knowledgeable and experienced youth ministry leader within the pre-defined confines of this research project.

I used an element of quota sampling as well. Quota sampling “identifies relevant categories of people... then decides how many to get in each category.”<sup>309</sup> As this research project sought to identify youth discipleship practices used at various times in the historical contexts, I limited the pool to a maximum of ten subjects from any given decade.

It is important to understand what it looked like when I put this methodological approach into action. The CBAC is a relatively small group of churches with a very high level of interwoven personal relationships. Using my knowledge<sup>310</sup> and conversations with knowledgeable and experienced people in the field,<sup>311</sup> I compiled the initial contact list. Because of the limited geographical and numerical size of the CBAC, those working within it

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> A purposive sample in this case was a group of people who had extensive youth ministry experience and knowledge within the scope of this research project.

<sup>309</sup> Laurence Neuman, Karen Robson, *Basics of Social Research*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pearson, 2012), 131.

<sup>310</sup> As I served as either, a pastor within the CBAC, on denominational or seminary staff from 1995 and onward, I have significant knowledge of the people who were active in youth ministry.

<sup>311</sup> These conversations took place in person, on the telephone, and by electronic communication.

as denominational or church staff usually have a good knowledge of the people who are currently leading or have led in various capacities.

I did not survey everyone I initially identified as some of those who were suggested did not meet my criteria. I developed a list of criteria (following page) to narrow down the suggested contacts to those I identified as the most knowledgeable and experienced in youth ministry within the pre-defined contexts and, therefore, the most desired subjects. After establishing the initial list of people to contact, I developed a letter (see Appendix A) and sent it out to everyone on the list for whom I could obtain an email address.<sup>312</sup> I contacted by telephone those for whom I could not locate an email address and invited them to participate in this first round of research. I asked the recipients of this letter to provide up to five names of knowledgeable and influential youth leaders from each decade in which they were involved in youth ministry. When more than one person suggested a new subject, and I located their contact information, I then sent the letter asking for other people they might know. In total, I sent 39 people the letter and invited them to submit the names of knowledgeable and influential youth leaders from their time. Only eight did not reply with names, so this initial stage had a 79.5% response rate.

I tracked the responses of these people in a spreadsheet. There were 140 different people suggested. I determined that I would adhere to the following criteria to decide which people I would invite to take part in the survey stage of the research:

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<sup>312</sup> I had to search for some of these email addresses, but most were available because of the CBAC records that were at my disposal. A few of those from the earlier decades could not be located.

1. Any person whose name was submitted more than once (As there was a smaller pool of potential subjects, I invited those from the 1950s and 1960s to take part in the survey based on only one recommendation);<sup>313</sup>
2. Any person who was still living and mentally capable of completing a survey;
3. Any person who did work as a youth leader (paid or volunteer), a denominational youth ministry leader, or as a youth ministry educator, with the CBAC during the designated period;<sup>314</sup> and
4. Any person for whom I could locate contact information.

This purposive snowball approach was very effective in identifying people who best fit the desired criteria for research. Through the methods explained in this subsection, I located 53 of the most knowledgeable and experienced youth ministry leaders within the CBAC. In the following subsection, I will critically examine my research methodology, explaining why the purposive snowball method achieved the goal of locating the desired subjects.

#### **4.4.3 Addressing Methodological Concerns**

Some criticize both the snowball and purposive research methods. To justify using this methodology, I now address the four primary concerns of the combined approach used to gather research material.

One concern related to snowball samples is that the resulting sample may not represent the entire group being studied.<sup>315</sup> I did not search for a representative sample but a group of

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<sup>313</sup> Because it was harder to obtain the names of people from these decades who were still living and able to complete the survey, I invited all of those suggested to take part in this initial stage of research.

<sup>314</sup> I removed some people from this list because they were not directly involved with youth ministries within CBAC churches during the period.

<sup>315</sup> Neuman, *Basics of Social Research*, 131.

informed participants. Despite this, a good indication of reliable representation is that the method results in saturation, the point when people suggest a significant number of subjects more than once.<sup>316</sup> There is apparent evidence that the use of this modified snowball method reached saturation as respondents suggested many people (62 of the 140) more than once. They identified 30 people twice, nine people three times, 11 people four times, one person five times, and respondents identified 11 people six or more times. The pool of people suggested more than two times is the group that provided most of those whom I invited to participate in the survey. As I explain below in the criteria selection subsection, I surveyed those from the earlier decades based on only one recommendation. After selection based on the four criteria, I established a list of 39 people and invited them to participate in the survey. Using the snowball method inevitably leads to working with a nonprobability research sample.<sup>317</sup> For this research, the ideal sample to work with is just such a research sample. This method should identify the youth ministry practitioners who were the most active and influential when they were directly involved in youth ministry. I chose not to use a probability sample within this relatively small group of people as it would undoubtedly lead to the omission of some of the most active and influential youth leaders and the inclusion of some who had only nominal involvement and influence.

A second criticism of the snowball method is that those identified for the survey are often the most socially connected instead of the most active or influential.<sup>318</sup> While this is a very significant possibility and may have happened in some cases, there are indications that this did not frequently occur. One would expect that people identified based on social connectedness would be involved in youth ministry as a vocation (i.e., youth pastor and not

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<sup>316</sup> Martin Marshall, "Sampling for Qualitative Research," *Family Practice* 13, no. 6 (1996): 524.

<sup>317</sup> A nonprobability sample is one that is not obtained in a random selection method (probability sample).

<sup>318</sup> Samuel Lucas, "Beyond the Existence of Proof: Ontological Conditions, Epistemological Implications, and in-Depth Interview Research," *Qual Quant* 48 (2014): 394.

as a volunteer).<sup>319</sup> One would also expect those identified because of social connections to be those who worked with youth in larger churches and in the region's urban centers, where stronger networks could more easily exist. My research sample did not see either of these expectations realized. Two youth leaders that respondents repeatedly identified served as volunteer youth leaders in small churches in relatively isolated communities. One volunteer was from the remote fishing community in Nova Scotia, and another was from a rural area of Prince Edward Island. Another indicator of the interconnectedness of those who work with youth ministry in the region is that youth leaders identified them as meeting the criteria within this sample. This also provides evidence of the effectiveness of this modified snowball method in determining the desired subjects.

A third possible weakness in this project's methodology is that reactivity could be present, especially in the responses of those most recently involved in youth ministry. Reactivity is “the general threat to external validity that arises because subjects are aware that they are in an experiment and are being studied.”<sup>320</sup> If reactivity were a reason for concern within this sample, I would expect it to be most present because of my recognized or perceived authority within the CBAC.<sup>321</sup> Some of those interviewed, especially those most recently involved in youth ministry, might feel the need to impress me by giving answers that demonstrated expertise or ability in the area of youth ministry.<sup>322</sup> If evident, I would expect evidence of this problem related to those youth leaders who were active in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and might look to me as having authority over them. However, there is evidence that the research subjects were honest in their responses on both the survey and interviews. Respondents routinely referred to their failures and struggles as well as their successes and

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<sup>319</sup> Those involved in vocational youth ministry within the CBAC have a strong relational network.

<sup>320</sup> Neuman, *Basics of Social Research*, 200.

<sup>321</sup> At the time of the survey and interviews, I had served as either Director or Associate Director of the Youth and Family Ministries Department of the CBAC for seven years.

<sup>322</sup> Some of the younger leaders have been in my youth ministry classes.

areas of strength. When asked about the effectiveness of youth discipleship within the ministries they led, some of the responses that indicate a lack of reactivity are “Some of our youth discipleship has been effective and some has not,”<sup>323</sup> and “Can it be better? Always!”<sup>324</sup> Responses of this type indicate that these respondents answered questions honestly without reactivity because of my position or perceived authority.

One final weakness of this method could be that the most verbose people in the survey or interviews gain a more prominent representation in the research. To combat this potential problem, I made every effort to recognize and report each respondent's input, regardless of how long or short their responses were. Each time I reference a subject's response in this research project, the footnote shows the respondent who submitted this response. Through this methodology, I demonstrate that I valued the responses received from every person and used material from all of them as a significant part of the research body.

Another possible critique of my methodology relates to who I interviewed for this research project. I chose to study youth ministry within the CBAC from the perspective of adults, those who led, wrote about, and prepared resources for youth ministries. I decided not to search out the personal reflections of young people. Others have studied youth and young people within the Canadian church,<sup>325</sup> and within the CBAC,<sup>326</sup> so I chose to use adults as my primary research group while integrating some of the conclusions of others within my writing.

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<sup>323</sup> Subject #7, “Ruth”, Survey Questions 13 & 34.

<sup>324</sup> Subject #8, “George”, Survey Question 13.

<sup>325</sup> Penner et al., “Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults Are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church.”

<sup>326</sup> Fawcett, “Recruiting Clergy for Canadian Baptist Churches: A Typological Understanding.” Linkletter, “Committed Baptist Youth in Atlantic Canada: Personal and Spiritual Profile.”

#### 4.4.4 Online Survey

At the end of this discovery process, I established a final list of 53 people I would survey. I sent all these people an invitation to participate in the online survey or receive a paper copy of the interview questions. I extended the second and third invitations to those who did not complete the survey the first time. After just over six months, the result was 33 complete surveys, giving a response rate of 62.3%. My respondents all completed their surveys between October 5, 2012, and April 17, 2013. In all, 31 respondents completed the survey online, one completed it on paper, and one person completed it through a telephone interview.<sup>327</sup> Typically, online surveys have a moderate return rate,<sup>328</sup> but probably because most of those I asked to participate know me, I realized a relatively high response rate. Five of the respondents were female, 26 were male, and one survey was completed by a husband and wife together.<sup>329</sup>

I completed the online interviews on the *SurveyMonkey* platform.<sup>330</sup> I sent an online link to those I invited to participate that took them to the survey to enter their responses. The only mandatory fields were demographic information that I required.<sup>331</sup> Participants could choose to skip any of the other questions in the survey. None of the respondents reported any difficulty with either completing the survey or the clarity of the questions.

The online survey portion of my research was very successful. This success claim is validated both by the high completion rate and the detailed answers provided whenever

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<sup>327</sup> One subject requested that he complete the survey via a telephone interview, as he was visually impaired.

<sup>328</sup> Neuman, *Basics of Social Research*, 174.

<sup>329</sup> The female to male ratio is representative of the CBAC where most youth pastors have been male. The husband and wife were always mentioned together when I gathered names. I asked them separately to complete the survey, but they chose to complete it together.

<sup>330</sup> SurveyMonkey is a widely utilized and reliable online tool that is frequently used for many types of surveys. [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com).

<sup>331</sup> The required fields were name, age, gender, geographic location, and date of completion.

possible. I will now explain the process by which I determined which of my survey respondents to interview.

#### **4.4.5 Personal Interviews**

After completing my survey, I began a selection process to decide which of these participants I should interview for more in-depth information. As I examined the responses of those invited who had completed the survey, some emerged as having either a more in-depth or broader knowledge of youth ministry within the CBAC. I asked these to participate further by taking part in an interview. I selected those to participate in the formal interview process based on at least one of the following characteristics:

1. They were involved in ministry to youth for an extended period (any who had indicated they were involved in three or more decades); or
2. They were involved in several different roles within youth ministry (any who were involved in denominational or educational youth ministry roles as well as local church youth leadership); or
3. They were involved in youth ministry in the 1950s or earlier (as more of these people were no longer alive or unable to complete the survey for health reasons, I attempted to interview everyone I surveyed from these earlier periods).

I either sent a letter of invitation or personally contacted people to invite their participation in the structured interview portion of this research project. When I received a positive response, I scheduled a time for the interview to take place and gave the person a copy of the interview questions at least 24 hours before the actual interview, telling them it should take no longer than 45 minutes. Giving them the questions in advance allowed the interviewees to prepare for their interview better. Most of those I invited to participate in the



interview phase of this research assented to the interview. In all, 17 of the 22 people invited to participate in the interview agreed and completed interviews. I conducted all interviews between September 20, 2012, and March 4, 2013. Nearly all the interviewees voluntarily reported enjoying the experience and spoke of their enthusiasm for the research project. Of those who did not complete the interview, one person asked me not to approach her again, and the remaining five seemed very open to participating. However, difficulties arose in establishing times that would work for both the interviewee and interviewer. Overall, the response rate of 77% for this phase of the research was quite favourable.

I completed most of the interviews in person (13 of 17), then conducted the remaining four over the telephone, as distance and the required travel time were prohibitive to in-person interviews. I recorded all interviews and transcribed full manuscripts to allow me to examine the collected material thoroughly. Four of the interviewees were female, and thirteen were male.

Berg suggests three categorizations for interviews: standardized, unstandardized, and semi-standardized. Standardized interviews rigidly follow the same questions without any deviation. Unstandardized interviews are directed by the answers provided and result in each interview being unique. Semi standardized interviews ask the same questions to each subject but allow for some follow-up questions when the interviewer deems it necessary.<sup>332</sup> The survey conducted for this research project was semi-standardized. I gave careful attention to asking interviewees the same questions in the same order. However, I asked a few follow-up questions for clarification or to pursue interesting topics.

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<sup>332</sup> Berg, and Lune, *Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 92-96.

#### **4.4.6 Collation and Examination of Data**

After completing the survey and interviews, I spent extensive time collating the data to make it understandable and usable. I examined the quantitative data in a way that isolated responses based on the following criteria: those who served in each decade, youth pastors, denominational youth staff, youth ministry professors or teachers, volunteer youth leaders, pastors who worked alone in their church, pastors who led pastoral teams, those who took or did not take, youth ministry training from Sonlife Ministries,<sup>333</sup> and those who did personal reading about youth ministry. After I completed, recorded, and transcribed the interviews, I examined the material by re-reading, then through keyword coding and concept searching.

#### **4.5 Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was threefold. First, I critically surveyed the literature in the broad field of North American youth ministry. Through this process, I significantly narrowed down the research field by identifying writing categories that were not relevant to my research. In the process, I identified those writings in the history of youth ministry, youth discipleship, and theological reflection on youth ministry that would be particularly helpful. Second, I critically introduced the source material from within the CBAC from the years 1945 to 2010. I showed that there is quite a supply of primary materials but no academic, critical writing in my research area. In the third section of the chapter, I explained the empirical research steps that I followed. I paid significant attention to the description and

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<sup>333</sup> Sonlife Ministries training was easily identified as one of the most significant and widespread sources of youth ministry training. Extensive interaction with Sonlife Ministries is contained in this research project.

rationale for the purposive snowball method of gathering research subjects. I also explained the processes that I followed in both the survey and the interviews.

As I established the critical lens in Chapter Two, established some core elements of the historical context in Chapter Three, and presented and explained my literature review and research methodology in this chapter, the subsequent chapters, I critically examine the discipleship that happened within the youth ministries of the CBAC from 1945-2010 through the lens of the theological turn in youth ministry.

## 5 AN EXAMINATION OF DISCIPLING YOUTH MINISTRY IN CBAC YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP MATERIALS

### 5.1 Introduction

In this research project, I am conducting a critical analysis of discipling youth ministries within the CBAC from 1945-2010. This examination is done through the lens of the *theological turn*, as I introduced it in 2.3. In this chapter, I show that throughout this period, the key youth ministry resources noted earlier as being used within and endorsed by the CBAC grew increasingly more in line with the markers of the theological turn, yet all the markers were not fully present. Through critical engagement with these markers and a thorough examination of CBAC youth ministry resources, I will demonstrate a progression toward alignment with the theological turn.

The markers of the theological turn that form my critical lens for this research project are ecclesial integration of young people, ministry of place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice. While I examine the presence of all three markers in CBAC youth ministry materials, I argue that the marker of ecclesial integration of young people is the most noteworthy. This significance lies in my conclusion that three of the four resources did not encourage ecclesial integration and unintentionally worked against it. Place-sharing is absent in two of the resources but is present in *Keys to Successful Youth Work* and is mainly present in *The Discipleship Project*. The marker, communities of spiritual practice, is at least present to some degree in all the resources, most notably in *The Discipleship Project*.

As I examine the CBAC youth discipleship materials from 1945-2010, I critically examine four youth discipleship resources. I selected these particular ones for two reasons.

First, I selected them because my research indicates they stand foremost in their influence on and use by the youth leaders of the CBAC. Throughout my historical examination, as well as the survey and interviews that I conducted, these four not only emerged but also, in fact, were the only constant sources referenced. I demonstrate the value of these materials as I introduce each of them. The second reason I have selected these discipleship materials is that these four resources offer source material representing various periods throughout the period that I am studying. Whether clearly articulated or not, each of these resources contains theology about youth discipleship. I focus on the markers of the theological turn as found in these materials.

The first of four denominationally endorsed youth ministry resources is the *Baptist Youth Fellowship (BYF) Handbook*.<sup>1</sup> The denominational circular, then called *The Maritime Baptist*, aggressively promoted this handbook. It was published in 1959 by the CBAC and is the denomination's first and the only handbook of its kind.<sup>2</sup> The second resource, also the only one of its kind within the CBAC, is a folder of materials entitled *Keys to Successful Youth Work*.<sup>3</sup> The CBAC intentionally dispersed this material to CBAC churches from 1974-1978.<sup>4</sup> The third resource is the youth ministry training materials provided by *Sonlife Ministries* (Sonlife). The CBAC officially entered into a partnership with Sonlife for youth leader training in 1991, which continued until 2005.<sup>5</sup> The final resource that I examine is *The Discipleship Project* and associated explanatory material. This discipleship material was included in three books about mission tours written by Bruce Fawcett and Mike McDonald

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<sup>1</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*.

<sup>2</sup> From April to November of 1959 there were five *Maritime Baptist* articles promoting the reorganization that was entailed by BYF, as well as advertisements for the handbook, which was sold for \$1.00.

<sup>3</sup> *Keys to Successful Youth Work*.

<sup>4</sup> There is no date on the folder, but this is the catalogued date in the Atlantic Baptist Archives. It lines up well with the authors of the materials included in the folder.

<sup>5</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nysten, *Mission Tour*, D-23.

(2001, 2005, and 2012 with Rob Nylan).<sup>6</sup> Fawcett designed *The Discipleship Project* for adult leaders to use with young people preparing to be involved in short-term mission trips.

As I search for the presence or absence of the markers of discipling youth ministry that I identified in Root and Dean’s work on the theological turn, I will describe the presence or absence with one of five descriptions: absent, mainly absent, moderately present, mainly present, and present. While there is always a subjective component to assigning a description, the following grid (Chart 5.1) will be my evaluative guide.

Chart 5.1: Measuring the Markers of the Theological Turn

<b>Description</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Absent	There is no clear evidence of the presence of the marker.
Mainly Absent	There is some evidence of the presence of the marker, but it is not widespread in the data, or not all components of the marker are present.
Moderately Present	There is evidence of the presence of the marker. Less than half the data demonstrates this presence, but most of the components of the marker are present.
Mainly Present	There is much evidence of the marker in most of the data, and most components of the marker are present.
Present	The marker is widespread in the data, and all components of the marker are present.

As I search for the markers of the theological turn in youth ministry within these resources, I must note that I am using markers of a movement that began to emerge long after some of the resources were produced. Even though the theological turn was not identified and described until the 1990s, I am interested in tracing the emergence of these markers within CBAC youth ministry throughout my research period, 1945-2010. I will now, in turn, introduce and critically examine each of these resources.

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<sup>6</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group*.

Fawcett, McDonald, and Nylan, *Mission Tour*.

Fawcett, and McDonald, *Building Young Leaders: Using Mission Experiences to Help Youth Grow as Leaders*.

## 5.2 Discipling Youth Ministry in the *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*

In this section, I argue that the *BYF Handbook*, developed in 1959, may have unintentionally provided youth with encouragement and the opportunity to remain separate from ecclesial life within CBAC churches. This argument is very significant as one marker of the theological turn is young people's ecclesial integration. In this section, therefore, I argue that because the *BYF Handbook* emphasized both fellowship among young people and the unification of various young people's ministries within the church to such a high degree, it worked against holistic, church-based discipleship, unintentionally discouraging young people from church integration, and creating a youth church community. While this handbook speaks about discipleship aspects such as Bible study and prayer, it never uses the term discipleship, nor is the concept well explained. However, I will introduce material from the handbook that contributes to understanding Eugene Thompson's<sup>7</sup> view of discipleship.

Thompson developed this handbook, largely basing it on a similar handbook from the American Baptist Convention.<sup>8</sup> This task was one of his first undertakings when serving as the Youth Work Secretary for the CBAC (1959-1961).<sup>9</sup> Printed and distributed in 1959, this handbook provided youth leaders with a detailed guide for ministry to youth within CBAC churches. Listing six different popular Baptist congregational-based youth programs of the time, the handbook expressed a desire for youth leaders to encourage all young people to recognize their identity beyond these programs and more fully with the BYF.<sup>10</sup> Throughout

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<sup>7</sup> Eugene Thompson was a very influential denominational leader within the CBAC. As well as serving extensively as a pastor, he served as the Youth Work Secretary (1959-1961), later as an Area Minister and eventually Executive Minister (1984-1996).

<sup>8</sup> Fordham, *The Baptist Youth Fellowship*.

<sup>9</sup> Extensive portions of this handbook were borrowed from the American Baptist Convention. As indicated in the preface of the CBAC version, it was revised and some sections were expanded in order to make it applicable for use in Atlantic Canada.

<sup>10</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 5.

this examination, I will point out some differences between the American Baptist version (Fordham) and that of the CBAC (Thompson), as these differences provide valuable insights.

While the bulk of this very descriptive book is devoted to the logistics of running a youth fellowship, nonetheless, it contains some theological insight about discipleship. Thompson adds a preface that is not in Fordham's version. In it, he states, "'What' to do is known; the uncertain question is 'How?'"<sup>11</sup> The 'what' that Thompson thought was common knowledge among leaders seems to refer to the five stated objectives of the BYF, taken directly from Fordham and printed inside the front cover and again within the handbook. I conclude that this tells us much about the understanding of discipleship that he endorsed:

To emphasize the personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and to encourage Christian growth through a deepening understanding of **Christian faith**.  
To promote an enthusiastic **Christian witness** in all aspects of life and to foster in the church an active program of evangelism.  
To insure intelligent participation in **world missionary outreach**.  
To promote a Christian solution of community and world problems through **Christian Citizenship**.  
To develop friendliness and to give spiritual depth to life through active participation in **Christian Fellowship**.<sup>12</sup>

The strong emphasis on a personal relationship with God, evangelism, and missions is evident in the stated objectives and the handbook material.<sup>13</sup>

As stated in the handbook, one of the goals of the BYF was to bring together all church ministries to youth into one organized movement.<sup>14</sup> Like Fordham, Thompson suggested that young people, who were part of any ministry within the local church, be considered part of this fellowship. Thompson reiterated the claims of Fordham<sup>15</sup> in this concise statement: "Wherever they are or whatever they do, all of these young people together make up the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Bold is original to text.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 19. "Making a commitment of one's life to Christ is the first step in discipleship."

Ibid., 21. "One of the activities that should be carried on through every youth group, every year, is a program of evangelism for other youth, bringing them into the fellowship."

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>15</sup> Fordham, *The Baptist Youth Fellowship*, 8.



BYF.”<sup>16</sup> This wording appears to be a reaction against the existing Baptist Young People’s Union (BYPU). The BYPU, with limited direction from the denomination, was the dominant local church youth ministry structure from the beginning of the CBAC in 1905. The program peaked in 1940-1941, with 374 groups.<sup>17</sup> Thompson viewed the BYPU as an organization that functioned primarily on one night and did not work cooperatively with other church youth ministries or even the local church. The first two sentences of the following quote are nearly verbatim from Fordham’s handbook.<sup>18</sup> However, the final sentence that emphasizes the separateness is unique to Thompson, indicating that he saw the separation of young people’s ministry from the church as an existing problem within the CBAC.

The B.Y.P.U., however, operated as a “one-night-a-week-program.” It elected its own officers, chose its own advisor, and concerned itself with its own program. In many cases it became almost a separate organization instead of being an intimate part of the church life, worship, and study.<sup>19</sup>

Despite this concern about the BYPU, I will show that the BYF would have a similar impact.

The 1958 report of the CBAC Board of Christian Education contains the last reference to BYPU. Here it states that the board was “planning to propose a change in the organization of our Youth Groups” and to “provide a full-time worker” in the area of youth.<sup>20</sup> They soon hired Thompson as that worker, and the BYF that he developed, quickly and permanently replaced the BYPU.<sup>21</sup> By 1965, the Board of Christian Education's annual report referred to the annual youth convention as the BYF Convention; the takeover was complete.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> MacPherson, *Report of the Board of Christian Education*, 165.

<sup>18</sup> Fordham, *The Baptist Youth Fellowship*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Gordon Gower, *Report of the Board of Christian Education* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces, 1958), 184.

<sup>21</sup> G. S. McGray, *Report of the Board of Christian Education* (Saint John: Maritime United Baptist Convention, 1959), 187-88.

<sup>22</sup> JB Wilson, *Report of the Board of Christian Education* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1965), 123.

The handbook set out precise instructions for establishing a very structured organization with job descriptions for officers, guidance in developing a constitution, a suggested list of specific programs for the BYF to offer for the various age groups, and detailed organizational flowcharts. Thompson copied these almost verbatim from Fordham's handbook. The organizational structure was not an entirely new creation but was a mirror of the structure of local churches of the time. The suggested order of business and responsibilities of officers explained in the *Short Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice* (1965) of the *American Baptist Convention* is remarkably like that found in both the American Baptist and CBAC versions of the *BYF Handbook*.<sup>23</sup>

In the following three subsections, I will critically interact with the presence or absence of the three markers of the theological turn within the *BYF Handbook*. As introduced in Chapter Two, these markers are ecclesial integration of young people, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice.

### **5.2.1 Ecclesial Integration in the *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook***

In this subsection, I will examine the absence of young people's ecclesial integration in the *BYF Handbook*. It is very clear from the handbook that Thompson valued church integration and that church attendance was encouraged.<sup>24</sup> However, this is very different from what is meant by integration in the theological turn. I argue that while the BYF may have been concerned with integration and speaks of church involvement, having the implicit goal of church integration did not mean that the handbook achieved church integration. As

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<sup>23</sup> Norman Maring, and Winthrop Hudson, *A Short Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice* (Valley Forge: Judson, 1965), 75-77.

Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 26, 42-44.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

explained in 2.3.1, church integration within the theological turn relates to the current growth and development of both the young person and the church, not future leadership potential.

By uniting the efforts and purposes of the different ministries reaching out to those between the ages of 12 and 25, I argue that the BYF unintentionally discouraged young people from church integration, building on what Thompson critiqued in the BYPU. In the *BYF Handbook*, he stated, “The young people should appreciate the suggestion that the Baptist Youth Fellowship is the youth division of the church – a total youth organization.”<sup>25</sup> The establishment of the BYF as a youth division appeared to happen in a way that Thompson did not intend. Young people connected more strongly with the BYF than with their church congregation. The introduction of the BYF led to some youth ministries of the BYF developing their own identity. They established a constitution and the handbook provided a method for voting into membership young people who were not church members.<sup>26</sup> This division grew until a few decades later, when churches often had entire youth ministries that functioned somewhat independently from the church.<sup>27</sup> Looking back, Larry Richards observed this trend toward segregation in North American youth ministry circles, as in 1982, he reflected, “the church... has systematically isolated youth from meaningful contact with persons older, or younger, than themselves.”<sup>28</sup>

When Thompson developed the BYF, one of the things he critiqued in the previous youth program was the separate nature of youth ministry that had been part of the previous dominant youth organization, the BYPU. I argue that he inadvertently set up a new system

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>27</sup> Byron Fenwick, "The Church as Separator," *Atlantic Baptist* 13, no. 6 (1977). In the article, Fenwick speaks to the problem of families segregated by age, and even gender, within the church. Fenwick was a former Field Secretary for the Board of Christian Education of the CBAC.

<sup>28</sup> Laurence Richards, "Youth and Church Renewal," in *Religious Education Ministry with Youth*, ed. Campbell Wyckoff (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1982), 151.

that united CBAC youth with each other but not with the local church. The structure failed to have significant integrative links with the life of the local congregation. As the handbook explains, adult church members could serve within some parts of the youth ministry. However, they confined youth involvement to designated BYF events,<sup>29</sup> stating that all ministries to youth came under the BYF.<sup>30</sup> Thompson uses the phrases ‘youth division of the church’ and ‘total youth organization’ repeatedly in the sections entitled “The BYF in the Local Church” and “Our Objectives.” Young people became members of this new organization, sometimes without being church members, and they developed a strong loyalty to the BYF. The handbook provides plenty of structure and motivation for those under 25 years old to serve within the BYF but does not encourage participation in leadership or service outside the BYF until they turn 25. The only mention of young people serving in the church outside the BYF was the elected youth president, who served on the church board.<sup>31</sup>

The emphasis of the *BYF Handbook* was clearly on developing a framework that mirrored the adult church rather than integrating young people into that life in the present. In this structure, borrowed from Fordham, discipleship seemed to have the intention of “train[ing] young people to be good churchmen.”<sup>32</sup> Thompson explains this importance in a section that is not from Fordham but unique to the CBAC version of the handbook:

The Baptist Youth Fellowship in the local church will be that local church only a few years hence. If it is important to ensure the continuance and growth of our Maritime Baptist churches, then it is vitally important to have a Baptist Youth Fellowship within every Baptist Church.<sup>33</sup>

Thompson supports this with statements explaining the requirement for young people to attend church and Sunday School regularly to receive BYF awards regularly. He also stated that those working with youth must use specific resource books that encourage church

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<sup>29</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 16.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

membership.<sup>34</sup> All this material is unique to Thompson's handbook, so the fact that he supplemented Fordham's material indicates that there likely was a problem with irregular or non-attendance of youth in the church.

