

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

RETHINKING DISCIPLESHIP IN THE AREA OF

HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY:

KEY STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMING URBAN YOUTH

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## ABSTRACT

TITLE: RETHINKING DISCIPLESHIP IN THE AREA OF  
HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY:  
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Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014

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According to a Barna Research Group study titled “Third Millennium Teens” 60% of young people will leave the church permanently or for an extended period. Decreasing the number of urban youth ages 14-18 from defecting from the church and to increase retention of church dropouts using Twenty-First Century transformational strategies is the goal of this project. Having served as a youth pastor the writer will analyze key strategies that will benefit high school ministry by raising the bar on expectations and by building future leaders in the church.

This project will include an anonymous survey of 125 participants aged 18-24 and the results will be analyzed and displayed in graph form. This will serve as a visual representation of youth’s interest in the topic, their involvement in church, and their willingness to apply strategies to their personal lives. The desired outcome is to give strategies to strengthen youth ministry and the church to impact the world for Christ.

Abstract length: 150

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

The background that led to the candidate's interest and awareness in this study was a reoccurring theme seen in a twenty year period; from five to ten thousand at-risk youth from the Miami Job Corps Center in Miami, Florida, they have all said that they heard about Christ but want to know how to have a relationship with Him. Job Corps is the largest career technical training/education program for students ages 16 through 24. It is a U.S. Department of Labor program established in 1964 that provides 100,000 students per year with hands-on training in America's fastest growing careers. The candidate has for twenty years conducted bible studies for young people of various ethnic backgrounds like Hispanics, African Americans, Caucasians, Jamaicans, Haitians, Bahamians, Cubans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, as well as counseled these youth of different religious affiliations like Christian denominations, cults, occults, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, Santeria, Rastafarianism, Alien Occult, Ouija Board users, drug addicts, Satanism, skin heads, Catholics, Mormons, Voodoo workers, Crypts, Bloods, Latin Kings, Atheists, Witches, Warlocks, Homosexuals, Hebrew occults, inner-city gang members, Seventh Day Adventists, incest victims, strippers, prostitutes and more. Through experiences of counseling and teaching these urban youth, there were a few implications noted—the church expected very little of them, there was no evidence of discipleship and ninety percent came from dysfunctional families. Incidentally many were once saved in the church but couldn't resist the tentacles of the world. Many are still longing for a relationship with Christ in the midst of a post-modern culture.

The author felt compelled to identify factors within the church that affect these young people and to introduce key strategies for transforming urban youth to "live out" their faith and

create a positive normative culture. The book of Jude 1:3 says “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and extort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.<sup>1</sup>” The church must battle for the souls of these young people against the world that is bent on discipling according to the world customs.

The goal of this project is to decrease the number of urban young people from defecting from the faith and church and to increase retention of high school church dropouts by using 21<sup>st</sup> century cutting edge transformational strategies for urban youth. These key strategies will benefit high school ministry/churches by restoring family discipleship and family services by modeling the Apostle Paul/Timothy mentoring model, raising the bar of expectations, creating relevant topics for youth, increasing youth’s hunger for Christ, calling for deep convictions based on scripture, analyzing Hebrew versus Greek Educational models for relevance, building future leaders in the Church, and preparing them for transition into college.

#### Terminology Defined

Key words are necessary to define here before investigating the nature of the problem for clarity and understanding into the world of urban high school ministry.

Urban: is defined as a populated city or town.

Post-modernity: “is the denial of personal objectivity, the uncertainty of knowledge, the death of any all-inclusive explanation, the denial of the inherent goodness of knowledge, the rejection of progress, the supremacy of community-based knowledge, and the disbelief in

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1. Jude 1:3 KJV

2. Millard J Erickson, *Post-modernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 19.

objective inquiry.”<sup>2</sup> Disciple: “a person who has trusted Christ for salvation and has surrendered completely to Him. He or she is committed to practicing the spiritual disciplines in community and developing to their full potential for Christ and His mission”<sup>3</sup>

Discipleship: “the process of guiding individual disciples to grow in spiritual maturity and to discover and use their gifts, talents and abilities in fulfillment of Christ’s mission.”<sup>4</sup>

Transform: in the book of Romans 12:2 is the Greek verb (μεταμορφόω) metamorphoo, defined as the “obligation to undergo a complete change under the power of God.”<sup>5</sup>

Syncretism: is “when the values of the world are mixed with the true faith and obscurantism is when rules and tradition obscure the true faith and confuse the world.”<sup>6</sup>

Generation Y: The author called this generation of young people between the ages of 14-24 Generation Y because they asked a plethora of questions about life, God, money, relationships, music, sports, death, family, war, and religion that merit answers.

### Statement of the Problem

There are many reasons why young people are defecting in urban high school ministry at an alarming rate, but low expectation in youth ministry seems to be a universal problem in the church of America. In the urban communities there appears to be a greater impression and influence in the lives of today’s youth by the culture than the church, and in many cases appears to be more effective in the area of discipleship which will be investigated later. Unfortunately, for many of our young people the church is no longer culturally relevant and biblically based.

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3. Jonathan Falwell, Innovate Church. (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishers, 2008), 6.

4. Ibid.

5. Romans 12:2 Version

6. James Strong, The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Red-Letter Edition (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 162.

The church expects very little from its youth and that's exactly what it gets! The author agrees with Dr. Elmer Town's (Dean of the School of Religion at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia) assessment on church growth—"in reference to God using certain methods early in the Twenty-first Century compared to years ago, many are no longer relevant: When time changes, adjust your methods or you will lose your effectiveness...but never change your message or your principles!"<sup>7</sup> In other words if the church loses its edge and no longer challenge our young people to "live out" their faith, we have all lost a generation. Many have abandoned church and the faith because they lack something that's needed in Christ which is tough love—to them it means you care about them when you show them this kind of love. Of course there will be some resistance, but that's when the church can earn their trust through the leading of the Holy Spirit and consistent discipleship.

In support of this, the fifth book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy 21:18-21 sets a standard in expectation and gives a community approach to raising youth in ancient Israel:

If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or his mother and though they chasten him will not listen to them. Then his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, and they shall say to the elders of his city, This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey our voice. He is a glutton and a drunkard. Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death: so you shall cleanse out the evil from your midst, an all Israel shall hear and [reverently] fear.<sup>8</sup>

Although this scripture is under the Mosaic Law and is a bit extreme, Jewish scholars say no parent has ever brought their son or daughter to be executed. The point is that the Jewish young people were expected to govern themselves according to biblical principles, and the Jewish community held them accountable because there was an expectation that youth

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7. Elmer Towns and Ed Stetzer, *Perimeters of the Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 34.

8. Deuteronomy 21:18-21 AMP

understood. Today among Orthodox Judaism “according to Jewish law, a child who reaches the age of thirteen accepts responsibility of obeying the commandments, takes a giant step toward adulthood and who’s now liable for his own mistakes, this is called *bar mitzvah* for boys, *bat mitzvah* for girls as well as other committeemen’s with a Rabbi, curriculum and awards.”<sup>9</sup> Also, the child has to read from the torah scroll in Hebrew which quite the expectation at that age.

Islam is successful at discipling youth because they expect them to live and die for their faith. Every “Muslim parent is encouraged to instill fundamental Islamic concepts to their teens, to help him live a righteous, upright, rounded personality who can contribute to himself, his family, the Muslim community, and humanity in general.”<sup>10</sup> The evidence of their success is obvious according to the latest “U.S. Religion Census that was released on May 1, 2012; the fastest growing religion in America is Islam. The data for the census was compiled by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, and the results were released by the Association of Religion Data Archives. From the year 2000 to the year 2010, the census found that the number of Muslims living inside the United States increased by about 1 million to 2.6 million – a stunning increase of 66.7 percent.”<sup>11</sup>

As the church it must follow Jesus’ command by making disciples and fulfilling His expectation in Matthew 28:19-20, “Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days, to the [very]

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9. Elmer L. Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, 11 *Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2007), 16.

10. Joanne Doades, *Parenting Jewish Teens: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006), 12.

11. Khattab, H. "Muslim Teens: Today's Worry, Tomorrow's Hope" (by Ekram and Mohamed R. Beshir). *American Journal Of Islamic Social Sciences* 20, no. 1 (2003): 156-157.(pg. 105) Beltsville, Maryland.

close and consummation of the age.<sup>12</sup>” In these scriptures Christ expects the church to make disciples young and old, regardless of ethnicity or race.

The climate in the church determines how much attention is given to youth ministry. There appears to be two major views about youth ministry today. One camp view is “we’re asking the church do what God designed the family to accomplish. Discipleship and multi-generational faithfulness begins and ends at home. At be, the church is to play a supporting role as it” ‘equips the saints for the work of the ministry.’<sup>13</sup> The other camp believes “if we’re going to reclaim the next generation then the home and the church must join forces together like never before.”<sup>14</sup> Although both camps are correct in their assessment of the role of the family and church; however, among Christian urban teenagers the family is broken. After twenty years of ministry experience, talking, teaching these young people, and witnessing their struggle with fatherlessness is so real that this generation cannot even fathom it. Most Christian urban youth comes from dysfunctional families where in many cases fathers aren’t home, and the mothers must work.

The statistics of the plight of these adolescents are "young men who grow up in homes without fathers are twice as likely to end up in jail as those who come from traditional two-parent families...those boys whose fathers were absent from the household had double the odds

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12. Matthew 28:19-20 AMP

13. Ephesians 4:12 ESV

14. The Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies. U.S released Religion Census 2010: Summary findings May 1, 2012 [http://www.rcms2010.org/press\\_release/ACP%2020120501.pdf](http://www.rcms2010.org/press_release/ACP%2020120501.pdf)

15. Voddie Baucham Jr, Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes To Raise Sons And Daughters Who Walk With God (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2011), 9.

16. Cynthia C. Harper and Sara S. McLanahan, "Father Absence and Youth Incarceration." *Journal of Research On Adolescence* 14, no. 3 (2004): 369-397.

of being incarcerated -- even when other factors such as race, income, parent education and urban residence were held constant.<sup>15</sup> Cynthia Harper of the University of Pennsylvania and Sara S. McLanahan of Princeton University cited in "Father Absence and Youth Incarceration." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 14 (September 2004): 369-397.<sup>16</sup> Among these Christian urban youth, if the body of Christ believes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that it's solely the family's responsibility, it have all but lost a generation and the future church. On other hand, if the church believes it's in a crisis, then it must act now and come beside the parents and single parents as the church. Or it may be witnessing the unfolding of a lawless generation rather than a Godly generation. Psalms 11:3 states, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the [unyieldingly] righteous do, or what has He [the Righteous One] wrought or accomplished?" As the church the body of Christ is witnessing the destruction of the family, and possibly future believers in this twenty-first century, thus it must pray for this moral and spiritual foundation to be rebuilt in this generation.

The second aspects of the problem in the urban church culture are leaders, lay members, and parents that discourage the youth. Many are seen as distractions; some think that young people aren't the responsibility of the church; and some conduct youth ministry as business as usual. In many historically black churches youth are told "speak when spoken to, or that kids are to be seen but not heard" because of generational gaps as well as tradition.

The issue is that the culture has changed, single family households are on the increase, but an outdated church tradition without Christ has put a stumbling block in the path of these youth. This hypocrisy comes from the pages of scriptures itself in Mark 10:13-14 "And they

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17. Psalm. 11:3 AMP

18. Mark 10:13-14 KJV

brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, permit the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.<sup>18</sup>”

The Greek verb “(ἀφίημι) *aphiemi* meaning permit,” in verse 14 is a first person singular present active indicative tense.”<sup>19</sup> The present tense is a continuous action in the present. In this verse the disciples were preventing the children from meeting Jesus, Christ rebukes them from becoming a barrier by saying “permit,” meaning allow these children to come. This means that even in the twenty-first century Christ expects and accepts youth as gifts to come to Him over and over in the present. “Since the church no longer hears or sees youth, but only creates compartmentalized ministry for them where they are not empowered to explore and use their gifts, the church no longer lives in ways that are theologically relevant to young people. Because their voices are oftentimes unheard or only heard outside of the church, such as hip hop music, for example, the church misses the gifts of an important part of the intergenerational connection.”<sup>20</sup> In many cases if young people aren’t allowed to minister to the Lord with their gifts at home and in the church, the secular arena will gladly give them a voice at a magnitude the church cannot even imagine.

In many urban communities post-modernism appears to have a larger sphere of influence than the church over our young people. Post-modernity is a momentous paradigm shift “from what has been accepted as morally, ethically or way of thinking as well as a lifestyle.”<sup>21</sup> This

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19. Welsey J. Perschbacher, ed. *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers), 63.

20. Anne Streaty Wimberly, *Keep it Real: Working with Today's Black Youth* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 25.

21. Henry Blackaby, “Postmodernism: Is It a Fad or Here to Stay?” *On Mission*, September-October 2002, 16.



challenging worldview has made inroads in redefining the church, culture, traditional marriage, traditional relationships and family. The consequence of this worldview is exhibited in the culture our youth permeates, music, lifestyles, violence, trends, fads, in which they are unable to oppose the onslaught of heavy artillery from popular secular entertainers, music and athlete's saturating it with their ideology, new age beliefs and rhetoric. "Culture seems to be influencing the church more than the church is influencing the culture in which the church is located. It's not one single factor that is influencing the church but rather the whole thrust of society."<sup>22</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ must awaken from her slumber and answer the clarion call of the gospel of Jesus Christ to "go then and make disciples of all the nations"<sup>23</sup> which is a command. Many churches in the urban communities face additional challenges like drug dealers, drugs, gangs, other cults competing for the souls of our young people.

#### Statement of Limitations

Due to the nature and scope of this thesis, the following issues will not be addressed:

The study will not allow an exhaustive study on urban high school ministry due to time.

The study will not allow me to fix the problem, but only to examine and understand the problem.

Minors will not be interviewed, surveyed, or given a questionnaire.

The research isn't inclusive of all urban high school ministries.

This has not been tested, however in a few years research will be tested and I give you my final answer.

Youth ministry appear to be a spinoff of Sunday School, and urban high school ministry starting point is quite vague possibly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as its under research.

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22. Elmer Towns and Ed Stetzer, *Perimeters Of The Light: Biblical Boundaries For The Emerging Church* (Wheaton, Illinois:Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 80-81.

23. Matthew 28:19 AMP

## Theoretical Basis

The theoretical perspective of culture, education, psychological, theological, historical aspects of urban high school ministry will be explored in order to most effectively reach young people.

### *Culture*

Cultural is a way of life. Church culture and high school ministry culture in many cases are parallel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Youth Ministry is a carbon copy of youth culture; youth culture is a carbon copy of adult culture. The church has compromised with the world by using secular methods instead of biblical methods to evangelize and disciple our young people. Statistics have proven this over and over in which will be investigated later in the project. If the future church doesn't see a difference in church culture and secular culture, they will not embrace Christ or His Church. The saying goes "the world is interested in Jesus, but it's His church they struggle with." On the other hand, many Missional Churches are biblically faithful to the scriptures, yet their high school ministry operates in syncretism or obscurantism. High school ministry must be missional focused like a healthy church is in all of its programs, messages, vision, mission statement, evangelism, discipleship and curriculum in order to be effective for Christ in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Hughes Scale below has been developed by Robert Hughes, professor of missions at Clear Creek Bible College in Pineville, Kentucky. It is depicted as three quadrants of cultural compromise A, C, and D in the church and quadrant B is the example of "the Missional Church which is committed to cultural relevance and to biblical authority."<sup>24</sup> The author also sees the

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24. Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Post Modern Age* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 16.

relevance of the Hughes Scale in high school ministry—if the church can’t make a distinction between being culturally relevant and biblically based, what about high school ministry? In high school ministry each quadrant of the Hughes Scale can also represents some form of culture compromise in high school ministry except quadrant B. Quadrant A high school ministry is biblically sound, but culturally blinded as a stated in the diagram. Quadrant C high school ministry focus is tradition, but is biblically illiterate as stated in the diagram. Quadrant D is culturally relevant, yet abandoned the faith as stated in the diagram.

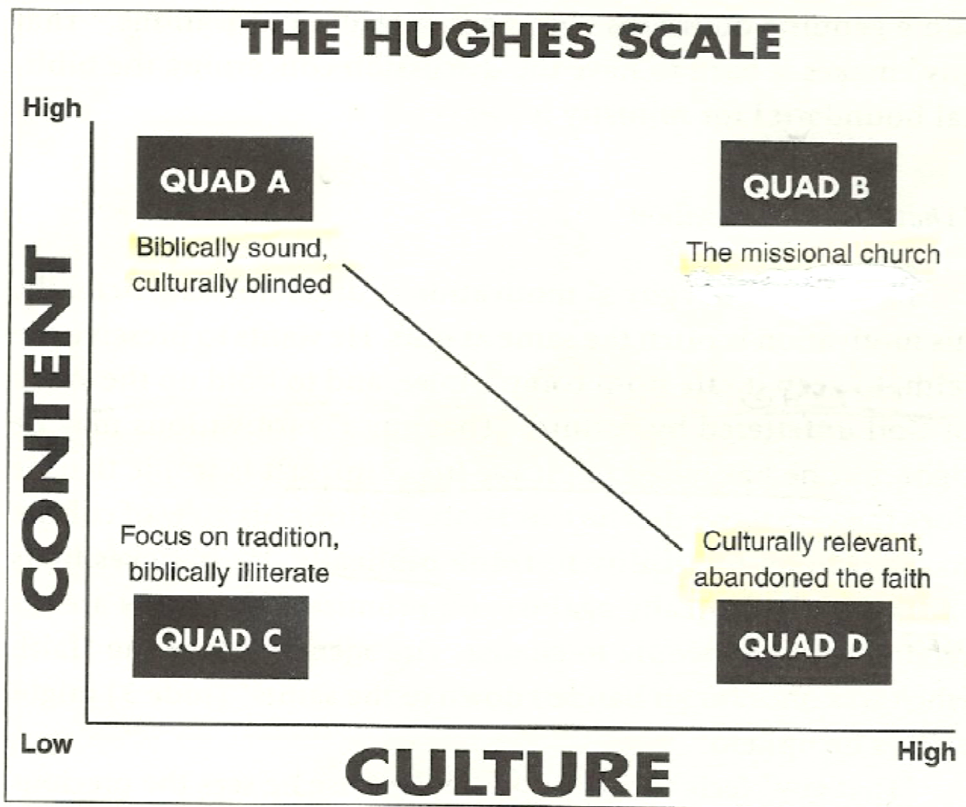


Figure 1.1—Adapted from Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Post Modern Age* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 50.

### *Education*

In order to reach young people for Christ in this millennium education is a key to unlock their understanding of the bible. In urban high school ministry, active learning puts students and

their learning needs at the center of ministry, the focus is on understanding, growth and transformation. Active learning must be challenging and relational to youth in bible study, through strategies like group discussions, homework, apologetic debates, brain bowls, peer tutoring, biblical case studies, reports, individual journaling and critical thinking to enhance their overall learning experience. As an educator the author has successfully used different learning styles (visual, auditory, oral, social, logical, imaginative and tactile) to boost youth comprehension and application of the risen savior, church history, the prophets, the patriarchs, and the apostles. An illustration of using these learning styles is “Mike is sitting in youth ministry listening to a message on salvation, yet, his learning style is tactile (learning through experience and hands on), not lecturing.” This would be difficult for Mike’s key path for growth and the Youth Pastors/leaders in urban high ministry like any other high school ministry has an awesome challenge because most students have a plethora of issues in cognitive scholarship and they must incorporate different forms of technology (social media or power point presentations) as well as creativity to meet this challenge. Solomon put it this way in Proverbs 4:7 “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all your getting get understanding.”<sup>25</sup>

### *Psychological*

The Bible tells us to “Train up a child in the way he should go [and in keeping with his individual gift or bent], and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6). The Hebrew word *train* means “to dedicate” or “to discipline.”<sup>26</sup> “This means as a caretaker—

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25. Proverbs 4:7 KJV

26. Proverbs 22:6 AMP

whether a parent or guardian—we must commit ourselves to godly training and discipline of our children to Christ and His will.”<sup>27</sup> Another key work here is child. The author believes much confusion can be avoided in the home and high school ministry, if parents and youth leaders recognize, respect, and treat children according to their age group and maturity level. Provided here to help us understand and deal with the youth is a graph with a breakdown of Erik Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development:<sup>28</sup>

| Infancy            | Up to 1 year old    |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Toddler/Pre-school | 1-2 years/3-5 years |
| Children           | 6-puberty           |
| Adolescence        | Teen years-20's     |
| Young Adolescence  | 20s to early 40s    |
| Middle Adulthood   | 40s to early 60s    |
| Late Adulthood     | Late 60's and up    |

Figure 1-2

This will provide us with a guideline to follow in rearing our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Developmental psychology offers the foundation of how to most successfully reach young people of different ages. For example, Erik Erikson, known psychologist, provided a working definition of self-image with the term *ego identity*. Ego identity is defined as “the self-image formed during adolescence that integrates our ideas of what we are and what we want to

27. James Strong, *The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Red-Letter Edition* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 92.

28. David G. Myers, *Exploring Psychology*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Holland, MI: Worth Publishers, 2008), 120.

modern culture in hopes to create an identity crises so that they can reject God and the bible. be.”<sup>29</sup> It’s a known fact that between the ages of 12-18 adolescents discover their identities; on the other hand, this is also the age group that have been strategically assaulted by the post- Also, this is valuable information to parents, pastors youth pastors/leaders because they can help youth discover their identities with a biblical foundation.

### *Historical*

The historical perspective of youth ministry has changed moderately in generations; according to Mark Senter in his historical framework for doing youth ministry “we have witnessed paradigm shifts every fifty years in the last one hundred eighty-three years of its existence:

- 1830s -1850s: Sunday School Union and Young Men’s Christian Association
- 1890s: Society for Christian Endeavor
- 1940s: Youth for Christ and Young life
- 1990s: FCA Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- 2000s: Youth Pastors and Leaders Specialized Full time employment”<sup>30</sup>

What the above timeline doesn’t consist of was the young African-American Christians student movement political activism in the 1950’s and 1960’s (during the Civil Rights Movement) that transformed America. These Christian urban young people under the guidance of the African-American church rose to the occasion of racial inequality, not by physical violence, but non violent civil disobedience, prayer, and the love of Christ. Thus proving the church does care

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29. Daune P. Schultz and Sydney Ellen Schultz, *Theories of Personality*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2009), 215.

30. Richard R. Dunn and Mark H. Senter III, *Reaching a Generation for Christ: A Comprehensive Guide to Youth Ministry* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers, 1997), 25.

about civil rights and personal salvation. If we follow this time line the next great move in high school ministry will be in 2043. The issue is that the church cannot afford to wait another twenty years; it must be proactive and not reactive. The “millennials” today are different from the baby boomers and baby busters of yesterday, they’re more computer savvy, they ask more questions, and are exposed to an abundance of things in the world. The church in many cases has become institutionalized; using 80’s and 90’s outdated methods on 21st century youth. As the church we must ask ourselves a question, “If not now, then when?”

