

*MY PHILOSOPHY*  
*of*  
*YOUTH MINISTRY?*

Introduction to Youth Ministry  
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ABSTRACT

In this paper I will discuss what qualities and characteristics I feel are needed in a Youth Pastor. Also, I will discuss how these qualities and characteristics will be of benefit in youth ministry. Finally, I will discuss more direct aspects of youth ministry as seen from the limited experience I have behind me.

Youth Ministry. What is it and how is it accomplished? How does a college student or fresh green youth pastor help youth get to know God better? These are but a few of the questions that will be discussed in the following pages as I lay down some foundations of a philosophy of youth ministry.

There is a lot of things to be considered here and so to begin perhaps a list of the various aspects of youth ministry should be put forth. Youth ministry should include ways of improving the 1) spiritual life of kids, 2) mental health and self-esteem, 3) physical health and abilities of youth and finally, 4) social abilities of youth in the youth pastor's area.

The youth pastor should have several qualities to be effective. Among these are:

- 1) a strong relationship with Christ
- 2) immersion of the Holy Spirit
- 3) willingness to submit to authority
- 4) desire to see kids grow in Christ Jesus
- 5) ability to handle responsibility
- 6) get along well with kids and be able to relate to them
- 7) able to lead others to Christ
- 8) self-confidence and self-respect

Beginning with the youth pastor himself, lets start with a discussion of his characteristics and qualities. A youth pastor must have a desire to work with kids. He must also beyond any doubt know that he is called of God to do this kind of ministry. A youth pastor must be constantly abiding in Christ to do the ministry which he has been given. He must be responsible, able to handle the pressures that accompany this task. He must be able to see to the administrative needs of a youth group and Sunday School with a measure of confidence but not pride or arrogance. He must be concerned with the whole person of each individual he is given charge of. He must be capable in counselling, teaching, preaching, outreach, and evangelism, and just simply of having a good ole time the clean way. He must have a genuine love for the ministry and for the people he has authority over, including the youth. That a youth pastor will have a workable knowledge of the Bible and his theology is a given.

But how will all this be of use in ministry? Well if one is not called to this type of ministry, then the youth pastor will likely be less effective and/or get less out of it himself. Being called is important since one must be obedient to God's calling to be totally effective. If a youth pastor is not completely leaning on God for strength, wisdom, and guidance, then there is an opening in the armour where the enemy can strike and weaken or ruin a youth pastor's credibility or ministry. A youth pastor must see things as Jesus does in order to minister to the fullest. Only then, when a youth pastor is completely subservient to God can he truly accomplish what God would have him accomplish. Without a sense of responsibility a youth pastor can kiss his credibility, ministry, and reputation good-bye with little hope of restoration. Jesus was responsible for what and who he was given charge over and could say with all confidence and faith that he had accomplished what his Father had told him to do and as Jesus is out example of Godly living the youth pastor is to be responsible and obedient to his calling so that on the day of reckoning he can give a full account of his ministry and hear the words "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord." When a youth pastor is unable to administrate his group and those under him, chaos is sure to develop and organization will crumble.

A youth pastor should also have self-confidence, peace of mind, and the love of Christ since without these qualities and characteristics, how can a youth pastor minister to those who lack them? That would be like the blind leading the blind! I am fully certain that these qualities are of God and essential to ministry. These qualities are to be pure, without pride and/or arrogance. Pride calls attention away from god and arrogance hurts those who possess it more than it will ever benefit a ministry. The scriptures definitely oppose arrogance in anyone who would serve the living God.

A youth pastor must be completely concerned about each kid individually and needs to try to the best of his ability to minister to each aspect of the individuals who make up the youth group. It can be said that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts but if the parts aren't in optimal operating order

then the whole suffers. The youth pastor must also know how to have a good ole fun time without letting things get out of control and should be able to show the youth that clean fun can be the best fun of all!

