Toward An Integrated Youth Ministry: A Case Study Of The Application Of Principles From Ephesians Among Teens And Their Families Of The Collegedale Church Of Seventh-day Adventists

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ABSTRACT

TOWARD AN INTEGRATED YOUTH MINISTRY: A CASE STUDY OF THE APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES FROM EPHESIANS AMONG TEENS AND THEIR FAMILIES OF THE COLLEGEDALE CHURCH OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

by

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Dissertation

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: TOWARD AN INTEGRATED YOUTH MINISTRY: A CASE STUDY OF THE APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES FROM EPHESIANS AMONG TEENS AND THEIR FAMILIES OF THE COLLEGEDALE CHURCH OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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Date completed: May 2011

Problem

According to recent research on young adults in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists, there has been an approximate 68% attrition rate (Rainer, 2009, pp. 5-6). This research revealed that 84% of the young people growing up in the Collegedale Church drop out and only 38% of those who drop out engage in another church.

Consequently, of the young people who grow up in the Collegedale Church, this leaves a net result of 68% who drop out from church entirely. DeVries’ seminal work (2004), combined with Rainer and Rainer’s research (2008), demonstrate the potential of a significant increase in the retention of young people when the family and
church family partner in discipling their young people. However, prior to the implementation of this project, there was very little partnership for discipleship occurring among the families and church family of the Collegedale Church. This segregation of teens from their families and church family was most distinct during the Friday evening youth ministry programming.

Method

The Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists was transformed into an integrated approach to youth ministry. For the purpose of this project when the term integrated is used it is primarily referring to people’s age. Therefore, integrated youth ministry in this context means youth ministry being done in a setting where not only teens are present but also people who are not teenagers, especially adults. The transformation into an integrated youth ministry was accomplished by transitioning from a church-based youth worship service to home-based group Bible studies for teens. This transition process began during the 2003-2004 school year. The effectiveness of the transition to an integrated youth ministry was measured during the school years that followed, concluding with the 2008-2009 school year. Three approaches were used to measure the effectiveness of achieving an integrated youth ministry:

1) The number of adults involved in each setting was contrasted.

2) During the 2008 – 2009 school year, thirteen teens that seemed most invested in CAYA Community were selected in a nonrandom, purposeful manner and interviewed along with one of their parents.
3) An analysis was done of student responses to a survey question provided them at the conclusion of their interview.

Results

The contrast of the number of adults involved in each setting revealed a dramatic increase in adult participation in Friday evening youth ministry programming when the transition was made to the home-based Bible study program. In the church-based youth worship service approach there were no consistent, committed adults involved. However, the average adult involvement in the home-based group Bible study approach over five school years was 29 adults. The interviews and the survey questions also affirmed the effectiveness of using CAYA Community as an intervention to transition the Collegedale Church’s Friday evening youth ministry programming into an integrated approach to youth ministry.

Conclusions

Based on the contrast in the number of parents involved before and after this project, the interview findings, and the results of the survey question documented in this research report, it does seem that CAYA Community has helped to bridge the segregation of teens from their families and church family during the Friday evening youth ministry programming. Therefore, an overall evaluation is that CAYA Community has been effective in helping to bridge the segregation and serves well as an example of an integrated approach to youth ministry.
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A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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May 2011
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A project dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Personal History

I grew up in the home of two Seventh-day Adventist elementary school teachers, which for us included multiple moves during my childhood. These transitions allowed me the opportunity to experience five different small Seventh-day Adventist congregations during my elementary and high school years. These churches were located in Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. It was during this time that I first began to hear God’s call on my life to go into full time ministry; however, it wasn’t until my junior year in college that I fully surrendered. For my high school education, I attended a Seventh-day Adventist school by the name of Bass Memorial Academy. For college, I attended Southern Adventist University and earned two degrees, one in business and the other in religion. Throughout this season of my life, I spent a total of nine summers working in various roles at two different Seventh-day Adventist summer camps. Additionally, after my sophomore year in college, I took a year out of school in order to serve as an assistant in the youth department of the Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. While in seminary, I served as an elder in a small rural congregation in southern Michigan and also helped out with some youth ministry in the congregation. It was during this season in my life that I was blessed to marry Becky, the
woman of my dreams. I am grateful that she has been willing to join me in a partnership of service to Jesus. Since graduating from seminary in 1997, I have served exclusively as a youth pastor in three different congregations. The first two churches were located in Northern California and had memberships of 1,000 and 630 respectively. Since 2001, I have served as the youth pastor of the Collegedale Church, which has a membership of around 3,000 and is located on the campus of Southern Adventist University. During this time I have been blessed with three daughters: Emilianne born in 2002, Karina born in 2005, and Julia born in 2008.

There are numerous experiences that seem to contribute to my passion and perspective in youth ministry. Perhaps the most significant such experiences are:

1. Becoming a dad.
2. Being a lifelong Seventh-day Adventist.
3. Participating as a member of numerous congregations that varied significantly in size and location.
4. Serving for fourteen years as a full time youth pastor in a local church setting.

Unfortunately, it seems like the majority of young people that I grew up with in the Seventh-day Adventist church have walked away from their faith in Jesus and consequently their connection with a local Seventh-day Adventist congregation. This seems to also be the case for the majority of the young people I have worked with as a youth pastor. These observations grieve my heart and motivate me to work on increasing the number of Christian young people who live as lifelong, committed followers of Jesus. To that end this research project has been pursued.
Statement of the Problem

According to a recent research on young adults in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists, there has been an approximate 68% attrition rate (Rainer, 2009, pp. 5-6). This research revealed that 84% of the young people growing up in the Collegedale Church drop out and only 38% of those who dropout engage in another church. Consequently, this leaves a net result of 68% of the young people growing up in the Collegedale Church dropping out from church entirely. DeVries’ seminal work (2004), combined with Rainer and Rainer’s research (2008), demonstrate the potential of a significant increase in the retention of young people when the family and church family partner in discipling their young people. However, prior to the implementation of this project, there was very little partnership for discipleship occurring among the families and church family of the Collegedale Church. This segregation of teens from their families and church family was most distinct during the Friday evening youth ministry programming.

Statement of Task

The task of this project is to transform the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists into an integrated approach to youth ministry. For the purpose of this project when the term integrated is used it is primarily referring to people’s ages; therefore, integrated youth ministry in this context means youth ministry being done in a setting where not only teens are present but also people who are not teenagers, especially adults.
**Justification for the Project**

Prior to this project, there had not been any work done to implement an integrated approach to the Collegedale Church’s Friday evening youth ministry programming. The following reasons indicated it was time for such a change:

1. The significant attrition rate among young people growing up in the Collegedale Church who are no longer participating in any church.
2. The complete segregation of teens from their families and church family during the Friday evening youth ministry programming that was resulting in minimal spiritual impact and major behavioral issues among the teens.
3. The lack of willingness on the part of the adults to get involved.
4. The potential of significant spiritual benefits for young people when an integrated approach to youth ministry is implemented.

**Expectations for the Project**

It is hoped that this project will transform the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church into an integrated approach. By doing this, it is my aspiration that the following things could be accomplished:

1. The behavioral issues among the teens dissipate.
2. The spiritual impact of the Friday evening youth ministry programming be significant for those teens who seriously invest in it.
3. Consequently, the retention of young people in the Collegedale Church increased.
Delimitations

This project is limited to the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists during the school years of 2001-2002 through 2008-2009. Certainly there is the desire to see all the ministries of the Collegedale Church contribute toward an integrated approach to youth ministry. However, for the purpose of this project the focus is limited to the Friday evening youth ministry.

Additionally, a motivating factor for doing this project is the approximate 68% dropout rate among young people growing up in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventist. Also, an expectation of this project is that it will improve the retention rate of the Collegedale Church’s young people. However, due to the time limitations of a total of six years set for the Andrews University doctorate of ministry project, dissertation report, as well as class work; and due to the choice of pursuing a qualitative research rather than a quantitative, the focus of this research is limited to an evaluation of the effectiveness of integrating the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church. An evaluation of the effects on the dropout rate of the Collegedale Church’s young people as a result of this transition to an integrated approach is beyond the scope of this research project. This research project is building on already established research that is provided in the literature review of this dissertation that clearly states that an integrated approach to youth ministry does increase the retention rate of young people.

Limitations

Though I do hope others can benefit from this research project, the qualitative approach selected is limited to providing only some understanding to the Collegedale
Church’s Friday evening youth ministry programming during the 2001-2002 through 2008-2009 school years and, therefore, does not intend to provide objective and quantifiable data.

**Definition of Terms**

The term *CAYA Community* refers to home-based group devotional bible studies, for teens and their families. *CAYA* is an acronym adopted as the name of the Collegedale Church’s youth ministry. This acronym is taken from the words *Collegedale Adventist Youth in Action*.

Additionally the term *integrated youth ministry* refers to doing youth ministry in partnership with families and church families.

**Description of the Project Process**

In chapter two, a theology of integrated youth ministry will take its foundation in the imagery found in Eph 4:16 of a body. Additionally, the following principles from Ephesians will be evaluated as a potential implementation strategy for an integrated approach to youth ministry:

1. Establish the goal to unite all in Jesus (Eph 1:9-10).
2. Practice the pastor’s role as primarily trainer and equipper (Eph 4:12).
3. Develop a discipleship strategy that is implemented in families and church families (Eph 5:22-6:4; Deut 6:4-9; Eph 4:16),
4. Encourage love (Eph 4:15-16).

In chapter three, current literature will be reviewed to discover various perspectives on an integrated approach to youth ministry. Observations will be gleaned regarding the degree of teen segregation in current society and how youth ministry has
related to this historically. Also, consideration will be given to what researchers and practitioners are recommending for the future in regards to an integrated approach to youth ministry.

Chapter four will describe the case study of the Collegedale Church's Friday evening youth ministry programming. This narrative will include the following descriptions: the ministry context of the Collegedale Church, research methodology used to determine the intervention, development of the intervention, the implementation, and finally the research methodology.

Finally, in chapter five the following evaluations will be provided:

1. A contrast in the number of adults participating before and after the implementation of this project.

2. Some of the results from the twenty-six interviews conducted.

3. The outcome of a survey question answered by thirteen teens.

4. The reasons provided as justification for this project.

5. The implementation strategy gleaned from Ephesians.

6. Ongoing challenges.

The report on this research project will end with a final summary, conclusions, and recommendations.
CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Introduction

Youth ministry is filled with divergent philosophies and practices. Historically there has developed a detrimental practice of segregating the youth from their family and church family (DeVries, 2004). According to research done by Rainer and Rainer, currently there is a dismal 70% dropout rate among young people who are raised in Christian churches (2008, p. 3). Certainly this significant loss cannot be attributed solely to the segregation of the youth; however, DeVries’ seminal work (2004) along with Rainer and Rainer’s research clearly demonstrate that an integrated approach to youth ministry can significantly increase a church’s retention of young people (2008). This research corresponds with the epistle to the Ephesians’ imagery that seems to call for an integrated approach to ministry. This is the main reason Ephesians has been selected to serve as a primary source to develop a youth ministry theology. Additional reasons are:

1. The probability it was a circular letter.
2. God’s instructions on various roles within the church.
3. God’s instructions on how to deal with diversity.
Imagery for an Integrated Ministry

What seems to be most helpful in the book of Ephesians is the imagery provided in Eph 4:16. This metaphor of a body appears to make a strong argument in favor of an integrated approach to Christian ministry despite the challenges diversity may create. The fact that the body is connected and growing, with each member working harmoniously together as one unit, can provide a strong case in favor of an integrated approach to ministry.

Circular Letter

Additionally, many scholars consider the book of Ephesians was written with multiple churches in mind. “It may well be that the letter was sent to the church at Ephesus, the metropolis of the proconsulate of Asia, with the intention that it should be sent also to other churches in the area” (Nichol, 1957, vol. 6, p. 993). The fact that Paul sends no personal greetings or salutations in this particular letter even though he spent three years working in Ephesus adds credibility to the idea that this letter was intended to be a circular. As such it can serve well as a primary source for a youth ministry theology. The fact that it does not “address any particular error or heresy” (Barker, 1999, p. 1717) can help facilitate the process of accurately extracting principles and applying them to youth ministry.

