



Preface

Ten years ago I read the book, *Starting Right*, edited by Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark, & Dave Rahn. It was on the first page at a side bar exercise from Ron Foster that I read these words:

“What are your theological rocks? Which of your beliefs about God matter the most to you? Which ones would you say are “musts” for youth ministry? Do you have a theological conviction that serves as the hub of your beliefs and practices? Think of an adolescent you know. If you share only five things about God over the course of your ministry with this teenager, what would you want him or her to hear you say? Write your theological rocks here.”

I did that exercise ten years ago and concluded for myself that my personal top five in youth ministry are, Salvation, Second Coming, Sanctuary, Sabbath and Stewardship. Theology is our first task in youth ministry. The way we treat teenagers or young adults is driven by our understanding of salvation and grace.

The Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE) launched the annual 180° Symposium as a gathering point for free thinking dialogue on matters critical to youth and young adult ministry. Intentionally inviting participants from within the Church structure, our expectation is that we will create smart networks advocating and seeking solutions. Ultimately our desire is that appropriate change will take place, that our Church’s inquisitive and searching nature for present truth will lead us into new grounds for the sake of the Gospel. That as we deepen our theological reflection, we will engage the

culture and follow our higher calling to ministry.

To that end, last October at our third gathering, we addressed the theology of youth ministry with applicable models. We brought professionals, practitioners and professors proposing solutions and models.

Our research and report, edited by Steve Case, is in your hands as you read this preface. We hope it serves as a tangible resource for those passionate about reaching the throngs of youth and young adults desperately seeking authentic community. Scott McKnight in his work, *One. Life*, said:

- Without love, society becomes a chaos of individuals.
- Without love, society becomes a free for all.
- Without love, society ceases being society.

- With love, society becomes community.
- With love, society becomes one for all and all for one.
- With love, society becomes kingdom.

As you wrestle with why and how best to reach young people in your community may this resource provide you extra insight and encouragement.

To share your thoughts or for information about joining the next 180° Symposium, exploring the 2nd and 3rd generation youth ministry please feel free to contact me at japhet@andrews.edu

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