In the context of urban youth ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, African Americans youth ministry was viewed and approached differently from its counterparts in suburban America. In Erik Ewaskowitz Thesis on *Transformation Youth Ministry*, he provides a background into this historic analysis:

The development of youth ministry in 20<sup>th</sup> century America was primarily a white, suburban, middle-class phenomenon. It is not that African American churches and Para church organization were not engaged in youth ministry; rather most African American youth ministry was taking place in poor, under resource urban centers. Youth leaders in black churches did not have the same access to the same fresh and innovative youth ministry resources as their white suburban counterpart.<sup>31</sup>

The African America youth ministries are years behind their counterpart, battling urban youth culture for souls, the question is ask, what can the church do? Dr. William H. Cosby educator, actor, author, television producer, comedian, musician and civil rights activist states addressing many people during a 2004 NAACP awards ceremony:

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31. Erik, Ewaskowitz, M.T.S, “Transformational Youth Ministry: The Developmental Of Youth Ministry In 20<sup>th</sup> Century America Through The Lens Of Transformative Learning Theory,” Garrett-Evangelical Theology Seminary, 2010, 115 pages; AA 1477204 pg. 39/ Thesis.

The church is only open on Sunday, and you can't keep asking Jesus to [keep] doing things for you. You can't keep asking that God's will find a way. God is tired of you. God was there when they won all those cases—50 in a row. That's where God was because these people were doing something. And God said, 'I'm going to find away. I am telling you Christians...what's wrong with you? Why can't you hit the streets? Why can't you clean it out yourselves? It's our time now, Ladies and Gentlemen. It's our time.'<sup>32</sup>

Dr. Cosby is giving a Beacon call not for social justice, but the gospel of Jesus Christ to be taken into dilapidated areas, drug invested areas, poverty stricken areas, areas with dysfunctional families, fatherlessness, incarceration and disease to urban communities, and even youth ministry. This is in line with fulfilling the Great Commission Jesus called us to in Matthew 28: 19 "Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>33</sup> The author agrees with Dr. Cosby's famous address, we have a new mission field in our backyard, this Generation X doesn't have Christ, and so we must bring Christ to them wherever they are.

### *Theological*

After 20 years of educating and teaching urban young people, the number one topic, conversation piece is the God of the bible. Amazingly, most people might assume its music, money, sex, social media, sports, drugs or the illuminati; contrary to popular belief it's Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The most obvious questions about Christ were:

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32. Merisa Parson Davis, *Bill Cosby Is Right: But What Should The Be Doing About It* (M.A. Theological Studies at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010 Xulon Press), 19.

33. Matthew 28:19 AMP



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| When was He born?                             |
| How was He born?                              |
| Is Jesus black, white or Hispanic?            |
| Is His first name Jesus and last name Christ? |
| Does Jesus care about me?                     |
| Why did they crucify Him?                     |
| Is Jesus alive now?                           |
| Can Christ identify with my pain?             |
| Who was Jesus family?                         |
| Do He love me and why?                        |

Figure 1-3

Regardless of whether young people are born uptown or downtown, urban, suburban or rural the longing or void for Christ is the same. Theology (the doctrine of God) can be one of the most popular topics in high school ministry; not music, tv shows, or games just as long as it's active learning. Theology is foundational in order for young people to build their faith. Yet many youth ministries struggle with the idea of teaching theology to its youth, not even realizing that they're already learning academic disciplines in high school like mathematics, science, english, engineering, linguistics, and computer technology. Systematic theology is under the umbrella of theology and it is an academic discipline. Systematic Theology is defined "as the collecting, scientifically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of all facts from any and every source concerning God and His works."<sup>34</sup>

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34. Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systemic Theology, 8 vols. (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), 1:5-6.

Systematic Theology consists of several doctrines/disciplines the bible teaches here is just a few:

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|--|
| Theology – The doctrine or study of God              |
| Bibliology – The doctrine of the Bible               |
| Christology – The doctrine of the Son (Jesus Christ) |
| Angelology – The doctrine of angels.                 |
| Pneumatology – The doctrine of the Holy Spirit.      |
| Soteriology – The doctrine of salvation.             |
| Anthropology – The doctrine of man.                  |
| Hamartiology – The doctrine of sin.                  |

Figure 1-4

The benefits of studying theology/systematic theology for youth is that “it will help them to grow as Christians, the more they get to know about God and about his Word, about his relationships to the world and mankind, the better they will trust him, the more fully they will praise him, and the more readily they will obey him.”<sup>35</sup> Young people can benefit from studying an Introduction to Theology and various doctrines in systematic theology because it will answer many questions they’re pondering and it will bring them closer to Christ.

The study of theology among the youth is related to expectations of leaders and parents. If expectations are lacking in the home, then it will most likely carry into any other areas of life (urban youth ministry included). If there is a fatherless home, or a single-parent home, then there is a gap in what God intended for the family unit. Fatherless homes contribute to the moral and spiritual decline of youth in general. God is seen as the father, but without a physical father present, God is seen often as absent and many become hostile and angry towards God because of

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35. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 29.

the emotional distress of not having a father present.

### Statement of Methodology

The proposed thesis project will provide five chapters that overviews high school ministry in the urban context. This paper will examine factors and the effectiveness of key strategies in Urban High School Ministries in order for young people to successfully “live out” their faith. The key strategies are based on 20 years of youth pastor experience, current research, and an anonymous survey. Below are the chapters listing for the project and a summary of what each chapter will contain.

The chapters are:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Factors that Affect Urban High School Ministry

Chapter 3: Research Proposal, Anonymous Survey Questions, and Results

Chapter 4: Critical Evaluation of the Results

Chapter 5: Key Strategies for Transforming Urban Youth to “Live Out” their Faith

Chapter 6: Conclusion- Contribution of the Research

#### *Chapter One –Introduction*

The Introduction of the thesis will serve to explain the primary reasons why the writer chose to write about the topic. It will provide the background that led to the candidate’s awareness and interest in the problem. This thesis project is designed to be a helpful resource to church leaders, schools and parents by providing staggering information on high school ministry in the urban context. The Introduction will propose the problem; state the limitations of the project; describe the setting for the theoretical perspective of culture, education, psychological, theological and historical bases for the project; provide a methodology and include a review of the literature and related works. Also, it will introduce the research by identifying the essential rationale for the thesis and the basis and motivation for the research.

## *Chapter Two – Factors that Affect Urban High School Ministry!*

The challenges to high school ministry in an urban context are many. Attractional Churches with its lure of “come and see” as well as its youth ministry have long been a hindrance to sinners and the Body of Christ alike. The influence of a prevailing culture seems to be affecting the church more than the church is affecting the culture. The institutionalization of high school ministry (reluctance to change or tradition), secularization of youth ministry in the church (hip hop invasion), lack of family discipleship among youth, the lack of relevant topics (outdated topics or no relevance to millennials), pastoral inexperience (many lack pastor’s experience, expertise, teaching, motivation, training, innovations), focusing on forms (youth ministry adopting forms of godliness like abstaining from all movies, leads to rejection of the gospel) are all factors that barriers to our youth. This chapter will consist of secondary research and qualitative data like statistics, interviews, and surveys of the factors that hinder high school ministry in an urban context. The desired outcome is to remove these obstacles, so youth ministries can become healthy and vibrant for our young people to grow healthy, mature in their faith and win souls for Christ.

## *Chapter Three – Research Proposal, Anonymous Survey Questions and Results*

This chapter will give an overview of the primary research proposal; a quantitative analysis including research hypothesis, questions, design, participants, tools, approaches and the results will be analyzed and displayed in graph form. This will serve as a visual representation of youth’s interest in the topic, their involvement in church, and their willingness to apply strategies to their personal lives. The desired outcome is to examine the effectiveness of key strategies and measure the efficiency of the results in order to strengthen youth ministry and the church to impact the world for Christ.

#### *Chapter Fourth – Critical Evaluation of the Results*

This chapter will provide a detailed study and interpretation of the research data and summaries.

#### *Chapter Five -- Key Strategies for Transforming Urban Youth to “Live Out” their Faith*

This chapter will examine key strategies for urban youth to “live out” their faith, and the results from the anonymous survey will be the basis from which the author creates these transformation strategies. Also, the author hopes to learn that these same strategies will serve as a transformational basis for young people from dropping out of church and decrease attrition from the present church. The following strategies that will be analyzed in this chapter are that One Size Doesn’t Fit All, Confrontational Evangelism, Mentors in the Church, Missions Trips, Youth Shadowing Leaders in the Church, Church Transitional Ministry, Multicultural Perspective of the Bible Characters, Effective Messages and Greek Educational Model versus Hebrew Educational Model. Chapter five will provide details of each strategy, application, and how it leads to transformation.

#### *Chapter Six - Conclusion- Contribution of the Research*

This chapter concludes the research by summarizing the research findings along with key transformational strategies in order to reduce church dropouts, decrease attrition and increase retention among urban youth in high school ministry, and how this study contributes to an under researched field.

## Review of the Literature

### *Books*

This writer is eternally grateful to many of the following authors who have written on youth ministry, as well as the churches that have advanced the Kingdom of God through their works. Beginning with one of the leading authorities and well known apologists, Josh McDowell author of *The Last Christian Generation: The Crisis is Real. The Responsibility*, who warns the church of the realities of today's youth murky view of Christ, Christianity, absolute truth, and the church. He provides solutions to this challenge by advising the church to change educational models, to rethink the purpose of youth ministry, and to reveal the nature of God.

*The 11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future* by Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird basic principle is "Innovation or death?" The key message is that the church is the Body of Christ; not a race-centered church, prosperity-centered church, community-centered church, poverty-centered church, or a pastor-centered church. When these New Testament Churches take on this culture/persona, it becomes cancerous and begins to show signs of decay because it's no longer receiving the proper nutrition that only the Head can give. We must be available for God's leading in whatever innovation He deems appropriate; not personal preference, ambition, or tradition so that Christ can build a healthy church that is strong, vibrant, and that will glorify Him through obedience.

*Purpose Driven Youth Ministry: 9 Essential Foundations For Healthy Growth* by Doug Fields who is a veteran youth pastor reveals 9 essential ingredients for a vigorous youth ministry. He explains these components in a way that the common youth pastor or leader can implement regardless of the budget, race or location.

*Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk With God* by Voddie Baucham is a fabulous book that gives foundational purposes of the bible for our families and the importance of legacy. Also, he provides key insights into discipling our sons and daughters the way the bible intended it. He gives amazing statistics and illustrations for the common man or woman to comprehend and apply to their daily lives as well as their families.

*The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* by Rick Warren has pastors questioning and challenging the purposes of their church vision, programs, growth and its existence. He also, dispels church growth myths reveals practical ways for church growth. Furthermore, provides data about the number one criticism of why adults and young people don't attend church... "it's boring."

*Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church* by Elmer Towns and Ed Stetzer is about the church to being biblically based, theologically sound, exegetically accurate, missionally focused and culturally relevant. This can only be accomplished by walking in the light, while discerning, invading, as well as pushing back the darkness. The parable about the two fictional missionaries traveling through the sultry primeval jungle sets the tone for its readers by establishing a scenario distinguishing between light (gospel light of Jesus Christ) and darkness (evil) throughout the book; this is a fundamental strength for this book because many people are visual learners, which supports the phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words." This scenario and its flow make the book easy to follow without diverting from the point at hand

*Keep it Real: Working with Today's Black Youth* by Anne E. Streaty Wimberly is a comprehensive book for ministering to African American Youth. Its purposes appear to open up the communication between Baby Boomers/Busters and Generation Y or Millennials in church and bridge the gap to intergeneration ministry. The premise is to facilitate youth's development

and Biblical Christian Worldview, so that they may mentor, model Christ likeness in church as well as in the community. Each chapter is written by scholars and veteran youth pastor/leader who currently serves in various roles in youth ministry.

*Exploring Psychology seventh edition* by David G. Myers is a book that gives a detail analysis of a cross-cultural point of view on psychology, and the culture and multicultural experience. This book combines psychology with the flavor of several disciplines like literature, philosophy, history, sports, politics and trendy cultural. Also he includes adolescence brain development period, cognitive development, drug use, moral development, peer influence period, physical development, sexuality development and social development period as a way of relating to young people issues.

*The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You* is by John Ortberg. This book uses biblical characters, practical illustrations, personal testimonies, scriptures, relationships, quizzes, diagrams, heartfelt messages, God's original plan for man and the flow of the Holy Spirit to show people spiritually where they are now, how they got there, and how to get back to God's original plan for them as individuals in order to be the all that God's wants them to be. What caught my attention for the first time in this book is what the author called "sacred pathways." He describes "sacred pathways" as ways that we find naturally that help us experience the presence of God. This new insight is important because it demonstrates each man/woman natural flow in experiencing the Lord, and provides nine pathways with descriptions. This key insight will help many youths by identifying their individual pathways, it saves time by not comparing themselves to other people, and knowing it's ok to experience God in a different way from other people, plus their free to seek God in a way He has designed them to do.



*Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry: Theory and Praxis in Urban Context* by Fernando Arzola Jr views urban youth ministry from an academic standpoint. Its goal is to reveal theoretical and methodological approaches to youth ministry in an urban context. Also, analyzes four paradigms of youth ministry in an urban context, traditional, liberal, activist and prophetic. Furthermore, the author looks at youth models and moves toward a theological and philosophical prophetic youth ministry model in the urban setting, as well as a holistic psychological development of adolescents with an education perspective. This book is also helpful for youth pastors/leaders in identifying different discipleship models, comparing and contrasting various youths ministry models in the urban context.

*Handbook on Counseling Youth: A Comprehensive Guide for Equipping Youth Workers, Pastors, Teachers, Parents* by Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler tackles the tough issues young people are struggling with like: depression, suicide thoughts, love, dating, peer pressure, non-Christian parents, parental divorce, lust, pornography, homosexuality, premarital sex, rape, drug use, disorders dropping out of school and choosing a college. Also, this resource exposes astounding statistics of “youth in crisis,” qualifications of youth ministers, the goal of biblical counseling and real answers to a dilemma many are clueless about, youth defecting from Christ and the church.

*Parenting Jewish Teens: A Guide for the Perplexed*, by Joanne Doades, is an excellent resource in which she outlines the biblical and family expectations of Jewish youth from the *Torah* to the twenty-first century. She also describes the challenges of Jewish young people in America who are facing issues like the sexual freedom, gay and lesbian rights, and personal autonomy. The author looks at a timeline from the sixty’s and uses data to support her argument. Also, she gives great advice for family relationships, Jewish tradition, marriage, dating, and

parenting Jewish teen's program.

*Reaching a Generation for Christ: A Comprehensive Guide to Youth Ministry* by Richard R. Dunn and Mark H. Senter III, is an all-inclusive guide on youth ministry that ranges from a general outline of youth ministry to a theological, developmental, sociological, and historical guide. The authors do a thorough breakdown and detailed analysis of the structures, contexts, skills, challenges, operations, resources, and the future of youth ministry which is a valuable commodity for senior pastors, youth pastors/leaders, teachers and parents to guide them in this millennium.

#### *Journal Article*

“Father Absence and Youth Incarceration” by Cynthia C Harper and Sara S McLanahan is adapted from Journal of research on adolescence. They give shocking stats on the plight of youth in dysfunctional families and the consequences.

#### *Scripture Review*

The purpose of this study is to develop key strategies that serve as a transformational basis for young people to “live out” their faith. This project will consist of ten key biblical strategies that will be effective in increasing retention of our youth from dropping out of church and decreasing attrition of the future church. Therefore, each of these strategies are rooted in scripture and anchored in the Bible. This thesis will use The King James Version of the Bible, The Amplified Bible and the English Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 these scriptures affirms monotheism, as well as gives a command about loving the “Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy heart,” because God desires intimate fellowship with His people. Also, God instructs Israel that its educational model for its children must be relational, daily, scriptural, and anchored in biblical

truth; along with parents/elders discipleship of their youth.

Proverbs 11:30 “he that winneth souls is wise;” this scripture expresses that Christians are to be influential in the lives of people who don’t know Christ, and lead them to Him, in addition to using different methods, for witnessing to different people. For example, a fisherman uses quite a few baits for fresh water and salt water fishing. This verse is also true when reaching out to young people of various backgrounds, races, languages and countries.

Romans 12:2 “and be not conformed to this world,” the verb “conformed” in the Greek “(συσχηματίζω) suschematizo means to fashion or shape one thing like another.”<sup>36</sup> It is a present tense command to not to become a carbon copy of the world, but “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” “Transformed” is the Greek verb “(μεταμορφώω) metamorphoo the obligation being to undergo a complete change which, under the power of God, will find expression in character and conduct.”<sup>37</sup> It is another present tense command to change under the power of God, examples are God change a murderer into a deliver (Moses), Shepherd boy into a King (David), Coward to a Warrior (Gideon), unstable Simon to Peter (stone). God’s desire is to “transform” His children into honorable men and women of God.

Matthew 28: 18-20 in these scriptures Christ commissions His Church to go into the entire world proclaiming the gospel, teaching, making disciples, baptizing all people in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (vv.19). This is the goal of the church and discipleship, and this must be the forefront of every vision, ministry and program.

Philippians 2:19-22 outlines Paul & Timothy Discipleship Model of an elder and young

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36. James Strong, The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Red-Letter Edition (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 244.

37. James Strong, The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Red-Letter Edition (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 162.

man. Timothy is a true example of a Christian minister/missionary in word and deed, moreover a spiritual son of the Apostle Paul, following his instructions, serving the body of Christ, faithful to the Word, and eager to please Christ. Today Paul & Timothy Discipleship Model is needed in youth ministry for guiding, coaching and instructing a generation that doesn't know Christ nor their biological fathers.

Mark 10: 13-16 illustrates the disciples reprimanding the people for bringing children to Jesus, and being displeased with them, Jesus said "Suffer not the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God (vv.14)." Christ is truly concerned about the salvation of children and rearing them according to the Bible. The Church must continue to be proactive in bringing children to Christ and not an obstruction that leads to the world.

Luke 14:25-33 Christ instructs a large crowd on authentic discipleship. He says "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple (vv. 26)." This explanation on discipleship was relevant in the past, as it is relevant now because its definition and concept had been lost in many denominations or church polity. The costs of discipleship as Jesus explained was that "whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple (vv. 27)." This is fundamental for all, especially Generation Y, so they may fully comprehend Christ expectation of a disciple and "count the cost."

1 Peter 3:15 The Apostle Peter calls on the church to always be "ready to make a defense" of the gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone who "asked you a reason of the hope that is in you." Defense in the Greek is (*απολογία*) apologia "rendering to answer; to reply; to defend; to explain. It means a decision, response, discovery, solution."<sup>38</sup> A practical illustration of this is of

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38. James Strong, The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Red-Letter Edition (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 162.

a lawyer in a courtroom giving a thorough defense of his/her case. In this post-modern culture the church must prepare its youth to be young apologist in a world that needs Christ, yet hostile to His Church.

Proverbs 9:10 this verse expresses that a true biblical education is founded on these principles—“fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” Of course this is contrary to humanistic teaching in our secular universities which believes man is the pinnacle of the universe. If we’re going to reduce attrition in youth ministry, it starts with theology, who is God?

Acts 26:13-18 the Apostle Paul describes his Damascus Road conversion experience to king Agrippa, and shared his divine commission from the Lord Jesus Christ, “Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” The writer believes every believer has a conversion experience that the world needs to hear and like the Apostle Paul, we’re given a divine commission from Christ to in the inner most parts of the world with the gospel. This same revelation Paul received must be transmitted to our youth, which God has commissioned them in His army for a purpose while they’re here on earth.

Daniel 1:20 After king Nebuchadnezzar thoroughly examined the four Hebrew boys in Babylon over a period of time; he found them “ten times better,” and none that could compare to them, including magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, astrologers, wise men and diviners. This is a testimony to young people who are faithful to God, even in a polytheistic culture like Babylon; God was faithful towards them.

2 Timothy 2:22 “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace,

with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” “Youthful lusts” has devastated the lives of teens and young adults, has destroyed marriages, produced unwanted pregnancies, and even caused many to lose their lives. The Greek verb for *flee* is *pheugo* (φευγε) which is a second person, singular, present, active, imperative verb that means to literally run away or escape as fast and as far as you can. In other words, avoid places, people, events, and situations that can lead to reckless behavior, and pursue Christ, holiness, faith, love, and righteous living. Paul commands us to continue to flee youthful lusts (over and over again) in the present.

The above scriptures and many more will be used in each chapter of this project. Also, factors that affect urban youth ministry, results from research will be explain, key transformational strategies explore and four of the latest paradigms of youth ministry in an urban context will be argued meticulously with the author’s newly developed model that’s biblically based and culturally relevant.

The goal of this study is to decrease the number of urban young people from defecting from the faith and church, and to increase retention of high school church dropouts by using 21<sup>st</sup> century cutting edge transformational strategies for urban youth. These key strategies will benefit high school ministry/churches by restoring family discipleship, appointing mentors to our young people, raising the bar of expectations, equip youth pastors/leaders with strategies that have be proven over years, advancing the kingdom of God by making the invisible (kingdom) now visible, increasing youth’s hunger and thirst for Christ.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Factors that Affect Urban High School Ministry

The challenges to high school ministry in an urban context are countless. Many attraction churches with its lure of “come and see,” very little discipleship /evangelism, as well as unbelievers and the body of Christ have long been a hindrance to youth ministry. The influence of a prevailing culture seems to be affecting the church more than the church is affecting the culture. The institutionalization of high school ministry (reluctance to change or tradition), secularization of youth ministry in the church (hip hop invasion), lack of family discipleship among youth, the lack of relevant topics (outdated topics or no relevance to millennials), pastoral inexperience (experience, capability, teaching, motivation, training, innovations), and focusing on forms (youth ministry adopting forms of godliness like abstaining from all movies which leads to rejection of the gospel) are all barriers to our youth. These factors affect urban high school ministry and the church at large causing a dramatic increase in church dropouts, as well as attrition among youth. These factors will shine light on the challenges and issues that high school ministries in an urban setting must overcome if it’s going to disciple present and future generations for the kingdom of God.

This chapter will consist of secondary research and a qualitative analysis of the factors that hinder high school ministry in an urban context. The desired outcome is to identify these obstacles, so youth ministries can become healthy and vibrant for our young people to grow healthy, mature in their faith and win souls for Christ. Qualitative analyses of the secondary research is used in support of the author’s current study, as well as give a voice to the youth pastors, workers, leaders and youth in order “to provide an explanation for behavior and attitudes, and it may be complete with variables, constructs, and hypotheses.”<sup>1</sup> The writer used

secondary research because the author's aim is not to solve the problem in this chapter, but to understand the crisis, and use information readily available which allows the researcher to explore this area of interest without having to go through the process of collecting data themselves in the field. Although, there is information available and studied more extensively by expert's time won't permit further study.

### Influence of a Prevailing Culture

#### *Culture During Jesus Time*

The Jewish sub-culture in Jesus' time was a tight-knit community woven together that included families, synagogues, businesses, community worship, social functions, churches and political meetings. For example, in Luke 2:40-42 "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast."<sup>2</sup> In this scripture most Jewish families together, like Jesus' family went on a pilgrimage to celebrate the "feast of the Passover" in the Third Temple at Jerusalem which was an annual tradition commemorating the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Also, in the above verses it is revealed that His "parents went to Jerusalem," indicating the cohesiveness of marriage between one man and one woman, for the couple's mutual joy, oneness and the procreation of children. The Third Temple or Herod's Temple during the time of Christ was located in a centralized site, on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Jews and travelers around the world made pilgrimages to the temple for various religious festivals. "Jewish districts existed in all the major cities of the Roman Empire at the

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1. John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 148.