Roles Described

Ephesians is also helpful in describing the roles of various people within the church. Eph 4:12 clearly states that the function for leaders is “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (NIV). This simple
directive can be formative in shaping the role of a youth pastor. The pastor’s role appears to primarily be to help the members of the church do the work of ministry, whereas those with other spiritual gifts are to mainly do the work. When this principle is applied to youth ministry, it could prove formative.

Dealing With Diversity

Another important reason Ephesians can serve well as a primary source for a theology of youth ministry is because of the instruction given on how to deal with diversity within the church. This seems particularly helpful for youth ministry considering the multiple culturally distinct generations present in churches today. One scholar describes the cultural diversity in Paul’s day like this, “He was writing to a church (or churches) consisting of Jews and Gentiles, Asiatics and Europeans, slaves and freemen” (Nichol, 1957, vol. 6, p. 995). Thus since Ephesians was written to churches experiencing the challenges of extreme diversity, it seems appropriate to allow the instructions in Ephesians on how to handle diversity within a local church to shape the current youth ministry practices.

Ephesians’ Call for an Integrated Approach

Now that the rationale for the selection of Ephesians has been considered, attention can be given to the main question at hand: does the book of Ephesians advocate an integrated approach to ministry, and if so, what are some of the key principles involved in leading such a ministry?
Ephesians’ response to diversity in the church is not to segregate into separate homogenous groups but rather to allow the transformational graces of Jesus to work in each person so the church can practice an integrated approach to ministry.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:1-5, NIV)

Ephesians’ call for an integrated, united, or connected approach to ministry in a local church includes the following descriptions “one new man” (Eph 2:15, NIV), “fellow citizens” (Eph 2:19, NIV), “members of God’s household” (Eph 2:19, NIV), a “building” (Eph 2:20, NIV), “a holy temple” (Eph 2:21, NIV), “a dwelling” (Eph 2:22, NIV), “heirs together with Israel” (Eph 3:6, NIV), “members together of one body” (Eph 3:6, NIV), and “sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus” (Eph 3:6, NIV). It culminates with this descriptive imagery of a body:

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph 4:15-16, NIV)

A theme can be observed from these verses of a call to unity, oneness, or working together in an integrated way despite the challenges diversity may create. As Neder notes:

The predominance of scripture points to the body of Christ as a group of people in a particular geographical location who are seeking to follow Him. In this context they live, work, and play together. They hold one another accountable, they respond to one another in need, and though they may be separated from one another in program issues, they are bound together relationally. (2002, p. 56)
Neder continues a little later with these thoughts:

It is clear that the church is made up of all its members and that the church moves and functions together as the family of God. This is an undeniable and indisputable fact of scripture. To this point, it is vital that, in all aspects of an adolescent’s life, there must be integration within the church body as a whole for the maturation process to be healthy. If the church and families are not partnering to assist the child then the child will not individuate in a healthy process. The scriptures are clear that strong relationships are crucial to adolescent development. There are personal, human relationships that are crucial to a child’s development. In addition, there are also structural relationships, such as the relationship between the church and family. This relationship between youth and church is absolutely critical for the child’s spiritual and psychosocial development. If it does not exist then the family and the church assume adversary roles in their ministry and example to kids. While this may not be the intention of the church or the parents, it is the end result when limited scriptural understanding, unclear goals, and community are forsaken. (2002, pp. 56-57)

In order to effectively implement such an integrated approach in youth ministry, it seems the following key principles from Ephesians could be formative:

1. Establish the goal to unite all in Jesus (Eph 1:9-10).
2. Practice the pastors’ role as primarily trainer and equipper (Eph 4:12).
3. Develop a discipleship strategy that is implemented in families and church families (Eph 5:22-6:4; Deut 6:4-9; Eph 4:16).
4. Encourage love (Eph 4:15-16).

**Integrated Youth Ministry Implementation Strategy**

**Establish the Goal to Unite all in Jesus**

DeVries points out a common temptation in youth ministry of focusing on the quantity of youth participating to the neglect of keeping God’s long-term plan in mind (2004). He goes on to confess, “I love building a crowd. It makes me feel good. It makes me look good. And because of what building a crowd does for me, I have often mistaken short-term success for long-term effectiveness” (2004, p. 29). A primary focus
on the number of teens participating in a particular youth ministry could be a distraction from truly fulfilling the goal God has in mind. There are multiple factors that affect attendance and each component needs to be carefully examined to ensure that effective youth ministry is taking place. Attendance is important, just not most important. If students are not present, the opportunity to connect with them and lead them to Jesus is reduced. However, their presence alone gives no evidence that the ministry is being effective at leading them to Jesus. Conversely, low attendance can be discouraging but does not necessarily mean that a youth ministry is a failure. The trend often found in the Bible shows only a minority faithfully following God. In order to avoid being distracted by the number of youth in attendance, it could be helpful to clarify the goal of youth ministry. This is especially true when pursuing an integrated youth ministry because segregated youth ministry programs are typically more attractive to youth and can therefore often achieve a larger attendance than integrated programs (DeVries, 2004). However, integrated youth ministry programs are more effective in accomplishing long-term spiritual objectives (Rainer & Rainer, 2008). In order to clearly articulate the goal of youth ministry, consideration of this verse in Eph 1:9-10 can be helpful:

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. (Eph 1:9-10, NIV)

God’s ultimate goal is to unite all in Jesus. If this is God’s goal, it seems that it could serve well as the goal of youth ministry as well.
Second Corinthians clearly describes the role God has given His followers in achieving this goal in these verses:

For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All of this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (5:14-21, NIV)

God’s people are to be doing the work of connecting people to God through Jesus.

There are specific spiritual evidences provided in these verses that reveal when a person has become connected to God. Such people are compelled by the love of Jesus into action for others. They no longer live for themselves. They are a new creation—the old is gone and the new has come. Their lives are shaped by being an ambassador for God; they work to reconnect people with God. First John gives additional evidences:

1. They “walk in the light” (1:7, NIV).
2. They “have fellowship with one another” (1:7, NIV).
3. They are purified from all sin by Jesus’ blood (1:7, NIV).
4. They obey Jesus’ commands (2:3, NIV).
5. They “walk as Jesus did” (2:6, NIV).
6. They love their brother (2:10).
7. They do not love the world or anything in it (2:15).
8. They do the will of God (2:17).
9. They are born of God and are therefore a child of God (3:2 and 5:1).

10. They do not keep on sinning (3:6).

11. They do what is right (3:7).

12. They love others with action and in truth (3:11, 18).

13. They sacrificially give for their brothers (3:16).

14. They believe in the name of Jesus (3:23).

15. They have God’s Spirit (3:24).

16. They overcome the world (5:4).

17. They believe that Jesus is the Son of God (5:5).

18. They have Jesus and eternal life and know it (5:11-13).

19. They have confidence in approaching God.

20. They know that when their requests are made in accordance with His will.

21. They will be both heard and provided for by God (5:14).

22. They have been given understanding to know Jesus (5:20).

God’s value system is based on the openness of an individual’s heart to His presence and leading in their lives. Scripture provides specific, observable indicators that offer evidence that such spiritual activity is taking place. Therefore, it seems wise to measure the success of a youth ministry primarily by the number of young people walking with Jesus, as is evidenced by these spiritual indicators, rather than the mere quantity of participants. Such a focus can encourage the development of an integrated youth ministry since it is becoming increasingly clear that an integrated approach to youth ministry is most effective for long-term spiritual results (Rainer & Rainer, 2008).
Another principle from Ephesians that could help implement an integrated approach to youth ministry is having pastors serve primarily in the role of trainer and equipper.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. (Eph 4:11-12, NIV)

The idea for pastors, and others with leadership spiritual gifts, is primarily to “prepare God’s people for works of service” (Eph 4:12, NIV). This is in harmony with the transition one can observe in Scripture.

In the Old Testament, only Aaron and his family were appointed to serve as priests. In addition, the Levites were assigned the job of assisting Aaron and his sons in their service as priests as indicated in these verses:

The Lord said to Moses, “Bring the tribe of Levi and present them to Aaron the priest to assist him. They are to perform duties for him and for the whole community at the Tent of Meeting by doing the work of the tabernacle. They are to take care of all the furnishings of the Tent of Meeting, fulfilling the obligations of the Israelites by doing the work of the tabernacle. Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to him. Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests; anyone else who approaches the sanctuary must be put to death.” (Num 3:5-10, NIV)

However, as these verses show in the New Testament, all of this appears to have changed:

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet 2:4-5, NIV)
But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Pet 2:9-10, NIV)

No longer is the work of ministry reserved for a few selected priests and Levites serving in the sanctuary; rather in the New Testament the work of ministry has been given to every follower of Jesus. In this New Testament paradigm, the role of the pastor appears to be primarily one of facilitating the followers of Jesus to effectively do this work.

In North America, there seems to be a common expectation that the pastors’ role is to perform the majority of the work of ministry. Knight addresses this trend while commenting on Ephesians 4:12, “We need to move away from the unbiblical concept that it is the paid (or unpaid) clergy who are responsible for ministry in the church and its surrounding community” (2005, p. 248). Then he continues to clearly articulate the biblical role of the pastor:

It is the function of pastors and teachers and other clergy types to equip ‘the saints for the work of ministry.” Please note that it does not say that pastors and other leaders are to do all of the work themselves, but rather to prepare the entire church to do ministry. Thus the function of clerical leadership is to enable every church member to enter God’s work. (Knight, 2005, p. 248)

White advocates this same idea:

The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them. Give each one something to do for others. Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work. (1948, p. 82)

Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them—the burden of leading souls into the truth. Those who are not fulfilling their responsibility should be visited, prayed with, labored for. Do not lead people to depend upon you as ministers; teach them rather that they are to use their talents in giving the truth to those around them. (1915, p. 200)
Unfortunately, in North America the Christian church has often failed to achieve this biblical mandate of effectively enabling every church member to enter God's work. Many times churches have deteriorated to the point where pastors do most of the ministering and members simply attend as discriminating consumers (Adams, 2009). This is often especially true in youth ministry. Wright and Graves articulate well this reality. Speaking of how we live in a society providing all manner of specialized services Wright and Graves say:

Some parents and churches unfortunately view student ministry in the same way: as a spiritual drop-off service best left to the professionals. Those parents think they are only responsible to take their child to church—put him or her in a spiritual environment and out comes a morally sound young adult. They are then angry when things do not turn out as expected and demand an explanation from a student pastor who they barely know or may have never met. (2007, p. 47)

Wright and Graves continue by pointing out that the fault lies with both the parents and the church:

Student pastors may have too quickly accepted responsibility for teens' spirituality and too reluctantly reminded and equipped parents to take their responsibility as primary spiritual disciplers. I have often been made aware of how parents will hand the baton of spiritual formation off to me over the years, but it's not mine to take. Traditional student ministry has come to value freedom from parents and neglect the importance of partnership with them. The problem with this value system is twofold: 1) it isn't biblical and 2) it doesn't work. (2007, pp. 48)

This traditional, non-biblical approach to youth ministry in North American does seem to develop from both local churches and parents. It seems that churches often look for a youth pastor who is young, trendy, and can connect well with the young people. Once such a youth pastor is found, they become the youth ministry specialist for that particular church. The implication then becomes that adults who are not young and trendy are not effective youth workers. DeVries observes that "the unanticipated consequence of the elevation of the 'profession' of youth ministry has been to push the
work of volunteers to the sidelines. Too many volunteer leaders see themselves as second-class assistants to the real ministers” (2008, p. 142).

Parents also seem to add to this problematic tradition of pastor-dependent youth ministries. During the teen years, young people go through developmental stages that include differentiating from their parents. This process can include a significantly decreased desire for the child to be around their parents. As a result, many parents will decline any involvement with their child’s youth ministry, thus adding to the problem of pastor dependency.

It seems if parents and local churches would choose to abandon the traditional, clergy-dependant approach to youth ministry and instead adopt the biblical role for pastors, this could help create an integrated team working together in harmony as is portrayed in Ephesians 4:16. Boldly practicing the pastor’s role as primarily trainer and equipper can then become a key implementation strategy for developing an integrated youth ministry.