So with this in mind how can a youth pastor then help kids grow spiritually? As a youth pastor, I would need to be consistent in devotional prayer and study of the Bible, intercessory prayer, and memorization of Scripture; much more so than I am now. As a teen I needed to learn and appreciate what God's Word was, its value to me, and that it was all I needed to really be confident and effective, that it was everything I was looking for and more. I needed to know the power of living by faith and that even though it is a given that humans sin, that we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, that it doesn't have to be that way and victory over sin is possible, not just every now and then, but that it is possible...consistently possible through the blood and strength of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. I also needed to see the benefits and power of the Holy Spirit and living by faith. So often I remember wonder if Christianity really was all that it was cracked up to be. I never really understood that Christianity could be an exciting dimension of life or more accurately stated, life could be an exciting dimension of Christianity. I think that today's kids need to know these things too, and these things are not always easy to convey to kids.

So how would I show these things to kids? The first thing I need to do to accomplish these ends is to make sure I'm healthy spiritually and that I'm making every effort to stay in God's will for my life and also that I have been bestowed with power from on high to accomplish the ministry God has for me. These things can be done only when I submit fully to Christ and abide in him fully. Once this is done then I can begin to help get to know Jesus better.

That's great but just how do I plan to meet true spiritual needs of the kids? The first thing on this agenda is intercessory prayer, and lots of it. This means each kid by name and praying for specifics where possible. It will be important to make this a priority and not get the feeling that I should rush through but that I should take the time necessary to accomplish prayer on a meaningful level.

The second on the agenda calls for getting to know the kids, where they are spiritually and how serious they are about getting to know Jesus intimately. I then need to help them learn and grow more without pushing too hard and without leaving the need unmet. This would be done by prayer, Bible study, discipling, memorization of Scriptures, "on-the-job" training, group and individual discussion, and friendship. The trick will be in deeming which Scriptures will be needed to do the most constructive work in their lives. Once these have been determined it will have to be decided which method of presentation will be best at demonstrating relevance and maintaining interest. "It's a sin to bore a kid." is undoubtedly a very true statement with the Gospel of Jesus.

If I only stick with the kids of the church and don't reach out to those others in the area who are unchurched, fallen away, or lax attenders of youth group or other church activities, am I not failing to obtain the goals set out for me in Scripture? I think, given my present knowledge and understanding of the Bible, that the above statement is true. My understanding of Scripture says to go to all the world and bring the gospel to the to the people not the other way around and that command begins by stipulating that locals be evangelized first. Only then can I actually be called an "evangelical". Reaching out will show that I care and will encourage positive responses to the Gospel. Bible studies will consist of prayer, reading the Word, ripping it apart and putting it back together again, seeing what we can arrive at as a common point as to what the message of the Scriptures is and if possible, apply it.

Learning to pray will be an important part of teaching youth as well as putting it into practice in the form of regular prayer meetings for your, establishing or expanding local concerts of prayer, or examining Scripture for what constitutes good prayer and finding out how we can apply it. Kids want to know about the practical side of the Gospel. I would definitely try to keep things on a practical limb and show the kids how the Bible can work for the here and now. I would try to answer questions like "How can the Bible help me decide what to wear?"; "How does the Bible help me decide how far I can go sexually with my girlfriend/boyfriend?"; "What does the Bible say about obeying

people tell me to do things I don't believe in (working on the Lord's Day, banning prayer at home, etc)?" "Why is extra-marital sex wrong?" "What's wrong with smoking?" Why shouldn't I listen to non-Christian music?" "Why should I listen to Christian music?" "What do I say to people when I tell them about Jesus?" and many other questions.

Mentally, kids need to have a healthy self-outlook. They need to know that they are worth our time and love. They need to know that God loves them, that I love them, that they have a reason for being. So often kids are abused, kicked out of homes, told that they're worthless, unlovable, unwanted, and that they are made to feel that the world would be better without them. Kids carry these scars, often for life. I need to try to help these kids through these lies and if necessary bring in other Christians to help solve the problems. If need be perhaps I would have to open up my home to a kid to give them a place to stay. This is another place counselling abilities and gifts would be useful along with prayer.

Physically, kids need to have their needs taken care of. As a Christian I cannot stand by or sit around while someone needs help and do nothing if there is something I can do to help. If someone comes and needs food and I send him away saying "Be well fed." but do not feed him what presentation of God will I be giving? What kind of ministry would that be? That'd be totally useless and would be a mockery of the love, sacrifice, and name of my holy God. Also, I should encourage good health habits and be an example, although as Paul wrote, physical conditioning is nearly useless compared to spiritual conditioning.