2. Luke 2:40-42 KJV



time of Christ, with possibly 150 synagogues scattered across the empire early in the first century. Whatever the number, these institutions served as lighthouses of monotheism in a polytheistic world.”<sup>3</sup> The synagogues were in decentralized areas and their central purpose was teaching, prayer and social gatherings.

### *Early Church Culture*

The Early Church were Jewish believers, as well as Christ’s disciples in the book of Acts 2, Cornelius was the first gentile believer in Acts 10. The practices of the Early Church after Christ had risen in Acts 2:42-47 were to “continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, teaching, fellowshiping, breaking bread, community, prayer, intentional evangelism, praising God, corporate prayer house to house and in the temple. The first churches endured persecution in a hostile culture, and met in small groups in homes much like the “Persecuted Church” today in North Korea, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, China, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Vietnam. As believers we must pray and intercede for our persecuted brothers and sisters in these foreign countries that suffer daily in the name of Jesus Christ. The proof of the early church persecution and meeting in homes are in the various scriptures:

- And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go (Acts 5:40 KJV).
- And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:42 KJV).
- And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution

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3. Howard Vos, *New Illustrated Bible & Customs: How the People of the Bible Really Lived* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 386.

against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles (Acts 8:1 KJV).

- Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to harass some from the church (Acts 12:1 KJV).
- And he killed James the brother of John with the sword (Acts 12:2 KJV).
- And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed (Acts 16:40 KJV.)
- And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house (Acts 20:20 KJV).

### *Greco-Roman Culture*

In the Greco-Roman culture in the first and second century, “a sacred contractual relationship between gods and people, preserved the essential unity between religion and politics and governed the basic rules of life in the Empire: the order, success, and prosperity of the Empire would be maintained so long as the worship of the Roman gods continued by means of appropriate cults.”<sup>4</sup> The church faced heavy opposition in this hostile culture as it grew advancing the Kingdom of God proclaiming the name of Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, and rival to the Roman Empire and other pagan cults resulting in intense persecution. In a famous letter from Pliny to Emperor Trajan,

*“Christians were denounced as Christians and punished by their confession of the nomen christianorum in association with alleged crimes accompanied by the Name. In the course of his investigation, Pliny ordered a “sacrifice-test” for a proof of innocence; only those who recanted conformed to the worship of the gods and the emperor, and cursed*

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4. Helen Rhee, *Early Christian Literature: Christ and Culture in the Second and Third Centuries* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 13.

*Christ were pardoned. Although he found no specific crime of Christians, he declared Christianity a “depraved and excessive superstition” (superstitio prava, immodica).”*<sup>5</sup>

### *Post-Modern Culture*

Post-modernity is a drastic change from what was once considered respectable, normal, moral and spiritually acceptable. The effects of post-modernism are seen in the western culture, where communities are fragmented, families are dysfunctional, government is trillions of dollars in debt and morally bankrupt, many churches are spiritually weak or no longer relevant, and the culture is polytheistic in nature. In the twenty-first century the American post-modern culture has challenged the church and urban high school ministry for one of its most prized possessions, the souls of its youth. Research tells of a statistical nightmare of what is happening every day to urban youth in the United States of America:

### *Family Structure and Income*

- Thirty-eight percent of Black children live with two parents, compared to 77 percent of White children.<sup>6</sup>
- Fifty-one percent of Black children live with only their mother. Black children are more than three times as likely to live with their mother only as are White children.<sup>7</sup>

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5. Helen Rhee, *Early Christian Literature: Christ and Culture in the Second and Third Centuries* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 12.

6. U.S. Census Bureau. 2011. “America’s Families and Living Arrangements: 2011,” Table C9. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/cps2011.html>

7. Ibid.

8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2011. “Births: Preliminary Data for 2010,” Table 2. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 60 (2). [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr60/nvsr60\\_02.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr60/nvsr60_02.pdf)

### *Births To Unmarried Mothers And Teens*

- Black babies were more than twice as likely as White babies to be born to a teen mother in 2010.<sup>8</sup>

### *High School Dropouts*

- In 2000, about 530,000 Hispanic 16-to-19-year-olds were high school dropouts, yielding a dropout rate of 21.1 percent for all Hispanic 16-to-19-year-olds.<sup>9</sup>
- Thirty-five percent of the nation's Black students in 2008 attended one of the 1,700 "dropout factories," high schools where less than 60 percent of the freshman class graduate in four years; only eight percent of the nation's White students attended such schools.<sup>10</sup>

### *College or Prison?*

- Black males age 18 and over in 2008 represented only five percent of the total college student population, but 36 percent of the total prison population.<sup>11</sup>

### *Violence*

- Black children have the highest rate of abuse and neglect. In 2010, 28.1 percent of deaths from child maltreatment were Black children.<sup>12</sup>

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9. U.S. Census Bureau. (2003). School enrollment: 2000 (C2KBR-26). Washington, DC: Author.

10. R Balfanz, J Bridgeland, L Moore, and, J Fox. 2010. "Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic." Percentages from Balfanz email, 12/10/2010.

11. The Council of the Great City Schools. 2010. "A Call for Change: The Social and Educational Factors Contributing to the Outcomes of Black Males in Urban School," Figure 6.8.

[http://cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/27/Call\\_For\\_Change.pdf](http://cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/27/Call_For_Change.pdf)

12. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2011. "Child Maltreatment 2010," Figure 4-2.<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm10/>

13. Children's Defense Fund. 2012. "Protect Children, Not Guns 2012."<http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/protect-children-not-guns-2012.pdf>

14. Ibid.

### *Gun Violence*

- Forty-three percent of all children and youth killed by firearms in 2009 were Black.

Black males ages 15 to 19 were more than eight times as likely as White males and more than two-and-a-half times as likely as Hispanic males in the same age group to be killed in a firearm homicide in 2009.<sup>13</sup>

- Over 90 percent of firearm deaths of Black children and teens in 2009 were homicides (1,092) and six percent were suicides; among White children and teens just under half of All firearm deaths in 2009 were homicides (730) and 46 percent were suicides.<sup>14</sup>

### *Juvenile Arrest and Incarceration*

- Black children are more than twice as likely as White children to be arrested. From ages 10-17 a Black youth is more than five times as likely as a White youth to be arrested for a violent crime.<sup>15</sup>

Author believes that these statistics are applicable to the urban community as a whole, although it's referencing African Americans and Hispanics. Among young people in this generation the prevailing culture that affect urban high school ministry appears to be fame, consumerism, sexual freedom, gender equality, personal autonomy, drugs, dysfunctional families, acceptance of homosexuality, and secular music.

### *Fame And Technology Culture*

The quest for fame seems to be the overarching goal that generation X seeks to attain.

Longman dictionary defines fame as the “state of being known about by a lot of people because

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15. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 2011. “Juvenile Arrest Rates by Offense, Sex, and Race (1980–2009).” [http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/crime/excel/jar\\_2009.xls](http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/crime/excel/jar_2009.xls).

16. A.W. LONGMAN, Longman Dictionary of American English (New York Longman, (2004) 1983), 365.

of your achievements,”<sup>16</sup> the problem with this definition as it relates to this generation is a moral decline of traditional values, increase an individualism, produces child kings, independence from family, a cultural shift, a weakening family structure, and an independence from social authority. According, to the Journal on Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace title “The Rise of Fame,” “Internet platforms such as online video-sharing sites, online publishing websites, and social networking sites allow nearly anyone to connect with a virtual audience of friends and strangers, giving everyone the potential for fame.”<sup>17</sup> Today, it is a known fact that this generation of young people have use more media than any other in the history of America. For example, The Kaiser study found that, “in 2009, American youth, age 8 - 18, spent an average of nearly seven and one-half hours a day, seven days a week with media, defined as television, music, computer, video games, print, and movies.”<sup>18</sup> Due to the paradigm shifts in information, knowledge, technology, earning power, degrees, social media, and a growing appetite in the last twenty years for more, how has this influence affected youth behavior, and its consequences to high school ministry? “Greenfield’s theory predicts that these socio-demographic shifts will produce ever more individualistic values, accompanied by a decline in communitarian values. A corollary is that these value shifts will be manifest in popular television shows that are a key component of the learning environment of tweens. Because fame and personal wealth are highly individualistic values, we expected an increase in their portrayal on

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17. YaldaT. Uhls and Patricia M. Greenfield, “The Rise Of Fame: An Historical Content Analysis. “Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace 5, no. 1 (2011).

18. V. J. Rideout, U. G. Foehr, and D. F. Roberts, Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-to 18-Year-Olds. (2010). Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

19. P. M. Greenfield, (2009a). Linking Social Change And Developmental Change: Shifting Pathways Of Human Development. *Developmental Psychology*, 45, 401-418.

popular TV over the decades, along with a decrease in the portrayal of communitarian values such as community feeling and tradition.”<sup>19</sup>

The decrease in traditional values, and increase in a desire to be famous will affect the way young people communicate, beliefs, outlook on life, and relationships with friends and family. This generation is considered the most selfish generation in the history of America, because it places careers before family, shows like American Idol over of family oriented programs, and many would rather play videos game instead of spending time with family. The consequences of this trend on urban high school ministry can be an inflated ego (because of the instant fame of social media which can pose a problem in youth ministry) pride, or a sense of entitlement. In the book of Proverbs 16:18 it says “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”<sup>20</sup>(KJV) Pride has been the down fall of many in the bible: Judas, Pharaoh, Saul, Goliath and many others.

Today the evidence of pride has permeated society and urban high school ministry in the form of fame “(1 John 2:16)<sup>21</sup> which have become a barrier for many young people knowing Christ. This is in large part due to the negative exposure which causes pride to enter into many young hearts so they don’t have a desire to know Jesus, read the bible, or pray. Pride too was satan’s fall. The church must see this rebellious generation as a new mission field, and saturate their environment with the love of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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20. Proverbs 16:18 KJV

21. 1 John 2:16 KJV

22. U.S. Energy information Administration, “World Proved Reserves of Oil and Natural Gas, Most Recent Estimates” (posted October 5, 2006), based on information from Oil & Gas Journal, January 1, 2006.

23. Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook 2006.

24. Skye Jethani, The Divine Commodity: Discovering A Faith Beyond Consumer Christianity (Zondervan, 2009), 15.

### *Consumerism*

The problem is that the United States has a consumer mentality. First, let's define consumerism "A view of life that says everything is to be evaluated on whether it satisfies my desires and makes me whole, it's not really a worship of stuff, at root, it's a worship self at any cost."<sup>24</sup> As an educator to urban young people between the ages of 16-24 for twenty-years in Miami, Florida, students have defended purchasing the latest pair of Michael Jordan sneakers by saying, "I've got to have them," or "it's in style who wouldn't want them." We hear countless stories on the news of fights in the malls or shootings at sport outlet stores for these same over-priced sneakers, so it appears that desires to gratify self has superseded morals.

Society and consumerism appears to be driving the church. People often choose a church based on the services it provides like form and function rather than doctrine. "Church shopping" is a relatively new phenomenon in the American Church where an individual/family can window shop for church building beatification, the best programs, the finest choirs, the softest pews or the most gifted preaching. Unfortunately, this spirit of competition has slithered its way into the church of the west and many believers are no longer concerned with church health. The church leadership and its members have slipped into an indifference about whether it is healthy holistically or whether it's fulfilling the "the Great Commission." The church is not a Fortune 500 Corporation competing for the profits of its consumers at all costs, nor was it designed to compete with secular organizations. In the book called the *Organic Church* by Neil Cole the author says, "We cannot compete with Hollywood when it comes to entertainment. The best preachers cannot out-entertain Jay Leno and David Letterman, with their team of talented

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25. Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 95.



writers. The best worship band cannot put on a better show than the Rolling Stones, No Doubt, or Green Day. Our buildings are not as nice as the ones that corporate America is constructing; in fact, other religions and cults are outdoing us architecturally. Have you seen any Christian movies? Please! We are not able to come up against the world, play its game, and win. It is a foolish strategy---and a needless one.”<sup>25</sup>

The church in the Greek is Εκκλησία rendering a community of believers or called out ones. In the book of Matthew 16:18 Jesus says, “And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”<sup>26</sup> First, its evidenced by scripture that its Christ church—not the Pastors, trustees board, deacon board, denomination, cliques or anyone or thing else. He determines its definition, vision, mission, function and purpose. If a church wants to know its mission and how to evangelize its youth, it starts with knowing Christology which defines its Missiology and defines its Ecclesiology. The church is living and growing with Christ DNA flowing through it meaning “divine truth, nurturing relationships, and apostolic mission.”<sup>27</sup> This DNA is the building blocks of a healthy church for God’s people, youth and world.

#### Americans Concept of Teenage Culture

According to the W.T. Grant Foundation the purpose of this report is to set out to determine Americans basic understandings of youth — not focusing on their opinions about particular issues relating to adolescents (these have been extensively documented in previous polls and surveys), but on the more fundamental cultural models that define the American concept of teenager, and on which the various opinions are based.

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26. Matthew 16:18 KJV

27. Neil Cole and Phil Helder. Church Transformation: Changing Your Church Organically—from the Inside Out (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012) 18.

The method of the study was ten in-depth, one-on-one interviews conducted with Americans representing various backgrounds and demographic groups. This technique yielded qualitative data and a cognitive analysis which focused on the more basic cultural models (i.e., understandings and beliefs) that motivated the opinions.

### *Difficulty Drawing the Line Between Teens and Kids/Adults*

Aside from the superficial definition of the teenage years, many people feel that there are no sharp lines representing the transitions to or from adolescence.

*I'm having trouble finding something for him because he's too big for toys really but he's not really a teenager yet so I don't know what to do.*

*I think an adult is probably between 25 and 30. ... I was probably 30 years old before I matured enough to be considering myself an adult.*

*I don't believe there's any difference [between a teenager and a nine year-old], just in age... But again I have to go back to the media — just seems like they have a ready access to sexual knowledge, they are into sex, smoking, drinking and doing all these other things.*

*When I was growing up, you could usually tell a teenager by their size, but nowadays a lot of them are much bigger, so the kids that you think are teenagers are only 9 or 10 year olds, 11 or 12 year olds.<sup>28</sup>*

The responses to this interview give this data an adult voice to how Americans of all races have a cloudy and unhealthy outlook on its youth. The church also must change this unhealthy view of its youth, and view its young people the way God does, for instance in Jeremiah 1:5-7 God tells the youth or teenager “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” Of course like any other youth, intimidated by the call of God, Jeremiah’s answer was “I cannot speak, for I am a youth.” God response, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I

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28. Frameworks Institute. How Americans Understand Teens: Findings From Cognitive Interviews. Prepared for the Frameworks Institutes By Axel Auburn and Joseph Grady and Cultural Logic. February 2000. ( 9)

command you, you shall speak.” A willingness to obey God is of the utmost importance to the believer’s faith and walk regardless of age.

### *Influences on Teenagers are Like Forces Pulling Them in Particular Directions*

*[T]hey gravitate more to what the street is offering, more so than what could possibly come out of, say, the home or the church or some other social areas.*

*And overall if they don't have a steady influence that can pull them greatly in a positive area, then it's so easy for them to fall prey to what's out there for them ...*

*[Gangs] seem to be everywhere, a false church. Once you get into a gang, it is not easy to get out of a gang. [A gang] almost seems like a clique on steroids or something! [T]he pull of the street had more influence on him than me as a single parent. [T]hey gravitate more to what the street is offering.<sup>29</sup>*

These interview responses reveal the negative depiction of how adults view teens to be gullible to the culture at large, without any positive references to resisting it. This perception of youth can affect many churches willingness to disciple and evangelize.

### *Two Types of Teens*

Informants regularly spoke in terms of a dichotomy between "normal" or "good" teens and "strange" or "bad" teens.

*I see the teenagers that hang out on the street and the teenagers in my church and they are totally different. Two extremes: one is criminal activity, and the other is where you see or read or hear about groups of teenagers going on trips to South America to build churches. You see both types.<sup>30</sup>*

These interview responses view teens as either good or bad based on perception, appearance, beliefs, genre of music, media hype or tradition. On the other hand, the Church culture should be

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29. Frameworks Institute. How Americans Understand Teens: Findings From Cognitive Interviews. Prepared for the Frameworks Institutes By Axel Auburn and Joseph Grady and Cultural Logic. February 2000. ( 14)

30. Ibid. 16

different based on biblical principles and not cultural norms. Unfortunately, the above viewpoint is prevalent in local churches around country. The bible says in John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”<sup>31</sup> Christ gave His life for the world this includes black, white, yellow, brown, red, man, woman, child, teenager, old, young, poor, rich, Christian, Moslem, Jew, or Greek, etc. The church is called to “make disciples of all nations,” by being biblically based and culturally relevant. This generation of urban youth or young people is already skeptical of the church; the battle is won by transparency and the tough love of Christ.

### Secularization of Urban High School Ministry

A few years ago the writer received a phone call from an ex-student that attended weekly Bible study in the evenings at Miami Job Center in Miami, Florida for several months. After, completing a trade the student moved back home and registered for college and found a new attraction church in the community to join. The student that called was concerned about hip hop music being played at the beginning and ending of the church youth ministry. The author explained to the student that hip hop music wasn't Christian music and referenced several scriptures in the bible like 1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17, and 1 Peter 4:11 just to name a few. The student understood the various verses cited, as instructed by the writer over the phone, and encourage the student to arrange a meeting with the youth pastor regarding this matter. A few weeks later the author was contacted again by the same student regarding the secular music being played in youth ministry, and the student became distraught, confused and discouraged by the youth pastor's defense of this genre of music. Later, writer was informed that the senior

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31. John 3:16 KJV

pastor the father of the youth pastor was informed and did nothing. By the way this student left the church and has been “church hopping” ever since. The culture and this attraction church in the community is a clear indication of secularization of urban high school ministry, which is an impediment to youth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Another example given of a week- long conference mandated by the Episcopal leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal church focused on “Ministering to the Hip Hop Generation.” According to the author of this book it was meant to offer solutions and ideas to the churches experiencing a dearth of youth in their congregations.

“The suggestions included using rap and song lyrics in sermons, having youth conduct youth-oriented worship services, organizing more youth social gatherings, and even the use of a more liberated theology from the pulpit. Some leaders believed boundaries are

crucial for effective youth programming and that transforming the life of the church into a more secularized setting would compromise God’s intended mission, vision and use of the Gospel message for the church.”<sup>32</sup>

The bible is clear in Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” “The church is supposed to change the culture, not the culture change the church.”<sup>33</sup> Evangelism and discipleship appears to be the missing ingredients for the above churches; unless these young people are properly disciplined, not socialize, transformation isn’t possible, and leaving the church and faith is inevitable.

### *Entertainment*

The question of entertainment in Urban High School Ministry and Children Ministry and how much appear to be in ongoing discussions in high school ministry around the country. In children ministry there appears to be several approaches to it and the author will focus on three:

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32. Regina C Groff, *Beyond Sunday Mornings: The Influence of Church-based Programs on the Everyday Lives of Urban African American Youth*. (ProQuest, 2008) 6.

33. Romans 12:2 KJV

the Sesame Street approach, the Disney approach, and the Nickelodeon approach. The “Sesame Street approach which is cognitive approach to education, Disney approach which is an entertainment approach, and the Nickelodeon approach which is a fun approach that leads to learning.”<sup>34</sup> This Sesame Street approach to children ministry is probably effective with its innovation, technology, media presentation, visual affects of Muppets, and lessons on DVD providing a conducive atmosphere for kids learning. However, when this approach is used for high school ministry it is a recipe for disaster. Many high school ministries using this method can be summed up as elementary in its delivery, message, instruction, material, and content. If these millennials aren’t challenged intellectually, biblically as well as disciple scripturally, many don’t stand a chance against this worldly juggernaut—sound doctrine is the answer to this negligence. The Disney approach to high school ministry is an indictment against church leaders who allow it. In this ministry pizza, secular movies, and activities are the weekly feast. The young people in this ministry majors in entertainment and minors in programs with no substance, and as a consequence learning isn’t taking place, prayer/fasting isn’t talked about, the bible isn’t taught, and evangelism is scarce. The Nickelodeon approach to high school ministry is a fun approach that leads to learning, which is great because learning should be fun, but where’s the transformation? The author often tells pastors of a large youth ministry that the attendance could be a sign that something is right or wrong, right meaning the leadership is healthy, congregation is healthy, and youth is healthy. Also, a large youth ministry can be a sign that it is unhealthy-- for example youth can be recruiting other youth to come because it’s fun and no Godly

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34. Warren Bird, Ed Stetzer, and Elmer L. Towns. 11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2007) 169.

accountability. “The youth program can entertain and amuse to a certain point. Once it reaches its maximum capabilities, if the young person wants bigger and more extravagant entertainment,

he will move on to what the secular world has to offer. The teenager becomes disillusioned with church in general. The local church is no longer a lighthouse in a spiritually dark world.”<sup>35</sup> In 1 Corinthians 13:11 the Apostle Paul says “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”<sup>36</sup> In high school ministry young people must be recognized and ministered to at the appropriate age level. This ministry needs to involve youth into the learning process which includes homework, trainings on teaching, evangelizing and discipling the community at large.

*Youth Pastors, Leaders and Workers: Barriers to an Effective Youth Ministry*

The purposes of this secondary research is to provide a research base for budding youth ministry professionals, and to present the results of what is considered the largest gathering of youth ministers to date 7,500 at the Atlanta’s Georgia Dome in 1996. Out of the 7,500 there were 2,130 fulltime youth leaders represented various denominations, races, social demographics, ages, experiences and para-church ministries. The author’s goal for the research study is to give a voice to some critical results of 2,416 youth minister responses to a 260 item paper-and-pencil survey. These results will reveal impediments to youth ministry from a youth pastor, minister, worker, and leader perspective. Why is this important? Youth ministers have the awesome responsibility in church to teach, model, disciple, evangelize, and bring this generation face to face with the risen Savior Christ Jesus. It is imperative for Senior Pastor’s, parents, church leaders, guardians to realize that this group of ministers has something to say that will change the way church does high school ministry which will affect the present and future youth for generations to come. Urban High School ministry can benefit from the qualitative analysis of this

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35. Lee Vukich and Steve Vandegriff. *Timeless Youth Ministry: A Handbook for Successfully Reaching Today’s Youth* (Moody Publishers, 2008).

36. 1 Corinthians 13:11 KJV

secondary research, because these youth ministers are from rural, urban and suburban cities which can provide priceless data used to understand barriers and strategies to remove them.

### Inexperienced Youth Ministers

Inexperience youth ministers have been identified as having less than three years experience in the profession, and age less than twenty-nine according to the study are vulnerable to issues dealing with troubling youth.