Develop a Discipleship Strategy That is Implemented in Families and Church Families

Families and Church Families

As the youth pastor assumes the role of primarily trainer and equipper, the church family will then need to assume the responsibility of discipling their young people. Ephesians 4:16 makes it clear that discipleship, or growing in Jesus, takes place in the context of being connected to a local church family and working there.
Later in Ephesians the smallest discipleship unit is discussed—the family (Eph 5:22-6:4). These verses describe a healthy Christian home as one where each member has an attitude of love, respect and submission appropriate for the various roles in the family. It concludes with this admonition: “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instructions of the Lord” (Eph 6:4, NIV). God instructs fathers in this way because He has assigned the primary task of discipling young people to the parents.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deut 6:4-9, NIV)

Joiner notes that this is the farewell speech of Moses where “He gives them a plan to guard their heritage and transfer their faith to the next generation” (2009, p. 53). The Hebrew word that has been translated *impress* literally means to *sharpen*, with the imagery of a repetitive action as is involved with the sharpening of a knife on a stone (Harris, Archer, & Waltke, 1980, p. 943). This verse appears to provide the most transparent revelation of God’s vision for youth ministry—parents repetitively training their children how to love God as they spend time together during the daily routines of life. Church-based youth ministry then should only supplement this God-designed
spiritual foundation developed in the family. While addressing parents, White also emphasizes this point:

Do not depend upon the teachers of the Sabbath school to do your work of training your children in the way they should go. The Sabbath school is a great blessing; it may help you in your work, but it can never take your place. God has given to all fathers and mothers the responsibility of bringing their children to Jesus, teaching them how to pray and believe in the word of God. (1980, p. 189).

Parents are the ones who have the maximum spiritual impact on their children.

And when it comes to faith formation, the impact of parents is dramatic. Research now shows that parents who simply talk about faith in the home and who involve their children in serving alongside them can actually double and sometimes triple their children's chances of living out their faith as adults. (Strommen, Jones, and Rahn, 2001 as cited in DeVries, 2004, p. 63)

White says it like this, “The sphere of the mother may be humble; but her influence, united with the father's, is as abiding as eternity. Next to God, the mother's power for good is the strongest known on earth” (1980, p. 240). Wright and Graves also cites multiple studies that affirm that parents have primary impact on the spiritual lives of their children (2007, pp. 48-49). More specifically the Valuegenesis studies conducted among Seventh-day Adventist young people discovered the same truth (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992; Gillespie, Donahue, Boyatt, & Gane, 2004). Valuegenesis I identified forty-one “effectiveness factors that promote both faith maturity and loyalty to Adventism” (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992, p. 184). Twenty of these effectiveness factors come from families, twelve from churches, and nine from Adventists schools leading the researchers to this conclusion, “Family influences are paramount. Families are perhaps the most significant factor in helping youth develop a life-giving faith and deep religious commitment” (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992). However, in Deuteronomy 6 Moses is not addressing parents exclusively. This commission is for all generations to work together to
achieve the stated goal of teaching young people to love and obey God. While commenting on Deuteronomy 6, Joiner notes: “The culture of the Israelites was that of a community, and not only were parents listening, but so were other relatives in the crowd—siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, and probably even some extra wives” (2009, p. 70).

It seems clear that God has designed discipleship to take place in families and church families. Therefore, it makes sense for local churches to develop a discipleship strategy where the implementation primarily occurs in partnership with the young person’s family and church family. By so doing, they would be in harmony with Scripture and help move the youth ministry toward an integrated approach.

**The Challenge of Dysfunction**

A youth ministry philosophy that includes in its implementation strategy a partnership with families and church families naturally raises a question about the homes and churches where there is not an environment of love and discipleship. It is a considerable challenge in youth ministry to know how to effectively disciple young people from homes where respect and love are absent; where parents do not bring their children up in the training of the Lord; where strife, abuse, and addiction replaces the love, respect, and submission described in Ephesians. It is also a significant youth ministry challenge to function in a spiritually toxic church environment where pride, criticism, or politics are more prevalent than love, encouragement, and humility. It is natural to wonder if in such cases a different strategy should be pursued other than a partnership with families and church families.
As consideration is given to this question, it is helpful to remember that many of God’s heroes of faith came from dysfunctional circumstances. Joiner puts it this way, “My point is this: Parenting is hard. Families are messy. There are no clear biblical examples” (2009, p. 45). Joiner continues by demonstrating the dysfunction in so many families described in Scripture: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Rebekah and Isaac, Jacob’s family, David and his family (2009, pp. 45-46). Then Joiner makes this observation:

What if it’s not God’s plan for parents or leaders to restore the church and the home to a sublime, utopian state? What if, instead, it’s God’s plan to do an amazing work within the church and the home in order to put His grace on display? Imagine the Supreme Creator visibly and actively involved in both entities—healing, loving restoring, and re-creating a broken people in order to demonstrate His glory and plan of redemption. If this is true, then every parent and leader should work to combine the influences of church and home with a very strategic mindset. (2009, pp. 47-48)

This is certainly what God reiterated in Deuteronomy 6, the family and church family is the crucible of discipleship.

Love

Love is the Nonnegotiable Ingredient

Love is the final ingredient in the implementation strategy for developing an integrated youth ministry. The concept of love is woven throughout the book of Ephesians:

1. “In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ (1:4-5, NIV).

2. “To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves” (1:6, NIV).
3. “For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints” (1:15, NIV).

4. “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ” (2:4-5, NIV).

5. “Instead, speaking the truth in love” (4:15, NIV).

6. “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (5:1-2, NIV).

7. “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (5:25, NIV).

8. “In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” (5:28, NIV).

9. “However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself” (5:33, NIV).

10. “Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love” (6:23-24, NIV).

In addition to these texts, Ephesians also describes how God is the source of love and that when people connect with God they experience His love:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (3:14-19, NIV)
It appears that when people know the love of Jesus, they are filled with the presence of God. Therefore, knowing the love of Jesus and being filled with the presence of God appear to be equivalent terms. First John seems to affirm this conclusion: “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (4:7-8, NIV). Due to the fact that the English word love can mean such a variety of things, it is helpful to obtain clarity from Ephesians 4:1-3 as to exactly what is meant by love in this context.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (NIV)

Love appears to be primarily a description of how people act toward each other, which is depicted as attitudes and actions of humility, kindness, gentleness and patience. Love, therefore, seems to be more about actions given to achieve unity than emotions experienced. Once again this conclusion is affirmed in First John:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (3:16-18, NIV).

So it seems quite clear from the biblical perspective that love has more to do with actions than emotions. It seems reasonable, therefore, that this would be a nonnegotiable ingredient for an integrated youth ministry. Such a conclusion is affirmed in the primary text that has been selected to develop a theology of integrated youth ministry, which
“grows and builds itself up in love” (Eph 4:16, NIV). Considering the significant generational differences present in local churches (Gane, 2010, pp. 43-50), God’s love appears to be the only way to overcome these challenges. Hopkins does a good job emphasizing the importance of love being present in local churches for effective youth ministry to occur.

Our kids aren’t leaving because they don’t understand the message; they are leaving because our churches have become message only organizations. We assume that we have the gospel. Well, unless your church is a caring, extremely loving organization, then it clearly doesn’t have the gospel. Part of the message is information, but there’s another part—love. You can’t separate the two. (Tetz & Hopkins, 2004, p. 17)

White also emphasizes the power and importance of love: “Love’s agencies have wonderful power, for they are divine” (1980, p. 195). Additionally White says, “Love will break every barrier down. This is the principle of the Saviour’s dealing with man; it is the principle that must be brought into the church” (1980, p. 198).

**Including Love in a Strategic Process**

However, love is not the type of thing that a committee can sit in a board room and decide to place in the church much like they would new carpet. Rather the nature of love demands a different strategic approach. Such an approach can be observed in Ephesians.

**Pray**

In Ephesians 3:14-21, prayer is an easily discernable strategy for the implementation of love. Here the Apostle Paul is obviously praying for the people in Ephesus to experience love on a whole new, supernatural level. The source of such love appears to be God, “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Eph 3:17, NIV) and “that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Eph 3:19,
NIV). Since God is the source of this love, prayer seems like a logical starting point in a strategic process intended to develop a loving church.

Exhort

In Ephesians 4:1-5, Paul urges the Christians in Ephesus to “make every effort” (Eph 4:3, NIV) to live a Christian life, which includes loving others. Therefore, exhortation appears to be part of the strategy Paul uses to help develop a loving church.

Effort

The correlating idea from this same text is that part of the strategic process to developing a loving church is that people need to try hard. Certainly exhortation and effort alone will consistently fall short of the love that is advocated here in Ephesians. This is a supernatural love, the reality of which is only in Jesus. However, God has obviously decided to include exhortation and human effort as part of the process to becoming a loving church.

Know Jesus

Knowing Jesus seems to be the gateway to experiencing such supernatural love (Eph 3:17-19). This idea appears to be affirmed in the book of John, “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3, NIV). Also, “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well’” (John 14:6-7, NIV). Apparently, every effort a church gives toward helping people know Jesus in the fullness of His love is work given toward becoming a loving church.
Finally, there is an implicit connection between service and love that can be made from Ephesians 4:16, "builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (NIV). Is it possible that there is a correlation between working in service to others and being a loving church? Joiner observes that the act of serving can function as a stimulus to transform hearts into love. "You don’t begin to serve when you feel compassion, you feel compassion as you begin to serve. Without a sense of compassion students and families never experience a sense of calling and mission to make others a priority" (2009, p. 212). Later Joiner observes, “Finally, and probably most important, when students are not given the opportunity to serve, they never learn the power of loving someone simply for the sake of love” (2009, p. 212).

So it seems that there is quite possibly a correlation between working in service for others and experiencing the fullness of God’s love. In fact, Rusaw and Swanson (2004) make the final connection by pointing out that by serving others, people get to know Jesus. They reference the fact that Jesus said, “whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matt 25:40, NIV). It seems plausible that as people serve Jesus in the form of others in need that they get to know Him. Knowing Jesus does seem to be a source of experiencing His love, thus there does seem to be a potential connection between serving and experiencing His love. Perhaps that is why Ephesians says, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph 2:10, NIV).
Conclusion

Ephesians advocates an integrated approach to Christian ministry. When the idea of an integrated ministry is applied to youth ministry it can be formative. The following key principles can be an important part of a strategy for implementing an integrated youth ministry:

1. Set the goal of youth ministry to unite all in Jesus (Eph 1:9-10).
2. Practice the pastors’ role as primarily trainer and equopper (Eph 4:12).
3. Develop a discipleship strategy that is implemented in families and church families (Eph 5:22-6:4; Deut 6:4-9; Eph 4:16).
4. Encourage love (Eph 4:15-16).

When such an integrated youth ministry is implemented it seems that it would promote spiritual growth as well as help to reduce the dropout rate among young people growing up in Christian churches. Certainly the youth ministry programming used to implement an integrated youth ministry will vary with each context, but the testimony of Scripture seems to be clear that Christian youth ministry is to be integrated.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A review of current literature on an integrated approach to youth ministry reveals a strong consensus among authors that is articulated well by Smith and Denton, "Viewed in broad historical perspective, contemporary teenage autonomy from adults is unprecedented and astounding" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 185). Speaking of adults Hersch (1998, as cited in DeVries, 2004, p. 36) says "we aren't there...not just parents, but any adults. American society has left its children behind as the cost of progress in the workplace." Hutchinson-Long, who bases her opinion on her work as a public-school teacher as well as a youth minister, states that "children are in dire need of adult affection and attention... for some students the only time they receive any attention during a twenty-four hour period is at school. Children long for attention from adults" (2004, p. 6). Clark, who immersed himself extensively into the daily lives of adolescents, refers to this reality as the abandonment of teenagers by the adult population (2004). While referring to his time spent with teenagers, Clark states, "I did not hear a few voices crying out. I heard an overwhelming chorus of longing to be cared for and to be taken seriously" (2004, p. 55).