Despite this stated and desired connection between the BYF and the local church, the handbook is utterly void of any material to suggest how this should happen. It does not mention what happens to young people after they pass the age of 25, and the mention of BYF members serving in any role other than youth ministry within the church is minimal. Fordham does not build a strong case for church integration of youth, but he does suggest that young people should have positions on "the boards of the church where youth representation is desired."<sup>35</sup> He also suggests that youth choirs that participate in church services "render a real service to the church."<sup>36</sup> In his revision of the American Baptist handbook, Thompson chose to keep the reference about church choirs but changed the youth representation on church boards to suggest that only the BYF President be the representative on any church boards. This arrangement left no opportunity for all remaining youth to be involved in ecclesial life other than attending church services, singing in a youth choir, and being active in BYF initiatives.

This missing integrative link between the BYF and the local church is very significant for my argument. It strengthens the case that the BYF may have distanced young people from their local church instead of integrating them or even thoroughly preparing them to integrate within it when they turned 25. Despite the stated desire to raise church leaders, the *BYF Handbook* and the methods it encouraged did little to help young people transition to leadership within the local church. While the handbook does not explain it in this way, it

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>35</sup> Fordham, *The Baptist Youth Fellowship*, 84.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 80.

seems the belief was that if the BYF trained young people how to ‘do church’ within the BYF, then they would automatically transition on their own into broader church leadership.

The majority of this 44-page handbook focused on the functioning of the BYF as an organization and was not directly related to discipleship or teaching young people. Two exceptions are sections on “The Christian Faith” and “The Christian Witness.” These have the following subsections: Personal Christian Commitment, Bible Study, Prayer and Worship, Christian Beliefs, Christian Heritage, Meaning of Church Membership, Cell Group Experiences, Personal Enrichment and Growth, Personal Conduct, Evangelism, Stewardship, Churchmanship, and Church Vocations.<sup>37</sup> These few pages provide the primary material related to discipleship in the handbook, and what we have is very general. For example, here is the entire section on prayer:

Interesting meetings may be conducted on the meaning of prayer. Here again entire books have been written on the subject of prayer. We will have many interesting experiences discussing together how we might develop more meaningful prayer lives.<sup>38</sup>

Like in this section, other sections that focus on discipleship topics mention the importance and state that it should or will be studied or practiced within the BYF but consistently lack details and instruction on implementing these discipleship practices. In speaking about the BYF ministry to boys and girls ages 12-14, there is a suggestion that daily devotional reading should be encouraged and that if a young person submitted a record of this for three months, they should get an award.<sup>39</sup> This material is not in Fordham’s handbook.

One possible interpretation of not focusing on discipleship is that this was from a lack of concern about young people becoming devoted followers of Jesus. However, it is more likely because there was an assumption that they already were ardent followers. The strong desire stated in the objectives of the BYF (above) to have personal relationships develop with

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<sup>37</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 19-22.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

God, a “deepening understanding of the Christian Faith,” and evangelism and mission outreach shows that Thompson valued specific aspects of discipleship.<sup>40</sup> The very telling factor is the huge leap in the logical process from these discipleship-oriented objectives to a detailed structure and ministry environment devoid of strategic linkages between structure and discipleship. The implied conclusion of the handbook is that if a church develops a youth ministry structure like the one explained in the book, discipleship that meets the objectives of the BYF will necessarily occur. I have argued that this is not the case, and in fact, such discipleship probably did not consistently happen.

This absence of discipleship can be seen through the two practices that traditionally serve to assist with integrating Baptist young people into the church, baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Traditionally within CBAC churches, young people became church members through baptism and then participated in the Lord’s Supper.<sup>41</sup> These two practices are significantly absent from the *BYF Handbook* in both the American Baptist and CBAC versions. It could be that local churches so fully integrated young people into their membership that these topics were not necessary. However, the *BYF Handbook* provision for young people becoming members of the BYF without becoming church members suggests otherwise. I conjecture that the omission of transitional procedures in the BYF set up a scenario where young people felt more connected with the BYF than with their church, contributing to their decision to withdraw from the church when they were too old for the BYF.

Concerning this matter of integration, it is not easy to obtain useful information about the integration of youth at this time, but from the broader context, it appears that there were challenges. One study of Lutherans in the United States points to a disconnect between generations, stating that “the adults responsible for youth work lack an accurate perception of

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Preface.

<sup>41</sup> A Manual for Worship and Service, (Canada: All-Canada Baptist Publications, 1976), 10, 117, 271.

the chief concerns of youth.”<sup>42</sup> Howard Worth, writing on the previous ten years, said in 1963 that there had not been “any refinement of... techniques of working with young people in the church.”<sup>43</sup> While these quotes are not directly related to the integration of young people, they demonstrate inadequacies in how adult-led churches were working with youth. Another factor in North American Christian youth culture of the time was that parachurch ministries for youth were on the rise, causing tension between them and particular churches. In 1960, *Time Magazine* featured an article highlighting Young Life's denunciation by four prominent Connecticut pastors.<sup>44</sup> Within the CBAC, parachurch youth rallies were present as well, as one leader reported that there were “Saturday night Youth for Christ rallies that attracted about 1000 people at the Moncton High School auditorium.”<sup>45</sup> Some Christian leaders were very critical of Youth for Christ, claiming that it seemed “to have levelled off at the point of commercial gimmicks, big conventions, and singspirations.”<sup>46</sup> While the linkages with the integration of young people into the church are not direct, such large events probably pulled young people away from integration within the local church by involving them elsewhere.

Within the *BYF Handbook*, there is a broad endorsement of young people becoming church members in the future. However, this preparation is not the understanding of church integration that the theological turn encourages. As demonstrated above, church integration is not explicitly encouraged in any way in the handbook. Instead, the handbook endorses a structure that unintentionally promoted a functioning separation instead of actual integration. Therefore, the conclusion must be that this marker is absent.

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<sup>42</sup> Merton Strommen, “A Comparison of Youth and Adult Reactions to Lutheran Youth Problems and Sources of Assistance” (University of Minnesota, 1960). Abstract in: Helen Spaulding, “Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations in Religious Education, 1959-1960,” *Religious Education* 55, no. 1 (1960): 383.

<sup>43</sup> Worth, “Youth Work in the Past Decade,” 393.

<sup>44</sup> Roy Alexander, “Teen-Age Church,” *Time Magazine*, 1960.

<sup>45</sup> Robert Berry, “Why Our Story Is Important,” 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Worth, “Youth Work in the Past Decade,” 393.



## 5.2.2 Place-Sharing in the Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook

In this subsection, I argue that the second marker, a ministry of place-sharing, is also absent from the BYF material. As explained in 2.3.2, place-sharers are adults who enter deeply into a young person's life, not to obtain influence or leverage over them, but so that Christ may be fully present to those in the relationship.<sup>47</sup> There is significant attention given to group fellowship within the BYF. Most of the references are to social or organizational activities. These activities might be settings where the few adult BYF advisors could establish or strengthen place-sharing relationships. However, there appears to be no intentionality about developing these deep relationships within the BYF. There is one brief and unexplained reference to cell group experiences. Although this is a setting where place-sharing might have occurred, the lack of detail makes this reference somewhat ambiguous.<sup>48</sup> These settings, though, like all BYF activities, were primarily gatherings of young people without a significant adult presence. When Root writes about place-sharing in youth ministry, he specifically focuses on the relationships between adults and young people.<sup>49</sup>

While Thompson took the section on cell groups directly from Fordham, he replaced Fordham's *yoke groups* with *cell groups*.<sup>50</sup> That he did this, coupled with the fact that he did not explain them in detail, demonstrates that there must have been some familiarity with the concept of cell groups. There is no mention of anything more profound within the rest of the material than individually "promoting the spirit of friendliness."<sup>51</sup> This reference to friendliness was Thompson's addition to Fordham's version of the handbook, and the context points toward this friendliness being with other young people, not with the adult leaders.

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<sup>47</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 125.

<sup>48</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 20.

<sup>49</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 83.

<sup>50</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 22-23.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

There is a brief mention that evangelism patterned after Jesus' life involves friendship, but the handbook does not explain further.<sup>52</sup>

Perhaps the most significant barrier to place-sharing within the BYF is that very few adults were present with the young people. Adult advisors were present, but mainly in a support role within the BYF. The recommended structure was overall advisors of “a man and wife who are interested in young people and liked by them.”<sup>53</sup> Each age group was to have an assigned advisor. The groups were junior high, high school, and young people or those who finished high school and were up to 25 years old. This arrangement set up a very limited possibility for place-sharing. The only group where adults were supposed to act as more than advisors was the junior high group.<sup>54</sup> The lack of adults spending time directly with young people precluded the possibility of much place-sharing within the BYF.

As I have shown in this section, there are some hints of place-sharing in the *BYF Handbook*. However, in this extensive handbook, neither Fordham nor Thompson takes the opportunity to explain anything close to the place-sharing concept endorsed by Root. According to him, place-sharing must be much more than being friendly and doing activities together. Root supports unconditional relationships between adults and young people, and there is no suggestion that this was ever a goal of the fellowship within BYF. Therefore, while I consider this marker absent, I would note that settings where place-sharing might have developed, were part of the BYF.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 21,24.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

### 5.2.3 Communities of Spiritual Practice in the *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*

In this subsection, I argue that the third marker, communities of spiritual practice, is mainly absent in the handbook even though traditional evangelical practices such as Bible study, prayer, and worship are strongly encouraged.<sup>55</sup> Thompson suggests that young people should form cell groups and participate in “experiences that are not to be had in any other way.”<sup>56</sup> The handbook explains:

One of these is the experience of creative silence. We may simply sit and listen for the voice of God speaking to us. After this comes an experience of sharing. Each person knows that he has the privilege of sharing his deepest thoughts and convictions, or of confessing his doubts, knowing that nothing he says will be repeated outside the cell group without his permission. The cell group also experiences meaningful prayer times. There is a tie which binds young people of a cell group together which becomes more meaningful each time the cell group meets.<sup>57</sup>

The intentionality of this focus on spiritual practice, and the variety of spiritual disciplines mentioned, indicate some attention to the broad idea of communities of spiritual practice. It is unclear if this marker was present through cell groups in BYF meetings of the late 1950s and 1960s or not, but some intentionality certainly existed within the handbook. In 2.3.3, I established that it is not just the presence or absence of these practices that determine if this key marker of the theological turn is present or not; it is the intentional incorporation of spiritual practices, within community, as part of the discipleship process with young people.

The structure proposed in the *BYF Handbook* suggests regular meetings for three age groups: junior high, high school, and young people (after high school and up to 25 years old). It is unclear if cell groups fit within this structure or if they were separate from them. According to the manual, one of the purposes of these regular meetings is discipleship of sorts. On a specific evening of the week, the youth from these three groups gather for their weekly BYF meeting. Thompson states that the purpose of these meetings was to develop

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-20.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

“strong churchmen (sic).” He goes on to explain that the church “has come to realize there was a real need for another youth session which young people would plan for young people.”<sup>58</sup> While there is some emphasis on discipleship practices like learning to pray and worship, these are always directed toward preparation for leading in the adult church in the future.<sup>59</sup> Thus, while Thompson designed the BYF to teach about various discipleship practices, they were not communities of spiritual practice; instead, they were communities of preparation for future church leadership.

In conclusion, the BYF meetings, as set out in the *BYF Handbook*, cannot be described as communities of spiritual practice as described by Root and Dean in the theological turn. Despite this, some indications point toward some aspects of this marker. I conclude that the marker is mainly absent within the *BYF Handbook*.

#### **5.2.4 Conclusions: the Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook**

In this subsection, I have suggested that as youth ministries followed the *BYF Handbook* in facilitating youth ministries, it unintentionally worked against one of the markers of discipling youth ministry, church integration of young people. I have argued that despite Thompson’s high regard for involving young people in the church, the handbook contributed to the non-integration of young people instead of integrating them into it. The handbook may have hinted toward the marker of place-sharing, but I concluded it is absent. The key marker communities of spiritual practice is mainly absent in the *BYF Handbook*. It mentions a few spiritual practices, but there is little encouragement toward practices in community. Overall, the markers of the theological turn are absent or mainly absent from the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

*Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*. I now move my youth ministry analysis forward by critically examining another resource, *Keys to Successful Youth Work*.

### **5.3 Discipling Youth Ministry in *Keys to Successful Youth Work***

In this section, I discuss a package of information called *Keys to Successful Youth Work*. I demonstrate that one of the markers of discipling youth ministry, as identified in Chapter Two, communities of spiritual practice, is present to a certain degree in the material. Ecclesial integration and place-sharing are mainly absent. Further, I argue that because it did not contribute to the integration of youth into the church, this material, at best, helped to maintain the status quo, and at worst, contributed to the further non-integration of young people from local congregations.

The Christian Training Commission of the Convention published *Keys to Successful Youth Work* in the mid-1970s and made it available to youth leaders. Beverly Powell, nee Logan, then a recent graduate of Acadia Divinity College and Youth Corps worker with the CBAC, compiled the material.<sup>60</sup> It contained five items:

- *Bible Study: Ways and Means* – A 34-page document by Byron Fenwick
- *Me, A Leader?* – A 27-page document assembled by Powell
- *My Heart Christ's Home* – A booklet by Robert Boyd Munger<sup>61</sup>
- *Bridge to Life* – An evangelistic booklet from NavPress

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<sup>60</sup> The Youth Corps was as program of the CBAC that operated for several years in the 1970s. It gave young adults the opportunity of serving within the Board of Christian Education (pre-1974) or the Christian Training Commission (post 1974). The young adults served in what was essentially an internship position in which they received a small stipend of \$10 per week.

<sup>61</sup> This pamphlet was a copy of Munger's sermon by the same title that was distributed widely, with over ten million copies distributed. <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/feb/22/local/me-28619> (accessed 2017 10 03).

• *Focus Ministry: How Every Christian can be a Minister* – A one-page brochure written by Eugene Thompson<sup>62</sup>

Munger and NavPress's booklets came from outside the CBAC and do not directly relate to youth ministry, so they are not relevant to my research. Thompson's brochure speaks only about building relationships for evangelism, so it is helpful only for its description of relationships that are not place-sharing in nature. The two larger documents, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, and *Me, A Leader?* are the earliest known discipleship materials primarily written by CBAC leaders and youth workers, so I will examine them. Both documents attempted to help youth leaders with locating discipleship materials and youth ministry content. They stand in stark contrast to Thompson's previous 1959 work that primarily provided a structure for CBAC ecclesial ministry to young people.

By way of an overview, *Bible Study: Ways and Means* contains introductory material on hermeneutics, teaching, tips for understanding youth culture, ideas related to creativity in communication, teaching on developing a disciple-making ministry, and sample devotionals for youth.<sup>63</sup> *Me, A Leader?* has some overlap with *Bible Study: Ways and Means*. However, it uniquely focuses on personal leadership development, building leaders within the youth ministry, and strategic youth ministry planning. It also contains a list of recommended resources for youth ministry.

I will now critically examine the material in *Keys to Successful Youth Work*. The folder was a significant step forward in youth discipleship resourcing within the CBAC. Those who put it together apparently realized that providing a youth ministry structure was not enough, so they offered a substantial amount of materials for youth ministry in this package. In

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<sup>62</sup> Eugene Thompson, who wrote the *BYF Handbook* which was examined above, went on to become the CBAC Executive Minister from 1984-1996.

<sup>63</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*.

Thompson's *BYF Handbook* discussed in the previous section, adults were primarily facilitators. However, this information folder was designed for adult youth leaders who directly led and worked in CBAC youth ministries. Compiled around the same time that Yaconelli and Rice started *Youth Specialties*,<sup>64</sup> this resource demonstrates that the CBAC was also concerned about resourcing youth leaders.

There is a concern for discipleship within *Keys to Successful Youth Work*, but the explanation is confusing and unclear. It states, leaders, must "grow in being disciples" and in "knowledge of God's Word and its power in our daily lives."<sup>65</sup> The material also provides an objective for disciple-making ministry and includes a brief model (chart 5.2). In the explanation of this model, the author states that the youth leader's objective is "To know, love, and glorify God and to be used of Him to raise up qualified labourers in significant numbers as fast as possible to help fulfill the Great Commission."<sup>66</sup> This objective expands into a four-phase strategy. The first phase is "a sound Biblically based program of Bible study, evangelism, follow-up, missions, and so-forth" for "The Multitude." It states that it is "out of this group that you begin to get those who will become disciples."<sup>67</sup> Second, it suggests that a group called "The Seventy" will emerge, looking for a deeper level of study.<sup>68</sup> The document does not explain what to do with this group or how to provide discipleship for them. The third group, called "Man-To-Man," was to emerge and meet the "profile of a disciple and indicate the potential for spiritual leadership." It goes on to suggest that leaders prioritize these youth "in time and one-to-one training by example, instruction, and on-the-

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<sup>64</sup> <http://youthspecialties.com/about/history/>. Accessed July 19, 2017. The first *Ideas* books were published in 1969, but it was not until 1974 that *Youth Specialties* was established. Then Yaconelli and Rice published an extensive series of books that provided very practical how-to help for youth leaders.

<sup>65</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, 6.

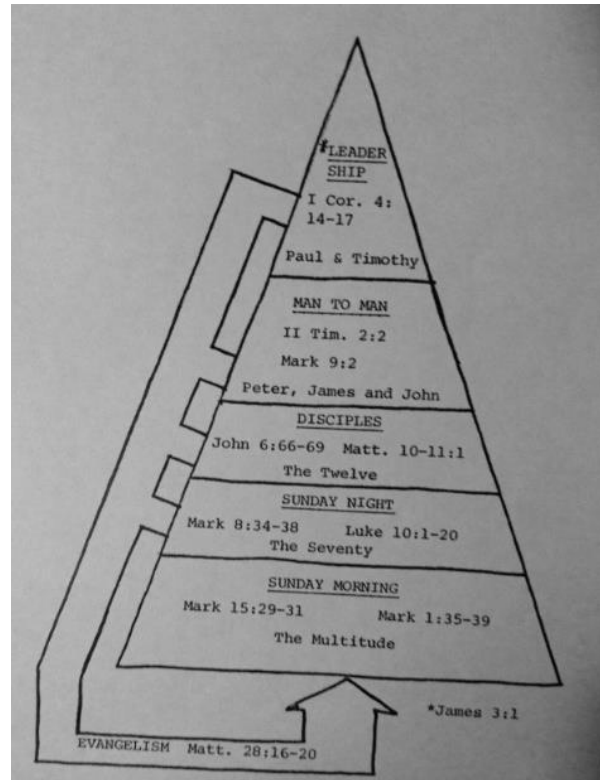
<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

job experience.”<sup>69</sup> The final step, called “Leadership,” is to be provided by either the minister or youth director who works for the church.

Chart 5.2: Disciple Making Ministry



For some unknown reason, the step named “Disciples” in the chart is not explained in any way as all the other steps are.<sup>70</sup> Within this strategy, the lines between discipleship and leadership development are blurred. It also seems evident that not all Christians, not even all those looking for “a deeper level of study,” were considered disciples. As well, there is no clear explanation of what discipleship meant within this *Disciple-Making Strategy*. Despite this, at the end of the brief section, the author writes, “Thus, in time, if you have done the job of discipling, your youth group should be growing far beyond your capabilities.”<sup>71</sup> Evidently,

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.



Fenwick understood discipleship as closely connected with becoming an evangelistic leader and specifically focused on evangelistic efforts.

In *Me, A Leader?* there is a section on the leader as a discipler. It is built on the concept that “the greatest single principle in making disciples is the ‘follow me’ principle.”<sup>72</sup> Leaders were to “by examples and pacesetting... get them to follow you,” so that “they become examples to others as you are to them.”<sup>73</sup> It mentions modelling in sections on witnessing, Bible study, and devotional life, but includes no description of a leader or how they act.

From these resources, it is evident that CBAC denominational youth leadership believed discipleship pointed toward evangelism. The resource only considered disciples to be those ready to be trained and active in evangelism efforts. This end-focused understanding of discipleship is not like what Root and Dean explained in the theological turn. Fenwick does not seem to recognize the validity of discipleship that neglects to build toward evangelism. His model does not encourage other discipleship components that are important to Dean, such as exploring spiritual practices to understand what it means to be a Christian.<sup>74</sup> It also does not allow for Root’s explanation of youth ministry “simply, but profoundly, [being] the space that invites young people to hear the personal call of Jesus Christ to come and follow.”<sup>75</sup>

Despite the stated concern for discipleship, a search for the markers of discipling youth ministry from the theological turn within the resources provided in *Keys to Successful Youth Work* yields little. Having provided some description of the material in *Keys to Successful*

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<sup>72</sup> Beverly Powell, "Me, a Leader?," 1979. This material is credited as having come from Max Barnett of Southwestern Baptist Seminary.

<sup>73</sup> Powell, "Me, a Leader?."

<sup>74</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 115.

<sup>75</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 180.

*Youth Work*, I will now examine the material through critical analysis using the key markers of the theological turn that I drew from Root and Dean's work.

### **5.3.1 Ecclesial Integration in *Keys to Successful Youth Work***

In this subsection, I will demonstrate that *Keys to Successful Youth Work* says little, if anything, about the first marker, that of integrating young people into the church. There is a focus on evangelism, including some aggressive activities designed to bring young people to youth activities. Chart 5.2 shows new Christians coming to church, but there is no mention here or elsewhere in the material of the transition from youth activities to the broader church.<sup>76</sup>

This focus on youth activities is similar to that in Thompson's *BYF Handbook*, but in the handbook, there was a clear desire to teach youth how to lead so they could someday lead within the church. Within *Keys to Successful Youth Work*, there is no mention of this preparation, and I would argue that by not encouraging integration, it inadvertently encourages a further distancing between the local church and the youth ministry within it. Other than the reference to local church life mentioned in the chart, there is no reference to the ecclesial integration of youth. With this lack of an integrative strategy, it is difficult to argue for this material's impact on the church/youth ministry relationships within the CBAC. Local churches endorsed and implemented the youth ministry model in *Keys to Successful Youth Work*. However, this model did not overtly support the building up of the church. What is certain is that *Keys to Successful Youth Work* offered little to strengthen the connection between youth and their local church, and I argue that this absence did not improve ecclesial

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<sup>76</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, 32.

integration and may have contributed to the further separation of the two. Therefore, the marker, ecclesial integration, is mainly absent.

### 5.3.2 Place-Sharing in *Keys to Successful Youth Work*

There is definitely some indication of the second marker, a ministry of place-sharing, within this material. *Me, A Leader?* mentioned but did not explain “sharing and prayer” groups where young people and their leader(s) met together.<sup>77</sup> In *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, there is an explanation of something similar that is encouraged to happen within the regular youth night's devotional time. It suggests that “10 minutes of speaking, 20 minutes of sharing and prayer” is a good balance.<sup>78</sup> As well, there is a significant emphasis on building relationships with youth. The material suggests having young people in the leader's home, being involved in their lives, loving them, and having regular communication with them.<sup>79</sup> This description is very close to some aspects of the place-sharing practices presented by Root.<sup>80</sup> Building on the writing and practice of Bonhoeffer, Root emphasizes the home of a leader as an important place for youth ministry.<sup>81</sup> However, it cannot be determined if these relationships were designed toward influence instead of an encounter with another, as Root describes.

The document, *Me, A Leader*, includes a section on discipling young people. In this section, a good understanding emerges of how CBAC denominational staff understood the connection between discipleship and friendships. From the beginning, discipleship was for

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<sup>77</sup> Powell, "Me, a Leader?."

<sup>78</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, 12.

<sup>79</sup> Powell, "Me, a Leader?."

<sup>80</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 175.

<sup>81</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 108.

those who had already become Christians. In a description that touches on some aspects of place-sharing, the author explains how to help a young Christian grow:

You must get closely involved in the life of that person, sharing your life with him; giving him personal help; building into his life through association, observation, and instruction; imparting the conviction that every area of life must be in harmony with the Word of God.<sup>82</sup>

In the explanation section that follows, the author expands on the youth leader's responsibilities to include accepting them as they are, expecting them to fail and being patient, and offering encouragement and forgiveness.<sup>83</sup> This is the first reference to unconditional friendship that I discovered. While the relationships described focus on helping a young person grow in faith and have an emphasis on influence, the presence of unconditional friendship shows that it is not a pure strategy of influence and has elements of place-sharing.<sup>84</sup>

The descriptive material in *Keys to Successful Youth Work* definitely does not demonstrate the entire presence of place-sharing relationships as described by Root. As I argued in 2.3.2, place-sharing involved transformation, unconditional friendship, and advocacy. There is no indication in these materials that advocacy was present, but it appears that at least some aspects of the other characteristics may have been present. The factor that does not point to a full presence is that descriptions of the relationships between youth leaders and young people are strictly focused on helping young Christians grow and develop evangelistic practices. As this is clearly a strategy of influence, I argue that this marker is mainly absent in the material. However, this material expresses a desire for settings and relationships that could foster place-sharing relationships between youth leaders and young people. In Chapters Six and Seven, I examine CBAC youth ministry practices and the

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<sup>82</sup> Powell, "Me, a Leader?."

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 74. Here Root points to similar examples; youth pastors who primarily operated ministries based on a strategy of influence yet at times used elements of place-sharing.

opinions of those who led these ministries. This process will allow me to determine if the marker was more present in practice than intention.

### 5.3.3 Communities of Spiritual Practice in *Keys to Successful Youth Work*

In this subsection, I analyze the presence or absence of the third marker, communities of spiritual practice within *Keys to Successful Youth Work*. I argue that it is moderately present within the material. The primary spiritual practices mentioned are Bible study, prayer, and worship. It is perhaps telling about the shallowness of discipleship offered in the materials that even the booklet entitled *Bible Study: Ways and Means* does little more than state that Bible study must include Bible facts, Bible interpretation, and Daily life application.<sup>85</sup> It goes on to teach about learning styles and methods and provides suggestions for topics and delivery methods.<sup>86</sup> There is also an emphasis on prayer in the material. One page is devoted to suggestions related to individual and group prayer, including “the use of prayer cells.”<sup>87</sup> What exactly Powell means by this is somewhat ambiguous, but it could refer to the *sharing and prayer groups* mentioned above. Worship “through His Word and in song and praise” is also encouraged in youth ministry.<sup>88</sup>

Beyond the encouragement toward Bible study, prayer, and worship, perhaps the most significant reference that could be related to communities of spiritual practice is the suggestion that “a time of quiet meditation” is best instead of extensive teaching when young

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<sup>85</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, 1.

<sup>86</sup> Powell, "Me, a Leader?."

<sup>87</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, 13.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

people gather in community.<sup>89</sup> As in the *BYF Handbook, Keys to Successful Youth Ministry* also lacks any mention of the important Baptist practices, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

In 2.3.3, I concluded that determining the presence or absence of this marker is not as simplistic as the presence or absence of all spiritual practices that I introduced. Instead, it is the intentionality behind a community acting on the commitment to make spiritual practices an integral part of their life together. In the *Keys to Successful Youth Work* material, I would argue that the marker communities of spiritual practice is moderately present. There is no clear evidence that it was part of ministry in local churches, but as I have demonstrated, the handbook encourages some aspects of communities of spiritual practice.

#### **5.3.4 Conclusions: *Keys to Successful Youth Work***

In conclusion, one of the three markers of discipling youth ministry found within the theological turn is present to some degree within *Keys to Successful Youth Work*. Ecclesial integration and place-sharing are mainly absent. In this section, I have shown that, at best, the material did not contribute to the integration of youth into ecclesial life and may have assisted in further distancing them from the local church community and the discipleship they might have received there. I have demonstrated that relationships and settings where place-sharing could occur were encouraged, and there was encouragement toward the traditional practices of Bible study, prayer and worship, and quiet meditation, indicating an emphasis on a community of spiritual practice.

The CBAC youth staff disseminated *Keys to Successful Youth Work* at a time when North American youth ministries were proliferating.<sup>90</sup> What remains unknown until I

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Senter, "History of Youth Ministry Education," 96.

examine other data in the following chapters is how much this material served merely as a suggestion and how much CBAC youth leaders used it, thereby reflecting the markers' moderate presence. I will now move on to examine the materials of Sonlife Ministries critically.

#### **5.4 Discipling Youth Ministry in the Materials of Sonlife Ministries**

In this section, I demonstrate that Sonlife was a very influential training program for CBAC youth leaders but fell short of the markers of discipling youth ministry. Sonlife emphasized establishing relationships for evangelism but did not stress the integration of young people into the church or encourage the church to be a community of spiritual practices that would stimulate young people's ongoing development. Therefore, although Sonlife was often effective in helping youth leaders understand their role and perpetuating youth ministry attendance and participation, it did not contribute to the development of discipling youth ministry as identified in the theological turn.

Founded in 1979 by Dann Spader, Sonlife was the primary youth leader training resource within the CBAC for over a decade. Most of the youth leaders I surveyed (21/32) took some training from Sonlife as adult leaders, some at an advanced level.<sup>91</sup> Sonlife has the mission of “Equipping leaders in relational disciple making according to the Son’s life (John 14:12).”<sup>92</sup> Claiming to have trained over 750,000 leaders in over 70 countries throughout

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<sup>91</sup> Harold Arbo, *The Christian Training Communicator*, 1992, 12. In addition to the basic training taken by 21 of my respondents, *Sonlife Advanced Training #1* was offered three times in Atlantic Canada. It is not known how many of the respondents participated in this training, but we do know that seven of them became Sonlife trainers so they would have had to complete advanced preparation to do this.