- They are more troubled than most youth ministers about how well they are doing. Compared to the overall sample, they are more critical of themselves (49 percent versus 33), far more concerned over their inability to manage their time (49 percent versus 26 percent), more troubled about the emotional strain from their work (51 percent versus 39 percent), and more concerned over lack of needed volunteers (51 percent versus 38 percent).<sup>37</sup>
- About a third are troubled over how well things are going in their congregation  
One out of five (22 percent) are not happy with the ways things are going in their congregation or organization. A third of these youth ministers (34 percent) report there is considerable tension in their ministry, and 42 percent say that too much time and effort is required to get something approved. These percentages which indicate how many are unhappy over their work situation are nevertheless quite similar to those reported by the other youth ministers.<sup>38</sup>

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37. Merton P Strommen, Karen E. Jones, and Dave Rahn. Youth Ministry That Transform: A Comprehensive Analysis Of The Hopes, Frustrations, And Effectiveness Of Today's Youth Workers (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 113-114.

38. Merton P Strommen, Karen E. Jones, and Dave Rahn. Youth Ministry That Transform: A Comprehensive Analysis Of The Hopes, Frustrations, And Effectiveness Of Today's Youth Workers (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 113-114.



A response of a youth minister who read an early draft of this chapter in reference to inexperienced youth ministers:

I guess I shouldn't be surprised about the level of satisfaction that youth workers express concerning our profession. In talking with those who are younger, the satisfaction issue comes up on a frequent basis: "If God really called me to this ministry, why isn't it more satisfying, gratifying, and fulfilling?"<sup>39</sup>

The above statistics may be matter of institutionalization of youth ministry and the results of this study reveal that these inexperienced youth ministers are crying out for help in need of assistance from the senior staff of the church to provide the necessary support in order to be healthy husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, families, disciples, and youth ministers. In order for these youth leaders to disciple the next generation, they themselves must be healthy. Unhealthy churches are an indication of unhealthy leaders, families, and members.

#### *Disconnect Between Youth And Church*

- There is little interaction between adults and youth in the church.
- I have a hard time getting parental involvement in my ministry.
- Youth ministry seems disconnected from the rest of our church.
- Youth feel that adults in the church just do not understand them.
- I do not have the volunteer youth leaders I need.<sup>40</sup>

The responses above reveal the youth minister's disappointment, frustration, and disconnect between youth and the church. This unhealthy detachment is a barrier to discipleship, to transformation into healthy disciples, and leads to church dropouts. Also, this study can be an indication of unhealthy leadership in the church, which trickles down to families and individuals.

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39. Merton P Strommen, Karen E. Jones, and Dave Rahn. *Youth Ministry That Transform: A Comprehensive Analysis Of The Hopes, Frustrations, And Effectiveness Of Today's Youth Workers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 113-114.

40. Merton P Strommen, Karen E. Jones, and Dave Rahn. *Youth Ministry That Transform: A Comprehensive Analysis Of The Hopes, Frustrations, And Effectiveness Of Today's Youth Workers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 113-114.

Due to the fact that millennials are skeptical of the church, the love of Christ that's mentioned in John 13:35 will assist to establish trust with them and be an excellent drawing card. Jesus says "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have loved one for another." The love of Christ is one of the things that separates the church from the world, so if young people don't see a difference in the body of Christ why would this present generation remain faithful?

### Voices of the Youth

The voices of the youth are important in saving souls, advancing the kingdom of God, reaching other generations, improving youth ministry, discipling families, continuing legacy, preparing the present and future church, building families, and having an intimate relationship with Jesus.

In a survey published by Group magazine ten thousand Christian teenagers who attended a work camp program were asked to check ten significant factors that influenced commitment to church. The questions and the results are as follows: "If you were choosing a church, how important would the following things be?" The percentage of teenagers that rated items "very important," is displayed below:

1. A welcoming atmosphere where you can be yourself—73%
2. Quality relationships with teenagers—70%
3. A senior pastor who understands and loves teenagers—59%
4. Interesting preaching that tackles key questions—53%
5. Spiritual growth experiences that actively involve you—51%
6. Fun activities—51%
7. Engaging music and worship—50%
8. Quality relationships with adults—36%

9. Multiple opportunities to lead, teach, and serve—35%

10. A fast-paced, high-tech, entertaining ministry approach—21%<sup>41</sup>

The voice of teenagers must be heard in this survey by church leaders and parents, in order to meet the need and establish a relationship with Christ. This survey expresses teens number one concern which was to be authentic in a non-threatening Christian environment where youth are accepted, loved, can be relational, understood, and challenged. On the other hand, it also reveals at the other extreme how youth valued entertainment last, which is unfortunately is seen first in many youth ministries and is a factor in discipleship. The editor Rick Lawrence of Group magazine tells of a 16 year youth ministry veteran and president of the Hispanic Ministry Center in Santa Ana, California name Larry Acosta, who gives an astounding revelation about urban youth, “*Kids have seen it all...that’s why they long for what’s real. And that’s ultimately why they’re attracted to rap music—it seems so real.*” Hip Hop Rap music talks about real things, like sex, drugs, money, poverty, riches, jail, prison, politics, being single, marriage, homosexuality, virginity, culture, fantasy, gold, and women. It’s time for parents, the church, and high school ministry to counter this culture and talk about real things from a Christian biblical worldview. In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 the Apostle Paul says “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” The gospel of Jesus Christ is that light that invades spiritual darkness, and opens the eyes of the blind.

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41. Group Magazine Survey of ten thousand teenagers and adults at Group work camps during the summer of 2000. Published in “The Cool Church,” Group Magazine, May/June 2001.

## Church Model Must Change

The “attraction church is built around the concept of ‘come and see,’ also it emphasizes programs, or activities that attract people to visit the church to see. The hook used to attract people ranges from size to quality of worship to teaching to children.”<sup>42</sup> The attraction model was the only and most popular type of church in the author’s community decades ago; however, just because something is popular doesn’t make it a healthy church. In the African American culture the attraction model seems to be the most popular and acceptable at least in the author’s community at large presently. Also, this church model in many cases is centered around a corporate CEO personality (pastor) which is usually a gifted orator who relies on gifts and uses very little evangelism, apostolic missions, as well as discipleship.

Many attraction churches unarm the saints by bringing them into the church without equipping them to be released so that the Great Commission can be fulfilled—which is the opposite of what the scriptures teach. This defeats the purpose of the church which is praise/worship, community and apostolic missions. A missional church is about the mission of the New Testament Church described in the bible, and will penetrate society with the loving gospel of Jesus Christ and “make disciples of all nations, “which is fulfilling the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20. In other words a Missional Church will go out and emphasize growth. However, if a church is missional and healthy it will grow, and produces healthy disciples and families. A church model check is in order if an attraction church continues with its mission of “come and see” and if people aren’t being discipled and not serving the local body of Christ and the community.

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42. Warren Bird, Ed Stetzer, and Elmer L. Towns. 11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2007), 225.

In the book Acts the early church were house churches, yet it grew according to scripture in Acts 2:42-47 *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*<sup>43</sup> From these verses of scripture are several healthy practices of the early church the twenty-first century church can glean from:

- Steadfast in the Apostles Doctrine
- Fellowship with one another
- Prayer
- Breaking of bread collectively
- One accord
- Shared possessions when a need arose
- Met in the temple
- Praising the Lord
- Went “house to house”
- God gave favor with all people

The results of the early church’s healthy habits were astounding, “the Lord added to the church

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43. Acts 2:42-47 KJV

daily.” There were no gimmicks, excessive programs, secular entertainment, emphasis on size, mission of ‘come and see,’ and popularity contest, yet God blessed the early church because of these healthy practices.

If the church is serious about reducing church dropouts and attrition among young people, it must take another look at its model and the way it’s doing church. “To achieve this goal, many will need to make a radical shift in the way ministry is done. In the eyes of our kids, today’s ‘Structure Church’ model often appears to be more concerned about events and making a gospel presentation to a spectator audience than perpetuating a constant relational interaction with God.”<sup>44</sup> The church must rethink the way it’s doing urban high school ministry as it relates to its model and mission statement, and begin asking real questions. What is its Ecclesiology? What’s the purpose of the church? What’s the function of the church? Where are the young people? What’s the purpose of high school ministry? Is urban high school ministry biblically based and culturally relevant?

#### Focusing on Forms

Focusing on forms rather than on biblical principles is a reason why many young people have abandoned Christ and the church. After teaching bible study to urban young people for twenty years, the author poses a question to most groups, why don’t you attend a community gathering (church) throughout the week or Sunday’s with brothers and sisters of the faith? A reoccurring answer heard quite often is “I don’t have any dress clothes,” “They’re going to look at me strange” “I have long dreadlocks and they told me to leave” or “There nothing but hypocrites in the church.” There’s an old saying that explains clearly what many youth or people are trying to articulate about Christ and the Church, “the world is interested in Jesus; it is His

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44. Josh McDowell, *The Last Christian Generation: The Crisis is Real. The Responsibility is Ours* (Holiday, Florida: Green Key Books, 2006), 82.

wife (the Church is the bride of Christ) that they do not want to spend time with.”<sup>45</sup> Although, Hebrews 10:25 has been taught to these young people on several occasions, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”<sup>46</sup> Attending a gathering of believers and meeting the biblical requirement for church, whether it’s in a house, small groups, cells, store front or traditional brick and mortar is what the bible instructs. It is what the early church practices like fellowship, prayer, teaching the word of God, baptism, love of Christ is express, evangelism, and Lord’s Supper. Also, as a reminder to young people, the author tells them that physically attending Sunday services doesn’t save anyone, Christ saves people and changes lives, but the church will help disciple, teach, love on you, train, instruct about Christ and the bible.

“Focusing on forms always leads to the rejection of the gospel in the next generation.”<sup>47</sup> There are many examples of forms years ago that was considered a sin when the author was a young lad, that’s probably not considered a sin today, like women wearing pants to church, or going to the movies. Many people have left the church because it couldn’t differentiate between cultural forms and what’s biblical. For example, in most African American Church services starts on Sunday at 11 a.m., the cultural is to dress up not down, the form can be to pull up your pants, and cut your dreadlocks or cover tattoos, but the bible teaches “dress modestly.” The probability of changing a church culture as it relates to dress code is challenging, but the forms are pushing urban youth out of the church. The church of Jesus Christ must be biblically based and culturally relevant, loving and imitating Christ not being dogmatic.

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45. Warren Bird, Ed Stetzer, and Elmer L. Towns. 11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2007), 27.

46. Hebrews 10:25 KJV

47. Ed Stetzer and Elmer Towns. Perimeters of the Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church. (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 2004), 42.

We as the body of Christ should ask ourselves: If Christ or the original twelve disciples walked in to churches in America, and didn't look like the status quo, will many of them be subjected to forms and possibly rejected. Now consider the youth of America.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

This chapter will give an overview of the primary research proposal which is a quantitative analysis that includes research questions, designs, participants, tools, approaches and results analyzed and displayed in graph form. This will serve as a visual representation of youth's interest in the topic, their involvement in church, and their willingness to apply strategies to their personal lives. The desired outcome is to examine the effectiveness of key strategies and measure the efficiency of the results in order to strengthen youth ministry and the church to impact the world for Christ.

#### **Research Hypotheses**

1. If these key strategies are implemented in High School Ministry, then spiritual transformation will occur within the urban group settings.
2. If these key strategies are implemented in High School Ministry, then church drop outs will decline.
3. If these key strategies are implemented in High School Ministry, then conviction of the youth will promote faith being lived out.

#### **Research Question**

In view of the outcomes of the anonymous survey and designing key transformational strategies, this study is intended to address the following research questions.

1. Will key transformational strategies strengthen urban high school ministry and the church based on the results of primary and secondary research statistics, interviews, and surveys to impact the world for Christ?

2. Will key transformational strategies increase retention and decrease attrition in urban high school ministry based on the results of primary and secondary research statistics, interviews, and surveys?
3. Will key transformational strategies encourage urban youth to “live out” their faith as disciples of Christ?
4. Will the results from the anonymous survey produce key transformational strategies?

### Research Design

This study is primarily a quantitative method study designed to “find common patterns in thought and behavior and to generalize broadly.”<sup>1</sup> Also, quantitative research is used to evaluate the number of people who feel, believe, and act in particular ways. Qualitative studies are designed to “develop understandings, about particular people, places and groups”<sup>2</sup> which in this case was conducted in chapter two with secondary research. The purpose of the study is to examine the effectiveness of key strategies being implemented in urban high school ministries in order for young people to successfully "live out" their faith. It is also to learn that the key strategies that will be implemented and serve as a transformational basis for young people will be effective in increasing retention of our youth from dropping out of church, and decreasing attrition of the future church.

The goal of this anonymous survey is to create transformational strategies for urban high school youth based on the quantitative data gathered which is supported by qualitative data.

### Research Participants

The one hundred twenty five urban participants of the research project in the anonymous

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1. Johnson, Burke and Larry Christensen, *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 53.

2. Ibid. 53.

survey range from ages eighteen to twenty four years old. They reside in Miami Gardens, Florida which is a busy city in Miami located in north-central Miami Dade County. “Miami Gardens has a population of 110,754, and is the third largest city in Miami-Dade County. The demographics of the participants are 76% African Americans (Black Americans, Bahamians, Jamaicans, and Haitians), and 22% Hispanics (Puerto Rican, Cuban, Mexican, South American, Central American).”<sup>3</sup> The dominant faith of all of the participants is Christianity (Southern Baptists, Pentecostal, Non-Denominational, Full Gospel, and Methodist). Approximately eighty percent of these young people come from a single family household.

### Research Approach

One hundred and twenty-five young adults between the ages of eighteen and twenty four will be selected randomly from a local church in Miami Gardens, Florida to participate in this study. An announcement will be made every Wednesday evening at 6:30pm, for five weeks at the local church to a group of young adults in the lobby by the author for 15 minutes explaining an opportunity to volunteer for a research project. After an announcement is made, at 6:45 p.m. twenty-five participants will be asked to volunteer for an hour to complete an anonymous survey from 6:45p.m. to 7:45 p.m. for five weeks totaling a hundred and twenty-five volunteers.

The announcement will say:

Good evening, My name is Michael Rackley and I am a Doctoral candidate at Liberty University conducting a research study on urban high school ministry and how it can be improved. It includes key transformational strategies that can be used to promote "living out your faith" in Jesus Christ. I am asking for 25 volunteers to participate in this study

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3. U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. “State & County Quick Facts for 2012,” Miami Gardens (city), Florida. Census.gov

every week for five weeks. I will be distributing surveys containing 25 questions and the participants of the survey will remain anonymous. When you have completed the survey, insert them into the individualized folders that came with the survey, and pass them at the end of the row so that an usher can collect them and submit them. The results will be used and translated into a graphical format to illustrate the outcome of urban high school young people ages 18-24. Thank you again for your time and participation. I look forward to working with you all.

Once participants are recruited weekly, a group of twenty-five young adults will be escorted into the main sanctuary of a local church, and seated for a fifteen minute briefing of the research project with me face-to-face at 7:00 p.m. During the briefing participants will given instructions about the purpose of the research study, duration of time of subject participation, description of foreseeable risk, description of the benefits if applicable, statement of confidentiality of data being gathered, explanation of who to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects rights, statement that participation is voluntary and a refusal to participate involves no penalty. At 7:15 p.m. the same group of twenty-five participants will be read a script and distributed a hard copy of the anonymous survey questions. Each participant will be allotted thirty minutes to complete and return the anonymous survey questions at 7:45p.m. I will finish by thanking the participants for volunteering their time and efforts. No participant will be videotaped or audio recorded.

### Research Results

A traditional group was given an anonymous four page survey that was completed by individual respondents assembled together over a five week period. The following urban high school ministry anonymous survey results consist of 25 items:

## Research Results

| N<br>U<br>M<br>B<br>E<br>R | Answer   | Strongly<br>Agree | Agree     | Neutral   | Disagree  | Strongly<br>Disagree |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|
|                            | Anonymous Survey   |                   |           |           |           |                      |
| 1                          | Mentors are needed in high school ministry   | <b>75</b>         | <b>36</b> | <b>8</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>1</b>             |
| 2                          | Mission trips promote involvement in church activities   | <b>45</b>         | <b>52</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 3                          | Shadowing is a helpful tool for discipleship   | <b>45</b>         | <b>54</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>2</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 4                          | Relevant topics increase interest in bible study in high school ministry                                 | <b>57</b>         | <b>50</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>2</b>  | <b>1</b>             |
| 5                          | Multicultural point of view is needed in church to be relatable to different ethnic groups in the bible? | <b>36</b>         | <b>51</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>4</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 6                          | Church Transitional Ministry is a necessary passport for preparation for college                         | <b>31</b>         | <b>58</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>7</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 7                          | Confrontational Evangelism creates curiosity about Christ  | <b>22</b>         | <b>51</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>5</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 8                          | Monthly family discipleship is needed in the church  | <b>43</b>         | <b>61</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>3</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 9                          | High School Ministry being administered in a secular environment   | <b>26</b>         | <b>52</b> | <b>42</b> | <b>4</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 10                         | The expectation of high school ministry is too low   | <b>24</b>         | <b>58</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 11                         | High School Ministry prepares youth to defend the faith of Jesus Christ                                  | <b>32</b>         | <b>53</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>7</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 12                         | High School Ministry prepares youth to evangelize the Gospel of Jesus Christ                             | <b>36</b>         | <b>47</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>1</b>             |
| 13                         | High School Ministry you attend teaches youth how to study the bible                                     | <b>29</b>         | <b>58</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>1</b>             |
| 14                         | Youth Pastors are interested in the spiritual growth of the youth  | <b>35</b>         | <b>66</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>3</b>  | <b>0</b>             |
| 15                         | Youth Pastors create an environment that's conducive for youth to learn the bible                        | <b>51</b>         | <b>53</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>0</b>             |

|    |  |    |    |    |    |   |
|----|--|----|----|----|----|---|
| 16 | Youth Ministry exposes young people to a variety of Christian careers  | 23 | 49 | 30 | 20 | 1 |
| 17 | Teaching an Introduction to Biblical Hebrew and Culture course in high school ministry gives youth insight of the bible                    | 21 | 59 | 39 | 5  | 0 |
| 18 | Teaching an Introduction to Biblical Greek and Culture course in high school ministry gives youth insight of the bible                     | 28 | 54 | 33 | 8  | 0 |
| 19 | Teaching an Eschatology course in high school ministry gives youth knowledge about future events   | 22 | 54 | 39 | 7  | 0 |
| 20 | Teaching an introduction to Theology course in high school ministry sheds light on who God is  | 26 | 54 | 33 | 10 | 0 |
| 21 | Studying Biblical Archaeology in high school ministry brings the land of the bible to life.  | 27 | 54 | 35 | 5  | 1 |
| 22 | Teaching a course on Applied Christianity in high school ministry teaches young people to live out their faith                             | 28 | 61 | 31 | 3  | 0 |
| 23 | Teaching a course on Discipleship in high school ministry will strengthen the body of Christ   | 39 | 63 | 17 | 1  | 0 |
| 24 | Teaching a course on Biblical Finances in high school ministry equips young people to be stewards of their time, talents, and gifts        | 36 | 53 | 28 | 5  | 1 |
| 25 | Teaching the purposes of the Church in high school ministry reveals to youth their purpose within the earth in what God has for them to do | 41 | 48 | 30 | 3  | 0 |

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Critical Evaluation Of The Results

#### Analysis of the Research Data

##### *Research Methods*

The author analyzed and evaluated research statistics from the results of the anonymous survey in the month of July 2013. The survey focused on one hundred twenty-five urban young adults between the ages of eighteen to twenty-four from local churches in Miami, Florida. The purpose of the study is to examine the effectiveness of key strategies being implemented in urban high school ministries in order for young people to successfully "live out" their faith. The author hopes to learn that the results from the study will help identify key strategies that will serve as a transformational basis for young people and will be effective in increasing retention of our youth from dropping out of church, and in decreasing attrition of the present church.

##### *Analysis of Statistical Answers*

1. Mentors are needed in high school ministry.

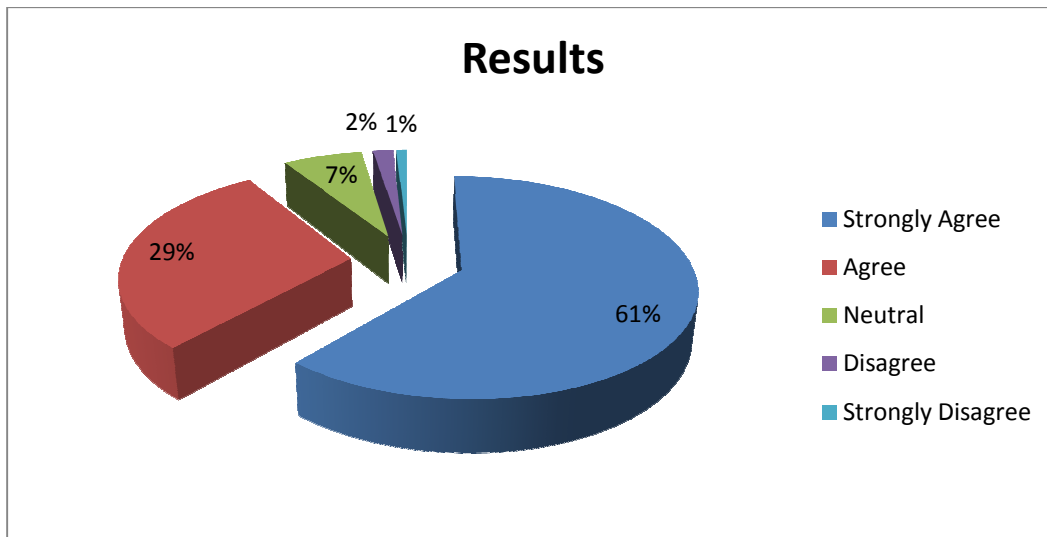


Figure 1.1  
According to the survey results, 61% of the respondents strongly agreed that mentors are

needed in urban high school ministry; 29% agreed that it was needed; 7% were neutral; 2% disagree; and 1% strongly disagree. Over half of the young people decided mentors are needed in high school ministry and in the church probably because there is a lack of such a thing in their sphere of influence. This group of people face absent fathers, peer pressure and dysfunctional families as indicated in chapter two secondary research.

2. Mission trips promote involvement in church activities.

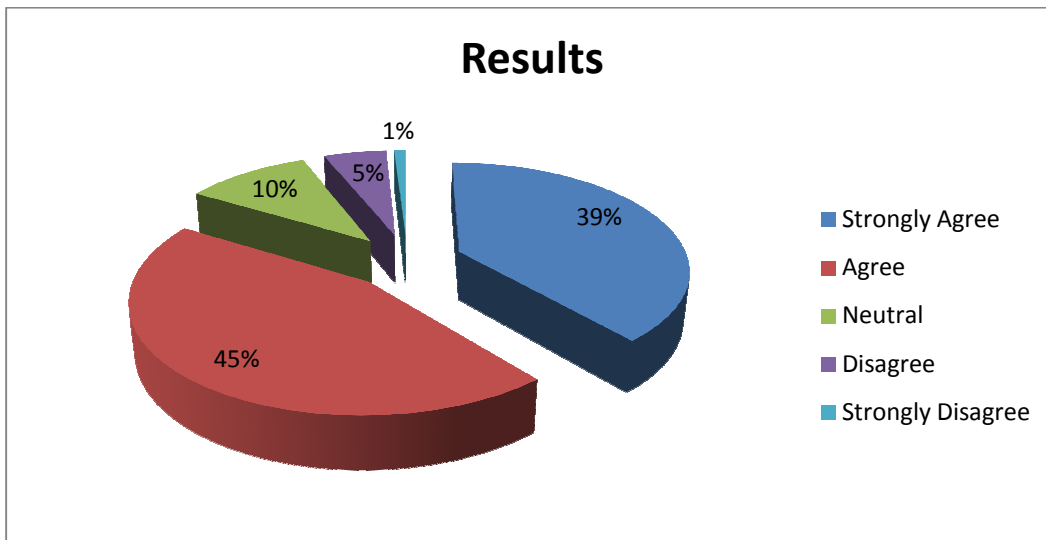


Figure 1.2

According to the survey done by the author, 45% of the young people strongly agreed; 39% agreed that mission trips are needed to encourage involvement in church related activities. Also, 5% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed that mission trips promote participation in church activities. Mission's trips are an opportunity to evangelize unbelievers, to serve the community, to be disciple by mature believers, to lift up the name of Jesus, to plant churches, and to gain a Christian educational experience.