However, it has not always been this way. Smith and Denton note, "Throughout most of human history in most societies, the lives of youth were closely integrated into
the world of adults" (2005, p. 182). Smith and Denton then describe how teen segregation came about: “America’s nineteenth-century industrial revolution separated work from home, production from consumption, and public from private life. . . . Throughout, childhood and adolescence were being culturally redefined as particular development phases of life profoundly different from adulthood” (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 183). Smith and Denton (2005) continue their explanation by pointing to many inventions that added to the isolation of teens from adults, including such things as cars, theaters and various other entertainment venues. But the most dramatic societal change was the system of public education developed in the 1930s. “Mass schooling was the perfect incubator for a new, distinctive youth culture, which blossomed in the following decades” (Smith & Denton, 2005, pp. 183-184).

Neder points out that the isolation between teens and adults is not only caused by a lack of being together physically, but also by an inability to understand each other (2002, p. 8). He attributes this lack of understanding to what he refers to as a “shift from modernism to postmodernism” (2002, p. 8). Neder also observes that this transition to postmodernism has not only brought confusion to many parents but also the feelings of abandonment to many teens (2002, p. 9).

The isolation between adults and teenagers has continued to increase. This leaves Christian leaders with a choice about how to relate to this societal phenomenon, which simply put, is the point of this dissertation. The options for such leaders can be reduced to two basic choices: (a) participate in the societal norm of teenage autonomy from adults, or (b) work against this societal norm by pursuing an integrated approach to youth ministry. Both of these approaches to youth ministry will be evaluated in this review of
relevant literature from the past ten years. It was decided to extend the scope of this research to include the past ten years due to the flurry of relevant material written in 2001 through 2005. The abundance of germane material during that era could possibly be attributed to Mark DeVries revolutionary *Family-Based Youth Ministry* books calling for a significant youth ministry paradigm shift. The first edition was printed in 1994 and the second in 2004. Finally this chapter will also include an evaluation of the potential of an integrated approach to youth ministry increasing the retention of young people in Christian churches.

**Participate in the Societal Norm of Teenage Autonomy From Adults**

Currently, those in youth ministry who are participating in the societal norm of teenage autonomy from adults seem to be doing this more by default than design. A careful evaluation of current literature did not reveal anyone advocating a completely segregated approach to youth ministry. However, there appears to be strong consensus among authors that this is the traditional methodology. DeVries says it like this:

What I am calling “traditional youth ministry” has little to do with style or programming or personality. It has to do with the place of teenagers in the community of faith. During the last century, church and parachurch youth ministries alike have increasingly (and often unwittingly) held to a single strategy that has become the defining characteristic of this model: the isolation of teenagers from the adult world and particularly from their own parents. (2004, p. 21)
Clark seems to agree that teens are typically segregated from adults as a traditional approach to youth ministry (2004, pp. 186-187). Wright and Graves also acknowledge this reality, "For decades in many religious traditions, the prevailing model of youth ministry has relied on pulling teens away from their parents. In some cases, youth ministers have come to see parents as adversaries" (2004, p. 83). Black notes that "it is almost in the nature of a youth ministry to assume a parental role, to be their students' mothers and fathers in absentia" (Senter, Black, Clark, & Nel, 2001, pp. 53-54). Wright and Graves also note the drift of youth ministries is away from not only parents but also from the rest of the church family (2007). Gibson seems to agree (2004, p. 8). Neder observes "that those in youth ministry seem to be committed to keeping parents out of the youth ministry and keeping the church separate from the youth ministry" (2002, pp. 80-81). Hutchinson-Long states: "Traditionally, youth ministers have seen parents as an interruption, as obstacles to success in ministry" (2004, pp. 54-55).

If no one is advocating for a segregated approach to youth ministry, the following questions naturally arise:

1. How did segregation become the traditional approach to youth ministry?
2. What are the advantages of segregated youth ministry?
3. What are disadvantages of a segregated approach to youth ministry?

The Origin of the Segregated Approach to Youth Ministry

The origins of a segregated approach to youth ministry are found in the societal shift from teens being integrated among the adult world to becoming segregated from it. Shields notes that churches "were slow to respond to the changing cultural tides" (2008, p. 36). He then points out how independent school-based youth ministries stepped in to
Ultimately, churches modeled their youth ministry after these school-based programs. Root identifies these school-based ministries as the source of the DNA of current church-based youth ministry which he describes as a place where “parents and families were excluded” (2010). Root continues by saying, “When youth ministry migrated from the para-church to the local congregation, the adolescent-centered, family-excluded perspective migrated with it (2010). When this transition occurred, Nel also points out an additional challenge that helped maintain segregation between adults and teens: “The inability of adult members of congregations who could not (or would not) change or adapt old traditional forms and thought patterns in order to meaningfully integrate the youths into the local church and minister to them as part of the whole” (Senter et al., 2001, p. 7).

In addition to societal changes, Gibson notes that churches have developed age-specific programming in order to more effectively attract teens (2004, p. 8). Neder notes that as such programming continued to grow, so did the expectation for the youth to attend the programs which consequently “hindered family interaction” (2002, pp. 11-12). Hampton points out an additional challenge that has tended to promote segregation is that “youth workers have developed the sense that, because they are the trained professionals, they are the ones who will make the biggest impacts in the lives of teenagers” (2010). Craig also notes that many youth ministers contribute to the segregation of teens in local congregations (2002, pp. 149-150). Hutchinson-Long describes such youth ministries like this: “For too long, youth ministry has been a separate, hands-off program—creating its own purpose statement and strategic plan, its own checkbook and lay leadership, and its own way of doing ministry” (2004, p. 82).
The years of segregation between the adult population and teens has created some additional realities that have helped to perpetuate segregation. One such reality Clark points out is that “adults are, frankly, afraid of most adolescents” (2004, pp. 67-68). However, it is not just the adults’ fear that contributes to the segregation. Smith and Denton note that teens rarely have the opportunity to get to know adults and consequently they don’t know how to relate to them. Therefore, teens often “find it more difficult to form meaningful relational ties with members of their congregations who are not their peers” (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 185). Since teens rarely have an opportunity to get to know adults and they feel abandoned by them, Clark notes it is difficult for teens to learn to trust adults (2004, pp. 67-68). Clark also notes that “adults have moved away from nurturing adolescents into the life of the church” and “students are the prime leaders in almost every aspect of youth ministry” (2004, p. 187), resulting in even further isolation. This series of events contributes to the development of the traditional approach to doing youth ministry which is primarily segregated from adults.

Advantages of a Segregated Approach to Youth Ministry

The basic advantages to a segregated approach to youth ministry are: (a) effectiveness in connecting with teens for missional purposes, and (b) age appropriate differentiated ministry.
Clark articulates well the missional advantages to a segregated approach to youth ministry:

The Missional approach to youth ministry recognizes that there are cultural barriers that separate adolescents from adults. This is not only true of the *secular* adolescent world, but also the world of churched young people. Therefore, youth ministry as *mission* is defined as the community of faith corporately committed to caring for and reaching out into the adolescent world (of both churched and unchurched young people) in order to meaningfully assimilate them into their fellowship. (Senter, et al., 2001, p. 80)

Dean also emphasizes the missional importance of youth ministry in this way:

It should be acknowledged, though, that youth groups are a good idea. Kids need peer groups in a healthy Christian environment to reflect back to them who God thinks they are. They're going to find their peers someplace, and if the church does not fit into that activity, there is a problem. (Kauffman, 2003, p. 21)

Black (Senter et al., 2001), Shields (2008), and Fraze also clearly notes the missional advantages to a segregated approach to youth ministry. As Fraze notes: “Well-developed, congregational-based youth groups with established youth leaders likely provide teens who lack parental support appealing doorways into and relational ties encouraging greater religious participation in the life of religious congregations” (2008).

The second basic advantage to a segregated approach to youth ministry is the ability to provide a differentiated, age appropriate ministry. Nel describes it like this,

Youths need all that adults need, but there is a difference between how to feed a need in a 10-year-old and how to feed that same need in a 50-year-old. One has to differentiate within the ministry. (Senter et al., 2001, p. 9)

Nel continues his explanation in this way: “Characteristics of youths at different ages or at different development levels must be taken into account” (Senter et al., 2001, p. 9).

Wright and Graves also articulate the advantages of differentiated ministry like this: “We age-grade our Sunday morning and discipleship groups because we understand the value of the time spent growing with others in a similar stage of life” (2007, pp. 68-69). Neder
puts it this way, “It is imperative that these age appropriate events happen in order to meet the psychosocial development of a young person” (2002, p. 62). Black also explains this benefit:

Youths need developmentally specific ways to channel their energies and idealism; they need their own ways to put into practice the movement of God in their lives. . . . Churches that do not recognize the need for youths to invest themselves in something meaningful and worthwhile to them miss out on contributing to the proper nurture of youths and fail to benefit from the fruits of their students’ youthful idealism and energy. (Senter et al., 2001, pp. 25-26)

Additionally, Gibson affirms the need for differentiated teaching when describing the need to use varied and unique teaching methods to effectively minister to high school youth (2004, pp. 9-13).

Disadvantages to the Segregated Approach to Youth Ministry

The basic disadvantages of a segregated approach to youth ministry seem to be:

1. It goes against some principles found in scripture.

2. It is ineffective in leading young people to become faithful, lifelong followers of Jesus.

3. It contributes to behavioral challenges among the young people when they are segregated.

The fact that the segregation of teens goes against some principles found in Scripture and is consequently ineffective seems to be a significant disadvantage. Scripture identifies the parents as a young person’s primary source for spiritual training; however, when a segregated youth ministry works against the fulfillment of parents serving in such a role, Scriptural instruction has been violated. Many note that youth ministry can do just that. Neder (2002) and McCall (2001) both point out how segregated
youth ministry can promote family disintegration, thus potentially damaging the parental role as the primary spiritual teacher for their children. Neder also notes, “Therefore, given our scriptural studies, it is impossible to assert that separating youth from the body of the church achieves God’s intention for them or assists them in their process of maturation in Christ” (2002, p. 57). Clark seems to agree, “Youth ministry that segments and divides the body, even if for the sake of winning the lost or similarly noble reasons, does a disservice to the youths it seeks to attract and disciple” (Senter et al., 2001, p. 27).

Holmen (2007) points out that such isolation has misplaced the responsibility for spiritual training from home to the church, “intentional or not, during the last 40 to 50 years, we’ve moved away from the home being the primary place where faith is nurtured” (p. 22). Wright and Graves’ observations agree with Holmen’s:

Traditional student ministry has come to value freedom from parents and neglect the importance of partnership with them. The problem with this value system is twofold: 1) it isn’t biblical and 2) it doesn’t work. The research is now pointing this fact out to us. (2007, pp. 47-48)

Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that when an approach to youth ministry works against the strengthening of a family unit and/or displaces the family as the primary spiritual leader in a child’s life, it is thereby working against Scripture.

Even more sobering than going against some principles in Scripture is the resulting ineffective nature of such practices. Senter points out that segregated youth ministry causes discontinuity in the spiritual mentorship process and is therefore ineffective (Senter et al., 2001, p. 122). While discontinuity certainly seems to be a disadvantage, Neder identifies what he considers the most fundamental problem: “Kids are separated from adults in their journey of faith. As a result, the people who have the
most influence on their faith development are their peers” (2002, pp. 46-47). DeVries expands on this idea, explaining in detail the disadvantages:

Teenagers won’t learn the skills required of mature adults in a peer-centered youth Sunday-school class. They won’t learn these skills by talking with their friends. The maturation process occurs as the less mature have repeated opportunities to observe, dialogue and collaborate with the more mature. By denying teenagers opportunities for this kind of involvement with adults, our culture sends its youth into the adult years relationally, mentally and morally unprepared for the challenges of adulthood. (DeVries, 2004, p. 48)

Clark notes the ineffective nature of the traditional segregated approach to youth ministry like this:

The problem is that adults have not invested the time, energy, and commitment to reach adolescents. Both practical and academic literature show strong evidence that youth ministry in its current form makes little difference in the future faith commitment of the vast majority of adolescents, especially when compared to the overwhelming influence of parents. (2004, pp. 187-188)

Neder points out that a segregated youth ministry is really not even part of the church, and consequently teens tend to graduate from church as they complete their high school years (2002, pp. 47-48). Nishioka expands on this idea, “Why should young people, who have existed tangentially to the congregation’s life and witness, suddenly appreciate and take their part in the whole congregation when they’re 17 or 18 years old?” (Kauffman, 2003, p. 21). In summary, Neder’s concerns about the ineffectiveness of a segregated approach to youth ministry can be stated as follows: “Youth ministry has succeeded in separating itself both practically and programmatically, thus cutting itself off from an essential source of nurture for the young people” (2002, p. 53). Wright and Graves seem to agree, “When students are separated from the life of the church . . . we are setting them up for failure. Those who graduate from God after high school are proof” (2007, pp.68-69). Walker (2010) and Craig (2002) make similar observations.
Smith and Denton’s extensive research, known as the *National Study of Youth and Religion* which involved conducting 3,290 phone surveys with teenagers and their parents as well as participating in 267 in-person interviews in 45 different states, confirms that the prevalent approach of segregated youth ministry is ineffective, “one finds little evidence that the agents of religious socialization in this country are being highly effective and successful with the majority of their young people” (2005, p. 27). Due to the ineffective nature of the segregated approach to youth ministry, DeVries makes this bold statement, “There is no such thing as successful youth ministry that isolates teenagers from the community of faith” (2004, p. 103).