<sup>92</sup> “Our History”, <http://www.sonlife.com/about-us/>, accessed 2013 11 14.

their history, Sonlife was a significant leader in training youth leaders from 1979 to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, when its popularity started to decrease.<sup>93</sup>

My research demonstrates that those who took part in Sonlife training in Atlantic Canada consider it a significant part of their youth ministry training. As shown in the following chart (5.3), 16 of those who took the training thought it to be among the most significant sources of youth ministry training they received. This positive rating by 76% is higher than that of those who learned about youth ministry from any other source. Those who took Sonlife training gave it a higher rating for youth ministry preparation than personal reading, which rated the highest in every comparative analysis I conducted. My interviews supported the positive responses from the survey. One youth pastor stated, “To me, the basics of how I approached my youth ministry... came out of the Sonlife training.” He went on to say, “it was kind of like stuff that you were doing, but you didn’t really know how it all was related... it just kind of connected the dots for you.”<sup>94</sup>

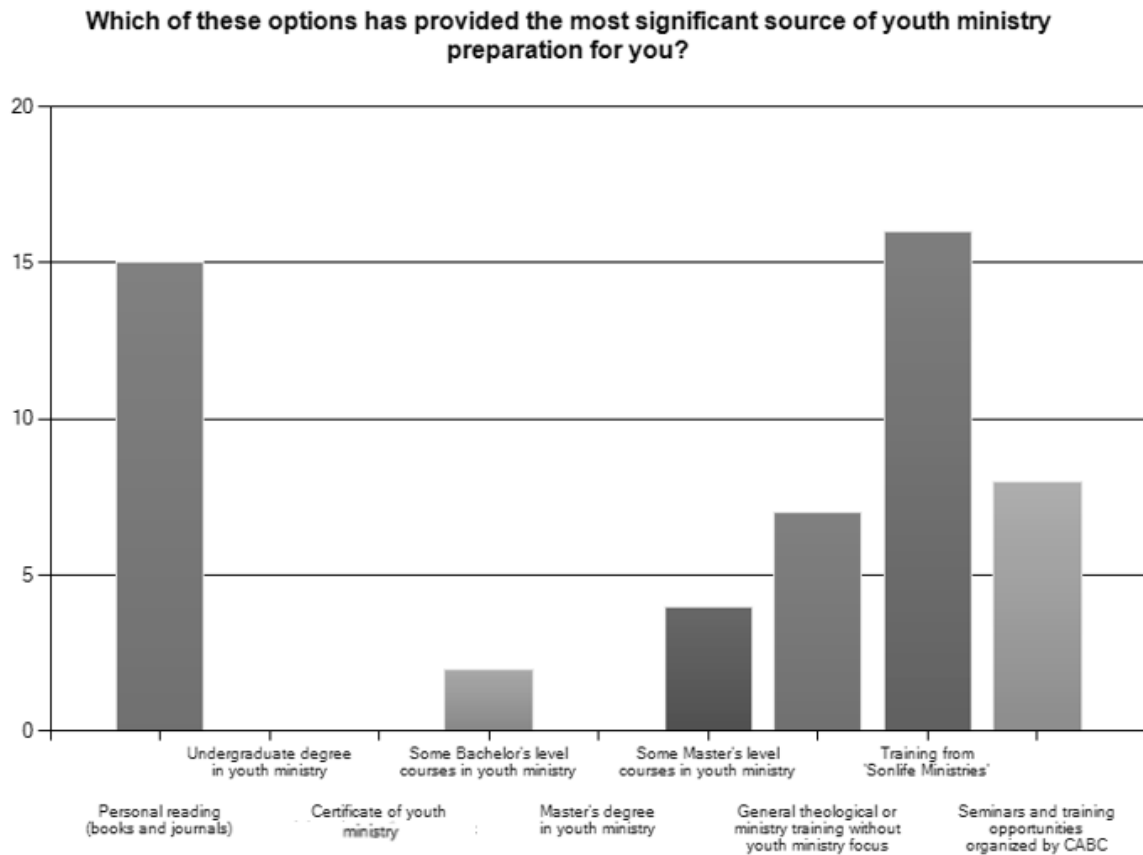
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<sup>93</sup> Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 296-98. Livermore and Argue were tasked with updating the Sonlife material so that it was relevant in a changing North American culture as well as in their international markets. They saw the ‘strategy of Jesus’ that Spader believed so strongly in, to be a product of modernity, not of Scriptural exegesis. Spader strongly disagreed with them and the impasse that developed led to the departure of not just Livermore and Argue, but Bill Clem as well, who had been with Sonlife from nearly the beginning.

<sup>94</sup> Structured Interview #33, “Dan” 2013 03 04, 23.



Chart 5.3: Those who took Sonlife Training (21) responses to Survey Question Six



The significance of Sonlife training for youth leaders is also widely recognized within much of North America. Mark H. Senter, in a critique of the training, states, “There is no doubt that the Sonlife training has contributed to a dramatic shift from youth groups to youth ministry witnessed in the final decade of the twentieth century, especially in North America.”<sup>95</sup> One long-serving CBAC youth pastor, who later went on to denominational work and then pastoral ministry, stated, “I would say the first big influence that I encountered was some of Dann Spader’s Sonlife Ministry perspective on discipleship and evangelism.”<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Mark Senter, "Is the Sonlife Strategy the Strategy of Jesus? Replicating Dann Spader's Study of a Harmony of the Gospel," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 1, no. 1 (2002): 23.

<sup>96</sup> Structured Interview #5, “James” 2012 11 19, 112.

Youth leaders in Atlantic Canada had the opportunity to learn the Sonlife material, but they also interacted with the founder and some key presenters and curriculum writers. Three people who served on CBAC staff had personal relationships with Dann Spader. Harold Arbo (Director of the Christian Training Commission, 1984-1992) met Spader in Chicago at a Christian Education event and spent a week with him. He later had him come to Atlantic Canada to do youth leader training.<sup>97</sup> This visit led, in 1991, to the CBAC officially endorsing Sonlife as their ‘basic philosophy of youth ministry.’<sup>98</sup> John Dunnett (Youth Co-ordinator, 1994-1999) became good friends with one of Sonlife’s primary curriculum writers and presenters, Dave Garda. As John recalls, “Dave and I spent time reflecting with each other, and we began to look at the call of the great commandment and what it meant to be a disciple in a well-rounded way and do evangelism.” Dave and his wife Rennie were frequent guests in the region, speaking and leading multiple training events.<sup>99</sup> Bill Clem, Spader’s original partner, was the main speaker at the annual youth conference, *Springforth*, in 1998 and at the annual Youth Convention and CBAC Convention Assembly in 2001.<sup>100</sup> The first director of the CBAC’s Youth and Family Ministries Department, Bruce Fawcett, also had a close connection with Sonlife staff and intentionally and strategically worked to make Sonlife training accessible to youth leaders in the region.<sup>101</sup>

Sonlife used a variety of training manuals over the years. However, it was the publication of the *Sonlife Strategy Seminar* manual in 1989/90 and the training opportunities that went along with the subsequent organizational expansion that significantly influenced

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<sup>97</sup> Structured Interview #38, “Rick” 2012 10 03, 35.

Harold Arbo, *Report of the Christian Training Commission* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1989), 233.

<sup>98</sup> Harold Arbo, *Report of the Christian Training Commission* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1991), 86.

<sup>99</sup> Structured Interview #5, “James” 2012 11 19, 113.

<sup>100</sup> Gary Dunfield, “Spring Forth 1998,” *Atlantic Baptist*, March 1998, 23.

Gary Dunfield, “What’s Happening in Youth Ministry,” *Atlantic Baptist*, July/August, 2001, 19.

<sup>101</sup> Bruce Fawcett, Personal Interview, 2013 12 20.

Atlantic Canada.<sup>102</sup> In 1999, Sonlife completely re-wrote the manual.<sup>103</sup> Both of these versions were taught extensively in Atlantic Canada in the 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Additionally, Sonlife offered in-depth training, called *Sonlife Advanced Training #1*, for youth pastors and youth leaders in the region.<sup>104</sup> The organization published other materials, but throughout the time that Sonlife had such a significant impact on youth ministry, the daylong *Sonlife Foundations* and *Sonlife Strategy Seminar* formed the core of their youth ministry training within the CBAC.<sup>105</sup> A 1992 advertisement in the CTC lists eight different CBAC youth pastors who taught Sonlife training in seven locations that year, demonstrating the training program's saturation.<sup>106</sup>

Based on the ministry pattern and cycle that Spader identified in the life of Christ, the curriculum teaches that followers of Jesus need to develop youth ministries that follow the four-step pattern of build, win, equip, and multiply. Sonlife applied this method to both individuals (they are won, built, equipped, and become a “balanced and healthy disciple”) and for “the disciple-making ministry” (a cyclical strategy of building, equipping, winning, and multiplying).<sup>107</sup> Although the four steps remain the same from the first version of the manual to the second one, the presentation and detail are somewhat different. One of the most significant curriculum developments was integrating a ‘harmony of the Gospels’ into the 1999 training material.<sup>108</sup> The writers made minor adjustments to the presentation order and

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<sup>102</sup> Dann Spader, *Sonlife Strategy Seminar* (Elburn: Sonlife Ministries, 1990).

<sup>103</sup> Dann Spader, *Strategy: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry* (Elburn: Sonlife Ministries, 1999).

<sup>104</sup> CBAC annual reports, articles and advertisements in *The Atlantic Baptist*, and items in the *Christian Training Communicator* show that Advanced Training #1 sessions were offered in the region in 1991, 1992 and 2001.

<sup>105</sup> CBAC annual reports, articles and advertisements in *The Atlantic Baptist*, and items in the *Christian Training Communicator* show that *Foundations* and/or *Strategy* training sessions were offered in the region in 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005.

<sup>106</sup> Arbo, 12.

<sup>107</sup> Spader, *Strategy: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry*, 10.

<sup>108</sup> From the beginning of Sonlife, Dann Spader built the entire structure of the youth ministry strategy on what he called ‘the strategy of Jesus’. He observed this ministry outline in the Gospels when he put all the passages in chronological order. The training guide included this material in ‘The Complete NIV Harmony of the Gospels Outline (p. 71-77). This material was an external source for the earlier training manuals; this revision integrated it into the actual manual.

emphasis to connect the discipleship process with the strategy that Sonlife presented as the process Jesus used with His disciples.<sup>109</sup> Another addition to the later version is that of shepherds who oversee the youth ministry's entire discipleship process. Sonlife taught that shepherds needed to function at the multiplication level and intentionally watch over and encourage the growth of those within the ministry.<sup>110</sup>

Understanding the four-step process taught by Sonlife is very significant to understanding youth discipleship within Atlantic Canada. The four steps constitute a discipleship process in which youth ministries were to continue to invest. The building phase encouraged youth ministries to develop relationships with non-Christian youth through organizing outreach events and personal connections. As these youth became familiar with youth ministry events and activities and comfortable attending them, youth leaders introduced foundational Christian teaching regarding salvation and discipleship. Throughout this phase, though, the focus was on developing strong relationships between youth and youth leaders within the youth ministry's loving and safe environment. In this context, youth were encouraged to commit their lives to follow Jesus. Essentially, for Sonlife, discipleship meant becoming a Christian and helping others to become Christians.

The next phase was to develop the ministry into one of equipping those who are ready for it. Through invitation, modelled after the 'follow me' of Jesus, students were encouraged to take the next step and enter a building process where they focused on "become[ing] fishers of men."<sup>111</sup> After the building phase, the ministry moved on to a time of involving the students in evangelism. Their evangelistic involvement included having the students work to build relationships with non-Christians. Students were to prayerfully move toward a

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<sup>109</sup> Spader, *Strategy: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry*, 18-19, 73-79.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>111</sup> Spader, *Sonlife Strategy Seminar*, 2.1.

conversion experience for these acquaintances and eventually participate in evangelistic events in the community. Sonlife's goal was to involve them in so much evangelism that it became a regular part of their life from that point forward. Sonlife used the acronym CPR to describe the process taught and modelled during this youth ministry phase. The steps were Cultivating (establishing solid relationships), Planting (pointing people toward Jesus), and Reaping (regular opportunities for people to "declare that they follow Jesus").<sup>112</sup> The multiplying phase came last. In this step, youth leaders were encouraged to pay special attention to releasing students who would become shepherds. These, in turn, continued the process by investing in others who started discipling still more people.<sup>113</sup>

Although Sonlife does not provide one specific definition of discipleship, the descriptive material inextricably connects discipleship with a lifestyle of evangelism. The previous resource I examined, *Keys to Successful Youth Work*, also built toward an apex of evangelism, but there are some significant differences. *Keys to Successful Youth Work* presented evangelism as the climax of youth ministry, with importance above all else. Sonlife places more of an emphasis on the value of the process of growing toward an evangelistic lifestyle. The difference between both programs and Root and Dean's understanding of discipleship is also significant. Root does not emphasize evangelism but places importance on entering into the presence of God with young people.<sup>114</sup> Dean does believe that evangelism is one of many essential components of the Christian life.<sup>115</sup>

Within Atlantic Canada, the survey and interview responses that I collected for my research demonstrate the influence of Sonlife. In addition to the overwhelming endorsement

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<sup>112</sup> Spader, *Strategy: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry*, 33.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>114</sup> Andrew Root, *Taking the Cross to Youth Ministry, A Theological Journey through Youth Ministry*, ed. Andrew Root (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 79.

<sup>115</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 166-67.

given to the training, youth leader reactions echo the core concepts. When asked to describe effective discipleship, those who had taken this training said such things as “when the youth, in turn, become disciplers of those around them” and “the act of pouring into the life of a young person to train them to walk with Christ and then pour into others.”<sup>116</sup> This language is very similar to that found in Sonlife and described above. Because it was five years from the time of the most recent Sonlife training event to the time people completed this survey, these and other comments echoed the core of the training and are very significant as they speak to the training's powerful influence.

Having established that Sonlife has been integrally connected with CBAC youth ministries, I will now search within the Sonlife youth leader training materials for the key markers of a discipling youth ministry from the theological turn.

#### **5.4.1 Ecclesial Integration in the Materials of Sonlife Ministries**

I demonstrated that the *BYF Handbook* and *Keys to Successful Youth Work* might have unintentionally encouraged youth to remain separate from the local church community. In this subsection, I argue that Sonlife also did not encourage young people toward ecclesial integration, something that is evidenced by a noticeable lack of material relating to the local church.

The 1999 *Sonlife Strategy Manual* includes a very brief section entitled, “What’s the role of the church?” It speaks of the local church as “a people gathered” and states, “As the people of God gather, the purpose should reflect the priorities of Christ – balancing winning, building and equipping that ultimately multiplies.”<sup>117</sup> Essentially this section restates the core

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<sup>116</sup> Subject #20, “Carla”, Survey Question #9, “How would you define effective discipleship of youth?”

<sup>117</sup> Spader, *Strategy: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry*, 11.

Sonlife strategy for the entire church and provides no instruction or guidance to help leaders integrate young people into the local church's life. The language throughout the Sonlife material focuses primarily on the youth ministry, not on the broader church. Even in a four-page section that addresses identifying and equipping a candidate for ministry training, there is no mention of the local church or church leadership beyond youth leaders.<sup>118</sup> As will be examined in the upcoming subsection on communities of spiritual practice, there is some mention of baptism.<sup>119</sup> As baptism happens within the ecclesial gathering, this is the strongest indication of church integration, but the material does not state that baptism involves the church. With such limited direct or indirect reference to church integration, I conclude that within the Sonlife material, the marker of church integration is mainly absent.

The absence of material related to the integration of youth into the church is very significant when one considers the large amount of material that Sonlife produced and made available for youth leader training. Unlike the *BYF Handbook* and *Keys to Effective Youth Ministry*, Sonlife produced much more than a folder of information or a one-time manual. The omission of material related to church integration is significant and speaks to the program's priorities. In response to some criticism, in 2002, Sonlife founder Dann Spader unequivocally stated, "Disciplemaking in the New Testament is to be done in community. A healthy Great Commission and Great Commandment church is God's plan for the making of disciples who can make disciples."<sup>120</sup> Although this statement affirms his belief in the local church's centrality, it does nothing to change the fact that within Sonlife training materials, there was nothing to encourage the integration of youth into their local church.

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 35-38.

<sup>119</sup> Bill Clem, Dave Garda, and Dann Spader, *Vision: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry, Advanced Training #1* (Elburn: Sonlife Ministries, 1997), 96.

<sup>120</sup> Dann Spader, "A Response to Senter's 'Is the Sonlife Strategy the Strategy of Jesus'?", *Journal of Youth Ministry* 1, no. 1 (2002): 55.

#### 5.4.2 Place-Sharing in the Materials of Sonlife Ministries

In this subsection, I argue that the second marker of the theological turn, a ministry of place-sharing, is mainly absent from Sonlife. This absence is even though the Sonlife strategy speaks much about relationships. The materials instruct youth leaders to develop strong relationships with the youth in their programs, those who are influential in the lives of their youth, and church and community leaders.<sup>121</sup> As well, part of the strategy is for youth to develop “redemptive relationships” with those who are not Christians, “building credible and loving relationships with unbelievers at school, work or home.”<sup>122</sup> These redemptive relationships were to be the setting for “eternal CPR,” where students cultivated relationships, planted the gospel, and then reaped the harvest by leading their friends to become Christians.<sup>123</sup>

There is no doubt that Sonlife puts a significant emphasis on relationships. However, Sonlife’s relationships are different from the place-sharing relationships explained by Root and Dean as part of the theological turn. I conclude that Sonlife does not teach genuine relationships, as it is evident that a salvation experience is a foremost goal and priority of establishing all relationships. The excerpts above demonstrate that there is an assumption that the other person *will* experience personal conversion. As I showed in 2.3.2, there is certainly room within place-sharing for, through encounter with God through relationship with another, influencing the other toward a new or deeper relationship with God. However, for a relationship to be a genuine place-sharing one, this agenda cannot take priority over caring in a deep and personal way, even if the other person does not make any movement toward God.

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<sup>121</sup> Spader, *Sonlife Strategy Seminar*, 1.11.

<sup>122</sup> Clem, Garda, and Spader, *Vision: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry, Advanced Training #1*, 68.

<sup>123</sup> Spader, *Strategy: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry*, 51-52.



Thus, despite the strong language of relationship, there is no convincing evidence of place-sharing within the Sonlife materials, so I conclude that the marker is mainly absent.

### **5.4.3 Communities of Spiritual Practice in the Materials of Sonlife Ministries**

In this subsection, I demonstrate that the final marker, communities of spiritual practice, is mainly absent within the Sonlife materials. Sonlife had a significant emphasis on the spiritual practices of reading and studying Scripture, evangelism, and some on serving others' needs.<sup>124</sup> It mentions baptism in the theological foundation section, as it uses the scriptural mandate (Matthew 28:19) “baptizing them in the name of the Father...” to support the *build* portion of Sonlife’s model. Elsewhere, there is a very brief mention that new believers should be encouraged “to be baptized, making a public expression of his/her decision.”<sup>125</sup> Spader attempted to build the Sonlife model on the example and life of Jesus, so baptism's inclusion might be anticipated.<sup>126</sup> There is, however, no mention of the Lord’s Supper.

Aside from the practices mentioned above, a thorough search of the Sonlife materials yielded no other consistent emphasis on spiritual practices with youth. It is noteworthy that, except for baptism, all the encouraged spiritual practices are individual and involve no aspects of a community in their practice. In 2.2.3, building from Root and Dean's writing, I defined communities of spiritual practice as “the intentional incorporation of spiritual practices, within community, as part of the discipleship process with young people.” According to this definition of the marker, I can conclude that the marker of communities of spiritual practice is mainly absent in the material of Sonlife.

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

<sup>125</sup> Clem, Garda, and Spader, *Vision: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry, Advanced Training #1*, 96.

<sup>126</sup> Spader, *Strategy: Growing a Healthy Youth Ministry*, 4.

#### **5.4.4 Conclusions: The Materials of Sonlife Ministries**

In summary, the markers of the theological turn were mainly absent within Sonlife. This absence is significant considering the priority given to this material within the CBAC. The first marker, church integration, is absent. Its absence contributes to the problem that I first identified in the *BYF Handbook* and continued with *Keys to Successful Youth Work*, the inadvertent non-integration of youth ministry in the local church's life. The second marker, place-sharing, was mainly absent in the Sonlife material. While it might have been present within the relationships that were understood to be essential in the ministry model, the relationship paradigm presented was very different from that of place-sharing. The third marker, communities of spiritual practice, is also mainly absent in the resources provided by Sonlife. I will now move to the fourth and final resource that I will critically examine.

#### **5.5 Discipling Youth Ministry in *The Discipleship Project***

In this section, I argue that in the resource called *The Discipleship Project*, there is more evidence of the markers of discipling youth ministry than in any of the previous material, indicating a development in the understanding of discipleship. Three specific books published and promoted by the CBAC included *The Discipleship Project* as an appendix, and the CBAC promoted it in other ways. This discipleship approach appeared in the 1990s when Root and Dean claim the theological turn was beginning to emerge at a grassroots level. Dean states, “our writing reflects a ‘turn’ that youth leaders were already making as they began to acknowledge the theological depth and possibilities of churches’ ministries to young people.”<sup>127</sup> I propose that the CBAC was one place where this movement was beginning and that *The Discipleship Project* provides an example of the beginning of a turn toward the

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<sup>127</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 16.

theological at a grassroots level. *The Discipleship Project* was popularized within the CBAC between 2001 and 2010 when the CBAC's reliance on the Sonlife materials was beginning to decline.

Bruce Fawcett first introduced *The Discipleship Project* to the CBAC in a 1994 two-page descriptive article in *The Atlantic Baptist*.<sup>128</sup> In this article, he described the framework of a five-month discipleship program that he had developed for Lewisville Baptist Church's youth ministry, where he served as Assistant Pastor. In the article, he offered to send a copy of the entire program to anyone interested. A few years later, at the CBAC Youth Pastors Summit in the fall of 2000, Darren McHarg, assistant pastor at Lewisville Baptist Church, presented the program to all the youth pastors in attendance.<sup>129</sup> Just one year later, the CBAC published the first book to include *The Discipleship Project*. It was *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for your Youth Group*.<sup>130</sup> A second edition was published in 2005,<sup>131</sup> and a re-write of the book in 2012 under the title *Building Young Leaders*.<sup>132</sup> The first two editions and the re-write served to provide a framework for youth pastors and leaders to involve youth in short-term mission. The books explained the use of *The Discipleship Project*, and each of them included it in the appendix.

The stated goal was “to help you become a mature disciple of Jesus Christ.”<sup>133</sup> The authors fall short of defining discipleship but provided the following description:

*The Discipleship Project* assumes that in order to mature as a disciple of Jesus teenagers need... to be doing ministry...to be meeting God each day in a deliberate devotional encounter... to

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<sup>128</sup> Bruce Fawcett, "Discipling Teens in the 90's," *Atlantic Baptist*, May 1994, 24-25.

<sup>129</sup> I attended the event when the Assistant Pastor from Lewisville Baptist Church, Darren McHarg, presented on *The Discipleship Project*. It was memorable as it was the first time I had heard about the program, and I started using a version of it immediately.

<sup>130</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group*.

<sup>131</sup> Bruce Fawcett, *Youth and Family Ministries Report* (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2005).

<sup>132</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Building Young Leaders: Using Mission Experiences to Help Youth Grow as Leaders*.

<sup>133</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nysten, *Mission Tour*, 205.

memorize the word...opportunities to take responsibility for their own spiritual growth... [and] accountability and encouragement to accomplish the above.<sup>134</sup>

This pragmatic description of discipleship reflects the structure of *The Discipleship Project*.

However, it also speaks to the discipleship priorities embedded within the program:

involvement in church ministry, personal time with God, and a mentor system of accountability.

From the 1994 introduction of *The Discipleship Project* to its inclusion in *Building Young Leaders* in 2012, its form remained mainly the same. It was an experience around five months long, designed to help prepare youth for short-term mission experiences. After completing a trial month in which students completed daily Bible reading and devotions and some Scripture memory, those who wanted to continue moved into the main part of the program.<sup>135</sup> The key components were standard requirements (daily Bible reading, daily devotional, and Scripture memory) and elective requirements (a wide variety of options from serving in church or denominational leadership to memorizing additional passages or reading the entire New Testament). Other components were regular attendance and participation in church life and ministry, weekly meetings with mentors, and the reading of biographies or autobiographies about noteworthy Christian leaders.<sup>136</sup> Those who completed *The Discipleship Project* were encouraged to do so both by their adult mentor and by the promise of rewards that could take the form of fun trips, subsidized rates at youth events, and recognition in a church service.<sup>137</sup> Fawcett states that in addition to communicating information about the upcoming mission trip, a significant amount of time needed to be

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<sup>134</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group*, 49-50.

<sup>135</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group*, 142.

<sup>136</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nysten, *Mission Tour*, 79.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

devoted to prayer each time the team gathers. Students also practiced the things they would be doing during the mission trip – from leading singing to teaching Bible lessons.<sup>138</sup>

From 2001 onward, most youth leaders relied heavily on this mission-preparation discipleship model to provide part of their church's youth ministry framework. Many young people strongly desired participation in mission experiences, so they participated in discipleship experiences as part of the preparation process. The *Mission Tour* book's three editions that contained *The Discipleship Project* were widely distributed free of charge at youth events and leadership conferences to youth leaders, church leaders, and pastors within the CBAC.<sup>139</sup> Circulation was broad, and from the survey and interview material that I collected, it is evident that the impact was very significant.

*The Discipleship Project* served to introduce youth to significant discipleship practices. In his interview, one youth pastor stated that a component of *The Discipleship Project* was “preparing their hearts which was related to spiritual disciplines, regular Bible study, preparing their testimony, and often meeting with a mentor.”<sup>140</sup> A volunteer leader echoed this by saying:

We always have certain things that the kids are expected to do [in preparation for a mission trip]. They usually have a certain book of the Bible that they read and Scripture memorization and memorizing the books of the Bible. They're required to be in attendance at church and youth group, and usually, there is some ministry expectation for them to be involved in over some period of time that we are preparing them.<sup>141</sup>

Another long-serving youth pastor illustrated that youth leaders sometimes adapted *The Discipleship Project* for their context:

I was pretty hard on them actually. I made them write tests on Scripture, and parents never said anything, but I said, ‘your kid cannot go unless they pass this many tests’ and read this book. They just have to. And the students were good about it. I think that was an example, though, that students will step up to whatever you challenge them with if there is something that they desire on the other end.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>139</sup> Bruce Fawcett, Personal Correspondence, 2017 07 28.

<sup>140</sup> Structured Interview #10, “Donald” 2012 11 19, 109.

<sup>141</sup> Structured Interview #37, “Barb” 2012 10 02, 62.

<sup>142</sup> Structured Interview #6, “Ronald” 2012 11 06, 90.

The integral nature of *The Discipleship Project* to Atlantic Canadian youth ministry is evident. Without exception, every interviewed person who served with youth after the first *Mission Tour* book came out referred to using *The Discipleship Project* or a variation of it to prepare youth mission tours. Some were critical and recognized the dangers: “the difficult side of it sometimes is [when it] is seen as just the work you have to do to go on the mission trip.”<sup>143</sup> However, even those who were critical in this way still admitted that they used the components of *The Discipleship Project* as a mission tour preparation tool. Before *The Discipleship Project* emerged, those involved in youth ministry were more likely to have preparation events and meetings that focused on the travel or other details of the trip instead of specific discipleship that prepared them for the mission experience.<sup>144</sup>

As a consequence of Fawcett and others introducing and promoting *The Discipleship Project*, CBAC youth ministries placed a much greater emphasis on discipleship. The material demonstrates some presence of the markers of discipling youth ministry from the theological turn. I will now examine each marker in turn.

### **5.5.1 Ecclesial Integration in *The Discipleship Project***

In this subsection, I argue that *The Discipleship Project* was the first CBAC youth discipleship resource that identified the non-integration of young people in the local church and offered a partial solution. In the first *Mission Tour* book Fawcett and McDonald demonstrate this encouragement:

Local church youth ministry can exist much like a loose appendage to the body, attached only in name, not interacting with the wider body... This means that teens often have no appreciation for

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<sup>143</sup> Structured Interview #5, “James” 2012 11 19, 115.

<sup>144</sup> Michael Lipe, “Highfield's 'Youth Ambassadors' to Jamaica,” *Atlantic Baptist*, January 1993, 29.

the wider ministry of the church or see that they have a role in giving as well as receiving ministry to the wider body. *The Discipleship Project* can help address this problem.<sup>145</sup>

Participation in *The Discipleship Project* required young people to be involved in various aspects of the church's life, from serving to leading in services and participating in church planning and leadership teams.<sup>146</sup> This involvement, in addition to the required work with a mentor from the congregation, aimed to integrate young people into the church:

A teenager who is involved in *The Discipleship Project* for several years will have had not only several mentors, but also will have served alongside countless adults in ministry, thus ensuring contact with many adults. This can ease integration into the wider life of the church following high-school graduation.<sup>147</sup>

As mentioned above, we know that youth leaders within the CBAC widely used *The Discipleship Project*. Thus, I argue that it directly impacted the way local church youth ministries disciplined their youth. I do not suggest that *The Discipleship Project* solved the non-integration of youth in the local church. However, I argue it was the first youth ministry curriculum of those I examined that identified the problem as Thompson did but also addressed the issue. This is very important, as this marker was absent or mainly absent in the three previous materials that I examined.

Although this marker is mainly present, I argue that a five-month curriculum done with rewards for those who complete it still falls short of the full integration of youth into the church. For some, participation in *The Discipleship Project*, even for repeated years, might only serve to provide them with the opportunity to go on a mission trip and receive other rewards.

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<sup>145</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group*, 52.

<sup>146</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nylan, *Mission Tour*, 207-12.

<sup>147</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group*, 53.

### 5.5.2 Place-Sharing in *The Discipleship Project*

The second marker, place-sharing, is partially evidenced in *The Discipleship Project* structure. Youth leaders who used the resource partnered each young person with a mentor or advisor. In the job description for the mentor, Fawcett listed five requirements. These four related to place-sharing:

1. Follow Christ. We all make mistakes, so we don't expect you to be perfect. However, by inviting you to be an advisor we have placed a high level of trust in you and we expect you to be conscious of this fact.
2. Pray for your student regularly. Pray about their progress in the project and other issues in their life. Ask them what they would like you to pray about.
4. Get to know your student. Ask them what they do for fun. Ask them about school and their family. Try to hold some of your meetings in an informal setting rather than just after church. Often much growth takes place from informal conversation and sharing.
5. Meet with your student weekly. Meetings normally last 15-30 minutes. During the meeting you should pray and review the memory verses learned to date. Encourage them in their ministry projects and share insights or help with questions they may have from their Bible reading.<sup>148</sup>

This integration of mentoring relationships into a discipleship program is very different from anything I previously examined concerning place-sharing ministry. However, despite this development, this description of mentoring does not fully measure up to the place-sharing that I explained in 2.3.2. There I explained that transformation through encounter with God in relationship with another, unconditional friendship, and advocacy are the primary characteristics of place-sharing relationships. The description of mentoring in *The Discipleship Project* does argue for the presence of advocacy and transformation, not for unconditional friendship. The indication in requirement one above that people are not perfect might hint toward unconditional friendship, but it does not clearly articulate it. The relationships that *The Discipleship Project* established between church members and young people may have been established to influence young people to grow in faith and prepare for the mission experience, but despite this, I argue that it provided a setting where place-sharing was possible. Root allowed for this when he discussed three youth pastors who operated from

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<sup>148</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nylén, *Mission Tour*, 203.



a framework of personal-influence strategy, yet they were able to operate outside that model at times (i.e. one allowed adolescents to see his weakness, another described unconditional love, and a third created “open spaces where mutual conversations could occur.”)<sup>149</sup>

The mentoring that youth leaders set up as they implemented *The Discipleship Project* likely provided place-sharing opportunities. However, the time constraints work against it. Mentorship that is limited to five months, and having the primary purpose of holding youth accountable for their projects, does not necessarily encourage deep, sharing relationships. I conclude that this marker is moderately present in *The Discipleship Project*.