3. Shadowing is a helpful tool for discipleship.

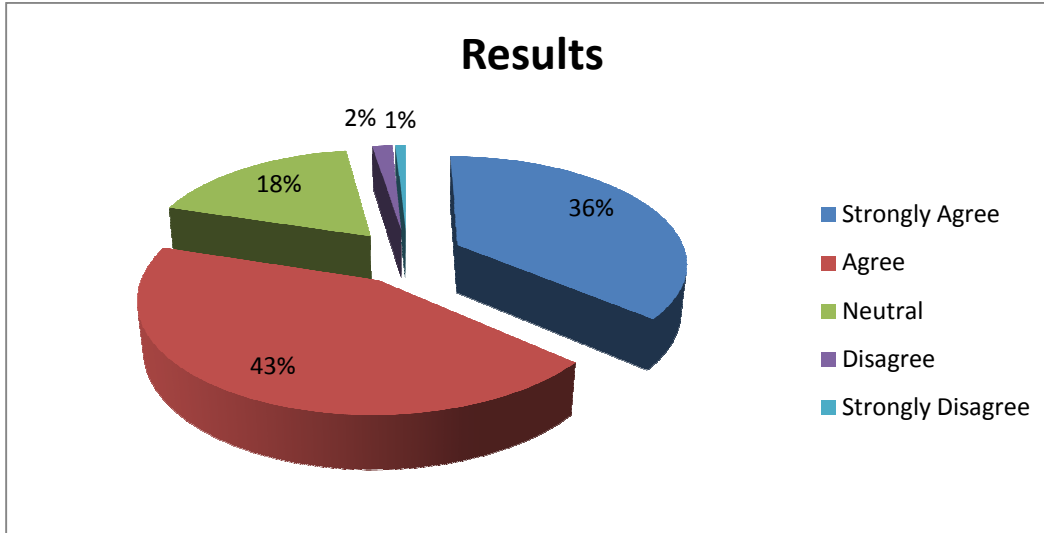


Figure 1.3

According to the author's survey, 43% agreed that shadowing is a helpful tool for discipleship; 36% of the respondents strongly agreed; 18% was neutral; 2% disagree and 1% strongly disagree. A total of 79% of the young people agreed that shadowing can be used as a tool for discipleship, because as youth shadow church leaders, learning, teaching, coaching, correction, and counseling occurs over a period of time. This in turn can impact the lives of young people tremendously, especially for those who deal with self-esteem issues or even dysfunctional families because this type of activity can promote communication and personal and spiritual growth.

4. Relevant topics increases interest in bible study in high school ministry.

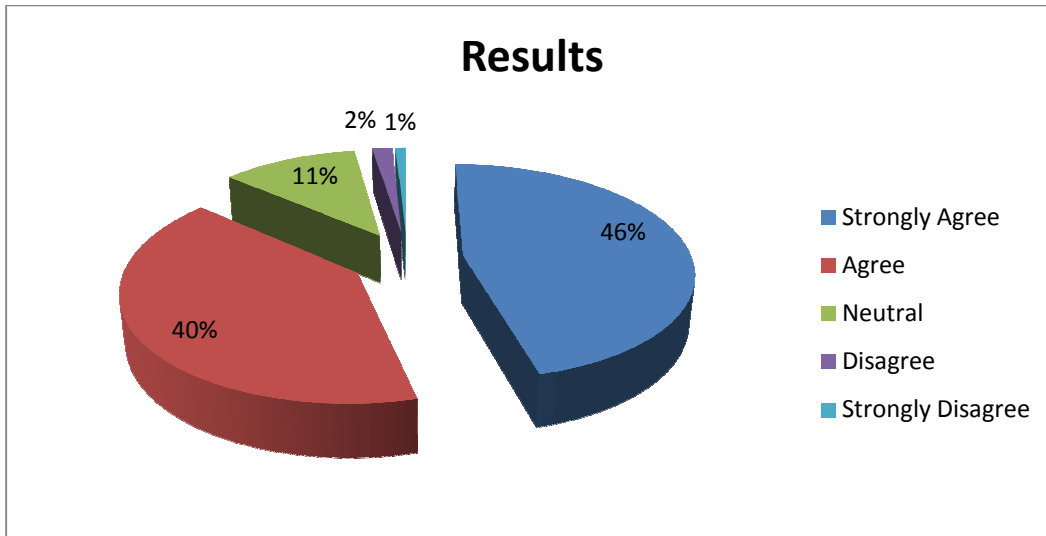


Figure 1.4

In figure 1:4 the response is as follows: 46% strongly agreed that relevant topics increase interest in bible study in urban high school ministry; 40% agreed; 11% were neutral, 2% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed. A total of 86% of the participants desired relevant messages for relateability. The author will elaborate more on this topic in the next chapter.

5. Multicultural points of views are needed in church to be relatable to different ethnic groups in the bible?

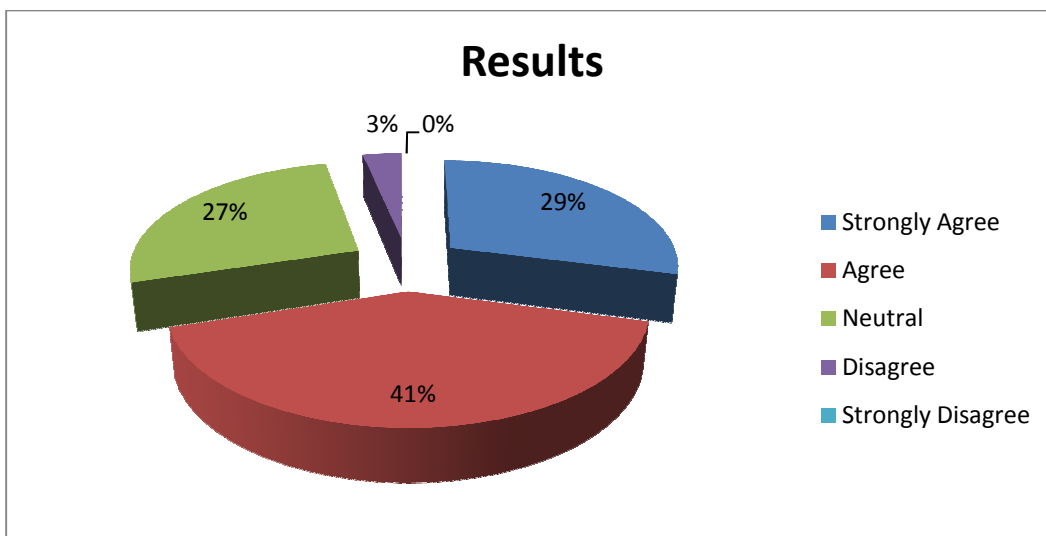


Figure 1.5

According to the survey done by the author, 41% of urban young people agreed that a

multicultural point of view is needed in youth ministry in order to relate to the bible and biblical characters; 29% strongly agreed, 27% were neutral; and 3% disagree. For urban young people, having the ability and knowledge to view the bible from a multicultural point view is significant, because of the culture and community they live in. For example, in the book Mark 15:21“Simon a Cyrenian was a native of Cyrene, an important coastal city of North Africa that had a large Jewish colony (Acts 2:10)”<sup>1</sup> helped to carry the cross of Jesus because He was too weak beyond the city gate to carry it due to beatings. This is an enormous since of achievement for “Simon the Cyrene,” and an important piece of culture history for urban youth to glean on. Also, 27% were neutral possibly implying a general disinterest or unawareness of the diversity of biblical culture.

6. Church Transitional Ministry is a necessary passport for preparation for college.

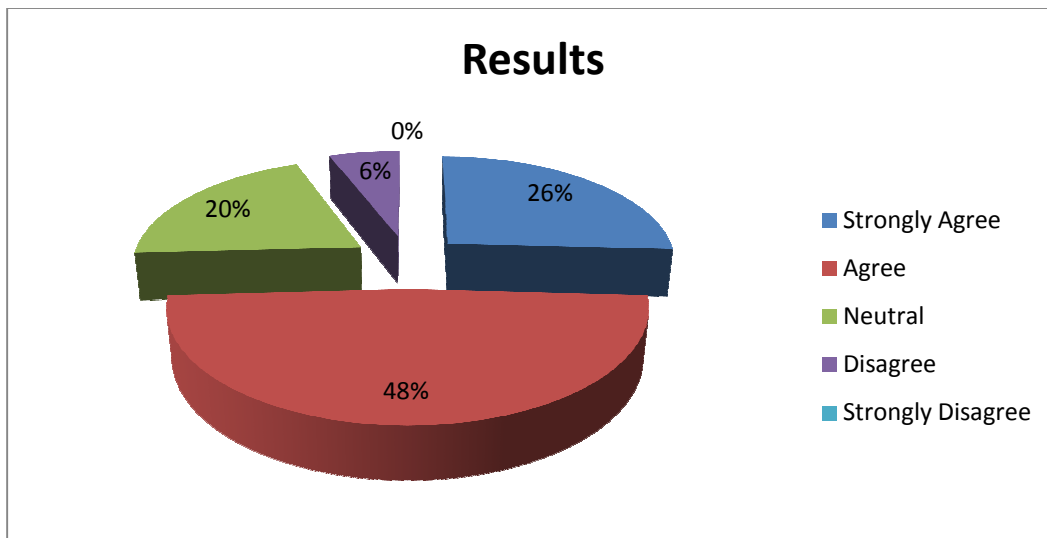


Figure 1.6

The results of the research reveals that 48% of the respondents agreed, that some type of ministry preparation for college is needed, 26% strongly agree, 20% were neutral, and 6% disagree. A total of 74% agreed that some type of Christian development is needed between high

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1. Mark 15:21

school and college in order to prepare young believers for the culture shock (sex, drugs, alcohol, false religions) of college atmosphere.

7. Confrontational Evangelism creates curiosity about Christ.

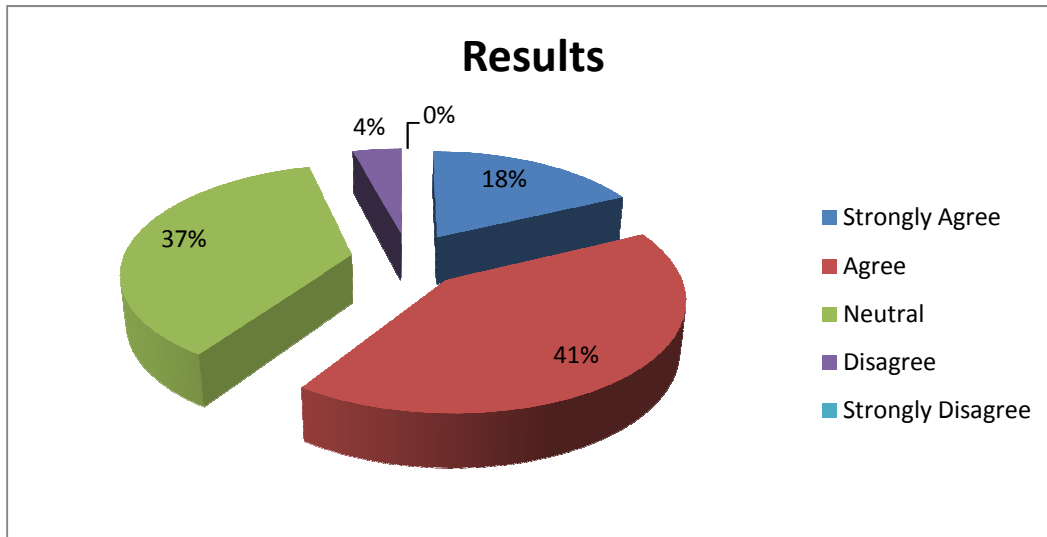


Figure 1.7

According to the writer's survey, 41% of the young people agreed that confrontational evangelism generates interest about Christ, 18% strongly agree, 37% neutral, and 4% disagree. Over half of these urban young people approve of being engaged face-to-face with the gospel of Jesus Christ in the community (like the board walk , malls, streets, and parking lots). This type of evangelism provokes thought; create a conversation, as well as an opportunity to ask questions. For other communities this type of evangelism might be considered a bit overboard or aggressive, but for some of these young adults it can be an occasion to meet Christ face to face.

8. Monthly family discipleship is needed in the church.

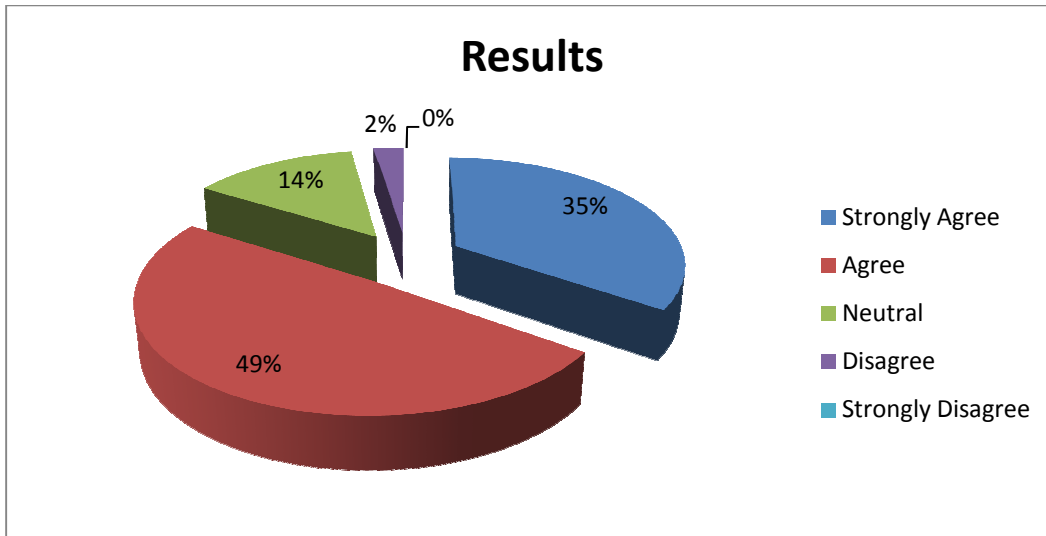


Figure 1.8

The study shows that 49% of the young people agree that family discipleship is needed in church; 35% strongly agree; 14% neutral; and 2% disagree. About 84% of the respondents agreed there is a need for parents, single parents, grandparents, and other family members to be a part of monthly fellowship in the home and corporate gatherings on Sunday. Amazingly, this survey has one of the highest percentages out of twenty-five items indicating an intense desire for youth to be disciple by parents, grandparents or other family members.

9. High School Ministry being administered in a secular environment.

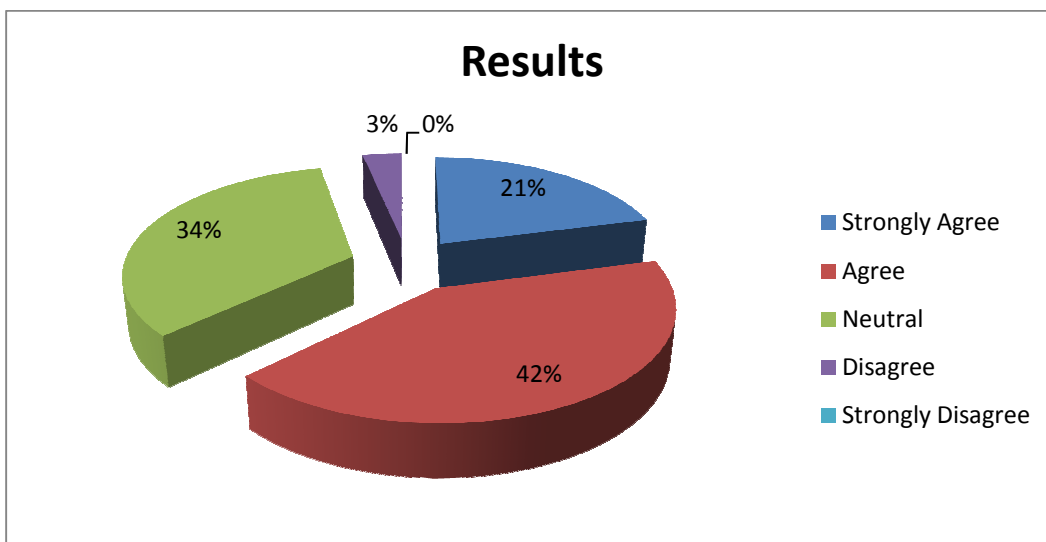


Figure 1.9

The author’s research results demonstrated that 42% of the respondents agree that urban high school ministry is being administered in a worldly atmosphere; 21% strongly agreed; 34% neutral; and 3% disagree. The results of the survey are an indicator that urban young people desire to be in a godly environment attending youth worship services weekly not secular. About 63% are in agreement that youth ministry is being conducted in a worldly settings, as indicated in secondary research in chapter two. For examples, secular artist instrumentals/lyrics are being played in the beginning and end of youth services, programs and conferences. In 1 Peter 4:11 it says “If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.”<sup>2</sup> The question pastors, youth pastors, leaders, and workers should be asking “Is Jesus glorified, and are young people edified in these toxic surroundings?”

10. The expectation of high school ministry is too low.

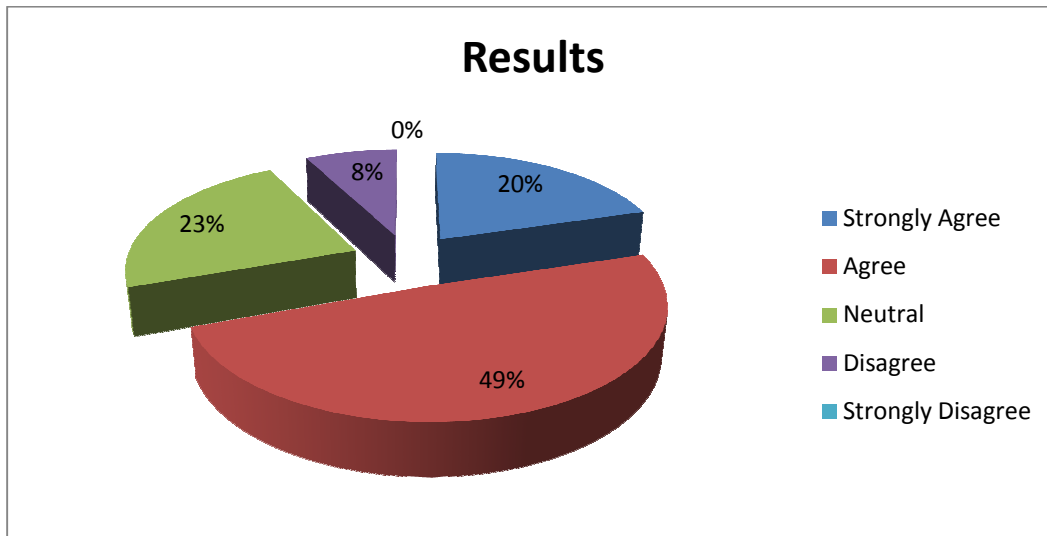


Figure 1.10

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2. 1 Peter 4:11 KJV

The result of the research reveals that 49% of the young people agree that the expectation of high school ministry is too low; 20% strongly agree; 23% neutral; and 8% disagree. This is due to respondents experience in various youth ministries of not being challenged as indicated in a survey in the second chapter. More than half of these young people agree that expectation in youth ministry is too low. In the authors' twenty years of experience young people will meet and surpass any realistic expectation given because an expectation has been set before these urban youth.

#### 11. High School Ministry prepares youth to defend the faith of Jesus Christ.

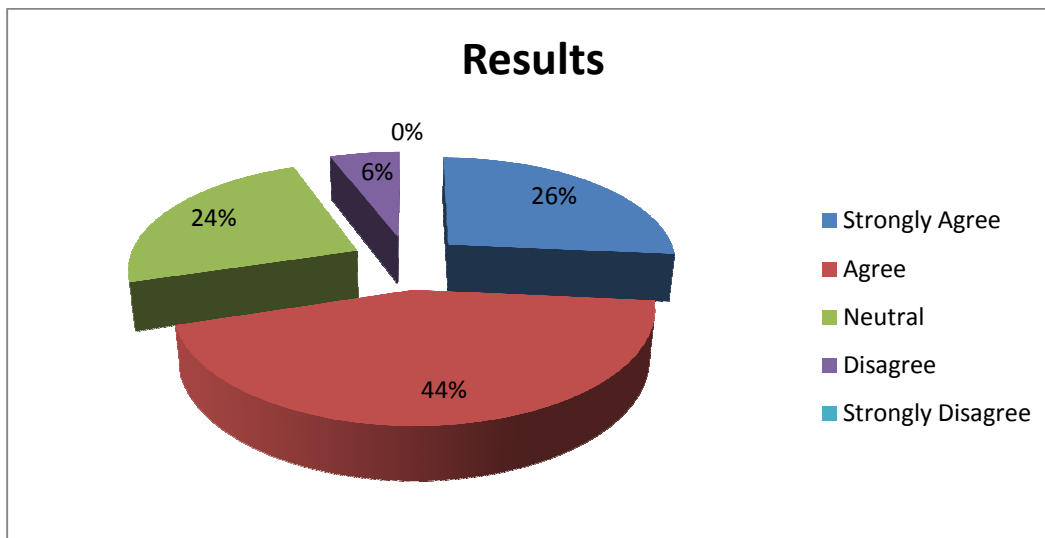


Figure 1.11

The results of the following the survey suggest that 44% of the young people agree that high school ministry prepare youth to defend Christianity; 26% strongly agreed; 24% were neutral; 6% disagree. In this survey more than half of the respondents decided that high school ministry sufficiently train students defend the faith.