Finally, the segregation of teens tends to increase behavior challenges. Gibson (2004) and McCall (2001) both point out the behavioral challenges among young people when they are segregated from adults. Referring to Watson, McCall writes,

> He believes that the idea that teens need to separate from parents has been modified. “Now it is recognized by psychology that if parents drop out, kids will default to a personality that is really not them. They’ll find their identity in being a cool kid, in a generic stereotype identity. Parents have been taught to step back, and they need to change that thinking.” (2001, p. 23)

**Work Against the Societal Norm by Pursuing an Integrated Youth Ministry**

Due to the significant disadvantages of a segregated approach to youth ministry, the majority of the authors of the current literature evaluated recommend that youth ministry should work against the societal norm of teenagers’ segregation from adults by pursuing an integrated approach to youth ministry. This consensus provides wide support for the thesis of this dissertation which argues in favor of an integrated approach to youth ministry.
However, there is considerable disagreement over the degree of integration. Most advocate a blended approach, combining the advantages of age-specific programs with an intentionality of connecting young people with the entire church family. However, a minority, known as *Family Integrated Churches*, advocate a fully integrated approach to youth ministry with no age-specific segregated programming.

**Family Integrated Churches**

The concept behind the Family Integrated Church movement seems to be quite simple. In order to maximize the advantages of an integrated approach to youth ministry and avoid the disadvantages of segregated youth ministry, they fully integrate their young people in everything they do as a church family. Fox, who pastors a Family Integrated Church, describes it in this way: “We began to catch on to the revelation that God’s purpose for ‘youth ministry’ is to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the children to their fathers” (2006, p. 45). Fox continues by explaining that they believe God intends to include young people in “advancing His Kingdom. The primary way He will do that, we believe, is through the family, specifically through the leadership of the father” (2006, p. 53). Fox further explains his understanding that it is primarily the father’s role to lead the spiritual training of his children: “He will teach his children at home when they are very young, even 2 and 3 years old, that they are to be quiet when he is teaching the Bible to the family” (2006, p. 68). Fox (2006) also notes that the father is to train his children to be quiet while at church as well. Fox describes his church’s work with teenagers in this way: “We decided that we would avoid activities that would simply
throw teenagers together just to 'hang out,' but whenever we did anything aimed at the teens, we would involve the fathers and the mothers” (2006, pp. 73-74).

Baucham, who is also an advocate of the Family Integrated Church movement, describes his church as a place where there are “no youth ministers, children’s ministers, or nursery” (2007, p. 191). Baucham continues with these examples, “We do not divide families into component parts. We do not separate the mature women from the teenage girls who need their guidance. We do not separate the toddler from parents during worship” (2007, p. 191). Baucham concludes his definition of the Family Integrated Churches as “a reformation, a paradigm shift. This is a complete departure from current norms in the way we do church. There is no systematic age segregation in the family-integrated church!” (2007, p. 195).

Another unique characteristic of Family Integrated Churches is their view of teenagers being adults. They point to Scripture as the source of this belief noting, “We are born as infants and grow as children until we are 12 or 13 years old. At that time, according to the Scriptures, a Jewish boy or girl would become an adult” (Fox, 2006, pp. 73-74). Fox says “Young men and women are treated as adults and asked to be examples to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity (1 Timothy 4:12)” (2006, p. 79). Fox sees the significance of this definition as an intentional attempt to work against what he views as a wrong message being given to teens by our modern culture. Fox articulates this wrong message like this: “You are a child and children behave childishly, and we can’t expect you to be anything else” (2006, pp. 75-76). Fox describes the ramifications of treating teenagers as children as sabotaging them from having an opportunity to serve in Kingdom work and thereby inoculating them from any
genuine interest in a life of faith (2006, pp. 75-76). Fox concludes this idea with this statement: "What we are doing to these young men, especially, is training them for passivity. . . . And could it be that men are passive many times because they are trained as youth to stay out of sight and out of trouble?" (2006, p. 77).

Despite the apparent advantages of the Family Integrated Churches’ approach to youth ministry, many have significant concerns. In his dissertation, Shields (2008) attempts to counter what he considers to be the false claims of the Family Integrated Church movement, that the age-segregated approach to youth ministry is not working. However, his attempt seems significantly questionable since he was not able to measure the number of youth who actually did drop out (2008, p. 168).

Brown also has concerns about the Family Integrated Church movement: “There is a growing movement within the church today that speaks against and even calls for the removal of modern student ministry. This cause is being led by various persons. . . . One such leader is J. Mark Fox” (2008, pp. 22-23). Fox does question the biblical validity of the age-segregated approach to youth ministry; however, he does not seem to speak quite as categorically against age-segregated youth ministry as his detractors imply. Fox states: “Am I suggesting that any church that offers a Sunday School program is outside the will of God and therefore disobedient? No, I will not make that judgment” (2006, p. 54).

Neither does Baucham seem to categorically forbid an age-segregated approach to youth ministry, but rather voices his concerns in this way: “I believe the modern American practice of systematic age segregation goes beyond the biblical mandate. I believe it is a product of the American educational system, and in some instances it
actually works against families" (2007, pp. 178-182). Baucham continues by pointing out what he considers three specific problems with the age-segregated approach to youth ministry:

1. No biblical instruction for such an approach.
2. Age-segregated youth ministry can work against the biblically mandated integrated approach.

However, Brown defends the age-segregated approach. First, Brown calls into question some of Baucham’s assumptions. He notes that just because the bible doesn’t mention “youth group” does not mean “these ministries are unbiblical” (2008, pp. 23-26). Brown also points out that Baucham assumes “that parents drop their kids off at the church to take care of the spiritual needs of their children; therefore they are abdicating this responsibility to the church” (2008, pp. 23-26). Brown then challenges Baucham’s conclusion that youth ministry is not working based upon what Brown views as inaccurate assumptions (2008). Brown notes that “There truly seems to be a growing tension between the age-specific approach . . . and the recently growing multi-generational approach” (2008, p. 27). Then Brown expresses concern over what seems to him to be a “‘boycott’ mentality toward student ministry” (2008, p. 27), as well as what seems to him to be an unhealthy attitude among the proponents of the Family Integrated Churches.

Brown also goes to some length to demonstrate the potential biblical validity of an age-segregated approach to youth ministry. “The author will argue that while there is specifically no mention of the model of modern student ministry, he does believe there
are biblical principles which do support its existence” (2008, pp. 30-31). Brown notes that ancient Jewish education tradition included age specific education beyond just the parents serving in that role. Then Brown makes this conclusion: “Age specific education is not a product of a 20th century humanistic philosophy . . . it was the model being used when the church was born; thus, the Scriptures has no negative issue with age-specific education” (2008, pp. 34-35).

Wright and Graves also argue against the call of the Family Integrated Church movement for the abandonment of age-segregated youth ministry (2007, pp. 87-90). Wright and Graves also work to demonstrate the biblical validity of such an approach:

Luke 2:46 shows Christ sitting in the midst of rabbis or teachers . . . listening to them and talking to them, a practice common in those days. Second, Galatians 3:24 alludes to the Hebrew idea of a tutor, instructor or schoolmaster” (2007, pp. 87-90). Then Wright and Graves draw this conclusion regarding the biblical validity of an age-segregated approach to youth ministry: “The point I want to make is that more than parental teaching and preaching was involved in the process. . . . there is biblical precedent for age-graded ministries and for parents allowing non-family members to teach their children” (2007, pp. 87-90).

Blended Approach to Youth Ministry

Despite the heated debate over the degree in which to integrate a local church’s youth ministry, the majority of authors evaluated in this research are in favor of an integrated approach. Those previously cited arguing against the Family Integrated Churches’ approach also argue just as passionately for an integrated approach. The primary difference between the two views is the advocates of the Family Integrated Churches’ approach see no value in any segregation during the spiritual training of young people. However, the majority of the authors are in favor of a blended approach to youth ministry. Such an approach attempts to blend the advantages of age-segregated youth ministry with the benefits of an integrated approach.
For the purposes of this dissertation, such a blended approach to youth ministry is still considered integrated youth ministry since it includes families and church families as part of the youth ministry implementation strategy. A blended approach to youth ministry simply includes a smaller degree of integration of families and church families than does the fully integrated approach advocated by the Family Integrated Churches. Both of these approaches, however, affirm the intention of this dissertation to make a bold call for youth ministry to move away from practicing a completely segregated approach to youth ministry.

Leading a blended approach to youth ministry requires a careful balancing act and focused intentionality. Author’s appeals for a blended approach to youth ministry will first be considered, then an evaluation of ideas on how to successfully blend an integrated and age-segregated approach to youth ministry will be considered.

Appeal for Blended Youth Ministry

Arnold appeals for a blended youth ministry in this way: “Youth ministry should balance age-specific ministry and ministry that involves non-youth” (2009, p. 1). DeVries puts it like this: “Whatever new models for youth ministry we develop must take seriously the fact that teenagers grow toward mature Christian adulthood as they are connected to the total body of Christ, not isolated from it” (2004, pp. 43-44). Black says, “Youths need to be involved in the life of the local body of Christ, but they also need focused ministry that is generationally specific. It is a balancing act between separating and integrating (Senter et al., 2001, p. 72). Wright and Grave’s appeal for a blended approach to youth ministry is articulated in this way: “Extremists who want to eliminate student ministry have not seen how it can work when it is in partnership, rather than
competition, with the family” (2007, p. 94). Later they continue by saying: “The biblical ideal is one of the family supporting the church and the church supporting the family, but it’s not happening today” (Wright & Graves, 2007, p. 105).

Smith and Denton seem to agree with Wright and Grave’s appeal to keep the family and the church joined together for the most positive and effective impact on young people. Their findings point out the power of adult influence (2005, p. 28), as well as emphasize that age-segregated youth ministry is effective (2005, p. 117). This naturally leads to the conclusion that a blended approach to youth ministry can serve a congregation well.

Holmen also advocates a blended approach to youth ministry. He acknowledges the benefits of age-segregated youth ministry programming, while at the same time emphasizes that the power of parental influence is “two to three times more influential than anything that takes place in our churches” (2007, p. 31). Therefore, Holmen concludes that “it seems clear that we should then devote some considerable time, effort and resources to what’s most effective and God-ordained” (2007, p. 31).

The extensive research done among Seventh-day Adventists’ young people, known as Valuegenesis, also makes this strong appeal for a partnership between families and church families in discipling young people: “We can’t stress enough the power of family involvement in religion as a means of fostering a life of faith in our young people” (Gillespie et al., 2004, p. 348). This statement affirms an earlier Valuegenesis study that revealed out of forty-one effectiveness factors that correlate with faith maturity and denominational loyalty in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, twenty of such effectiveness factors occur only in the family setting (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992, p. 201). Additionally, twelve of these effectiveness factors were also related to the church family, one of which is “frequent intergenerational programming” (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992, p. 185). Thus, this extensive research done exclusively on Seventh-day Adventist young
people provides solid support for the integrated approach to youth ministry that this dissertation is arguing for.