### 5.5.3 Communities of Spiritual Practice in *The Discipleship Project*

The third marker of the theological turn, communities of spiritual practice, is found within *The Discipleship Project* more than in any previous materials. There is a significant focus on personal Bible reading, Scripture memory, prayer, meetings with a mentor, and service in the church and community. These practices did not happen in community per se, but the community of young people within the youth ministry participated in these practices simultaneously. There is some mention of worship, an option for spiritual journaling, and the teaching and nurture in the church congregation and youth ministry is an integral part of *The Discipleship Project*.<sup>150</sup> Added to this is that the entire experience's end goal was to prepare students for a mission opportunity. Again, as with the *BYF Handbook* and *Keys to Success in Youth Ministry*, what is conspicuous by its absence within these Baptist materials is any mention of baptism or the Lord's Supper.

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<sup>149</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 74.

<sup>150</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nylén, *Mission Tour*, 207-12.

Although *The Discipleship Project*, as Fawcett proposed it, was only a five-month experience for youth, it gave participants a significant experience in a wide variety of spiritual practices. While not ensuring support from the church, the nature of *The Discipleship Project* confirmed widespread knowledge about and involvement with the program. In 2.3.3, I stated, “If the church community intentionally worked toward involving young people in several different spiritual practices, I would say that the key marker was present.” On this basis, I conclude that *The Discipleship Project*, as a discipleship program, achieves this marker of the theological turn. As the name indicates, it is a *project*, a short-term emphasis that may be very positive but does not achieve the depth of spiritual practices in community that include important practices like baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

#### **5.5.4 Conclusions: *The Discipleship Project***

In conclusion, within *The Discipleship Project*, there is a more substantial presence of the markers of the theological turn than there is within any previous CBAC discipleship materials. Ecclesial integration is mainly present. One of the most significant aspects here is that Fawcett clearly articulated the problem of non-integration and took steps toward integration. This material attempts to set up intergenerational relationships for young people, so even though *The Discipleship Project* falls short of the marker of place-sharing, it demonstrates a movement in that direction. Finally, the marker communities of spiritual practice is present, as *The Discipleship Project* strongly encourages and sets up systems to have young people involved in these practices within the community of the youth ministry and the local church.

## 5.6 Summary

By examining these four sets of resources used by youth ministry leaders within the CBAC, I have demonstrated that resources have grown increasingly in line with the markers of discipling youth ministry that I identified in the theological turn. By way of summary, I will touch on each marker in turn, bringing together some of the most notable observations and conclusions.

I argue that the most significant outcome from this chapter comes from examining the marker of youth integration into the church. This marker is absent or mainly absent from the first three sets of materials that I studied. Perhaps more significant than this absence, the structure and ethos that Thompson laid out in the *BYF Handbook* may have unintentionally provided youth with encouragement and the opportunity to remain separate from the local church community. This happened even though he was aware of the shortcoming in the previous youth program and had the implicit goal of working toward integration. In addition, Thompson's material did not offer young adults any encouragement or strategies to reintegrate into the church when they turned 25 and completed their time in the BYF. Both *Keys to Effective Youth Ministry* and the Sonlife materials did not challenge this model of separation of youth and adults, as both included no material on integrating youth into the church beyond youth ministry involvement. *The Discipleship Project* was the only one of the four that articulated the problem of youth being distant from church life *and* at least attempted to integrate them by connection with a wide range of adult church members, as well as through leadership, service, and worship opportunities.

The second marker, place-sharing, is an extremely difficult one to establish within these programs and materials. As place-sharing is such an intimate, personal experience, it is difficult to evaluate. Because of this, I based my evaluation on the leader's motivations for

entering a relationship with a young person and if the program or material encouraged leader-youth relationships where place-sharing could take place. Thompson did not focus on relationships or environments for place-sharing in the *BYF Handbook*, so I determined that the marker was absent. In the Sonlife materials, while relationships were important, they did not have place-sharing characteristics, so the marker was mainly absent there as well. I determined that place-sharing was mainly absent in *Keys to Effective Youth Work* and moderately present in *The Discipleship Project*.

The first three materials, the *BYF Handbook*, *Keys to Successful Youth Work*, and Sonlife, briefly alluded to the final marker, communities of spiritual practice. All three demonstrate nominal levels of encouragement toward spiritual practice. Most of this was in the areas of traditional practices like Bible study, prayer, and worship, but there was very little or no provision for doing these things in community. Two of the three, the *BYF Handbook* and *Keys to Successful Youth Work*, very briefly introduced practices that were not typical of CBAC churches at the time, but none of the writers explained or strongly endorsed these. Only *The Discipleship Project* placed a strong emphasis on spiritual practices, and while they were encouraged within the church community, most happened individually. One item of note is the only resource to encourage baptism was Sonlife, which was not developed or modified within the CBAC, and none of the resources mention the Lord's Supper. The exclusion of these spiritual practices is noteworthy for youth ministry in Baptist churches.

After examining these resources, the question remains if the presence or absence of the markers of discipling youth ministry was similar among CBAC youth leaders to what it was in the materials provided and promoted to them. The following two chapters will answer this question. In the next chapter, I will examine the discipleship practices of key youth leaders within the CBAC. I do this primarily by searching for the key markers of a discipling youth ministry within their responses to my survey and interview questions.



## **6 EXPLORING THE DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICES OF KEY CBAC YOUTH LEADERS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I build on the previous chapter, where I examined CBAC youth discipleship materials through the lens of the theological turn in youth ministry. Here I will do a similar analysis of the discipleship practices used by key youth leaders within the CBAC, and I present the perspectives and youth discipleship practices of leaders. First, I demonstrate that some youth leaders believed they were doing a good job of integrating youth into the church, or they aspired to do well, but there is little external evidence to support they were doing so. Second, I show that youth leaders of the CBAC placed a significant emphasis on relationships with youth, sometimes nearly matching the place-sharing that I identified as a marker of the theological turn. Third, I argue that communities of spiritual practice sometimes have existed within youth ministries but rarely within the broader congregation of the church. Fourth, while some of these arguments point toward an increasing CBAC youth ministry alignment with the markers of the theological turn, I demonstrate that together, they may have further contributed to young people's distancing from their local church.

In this chapter, I critically examine the discipleship perspectives and practices of key CBAC youth leaders. Through the process described in 4.4.2, I identified the most influential youth leaders within the CBAC. I surveyed these leaders and then conducted follow-up interviews with some of them to understand their use of discipleship practices. In this chapter, I will introduce and categorize the data from these youth leaders, then analyze and interact with my findings based on the key markers of a discipling youth ministry that I identified in Root and Dean's work on the theological turn.

## 6.2 Introduction of Data

As I introduce data in this chapter, I first present the material I gathered from surveying youth leaders within the CBAC. I then return to the material in the next section as I analyze it and interact with my survey responses. As I establish below, several things emerged as significant discipleship practices among virtually all the youth leaders I surveyed and interviewed. They claimed that mentoring, small group ministries, mission experiences, and Christian camping were the most significant discipleship contexts they offered to youth.

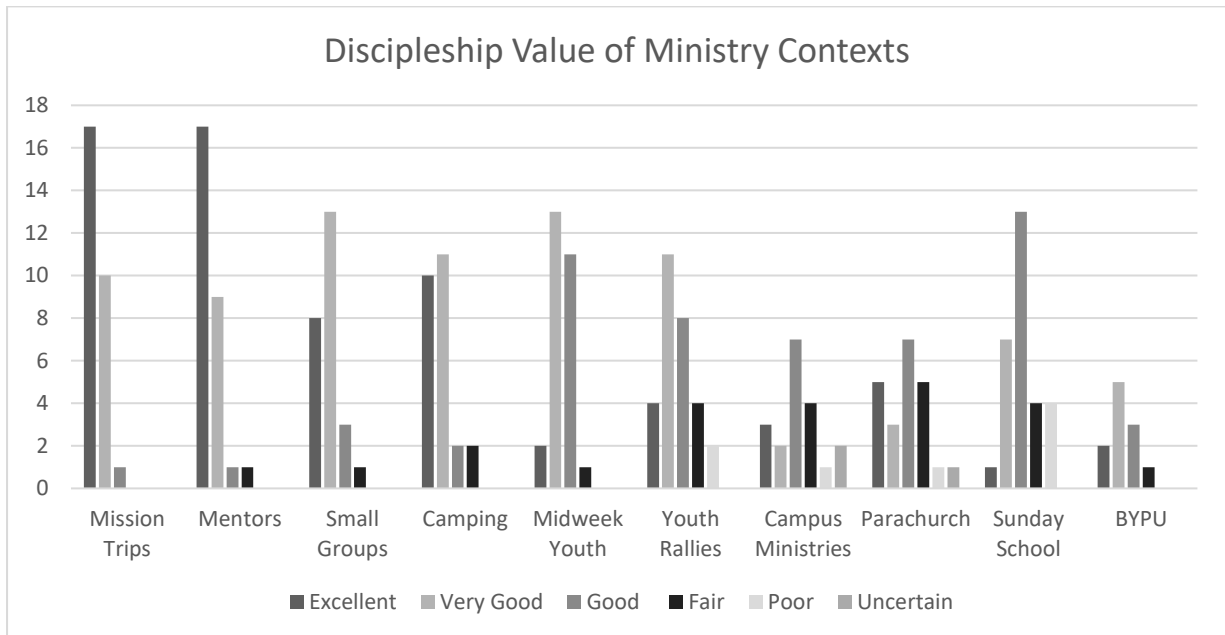
As can be seen from chart 6.1, when youth ministry practitioners were asked in the survey to rate the discipleship value of various contexts based on their experience, they rated youth mission tours<sup>151</sup> the highest (27 of 32 said excellent or very good). They rated mentoring relationships next (26 of 32 said excellent or very good), camping initiatives, and small group ministries fourth (for both, 21 of 32 said excellent or very good).<sup>152</sup> As I demonstrate in this chapter, my interviews supported these findings. Youth leaders consistently communicated the perceived effectiveness of youth ministry within these four contexts.

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<sup>151</sup> Although in the survey I used the phrase *mission trips*, throughout my research I will use the interchangeable term *mission tours* as most CBAC material uses this phrase.

<sup>152</sup> Camping initiatives is ranked higher than small group ministries because a higher percentage ranked camping initiatives as excellent. Respondents were asked to choose from a pre-determined list.

**Chart 6.1: All Responses (32) to Survey Question 8: *Please rate the discipleship value of these contexts based on your experience***



The top youth discipleship context identified in my survey of youth leaders was youth mission tours. As I examine youth mission tours within the CBAC in detail in Chapter Seven, I will not interact with the movement here other than to state that it is strongly interconnected with CBAC youth discipleship. The second-highest ranking was for mentoring relationships. My examination of mentoring relationships closely relates to both ecclesial integration and place-sharing relationships. The material on small group ministries, which ranked third, is very relevant to communities of spiritual practice and will be integrated into that examination. While youth leaders identified camping as a valuable youth ministry context for discipleship, I will not interact with this topic as my interviewees said very little about it, and it is usually removed from both congregational life and local church youth ministry.



## 6.3 Analysis

Having briefly introduced the settings for effective discipleship that I identified within the data, I now move to the task of searching for and interacting with the key markers of a discipling youth ministry that I developed from the work of Root and Dean on the theological turn. As introduced in Chapter Two, these are ecclesial integration, place-sharing relationships, and communities of spiritual practice. I will critically examine my survey and interview material in the following subsections, giving special attention to the ministry contexts I identified in the previous section and to the role of professional youth pastors.

The search for the key markers of a discipling youth ministry from the theological turn within these four areas is somewhat complicated because I designed my survey and interview questions before determining the critical lens.<sup>153</sup> This fact inevitably leads to an absence of some data that I might have discovered with more precise questioning. As will be evident, some of the most valuable material obtained is from the open-ended questions, where predetermined options did not restrict the respondents, and they could freely express their convictions and opinions.

### 6.3.1 Ecclesial Integration

In this subsection, I critically examine the discipleship practices of key CBAC youth leaders through the lens of ecclesial integration. In 2.3.1, I identified the first marker of effective discipleship from the theological turn as the integration of young people into the

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<sup>153</sup> When I started this research project, I was a student of the University of Wales through IBTS, and was assigned two supervisors to work with. During this time, I planned and conducted my surveys and interviews. One supervisor was expected to retire, and the other retired unexpectedly, so when IBTS moved to a partnership with the Vrije Universiteit, I was assigned two new supervisors. The addition of an external critical lens was then incorporated into my writing.

church. This integration focuses on both the growth and development of the young person and that of the church. My research shows that some youth leaders aspired to integrate youth into the church and believed they were doing well in their endeavours. I argue that there is little evidence to support that there was widespread integration despite their good intentions.

Ecclesial integration was an important goal for a number of those whom I surveyed and interviewed. Some respondents made a point of speaking about church integration of young people, even though no survey or interview questions specifically asked about it. Professional youth workers were especially vocal about their aspirations to integrate young people into the church. However, they provided very little evidence that they were successful in this endeavour. In my survey, one youth pastor wrote that the youth were “highly esteemed and cared for church-wide at [his] church.”<sup>154</sup> Another suggested that adult mentoring was significant to inviting youth into the church community and that “having students acknowledged to be an important part of the congregation” was an important part of discipleship.<sup>155</sup> A third stated that young people needed to “feel like they are part of the church community,”<sup>156</sup> and another said, “we’ve worked hard at engaging young people in the life of the church, not just compartmentalized in youth ministry.”<sup>157</sup> All these youth pastors demonstrate that they wanted to have young people integrated into their churches but provide no evidence that they did so in a significant way.

One youth pastor strongly stated this desire for integration:

...just having students acknowledged to be an important part of the congregation in a larger church family, so whether it’s having a youth service like on a Sunday morning, or having youth as a regular part of things such as worship team or ushers or nursery workers. That integration element is so important, and I think the discipleship angle is that I belong to this larger community of faith and I matter here, and there is a requirement that I contribute to the larger life of the church, it’s

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<sup>154</sup> Subject #27, “Ulrich”, Survey Question #14, “As you reflect on the youth ministry/ministries in which you led, what were the most significant factors that led toward proper discipleship of youth?”

<sup>155</sup> Structured Interview #10, “Donald” 2012 11 19, 107, 111.

<sup>156</sup> Structured Interview #3, “Cal” 2013 02 11, 104.

<sup>157</sup> Structured Interview #30, “Jason” 2013 02 20, 66.

not that I have this specialized program always for me to have whatever I want whenever I want it, but at some point, I become a part of a larger family, and I have to become integrated into it.<sup>158</sup>

This quote demonstrates that the youth pastor emphasizes integrating young people, but it is aspirational language, not describing what has been done but what he would like to happen.

A denominational youth leader, who came from the southern United States to serve with youth at the CBAC denominational office in the late 1970s and early 1980s, provides an outside perspective on the level of youth integration within CBAC churches. Reflecting on the time, she stated:

It seemed to me at the time that I was there that the youth were more of an appendage and not really involved in the church matters itself. We wanted to bring the church also to an awareness of the vitality that the youth would bring to the church if they would take the risk of incorporating their youth more into the total life of their church.<sup>159</sup>

Here we see her reflections lining up very closely with Dean's writing, who, as I showed in Chapter Two, places a very high value on the contribution that young people can provide to the church. Dean believes that "Legitimate peripheral participation means that adolescents make real contributions to our shared life in God, even while they are still figuring out how to be part of the community of faith."<sup>160</sup>

The quotes from CBAC youth leaders above demonstrate that not only did they see the importance of integrating youth into the life of the local church, but some of them tried to take intentional steps to involve them. What is lacking from all the references to ecclesial integration of youth is any youth leader who definitively stated they achieved or even came close to achieving their goal.

Question nine in my survey asked subjects, *how would you define effective discipleship of youth?* Noticeably absent from the definitions is any mention of ecclesial words or phrases.

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<sup>158</sup> Structured Interview #10, "Donald" 2012 11 19, 111.

<sup>159</sup> Structured Interview #36, "Peggy" 2012 11 06, 73.

<sup>160</sup> Kenda Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York: Oxford, 2010), 146.

No one referred to church attendance, church participation, church membership, congregational involvement, or any other related topic in their definition of effective discipleship. Instead, their answers referred to Christian growth happening in an individual, often within the relationship with their youth leader. As I demonstrated in the quotes above, some of those surveyed and interviewed claimed to value church attendance and involvement highly. However, in response to this question, they did not connect this value and their definition of effective discipleship. This observation points toward understanding youth discipleship as something that happened within the youth ministry, not in the congregational setting.

Another area where I heard from my respondents about discipleship was in response to Question 19, *If you were going to develop a discipleship strategy for youth, what would be the primary components of this strategy?* Here several respondents spoke about ecclesial integration. As they were free to express their opinions here and not choose options, we get a good glimpse into their convictions at the time of the survey. One former youth pastor claimed a clear connection between church integration and discipleship. He stated that if he were to develop a discipleship strategy for young people, he would include “connection with the inter-generational church community that includes welcome, conversion, baptism, and the sanctification process.”<sup>161</sup> Another respondent stated that he would use service opportunities as a “way to involve youth intergenerationally.”<sup>162</sup> A former missionary, who served as Associate Secretary to the Board of Christian Education in the early 1970s, said that he would “Involve them in the planning and carrying out all activities and allow them to do the ministry itself with help and encouragement, ministering with and alongside them, and

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<sup>161</sup> Subject #34, “Robert”, Survey Question #19, “If you were going to develop a discipleship strategy for youth, what would be the primary components of this strategy?”

<sup>162</sup> Subject #26, “Caleb”, Survey Question #19.

treating them as equal partners in ministry.”<sup>163</sup> Another person stated that he would work toward “full integration in the local church.”<sup>164</sup> Out of 32 complete surveys, only these four survey respondents named church integration as something that would be a primary component of a discipleship strategy if they developed one. At the time of this research (2012-2013), only four of my respondents believed that integrating young people into the church was important enough to incorporate it in their answer. One of these, a former youth pastor, explained that the young people provided all the worship music for the entire church in one of her small churches.<sup>165</sup> Dean noted that the ecclesial integration within smaller churches often happened naturally.<sup>166</sup> However, as I have mentioned, Root and Dean make an important distinction between a congregation using the skills and energy of young people and fully integrating them so their voice is heard and they become an integral part of the worshipping community. When asked, youth ministers, on the whole, did not indicate that this sort of integration was a priority for discipleship.

### ***Ecclesial Integration and Mentoring***

One of the strongest potential connecting points of the ministry contexts is presented in chart 6.1. is between the ecclesial integration of youth and mentoring. Some of my respondents believed the deep personal relationships that evolve within mentoring friendships are vital contributors to integrating youth into the church. One pastor who worked with youth from the 1960s and onward stated, “I loved them and nurtured them, I saw them as people of worth, I saw them as people who were capable of being involved in the ministry of the

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<sup>163</sup> Subject #13, “Joe”, Survey Question #19, “If you were going to develop a discipleship strategy for youth, what would be the primary components of this strategy?”

<sup>164</sup> Subject #1, “Alex”, Survey Question #19.

<sup>165</sup> Structured Interview #11, “Cindy” 2013 02 06, 79.

<sup>166</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 99.

church, not just passing out the bulletins.”<sup>167</sup> When asked about the key elements of effective relationships, one long-serving youth pastor answered:

Personal relationships-to actually be involved with them in things like missions that take them and go places with them, but also mission local, and I think that’s essential. You just can’t have missions where we take young people to another location where they do ministry with another church. They have to do ministry within their church and within their community.<sup>168</sup>

These two respondents make a direct connection between relationship and involvement in the local church. While their references do not conclusively show that one leads to another, it demonstrates that they connected relationships between young people and adults with young people's congregational involvement. Writing about the National Study of Youth and Religion,<sup>169</sup> Smith and Denton noted a positive correlation between the number of relationships with adults in their congregation and their church attendance.<sup>170</sup>

The other top youth ministry contexts that I identified in chart 6.1 (youth mission involvement, youth small groups, and Christian camping) might, in some cases, involve adults from the local church and thus imply a certain degree of connection with their church. However, in my research on Atlantic Canadian youth ministries, these youth ministry elements are primarily located within youth ministry settings, so they do not necessitate a significant level of ecclesial integration. The para nature of such youth ministry activities did not facilitate the young people’s connection with the church. As I continue to examine the responses of the youth leaders that I surveyed and interviewed, I will give special attention to the responses of professional youth pastors.

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<sup>167</sup> Structured Interview #38, “Rick” 2012 10 03, 37.

<sup>168</sup> Structured Interview #34, “Robert” 2013 02 15, 53.

<sup>169</sup> The National Study of Youth and Religion is led by Christian Smith (University of Notre Dame) and has been researching and writing about the religious lives of young people in the United States since 2001.

<sup>170</sup> Smith, and Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, 69.

### ***Age-Specific Ministry and Ecclesial Youth Integration***

An undercurrent directly connected with the integration of young people into the church was the interaction between integration and age-specific ministry. In Chapter Three, I introduced the professionalization of youth ministry within the CBAC, arguing that an understanding of this movement was necessary to examine discipleship within the CBAC critically. I will now explore one area dramatically impacted by youth ministry's professionalization, the exponential increase in age-specific ministries. I argue that the rise in age-specific ministries within the CBAC contributed to shallow discipleship of young people as it pulled them away from, or did not encourage them to be involved in, their church congregation.

Throughout North America, age-specific ministries were often appealing to youth and parents alike as they provided opportunities for youth to gather in safe places with people of their age in programs specifically designed for them.<sup>171</sup> Though perhaps unintended, a consequence evident in most regions of North America was that this compounded with the programmatic shifts examined in Chapter Five to lessen the intergenerational contact and experience with the local church.

Sunday Schools and the various types of youth unions and societies within the CBAC before 1945 utilized age-specific ministries.<sup>172</sup> However, even though these may have sometimes attracted people who did not attend church services, they were never intended to replace a congregational church worship experience. Sunday Schools first developed as an

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<sup>171</sup> Fields, *Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry: A Personal and Practical Guide to Starting Right*, 82.

<sup>172</sup> H.T. DeWolfe, *Report of Board of Religious Education* (Saint John: United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces, 1930), 169-70. This report is just one example. In it, there is reference to 98 Young Peoples' Societies, 13 rallies that involved a total of 2,000 young people, a camp, boys conferences, and a summer school.

evangelistic ministry,<sup>173</sup> and although it did not always go according to plan, youth unions and societies of the early 1900s attempted to design programs to supplement the church involvement of young people.<sup>174</sup> With increased youth ministry professionalization, youth ministries often were set up alongside the church as a parallel ministry.

Dean points out that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, across North America, vocational youth pastors introduced youth ministries that often became the primary church gathering point to the exclusion of the weekly congregational worship service.<sup>175</sup> The CBAC also exhibited this broader trend. In Chapter Five, I demonstrated that of the four sets of CBAC youth discipleship materials that I examined, three of them did not actively prioritize integrating youth into the local church. This non-integration is significant because denominational leadership either developed or endorsed all these materials. Without realizing it, the result was that denominational staff trying to help strengthen youth ministries ended up focussing the time and attention of young people on specifically youth-based activities rather than more congregationally-based ones.

Within the churches of the CBAC that had youth pastors, I discovered a range of approaches to the integration of young people. None used ministry models that fully segregated young people from the congregation, yet in practice, some segregation occurred. When interviewed, one youth pastor stated, “the vast majority of our youth are not Sunday church youth. Our unchurched kids call Wednesday night ‘church.’”<sup>176</sup> Only a few responses indicated segregation to this extent. Most CBAC youth pastors tended to use partially integrated models that encouraged young people to attend congregational worship services,

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<sup>173</sup> Evangelism in the Sunday School, *The Christian Century* 36, no. 12 (1919): 4.

<sup>174</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 5.

<sup>175</sup> Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*, 11.

<sup>176</sup> Supplemental question, “Manfred”, email, 2020 06 29.



and at other times during the week, to participate in age-specific events.<sup>177</sup> One former youth pastor explained his belief in the importance of both age-specific ministry and intergenerational worship:

...it is essential for them to be involved in worship with other young people, but I think it is essential for them to be involved in the community of worship, the church community. I don't like a youth ministry that is a lone-ranger ministry out there somewhere going along with their Friday night and a great number of young people, but then you don't see any of them at the worship service.<sup>178</sup>

Like this respondent, most youth pastors spoke of attempts to involve young people in congregational life. One reported having the young people in his church trained to lead in congregational worship and claimed they were as good as the adults.<sup>179</sup> As relationships are a significant factor in effective discipleship, these partially integrated models allowed adults who were not youth leaders to know and build friendships with youth as they together attended church services. One former youth pastor noted that “the integration with adults” was one of the most critical factors in youth discipleship.<sup>180</sup>

It is important to note that the description of ecclesial integration from the theological turn, as explained in 2.3.1, must be focused on both the growth and development of the young person and the church. It is much more than mere attendance and more than simply using young people in congregational life and worship. Some of the above comments from youth leaders focus primarily on how the church can use young people, not on the young person's growth, and none of them focus on young people helping the church grow and develop. One youth pastor came close to the understanding of Root and Dean regarding integration, yet he lacked a robust understanding of the contribution that young people could bring to the church. In his interview, he stated:

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<sup>177</sup> Mark Sypher, "Youth Ministry Program Models," in *Effective Youth Ministry*, ed. Bruce Fawcett and Robert Nylén (Saint John: Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, 2003), 158-67.

<sup>178</sup> Structured Interview #34, "Robert" 2013 02 15, 54-55.

<sup>179</sup> Structured Interview #30, "Jason" 2013 02 20, 67.

<sup>180</sup> Structured Interview #6, "Ronald" 2012 11 06, 88.

...just having students acknowledged to be an important part of the congregation in a larger church family, so whether it's having a youth service on a Sunday morning, or having youth as a regular part of things such as worship team or ushers or nursery workers. That integration element is so important, and I think the discipleship angle is that I belong to this larger community of faith and I matter here, and there is a requirement that I contribute to the larger life of the church, it's not that I have this specialized program always for me to have whatever I want whenever I want it, but at some point, I become a part of a larger family, and I have to become integrated into it.<sup>181</sup>

It is noteworthy that this youth pastor stresses ecclesial involvement and leadership and discipleship, as do Root and Dean.

Youth ministries that have segregated youth ministry time and have integration points with the church congregation can be healthy. A study of youth ministry in Canada suggests that age-specific ministry leads to students who are more likely to respond positively to the teaching or preaching. These settings are usually smaller and less formal, so young people are more willing to ask questions if there are topics they struggle with or do not understand.<sup>182</sup> Broader North American youth ministry writing claims that another advantage of at least a partially segregated youth ministry is that it may be more welcoming to those who come for the first time.<sup>183</sup> Because of the public school system, youth regularly spend significant amounts of time with their peers. An invitation to attend a church service with people of all ages might seem much more intimidating to them than an invitation to go to a youth event with people their age.<sup>184</sup> One former CBAC youth pastor identified the importance of a designated organizational space for youth ministry:

They hold everything together... that's where I think you need to have this regular type of thing happening where kids lock into their schedules as much as possible, and an opportunity to bring friends. I see it in some ways as being a catchall. It needs to be significant, and it needs to be planned well, but it is sort of the catchall that becomes the anchor point of everything.<sup>185</sup>

Support like this for designated, age-specific youth ministry times was widespread among my interview respondents.

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<sup>181</sup> Structured Interview #10, "Donald" 2012 11 19, 111.

<sup>182</sup> Penner et al., "Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults Are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church," 66-67.

<sup>183</sup> Fields, *Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry: Nine Essential Foundations for Healthy Growth*, 103-14.

<sup>184</sup> Barna, *Real Teens: A Contemporary Snapshot of Youth Culture*, 137.

<sup>185</sup> Structured Interview #30, "Jason" 2013 02 20, 69.

As I have demonstrated, youth ministry within the CBAC, and specifically the age-specific youth ministries led by professionals, has in many cases contributed to the non-integration of young people into the rest of the church for discipleship development. This non-integration was in opposition to the fact that some CBAC youth pastors expressed their desire to integrate young people into the church and the claims of some that they worked toward it. In some churches, especially the small ones, even if full integration cannot be demonstrated, there was an evident desire for youth participation and church service attendance.

Findings from my survey and interviews are supported by CBAC archival material, as there are only a few articles that point to a need to integrate youth. A 1957 article in *The Maritime Baptist* demonstrates a desire to see more ecclesial integration of youth. This full-page article devoted to suggestions for youth group discussions suggests that leaders should talk to their youth about “What role should [they] play in the activities of the church?”<sup>186</sup> The article does not provide any more details but lists other possible discussion questions on different topics. A decade later, in 1966, a two-page feature on the purposes of the CBAC’s youth programs in *The Atlantic Baptist* pushes for the consideration of six “essentials” of youth ministry. The only one related to integration is the “Opportunity for worship and work in the church.”<sup>187</sup> This suggestion is on a list with no further explanation offered. While there is conclusive evidence, these examples indicate that some leaders desired more integration of youth into the church. From both practice and their responses, there is no evidence that youth leaders achieved church integration of youth, even though some desired and worked toward it.