#### 12. High School Ministry prepares youth to evangelize the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

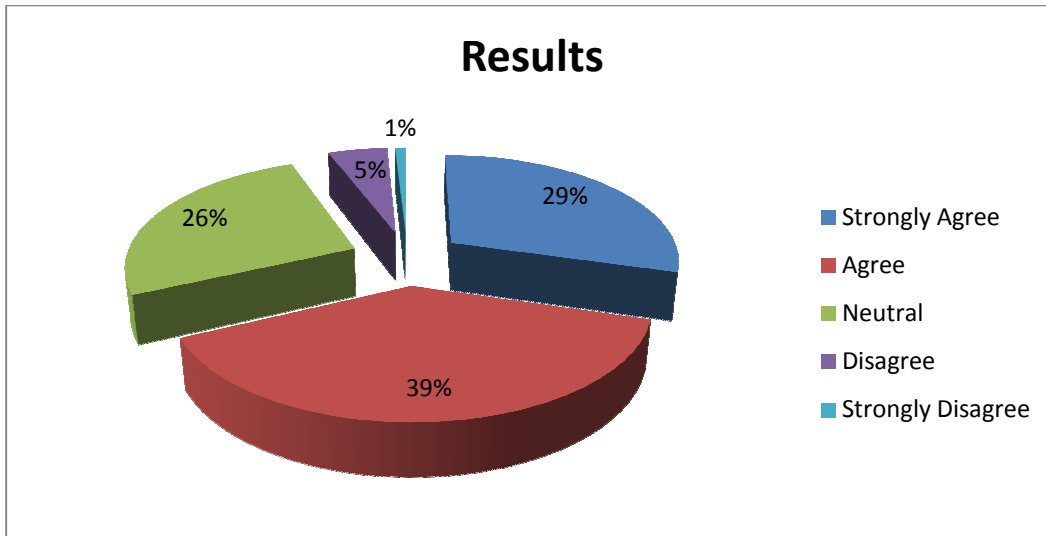


Figure 1.12

The research study of the author survey imply that 39% of the respondents agree, that high school ministry prepares youth to evangelize the gospel of Jesus Christ; while 29% strongly agree; 26: neutral; 5% disagree and 1% strongly agree. This survey reveals that 68% of the participants an agreement that high ministry prepares youth to evangelize, while 26% remained neutral possibly undecided, and 5% and disagreement.

13. High School Ministry you attend teaches youth how to study the bible.

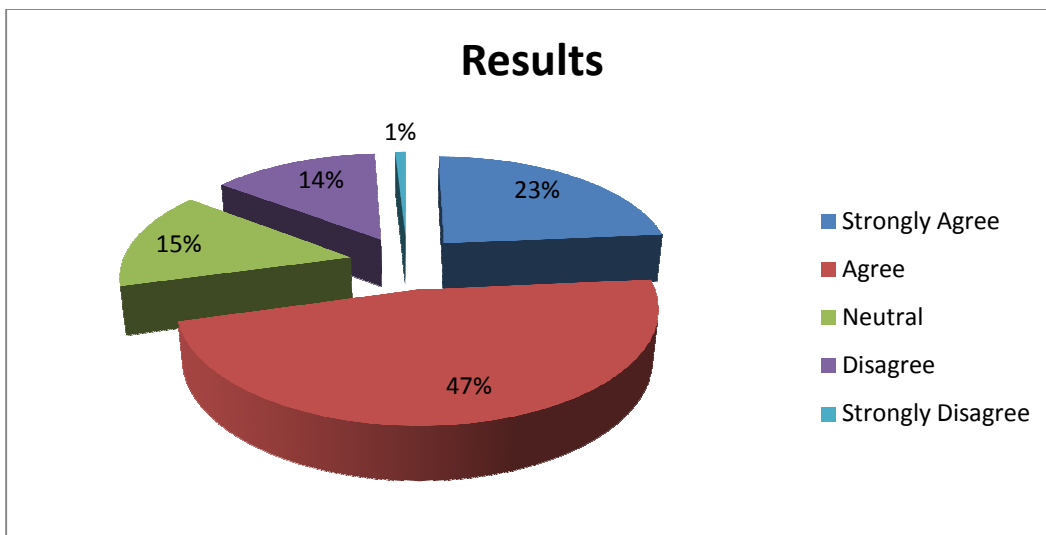


Figure 1.13



According to the author survey 47% of the respondents agreed, that high school ministry teaches you how to study the bible; 23% strongly agree; 15% neutral; 14% disagreed and 1% strongly disagrees. A resounding 70% believes high school ministry teaches young adults how to study the bible, which is great news, while 15% are in disagreement.

14. Youth Pastors are interested in the spiritual growth of the youth.

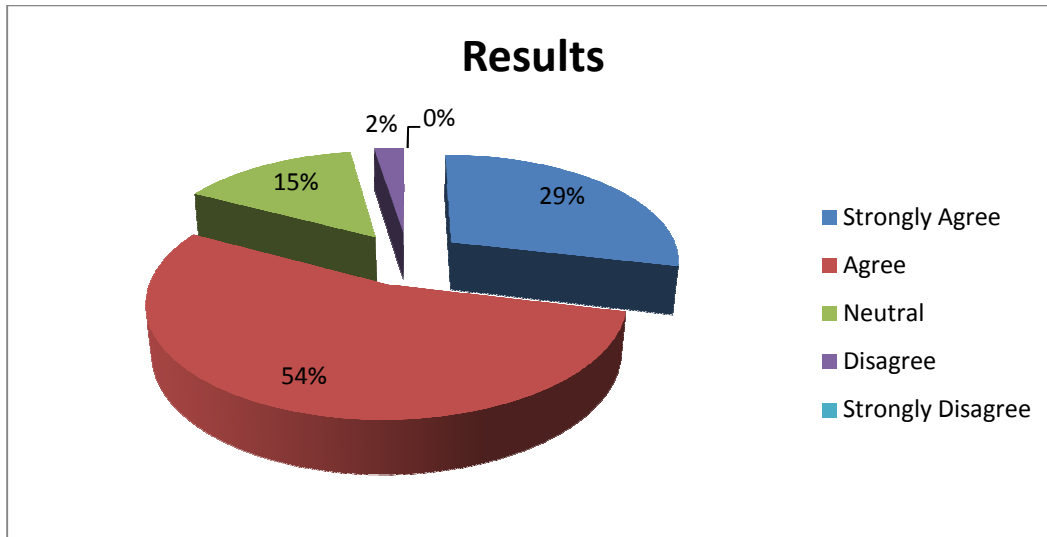


Figure 1.14

The author survey suggests that 54% of the young people agreed that youth pastors are concerned about the spiritual growth of the youth; 29% strongly agree; 15% neutral; and 2% disagrees. Over 75% of the participants agree that the youth pastors are concerned about the spiritual development of its youth, revealing that the heart of the pastor is like the heart of Jesus.

15. Youth Pastors create an environment that's conducive for youth to learn the bible.

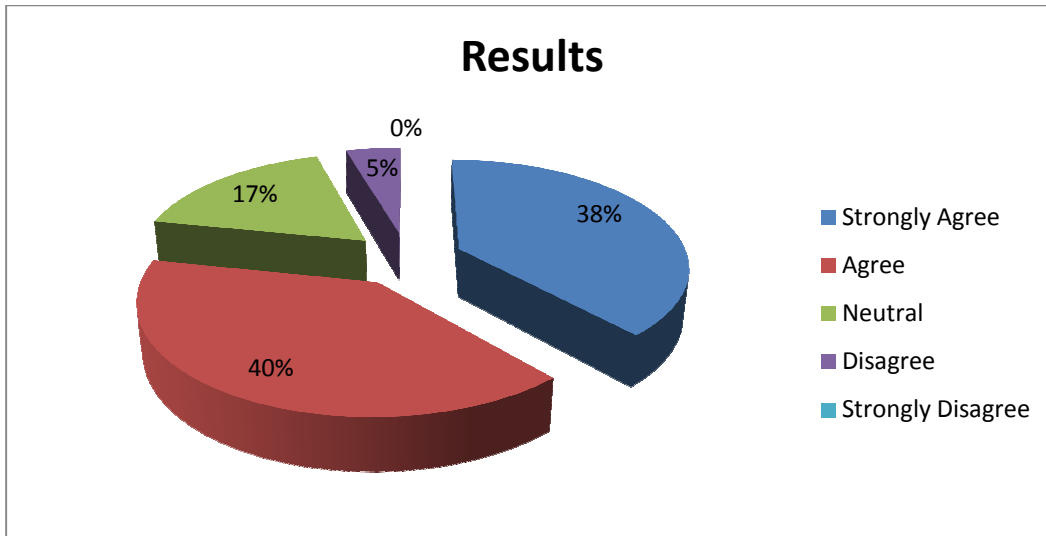


Figure 1.15

The survey results reveal that 40% of its respondents agreed, that youth pastors created an atmosphere that's encouraging for youth to learn the bible; 38% strongly agreed; 17% neutral; and 5% disagree. The results reveal its respondents are satisfied with a conducive environment to study the bible.

16. Youth Ministry exposes young people to a variety of Christian careers.

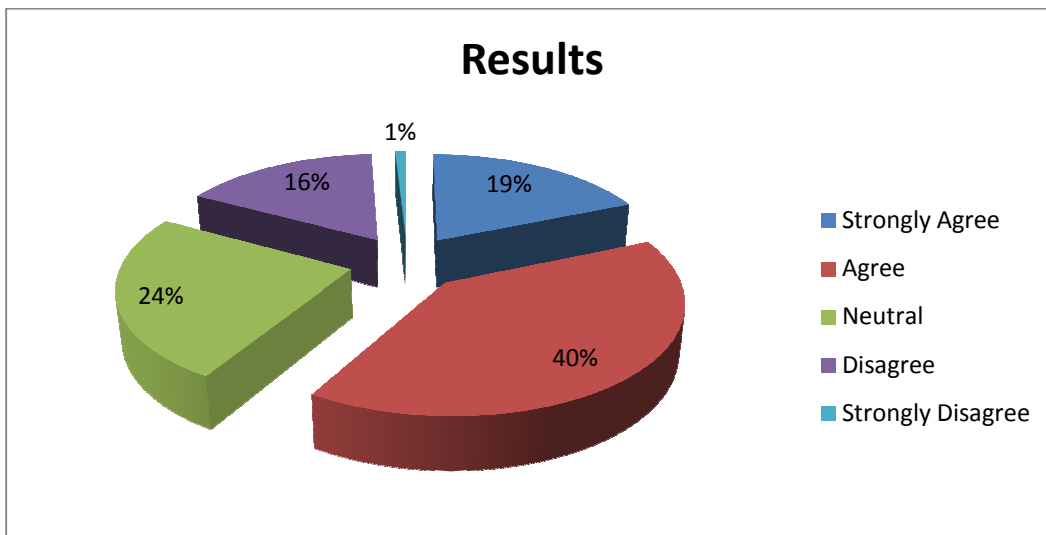


Figure 1.16

According to the survey done by the author, 40% of the young people agreed that youth ministry exposes young people to a selection of Christian careers; 24% were neutral, 19%

strongly agree; 16% disagree; and 1% strongly disagree. The results of this survey indicates that the a little over half of the respondents have been exposed to or are familiar with careers in the Christian arena.

17. Teaching an Introduction to Biblical Hebrew and Culture course in high school ministry gives youth insight of the bible.

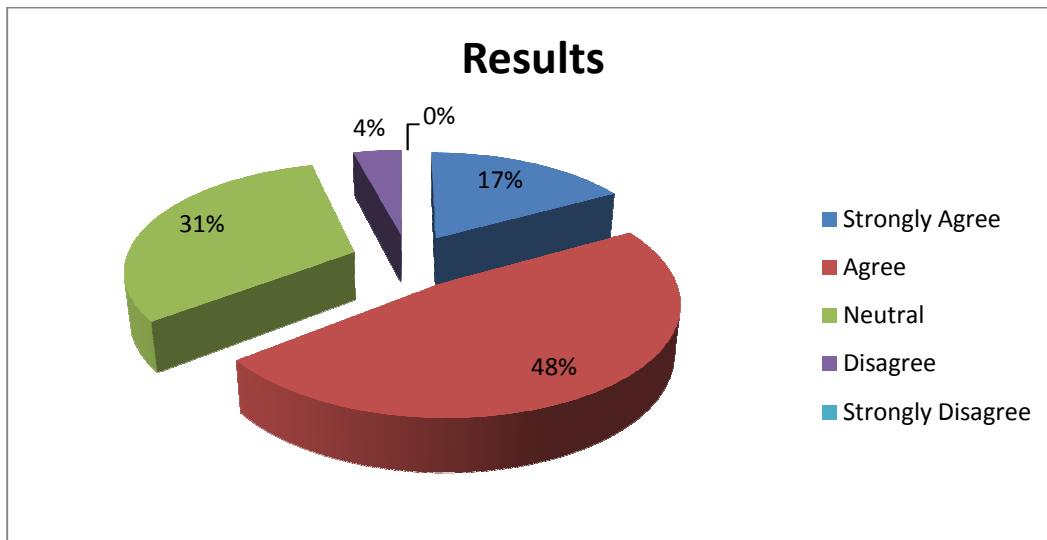


Figure 1.17

The survey results indicate that 48% of its young adults agreed that teaching an Introduction to Biblical Hebrew and Culture course in high school ministry gives youth insight into the bible; 31% were neutral; 17% strongly agree; and 4% disagree. The results are an indication that 65% of these respondents desire to obtain a better understanding of the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi through its original language Hebrew and the culture. In an “uncomplicated way the language of the Bible will speak directly to you,”<sup>3</sup> and learning the Hebrew alphabets/grammar and its meanings will promote a greater comprehension, defense and sharing of God’s Word among peers. The 31% that were neutral were perhaps indifferent or unaware of the advantages of studying the original language of the Old Testament Biblical

3. Ethelyn Simon, Irene Resnikoff, and Linda Motzkin, *The First Hebrew Primer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (Albany, CA: EKS Publishing Company, 1992), 1.

Hebrew.

18. Teaching an Introduction to Biblical Greek and Culture course in high school ministry gives youth insight of the bible.

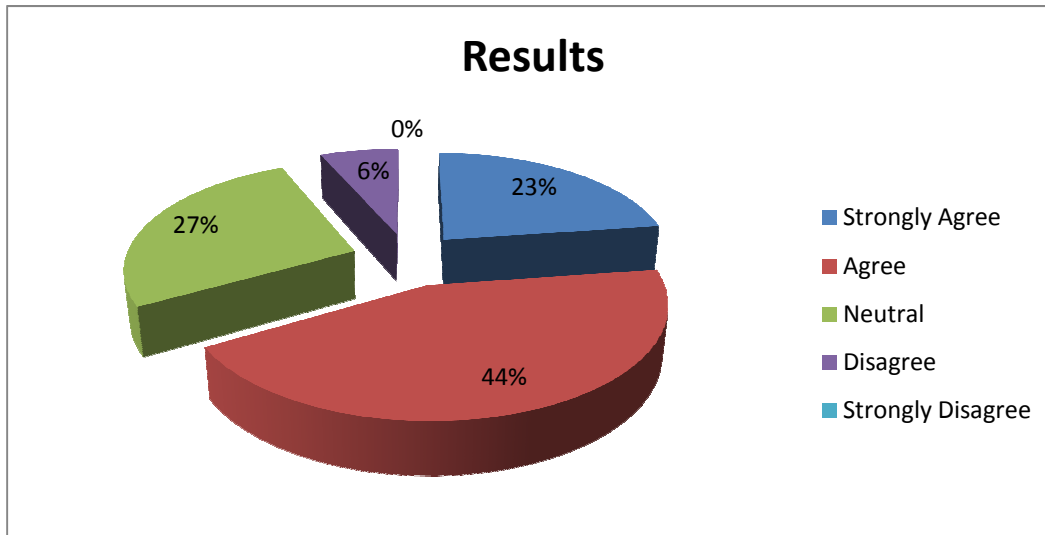


Figure 1.18

According to the author survey 44% of the respondents agreed, that teaching an Introduction to Biblical Greek and Culture course in high school ministry gives youth insight into the bible, 27% were neutral; 23% strongly agree and 6% disagrees. The results indicates that 67% of these urban young people are interested in learning an introduction to biblical Greek, and its customs from Matthew to Revelation for a broader understanding of the bible. This course will teach the Greek alphabets/grammar and its meaning as it pertains to the bible, as well as culture “to help discover the common ways of life shared by people in various bible times.”<sup>4</sup> In return, sharing God’s Word to peers is enjoyable and exciting. The 27% that’s neutral probably lack exposure or completely unaware of biblical Greek.

19. Teaching an Eschatology course in high school ministry gives youth knowledge about future events.

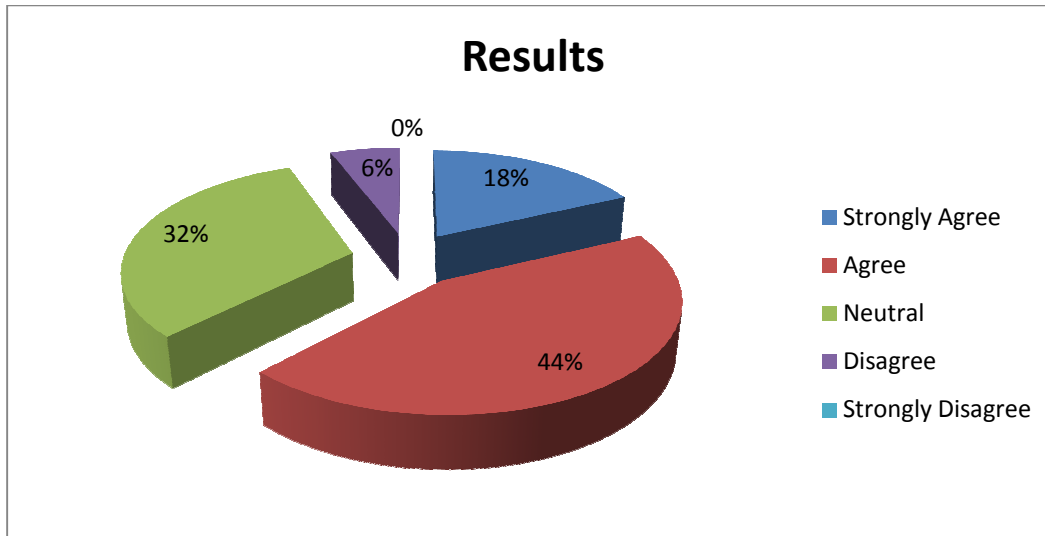


Figure 1.19

According to the author survey 44% of the young adults, agreed that an introduction in Eschatology course in high school ministry gives youth knowledge about future events, 32% were neutral; 18% strongly agree; and 6% disagrees. The results are 62% agrees that Eschatology is a course respondents desire to learn which consists of the rapture, literal method of interpretation, Second Coming of Christ, the Great Tribulation, and Millennial Reign of Christ. This course will promote a Christian Biblical Worldview about the End Times that will refute heresy, and promote understanding and sharing God’s Word to peers in Daniel and Revelation. Yet, 32% were neutral which possibly means these young people have never been given exposure to Eschatology or just completely unaware of it.

20. Teaching an introduction to Theology course in high school ministry sheds light on who God is.

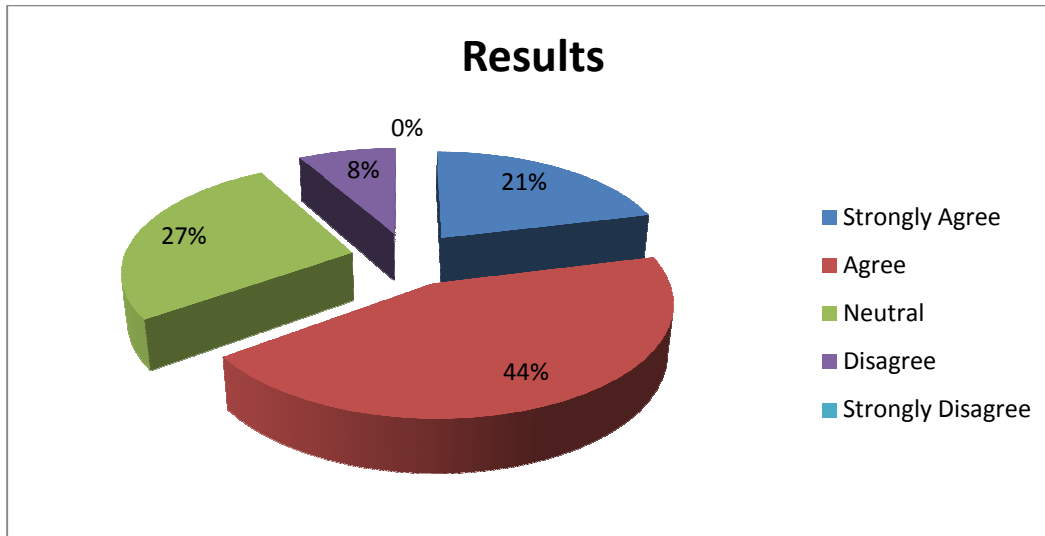


Figure 1.20

The survey the author completed reveals that 44% of the respondents agreed that an introduction to Theology course in high school ministry sheds light on who God is, 27% were neutral, 21% strongly agreed and 8% disagree. More than half of these urban young people want to study Theology, go deeper into scripture, nature, attributes, and doctrine of the Trinity. This knowledge will increase desire to study the bible, share, and defend the word of God with love and confidence. The other 27% were neutral which can be an indication of unfamiliarity with Theology or very little experience.

21. Studying Biblical Archaeology in high school ministry brings the land of the bible to life.

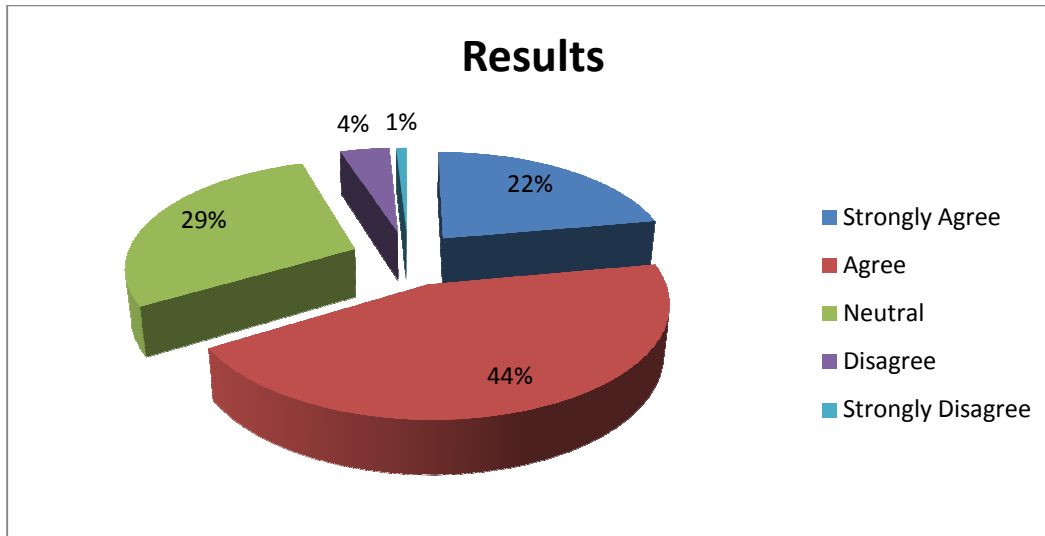


Figure 1.21

The results of the above survey shows, 44% of the respondents agreed that studying Biblical Archaeology in high school ministry brings the land of the bible to life, 29% were neutral; 22% strongly agree; 4% disagree and 1% strongly disagree. Many young people are visual learners, so an introductory course in Biblical Archaeology showing pictures or PowerPoint presentation from Christian explorations of the remnants of Noah’s Ark found in Mount, Ararat in Turkey by the National Geographic Daily News will increase interest and learning. Also, artifacts from excavations found in Jerusalem or Africa is of great interest to many students of the bible. Again 29% that were neutral probably lack exposure to this material like adults.