However, Valuegenesis also revealed the importance of age-segregated youth ministry programming. Their careful research demonstrates that young people who attend a church with an age-segregated youth ministry have a significantly more positive view of their church than their counterparts with no such youth ministry. Consequently, a much higher percentage of youth who participate in a church that provides some age-segregated youth ministries intend to remain Seventh-day Adventists as adults (Gillespie et al., 2004). Gane’s reflection on this research leads him to this conclusion, “The evidence is overwhelming. If you wish to close the back door of the church, you must have a strong youth ministry program. . . . Youth ministry is not an option; it is an imperative” (2009, p. 79).

However, when all of the Valuegenesis findings are considered as a whole it provides strong evidence for a blended approach to youth ministry. Nonetheless, it must be kept in mind that there are no Family Integrated Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Therefore, Valuegenesis’ findings demonstrating the importance of age-segregated youth ministry does not necessarily invalidate a fully integrated approach to youth ministry. This is true because there has not been a Family Integrated Seventh-day Adventist Church attempted and then evaluated. What personal observation has revealed is that often times in churches where there are no age-segregated youth ministry programs, the young people get ignored, which would certainly contribute to the Valuegenesis findings demonstrating the advantages of churches with age-segregated programs. However, in the Family Integrated Churches it does not seem like the young people are ignored, but
rather intentionally included. Therefore, it seems the verdict is still out regarding the comparative effectiveness in discipling young people between the blended approach and the fully integrated approach. Both of these approaches are using the powerful influence of families and church families to do youth ministry, which is what this dissertation is advocating.

The National Study of Youth and Religion also discovered these findings supportive of a blended approach to youth ministry: “Parents, friends, youth organizations, religious congregations, and youth group leaders all appear to have significant influence on the shape and extent of American teenagers’ religious and spiritual lives” (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 117). Smith and Denton later state:

Religious congregations that prioritize ministry to youth and support for their parents, invest in trained and skilled youth group leaders, and make serious efforts to engage and teach adolescents seem much more likely to draw youth into their religious lives and to foster religious and spiritual maturity in their young members. This appears to be true of local congregations, regional organizations such as dioceses and state conventions, and entire religious traditions. (2005, pp. 261-262)

Hutchinson-Long describes the reason why she feels a blended approach to youth ministry is important: “Intentional family-based programming does not need to replace all age-specific youth programs or activities. To move from one extreme (all age-specific programs) to the other extreme (all family-based programs) does not solve the problems” (2004, p. 55). Later Hutchinson-Long emphasizes the need for teens to have adult role models for learning how to live for Christ, which a youth ministry completely segregated from the church congregation does not adequately provide (2004, p. 69). She continues to explain: “The Church should be the model for interconnectedness among all members of the faith community” (Hutchinson-Long, 2004, p. 72).
Craig also points to the importance of a blended approach to youth ministry noting that a youth ministry that is completely segregated from the church family "may lead to the erosion of the church and a generation of teens with built-in expectations for the church to be targeted specifically, and only, at them" (2002, pp. 149-150). Craig then summarizes his emphasis on a blended approach to youth ministry with this statement: "Parental involvement in the lives of their teens is a key to the teen’s spiritual formation" (2002, p. 151).

Nel also gives an appeal for a blended approach to youth ministry by stating: "We need to strategize and structure for intergenerational living together" (2003, p. 95). Walker makes his appeal for a blended approach to youth ministry in this way: "I am not advocating a total departure from peer ministry. I believe in youth ministry, and I can argue for the value of a strong, vibrant church youth program. However, teens need adults and vice versa" (2010).

Balancing Age-Segregated with Integrated Youth Ministry

Now that many appeals for a blended approach to youth ministry have been considered, it could be helpful to reflect on some ideas for effectively balancing such an approach. This is particularly important since it is easy to give consent to the idea of an integrated approach to youth ministry and then default to the practice of a completely segregated youth ministry. It is the purpose of this dissertation to encourage leaders in youth ministry to actually do an integrated approach to youth ministry; therefore, the following keys are provided for those choosing to lead a blended approach to an integrated youth ministry.
The first key for achieving such a balance is to ensure that parents are kept in their biblical role of serving as the primary spiritual mentors for their children as they develop from infants into children, teens, and then young adults. Barna’s research demonstrates the importance of keeping parents in this role. According to Barna, churches that consistently help produce spiritually mature young people hold to the ministry philosophy that “the spiritual development of children is first and foremost the responsibility of parents and that a church is best poised to assist rather than lead in that process” (2003, pp. 96-99). Rainer and Rainer also advocate for parents to be the primary spiritual mentors of their own children (2008, pp. 97-98). Neder notes that “parents must resist the temptation to abdicate to the youth ministry the spiritual care of their children” (2002, p. 3). Later he notes that the leaders of the youth ministry must “guard against increasing the separation of the adolescent from the parents by taking the place of the parents and then undermining the family structure” (2002, pp. 23-24).

Hampton seems to agree: “If we want to really make a difference in the lives of teenagers, we have to reorient our ministries to allow parents to become participants in youth ministry rather than just observers” (2010).

The second key, to successfully balancing the age-segregated approach to youth ministry with an integrated approach, appears to be establishing that the work of youth ministry is the responsibility of the entire congregation, not just the youth ministry department of the church.

Youth ministry must not see itself as the sole spiritual influence in the life of adolescents and it must see itself as part of the overall mission of the church. It is the responsibility of the church to disciple young people and youth ministry is part of the church. To be anything less will result in the youth ministry separating itself from the ministry of the church. (Neder, 2002, p. 3)
Nel agrees that the responsibility for discipling the young people in a congregation goes beyond the youth ministry, including the entire church. He states: “Children and adolescents are an indispensable part of the congregation. Like all other members, they are part of the congregation, and as such they are a congregational responsibility” (Senter et al., 2001, p. 16). Nel continues:

The youths should therefore be built up as a part of the whole. They are in no way a group whose equipping should take place apart from the center of the congregation. A church’s youth ministry is not a mere supplement to the whole, but as much of the essence of the congregation as any other age group. (Senter et al., 2001, p. 18)

Clark also agrees that it is the entire church’s role to help their young people grow spiritually by explaining: “Ministry toward and care of young people at all levels is a central responsibility of every member of a congregation” (Senter et al., 2001, p. 27).

Black also shares this emphasis, “The entire congregation has to accept the marriage of youth ministry with the total mission of the church” (Senter et al., 2001, p. 74). DeVries is also in agreement, “The youth minister and the youth program must never be seen as substitutes for the parents’ and the church members’ fulfilling their own commitments” (DeVries, 2004, p. 164). Wright and Graves demonstrate that God created only two institutions for discipling young people, the family and the church family. They point out that any youth ministry that violates either of these institution’s role in discipleship is working against God’s intentions. “The two institutions must step closer to one another to be based on a biblical model. Teens need family and church working hand-in-hand surrounding them with truth and godly models to follow” (2007, p. 74). Nel agrees that the responsibility of discipling the young belongs to the entire church family, but points out that youth ministry can only be truly assumed by the entire congregation when “the faith community begins to value children and adolescents as not only being recipients but
as worthy co-workers in every sense of the Word and ministry" (Senter et al., 2001, pp. 36-38). Hutchinson-Long notes that the only way to keep a congregational-wide approach to youth ministry is to maintain the integrated approach as a higher priority than the age-segregated approach (2004, p. 55).

The final key noted for keeping a balanced, blended approach to integrated youth ministry seems to be pursuing the correct goals while leading a local church’s youth ministry. Neder says that youth ministry should only have the goals of “assimilation, convergence, and congruence” (2002, p. 58). By assimilation he means bringing teens into relationship with the church family as a whole. Neder does a convincing job of explaining that any other youth ministry goal will ultimately lead to the segregation of the youth ministry program from the rest of the church family. “Many youth workers say that it is the task of the youth ministry to win kids to Christ and nurture them... however, they need to be taught that these goals are the task of the church” (Neder, 2002, pp. 58-59). Later, Neder points out the practicality of why the goal of assimilation is so important: “As the youth worker realizes that his or her primary task is assimilation, they will be thinking of ways to bring young people into the life of the whole church and integrate young people into the church structure” (2002, pp. 59-62). Clark agrees that assimilation needs to be the goal of youth ministry stating the need of “shifting the goal of youth ministry from individual discipleship to communal assimilation” (Clark, 2004, pp. 175, 188-190).

In addition to assimilation, Neder calls for convergence and congruence. What Neder means by convergence is as follows:

1. A common voice spoken by all adults in the church.
2. All church programs working together to create a “structure and environment where there can be a converging of relationships between youth and adults” (2002, p. 68).

3. The church working to help parents be more effective (2002, pp. 63-68).

By congruence, Neder means ensuring that there is consistency between what is said by the church and what is actually done (2002, p. 71).

RetentionPolicy of an Integrated Youth Ministry

Now that a careful evaluation has been done of current literature’s perspectives on an integrated approach to youth ministry, it seems the work would be incomplete without at least acknowledging the retention benefits of this approach. Certainly there are many other benefits, such as reduced at-risk behaviors or increased resilience (DeVries, 2004), that could be considered; however, they are beyond the scope of this research project. Retention in church seems most relevant to the focus of this dissertation.

A significant component of an integrated approach to youth ministry is the priority of developing a partnership with parents that honors them as the primary spiritual mentor of their children. Such a partnership seems to maximize the possibilities for retention of young people since it places the powerful parental influence on the youth ministry team. Research unanimously affirms that parents have the most powerful spiritual influence on a young person. Smith and Denton’s research reveals that “about three in four religious teens in the United States consider their own religious
beliefs somewhat or very similar to their parents" (2005, p. 34). They conclude:

The best social predictor, although not a guarantee, of what the religious and spiritual lives of youth will look like is what the religious and spiritual lives of their parents do look like. Parents and other adults, as we have suggested, most likely “will get what they are.” (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 261)

The research of Rainer and Rainer (2008), Kim (2001), Lytch (2004, as cited in Shields, 2008), Myers (1996 as cited in Shields, 2008), Black (2006, as cited in Shields, 2008), and Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1997, as cited in Shields, 2008) reveal similar findings. Thus, when parents are partners in youth ministry and their parental influence encourages young people to live their lives for Jesus in the context of a local congregation, a significant increase in retention can be experienced. DeVries articulates this well when he explains:

And when it comes to faith formation, the impact of parents is dramatic. Research now shows that parents who simply talk about faith in the home and who involve their children in serving alongside them can actually double and sometimes triple their children’s chances of living out their faith as adults. (2004, p. 63)

However, an integrated approach to youth ministry includes more than just developing a partnership with parents; it also includes helping teens develop positive relationships with other adults in the church family. There seems to be agreement among current authors that such increased youth ministry integration results in increased retention. Perhaps Rainer and Rainer state this point most clearly as follows:

Those churches that have leaders investing time in students are more likely to keep them through college and into adulthood... the more adult leaders who are investing in a teen’s life, the more likely that teen is to stay in church. The more adults who are involved in a teen’s life, the lower the dropout rate. In fact, our research reveals that if a teen has no adult interaction in the church, it’s almost a guarantee he or she will drop out of the church... A pastor can reduce the dropout rate of teens from an almost certainty of losing students to only a 50-percent chance simply by getting adults involved in their lives! (2008, pp. 122-125)
Referring to Powell's research, O'Brien makes a similar observation: "Students who actively seek a church home after high school are those who have had meaningful relationships with other adults in the church besides their parents" (2010, pp. 2-3).

Gibson points out when young people are connected with the entire church they begin to feel like they are important, consequently they develop a strong commitment to the church (2004, pp. 9-10). Additionally, Kim's extensive research on retention in Seventh-day Adventist Churches reveals that an integrated approach to youth ministry promotes retention (2001). Joiner also notes the retention benefits of positive adult relationships in the lives of teenagers, "whether or not a student remains involved in a faith community is tied to the number of adults who influence that person spiritually" (Joiner, 2009, pp. 186-187).