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<sup>186</sup> Beth Crowe, "Suggestions for Your Youth Group Discussions," *The Maritime Baptist* 62, no. 36 (1957): 7.

<sup>187</sup> J.B. Wilson, "Purposes of the Convention's Youth Programs," *The Atlantic Baptist* 66, no. 2 (1966): 10-11.

### ***Conclusions about Integration of Young People***

The data gathered from individuals and presented in this chapter strengthens the previous chapter's conclusions concerning the ecclesial integration of young people. There I concluded that the materials used in youth ministry might have unintentionally contributed to the non-integration of young people into the church. This non-integration was encouraged through youth ministry structures that were church-like yet functioned separately from the ecclesial congregation and by not actively providing opportunity or encouragement for youth to build relationships with other generations or serve and worship with them. My data demonstrates that only a minority of youth leaders prioritized youth integration. Even for those youth leaders that prioritized it, the integration of youth into the church does not appear to have generally been part of their praxis.

In this subsection, I have shown that a minority of CBAC youth leaders believed that the ecclesial integration of young people was essential and that some aspired to do it well. Only four respondents stated that they would emphasize integration if they were to develop a discipleship strategy in the future. Despite this small core, most leaders set up ministries that, by their nature, did not integrate young people within congregational life. I have also demonstrated that most CBAC youth ministries, particularly those led by professional youth pastors, organized ministries that did not work toward integration with their church's adults. Therefore, I must conclude that the marker of ecclesial integration is mainly absent. I will now continue my critical evaluation by examining place-sharing in the responses of the key youth leaders that I surveyed and interviewed.

### 6.3.2 Place-Sharing

In the previous subsection, I examined the integration of young people into the church. I argued that youth leaders, especially those in vocational ministry, may have run activities that brought young people into contact with parts of the church but did little to achieve ecclesial integration as found in the theological turn. I will now critically examine the discipleship practices of key CBAC youth leaders through the lens of place-sharing. In 2.3.2, I explained that this second marker of discipling youth ministry from the theological turn was characterized by transformation through encounter with God in relationship with another, unconditional friendship, and advocacy. Place-sharing is the most evident of the three markers of discipling youth ministry within my survey responses. Two of the top four contexts for discipleship identified earlier, mentoring and small group participation, present excellent place-sharing opportunities. The intimate relationships that are often formed between leaders and youth and between youth and other young people in mission trips and camp experiences mean these contexts could have been conducive to place-sharing.<sup>188</sup> However, the desire for influence was a continual motivation for youth leaders.

I now explore the extent to which this place-sharing potential was realized in relation to my survey and interview material. In addition, I will refer to some CBAC archival material to supplement my data. In my surveys, youth leaders frequently pointed to mentoring relationships as one of the most significant settings for effective discipleship. To demonstrate that aspects of place-sharing existed in some CBAC youth ministries, I will introduce five factors that together point toward it. These are the connection between place-sharing and adults from the congregation, youth leaders, place, unconditional relationships, and

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<sup>188</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 191. Andrew Root, "The Youth Ministry Mission Trip as Global Tourism: Are We Ok with This?," *Dialogue: A Journal of Theology* 47, no. 4 (2008): 319.

professional youth ministry. By considering these factors together, I build an argument that place-sharing was moderately present within the youth ministries of the CBAC.

### ***Congregational Adults as Place-Sharers***

Some of those I interviewed highlighted the importance of adults from the church congregation as those who, according to Root's criteria, could be considered place-sharers. One youth pastor who went on to work for the denomination, teach at Acadia Divinity College and then pastor one of the largest churches in the CBAC stated that mentorship was one of the most important aspects of discipling youth. He claimed, "The role of spiritually mature adults speaking into the lives of the youth... is such a huge factor."<sup>189</sup> Another youth pastor described discipleship as something that happens "inside the eggshell of relationship." He went on to say that he paired key middle school youth with leadership potential with a key adult couple. Together they cared for a component of the youth ministry.<sup>190</sup> Two of those interviewed stated that as they look back, mentoring is something they should have invested more effort in, as when they did, it was often very significant for the young people.<sup>191</sup> Others named the lack of good adult mentors as the primary inhibiting factor of setting up more mentoring relationships within youth ministry.<sup>192</sup> It is evident that a significant number of my interviewees valued strong relationships between young people and adults, and some worked toward building mentoring relationships, albeit rarely to the level of unconditional friendship and advocacy that I drew from Root and Dean's work on the theological turn.

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<sup>189</sup> Structured Interview #5, "James" 2012 11 19, 113.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>191</sup> Structured Interview #30, "Jason" 2013 02 20, 66.  
Structured Interview #6, "Ronald" 2012 11 06, 89.

<sup>192</sup> Structured Interview #4, "Victor" 2012 11 06, 96-97.  
Structured Interview #11, "Cindy" 2013 02 06, 83.

## *Youth Leaders as Place-Sharers*

The youth leaders I interviewed emphasized the importance of strong relationships between youth leaders and young people. When asked about the significant factors that they thought led toward discipleship, some of the youth leaders provided these responses: “the relationships youth had with other Christian youth and their leaders,”<sup>193</sup> “sincerely loving each of them,”<sup>194</sup> “relationships (official mentoring and serendipitous),”<sup>195</sup> and “good relationships with strong adult believers and a peer cluster of Christian friends.”<sup>196</sup> One pastor, who started working with youth in the late 1950s, stated that mentoring was “the backbone of ministry.”<sup>197</sup> Another claimed that youth ministries were often too focused on large groups but that discipleship often happened “one on one.”<sup>198</sup> One respondent who worked with youth from the 1960s to the 1980s firmly stated that the primary components of a discipleship strategy should be:

Relationships, Relationships, Relationships. Relationships that follow youth through [their] teens, stick with them through University at all costs and then journey with them through early career. Get in your car or on a plane and go to them. Presence; be there! Protection; hold them safe!<sup>199</sup>

These quotes demonstrate that a significant number of my respondents highly valued deep and authentic relationships between youth leaders and young people.

A 1967 article in the CBAC denominational magazine reinforced the need for strong relationships. Here, Gordon Delaney, a local pastor, stated, “young people learn to live through the inter-personal relationship of youth and counsellor.”<sup>200</sup> My respondents widely endorsed young people having strong mentoring relationships with youth leaders. These

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<sup>193</sup> Subject #6, “Ronald”, Survey Question #14, “As you reflect on the youth ministry/ministries in which you led, what were the most significant factors that led toward proper discipleship of youth?”

<sup>194</sup> Subject #12, “Igor”, Survey Question #14.

<sup>195</sup> Subject #24, “Richard”, Survey Question #14.

<sup>196</sup> Subject #26, “Caleb”, Survey Question #14.

<sup>197</sup> Structured Interview #38, “Rick” 2012 10 03, 38.

<sup>198</sup> Structured Interview #10, “Donald” 2012 11 19, 109.

<sup>199</sup> Subject #31, “Brandon”, Survey Question #19 “If you were going to develop a discipleship strategy for youth, what would be the primary components of this strategy?”

<sup>200</sup> Gordon Delaney, “So You're a Youth Leader,” *The Atlantic Baptist* 3 no. 2 (1967): 14, 19.

relationships may or may not have met place-sharing characteristics, but this endorsement is essential as I build my argument. Next, I build on my argument for the moderate presence of place-sharing in some CBAC youth ministries by critically examining the importance of place.

### ***The Importance of Place in Place-Sharing***

In 2.3.2, I identified the home as significant for place-sharing. As explained there, Root draws from the example and writing of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and expands on it, emphasizing the importance of regularly inviting young people into the homes of adult youth leaders. The responses received from CBAC youth leaders also stressed that place was important for building strong relationships with young people. One explained the “importance of the home” as he understood it, stating that he and his wife believed it was important to invite his youth and youth leaders into his home at times to get to know the young people better.<sup>201</sup>

While the rest of the respondents did not explicitly make statements about the importance of home, there are frequent connections between youth ministry and homes. One stated, “we had all those young people in our home every week... a lot of the spiritual training took place there.”<sup>202</sup> Another spoke of taking young people with him to visit people in their homes.<sup>203</sup> He went on to explain that he believes youth ministry settings “should feel like home.”<sup>204</sup> Still, another explained that she often took their young people to “do visiting with our shut-ins... make[ing] soup and... go[ing] to someone else’s home and make[ing] biscuits, and then to another home and do cookies, and tak[ing] a meal out to them.”<sup>205</sup> One

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<sup>201</sup> Structured Interview #2, “William” 2012 12 07, 11-12.

<sup>202</sup> Structured Interview #13, “Joe” 2012 10 24, 19.

<sup>203</sup> Structured Interview #34, “Robert” 2013 02 15, 54.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>205</sup> Structured Interview # 37, “Barb” 2012 10 02, 60.



youth leader relates how she worked with a small group of young people and regularly “took them to [her] apartment.”<sup>206</sup> Another youth leader states that as a young person, he went to a youth group that met in someone’s home.<sup>207</sup> I argue that these references to home are very significant as CBAC youth leaders often recognized that home was a place where deep relationships could grow. This potential for deep relationships means the home was a setting where Root and Dean’s understanding of place-sharing could occur.

The connection between place-sharing and place often goes beyond home. I identified the four most significant discipleship contexts from CBAC youth leaders: mission involvement, mentoring, small groups, and Christian camping. These are very much place-centred and have strong relational components. The place is usually not in the church building. Mission trips typically involve going to a specific area to do ministry, and small groups usually happen in the same space, be it in a home, the church, or another location. Camping occurs in a specific place, and mentoring relationships, as explained by CBAC youth leaders, often happen when youth routinely meet with Christian adults in the same place.<sup>208</sup> Whether it be home or another space that youth leaders use for ministry, the significance of place is important to many CBAC youth leaders, as they consistently brought this up. Root proposed that home is often an important part of place-sharing. He suggests that home establishes a strong location for youth leaders to enter the lives and communities of young people intentionally, and in return, invite them into their own lives.<sup>209</sup> This acknowledged value of place builds on the importance of solid relationships with both congregation adults and youth leaders. As my argument for the moderate presence of place-

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<sup>206</sup> Structured Interview #11, “Cindy” 2013 02 06, 79.

<sup>207</sup> Structured Interview #6, “Ronald” 2012 11 06, 86

<sup>208</sup> Structured Interview #2, “Joe” 2012 10 24, 19.

<sup>209</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 64.

sharing builds, I will now critically examine the presence of unconditional relationships within CBAC youth ministries.

### ***Place-Sharing and Unconditional Relationships***

As I demonstrated in the explanation of place-sharing in 2.3.2, an essential characteristic is that of unconditional relationships that youth leaders will not abandon for any reason. From the responses given in both the survey and interviews, this was sometimes present. The strongest example is from “Cindy,” who said some of her most effective discipleship came through

caring for [young people] in the good times and bad, working with them for many years, enjoying the great gift of being in their presence and encouraging them to be the best person who they uniquely were in God’s image.<sup>210</sup>

Her concept expressed here directly lines up with the understanding of unconditional friendship that Root promotes as part of place-sharing and is the most clearly expressed example that I discovered within the youth ministries of the CBAC. The fact that only one youth leader explained this part of place-sharing is very telling. It indicates that some relationships within CBAC youth ministries probably did not have the depth that Root describes as part of the theological turn.

The absence of descriptions of unconditional relationships from most respondents is noteworthy. A possible explanation is that it was such an integral part of CBAC youth ministries that respondents did not think it necessary to mention it. When they repeatedly referred to the value of relationships, they may have intended to refer to relationships with the unconditional place-sharing characteristic or something very similar to it. The four top contexts identified by youth leaders, mentoring, small groups, mission tours, and Christian camping have strong relational components that add strength to this possibility. As my

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<sup>210</sup> Subject #11, “Cindy”, Survey Question #14, “As you reflect on the youth ministry/ministries in which you led, what were the most significant factors that led toward proper discipleship of youth?”

questions did not specifically ask about unconditional relationships, it may have been more present than the respondents indicated. In contrast, as these are all very evangelically focused contexts, it could be that many of the relationships within them were primarily predicated on a strategy of influence working toward the goals of evangelism or mission. Root acknowledges the importance of transformation through encounter with God in relationship with another but makes a clear distinction between this and the strategies of influence that may be present here. Despite this, the presence of unconditional relationships within CBAC youth ministries, no matter how limited, builds on the argument for a moderate presence of place-sharing. I will now move to my final argument for a moderate presence of place-sharing within CBAC youth ministries, the connection between place-sharing and the professionalization of youth ministry.

### ***Professional Youth Pastors and Place-Sharing***

The professionalization of youth ministry is deeply interconnected with place-sharing within the CBAC. I argue that youth pastors introduced structural intentionality within CBAC churches that provided ministry settings where place-sharing, or at least aspects of it, began to emerge. We see this in two specific ways. First, vocational youth pastors provided some new ministry structures, which allowed lay youth leaders to focus on relationships, with encouragement toward aspects of place-sharing. Second, vocational youth pastors and denominational workers regularly demonstrated certain parts of place-sharing with the youth themselves.

In describing Root's concept of place-sharing from the theological turn that I explained in 2.3.2, I concluded that place-sharing is characterized by transformation through encounter with God in relationship with another, unconditional friendship, and advocacy. Root further explains, "place-sharing takes shape when we place ourself fully in the reality of the other,

refusing to turn away even from its darkest horror.”<sup>211</sup> With this description as a tool of evaluation, I now examine place-sharing and the professionalization of youth ministry within the CBAC.

First, I examine how professional youth workers established ministry structures with an opportunity to emphasize significant relationships. Within these structures, there is evidence that some youth pastors strongly encouraged volunteer leaders to become active participants in the lives of the young people with whom they worked. One of my interviewees demonstrates this when she explains:

We would ask our youth leaders to intentionally say who they were going to be focusing on mentoring and ask them to be a part of those teen’s lives in terms of going to basketball games or ballet or whatever that teen was involved in, to be involved in their life apart from the Wednesday night situation.<sup>212</sup>

Another former youth pastor makes a similar statement. When asked about the key elements of effective discipleship, he stated, “The first would be mentorship, both formal and informal. The role of spiritually mature adults speaking into the lives of the youth.”<sup>213</sup> Later in the interview, he further explained:

...our approach to that was if we could get spiritually mature adults to role model the faith to those kids and rub shoulders with them and befriend them, which was such a huge part of it. To give them a sense of “this is what the disciplined life looks like.” Kind of lived out for them, not perfectly, but honestly and authentically.<sup>214</sup>

This quote provides an example of the authenticity that Root identifies in place-sharing relationships. Living out faith “not perfectly, but honestly and authentically” points toward a relationship that recognizes imperfections and looks past them. His reference to youth leaders “speaking into the lives of the youth” and showing them “this is what the disciplined life looks like” might point toward a strategy of influence. However, it also closely resembles Root’s explanation that “the incarnational youth worker must become a place-sharer to adolescents,

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<sup>211</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 83.

<sup>212</sup> Structured Interview #11, “Cindy” 2013 02 06, 80.

<sup>213</sup> Structured Interview #10, “Donald” 2012 11 19, 107

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

for in such relationships persons are transformed by the presence of God in the humanity of Jesus Christ.”<sup>215</sup>

Another youth pastor provides a description of mentoring that looks very similar to Root’s description of place-sharing. Note here how the vocational youth pastor empowered a volunteer toward place-sharing.

I remember one lady that we had here who said, “I can’t do youth ministry,” and I asked, “could you just come along and just know the kids?” And, she used to sit on the bottom of the step down there every Friday night, and the kids would swarm around her and just chatter, chatter, chatter, and tell her the whole week, and she was probably one of my best mentors for young people because she just loved them and listened to them and joked with them, and they learned so much from her.<sup>216</sup>

In these interview excerpts, two very significant themes emerge. First, encouragement for strong relationships came directly from the youth pastor. Second, we see examples of Root’s characteristics of place-sharing relationships. The last quote is an excellent example of someone who placed herself in the other’s reality and demonstrates unconditional friendship that invites the presence of God into the relationships that develop. Having dedicated, professional youth pastors made this type of structural intentionality more widespread.

The second way professional youth pastors encouraged place-sharing is that vocational youth leaders often established strong relationships with youth. Volunteer youth leaders may have also established such relationships, but my research points specifically to the occurrence with professional youth workers. The best example of place-sharing from my interviews was the testimony of place-sharing related by two interviewees. One was a denominational youth worker (“Joe”) who, in that role, worked with a young adult (“Marlene”) who went on to become a denominational and local church youth worker herself. When “Joe” served in denominational youth ministry for CBAC, he placed a significant emphasis on investing in

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<sup>215</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 130.

<sup>216</sup> Structured Interview #34, “Robert” 2013 02 15, 54.

teenagers and young adults. During the interview, he answered the question “were there any other discipleship practices that you used?” by explaining:

I guess the main thing was coming alongside, taking these kids with me all over the place. I hardly ever went anywhere for any training events in the churches of the Atlantic Provinces that I didn't take some of the youth with me, and I let them do some of the stuff.<sup>217</sup>

I also interviewed Marlene, who earlier in her life was one of the young adults he mentored.

She corroborates his statement by saying: “He used to just take us whenever he was doing retreats or weekends or camps.”<sup>218</sup> Further on, she explains what “was most significant in [her] development was being able to have people who [she] looked up to.”<sup>219</sup> Mentoring was a very important part of her spiritual formation.

Other professional youth workers within the CBAC also speak to the emphasis they put on building strong relationships with young people. When asked about the discipleship practices that he has seen to make the most significant long-term impact on the lives of youth, one respondent explained that it was “when you make the personal connection with the kid, and you kind of are able to invest your life into them a bit.”<sup>220</sup> Another stated, “The kids I influenced the most I spent the most time with, I think.”<sup>221</sup> As a former pastor who went on to serve at a denominational level, he expressed his relationship with youth like this:

I loved them and nurtured them. I saw them as people of worth. I saw them as people who were capable of being involved in the ministry of the church, not just passing out the bulletins, you understand what I'm saying? I talked respectfully of them in the church, and I tried to be positive about them, and I went to their schools for things,<sup>222</sup>

This quote demonstrates a youth pastor who supported strong relationships with young people and is also the best example of advocacy in the church that I discovered within my interviews.

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<sup>217</sup> Structured Interview #13, “Joe” 2012 10 24, 21.

<sup>218</sup> Structured Interview #14, “Marlene”, 2012 09 20, 3.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 4, 138.

<sup>220</sup> Structured Interview #33, “Dan” 2013 03 04, 37. Interview Question #4: What discipleship practices have you seen to make the most significant long-term impact in the lives of the youth you worked with?

<sup>221</sup> Structured Interview #38, “Rick” 2012 10 03, 38. Note here the reference to influence.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 38.

When I asked one denominational youth leader the same question about the long-term impact, she said that “a very caring and committed leader is one that can mentor, one [young people] feel like they can go to. They’re always in the youth’s life, especially at those times when they need to hear someone other than family.”<sup>223</sup> Another former youth pastor emphasized that relationships between youth leaders and young people are vital for both. She stated,

it has helped us to learn to live together and to be mentored by one another, and so mentoring is probably one of the spiritual disciplines that is important. We see it not just as young people being mentored by adults, but us being mentored by each other, so it is mutual.<sup>224</sup>

This description echoes Root, as he describes place-sharing as beneficial for both the adult and the young person.<sup>225</sup> Another former youth pastor stated that:

You don’t understand the kids in your group until you get to poke your head into their room and see how it is decorated, what’s on the walls and those kinds of things, and I would say the kids don’t understand you as fully as they could until they’ve been in your home and see how you live your life.<sup>226</sup>

Still another youth pastor explains that “effective youth discipleship happens inside the eggshell of relationship. It can’t just be programmed; it needs to be within a relationship aspect with the youth that is different than just their education process in school.”<sup>227</sup> These interview excerpts demonstrate that the vocational youth workers that served within the CBAC placed a very high value on building strong relationships with young people. In addition, some of them demonstrate the characteristics of place-sharing relationships similar to the understanding of Root. While strategies of influence are present in some of their responses, most point toward aspects of place-sharing.

We see characteristics of transformation through encounter with God in relationship with another, unconditional friendship, and advocacy both in the way youth leaders

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<sup>223</sup> Structured Interview #36, “Peggy” 2012 11 06, 74.

<sup>224</sup> Structured Interview #11, “Cindy” 2013 02 06, 82.

<sup>225</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 10.

<sup>226</sup> Structured Interview #2, “William” 2012 12 07, 12.

<sup>227</sup> Structured Interview #5, “James” 2012 11 19, 113.

themselves interacted with youth and in the programs they developed. It was also evident that professional youth workers intentionally introduced structures that encouraged strong relationships between adult leaders and young people

### ***Conclusions about Place-Sharing***

In this subsection, the evidence available allows me to conclude that place-sharing, as explicitly explained by Root, was moderately present. It demonstrates that some youth leaders highly valued deep relationships between young people and adults in the church and youth leaders. This, of course, is to be expected in an evangelical youth ministry and might indicate a strategy of influence, but in some cases, the descriptive material contains strong elements of place-sharing, as described by Root.

I examined the connections in my data between place-sharing and congregational adults and youth leaders. I built on this by demonstrating the importance of place within CBAC youth ministries and demonstrating that unconditional friendship was shown in some situations. Finally, I showed how the professionalization of youth ministry provided encouragement and programmatic space for place-sharing. Throughout all of this, there was a consistent presence of a strategy of influence, but within this, there is some evidence for authentic place-sharing. I do not argue that place-sharing was a dominant characteristic of CBAC youth ministries from 1945-2010, but I argue that it was present to a moderate extent and increased with youth ministry professionalization. I now examine the presence of the third marker of the theological turn, communities of spiritual practice.



### **6.3.3 Communities of Spiritual Practice**

In the last subsection, I examined the presence of place-sharing. I will now critically examine the discipleship practices of key CBAC youth leaders through the lens of communities of spiritual practice. This third marker of effective discipleship from the theological turn is explained in 2.3.3 as a community intentionally acting on the commitment to make spiritual practices an integral part of their life together. In this subsection, I will argue that some communities of spiritual practice have existed within CBAC youth ministries, but these communities have primarily only involved the youth ministry community, not the broader congregation. To develop this argument, I will first examine the spiritual practices that CBAC youth leaders claim were part of their ministries to young people. Following that, I will highlight the absence of specific practices particularly related to Baptist congregations in my responses, and then I will continue the argument by demonstrating a connection between spiritual practices and small group ministries. Finally, I will specifically examine the ways youth pastors integrated spiritual practices into their youth ministries. Through critical engagement with these topics, I will demonstrate that some CBAC youth ministries functioned as communities of spiritual practice while remaining somewhat separate from their church's congregation.

#### ***Presence of Spiritual Practices***

In this subsection, I will demonstrate strong evidence of spiritual practices within the survey and interview material collected from CBAC youth leaders. In most of the responses that I received, there were indications of some spiritual practices used within community. One former youth pastor was representative of this as he explained that he used the “traditional, historic, evangelical spiritual practices.” Elsewhere in the interview, he referred

to prayer, Bible reading, and memorizing Scripture as practices that he encouraged.<sup>228</sup>

Another former youth leader and denominational youth director stated, “I’m very happy for the emphasis that’s put on spiritual disciplines,” but went on to claim that in his time (1970s-1980s), “it wasn’t done... that vocabulary wasn’t Baptist.”<sup>229</sup> Responses like these, or just answering in a way that demonstrated little knowledge or experience with a diversity of spiritual practices, were typical of many interviewed. It is evident from responses in both the survey and interviews that the spiritual practices encouraged by CBAC youth leaders were such evangelical expressions of spirituality as prayer, Bible reading, and Bible memorization. Most did not mention other practices.

However, the minority that said more provides some interesting details about spiritual practices that CBAC youth ministries sometimes used. A youth pastor that worked with youth from the 1970s to the 1990s stated that he used fasting, solitude, and prayer in youth ministry.<sup>230</sup> Another, who was in youth ministry leadership from the 1960s to 1990s, said she used silent meditation with candles in retreat settings.<sup>231</sup> A youth pastor from the 1990s stated that he used retreats, prayer, confession, and solitude.<sup>232</sup> Another, who served as a youth pastor from the 1990s to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, spoke of the significance of Mark Yaconelli’s works on spiritual disciplines for youth. These works led him to experiment with simplicity, silence, and new types of worship, often in retreat settings.<sup>233</sup> This data demonstrates that spiritual practices, even some non-traditional Baptist practices, were consistently present within some CBAC youth ministries.

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<sup>228</sup> Structured Interview #2, “William” 2012 12 07, 8.

<sup>229</sup> Structured Interview #38, “Rick” 2012 10 03, 38.

<sup>230</sup> Structured Interview #34, “Robert” 2013 02 15, 53.

<sup>231</sup> Structured Interview #11, “Cindy” 2013 02 06, 82.

<sup>232</sup> Structured Interview #6, “Ronald” 2012 11 06, 88.

<sup>233</sup> Structured Interview #10, “Donald” 2012 11 19, 107-108.

A CBAC pastor named Harold Braun established a ministry to youth and young adults called *The Carpenter's Friends* in the early 1970s.<sup>234</sup> *The Carpenter's Friends* provides a glimpse into one ministry that allowed young people the freedom to worship in culturally relevant ways:

I had a young fellow who was in university, and we were in one church, this was with Carpenter's Friends, and there was a pair of drums set up there, well he played those drums, and I could hear him play "Jesus Christ super-star, how I love you for what you are," well some of the people I used to call the wrinklies... (That was anyone over 35). Sometimes some of the wrinklies said, "what's going on here?" but he was just a new Christian and enjoying himself, so go for it!"<sup>235</sup>

In addition to welcoming freedom to worship in new ways, Braun's group intentionally involved youth in extensive periods of prayer with adults from local churches, and for prayers for deliverance, from such things as addictions, that sometimes went long into the night.<sup>236</sup> In an article that refers to the significance of *The Carpenter's Friends*, Byron Fenwick<sup>237</sup> writes,

One could go on and on and still miss some of the most significant happenings among youth. For it is often in the small group, meeting for prayer in someone's living room, or meeting for Bible Study in a college dorm, that the truly significant really happens.<sup>238</sup>

Although details are somewhat vague, this material points to a gathering place for young people that valued spiritual practices in community.

The responses from youth leaders and the Carpenter's Friends information demonstrates that various spiritual practices were sometimes part of CBAC youth ministries. Most of these practices might be expected within a conservative evangelical denomination, but there is also evidence of practices that might not be expected. As has been evident in other aspects of my

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<sup>234</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, 8-9. *The Carpenter's Friends* was a loosely organized ministry headed up by Braun that led ministries at camps, churches, and organized at least six conferences. The largest of these, held in Saint John, NB in 1972 attracted over 550 youth from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Maine and Quebec. With a focus on world missions, it had 21 representatives from mission agencies.

<sup>235</sup> Structured Interview #35, "Mark" 2012 02 15, 49.

<sup>236</sup> Esther Crandall, "Communicating the Gospel to Youth: The Carpenter's Friends," *The Atlantic Baptist* 8, no. 5 (1972): 10.

<sup>237</sup> At the time, Fenwick was serving as Secretary of the Christian Training Commission of the Convention.

<sup>238</sup> Byron Fenwick, "Come Alive in Seventy-Five with Youth's New Awakening: Youth Outreach in Atlantic Canada," *Atlantic Baptist* 11, no. 3 (1974): 9.

examination of spiritual practices in community, the community that the practices happen within is often the youth ministry community, not the congregational community.

### ***Absence of Spiritual Practices Common to Baptist Congregations***

As well as noting the spiritual practices that youth leaders introduced and used within youth ministry, it is important to note those that are absent. In the CBAC resources examined in the previous chapter, the mention of the Lord's Supper and baptism were both noticeably absent. There were no references to the Lord's Supper in my original survey and interview responses, and only four respondents mentioned baptism. One youth pastor refers to baptism as one of the important times that youth can make a "connection with the inter-generational church community."<sup>239</sup> The only other two references to the practice are when youth leaders mention the preparation material they used for baptism.<sup>240</sup> These references to baptism do no more than indicate that some youth were baptized and that four youth leaders saw it as important. We know that many CBAC young people were baptized, as a youth survey done during a CBAC summer mission event in 2002 demonstrated that 85% of respondents had been baptized. Of these, only 13% had been baptized as infants, and 72% "had been baptized when they were old enough to decide for themselves."<sup>241</sup> Baptism was also a stated priority for the CBAC. In fact, in the years leading up to 2000, they launched a campaign entitled "2000 baptisms by the year 2000."<sup>242</sup> CBAC youth pastors did not highlight this emphasis in their responses.

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<sup>239</sup> Subject #34, "Robert", Survey Question #19, "If you were going to develop a discipleship strategy for youth, what would be the primary components of this strategy?"

<sup>240</sup> Structured Interview # 37, "Barb" 2012 10 02, 61.

Structured Interview #6, "Ronald" 2012 11 06, 92.

<sup>241</sup> Bruce Fawcett, and Leslie Francis, "The Relationship between Baptismal Status and Spiritual Practices among Committed Baptist Youth," *Journal of Youth and Theology* 8, no. 2 (2009): 16. As paedobaptism is not a CBAC practice, the 13% that said they had been baptized as infants must have either been from other denominations or they confused infant baptism with infant dedication.

<sup>242</sup> Malcolm Beckett, "An Evangelism Strategy: Toward 2000 and Beyond," *The Atlantic Baptist*, April 1997, 21-22.

To discover if this absence of an emphasis on baptism and the Lord's Supper was as widespread as it appeared, I sent out a supplemental question to my respondents.<sup>243</sup> In response, some stated that baptism and communion were integral parts of their youth ministry. One said, "They have been a very important part of the Youth Ministry."<sup>244</sup> Another said, "we ran specific Baptism Classes fairly regularly."<sup>245</sup> Still another explained, "I know for certain that I would have discussed baptism and the Lord's Supper at length. Even for those not being baptized, I would have covered those things."<sup>246</sup> Another stated that he thought baptism and the Lord's Supper were "implied in the conversation about discipleship."