22. Teaching a course on Applied Christianity in high school ministry teaches young people to live out their faith.

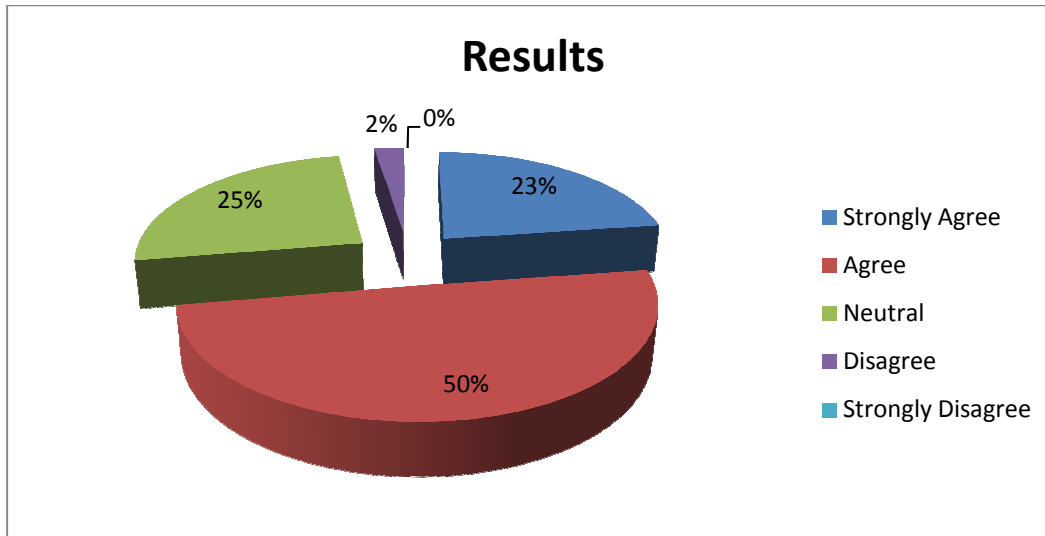


Figure 1.22

The survey on applied Christianity reveals that 50% of the respondents agree that teaching a course on Applied Christianity in high school ministry teaches young people to live out their faith, 25% were neutral; 23% strongly agreed and 2 % disagree. An overwhelming 73% of these young people desire to live out faith in Jesus Christ and being exposed to Applied Christianity can do this because it teaches the fundamentals like evangelism, discipleship, apologetics, prayer, fasting, salvation, repentance in action. Also, this survey demonstrates urban young people have a desire to serve, not to just sit on the bench in church like spectators watching a concert, or game. If the church doesn't properly disciple youth, many will fall prey to the heavyweights of this prevailing (athletes, entertainers, actors, actress, media) culture at large as presented in chapter two of this research.

23. Teaching a course on Discipleship in high school ministry will strengthen the body of Christ.



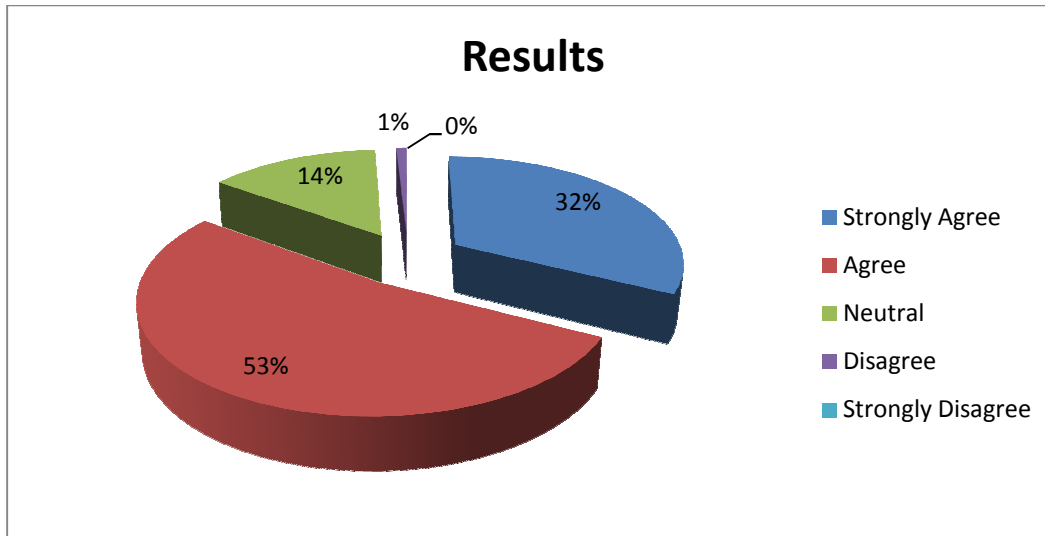


Figure 1.23

Over 85% of these urban young adults in this survey agreed that teaching a course on discipleship in high school ministry will strengthen the body of Christ, 14% were neutral and 1% disagrees. This unanimous agreement signifies these respondents are hungry to learn, pray, fast, evangelize, be disciple and are waiting to be given the church marching orders from Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>5</sup> Sometimes it’s easy for many people to stereotype or classify these young people and put them in categories, but the data speaks for itself.

24. Teaching a course on Biblical Finances in high school ministry equips young people to be stewards of their time, talents, and gifts.

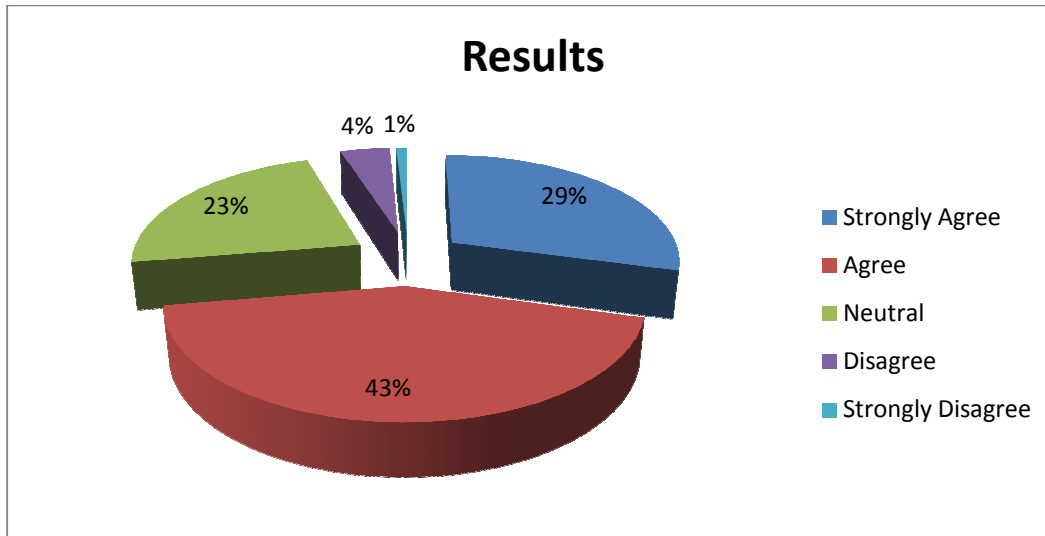


Figure 1.24

According to the author survey 43% of the young people agreed, that teaching a course on Biblical Finances in high school ministry equips young people to be good stewards of their time, talents, and gifts, 29% strongly agree; 23% were neutral; 4% disagree and 1% strongly disagree. About 72% agreed that's its necessary to teach biblical finances in youth and high school ministry, not only to older adults. Many times it's assumed that young people don't have a desire to give, the author has learned through the years, youth/young adults will give what is taught. If the church doesn't teach it many people will never learn to be good stewards of God's gifts. The 23% of the respondents that's neutral probably don't understand biblical finances or indifferent to it.

25. Teaching the purposes of the Church in high school ministry reveals to youth their purpose within the earth in what God has for them to do.

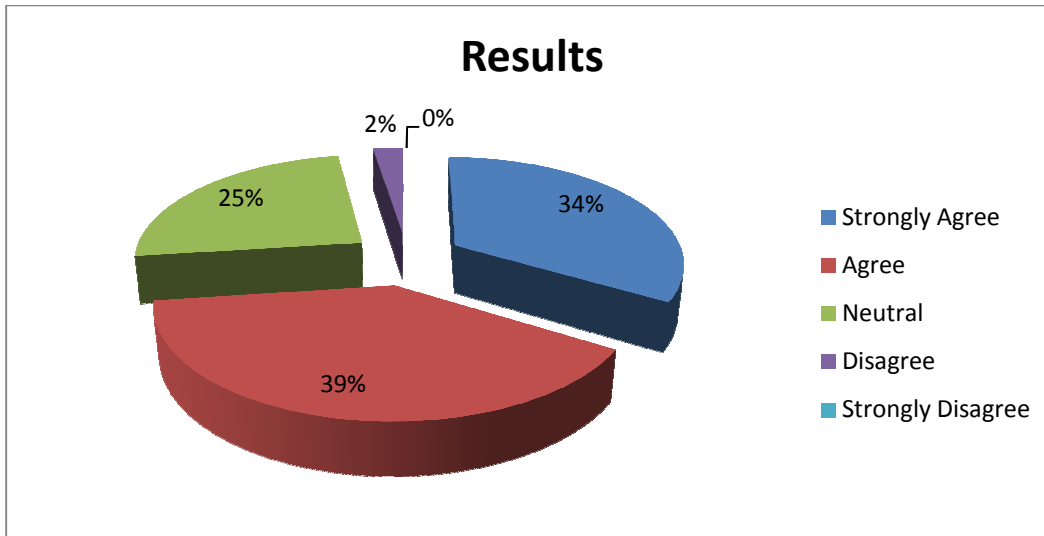


Figure 1.25

In the author church survey 39% agree, that teaching the purposes of the Church in high school ministry reveals to youth their purpose within the earth in what God has for them to do, 34% strongly agree; 25% were neutral and 2% disagrees. The results reveal more than half of these young people want to know God’s purposes for life, and purpose of the church. The other 25% were neutral which probably indicates a disinterest or just an unawareness of it.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Key Strategies for Urban Youth to “Live Out” their Faith

This chapter will examine key strategies for urban youth to “live out” their faith, and the results from the anonymous survey will be the basis from which the author creates these transformation strategies. Also, the author hopes to learn that these same strategies will serve as a transformational basis for young people and prevent them from dropping out of church and decrease attrition from the present church. The following strategies that will be analyzed in this chapter are that One Size Doesn’t Fit All, Confrontational Evangelism, Mentors in the Church, Missions Trips, Youth Shadowing Leaders in the Church, Church Transitional Ministry, Multicultural Prospective of the Bible Characters, Effective Messages and Greek Educational Model versus Hebrew Educational Model. Chapter five will provide details of each strategy, application, and how it leads to transformation.

#### One Size Doesn’t Fit All

Urban high school ministry must be approached differently from a suburban or rural high school ministry because of the differing social economic status and culture of the youth. The author isn’t advocating for a radical shift in urban youth ministry, but in its methodology. Dr. Elmer Towns, Co-founder, Vice President, and Dean of the School of Religion at Liberty University, in Lynchburg, Virginia say “methods represent a change in style. In other words, witnessing two emerging generations require a different approach. It will be different than the methods of the past. There is a need to employ a post-modern evangelistic strategy as churches share the unchanging gospel.”<sup>1</sup> Someone has said, “Methods are many, principles are few,

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1. Ed Stetzer and Elmer Towns, *Perimeters of the Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 2004), 24.

methods may change, but principles never do.” For example, in the urban culture main stream music is the norm, and in other cultures there is a genre of music that excludes a group of young people, but is accepted by another. This uniqueness doesn’t give the green light to the defiant hip hop culture to invade youth ministry as well as the church. The hip hop culture and church is an oxymoron, two opposing world views. Just because people are different, look different, talk differently, are of different ethnicities, speak different languages, and even eat different foods is not a license to commit transgressions against God. Yet, God made mankind this way that it should be embraced as an expression of uniqueness not of superiority, and not an excuse to violate the scriptures. In John 15:19 Jesus says, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”<sup>2</sup>

The Apostle Paul understood the concept of “one size doesn’t fit all” in the book of Acts 13, 14, 17 and 22:

| <b>Paul’s Varying Approach To His Audiences</b> |                    |                       |  |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Text</b>                                     | <b>Place</b>       | <b>Audience</b>       | <b>Approach</b>  |
| Acts 13:15-41                                   | Antioch of Pisidia | Interested Jews       | Much history and Hebrew Scripture                          |
| Acts 14:15-17                                   | Lystra             | Idolaters             | Nature is a bridge to the gospel.                          |
| Acts 17:22-31                                   | Athens             | Educated philosophers | Quotes a Stoic poet and acknowledges their religious quest |
| Acts 22: 3-21                                   | Jerusalem          | Mob of Jews           | Gives a personal testimony                                 |

Source: Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 281<sup>3</sup>

Just like the Apostle Paul, preachers/teachers must know their audience and the purpose of its message. If the church is to fulfill its missional statement in Matthew 28:18-20 by “by making

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2. John 15:19 KJV

3. Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*, 281.

disciples of all nations;” it must be able to reach people in order to teach them. If it can’t reach them, it can’t teach them.

What will it take to reach/teach urban teenagers and be effective? The author will list 16 items used effectively in bible study, for years in order to establish common ground with urban young people that probably won’t be effective with some suburban or rural youth:

- Relateability
- Understand where youth are coming from
- Feel youths pain and be passionate
- Acknowledge what youth have been going through
- Know the world young people live in
- Show empathy for the situation youth are going home to
- Understand their culture and pain
- Speak their language
- Don’t be afraid of young people (youth will sense it)
- Show tough love and give the truth of God’s word
- Be sensitive to their plight
- Set high expectations (most will meet it)
- Love on young people, laugh and have fun
- Give pedigree for creditability and prepare to be challenge (it’s not personal)
- Emphasize preacher is not to be called father/mother, but mentor, teacher or by name
- Show youth the exit (Christ is the “way, truth and life” John 14:6)

The biblical ingredients for bridging the gap between the adult generation and youth is to communicate the gospel “cross-generationally” for understanding, and it is found in the very

pages of scripture in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”<sup>4</sup> The apostle Paul gives an example of what evangelism looks like using the concept “one size doesn’t fit all,” to people of different races, lifestyles and religions that all might be one for Christ without engaging in sin.

In the book *Sacred Pathways* by Gary L. Thomas, nine pathways are given describing different ways to relate to God and how to draw near to Him:

- Naturalist – finds God in nature
- Ascetic – is drawn to disciplines
- Traditionalist – loves historical liturgies
- Activist – comes alive spiritually in a great cause
- Caregiver – meets God in serving
- Sensate – senses God through five senses
- Enthusiast – loves to grow through people
- Contemplative – is drawn to solitary reflection and prayer
- Intellectual – loves God by learning<sup>5</sup>

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4. 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 KJV

5. Gary L. Thomas, *Scared Pathways: Discovery Your Soul’s Path to God* (Grand Rapids. MI: Zondervan. 2000), 32.

Again “one size doesn’t fit all” young people have different learning styles, as well as different ways naturally to connect with God that’s biblical.

In preparing a message for urban high school ministry, there are a few practical things to consider when ministering:

1. “First, we have to get them to pay attention to the message.
2. And if they hear it, we need to make sure they understand it.
3. Then even if they hear it and understand it, that doesn’t mean they’ll actually believe it.
4. Even if they believe the message in that moment, there’s still the challenge of helping each of them to retain it in their active memory.
5. And then, of course, there is the question of obedience.
6. And of the numbers who retain the message and have some measure of resolve to obey the message, there’s finally this question: will they actually flesh out the decision by taking action.”<sup>6</sup>

These practical lessons can be used in general with all youth ministries, and a reminder of how in many cases eternity is being weighed in the balance of these young people hearts, and the preacher has the awesome responsibility through the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring young people face to face with the risen Savior.

### Mentors

The results of the anonymous survey overwhelmingly suggested that young people want and need mentors in the church to connect with, to model after Christ like behavior, to receive advice from and show forth the love of God. Mentoring is defined as a “sustained relationship

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6. Doug Fields and Duffy Robbins. *Speaking To Teenagers: How To Think About, Create, And Deliver Effective Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 19.



between a young person and an adult in which the adult provides the young person with support, guidance, and assistance. The very foundation of mentoring is the idea that if caring, concerned adults are available to young people, they will be more likely to become successful adults themselves.”<sup>7</sup>

In the world of the National Football League (NFL) – The most sought after coaches have been the recipients of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, the red carpet treatment, career opportunities/ with benefits and million dollar contracts because of who mentor them. Why is this important? Because it appears the world understands mentoring better than the church. For instance, Bill Parcells is considered one of the greatest coaches in the NFL, who won two Super Bowls and mentored Tom Coughlin who later won two Super Bowls as a head coach, Bill Belichick who won three Super Bowls as a head coach, and Sean Payton won one Super Bowl as a head coach. The power of mentoring has obvious benefits for a mentee to grow and prosper in whatever capacity he/she is being mentored in.

There is a great need for mentors in the urban church for several reasons like dysfunctional families, absent fathers, increased incarceration in prison, absent leaders in the community at large, and a plethora of negative influences in the community and secular arena on a broader scale. Also, mentoring is used as a means to mature, to discipline, to instruct, to educate, to promote, to counsel, and to test the mentee. It is also used as a biblical principle seen in the Old and New Testament relationships listed:

1. Abraham schooled Isaac in Genesis 22
2. Jethro and Son-in-law Moses Exodus 17, 24, 33
3. Moses and Joshua 1, Deuteronomy 31

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7. J. Allen, J. Aber, and B. Leadbeater, (1990) “Adolescent Problem Behaviors: The Influence Of Attachment And Autonomy.” *Psychiatric Clinics of North American* 13, 435-467.

4. Moses and Aaron Exodus 7:10
5. Naomi and Ruth Ruth 1-4
6. Mordecai and Esther Esther 2
7. Elijah and Elisha 2 Kings 2
8. Eli and Samuel 1 Samuel 3
9. Samuel and Saul 1 Samuel 9-15
10. Samuel and David 1 Samuel 16:13
11. David and Jonathon 1 Samuel 18, 19
12. Jesus and the Twelve Disciples Matthew 10, 20, 26
13. Barnabas taught Saul (who would later become Paul) Acts 4:36
14. Paul and Silas Acts 16:2-3
15. Paul and Timothy 2 Timothy 1:2
16. Paul and Titus Titus 1:4

The above relationships reveal the principle of mentoring is also a means for exponential spiritual growth in the Old and New Testament, and is distinguished from discipleship.

Hendricks distinguishes between biblical mentoring and what has been generally known as discipleship. He shares, “Mentoring...focuses on relationships.”<sup>8</sup> However, “Discipleship as we know it today tends to narrow its focus to the spiritual dimension.”<sup>9</sup>

How do we mentor urban youth in the church? First, the Senior Pastor and the leadership of the church must be on board if this key transformational strategy is to be successful. Second, it is just as important to demonstrate to the leadership and lay members that this isn’t just another

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8. Howard and William Hendricks, *As Iron Sharpens Iron* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 17f, 183.

9. *Ibid.* 182.

thing to do or program, but a biblical model and principle as a means to increase retention and decrease attrition among young people in the church.

Case in point: Saul who later became Apostle Paul (and Barnabas mentoring began in Acts 9) conversion took place on a road to Damascus in Acts 9: 3-19 where he encountered the risen Savior Jesus Christ. Saul was one of the leaders that persecuted the church and put men and women into prison (in Acts 8:1-3), and (in Acts 9:1-2) threatened many disciples of Jesus with murder. Yet, in God's Sovereignty as the disciples were scattered a great missionary work started in Acts 8:4. After Saul met Christ, the soon-to-be Apostle Paul conversion began with hearing the voice of Jesus in Acts 9:4; recognizing Jesus in Acts 9:6; and receiving instructions in Acts 9:11 "to go into a city." Ananias a believer instructed by the Lord to meet Saul and laid "his hands on him" in Acts 9:17. Prior to meeting Saul, Ananias had reservations about the acts of violence committed against the saints Acts 9:13-14, but the Lord said "*Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him great things he must suffer for my name's sake,*" in Acts 9:15-16. After Ananias laid hands on Saul, brother Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit, and his eyes were opened and he was baptized in Acts 9:17-19. Immediately, Saul began preaching in synagogues of Damascus in Acts 9:20 and later many Jews conspired to kill Saul in Acts 9:21 and he escaped by the power of God in Acts 9:25 -26. Acts 9:26-30 is where Barnabas (a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith) and Paul mentoring relationship started, as Paul was introduced to the Apostles later Barnabas' mentoring continued as Paul was recruited to the church at Antioch to teach new converts called "Christians," in Acts 11:25-20.

Barnabas mentoring relationship was instrumental in Paul's development as an essential leader in the early Christian church. Presently, there are many young people like Saul

persecuting the church in America and around the world using profane language, pornographic lyrics, or acts of violence who will eventually encounter the Lord on their road to Damascus. Like Barnabas church leaders must be examples and prepare to mentor the next generation of leaders. How important is mentoring? The bible says after Paul, the novice, was mentored by Barnabas the Elder under guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:15-16), Paul became the greatest propagator of the gospel of Jesus Christ in early church history.

Urban young people like any others come to church with issues like Saul, whether its gang banging, fornicating, legalism, or being in a place of need of a mentor, we see that coming to church can lead to transformation so youth can “live out” their faith. Like the Apostle Paul, being accepted and receiving the tough love of Christ is essential to be all God destined them to be.

#### Christian Based Urban Youth Paradigms/Mentoring Models

There are several Christian urban youth ministry paradigms that can also be used as mentoring models. They will be addressed looking through the lens of social justice, worldviews, transformation and why a new urban youth mentoring model is needed. Fernando Arzola, Jr the author of the book *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry, Theory and Praxis in Urban Context* outlined four paradigms of youth ministry in the urban context: 1) Traditional Youth Ministry 2) Liberal Youth Ministry 3) Activist Youth Ministry 4) Prophetic Youth Ministry.

In the Traditional Youth Ministry paradigm in the urban context, “the primary purpose is developing a ministry-centered program for urban youth.”<sup>10</sup> The challenge with this mentoring model is that its focus appears to be exclusively on programs that are hip-hop in nature, where a

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10. Fernando Arzola, Jr., *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry, Theory and Praxis in Urban Context*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 20.

lot of time and resources can be wasted, along possibly with religious responsibilities. Also, using this approach does real transformation occur or is the focus on men's tradition rather than Christ.

The Liberal Youth Ministry paradigm "primary purpose is developing a felt-needs ministry-centered programming for urban youth. This paradigm begins with the *felt-needs* of youth and then addresses them through youth ministry programs."<sup>11</sup> This mentoring model will seek to meet the emotional needs of its youth and possibly struggle with identifying with persecuted Churches around the world, including the urban youth because of its middle class urban youth status. These church leaders that use this model must be reminded of the second greatest commandment Matthew 22:39 "And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>12</sup>

The Activist Youth Ministry paradigm "primary purpose is developing an urban ministry centered program for youth. The paradigm begins by identifying *urban issues* affecting youth and then develops appropriate youth ministry programs which address these issues or needs."<sup>13</sup> The challenge of this mentoring model is not to see its youth as victims of society, but victors. Often when urban youth see themselves as victims many of their worldviews have become cloudy, instead of viewing the world in color, it's regularly seen in black and white. The consequences can be devastating and one can easily become an extremist or be recruited by homegrown terrorist. The key here is to provide a balanced and a biblical Christian world view.