**Conclusion**

Based upon the retention benefits and other findings in current literature, it seems churches can no longer afford to drift along with the cultural norm of segregating young people from the rest of the congregation. It appears to be time for Christian churches to pioneer a new paradigm of integrated youth ministry. As this literature review has revealed, many are doing just that. It seems there is a unique opportunity to lead a cultural revolution against the segregation of the young from the old. "Religious congregations . . . are uniquely positioned . . . to embrace youth, to connect with adolescents, to strengthen ties between adults and teenagers" (Smith and Denton, 2005, p. 264). Clark joins Smith and Denton in appealing for adults to pursue relationships with teens, "Put simply, this is my hope—that more adults, especially adults who are in positions of turning the tide of abandonment, would strive to change the systems and
structures that have caused collective anguish for our young” (2004, p. 56). Later Clark says: “By far the best way to help our young is by being a chorus of support and a choir of commitment” (2004, p. 183).

Perhaps, when it comes to youth ministry, it is time for Christian churches to do two things. First of all, it seems it is time to make a bold paradigm shift and pursue an integrated approach to youth ministry. Secondly, maybe it is time to stop bantering over the degree of integration and rather celebrate any and all integrated approaches to youth ministry. It certainly appears, from the research, that any increase in contact time between teens and loving Christian adults is something to be celebrated. Perhaps each ministry context will best determine the degree of integration. However, one thing that does not seem to be a variable is the need for Christian youth ministry to be integrated.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION NARRATIVE

Introduction

I arrived in Collegedale, Tennessee on November 18, 2001 to serve as the youth pastor of the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church on the campus of Southern Adventist University. During my interview process, I had heard that there were significant challenges with the Friday evening youth worship service. The church administration had gone so far as to hire off duty police officers to conduct drug busts on the church parking lot as well as to help maintain appropriate conduct of the teens present. On November 30, 2001, I experienced my first such Friday evening worship service. I found the room where the teens were gathered to be dimly lit with a casual atmosphere. There were plenty of friends, food, and music. Approximately fifty teens were in the youth room where the worship service was to take place, and another thirty teens were enjoying time together by simply sitting on the floor out in the hallway. Additionally, there were around thirty teens having fun together out in the church parking lot. There were no adults present other than me and my wife. During the course of the evening the teens came and went, and did as they pleased. For the remainder of the 2001-2002 school year I had a university student, who had served as interim youth pastor.
during the church’s search for a youth pastor, continue leading this Friday evening youth worship service while I assessed it and focused on getting to know the teens and their community. At the conclusion of that school year, after re-reading Mark DeVries book, *Family-Based Youth Ministry*, I became increasingly convicted that we needed to integrate our Friday evening youth ministry programming with our teens’ families and church family, but I did not know how to do it. This case study describes the journey toward that goal.

**Profile of the Ministry Context**

The most pertinent details of this ministry context have to do with the location, size, and resulting relational dynamics of the Collegedale Church. The fact that the Collegedale Church is located on the campus of Southern Adventist University significantly affects this case study. In addition to the teen worship service that was being held in the Collegedale Church on Friday evenings, there was also a worship service in the church’s main auditorium for university students. This created two challenging realities. First, since the main church’s auditorium was full of university students and there were no programs for adults, the teens’ families and church family were not present. The teens’ knowledge of this reality negatively affected the behavior of many of them. Additionally, since the university student worship service was taking place in the same building, it was more challenging to supervise the teens as they took the opportunity to roam through the entire facility. Also, since the Collegedale Church is located on the campus of Southern Adventist University, the teens would often choose to leave their worship service and roam the university campus and beyond. They were fully aware that the teen worship service was completely optional and since their parents were
not present or aware of what they were actually doing, they enjoyed the freedom and autonomy. In fact, some teens would be dropped off at the church by their parents, walk through the church and out the door on the other side of the church, get into a car with some of their friends, and leave for an evening of fun together, unbeknownst to their parents. Then these teens would return as the teen worship service was concluding, walk through the church and out to their waiting parent’s car.

The teens’ freedom and autonomy on Friday evenings was also enabled by the size of the Collegedale Church. The membership of 3,000 people creates an environment where many people do not know each other, thereby reducing the communication feedback to parents when certain teens make poor choices.

The location and size of the Collegedale Church created relational dynamics such that the teens knew that they could do anything they wanted and there would be no consequences. They knew the church had no real authority over them and the people running the youth program most often did not know their parents. These realities contributed to some teens participating in disrespectful and at times illegal behavior.

**Description of the Research Methodology Used to Help Determine the Intervention**

Practicing ministry is the best description of the research methodology I used to help determine the intervention to this ministry challenge. During the 2002-2003 school year, the first thing I did for the Friday evening teen worship service was to recruit a team of parents to partner with me in its implementation. I told this parent team that their primary job was to develop friendships with the teens, and then on a rotating basis, also to help supervise. We began to establish some guidelines for the Friday evening worship
service. We decided to not allow teens to be in the hallway or parking lot while the worship service was in progress because of the distractions it created for those teens that were coming with genuine intentions to worship. I also hired a university student to run a Friday evening worship service for seventh- and eighth-grade students. Initially this strategy seemed to work quite well. Our attendance leveled out that school year with around twenty to thirty seventh- and eighth-grade students in attendance and forty to fifty teens in attendance in grades nine to twelve. The team of parents that I recruited was faithful and diligent. At the height of that school year we had around 80% of the students in attendance focused and enjoying what appeared to be a genuine worship experience. We also created a small group, student-led Bible study program that took place following the teen worship service. I recruited, trained, and coached the student leaders for these groups, and we developed around four to six groups that each had five to fifteen students in attendance. However, at the conclusion of the school year, all the parents who had partnered with me in running our Friday evening programming were burned out and consequently resigned.

At the start of the 2003-2004 school year I made a diligent, but unsuccessful attempt at replacing the parent team that had resigned. However, I got to the point where I could not conscientiously recruit another parent knowing it was just going to burn them out. I considered hiring a team of university students to be my supervising team, but was deeply convicted this would not achieve God’s design for families and church families to disciple their young. As the school year progressed, I too got burned out and it became very apparent that it was time for a change. Either we needed to develop an entirely different paradigm for our Friday evening youth ministry programming, or I needed to
find a different job. Since I still felt a strong call to this specific job, I prayerfully wrestled through this crisis. Out of this prayerful wrestling experience grew the intervention.

**Development of the Intervention**

During the 2003-2004 school year, as I anxiously wrestled with the dilemma of feeling called to lead the youth ministry of the Collegedale Church, and yet burned out from leading the Friday evening worship service with minimal partnership from other adults, I had a growing conviction that we needed to develop a home-based group Bible study program for teens. However, I was scared to lead such a drastic change. I was fearful that I would not have anybody willing to open their home for such a purpose. I was also worried that the teens would not follow my lead and make this transition with me. Ultimately, I was scared of failure, but desperate for another option for Friday evening youth ministry programming. I shared my desperation with our team of six other pastors. Unfortunately, we were in-between senior pastors at this time, which made the transition seem that much more uncertain. I told the other pastors the crisis I was experiencing and that a change was needed. They listened, questioned intensely, made suggestions, and ultimately unanimously supported the idea of me transitioning the Friday evening programming rather than looking for another job. In our church setting such decisions did not need church board approval. The expectation of the church board was that I would lead the church’s youth ministry in a way that I thought was effective and appropriate. As long as I worked in harmony with the other pastors and had their approval, this was sufficient.
I developed a team of parents to serve as a steering team for our youth ministry and gave them *Family-Based Youth Ministry* and *Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry*. We met multiple times to work on making specific application for our context. We discussed the Friday evening youth ministry crisis we were experiencing along with possible solutions. Finally, while in conversation with some of the teens’ parents, they strongly challenged me to start this home-based teen Bible study program, and while feeling deep conviction, I consented. So mid-school year, I recruited several people to open their homes and transitioned our student leaders from our church-based groups into leadership roles in these home-based Bible study groups.

**Implementation Narrative**

In January of 2004, I began to integrate our new Friday evening youth ministry programming initiative that we called *CAYA Community*. At first we alternated between the church-based teen worship services and the new CAYA Community groups. The CAYA Community groups flourished and the behavioral issues disappeared. For example, a specific student whose behavior at the church-based youth worship service was significantly challenging became a compliant participant at one of our CAYA Community groups. Finally, during the following school year, we decided to make a permanent transition.

At this point, the youth ministry steering team had already developed a strong consensus that we needed to make a permanent transition exclusively to the CAYA Community groups. However, there was also agreement that the teens involved needed to be invited to participate in having a conversation about it and in making the decision. On November 9, 2005, we had just such a meeting. I told the teens that the meeting was
to determine the future of our Friday evening youth ministry programming and gave them an open invitation to attend and participate. Two teens chose to attend the meeting. During that meeting we decided to completely stop doing the church-based Friday evening programming and focus exclusively on the CAYA Community groups.

Soon thereafter, we also transitioned the seventh- and eighth-grade church-based worship service into a CAYA Community group, resulting in a total of eleven CAYA Community groups for teens in grades seven through twelve with a total of over thirty adults participating. The adults seemed to be thriving rather than burning out. Both the adults and the teens involved seemed to be enjoying CAYA Community and experiencing significant spiritual benefits as well.

However, there were some teens and their parents who were against this change. I met one-on-one with some and tried to help them transition into a CAYA Community group. With one particular family I worked with them to successfully start a new CAYA Community group that they helped lead. However, ultimately they said they just preferred the church-based youth worship service and transitioned from serving as key volunteer leaders in our youth ministry to leaving our church. Others, after participating in CAYA Community, felt like I should be the one running the Friday evening youth ministry programming at the church and not leave it up to the parents to run in their homes. I met with this particular group of parents and walked through the principles of Ephesians chapter four that are highlighted in chapter two of this dissertation. As a result, these parents were able to realize that this transition was in harmony with biblical principles. However, one particular father from this group refused to come to the
meeting or discuss this with me, opting rather to share his frustrations with others in the church.

During this time the other pastors and the youth ministry steering team provided me strong support and the opposition never gained significant momentum. In fact, this transition was never discussed or even brought up in our church board. One youth ministry steering team member told me about a several hour conversation he had with another church member who was opposed to the change. He described how he defended the transition to this other church member. Such ownership of the transition by our volunteers on the youth ministry steering team along with the other pastors provided the needed support to make this transition possible.

As we continued to develop the CAYA Community ministry, we experimented with multiple options for curriculum. I attempted to write a lesson that everyone would use, but I discovered that ultimately each group ended up doing what they wanted rather than the lesson I wrote. So instead, I developed a training course at the beginning of the school year for those interested in leading a CAYA Community group. In that course, I included a section where I taught the CAYA Community leaders how to develop their own devotional Bible study using the *Serendipity Bible*. The training manual for this CAYA Community leaders training course will be provided in appendix D.

I also discovered that these groups worked best when three different families partnered together to lead them. This allowed for the hosting and leading work to not be too heavy for any one family. Additionally, when a family had a scheduling conflict the group did not have to be cancelled; rather the other two families could lead it.
Another element that seemed to help build community was the presence of food. All of the CAYA Community groups provided either a snack or a meal. As the groups shared food together, they also shared life on a deeper level.

As I led this change in Friday evening programming, I discovered that my role as youth pastor changed as well. Rather than having all of the Friday evening programming dependent on me, my role became primarily recruiter, coordinator, trainer and equipper. A painful part of this transition was a significant reduction in my contact time with the teens. I started rotating from group to group, focusing most of my time on groups that were struggling. Additionally, we reduced the frequency of the Friday evening programming. While meeting at the church, we had a Friday evening worship service every week year round. In order to promote families enjoying more time together, I reduced the frequency to where CAYA Community groups to where they only met twice per month September through April. Consequently, I did not see each teen on a consistent basis, resulting in the painful reality for me of less connection with the teens. However, simultaneously the result was a stronger connection between the teens and their adult CAYA Community group leaders, effectively multiplying myself many times over.

Another challenge I discovered was an increased hesitancy of teens to drop in on a group when they did not know the host family very well. Since the church was a public building, that issue was not present when the programming was taking place there. Despite this challenge, however, attendance has been strong over the six years of this research project. We do everything we can think of through advertising and phone calls to help overcome this challenge and successfully connect teens to CAYA Community groups. We have not been successful in every case; however, there has been a strong
attendance with an average of around seven or eight groups each school year. There has been a total average attendance of around 170 teens per night, which is more than double the attendance of the church-based worship service. Additionally, each group has had many adults actively participating.