Socially kids need to be sensitive to the needs of others as it is in the teenage years that much of how we think and act as adults and many of our philosophies and attitudes are formed. It is important that I as a youth pastor am able to show kids how to interact with each other in a more Christlike way, which is a big challenge for a social hermit like me. I find myself wondering how I could teach or help improve something I learned so little of myself. It seems I'm in for some big changes before God is done with me. Kids also need to social events so they can have fellowship with each other, even the ones nobody wants to spend time with or pay attention to, let alone hang out with.

Also, social development includes getting involved socially with organizations in the area like soup kitchens and charities. Getting involved with the Church is something everyone can do. Things like prison ministry are more likely to be restricted to older youth. However there are many ways to be involved socially and become socially active and I'd only have to pray and look to find opportunities to help others.

The reasons I dealt so much earlier on with how a youth pastor should act is because I needed to see what my own criteria would be for a youth pastor and to see how far away I am from meeting those standards. I can see now that much preparation is to be done on my part since in light of what is written in this paper I do not feel I can match in practice, and my own practical experience is so much limited. I have based much of what is here on my own personal opinion and what I have seen and heard from the youth pastors I have associated with in the past. Much of what is written here is also based on the assumption that the congregation is located in a city or suburb. In a small set of country churches things could be somewhat to considerably different from what I have described... or maybe not.

GOOD MORNING DR. GORDON!

## Bibliography

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### PROFESSOR'S GRADE AND COMMENTS:

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Good work Geoff.

You mentioned that you need to improve on your prayer life, when are you getting started?

Start studying Philosophy of Youth Ministry. Learn vocabulary, terms and more with flashcards, games and other study tools. A Biblical Approach to Youth Ministry [from outside circle to inner circle] based off Colossians 1:9-14. 1. Salvation 2. Filled with the knowledge of His will 3. Walk worthy - pleasing the Lord 4. Fruitful in every good work 5. increasing in the knowledge of God 6. His Power. assumption of activity-centered philosophy. occupied equals safe. characteristics of activity-centered philosophy. - activities for activities sake - lack of bible doctrine and evangelism - church run babysitting service. criteria for success for activity centered philosophy. activity. results of activity-centered philosophy. - Spiritual shallow Youth Group. Philosophy of youth ministry. Philosophy of preaching. Philosophy of pastoral counseling. Coming up with a philosophy of ministry isn't about conjuring up some profound thoughts worth publishing in a book or writing an academic thesis. A philosophy is best if it is brief, readable, and personal. It would be a good idea, of course, to write it down. Here are some questions you should ask yourself as you begin to work on a philosophy of ministry. Why are you in ministry? What is the whole purpose of ministry anyway? Who are you ministering to? Why? What are your goals for the people to whom you minister? What features of ministry are most important to you? How do you do ministry practically? What would you like to achieve in ministry? Why? Developing a Philosophy of Youth Ministry. In youth ministry, it is imperative that we be intentional about what we plan and program. This happens only when we thoughtfully process what we hold as core values or theological rocks. Once a youth pastor mixes these with an understanding of adolescent development and a paradigm for youth ministry, they have a philosophy of youth ministry. Where do I start? I personally recommend you start by reading The Adolescent Journey by Amy Jacober. This book will soon become the source for understanding holistic youth ministry. In my Philosophy of Youth Ministry Video I discuss the following: 1. Adolescent Development & Identity: Help students answer the questions "Who am I?, Who am I to others?, Who am I to God?" Should the philosophy of the youth ministry be different than that of the church? The church growth movement that flourished in the 1980s espoused the idea that the church should try to get "unchurched" (unsaved) people into the church by making church appear fun and exciting. This mentality says, "Once we get them in, we can disciple them." Having adopted this philosophy of ministry as a church, why would we choose a different philosophy for our young people? What did the church do before there was a "youth group?" In the days before "youth groups," once children were no longer children, they were integrated into the mainstream of the church family. They worshiped and served alongside of their adult counterparts. It worked for nineteen and a half centuries.