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11. Fernando Arzola, Jr., *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry, Theory and Praxis in Urban Context*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 20.

12. Matthew 22:39 KJV

13. Fernando Arzola, Jr., *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry, Theory and Praxis in Urban Context*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 24.

The Prophetic Youth Ministry paradigm “primary purpose is developing a Christ- centered ministry for urban youth.”<sup>14</sup> This ministry model has many positive attributes such as that its foundation is Christ, its principle focus is transformation, and its emphasis is Christian ministry for urban youth. Also, the biblical example in this mentoring model is the prophets; the author believes pastors are a sufficient example based on the marching orders of the church in Matthew 28:18-20 the Great Commission, the two Great Commandments to love Matthew 22:37-40, evangelism, discipleship, community, personal relationship with Christ, purpose of the church, church is the Body of Christ, and apostolic missions.

The author developed and introduces a New Transformational Youth Ministry paradigm that can also be used as a mentoring model in an urban context below:

*Transformational Youth Ministry Paradigm*

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Ministry Emphasis:   | Christian Biblical Worldview that’s Pro –Israel, culturally relevant and biblically based (Genesis, 12:3, Matthew 21:13, Isaiah 55:7).  |
| Purpose:             | Missional (Christ and Bible centered) America and the world.<br>We are missionaries on a post-modern mission field.<br>Church marching orders (Matthew 28:18-20)                    |
| Assumption:          | Begins with meeting Jesus Christ face-to-face   |
| Evaluative Question: | Are the youth “living out” their faith<br>At home, school, community and throughout the world<br>(Romans 12:2).   |
| Primary Concern:     | Evangelism, Discipleship and Missions<br>(Mentors and Small Groups)   |
| Programs:            | Apologetics, Evangelism, Eschatology, Biblical Languages<br>Worship (music), Fasting, Family services, and relevant topics<br>Trips/events Missions, Prayer and Systematic Theology |
| Guiding Principle:   | Conversion to Discipleship to<br>Transformation   |

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14. Fernando Arzola, Jr., *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry, Theory and Praxis in Urban Context*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 24.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Ideology:                 | Complete Metamorphosis   |
| Change in Youth Ministry: | (Proverbs 4:7)   |
| Conflict:                 | Remain Biblically base and Culturally Relevant<br>in a postmodern culture<br>(Persecuted church all over the world)<br>(Ephesians 6:10-19) |
| Bible Example:            | Pastors 1 Peter 3:15   |

The primary purpose is developing a Christ and bible centered ministry for urban youth. The paradigm begins with Christ and His word, and then develops a youth ministry based on praise/worship, evangelism, discipleship, transformation and apostolic mission.

#### Effective Messages and Topics

Effective messages are used as key strategies for transformation, for instance God will go to great lengths to communicate with His children, “to communicate as God has communicated requires that we take radical, potentially inconvenient measures to make sure teenagers understand God’s Word and its power to transform – even in the twenty-first century. Here is a list of the following items God used to make Himself known in the Bible:

- A burning bush
- A talking donkey
- An illustration with a mustard seed
- A potter working his wheel
- A fig tree that met an early death
- A distant star
- A story about a man and his pet lamb
- Strange graffiti on the banquet room wall
- Swarms of locust and frogs

- Countless dreams and visions
- Stunning miracles
- The Word becoming flesh
- A prophet commanded to marry a prostitute named Gomer<sup>15</sup>

How much more should youth pastors, workers, and leaders use a variety of items to communicate about the Creator. In Matthew 4:19 Jesus says to His disciples “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,”<sup>16</sup> In this scripture Christ is calling His disciples to a higher calling of winning souls, the fishermen are the disciples, the Mediterranean sea is the world, the net is the gospel and the fish are the souls. Although, Jesus uses metaphors to relate to His disciples who were fishermen, at that time, it is still a literal interpretation.

An effective message as a strategy to win urban youth for Christ needs an effective topic in order to create interest and provoke thought. The following 63 hot topics have been used in the author’s bible study for urban young people ages 16 to 24 with much success:

1. Who is Jesus?
2. How to find the right one.
3. Why should I go to church?
4. Truth behind Hip Hop
5. What is Godly music?
6. Is it ok to drink?
7. What is love?

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15. Doug Fields and Duffy Robbins. *Speaking To Teenagers: How To Think About, Create, And Deliver Effective Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 33.

16. Matthew 4:19 KJV



8. What are the Illuminati?
9. What is the difference between Christ and Muhammad?
10. Godly marriage versus a secular marriage.
11. Life of Jesus?
12. Is eating pork a sin?
13. Questions about the Bible.
14. Questions about God.
15. Do I have the right to defend myself?
16. Why do people give money to the church?
17. Once saved always saved.
18. If I commit a sin as a Christian am I going to hell?
19. What is hell like?
20. Does God love me if I sin?
21. I don't want to get save, because I am afraid I'll messed up?
22. Is truth absolute or relative?
23. What is the difference between law and grace?
24. Do I need to pay tithes?
25. Is there more than one way to heaven?
26. Masturbation.
27. Pornography.
28. Is premarital sex?
29. Can I play the lottery?
30. Dysfunctional families and God.

31. Single parent homes and God.
32. Hatred for fathers and how God the heavenly father is viewed?
33. Is smoking marijuana a sin?
34. Lust.
35. Peer pressure.
36. Is Jesus white or black?
37. Suicide.
38. Abortions.
39. Is listening to hip hop music a sin?
40. Is it a sin to tattoo your body?
41. Contraception.
42. Racism.
43. Is it a sin to go to war in another country?
44. Voodoo and witchcraft.
45. Gangs.
46. How will the world end?
47. What is the Rapture?
48. When is Christ coming back?
49. What is the Holy Trinity?
50. What is salvation?
51. If I am baptized, do I need to be saved?
52. Youthology Hebrew 101.

A study in Hebrew grammar designed to promote a better comprehension/translation of

the Word.

53. Youthology Greek 101.

A study in Greek grammar designed to promote a better comprehension/translation of the Word of God.

54. Youthology Pneumatology 101.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit

55. Youthology A Biblical Christian Worldview 101.

A group of distinctively Christian philosophical & religious beliefs (C.S. Lewis)

56. Youthology Theology 101.

The doctrine of God, and the Trinity

57. Youthology Bibliology 101.

The doctrine of the Bible

58. Youthology Christology 101.

The doctrine of the Son

59. Youthology Hermeneutics 101.

Interpreting the Bible

60. Youthology Apologetics 101.

A defense of the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Pete 3:15)

61. Youthology Ekklesia (Church) 101.

The doctrine of the Church

62. Youthology Israelology 101.

Study of Israel past, present and future

The above topics/disciplines should be communicated in light of urban high school aged

students, according to the anonymous survey young people unanimously want sound doctrine at the home, youth ministry, and at church. In high school, students are given academic disciplines like math and the sciences, as well as college level courses and advanced classes. The above Youthology courses are disciplines as well, that will challenge and strengthen high school ministry.

### Shadowing Leaders In The Church

Shadowing leaders in the church is a strategy where the rubber meets the road because it increases youth expectations of what Jesus expects and the church expects from its future leaders. The results of the survey suggest young people desire to serve in the church in many capacities and they desire to gain exposure through all kinds of positions within the ministry.

Unfortunately, as a pastor encouraging young people to be a part of the local church in the community, a recurring question often is heard— “But, isn’t church boring?” In the book *Youth Leaving the Church: How To Reverse The Trend* the author gives a great illustration “one of the most exciting dreams of many people would be to have a Corvette or some other fast powerful car in the garage. But before that excitement can be a reality, two things must happen: 1. You must ride in the car (if not drive it). 2. The car must function properly. The car situation is much like the church. To be excited about church, first you must put yourself into the driver’s seat and church must function properly. When you see what the church is meant to do and then the church does it that is exciting.”<sup>17</sup> The point is that young people want to serve, but can’t quite articulate it in a way church leaders can understand. For example, work base learning/job shadowing (WBL) is given to middle school, high school students and high school dropouts for

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17. Joyce T. Henderson, *Youth Leaving The Church: How To Reverse The Trend* (Fairfax, VA: Xulon Press, 2001), 75.

several reasons: real-world experiences, career exploration, learn employability skills, workplace tours and improves interpersonal skills. What about the church? When young people shadow healthy pastors, deacons, deaconess, ushers, youth pastors, praise leader, and minister of music most are excited, youth are connecting with scripture, it's cool to hang out with the pastor for a few hours, gain valuable experience, expose to Christian careers and decreases boredom, church dropouts and attrition. Accountability is key in making a personal connection for urban youth, many don't know their biological fathers, or even hate them, because of this dysfunction within the family the church must become surrogates. The author is reminded of Dr Martin Luther King letter from a Birmingham Jail "if not us, who? If not now when?"

#### Changing Educational Model

After reading a book called *The Last Christian Generation* by Josh McDowell, who is considered one of the leading authorities on youth ministries in the last twenty plus years and world renowned apologist of the faith, he makes a recommendation to change education models by stating "we must craft a way of imparting the faith to our children that is more like the Hebrew model than the Hellenistic model of education. We must develop a spiritual formation process that not only declares but also demonstrates truth that is continually lived out in relationship to God and others."<sup>18</sup> The Hellenistic (Greek) model of education has formed our contemporary American education theories. The "Hellenistic approach is to present a student with rational and logical constructs of information that he or she is required to "learn."<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, "the goal of the Hebrew model is not mere memorization of repeated facts;

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18. Josh McDowell, *The Last Christian Generation: The Crisis is Real. The Responsibility is Ours.* (Holiday, FL: Green Key Books. 2006), 94.

19. *Ibid.* 94

the goal is to live-out the truth.”<sup>20</sup> The question is how can young people live-out the truth? The

Hebrew model is based on scripture and how to live-out the truth in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

*“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and your gates.”*<sup>21</sup>

It is in the scripture Moses was calling on God’s people to “live out” their faith, in the home, traveling, meditating on it, taking it in and living it out.

The author recommends the Hebrew model of education, along with the Greek model of education for urban high school ministry for several reasons. First, the Greek model has its place in youth ministry when students are asked to memorize scriptures, quote scriptures, learn the basics of theology and apologetics, and much more. Also, students are tested based on this information given in form of quizzes or test. If students are able to “regurgitate” the right answers to the youth pastor, the tests have been successfully passed. On the other hand, where is the evidence of truth being lived out? If the Hebrew model of education is implemented, youth would have to “practice what they preach.” In other words, their challenge will be to “live-out” faith at home, school, church, mall, sports activities, and dormitories, and when this is accomplished, the test is successfully passed. The Hebrew model is relational, and the Greek model form minds.

Using the Hebrew model in urban high school ministry, youth pastors, and leaders now

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20. Josh McDowell, *The Last Christian Generation: The Crisis is Real. The Responsibility is Ours.* (Holiday, FL: Green Key Books. 2006), 93.

21. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NLT

have a strategy to evaluate present and future leaders of the church. In 1 Corinthian 10:31 the bible says “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”<sup>22</sup>

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22. 1 Corinthians 10:31 KJV

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Conclusion**

#### Contribution of the Research

The author developed a New Transformational Paradigm for Urban Youth Ministries around the world, which is the latest among four current models: Traditional Youth Ministry, Liberal Youth Ministry, Activist Youth Ministry and Prophetic Youth Ministry which has a Christian biblical worldview that's Pro-Israel, culturally relevant, and biblically based (Genesis 12:3, Matthew 21:13, Isaiah 55:7). Its purpose is to be Christ and Bible centered, along with speaking and acting with one voice in support of Israel in matters related to Biblical issues. Also, its mission is the marching orders of the church "go and make disciples of all nations," and its mission field is the post-modern mission field in America. The emphasis isn't on programs but on Christ and the Word of God. The evaluative question for this model is "are the youth 'living out' their faith at home, school, community and throughout the world (Romans 12:2)?" The focus and assumptions of this paradigm begin with meeting Jesus Christ face-to-face and being changed.

The primary concern for the Transformational Youth Ministry is evangelism, discipleship, missions, mentors and small groups. As a result, Transformational Youth Ministries will focus on its core programs as foundational: Apologetics, Evangelism, Discipleship, Eschatology, Biblical Languages, Worship, Fasting, Family Services, Missions Trips/events, Prayer and Systematic Theology (using social media as a tool for evangelizing) and relevant topics.

The guiding principle for Transformational Youth Ministry is Conversion to Discipleship to Transformation, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of



God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).”<sup>1</sup>

The Transformational Youth Ministry is based on a metamorphosis (transformation in Romans 12:2), A complete spiritual change under the power of God. Some examples include: God changed Moses a murderer into a deliverer, Shepherd boy into a King (David), Coward into a Warrior (Gideon), and unstable Simon to Peter (stone).

Transformational Youth Ministry exemplifies Disciples. As these youth are discipled in youth ministry and church, the biblical example is to become lay leaders, eventually church leaders.

### Final Thoughts

The goal of this thesis project is to decrease the number of urban young people from defecting from the faith and the church and to increase retention of high school church dropouts by using 21<sup>st</sup> century cutting edge transformational strategies for urban youth. These key strategies will benefit high school ministry/churches by restoring family discipleship and family services by modeling the Apostle Paul/Timothy mentoring model, raising the bar of expectations, creating relevant topics for youth, increasing youth’s hunger for Christ, calling for deep convictions based on scripture, analyzing Hebrew versus Greek Educational models for relevance, building future leaders in the Church, and preparing them for transition into college.

Unfortunately this research about urban high school ministries is under researched and underdeveloped. The research for urban high school ministries is minimal in the area of books, articles, journals, or periodicals which can be an indication that the church in the west has neglected, forgotten about or are just oblivious to these youth as a population to evangelize.

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1. Ephesians 4:13 KJV

Christ cares about everybody and gives examples of the hungry, naked, sick, prisoner, stranger, or people that have been neglected in the books of Matthew 25:35 – 45, Hebrews 13:3, James 1:27, James 2:15 and James 2:15 as a case for the church to show acts of love and mercy. Finally, in Judgment Jesus will declare “Whatever you failed to do for one of my brothers or sisters, no matter how unimportant [they seemed], you failed to do for me (Matthew 25:45).”<sup>2</sup>This is at the very heart of the gospel, “love thy neighbor as thy self.”The author isn’t advocating for the social gospel, but the gospel of Jesus Christ.

According, “to the 2010 U.S. Census, there were 40,717,537 youth age 10-19 in the United States, 14% of the total U.S. population.”<sup>3</sup> Estimates suggest that by 2023, “the percentage of white, non-Hispanic (NH) children will drop below 50%. By 2050, “the percentage of Hispanic children is expected to reach 39%, overtaking the percentage of white-NH (38%) children.”<sup>4</sup> The statistics reveal America is changing and the church is changing. The church in the west its resembling heaven’s diversity of races, so it’s time for it to embrace this paradigm shift and love like Christ has demonstrated while here on earth.

In chapter one the author laid down the ground work for the research by giving the background that led to the interest in the subject matter at hand, the problem, limitations, the theoretical basis, methodology, and review of the study literature.

Chapter two lists and explains factors that are barriers to urban high school ministry and youth transformation, it is as follows: general influencing factors, the influence of a prevailing

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2. Matthew 25:45 God’s Word Translation

3. U.S. Census Bureau. (2011, May). “Age And Sex Composition: 2010.” Retrieved November 14, 2011 from [Census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c201010f-03.pdf](http://Census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c201010f-03.pdf)

4. Federal Interagency Forum On Child And Family Statistics. (2012). “America’s Children In Brief: Key National Indicators Of Well Being, 2012: Demographic Background.” accessed September 17, 2012, from [childstats.Gov/americaschildren/demo.asp](http://childstats.Gov/americaschildren/demo.asp)

culture, church model must change, secularization of high school ministry, focusing on forms, inexperience youth pastors, and voice of the youth.

Chapter three outlines the methodology of the research by explaining research hypothesis, research question, research design, research participants, research approach, research tools and research results.

Chapter four gives a critical analysis of the research survey and recommendations.

Chapter five breakdowns the key strategies for transforming urban youth to “live out” faith and becoming change agents: one size doesn’t fit all, Christian based urban youth paradigm, mentoring models, effective messages and topics, urban youth shadow leaders in the church, and Greek Educational Model versus Hebrew Educational Model.

Chapter six gives the author contribution of a new youth model for urban high school ministries and the author final words.

In conclusion, the author learned from this study that Christian urban young people unlike any other are suffering from a barrage of attacks from a postmodern culture that is relentless in seeing its demise, dysfunctional families/communities in which it appears to be no immediate cure, attrition of faith in Christ Jesus, and increasing church drop out among its population; however, the Church is the difference maker. The Church must look to its Commander and Chief Jesus Christ for the remedy to this devastating crisis.

In John 14:6 Jesus says, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except (through) Me.”<sup>5</sup> It is in this scripture Christ reveals and answers what the author believes are the three greatest practical questions of many urban young people.

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5. John 14:6 AMP

- How can someone like me be saved?
- How can I be certain?
- How can I be satisfied?

**(1) How can someone like me be saved?**

Jesus answers, “I am the Way.” In order to answer this question, Youth must admit to being lost and spiritually bankrupt. When you know Christ, you know the Way because He is the Way.

There are numerous ways to come to Jesus, but there is only one way to get to Heaven...by Him (Christ).

**(2) How can I be certain?**

Jesus answered, “I am the Truth.” Jesus not only taught the truth, but taught that He is the truth.

The absolute truth is not found in philosophy, religion, music, knowledge, or in crystal balls. The absolute truth is found in Christ alone.

**(3) How can I be satisfied?**

Jesus answered, “I am the Life.” The word life is Zoe [ζωή] in the Greek means fulfillment, contentment, peace, joy, security, deliverance, healing, peace of mind, and the heart’s ease. This life is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and only comes to a man by trusting in Jesus Christ. Evidence of the Zoë [ζωή] kind of life is explained in the Book of Galatians which is the fruits of the spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control (5:22-23). These qualities are the results of a fulfilled life in Christ.

## APPENDIX

### Research Tool

*Items:*

1. Mentors are needed in high school ministry.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

2. Mission trips promote involvement in church activities.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

3. Shadowing is a helpful tool for discipleship.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

4. Relevant topics increase interest in bible study in high school ministry.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

5. Multicultural points of views is needed in church to be relatable to different ethnic groups in the bible?

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

6. Church Transitional Ministry is a necessary passport for preparation for college.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

7. Confrontational Evangelism creates curiosity about Christ.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

8. Monthly family discipleship is needed in the church.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

9. High School Ministry being administered in a secular environment.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

10. The expectation of high school ministry is too low.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

11. High School Ministry prepares youth to defend the faith of Jesus Christ.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

12. High School Ministry prepares youth to evangelize the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

13. High School Ministry you attend teaches youth how to study the bible.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

14. Youth Pastors are interested in the spiritual growth of the youth.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

15. Youth Pastors create an environment that's conducive for youth to learn the bible.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

16. Youth Ministry exposes young people to a variety of Christian careers.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

17. Teaching an Introduction to Biblical Hebrew and Culture course in high school ministry gives youth insight of the bible.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

18. Teaching an Introduction to Biblical Greek and Culture course in high school ministry gives youth insight of the bible.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

19. Teaching an Eschatology course in high school ministry gives youth knowledge about future events.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

20. Teaching an introduction to Theology course in high school ministry sheds light on who God is.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

21. Studying Biblical Archaeology in high school ministry brings the land of the bible to life.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

22. Teaching a course on Applied Christianity in high school ministry teaches young people to live out their faith.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

23. Teaching a course on Discipleship in high school ministry will strengthen the body of Christ.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

24. Teaching a course on Biblical Finances in high school ministry equips young people to be stewards of their time, talents, and gifts.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |

25. Teaching the purposes of the Church in high school ministry reveals to youth their purpose within the earth in what God has for them to do.

|                           |              |                |                 |                              |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                  | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>                     |
| <b>Strongly<br/>Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly<br/>disagree</b> |



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Wimberly, Anne Streaty. *Keep it Real: Working with Today's Black Youth*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005.

## VITA

Michael L. Rackley

### PERSONAL

Born: September 10, 1964

Married: Andrea Rackley

Children: Anna Rackley, Deborah Rackley

### EDUCATIONAL

B.S. in Industrial Arts Technology Cheyney University, (1988)

M.A. in Divinity South Florida Bible College and Theological Seminary, (2004)

Ph.D. in Biblical Studies Louisiana Baptist University, (2011)

Studied abroad in Israel for ten days (2008)

### MINISTERIAL

Ordained/Licensed Minister: September 21, 1997, Lighthouse of Christ, Naranja, Florida.

Ordained/Licensed Pastor: March 2000, Revival Faith Center Ministries, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Senior Pastor, Mighty Fortress of God Ministries Church, (2000-2009).

President/Pastor of Sound the Shophar Ministries INC. (2011-Present)

### PROFESSIONAL

Miami Job Corp Center, Miami, Fl (1994-Present)

Academic GED Educator & ACT Teacher/Coordinator

Acting Director of Programs / Acting Academic Manager As Needed

2008—Department of Labor Academic Teacher of the Year at Miami Job Corps

1994 – Present Miami Job Corps Center, Miami, FL

\* Academic Teacher of the Year Award (1994 & 2002)

\* Most Outstanding Instructor of the Month (Numerous Occasions)

\* Staff of the Month (Numerous Occasions)

U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion, Miami, FL

\* Certificate of Appreciation (1998)

\* Instructor of the Year Plaque (Nationally Awarded) (1997)

Res-Care Inc., Louisville KY (via MJCC)

\* Certificate of Completion & Plaque for Mgmt. & Development Program (1997)

\* Certificate of Completion for Substantive Change /Accreditation for Leadership (1997)

Dade County Public Schools, Miami, FL (1991-1992)

Adult Academic Educator

Electronic Technician  
Spectradyne, Inc., Miami, FL (1988---1990)

#### BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

We Will Not Bow to Babylon's Table: A Spiritual and Practical Compass to Help our  
Youth Navigate Through a Hostile Culture  
Liberty University Press, (May 1, 2013)

#### PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

Member of (I A T S E) International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, in New York  
(1988-1991)  
Member of United Teachers of Dade, Miami, FL (1991-1992)  
Christians United for Israel, 2011-Present

#### SPORTS ACHIEVEMENTS

Athletic Achievements at Cheyney University, Cheyney, PA (1983-1987)  
Wade Wilson Scholarship Recipient (1985-1987)  
All Conference PSAC East Running Back (1986-1987)  
  
Free Agent Draft Pick by the New Orleans Saints (Spring of 1988)  
Inducted into the Cheyney University Football Hall of Fame, Cheyney, PA (2008)

April 9, 2013

Michael L. Rackley

IRB Exemption 1561.040913: Rethinking Discipleship in the Area of High School Ministry: Key Strategies for Transforming Urban Youth

Dear Michael,

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

**Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.**  
*Professor, IRB Chair*  
**Counseling**  
**(434) 592-4054** Liberty University