



The Missional Model

Based on the Gospel Commission and the promise from God to equip his people to fulfill it, the Missional Model expects and encourages youth and young adults to share the Gospel—NOW! The human perspective renders this impossible. The divine perspective pronounces it not only possible, but probable.

The human process, limited by human power, typically follows a slow, progressive movement from simple to complex, from small to large, and from simulations to reality. What this means for youth and young adults is that they really can't get into the game until they are older, more educated, wealthier, experienced, and higher on some human-engineered ladder. That's just the way it is, from a human perspective.

The divine perspective, powered by the supernatural, typically surprises people by small, medium, and large miracles primarily through people who are open and willing to be instruments for God. What this means for youth and young adults is that they are in the game now, equipped by God to be effective now, and also continue to learn and improve. This usually is not accepted or appreciated by those with a human perspective.

When it comes to the Gospel, God's time always seems to be NOW, not later. While it has implications for the past and the future, the need and response are present tense. This

matches the time orientation of youth and young adults.

Biblical Basis

Jesus gave the Gospel Commission to his disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Few would entrust them with so great a charge, but Jesus did. The secret wasn't in the disciples, but in the Holy Spirit that equipped and powered them. Just before ascending back to heaven, Christ told his disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8 NIV).

The kingdom of priests God intended for his people in Old Testament times (Exodus 19:6) gets passed on to the followers of Jesus Christ in the New Testament (1 Peter 2:9). The purpose continues to be passing along God's invitation for others to come out of darkness and into God's wonderful light, just as Christ's followers have experienced it.

What methods will they utilize to share this good news? The same Holy Spirit that empowered the disciples on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) also equips God's people to carry on the ministry of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-13). This includes presenting the Gospel in a myriad of ways as well as maturing in Christ.

The time is now. According to 2 Corinthians 6:2 (NCV), "I tell you that the 'right time' is now, and the 'day of salvation' is now." The writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 4:7) quotes Psalm 95:7-8 to specify that "Today" is the time to listen and respond to God.

Age has never been an obstacle or an asset for God. He uses people who are available and open to him (1 Samuel 3; Luke 2:25-40). God will minister to and through youth and young adults right now because of their availability and openness, not because of their age.

What It Looks Like

For some reason people still seem surprised that God works through young people. Whether it's preaching a sermon, providing leadership or manual labor, insights or courage, young people can do incredible things for God. These don't originate in some personally cultivated craft, but through divine power.

The spreading of the Gospel often takes different forms when young people attempt new methods or go retro with old methods in new garb. We should be surprised when others are surprised that this can occur. Have we forgotten about God's power and his track record?

Young people inoculated to the activity of God and the possibility that God will minister through them right now need a fresh vision of what God has done in the past and his desire to reach others today. Even simple actions like feeding a homeless person, listening to

an elderly person's stories, studying the bible alone or in a group, or sharing one's faith even without training can ignite divine activity and create sacred moments. The spectacular can tempt young people into ego trips or forgetting their source of power. God's powers are available to all who are open to him, not just young people. Those who forget or fail to comprehend will discover these things the hard way.

Keys To Make It Work

Two keys are all that really matter. The first is God, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The second is a person open to God's activity. By saying "Yes" to God, anything can happen.

On a secondary level, visionaries and people of faith can inspire young people to be open to God and to place them where God can minister through them. They can open doors that others would block. They can thwart or respond to resistance. Of course, God can do that whenever God chooses, but it's usually better when we cooperate with God.

Obstacles

One obstacle comes in the form of limiting one's vision to human power ("There's no way that we could do _____!"). The opposite comes in a manipulative form of demanding that God do things the way we want. God is God, not a magic genie who offers three wishes for personal desires. Another obstacle shows itself when we expect God to always use the same methods and agents. The reverse may also happen—expecting that God will only use new methods or agents. One other obstacle is that free people have the right to say, "No."

Opportunities

Limitless. Because this model relies on the supernatural, setting boundaries proves to be meaningless and making predictions

seems no better than guessing. The golden opportunity comes in the cooperation of the human and the divine. This taps into the Lord's prayer in terms of, "Thy kingdom come, they will be done; on earth as it is in heaven."

Young people who thought they would have to wait until some unknown future time when God might be able to use them can experience God and his power right now and still continue to be shaped into his image and sharpened as a tool in the hand of the Almighty. No college or grad school acceptance or starting employment can compare to that—now or for eternity.