In contrast, some admitted that the practices were not part of their youth ministries. One CBAC youth pastor who worked as a youth pastor from the 1960s to 1980s stated, "Baptism and Communion weren't priorities in my world." He went on to say that "youth pastors... didn't carry much weight when it came to church polity and sacraments."<sup>247</sup> Another stated, "While it's important, it may take a back seat to teaching people to live like Jesus."<sup>248</sup> Still another stated, "I would say that far too often the emphasis was on numbers and programs rather than on individual discipleship."<sup>249</sup> One youth pastor who worked with youth in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century mused,

When we're thinking about the discipleship of youth, we're thinking about the end goal of how we develop a fully alive, devoted, in-love, life-long follower of Jesus. We're thinking about the inner-spiritual development, spiritual disciplines, character traits, resilience, identity and knowledge needed. We're thinking less about the spiritual markers or rites of passage along the way.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Supplemental Question: One of my findings was that there was virtually no mention of either baptism or the Lord's Supper in the responses I received. I would be very helpful to me at this point if you sent me any comments, based on your experience, about this observation. Your responses will be kept confidential, but may be used in my final project. (Sent 2020 04 29).

<sup>244</sup> Supplemental question, Respondent #34, "Robert", email, 2020 02 01.

<sup>245</sup> Supplemental question, Respondent #3, "Cal", email, 2020 04 29.

<sup>246</sup> Supplemental question, Respondent #4, "Steven", email, 2020 04 29.

<sup>247</sup> Supplemental question, Respondent #21, "Victor", email, 2020 04 29.

<sup>248</sup> Supplemental question, Respondent #18, "Manfred", email, 2020 04 29.

<sup>249</sup> Supplemental question, Respondent #22, "Paul", email, 2020 04 29.

<sup>250</sup> Supplemental question, Respondent #7, "Ruth", email, 2020 04 29.

She went on to say, “In fact, I wonder how many of our youth have actually even witnessed a baptism? Been challenged to consider baptism as an important step and witness to their relationship with Christ?”<sup>251</sup> These quotes demonstrate that youth leaders had mixed opinions and practices related to baptism and the Lord’s Supper

When specifically asked about celebrating the Lord’s Supper, youth leaders frequently spoke about doing it in the context of retreats and special youth events.<sup>252</sup> One former youth pastor stated,

One of the highlights at many of these events was the sharing of the Lord’s Supper with a group of friends and fellow youth. It might have been cool-aid and crackers or even chips and pop, but the meaning of sharing together in what the Lord had done for me was deeply ingrained through those times.<sup>253</sup>

These respondents paint a picture of a youth ministry disconnected in some very significant ways from the church that supported it. We see baptism primarily happening in the church congregation, often removed from the young people in the church’s youth ministry. On the other hand, Communion was sometimes celebrated in informal ways within the relative isolation of the youth ministry community.

To this point, I have demonstrated that a wide variety of spiritual practices were present within some CBAC youth ministries. I have also shown that while being present sometimes, the practices of baptism and the Lord’s Supper were not emphasized or used by most youth leaders. I will now move on to argue for the connection between small group ministries and spiritual practices.

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Supplemental question, Respondent #34, “Robert”, email, 2020 05 02.

<sup>253</sup> Supplemental question, Respondent #22, “Paul”, email, 2020 04 29.

### ***Spiritual Practices and Small Group Ministries***

At the beginning of this chapter, I introduced small group ministries as one of the most significant youth ministry contexts for discipleship named by CBAC youth leaders. Next, I will demonstrate that these small groups were a setting where spiritual practices were present.

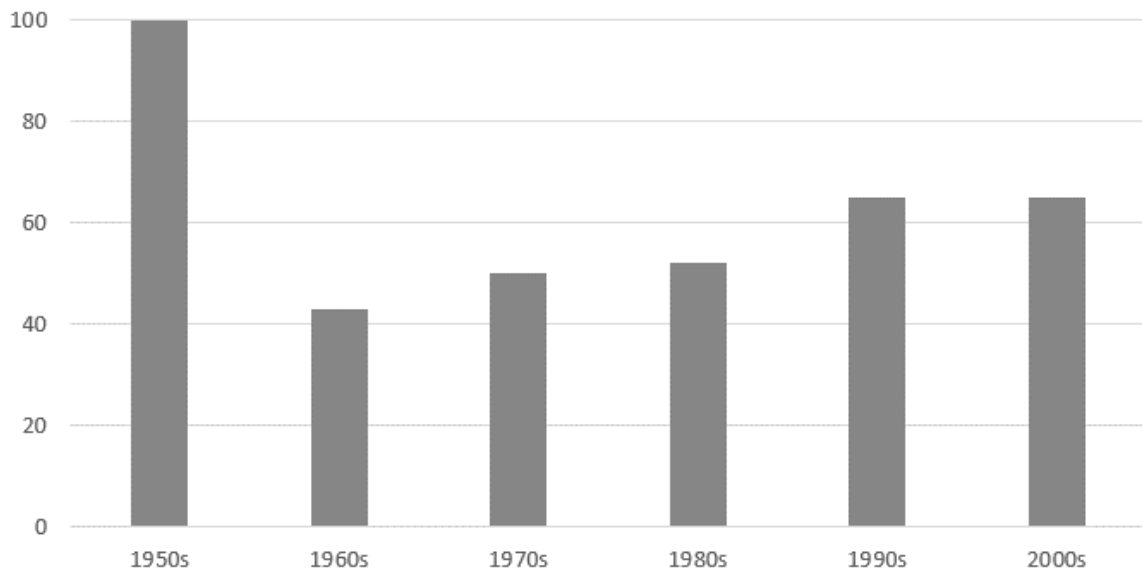
In 5.5.2, I noted that the *BYF Handbook* (1959) endorsed the introduction of cell groups within youth ministries.<sup>254</sup> I also noted that in *Me, A Leader* (1974), there is a reference to *prayer and share groups*.<sup>255</sup> From my survey data, it is evident that youth leaders from all decades highly valued small group experiences for their youth. To the question “Please rate the discipleship value of these contexts based on your experience,” 21 of the 32 respondents answered either “Very Good” or “Excellent.” This substantial support spread across all decades of my research, as in each decade, between 60% and 100% of youth leaders claim small groups have very good or excellent discipleship value. As Chart 6.2 demonstrates, aside from the 1950s, which only had responses from four youth leaders, a gradual increase is evident in each subsequent decade.

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<sup>254</sup> Thompson, *Baptist Youth Fellowship Handbook*, 20.

<sup>255</sup> Powell, "Me, a Leader?."

**Chart 6.2:** Percentage of Respondents who Rated *Small* Groups as either Excellent or Very Good (by decade) in Survey Question Eight “Please rate the discipleship value of these contexts based on your experience.”



Interview responses support this widespread endorsement. When asked to comment on the value of small groups, one youth pastor stated that he “built the youth group in Dartmouth on small groups. I mean, we started when I started doing some in high school, and we built it on that, and it was a key part of what we do here, I think it is a critical piece.”<sup>256</sup> He also emphasized the significance of solid teaching in the small group environment.<sup>257</sup> Another youth pastor stated that small groups are very important; he explained that they “let students try on ideas in a non-threatening environment.”<sup>258</sup> Another said, “Small group Bible study has always been a part of discipleship all year round.”<sup>259</sup>

As is evident from the responses to both my survey and interview questions, most youth pastors strongly believed that effective discipleship happened within the context of small group youth ministry. Few specifically said they used small groups to develop spiritual practices other than prayer and Bible study, but there are hints that other spiritual practices

<sup>256</sup> Structured Interview #30, “Jason” 2013 02 20, 68.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Structured Interview #2, “William”, 2012 12 07, 9.

<sup>259</sup> Structured Interview #3, “Cal”, 2013 02 11, 101.



were introduced and used. I will now build on the argument that some spiritual practices were found within CBAC youth ministries by specifically examining how professional youth pastors integrated spiritual practices into their youth ministries.

### ***Professional Youth Pastors and Spiritual Practices***

Professional youth pastors within the CBAC promoted certain spiritual practices. Perhaps the most significant setting for this was youth retreats. These were times when youth pastors took their young people to a Christian camp or another setting for a few days. Significantly, all the youth pastors that I interviewed reported that they used retreats with their young people, some annually or two times per year.<sup>260</sup> Conversely, no lay youth leader reported using retreats within their youth ministry. I argue that partially through these retreats, youth pastors sometimes developed communities of spiritual practice. Speaking about using retreats for discipleship, one former youth pastor stated, “You have to train young people into spiritual disciplines of prayer and Scripture reading and even train them into the joy of being a follower of Christ.”<sup>261</sup>

One of the others who used retreats for developing spiritual practices was “Cindy”, who spoke of using them to teach and practice prayer, fasting, and silence.<sup>262</sup> The strong correlation between youth pastors and the teaching of spiritual practices in retreat settings is noteworthy. I argue that it demonstrates one direct way youth ministry professionalization provided ministry structures for discipleship, specifically communities of spiritual practice.

Additionally, vocational youth workers emphasized that they taught spiritual practices within their regular youth ministries. They said such things as: “You have to train young

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<sup>260</sup> Structured Interview #10, “Donald”, 2012 11 19, 53.

Structured Interview #11, “Cindy”, 2013 02 06, 84.

Structured Interview #6, “Ronald”, 2012 11 06, 87.

<sup>261</sup> Structured Interview #34, “Robert”, 2012 11 19, 116.

<sup>262</sup> Structured Interview #11, “Cindy” 2013 02 06, 85

people into spiritual disciplines of prayer and Scripture reading,”<sup>263</sup> “there was an innate involving youth in a variety of types of things like worship, like prayer, of solitude,”<sup>264</sup> “we have groups of youth who meet for prayer for each other,”<sup>265</sup> and “I think things like prayer... are core habits of the faith that we need to be integrating into kids’ lives early.”<sup>266</sup> As these quotes from my interviews demonstrate, some vocational youth pastors recognized the importance of teaching spiritual practices.

This connection with professionalization in youth ministry builds on what I established previously. In Chapter Five, I demonstrated that the four sets of CBAC youth discipleship material that I critically examined all encourage spiritual practices to various degrees, especially those considered more traditional Baptist practices. The most recent of these, *The Discipleship Project*, also made the step of building toward church-wide communities of spiritual practice, as it intentionally integrated young people and adults from the church as part of the learning process for these practices. As all the discipleship material examined in Chapter Five were either written, collected, adapted, or endorsed by CBAC denominational youth leadership, the connection between this professionalized leadership and communities of spiritual practice is significant.

In this subsection, I have demonstrated that vocational youth pastors' presence helped create a ministry culture and structure that encouraged communities of spiritual practice within the CBAC. Within the community of church youth ministries, all youth pastors I interviewed spoke of their intentional efforts to promote traditional practices like Bible

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<sup>263</sup> Structured Interview #34, “Robert” 2013 02 15, 53.

<sup>264</sup> Structured Interview #5, “James” 2012 11 19, 114.

<sup>265</sup> Structured Interview #3, “Cal” 2013 02 11, 103.

<sup>266</sup> Structured Interview #30, “Jason” 2013 02 20, 67.

reading, prayer, and Scripture memory. This intentionality in belief and practice demonstrates this key marker's presence as it connects with the professionalization of youth ministry.

### ***Conclusions about Communities of Spiritual Practice***

In this section, I have shown that within CBAC youth ministries, a wide range of spiritual practices were present. There is clear evidence from youth leaders of the traditional practices of prayer, Bible study and Bible memorization, and others that would not be considered traditional Baptist practices. It is very noteworthy that baptism was not a spiritual practice that youth leaders usually prioritized, and while they sometimes invited young people to participate in the Lord's Supper, this was often in the segregated context of youth ministry, not with the church congregation. I conclude that communities of spiritual practice were evident at times within youth ministries, but there is no evidence that young people were regularly included in communities of spiritual practice within the broader congregation. Therefore, I conclude that the marker of communities of spiritual practice was mainly present in the youth ministries that I examined.

However, this separation of young people from others in their local church builds on my argument from Chapter Five, where I argued that youth ministry resources failed to encourage the integration of young people into the church congregation. Once again, we see well-intentioned leaders not integrating young people into the church responsible for their youth ministry.

## **6.4 Summary**

In this chapter, I have introduced data that comes directly from key youth leaders within the CBAC. I have argued that some youth leaders believed they were doing a good job

of integrating young people into the church, and many expressed a desire for integration, but they rarely achieved it. I also established that CBAC youth leaders placed a significant emphasis on building strong relationships with young people and sometimes did this to the point of demonstrating strong elements of place-sharing relationships. The professionalization of youth ministry was a substantial factor in creating these relationships. Further, I argued that communities of spiritual practice have sometimes existed within youth ministries, but these occurred in the isolation of youth ministry, not within the church congregation. Together, these arguments point toward an alignment with the markers of the theological turn, although youth leaders may have done little to create a connection with their local church.

I have also demonstrated that all three markers of the theological turn (ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice) were important for many of the CBAC youth pastors I interviewed and surveyed. I have shown that within two of the foremost contexts of youth discipleship they identified, mentoring and small group ministries, there is a noteworthy emphasis on all three markers of the theological turn. Although this emphasis on the markers of the theological turn was evidenced, the markers were not always present in the fullness that I identified in the work of Root and Dean.

These arguments build on what I established in the previous chapter, where I examined youth discipleship documents used within the CBAC. In the next chapter, I further develop these arguments as I move toward the conclusion of my critical study of discipling youth ministries within the CBAC. I will do this by critically examining the youth mission tour movement as it relates to youth discipleship.



## 7 THE YOUTH MISSION TOUR MOVEMENT AND DISCIPLING YOUTH MINISTRIES

### 7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I critically examine the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC. I argue that the youth mission tour movement shaped the practice of youth discipleship within the CBAC in several significant ways through the preparation for and experience of youth mission tours. The connection between youth ministry and mission tour involvement in the CBAC is strong, and youth leaders within the CBAC strongly believed in the importance of mission experiences for youth discipleship. In my survey, I asked youth leaders to rate the discipleship value of ten different youth ministry contexts, and youth mission tours received the highest rating, with 28 of the 29 people who answered the question marking it as either excellent or very good.<sup>1</sup> A former leader in the CBAC's Christian Education Department provides further evidence for the perceived connection between mission tours and discipleship by stating that mission tours were "the reason for some [youth] to commit themselves to come to discipleship."<sup>2</sup>

I do this critical analysis of the youth mission tour movement based on the three markers of the *theological turn* identified in Chapter Two in the work of Root and Dean. In 3.3, I presented a brief historical description of the development of the youth mission tour movement, demonstrating in the process that youth mission tours became an integral part of the CBAC youth ministry. I now build on this by examining the discipleship methods that youth leaders practiced as part of the preparation process for mission trips and the mission

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<sup>1</sup> Survey question eight: "Please rate the discipleship value of these contexts based on your ministry experiences." I proposed the context options based on my research into youth ministry within the CBAC.

<sup>2</sup> Structured Interview #36, "Peggy" 2012 11 06, 75.

experiences themselves. This progression builds on the previous chapters by connecting one of the resources I examined in Chapter Five, *The Discipleship Project*, and input from key youth leaders in Chapter Six. I specifically examine the connection between the professionalization of youth ministry and the youth mission tour movement that I introduced in 3.3. By critically examining the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC, I will bring out significant nuances about practical youth discipleship within CBAC churches.

In this chapter, I will show that youth mission tours within the CBAC took various forms. Some were large events that involved many churches from the CBAC and beyond, while others involved just one church sending a team to another place. Ministry of some sort was common to all of them. This usually involved some humanitarian work and sometimes a more evangelistic focus. To demonstrate the connections between the youth mission tour movement and CBAC youth discipleship, I will first examine the broad endorsement and nearly complete integration of youth mission experiences into CBAC youth ministries.

## **7.2 CBAC Endorsement of Youth Mission Tours**

CBAC youth leaders strongly endorse youth mission experiences and the youth mission tour movement. In this section, I will demonstrate this from the responses I received from my survey and interviews, with support from some CBAC articles. My respondents repeatedly spoke of the notable benefits of involving youth in mission experiences. In relation to youth mission and service experiences, one leader stated that the opportunity to “really challenge them to live outside of their comfort zones and stretch their faith by asking them to do things they had never done before” was one of the most significant discipleship opportunities he

provided his youth.<sup>3</sup> Another believed there was a substantial connection between youth experiencing mission projects and their later involvement in ministry.<sup>4</sup> Not one person that I interviewed or surveyed spoke negatively about involving youth in mission experiences.

Those who worked with youth in the 1990s and onward saw youth mission tours as a primary component of their youth ministries. A 1993 article about youth mission tours in *The Communicator* affirms this as the author states, “Each year youth groups from around the Atlantic Provinces plan mission tours.”<sup>5</sup> One person, who served as a youth pastor from 1994 to 2007, explained, “the churches I was involved with, they were looking every year for a mission to be involved with.”<sup>6</sup> Another long-serving youth pastor (1985-2002) states, “we’ve done one, if not two, short-term missions every summer that I’ve been able to... and I find them to be probably the most effective hands-on way in making a difference in somebody’s life.”<sup>7</sup> A third youth pastor explains that the two churches where he served “had an annual summer mission experience of some type, whether it was local or participating in a regional event like *Tidal Impact*... sometimes we went to Boston or Toronto.”<sup>8</sup> Another long-serving youth pastor stated that youth mission experiences were “a huge focus” in all the ministries he had led.<sup>9</sup> These youth pastors are just a representative sample of those who worked with youth during the 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For all respondents who led youth ministries in the 1990s and 2000s, youth mission tour experiences were a regular part of their youth ministry programming, often expected by their church.<sup>10</sup> They were accepted as a normal part of ministry to young people. A 1996 article in

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<sup>3</sup> Structured Interview #10, “Donald” 2012 11 19, 107.

<sup>4</sup> Structured Interview # 37, “Barb” 2012 10 02, 62.

<sup>5</sup> Sandy Sutherland, “Volunteering: Youth Mission Tours,” *Christian Training Commission Communicator*, December 1993, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Structured Interview #6, “Ronald” 2012 11 06, 90.

<sup>7</sup> Structured Interview #4, “Steven” 2012 11 02, 96.

<sup>8</sup> Structured Interview #10, “Donald” 2012 11 19, 108.

<sup>9</sup> Structured Interview #3, “Cal” 2013 02 11, 101.

<sup>10</sup> Structured Interview #6, “Ronald” 2012 11 06, 89.



*Tidings*, the magazine of the United Baptist Woman's Missionary Union of the Atlantic Provinces, gave details of six youth mission teams that had done mission tours the previous summer in three different Canadian provinces.<sup>11</sup> From the 1990s and onward, it also became more common for youth mission experiences to occur in international locations. For example, youth pastor Chuck Murray took a group from his Moncton church to Jamaica in 1993,<sup>12</sup> and in 2001, a group went from Prince Edward Island to Scotland,<sup>13</sup> and multiple teams went to Europe in advance of the Baptist World Youth Congress in Leipzig in 2008.<sup>14</sup>

Concurrent with this rapid increase in local churches sending out youth mission teams, the practice of youth ministries from different churches serving in the same area to do mission also rapidly increased. In the summer of 1989, a group of youth pastors organized an event that led toward the eventual formation of *Tidal Impact*. *Tidal Impact* was an organized weeklong youth mission experience with claims of being the largest youth mission experience in North America.<sup>15</sup> In the summer of 1989, five youth ministries decided to do their summer mission tours in the same area so they could meet in the evenings for times of worship and study and some combined fun events. There were 69 people involved in the cooperative mission venture in St. George, New Brunswick, and without knowing it, they laid foundations that would grow exponentially in the next few years.<sup>16</sup> Subsequent youth mission tours included:

- Urban Impact 1992 (Rothesay, 150 people)
- Heart for the City 1992, (Fredericton, numbers uncertain)
- Got to be Tru 1993 (Fredericton, 120 people)
- Bold and Alive 1995 (Moncton, 450 people)<sup>17</sup>
- Team Up 1996 (travelled to Ottawa, 300 people)
- Impact 1997 (Halifax, 420 people)<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Margaret Ryan, "Many Youth Involved in Summer Missions," *Tidings*, November 1996, 12.

<sup>12</sup> Lipe, "Highfield's 'Youth Ambassadors' to Jamaica," 29.

<sup>13</sup> Nicholas Fraser, "Team Scotland 2001," *Tidings*, February 2002, 22.

<sup>14</sup> Cindi Hastings, "English Camp - Great Success," *Tidings*, December 2008, 12.

<sup>15</sup> *Tidal Impact 2011: The Wave is Building*.

<sup>16</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nysten, *Mission Tour*, 189.

<sup>17</sup> Darrell Bustin, "Bold and Alive," *Tidings*, November 1995, 14.

<sup>18</sup> Margaret Ryan, "Street Ministry Leaves Lasting Impression," *Tidings*, September 1997, 13-14.

- Bold and Alive 1998 (Moncton, 550 people)
- Kingdom Builders 1999 (Fredericton, 250+)<sup>19</sup>
- Tidal Impact 2000 (Halifax, 850 people)
- Tidal Impact 2002 (Moncton & Saint John, 1100 people),
- Tidal Impact 2004 (Fredericton & Florenceville, 1300 people)
- Tidal Impact 2006 (Halifax and Annapolis Valley, 1194 people)<sup>20</sup>
- Tidal Impact 2008 (Moncton and Saint John, 791 people).<sup>21</sup>

*Tidal Impact* continued after this period, but the numbers generally trended downwards (2011: 924 participants, 2015: 810 participants, 2017: 743 participants, 2019: 587

participants).<sup>22</sup> This downward trend coincides with several other factors that may be significant, specifically declining church attendance and an ageing population in this region of Canada.<sup>23</sup>

Youth leader appreciation for the mission tour movement within the CBAC was strong, as demonstrated by the numbers just noted and comments such as this one from a youth pastor who later served at a denominational level. He stated,

one of the things we've done really well in Atlantic Canada ... is the whole mission tour side of things, from what has developed into *Tidal Impact*, to a culture... that has a lot of service projects for youth to do.<sup>24</sup>

The largest youth mission tour within the CBAC was *Tidal Impact* 2004, which saw the participation of 1300 young people and leaders from 109 churches.<sup>25</sup> As I introduced in 3.2, the professionalization of youth ministry was a contributing factor to the growth of this movement, as youth pastors led most teams,<sup>26</sup> and as the movement grew, the large youth

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<sup>19</sup> I was present at this event but could find no source with recorded numbers.

<sup>20</sup> Jacqueline Derrah, Tidal Impact Registrar, Personal Correspondence, 2019 08 12.

<sup>21</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nysten, *Mission Tour*, 189-200.

Jacqueline Derrah, Tidal Impact Registrar, Personal Correspondence, 2019 08 12.

<sup>22</sup> Jacqueline Derrah, Tidal Impact Registrar, Personal Correspondence, 2019 08 12.

<sup>23</sup> Ather Akbari, *Population Aging and Immigration in Atlantic Canada* (Halifax: Saint Mary's University, 2018). Akbari notes that in the ten-year period from 2007 to 2017, the percentage of the Atlantic Canadian population under 14 years of age decreased from 15.59% to 14.32%.

According to CBAC yearbooks, total reported membership in CBAC churches declined from 65,346 in 1990 to 36,226 in 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Structured Interview #5, "James" 2012 11 19, 113.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Ryan, "Tidal Impact by the Numbers," *Tidings*, November 2004, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Fawcett, "Recruiting Clergy for Canadian Baptist Churches: A Typological Understanding," 24.

mission events came under the organization of the CBAC Youth and Family Ministries Department.<sup>27</sup>

In this section, I have demonstrated that the youth mission tour movement was an integral component of CBAC youth ministry life and that youth leaders strongly endorsed it. Within only a few decades, the movement emerged, grew, and became perceived as an essential part of local church youth ministry. As the youth mission tour movement developed within the CBAC, of utmost significance is the short period of just over a decade from the early 1990s to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. This period saw mission tours move from youth ministry's fringes to an essential element, something understood as a requirement for most CBAC churches with ministries to youth.

### **7.3 Mission Tour Preparation as Discipleship**

One aspect of the mission tour movement that bears great significance for this research project is the development of discipleship practices as preparation for youth mission teams. This brief section will examine mission trip preparation other than *The Discipleship Project* that I critically engaged in 5.5. Here I demonstrate that CBAC youth leaders and denominational staff believed that the preparation for youth mission experiences was a significant opportunity for introducing discipleship practices.

One former youth pastor explained the need for preparation, stating that significant discipleship was necessary:

You wouldn't send out an adult couple to serve as missionaries overseas unless you felt they had the training and investment behind them that was necessary. I think the same is true for

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<sup>27</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group*, 147.

commissioning teenage missionaries from a church, that they really need to be disciplined fairly significantly before they're commissioned to be sent out.<sup>28</sup>

As introduced earlier, the 1972 booklet, *Bible Study Ways and Means*, includes a page about preparing young people for youth mission experiences, demonstrating that there was a desire even before the 1990s to prepare youth for the experience of being involved in mission tours.<sup>29</sup> Although the booklet does not provide many details, this similarity in discipleship practices to *The Discipleship Project* that Bruce Fawcett developed when he was Assistant Pastor at Lewisville Baptist in Moncton, New Brunswick, over two decades later, is noteworthy. In the 1972 booklet, the author states:

A mission tour is more than just singing and holding Bible Schools. It can be used as a building tool or preparation for spiritual growth. The tour then becomes a by-product of the youth ministry. During the preparation for the tour, the youth grow spiritually through Bible study, Scripture memorization, projects with their families and other kids. Everything leads to Jesus so that these youth will have something to share on the tour.<sup>30</sup>

Both refer to Bible reading, Scripture memory, prayer, projects, and service in the church and community as discipleship practices used in mission tour preparation.<sup>31</sup> The overlap in spiritual practice is especially noteworthy since Fawcett "...wasn't aware of that document's existence." He goes on to say that he "thought [he] was inventing the wheel."<sup>32</sup> It is significant that two different youth leaders within the CBAC, doing ministry 22 years apart, identified similar spiritual practices for mission team preparation. Both resources developed discipleship practices designed to prepare young people for mission experiences. Youth leaders apparently recognized that these discipleship practices provided necessary preparation for mission participation.

My respondents repeatedly mentioned discipleship practices that they used in preparation for mission experiences. Here are some of their comments:

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<sup>28</sup> Structured Interview #2, "William" 2012 12 07, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, 21.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nysten, *Mission Tour*, 76, 207-12.

<sup>32</sup> Bruce Fawcett, Personal Correspondence, 2019 07 11.

[We] usually have a certain book of the Bible that they read and Scripture memorization, memorizing the books of the Bible, they're required to be in attendance at church and youth group and usually there is some ministry expectation for them to be involved in over some period of time that we are preparing them.<sup>33</sup>

It's a great opportunity, and you've got great leverage, so it forces kids to do some of those habits, and it allows you to say, "If you want to go, here are some key things."<sup>34</sup>

Spiritual disciplines, regular Bible study, preparing their testimony, and often times meeting with a mentor, and that was important.<sup>35</sup>

Although widely endorsed, there was variation in what discipleship practices youth leaders used. Some added new things, like having students prepare their testimony, while some did not use components that others did.

The endorsement of discipleship practices by Fawcett and Fenwick (1972) reinforces the collective agreement from denominational leadership and church youth leaders of the need for discipleship practices for those who would participate in mission experiences. In this section, I have shown that youth leaders regularly used discipleship practices as part of mission tour preparation. CBAC youth ministries commonly used daily devotions, prayer, church attendance and participation, Scripture memorization, and meeting with a mentor. I will now build on this argument by examining mission as a discipleship practice.

## **7.4 Discipleship through Mission**

In this section, I expand on the establishment of discipleship through youth mission tour preparation by arguing that youth leaders within the CBAC understood the involvement of young people in mission experiences to be a discipleship practice. I will show that CBAC youth leaders believed that the act of taking part in a mission tour was a discipleship practice

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<sup>33</sup> Structured Interview #36, "Peggy" 2012 11 06, 62.

<sup>34</sup> Structured Interview #30, "Jason" 2013 02 20, 68.

<sup>35</sup> Structured Interview #10, "Donald" 2012 11 19, 109.

for young people. The establishment of this connection is necessary to examine this discipleship practice through the critical lens of the theological turn in the following section.

As I will demonstrate, for many of those who led youth on mission tours, there was a strong connection between these trips away and having young people involved in ministry in their home community. Some used ministry at home as preparation for mission opportunities further abroad. In contrast, others saw mission trips as part of their strategy to spark interest in ministry opportunities at home, and others referred to both components as existing alongside each other. *Bible Study: Ways and Means* (1972), one of the CBAC documents that I examined in Chapter Five, demonstrates this connection between mission tours and local church ministry:

A Mission Tour can be used as an incentive but more as a means of establishing a total youth program of ministry... There is a great follow up ministry when everyone returns home from the tour. After learning how to share about Christ with strangers, it should become easier to share with their families and in their communities.<sup>36</sup>

Using the example of evangelism, the author of this booklet demonstrates that as early as 1972, CBAC denominational leaders recognized that young people could be disciplined through involvement in mission experiences.

Some CBAC youth leaders emphasized their belief in the discipleship value of mission experiences by writing about them, claiming that much spiritual growth occurred when youth were involved in mission work. In writing about her team that went to the Czech Republic in 2007, one youth leader noted that the experience had “a profound impact” on everyone.<sup>37</sup> After *Tidal Impact* 2002, one volunteer youth leader reflected, “We saw growth in the form of leadership, commitment and the boldness to witness.”<sup>38</sup> In the same sentence, one former youth pastor refers to youth who regularly served at the local soup kitchen and international

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<sup>36</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, 21.

<sup>37</sup> Hastings, "English Camp - Great Success," 12.

<sup>38</sup> Jennifer Cox, "Tidal Impact - Fort Et Fier," *Tidings*, January 2003, 18.

mission trips, referring to both as part of the “spiritual gift of service.”<sup>39</sup> Another former youth pastor speaks of a tiered system in which youth have to be involved in their local church first, then community, followed by a regional mission experience such as *Tidal Impact*, only then followed by an international mission experience.<sup>40</sup> Another stated, “You just can’t have missions where we take young people to another location where they do ministry with another church, they have to do Ministry within their church and within their community.”<sup>41</sup>

As evidenced in these quotes, the youth leaders I interviewed and those reported in denominational publications understood involvement in mission experiences as strongly connected with discipleship and local church ministry. CBAC youth leaders also clearly understood that mission itself, not just the experiences during the mission trip, was a discipleship component that helped young people grow and mature in their faith.

In addition to the discipleship that happened as young people were involved in mission, the large-scale mission experiences of the youth mission tour movement offered more than just an opportunity to serve. Young people who took part had the chance to gather in worship events throughout the week of the mission tour, with youth speakers and worship bands.<sup>42</sup> In the large-scale events, there were gatherings for prayer, ministry projects that required participants to be involved in communities and not just within churches, fun events, and group meals.<sup>43</sup> I critically examine the many diverse experiences of these youth mission tours from the perspective of the key markers of discipleship in the theological turn in the next section.

In this section, I have argued that there was broad recognition, in both denominational writings about youth mission involvement and local church practice, that mission experiences

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<sup>39</sup> Structured Interview #11, “Cindy” 2013 02 06, 82.

<sup>40</sup> Structured Interview #30, “Jason” 2013 02 20, 66.

<sup>41</sup> Structured Interview #34, “Robert” 2013 02 15, 53.

<sup>42</sup> Cox, “Tidal Impact - Fort Et Fier,” 18.

<sup>43</sup> Gary Dunfield, “Bold & Alive '98,” *Atlantic Baptist*, September 1997, 22-23.

were discipleship contexts for CBAC young people. Further, I have demonstrated that those working directly with youth, and those working for the denomination, agreed that participation in youth mission experiences both local and far away was itself a discipleship practice. Having established this foundation, I now analyze the youth discipleship that was part of the youth mission tour movement.

## **7.5 The Youth Mission Tour Movement and Discipling Youth Ministry**

Having introduced the youth mission tour movement and how CBAC youth leaders used discipleship practices in conjunction with these tours and considered mission involvement to be a discipleship practice itself, I now critically examine the movement through the lens that I established in Chapter Two. Based on Root and Dean's work on the theological turn, the three markers of my critical lens are ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice. As I critique the youth mission tour movement through each part of the lens, I argue that as the youth mission tour movement demonstrates a fairly strong presence of all three markers, it was an important part of the grassroots theological turn within the CBAC. I must note here that Root is quite critical of mission tours. He argues that many mission tours have become “global tourism” that is more about doing projects than being with people.<sup>44</sup> While some CBAC youth mission tours may fall into this category, as I demonstrated in 7.3, most were local events where a team would go to another community and do ministry with them. In almost all of these experiences, visiting students lived in the homes of their hosts, built relationships with them, and partnered with them in the ministries that their hosts believed to be important. These characteristics are highly valued by Root.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 187.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.



### **7.5.1 The Youth Mission Tour Movement and Ecclesial Integration**

The connections between the youth mission tour movement and ecclesial integration are very significant. In this subsection, I argue that youth leaders believed the movement promoted ecclesial integration within the churches of the CBAC in three ways. These ways are a perceived correlation with future church involvement, increased interaction with adults in preparation and the actual mission trip, and increased awareness and involvement with their local church and other churches with which they partnered.

#### ***Youth Mission Experiences Correlated with Church Involvement***

Through my interview responses, it is apparent that some CBAC youth leaders believed in a positive correlation between young people being part of a mission tour and taking on church leadership and staying connected with the church. No person that I surveyed or interviewed made any negative connections between youth mission experiences and ecclesial integration. In addition, without explicitly being asked, five of the 17 who completed interviews stated that they believed involvement in youth mission tours led to young people being more involved in their church. One youth pastor said,

My leaders now, my strongest leaders, the believers who lead... tend to be those kids... who've gone on mission trips and served together. In fact, that is a huge focus in what we do, and of course, serving as you go through the year, there are other opportunities as well, so those have been key elements in discipleship for us... we've done a lot of changing of other things, but those things have always remained the same over the years.<sup>46</sup>

A volunteer leader from a rural community in Nova Scotia, who was the youth coordinator at her church from 1983 to 2012, claimed that throughout her ministry, mission tour involvement was “instrumental in a number of our teens that have gone on to be involved in ministry.”<sup>47</sup> Further, she stated, “I think being involved in the mission tour was certainly a

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<sup>46</sup> Structured Interview #3, “Cal” 2013 02 11, 101.

<sup>47</sup> Structured Interview #36, “Peggy” 2012 11 06, 62.

part of their maturing and really sensing God’s call and leading in their own lives.”<sup>48</sup> Another youth leader stated, “I’ve been taking mission trips for 25 years... I can’t think of a person who went on those trips who didn’t come back changed, or who didn’t come back being more active in their local church.”<sup>49</sup> While this last claim might be hyperbole, these quotes together demonstrate that some CBAC youth leaders believed that youth mission involvement encouraged future involvement and leadership in the church.

Alone, this argument does not indicate that youth mission tours contributed to integrating young people into the church. However, in the following subsections, I will add other arguments to strengthen my claim that youth leaders believed the movement promoted ecclesial integration.

### ***Youth Mission Tours and Interaction with Adults in the Church***

One very evident pattern that I observed from my interviews was that in preparation for mission experiences, and in the experience itself, young people were more involved with adults from their church than usual. This intergenerational involvement happened throughout the preparation process and during some of the trips. The opportunities within mission tours meant that young people worked alongside adults. In *Mission Tour*, Rob Nysten claims that as a youth mission team prepares for a mission trip, they should “involve the entire congregation” by enlisting prayer partners, getting help with fundraising, having a commissioning service, and reporting back to the church after the experience is complete.<sup>50</sup>

First, the preparation process often required students to be involved in regular church activities. In 5.5, I examined this component of *The Discipleship Project*, noting that this experience required students to attend church and be involved in various church ministries.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>49</sup> Structured Interview #35, “Mark” 2012 02 15, 45.

<sup>50</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nysten, *Mission Tour*, 50.

This ecclesial involvement is significant as I further demonstrated that youth leaders have widely used this preparation program for more than a decade. I also noted earlier that before the introduction of *The Discipleship Project*, denominational youth staff encouraged similar preparation. It appears that at least some form of preparation occurred for nearly all mission trips, and often this involved extensive training and fund-raising that pushed young people to be involved with adults within the church.<sup>51</sup>

Second, a youth mission tour movement component that reinforced youth interaction with adults was intergenerational mission teams. The CBAC organized parent and teen mission tours to other parts of Canada<sup>52</sup> and Bolivia.<sup>53</sup> As one of the participants on the Bolivia trip explains,

The idea for a parent/teen trip came from the Youth and Family Department of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. They believed that a parent/teen mission experience would give families an opportunity to be involved in cross-cultural ministry together and the hope was that this experience would strengthen team members individually and as families.<sup>54</sup>

Only one of these international parent/teen mission trips occurred. It happened in 2006.<sup>55</sup>

Other intentionally intergenerational teams from CBAC churches travelled together to many locations, including other parts of Canada<sup>56</sup> and Europe.<sup>57</sup> These two factors, interaction with adults from the church during preparation and interaction with adults during the mission experience, come together to demonstrate that the youth mission tour did increase the interaction between young people and the adults in their church. When this increased interaction with adults in the church is added to some youth leader's conviction that mission experiences led to church involvement and future leadership, it contributes to my argument

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<sup>51</sup> Lipe, "Highfield's 'Youth Ambassadors' to Jamaica," 29.

<sup>52</sup> Lisa Lohnes, "Promise, Hope and Action," *Tidings*, June 2008, 11, 24.

<sup>53</sup> Lois Mitchell, and Abby Mitchell, "Ruined for Ordinary Life," *Tidings*, November 2006, 12-13.

<sup>54</sup> Mitchell, and Mitchell, "Ruined for Ordinary Life," 12.

<sup>55</sup> I organized and led this mission trip to Bolivia in March 2006.

<sup>56</sup> Ryan, "Many Youth Involved in Summer Missions," 12.

<sup>57</sup> Hastings, "English Camp - Great Success," 12-13.

that CBAC youth leaders believed the mission tour involvement integrated young people into the church.

### ***Youth Mission Tours and the Local Church***

A final argument for the integration of young people into the church through mission tour involvement is that some youth leaders pointed to a stronger awareness and involvement with local churches. When CBAC young people participated in mission tours, they represented their church, and in most situations, worked specifically with another church.

Sandy Sutherland, a long-serving Christian Education Director in several CBAC churches, stated that regarding youth mission tours, it was important to “share the vision with the entire church family, so they [could] be involved – praying, giving, supporting.”<sup>58</sup> Fawcett supports this interaction with the congregation; he claims, “Often, in youth culture, the value of the local church is not seen. A week of service, rubbing shoulders with local church volunteers, and experiencing first hand the hospitality from a local congregation can create a positive perspective.”<sup>59</sup> One example from a mission tour that encouraged young people to celebrate their churches happened at *Tidal Impact 2002*. Before the final evening rally, a parade of 1100 young people and leaders marched through parts of Moncton, New Brunswick, carrying banners and flags with their church names on them.<sup>60</sup> The examples and quotes in this subsection demonstrate that as young people were involved in mission experiences, there are strong indications that they grew in awareness and involvement with both their church and other churches.

In this subsection, I have examined the youth mission tour movement and the integration of young people into the church. I have demonstrated that some youth leaders

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<sup>58</sup> Sandy Sutherland, "Youth Leaders - Try This," *Christian Training Commission Communicator*, June 1987, 21.

<sup>59</sup> Fawcett, McDonald, and Nysten, *Mission Tour*, 51.

<sup>60</sup> Gary Dunfield, "Tidal Impact," *Atlantic Baptist*, September 2002, 16.

believed that participating in youth mission tours led young people to become more engaged in the church and become future church leaders. I also argued that young people often built relationships with adults from their congregation through youth mission tours. Finally, I argued that youth mission tour involvement sometimes helped young people grow in awareness and involvement with local churches. These factors all come together to demonstrate that the marker of church integration was mainly present within the youth mission tour movement.

Despite the evidence of the integration of young people into the church through mission tour involvement, the missing component is young people contributing to the local church. In 2.3.1, I concluded, “young people's ecclesial integration is not merely for their spiritual formation and leadership development. Perhaps even more importantly, the integration of young people contributes much to the congregation's leadership, vision, and direction.”<sup>61</sup> As young people contributed to their church through mission trips, they did so in settings removed from congregational life. Although the mission tour movement within the CBAC mainly aligned with the marker, ecclesial integration of young people, there is little evidence that young people were invited to contribute to church leadership and direction.

## **7.5.2 The Youth Mission Tour Movement and Place-Sharing**

In this subsection, I argue that the youth mission tour movement encouraged place-sharing settings through team preparation and during mission experiences. I further argue that CBAC youth leaders and youth pastors intentionally built strong relationships with place-sharing aspects present during youth mission experiences. Together with the previous

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<sup>61</sup> See section 2.3.1 for a full description of ecclesial integration.

subsection, and the following subsection, this demonstrates a strong alignment between the theological turn and the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC.

### ***Place-Sharing during Mission Tour Preparation***

First, I argue that mission tour preparation provided a structure that encouraged place-sharing. As young people within the CBAC prepared with their church team for mission tours, it is evident that there was an emphasis on building strong relationships between young people and adult team leaders. One former youth pastor stated, “there was a lot of community building too in all of that preparation time.”<sup>62</sup> He went on to explain that it was necessary to learn “... some level of self-sacrifice if we were going to live as a mission team for a week.”<sup>63</sup> In 5.5.2, I examined place-sharing within *The Discipleship Project* and concluded that the marker was moderately present based on the component of adults mentoring young people. While I will not make these arguments again here, it is important to note that short-term mentoring relationships where place-sharing could occur were often part of mission tour preparation.

In *Mission Tour*, Fawcett, *The Discipleship Project* creator, states, “training for a project and then carrying it out will draw your youth ministry together.”<sup>64</sup> By claiming this, he introduces the possibility of place-sharing between young people and adult youth leaders. Thus, in preparation for mission tours, the opportunity for place-sharing between young people and adults (youth leaders and others) was present. The actual mission experience then built upon this with further opportunities for place-sharing.

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<sup>62</sup> Structured Interview #10, “Donald” 2012 11 19, 109.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>64</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group*, 19.

### ***Place- Sharing during Mission Tours***

Second, I argue that mission tours were optimal locations for place-sharing. Mission experiences put young people and adult church members together for intensive amounts of time and sometimes in challenging situations. The adult church members who went with young people were often regular youth leaders, but additional adults also joined youth mission teams. In 1992, a mission team from Highfield Baptist Church went to Jamaica. The group consisted of 15 young people and five adult leaders, two of whom were pastors from the church.<sup>65</sup> A former youth pastor explained that in her church, “three of our missions (one to Bolivia and two to the Czech Republic) have been inter-generational, and so it has helped us to learn to live together and to be mentored by one another.”<sup>66</sup> Speaking of another mission tour, one youth leader stated, “the group, through talk and sharing, vented their frustrations and became closer in interpersonal relationships.”<sup>67</sup> He went on to claim, “the smaller events are the most memorable in that they provide intimate contact with people. It is an incredible group-building time.”<sup>68</sup> Quotes like these demonstrate that elements of place-sharing sometimes occurred in the complex and challenging situations that were often part of youth mission tours. These reflections by youth leaders are very similar to when Dean speaks about “offering a supportive, caring presence that helps draw youth into the presence of God.”<sup>69</sup> They are also similar to Root’s explanation that place-sharers are people who enter deeply into each other’s lives, not to obtain influence or leverage over them, but so that Christ may be fully present to those in the relationship.<sup>70</sup> Admittedly there is no clear evidence that there

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<sup>65</sup> Lipe, "Highfield's 'Youth Ambassadors' to Jamaica," 29.

<sup>66</sup> Structured Interview #11, “Cindy” 2013 02 06, 118.

<sup>67</sup> Ryan, "Street Ministry Leaves Lasting Impression," 13.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>69</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 140.

<sup>70</sup> Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*, 125.

was no agenda to obtain influence or leverage over the students, but there is also no indication that this was part of the youth leaders' agendas.

Supporting the significance of mission tour relationships, in *Youth Mission Tours*, Fawcett writes, “students will develop bonds with other believers... learn skills for getting along with one another... build relationships with new friends, forge closer bonds with those in their own youth group.”<sup>71</sup> Further on, in the book, he states, “Travelling with teens for a weekend or a week allows leaders to develop close bonds with students that may have taken years by only connecting with them during a weekly meeting at the church.”<sup>72</sup> While not evidence that place-sharing occurred, Fawcett's claims in a widely circulated book among CBAC youth leaders demonstrate his conviction based on experience. Root agrees that place-sharing can happen during mission experiences, even though he has severe reservations about the implementation of international mission trips. Reflecting on youth mission experiences, he claims that when they are correctly planned and led, “they should be about seeing, hearing and sharing existence with others.”<sup>73</sup>

In this subsection, I have introduced the marker of place-sharing as something that the youth mission tour movement encouraged in both the preparation period and the actual trip. In 2.3.2, I described place-sharing within the theological turn as

adults within the church developing strong relationships with young people. Transformation, unconditional friendship, and advocacy characterize these relationships. Adults should intentionally enter young people's lives and invite young people to enter the adult's life and the church's broader life so that in these relationships they might encounter God.

I have shown the presence of strong relationships within the youth mission tour movement. Missing from the description provided by my respondents are direct responses or language that point toward unconditional friendship. Advocacy is not directly referenced either, but

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<sup>71</sup> Fawcett, and McDonald, *Youth Mission Tours: Planning and Leading a Short-Term Mission Project for Your Youth Group*, 14, 28.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>73</sup> Root, and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 188.



adults' deep appreciation for relationships with young people suggests that it could have been present. Therefore, I argue the place-sharing marker is moderately present in the youth mission tour movement.

### **7.5.3 The Youth Mission Tour Movement and Communities of Spiritual Practice**

In this subsection, I argue that the youth mission tour movement helped youth ministries take a significant step forward in developing communities of spiritual practice. The movement did this in three primary ways. First, spiritual practices were an important part of mission tour preparation. Second, the actual mission experiences usually contained a variety of spiritual practices that happened in community, and third, the mission experience was itself a spiritual practice done in community. The presence of communities of spiritual practice within the youth mission tour movement strengthens the relationship between the theological turn and the youth mission tour movement.

#### ***Communities of Spiritual Practice and Mission Tour Preparation***

First, I will demonstrate that from archival research, my survey, and interviews, it is evident that within the CBAC, mission tour preparation usually made use of spiritual practices. The 1972 booklet *Bible Study: Ways and Means* encouraged youth leaders to use spiritual practices. The author writes, “During the preparation for the tour, the youth grow spiritually through Bible Study, Scripture memorization, projects with their families and other kids.”<sup>74</sup> A specific example that reinforces the conviction that spiritual practices were part of the preparation is a 1996 article about a church mission tour from Highfield Baptist in Moncton, New Brunswick, to Massachusetts, USA. Here, the author writes, “As we gathered

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<sup>74</sup> Fenwick, *Bible Study: Ways and Means*, 21.

in a circle for a final prayer, I not only felt the support of my prayer partners Jean Phillips and Alison Toczko but of the entire congregation.”<sup>75</sup> The brief mention of prayer partners is significant. Young people on this team had two specific people praying for and with them. In preparation for a mission tour organized by First Baptist Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia, youth leaders encouraged participants to prepare by either working through either “the Convention’s *LETS* program or *The Survival Kit*.”<sup>76</sup> Spiritual practices were continuously present in mission tour preparation.

In addition to these early examples of spiritual practices that were used during the preparation phase of youth mission tours, is the abundant presence of spiritual practices used within *The Discipleship Project*. Through my critical examination of this youth discipleship program in 5.5.3, I demonstrated that spiritual practices were strongly encouraged. More significantly, every respondent who worked with youth at the time of *The Discipleship Project* and later utilized a form of the program as preparation for their youth mission experiences. The above early examples and the prevalence of spiritual practices through *The Discipleship Project's* influence make it clear that most CBAC youth leaders employed spiritual practices within community as they prepared their youth mission teams for trips. To build my argument for the presence of communities of spiritual practices within the youth mission tour movement, I will now argue for the presence of these communities with the mission tour experience.

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<sup>75</sup> Megan Robb, "Extreme Mission Tour '96," *Atlantic Baptist*, November 1996, 19.

<sup>76</sup> Harold Arbo, "Atlantic Baptist Youth - Reaching Out," *Christian Training Commission Communicator*, March-April 1987, 28. *LETS* (Lifestyle Evangelism Training Seminar) was developed by Dr. Andrew MacRae, and was composed of sections for use individually, in small groups, and church. The *Survival Kit for New Christians* is still sold as a discipleship program. <https://www.lifeway.com/en/product/survival-kit-for-new-christians-basic-english-P001117185>, Accessed August 8, 2019.

## *Communities of Spiritual Practice during the Mission Tour*

The young people who went on youth mission tours also had the opportunity to be involved in communities of spiritual practice during the experience. A good description of this is in the *Atlantic Baptist* article reporting on the 1995 mission tour, *Bold and Alive*. Here, the author records that young people and youth leaders gathered for a concert of prayer on one afternoon, and every evening they gathered for “lively worship” and to listen to a speaker.<sup>77</sup> One former youth pastor stated that the mission experience gave his young people a desire to be discipled, with specific reference to a group Bible study that he promptly started.<sup>78</sup> Another youth leader claimed, “some of the rallies that were a part of the mission tours definitely had a big impact on their lives.”<sup>79</sup> As the rallies were primarily times of worship and youth-oriented sermons, the spiritual practice of worship within community was evident. These rallies do not represent the full meaning of communities of spiritual practice as explained by Dean, but it does demonstrate the presence of spiritual practices within the mission tour experience.

In a 2001 article in *The Atlantic Baptist*, the authors stated, “ABU students repeatedly state that it was while on mission tour in high school that they encountered God in a fresh and special way.”<sup>80</sup> In 1999, youth pastors Mike McDonald and Glenn Erskine took turns leading discipleship sessions with their mission team from Henry Blackaby’s book *Lift High the Torch: An Introduction to Experiencing God*.<sup>81</sup> These examples from my interviews and CBAC news stories demonstrate that youth mission teams were often communities of spiritual practice. In these settings, young people participated in spiritual practices with other young people and youth leaders.

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<sup>77</sup> Bruce Fawcett, “Bold and Alive '95: Leadership Training for Teens,” *Atlantic Baptist*, June 1995, 14.

<sup>78</sup> Structured Interview #4, “Steven” 2012 11 02, 96.

<sup>79</sup> Structured Interview # 37, “Barb” 2012 10 02, 62.

<sup>80</sup> Chad Stretch et al., “Evangelism and Youth Ministry in Atlantic Canada,” *Atlantic Baptist*, July/August, 2001, 16. ABU is now Crandall University.

<sup>81</sup> Mike McDonald, “Build '99: Being Useful in Labour and Discipleship '99,” *Tidings*, March 2000, 9.

I have demonstrated that communities of spiritual practice were part of both the preparation time and the mission tour experience. Next, I will also show that the mission tour experience was a discipleship practice done in community.

### ***The Mission Tour as a Community of Spiritual Practice***

It is significant to note that not only were there spiritual practices in the community of those involved together in mission, but in fact, the entire mission experience was a discipleship practice done in community. One long-serving youth pastor stated,

...when you are involved in ministry, and you see God work in the lives of people, it does something to you. And that's why I always want my kids to go [on mission tours] because they see what God is doing, and it just opens up their hearts and their minds to the work of God.<sup>82</sup>

This youth pastor touches on something very significant, as he identifies that his young people were changed or spiritually formed through the experience of serving in mission. This description closely aligns with Dean's writing. In *The Godbearing Life*, she claims, "Youth mission projects are by far the most likely existing vehicle for empowering youth for ministry through their congregations."<sup>83</sup> Further on in the same book, she states, "In the Christian community, youth learn compassion by practicing compassion. The hands-on experience of caring for others shapes our hearts to care for our neighbour out of love as well as obligation."<sup>84</sup>

I argue that as young people served with the adults who organized and led their mission experiences, the mission itself was a discipleship practice, teaching young people to live out their compassion for others by serving with them. Within the CBAC, with many local mission tours and some cross-cultural ones, young people were disciplined through their mission involvement.

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<sup>82</sup> Structured Interview #33, "Dan" 2013 03 04, 24.

<sup>83</sup> Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 213.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

As I have demonstrated in this subsection, communities of spiritual practice were part of the preparation phase for mission trips and the actual mission experience. Additionally, the mission tour experience was a discipleship experience within community. Within the youth mission tour movement within the CBAC, there was an emphasis on the following spiritual practices used in community: prayer, worship, teaching, compassion, serving, and mission.

In Chapter Two, I concluded that:

The thing that makes communities of spiritual practice a key marker of the movement is not as simplistic as the presence or absence of all these categories of spiritual practices. Instead, it is the intentionality behind a community acting on the commitment to make spiritual practices an integral part of their life together.<sup>85</sup>

There was an intentional focus on building spiritual practices into the mission experience within the youth mission tour movement. For this reason, I can conclude that the marker communities of spiritual practice is present within the youth mission tour movement.

## **7.6 Summary**

In this chapter, I have shown that youth leaders believed that the youth mission tour movement contributed significantly to the discipleship of young people within the CBAC. I critically examined these contributions by interaction with the key markers of discipling youth ministries that I drew from what Root and Dean identified as the theological turn (ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice).

Certain aspects of the youth mission tour movement encourage ecclesial integration. Yet, despite the marker being mainly present, it fails to achieve the fullness of ecclesial integration that I identified in Root and Dean's work on the theological turn. The primary shortcoming was that the youth mission tour movement had focused primarily on providing

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<sup>85</sup> See section 2.3.3 for a full description of communities of spiritual practice.

mission experiences and growth opportunities for young people but did not take the required step of looking to young people for leadership within the church.

Concerning place-sharing, the youth mission tour movement encourages place-sharing and strong relationships between young people and Christian adults. The evidence of close relationships and of adults desiring growth and maturing experiences for young people demonstrate much of this marker's presence. However, the lack of conclusive evidence of unconditional friendship means the marker is only moderately present.

The marker where the youth mission tour movement most closely matches with the theological turn is communities of spiritual practice. As I demonstrated in 7.5.3, when youth leaders involved their young people in mission experiences, there was an emphasis on spiritual practice in community in the preparation period and during the mission experience. The focus on communities of spiritual practice was so robust that it aligns nicely with the description of the marker that I developed from the work of Root and Dean within the theological turn.

The strong presence of these three markers of the theological turn indicates that the youth mission tour movement closely reflects Root and Dean's descriptions of the theological turn that I used as the foundation for my critical lens. Now that I have critically examined the significant CBAC youth discipleship materials in Chapter Five, responses from key CBAC youth leaders in Chapter Six, and the youth mission tour movement in this chapter, I will draw my final conclusions from the research.



## **8 CONCLUSION**

### **8.1 Introduction**

In this research project, I have critically examined discipleship within CBAC youth ministries from 1945-2010. I answered the question: what does a historical analysis and evaluation of the youth ministries within the *Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada* (1945-2010) reveal about the presence or absence of the key markers of a discipling youth ministry through the lens of the theological turn? I identified, developed, and used three markers of discipling youth ministry from the theological turn for critical analysis. These are ecclesial integration of young people, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice. Root and Dean identified the theological turn as a grassroots movement that pushed those involved in youth ministry toward improved discipleship methods through theological reflection on their ministry practice.

### **8.2 The Markers of the Theological Turn within CBAC Youth Ministries**

Throughout this research project, I have critically analyzed CBAC youth discipleship through the lens of the theological turn. In this section, I will pull together my arguments related to each of the markers, demonstrating that the theological turn developed from the grassroots level within CBAC youth ministries and pointing to the extent of presence or absence of these markers within CBAC youth ministry.



### 8.2.1 Ecclesial Integration

While the CBAC youth leaders that I interviewed and surveyed stated their belief in the importance of young people's ecclesial integration, from my research, I concluded that they did not often act upon these beliefs to integrate young people into the church. In this research project, I have demonstrated that much CBAC youth discipleship from 1945-2010 seems to have unintentionally moved away from ecclesial integration and not toward it. Youth leaders showed a concern for the local church, but they did not regularly focus on working toward integration. It was primarily in the late 1990s and early 2000s that youth leaders made intentional efforts to increase young people's ecclesial integration. This may have been because church attendance was noticeably decreasing within the CBAC,<sup>1</sup> but I suggest that it was also connected with the beginning of the theological turn in youth ministry. I conducted my critical examination of ecclesial integration through the lens that I developed in 2.3.1. There I explained that ecclesial integration included “involvement of young people in the life of a church in such a way that they are both participants that receive from others and leaders that contribute in various ways to ministries and the direction of the church.”<sup>2</sup>

In Chapter Five, I argued that three out of the four discipleship materials prominently used within CBAC youth ministries did not focus on ecclesial integration. From 1945 until the introduction of *The Discipleship Project* (2000), the three significant publications or programs that dealt with the discipleship of young people all lacked a focus on integration, or through their methodology, probably contributed to non-integration. The first set of materials endorsed by the CBAC, the *BYF Handbook*, may have unintentionally worked against young people's ecclesial integration. The handbook stressed fellowship among young people to such a high degree that it had the side effect of working against holistic, church-based discipleship.

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<sup>1</sup> As noted earlier, church membership in CBAC churches dropped from 65,346 in 1990 to 36,226 in 2019.

<sup>2</sup> See section 2.3.1 for a full description of ecclesial integration.

The next resource, *Keys to Successful Youth Ministry*, did not correct this problem, and this lack of intentional correction did nothing to move closer to the ecclesial integration of young people. The third resource, the materials and training of Sonlife Ministries, focused on developing youth ministries and excluded any church community emphasis. All three of these resources promoted various youth discipleship programs, but none intentionally encouraged integrating young people into congregational life.

The only resource that attempted to reverse this separation of young people from the church was *The Discipleship Project*. Popularized within the CBAC around the turn of the century, the material emphasized the interaction between young people and adults and encouraged young people to attend congregational worship. This emphasis on ecclesial integration coincides with the emergence of what Root and Dean identify as the theological turn. They argue that toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one area that began to gain more attention was the intentional integration of young people into the church.<sup>3</sup> They suggest that the theological turn started as a grassroots movement. I demonstrated that the introduction and widespread use of *The Discipleship Project* within the CBAC points to the presence of the theological turn.

I must note that the use of *The Discipleship Project* did not in any way mean CBAC churches achieved ecclesial integration. The project was a five-month program designed to assist in preparing young people for mission tour experiences. The program's main significance lies in the fact that this was the first to identify *and* attempt to address the non-integration of young people in the church.

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<sup>3</sup> Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*, 124.  
Dean, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*, 99.

As I critically examined the survey and interview responses from key CBAC youth leaders in Chapter Six, I made some further discoveries about young people's ecclesial integration. I discovered that some CBAC youth leaders valued ecclesial integration and aspired to see it in their churches. A few of them even believed that they were achieving this integration. They may have, but I found little other evidence to support their claims. Also, as I examined the connections between the professionalization of youth ministry and ecclesial integration, I discovered that youth pastors were often instrumental in setting up youth ministry structures that gathered young people in groups of their own and did not encourage them to interact with adults in the church.

The one area where youth leaders, specifically vocational youth pastors of the 1990s and early 21st century, encouraged ecclesial integration was within the mission tour movement. Young people were often involved with adults from the church as they prepared for mission experiences. Mission tours always involved adults, often some in addition to the regular youth ministry leaders. Ecclesial integration may have happened after the mission tour as well. Some CBAC youth leaders believed that involvement in mission tours led young people to become more involved in their church and go on to church leadership positions.

The lens that I developed from Root and Dean's work indicates that youth ministries that are part of the theological turn should intentionally work toward young people's ecclesial integration. Progress toward integration did not historically happen within the CBAC but began to emerge as part of the theological turn, specifically in relation to mission tour experiences, and *The Discipleship Project* used to prepare young people for mission. As I have summarized my arguments related to the marker of ecclesial integration from the theological turn, I now will do the same for the second marker, place-sharing.

### 8.2.2 Place-Sharing

Throughout this research project, I consistently observed that youth leaders who worked with young people within the CBAC demonstrated a desire to have strong relationships with those young people. However, this relational emphasis did not always mean that authentic place-sharing relationships were present in their youth ministries. In this subsection, I draw together what I have argued about place-sharing relationships within CBAC youth ministries. I demonstrated that the emphasis on place-sharing relationships increased over time, yet place-sharing relationships did not characterize most CBAC youth ministries. In 2.3.2, I explained place-sharing within the theological turn as adults within the church developing strong relationships with young people characterized by transformation through encounter with God in relationship with another, unconditional friendship, and advocacy.<sup>4</sup>

In Chapter Five, I demonstrated that an emphasis on strong relationships between young people and adults was evident in most of the primary discipleship materials used within the CBAC. The *BYF Handbook*, the earliest youth discipleship resource that I critically examined, did not demonstrate the presence of a place-sharing relationship. The ministry model that the program described led to a separation of young people from most adults within the church. A small number of adults were involved in this ministry model, but the descriptive material shows that their responsibilities were more organizational than relational.

As I critically examined *Keys to Successful Youth Ministry* in 5.3.2, I showed that CBAC youth leaders highly valued relationships with young people and that the program encouraged these relationships so much that some adults might have achieved place-sharing.

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<sup>4</sup> See section 2.3.2 for a full description of place-sharing.

In this program, adult-led cell groups were encouraged, and there was an emphasis on building strong relationships. I demonstrated that the material endorsed a program where place-sharing could potentially occur.

The next group of materials that I examined was the youth discipleship resources and training from Sonlife Ministries. Sonlife placed a robust emphasis on relationships, but the strong agenda of evangelism means that it was a strategy of influence. Friendship with the only set goal being evangelism is conditional and does not meet my description of place-sharing. Significantly, these materials were the only ones I examined that the CBAC did not develop, and Sonlife is the only resource that clearly worked against developing place-sharing relationships.

Finally, I examined the presence of place-sharing within *The Discipleship Project*. This youth discipleship resource was the only one to specifically encourage strong relationships between young people and adults from their church. By establishing short-term mentoring relationships and encouraging young people to attend and be actively involved in congregational worship, this resource intentionally pushed young people toward relationships with adults. The descriptive material encourages relationships to support and help young people; relationships characterized by the adult sharing parts of their life with the young person. Of all the discipleship materials that I examined, *The Discipleship Project* contained the most substantial programmatic encouragement toward place-sharing. Despite the moderate presence of place-sharing, a strategy of influence was also part of the motivation for establishing these relationships.

In Chapter six, as I critically examined the connections between CBAC youth leaders and place-sharing, I found that, without exception, youth leaders tried to establish strong relationships with young people. In addition, I showed that professional youth pastors often

set up ministry structures to enable young people to develop strong relationships with adults. They also sometimes provided direct encouragement for their youth leaders to build strong relationships with young people. Some of these relationships seem to meet the description of place-sharing from the theological turn, but most lacked some aspects.

Finally, as I examined the connections between place-sharing and youth mission tours in Chapter Seven, I discovered that place-sharing between young people and adults sometimes occurred within both mission tours and the preparation for them. This preparation often required young people to spend time with adults from their church, and adults who were not youth leaders often helped lead mission trips. These structures established settings that encouraged deep relationships, places where place-sharing could occur.

Despite the emphasis on relationships from both the youth discipleship materials endorsed by the CBAC and youth leaders, I concluded that most of these were not place-sharing relationships. They usually lacked unconditional friendship or advocacy, which I identified as an essential part of place-sharing in 2.3.2. Within my research, I discovered various levels of alignment with Root's explanation of place-sharing. Although not common, the most frequently found topics were references to unconditional friendship and intentionally entering the young person's life.

Like my discovery with ecclesial integration, I demonstrated that the presence of place-sharing increased over time. This marker of the theological turn is most present in the most recent youth discipleship resource. As well, I showed that youth pastors were instrumental in providing ministry structures and encouragement for place-sharing. One of the most significant settings for place-sharing was within youth mission tours and the preparation for them. Having brought together my arguments about ecclesial integration and

place-sharing, I will now move on to the final marker of the theological turn, communities of spiritual practice.

### **8.2.3 Communities of Spiritual Practice**

In this section, I bring together the arguments that I presented regarding the presence of communities of spiritual practice within CBAC youth ministries. Of the three markers of the theological turn, this one is found most consistently within CBAC youth leaders' responses and the youth discipleship resources that the CBAC endorsed. However, I have argued that communities of spiritual practices were primarily present in a uniquely CBAC way. Youth ministry communities regularly practiced prayer, Bible study, Scripture memory, and worship. However, it was rare for the broader church congregation and young people to do most spiritual practices together. In 2.3.3, I explained that the marker, communities of spiritual practices, is present when the intentional incorporation of spiritual practices within community is part of the discipleship process with young people.<sup>5</sup> As was the case with ecclesial integration and place-sharing, this development of communities of spiritual practice provides further evidence of the emergence of the theological turn in youth ministry within the CBAC.

In 5.2.3, I demonstrated that communities of spiritual practice were mainly absent in the earliest youth discipleship resource, the *BYF Handbook*. However, there was a slight presence. The handbook encourages the formation of cell groups where spiritual practices can occur. In addition to the traditional evangelical practices, the handbook also suggests that youth leaders could integrate silence and listening for God into these groups. The resource,

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<sup>5</sup> See section 2.3.3 for a full description of communities of spiritual practice.

*Keys to Effective Youth Work*, is very similar to the *BYF Handbook* in its encouragement for the presence of spiritual practices within CBAC youth ministries. It also focused primarily on the traditional evangelical practices and encouraged small groups to practice them together. Both the *BYF Handbook* and *Keys to Successful Youth Work* demonstrate a partial presence of the marker, communities of spiritual practice.

The discipleship materials from Sonlife Ministries strongly encourage individual discipleship practices but make minimal mention of these being practiced in community. The final and most recent discipleship material, *The Discipleship Project*, strongly encouraged discipleship practices. It required Bible reading, Scripture memory, prayer, meetings with a mentor, and service in both the church and community. While young people practiced most of these spiritual practices individually, it is notable that they practiced them simultaneously with other young people, so in this way, there was a community emphasis.

As I critically examined the responses that I received through my survey and interviews in Chapter Six, I discovered that youth leaders consistently encouraged spiritual practices. As in the materials, most of the encouragement was toward the traditional evangelical practices. However, some youth leaders pointed to a wider variety of practices than were encouraged through the materials, demonstrating that many different practices were used and encouraged within CBAC youth ministries. Both the variety and the presence of spiritual practices gradually increased from 1945 to 2010, with the most significant variation and presence of practices after the turn of the millennium in ministries led by youth pastors.

My respondents regularly claimed that they used spiritual practices in the youth ministry community and rarely pointed toward utilizing them with young people in the church congregation. Youth retreats were a specific context where youth pastors often introduced and used spiritual practices. My respondents referred to using silence, solitude,



meditation on Scripture, simplicity, and confession in retreat settings, in addition to the traditional, evangelical practices. Some also celebrated the Lord's Supper in retreat settings.

Throughout the resources endorsed by the CBAC and the responses from youth leaders, the spiritual practices of baptism and the Lord's Supper were rarely mentioned. This silence is significant as both practices are central to Baptist life and worship. No resource mentioned the Lord's Supper, and the only one that referred to baptism was the materials from Sonlife Ministries, which the CBAC did not produce. Youth leaders only referred to the Lord's Supper when it was included in youth events and made no mention of young people participating in it with their church congregation. I concluded that as these practices typically happen within the church congregation, youth pastors and youth leaders were primarily concerned with the practices they used within their youth ministry. This separation is further evidence that CBAC youth ministries often contributed to the split between youth ministries and congregational worship.

### **8.3 Reflection on Research**

As I have critically examined CBAC youth discipleship from 1945 to 2010 through the lens I developed from the theological turn, I have presented material that is helpful from both an academic perspective and for ecclesial youth ministry. In this section, I will briefly explain some of these contributions.

#### **8.3.1 Wide Application for the Lens of the Theological Turn in Youth Ministry**

First, I suggest that this research project has demonstrated that the theological turn is a useful lens for critical examination of youth ministry within the CBAC. I further propose that

the lens could have broad application for other youth ministry research. Using the three markers of the theological turn, I have demonstrated that it is a useful and appropriate lens for critically examining youth discipleship within the CBAC. Dean and Root identified and described the theological turn. As they both come from mainline traditions in the United States, in Chapter Two, I defended the use of their work as a lens for critiquing youth ministry in the CBAC. I proposed that the theological lens was appropriate and useful for four reasons. First, the movement emerges from youth ministry theology and theory. Second, Root and Dean approach it from a perspective that is both academic and theological. Third, the theological turn is concerned explicitly with ecclesiology. Finally, the diverse theological and denominational backgrounds of Root and Dean strengthens the lens.

Having used the lens in a very different setting from Dean and Root's contexts, I have demonstrated that it worked very well as a critical apparatus. Instead of the differences in context causing difficulties, they led to the illumination of issues and trends that I might not have been seen if I had used a lens from a similar perspective. Further, based on my experience, I am convinced that the theological turn could be used as a helpful critical lens to examine youth discipleship in a wide variety of geographical or denominational settings.

### **8.3.2 Historical Material Discovered, Collected and Analyzed**

Another contribution of my research is the amount of original historical material discovered, collected, and analyzed. I will submit much of this material to the Atlantic Baptist Archives (archives) upon completing my research project.

Arguably the most significant material is the survey and interview material that I gathered from CBAC youth workers. While I will not submit this material in its entirety to

the archives, I present significant portions of it through this dissertation. In addition, through my research, I located several documents that were not in the archives. Specifically, Robert Berry (1931-2020) provided me with two papers: 'Youth Pastors Info' and 'Why our Story is Important.' He has since deceased, but he wanted me to leave the documents with the archives. I also located quite a few issues of the Christian Training Communicator and several Sonlife booklets that were not in the archives. I will donate all of these upon completion.

In addition to these recovered materials, my gathered material about youth ministry within the CBAC is of great value to the study of Atlantic Baptist ministry generally and youth ministry specifically. Berry, speaking of youth ministries in the CBAC between 1950 and 1985, writes, "The story of youth ministries is largely an unwritten one in this period as well as in previous periods I suspect. Much of the anecdotal stories have either not been recorded or not officially reported."<sup>6</sup> This research project helps to fill the gap of historical youth ministry knowledge within the CBAC from 1945 to 2010.

### **8.3.3 The Theological Turn: A Healthy Correction for North American Youth Ministry**

Not only can aspects of the theological turn be used as a lens to critically examine youth ministry, but because of my research, I conclude that the theological turn provides a healthy correction for North American youth ministry. Through my examination of youth ministry literature in 2.2, I demonstrated that most was practical and was primarily developed from a pragmatic, not a theological perspective. The theological turn, identified by Root and

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<sup>6</sup> Berry, "Why Our Story Is Important."

Dean, began to emerge in the 1990s. The movement has led to youth leaders and writers placing significant attention on correcting and improving North American youth ministry.

When youth ministry is critiqued and (re)developed a theological reflection on ministry praxis is required. The pragmatic, reflexive approach is found inadequate. History demonstrated that late 20<sup>th</sup> century models of youth ministry were at times effective in attracting large numbers of young people but were often inadequate to provide discipleship that would grow spiritually passionate young people into committed adult disciples of Jesus Christ. One result of theological reflection, a movement that my research is part of, is that youth ministry practitioners and educators have realized that much more attention must be given to areas like ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice. These three markers I have devoted so much attention to are only three characteristics of the theological turn. While I believe they are very important corrective areas for youth ministry, theological reflection on ministry praxis is also especially needed as the North American church plots a plan that addresses important youth ministry issues like evangelism to young people, gender identity and sexual orientation, justice and human rights, and many others. In this time of rapid cultural shifts, pragmatic approaches to youth ministry will fall short in even more devastating ways than they have in the past. The theological turn reminds us that theological reflection is necessary now more than ever before.

#### **8.3.4 Importance of Youth Ministry within the CBAC**

Although much of my writing has been critical of CBAC youth ministry, I argue that it has at the same time proven its importance. Many mainline churches lost their young people by following the World Council of Churches, 1965 directive of integrating young people

instead of running separate programs for them.<sup>7</sup> Within the CBAC, large numbers of youth continued to be attracted to church activities. As I showed, their attraction to youth ministries did not consistently lead toward ecclesial integration, but in times of such extreme cultural shift and secularization, youth ministries represented the Church to young people who would have otherwise had no contact with it.

As I pointed out in 1.5, CBAC youth ministries attracted more Atlantic Canadian young people than any other organization except the public-school system.<sup>8</sup> When this fact is coupled with the large number of young people who attended CBAC organized youth events and the claim that the CBAC event *Tidal Impact* was the largest youth mission tour in North America, consistently attracting over 1,000 young people and leaders, the conclusion is that CBAC youth ministries had an impact on a large number of young people. This impact with young people might not have regularly led to ecclesial integration, place-sharing or communities of spiritual practice, but it did serve to introduce young people to a life of faith and some aspects of the local church.

### **8.3.5 Youth Ministries Need to More Fully Understand their Audience**

Another area where my research contributes is that it reminds youth leaders that they need to learn who their ministry audience is and intentionally and strategically design youth ministries that meet the real spiritual needs of that audience. The reactive and pragmatic approach that I described has frequently emphasized large numbers over discipleship. Church leadership was usually pleased if the youth group was full and events were happening. However, young people from Christian families were often treated the same and taught the

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<sup>7</sup> Mercy, "Youth in God's World: A Response after Twenty-Four Years," 235.

<sup>8</sup> Bruce Fawcett, Personal Correspondence, 2019 08 16.

same basic things as young people who had no Christian knowledge, so few young people gained a depth of faith and spiritual practice that would sustain them.

The theological turn emphasizes place-sharing, where adults develop deep relationships with young people and, through encountering Jesus Christ in these relationships, both grow spiritually. In addition, it emphasizes communities of spiritual practice that introduce young people to methods of nurturing their spiritual growth and health. It also emphasizes ecclesial integration that empowers young people to be a full part of their local church congregation, both serving and leading.

There will undoubtedly continue to be a need for youth ministry initiatives that youth leaders uniquely design to attract young people and introduce them to the Christian faith. However, these initiatives cannot be prioritized over strategies to integrate and deeply disciple young people who have already made faith commitments or are already generally knowledgeable about the Christian faith. The reflection encouraged by the theological turn reminds youth leaders that they must engage both groups of young people in unique ways that address their spiritual needs. In the first footnote of this research project, I pointed to the work of Moser and Nel. They propose that one of the most significant problems in North American youth ministry has been youth leaders not knowing their audience, and because of this, not introducing them to spiritual practices that would sustain their spiritual growth.<sup>9</sup> My research supports their proposal.

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<sup>9</sup> Moser, and Nel, "The Connection between Youth Ministry's Division of Evangelism and Discipleship, and the Lack of Retention of Youth in North American Churches," 8.

## 8.4 How would Bonhoeffer Respond to this Research?

In this research project, the life and practice of Dietrich Bonhoeffer has been an important thread. I used Root's *place-sharing* interpretation of Bonhoeffer's *Stellvertretung* concept as one of my key markers of the theological turn in youth ministry. I extensively used Root's book, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together*. I am intrigued by the question of Bonhoeffer's response to my writing. As I interact with Bonhoeffer primarily through the writing of Root, would Bonhoeffer agree with my arguments and conclusions? I believe there are two very important Bonhoeffer writings that most directly relate to youth ministry. One is the short but poignant 'Thesis on Youth Work and the Church,' and the other is the catechism that he developed to prepare young people for confirmation.

In his 'Thesis on Youth Work and the Church,' his first thesis states:

Since the days of the youth movement, church youth work has often lacked that element of Christian sobriety that alone might enable it to recognize that the spirit of youth is not the Holy Spirit and that the future of the church is not youth itself, but rather the Lord Jesus Christ alone. It is the task of youth not to reshape the church, but rather to listen to the word of God; it is the task of the church not to capture the youth, but to teach and proclaim the word of God.<sup>10</sup>

Bonhoeffer here provides an important reminder that despite the efforts of youth leaders toward effective youth ministry, the focus needs to be on Jesus Christ alone and that the overall task of the church is to teach and proclaim the word of God. In his fourth thesis, Bonhoeffer expands on this to state that the church's task is also the task of young people: "It is to serve the church-community by hearing, learning, and practicing the word of God."<sup>11</sup> Thus, for Bonhoeffer, young people are to be a full part

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<sup>10</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, 115.

<sup>11</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*.

of the church, not a group that enjoys any sort of privilege. They are to be participants who hear and learn with everyone else, disciples who practice their faith together.

In his catechism, he explained the importance of the church:

Do I need the church? If you knew what the church is, and for what it needs you, you would not ask, but rejoice. The glad things would leave you no rest as long as you could have them. You would look for the community where one stands in prayer for the other, says all to him and forgives all, and for the promise that here ‘one shall be Christ to the other.’<sup>12</sup>

In this portion of his catechism, Bonhoeffer affirms the integration of young people in the church. In addition, he affirms authentic place-sharing relationships by explaining “says all to him and forgives all” and “one shall be Christ to the other.” He also touches on the church as a community of spiritual practice as he explains that it is “the community where one stands in prayer for the other.”

It is very evident from both of these sources that Bonhoeffer held a high view of the local church and believed that young people had a very important place within it. In addition to what Bonhoeffer wrote about ministry to young people, we are also privy to his methods when he worked with them. Eberhard Bethge<sup>13</sup> reports that when Bonhoeffer worked with young people, he visited them in their homes and invited groups of them into his home.<sup>14</sup> He lived out a life of place-sharing with them as he built authentic relationships with the young people, devoting his free evenings to spending time with them. As well, Bonhoeffer creatively used storytelling, worship and other spiritual practices in community with the young people. His concern for his

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<sup>12</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords*, ed. Edwin Robertson, trans. John Bowden, vol. 1, 4 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 144.

<sup>13</sup> Bethge was a friend of Bonhoeffer, and he invested many years in translating Bonhoeffer’s writing and writing a biography about him.

<sup>14</sup> Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, 94, 109-10.



confirmation students' spiritual development and general well-being did not end when he finished the classes, but he maintained ongoing relationships with them afterward.<sup>15</sup>

As I reflect on the writings and practices of Bonhoeffer, I believe he would agree with my emphasis on ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice. These three markers were priorities for him in both his writing and practice.

## **8.5 Toward a New Understanding of Youth Discipleship within the CBAC**

Throughout this research project, I critically examined aspects of CBAC youth discipleship through the lens of the theological turn, which Root and Dean identified. As explained in Chapter One, both Root and Dean come from and serve within mainline denominations in the United States. As I critically examined CBAC youth ministries through the lens that I developed from their work, I found it a very profitable exercise, and I argue that it provides a structure for developing a new understanding of youth discipleship. This understanding builds on the strengths of existing youth ministries, and using the critical lens, identifies areas where youth workers could, or should, strengthen ministries.

The three markers of the theological turn are areas that some CBAC youth ministry leaders endorse. I have shown that some affirm ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice as essential aspects of discipleship. However, they admit that the youth ministries they led often fell short in these three areas, especially in ecclesial integration and place-sharing.

In Chapter One, I argued that there were many strengths in the youth ministries of the CBAC, specifically the size of the youth ministry network and the many opportunities for

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 226-30.

large worship, mission, and Christian growth gatherings for young people. CBAC youth ministries have at times grown large, and I suggest that the next step is to grow deep through the intentional development of youth ministry models that incorporate the markers of the theological turn. CBAC youth leaders in local churches, the denomination, and the two denominational schools (Crandall University and Acadia Divinity College) need to work toward this youth ministry depth in teaching, research, and practice. Strategies to develop ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice are necessary to strengthen the youth ministries of the CBAC.

## **8.6 Future Research**

As I worked on this research project, I quickly became aware that, because of my research scope, there would be many areas that I would not be able to engage critically. In this section, I will highlight a few of these, suggesting areas that either I or others might study in the future.

In this research project, I used the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada as research subjects. I could have used the same methodology to critically examine youth discipleship in any other ecclesial context. I chose the CBAC only because it is the dominant evangelical denomination in my region and one with which I have been closely involved. The CBAC made a fascinating research context because, within it, noted growth in youth discipleship coincided with Root and Dean identifying the grassroots emergence of the theological turn.

Similar research could be done with other groups of churches. Both Root and Dean bring a wide range of experience and academic competence to their introduction of the theological turn. As I suggested in 8.3.1, I am convinced that the lens could be used to

examine youth ministry in a wide variety of contexts. The three markers of the theological turn are markers that would translate easily into diverse youth ministry settings. They highlight areas of youth ministry widely accepted and understood to be important in most, if not all, Christian denominations.

Second, I suggest research into developing practical methods of building the markers of the theological turn into CBAC youth ministries. For example, a researcher could develop strategies to introduce ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice into youth ministries and then measure these through qualitative and quantitative methods. This research would have academic potential and offer significant assistance to churches struggling in these areas.

I focused primarily on youth leaders within the CBAC. I examined the resources they used, articles and books they wrote, and their responses from my survey and interviews. The third area for further research could examine the perspective of young people brought up within the CBAC to see if their experience in ecclesial integration, place-sharing, and communities of spiritual practice was similar to the understanding of their youth leaders. This fascinating endeavour would provide an understanding of the effectiveness of CBAC youth discipleship and point toward possible improvements.

Finally, I recognize that this research is now somewhat dated. However, I argue that as this is a historical examination, the period studied does not negatively impact the study or any of my conclusions. However, there is an opportunity for further research in the period from 2010 to the present. It would help to examine youth ministry in the CBAC during this period to see if any further development in youth discipleship practice could be attributed to the theological turn. In addition, it would be very interesting to learn if the theological turn

contributed to a theological response in youth ministries to the 2020-2021 pandemic and all the issues that it raised for youth ministry.

In this section, I have highlighted four areas for future study that I think would be very profitable for academic pursuit. They would also be research areas that could assist Christian churches struggling to find help as they work to disciple their young people.

## **8.7 Final Words**

This dissertation has been a labour of love. As I stated in Chapter One, I was motivated to research this area because of my life-long ministry to young people and the various youth ministry roles that I have had. I believe this research is essential and addresses some youth ministry areas within the CBAC that need to receive attention and help. While this project is academic by nature, I suggest that there are also some significant practical implications.

The separation of youth ministry from broader ecclesial life is an area that the CBAC must address. Church leaders need to envision how this ecclesial integration can be encouraged creatively. CBAC denominational staff need to be catalysts for discussions in this area as they work with youth leaders. As well, denominational schools need to teach models of theological reflection that prepare youth ministry leaders and pastors to respond to practical ministry issues as well as cultural shifts and ethical challenges.

In addition, CBAC youth ministry leaders should work to build place-sharing relationships into their youth ministry structures and to continue to move away from strategies of influence. In my research, I identified that all CBAC youth leaders highly valued strong relationships with young people. It should not take a lot of effort to convince them that these relationships are worth more investment. If these relationships can be changed to

include place-sharing elements like transformation, unconditional friendship, and advocacy, it would be a very significant development.

Finally, the one marker of the theological turn where youth leaders are doing the best is in developing communities of spiritual practice. Many youth leaders introduce and use spiritual practices within their youth ministry community, primarily through retreats and mission tours. With intentionality, these communities of spiritual practice could become more embedded, expanded to involve more adults from the church congregation and involve a broader range of discipleship practices.

I set out to discover what a historical analysis and evaluation of the youth ministries within the CBAC (1945-2010) would reveal about the presence or absence of the key markers of a discipling youth ministry as identified in the theological turn. Beyond demonstrating the presence or absence of key markers, I have shown that the CBAC was one setting where the theological turn in youth ministry occurred.

## Appendix A: Letter to Identify Research Subjects

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am currently working on a research project that looks at the effectiveness of youth discipleship methods that have been used within our Convention over the last 70 years. As someone who was/is highly involved in youth ministry, could you please suggest up to five of the most significant youth pastors/leaders for each decade? If you don't have knowledge of a time period, please leave it blank.

If a person was active in youth ministry for more than one decade, please put their name in each appropriate decade. If you know the church/ministry where they served, please add that information as well.

Thanks so much,

Rev. Dale O. Stairs

M.Phil./Ph.D. candidate, International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague

1940's

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1950's

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1960's

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1970's

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 5.

1980's

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1990's

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

2000-2010

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



## Appendix B: Survey

### Youth Ministry Survey

**\*1. Personal Waiver:**

**I understand that this research is for the use of the M.Phil/Ph.D research of Rev. Dale O. Stairs. I hereby give my permission for all material gathered through this survey/interview to be used in full or in part by him as he conducts research and writes his dissertation. I give him permission for him to quote excerpts from this survey/interview in his research. I also give him permission to contact me for clarification on any answers that I provide.**

**I understand that personal information from this survey, including my name and personal details, will not be used in the published research and my transcript will be coded so that only the primary researcher will know to whom the transcript relates.**

Name

Date

Location



# Youth Ministry Survey

## Section 1

### \*2. Please tell us about yourself

Name:

Age:

Gender:

### \*3. Please mark the decades in which you were involved in youth leadership

- 1940's
- 1950's
- 1960's
- 1970's
- 1980's
- 1990's
- 2000-2009
- After 2009

### \*4. 4. In what youth ministry roles did you serve? (Check all that apply)

- Volunteer local church youth leader
- Local church youth pastor
- Senior or solo pastor who worked with youth
- Denominational youth worker
- Youth ministry professor or teacher
- Other (please specify)

## Youth Ministry Survey

### \*5. What training or preparation did you receive for youth ministry? (Check all that apply)

- Personal reading (books and journals, online sources, etc.)
- Undergraduate degree in youth ministry
- Certificate of youth ministry (earned concurrent with an undergraduate degree)
- Some Bachelor's level courses in youth ministry
- Master's degree in youth ministry
- Some Master's level courses in youth ministry
- General theological or ministry training without youth ministry focus
- Training from 'Sonlife Ministries'
- Seminars and training opportunities organized by CABC

Other (please specify)

### \*6. Which of these options has provided the most significant source of youth ministry preparation for you?

- Personal reading (books and journals)
- Undergraduate degree in youth ministry
- Certificate of youth ministry (earned concurrent with an undergraduate degree)
- Some Bachelor's level courses in youth ministry
- Master's degree in youth ministry
- Some Master's level courses in youth ministry
- General theological or ministry training without youth ministry focus
- Training from 'Sonlife Ministries'
- Seminars and training opportunities organized by CABC

Other (please specify)

# Youth Ministry Survey

## Section 2

**\*7. In what contexts did youth ministry happen in the period of time when you were a youth leader? (check all that apply)**

- Baptist Young People's Union
- Camping Initiatives
- Sunday School
- Midweek programs (I.e. Awana, Christian Service Brigade, Pioneer Clubs, etc.)
- Small group ministries
- Church, Region or Association Youth Rallies
- Para-church youth rallies (Youth for Christ, Intersarsity, etc.)
- Campus-based ministries (Navigators, Intersarsity, etc)
- Youth mission trips
- Mentoring relationships
- Other (please specify)

**\*8. Please rate the discipleship value of these contexts based on your experience:**

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Uncertain	N/A
Baptist Young People's Union	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Camping Initiatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sunday School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Midweek programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small group ministries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Church, Region or Association Youth Rallies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Para-church youth rallies (Youth for Christ, Intersarsity, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campus-based ministries (Navigators, Intersarsity, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth mission trips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Youth Ministry Survey

**\*9. How would you define effective discipleship of youth?**

**\*10. What were the primary discipleship materials that you used in working with youth?  
(check as many as apply)**

- Purchased materials or curriculum
- Materials or curriculum produced by Baptist Convention
- Personally developed materials or curriculum
- Other (please specify)

**\*11. If you used purchased material or curriculum, please list those that you relied on the most**

**\*12. What were the primary settings for youth discipleship? (check as many as apply)**

- Sunday Worship
- Sunday School
- Youth group
- Mission experiences
- Small Group Bible Study
- Mentoring Relationships
- Other (please specify)

**\*13. In your opinion, how effective was youth discipleship in the youth ministry/ministries that you led?**

## Youth Ministry Survey

**\*14. As you reflect on the youth ministry/ministries in which you led, what were the most significant factors that led toward proper discipleship of youth?**

**\*15. What youth ministry books were most informative for your youth ministry?**

**\*16. What youth ministry speakers or writers were most informative for your youth ministry?**

**\*17. What theologians or Christian writers were most informative for your youth ministry?**

**\*18. Please estimate the percentage of youth that you worked with who were still active in church (yours or another) at age 25?**

**\*19. If you were going to develop a discipleship strategy for youth, what would be the primary components of this strategy?**

## Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about the youth ministries that you were involved with (when, role, team worked with)
  - a. As a youth
  - b. As a volunteer leader
  - c. As a paid youth leader or youth pastor
  - d. In any other capacity
2. Were there any theologians or Christian writers who had a significant influence on your ministry to youth? Who were they and what influence did they have?
3. In your opinion, what are the key elements of effective youth discipleship?
4. What discipleship practices have you seen to make the most significant long-term impact in the lives of the youth you worked with?
5. Did you intentionally use spiritual disciplines as part of your youth discipleship?
6. If yes to question five, what disciplines did you use and how did you use them?
7. Briefly comment on your use and the effectiveness of the following discipleship practices and methods:
  - a. Individual mentoring
  - b. Small group Bible Studies
  - c. Mission opportunities
  - d. Service opportunities
  - e. Youth worship events or youth rallies
  - f. Discipleship as preparation for mission experiences
  - g. Leadership training and opportunities
  - h. Camping ministry
  - i. Youth retreats
  - j. Evangelism training events
  - k. Youth group or other regular youth events
  - l. Sunday School
  - m. School or campus ministries
  - n. Other practices or methods
8. Is there any other information you would like to share about your involvement in youth discipleship?



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