**Research Methodology**

The evaluation of the effectiveness of using CAYA Community as the intervention to transition the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church to an integrated approach is provided in chapter five. This evaluation is based on three different approaches.

The first approach was to simply contrast the number of adults who were involved in the church-based Friday evening programming prior to the implementation of this project and the number of adults who were involved in the CAYA Community programming following the implementation of this project.

The second approach was to use qualitative research to evaluate whether CAYA Community was actually providing opportunities for families and church families to disciple their teens. During the 2008 – 2009 school year, thirteen teens who seemed most invested in CAYA Community were selected in a nonrandom, purposeful manner, as is common in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Additionally, one parent for each teen was also interviewed separately for a total of twenty-six interviews. Some of the parents were also very involved in CAYA Community and served as adult leaders, though most were not. The goal of the interviews was to evaluate whether the integration goals were being achieved. The questions used for these interviews are provided in the appendix. All of the interviews were carefully analyzed and looked for themes. The
themes that were discovered were then recorded as findings from this qualitative research. Those findings applicable to the evaluation of CAYA Community's effectiveness in achieving an integrated approach to Friday evening youth ministry programming at the Collegedale Church will then be reported in chapter five.

Additionally, comments made in one of the interviews regarding their personal experience with CAYA Community are also considered valuable information-rich data. Consequently, excerpts from this interview will also be used in chapter five to assist in the discovery of the effectiveness of CAYA Community in implementing an integrated approach to Friday evening youth ministry programming at the Collegedale Church.

Finally, the third approach to evaluate the effectiveness of CAYA Community in achieving an integrated approach to Friday evening youth ministry programming is the analysis of student responses to a survey question. This survey question, along with several others, was administered at the conclusion of the teen interviews. An example of this survey will be provided in the appendix. One survey question was particularly relevant to the evaluation of the effectiveness of CAYA Community in achieving an integrated approach to youth ministry. Therefore, the results from this one survey question will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of CAYA Community as an intervention to the youth ministry challenge that was faced.

Conclusion

Certainly there was pain and significant challenge in the journey of transitioning the Collegedale Church's Friday evening youth ministry programming into a more integrated approach; however, the end results seem well worth the effort. Such a journey toward an integrated approach to youth ministry will be unique for each ministry context.
Nonetheless, I hope this case study will inspire others to attempt a similar journey in their ministry contexts.
CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES, EVALUATION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The painful reality that the Collegedale Church’s Friday evening youth ministry programming was not in harmony with God’s design led to a journey of significant change. As this dissertation has emphasized, it is primarily the role of the family and secondarily the role of the church family to disciple young people. Yet, on Friday evenings at the Collegedale Church, neither the family, nor the church family were present to disciple their own teens. Consequently, significant challenges were being experienced and minimal positive spiritual impact was being achieved. Due to these realities, a journey has been taken toward a more integrated approach to Friday evening youth ministry programming at the Collegedale Church. But the question must be addressed in regards to the effectiveness of this journey. This chapter will share the findings of the assessments made as well an evaluation of those findings. Finally, this chapter will provide a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.
Outcomes and Evaluations

The research done for this project is qualitative in nature and, therefore, only provides information about the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church. Although it is hoped that others can benefit from this case study and be inspired to lead an integrated approach to youth ministry in their particular context, there is no intent to provide objective, quantifiable data in the following report on the outcomes of this research project.

Contrast of the Number of Adults Involved

Perhaps the most obvious evaluation of the effectiveness of the CAYA Community program is the actual number of adults present at the church-based programming compared with the home-based CAYA Community program. There were no adults participating in the Friday evening youth ministry programming at the beginning of this research project. Parents were then recruited, but ultimately ended up getting burned-out and consequently resigned. After that the parent participation was very sparse. Occasionally one or two parents would be successfully recruited to come out and be present during the Friday evening youth worship service; however, many times the only adult present was the youth pastor. During the first full year of running CAYA Community, the 2004-2005 school year, there were twenty-six adults actively involved in leading the Collegedale Church’s Friday evening programming. During the 2005-2006 school year, there were twenty-seven adults; during the 2006-2007 school year, there were twenty-five adults; during the 2007-2008 school year, there were twenty-seven adults, and during the 2008-2009 school year, there were forty-two adults. There was an average adult participation of 29 adults actively participating in the Collegedale
Church's Friday night youth ministry programming over a span of five school years. This seems to clearly demonstrate a significant increase in adult and teen interaction and contact time.

It may be helpful at this point to note, however, that even though this research project was very intent on helping to bring teens into healthy, positive, spiritual relationships with adults and then measure how effectively that goal had been achieved, the term *integrated youth ministry* was not adopted until well after the completion of the interviews and surveys. Therefore, no direct questions using the terminology of *integrated youth ministry* were used, though questions were carefully crafted in an attempt to evaluate whether or not an integrated approach to youth ministry was occurring during our Friday evening youth ministry programming.

**Interviews**

**Findings**

Merriam's book, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, was used as a guide to direct this qualitative research process (1998). According to recommendations found in this book, the data collected from the thirty interviews was analyzed by use of the following steps:

1. Categories were constructed.
2. Categories were named.
3. Major and minor findings were identified.
Merriam’s general description of this process is as follows:

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of making meaning. Data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings or understandings or insights constitute the findings of a study. Findings can be in the form of organized descriptive accounts, themes, or categories that cut across the data. (Merriam, 1998, p. 178)

Merriam describes constructing categories like this:

The challenge is to construct categories or themes that capture some recurring pattern that cuts across “the preponderance” (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, p. 139) of the data. These categories or themes are “concepts indicated by the data (and not the data itself)” . . . Devising categories is largely an intuitive process, but is also systematic and informed by the study’s purpose, the investigator’s orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the participants themselves . . . Units of data—bits of information—are literally sorted into groupings that have something in common. A unit of data is any meaningful (or potentially meaningful) segment of data . . . The task is to compare one unit of information with the next in looking for recurring regularities in the data. The process is one of breaking data down into bits of information and then assigning “these bits to categories or classes which bring these bits together again in a novel way (Dey, 1993, p. 44).” (1998, pp. 179-180)

Merriam continues her explanation of this process with an illustration of shopping for groceries:

For a simple but vivid example of how to take raw data and sort them into categories, consider the task of sorting two hundred food items found in a grocery store. These two hundred food items in a research study would be bits of information or units of data upon which to base an analysis. By comparing one item with another, the two hundred items could be classified into any number of categories. Starting with a box of cereal, for example, you could ask whether the next item, an orange, is like the first. Obviously not. There are now two piles into which the next item may or may not be placed. By this process you can sort all the items into categories of your choice. One scheme may separate the items into the categories of fresh, frozen, canned, or packaged goods. Or you could divide them by color, weight, or price. More likely, you would divide the items into common grocery store categories: meat, dairy, produce, canned goods, and so on . . . All these schemes emerge logically from the “data”—the food items. The names of the categories and the scheme you use to sort the data will reflect the focus of your study. (1998, p. 180)
This is the process that was followed with the data collected from the twenty-six interviews conducted. The various categories became the thirty-five findings of this study. It was determined that a finding had validity as a major theme of this research project if it had six or more responses from the interviews included in that particular category. Three of these major findings seemed to support the idea that the CAYA Community program has helped facilitate an integrated approach to Friday evening programming and none of the findings appeared to challenge this conclusion. All thirty-five findings along with the supporting comments from the interviews will be included in Appendix E.

The first such supportive finding states, "CAYA Community is an enjoyable, intergenerational, spiritual experience that helps to create bonds between adults and teens". This finding is based on various responses to diverse questions. All of these questions used in the interviews will be provided in the appendix of this dissertation. A few examples are as follows. When student Y2 was asked how they would describe the unity of the Collegedale Church in relationship to its youth ministry program, as part of the response this particular student made this comment, "Oh, I think CAYA Community is great" (2009), thus helping to verify that teens do indeed find such an intergenerational experience enjoyable. This sentiment was repeatedly affirmed throughout the interviews. Another example is when the teens were asked which three adults, other than their parents, they would call for help if they were stranded, three of the teens included adult CAYA Community leaders on their list. Additionally, two of the fifteen parents interviewed mentioned CAYA Community leaders in their list of three adults they thought their child would call when stranded. This helps to demonstrate that at least in
some cases there is a significant level of relational trust between teens and adult CAYA Community leaders. At times, such trust may have already been established between the teen and adult prior to participating in CAYA Community. In other cases, the trust relationship may have been formed as a result of CAYA Community. Either way, the point that needs to be demonstrated is that when adults and teens spend time together in the CAYA Community ministry, there are, at least at times, positive interactions taking place between them. What CAYA Community seems to have effectively accomplished is creating an opportunity for leveraging the power of positive adult influence in the lives of teens that trust and respect them. This conclusion appears to be affirmed by parent A15 who said that their child’s CAYA Community group and its adult leaders have had a huge positive spiritual impact in their child’s life (2009). Another example of what this first research finding is based on is this statement from student Y6 when reflecting on the unity of the Collegedale Church in relationship to its youth ministry: “I’ve gotten to know other kids in the groups and often times other parents are there and I have gotten to know them as well” (2009). The final examples of what this first research finding is based on are from parents A6 and A10: “We would not feel connected to this church if we had not found CAYA Community; it has been a tremendous blessing to our family to integrate into this large church” (2009, Parent A6). Also, parent A10 stated that participation in the Collegedale Church’s youth ministry has at times drawn them into CAYA Community groups (2009).

The second finding that seems to support the idea that CAYA Community has been helpful in leading an integrated approach in Friday evening programming is this: “CAYA Community helps to create unity by providing an environment where teens can
experience love, acceptance, and friendships” (2009). This finding is based on the following examples:

1. While describing the relationship between the unity of the Collegedale Church and its youth ministry, student Y4 made this comment, “I think CAYA Community and small groups have helped our church come together in unity” (2009).

2. Also, when student Y4 was asked who they thought of as their extended church family this was the response, “CAYA Community is the first thing I think of. Actually, I guess CAYA Community is all I think of” (2009).

3. Student Y15 had a similar response (2009).

These responses do seem to demonstrate that these intergenerational CAYA Community groups are actually helping to integrate the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church in a positive way.

The final finding that seems to support the effectiveness of CAYA Community to help accomplish an integrated approach to Friday evening programming is: “CAYA Community helps teens connect with God and grow spiritually” (2009). Some significant evidence was provided in the literature review of this paper that suggests that an integrated approach to youth ministry achieves a much more powerful spiritual impact on teens than a segregated approach. Therefore, when the findings from the interviews conducted among teens and adults of the Collegedale Church reveal that the CAYA Community program has produced a powerful spiritual impact on teens, it seems logical to conclude that this could be partially a consequence of effectively achieving an integrated approach to youth ministry. This finding is based on the fact that when the
teens who were interviewed were asked which programs or activities over the previous three years helped them connect with God and grow spiritually, thirteen of the fifteen interviewed mentioned CAYA Community in their response. These teens mentioned CAYA Community completely of their own volition. They were not prompted in any way, nor was CAYA Community even mentioned or listed as an option to choose from. Additionally, nine of the fifteen parents interviewed also credited CAYA Community as one of the top programs that helped their child connect with God and grow spiritually in the past three years (2009).

**Interview Excerpt**

Parent A8 had a unique perspective for this research. This particular mother had her oldest child participate in the church-based youth worship service prior to the 2001-2002 school year and her youngest two children participated in the CAYA Community program during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years. Her reflections confirm the significant challenges already mentioned with the church-based worship service. This mother’s reflections also reveal an example of how beautifully CAYA Community has facilitated an integrated approach to Friday evening programming for the Collegedale Church’s youth ministry. In this interview, parent A8 refers to the Friday evening youth worship service as “vespers”:

I think the kids feel loved in this church. I think the CAYA ministry has helped—the small groups, because I’ll tell you when our son was here, he would come to the vespers and it was just one big group. He got in trouble so many times... It was a mess. I dreaded those Friday nights. [She was then asked if she attended vespers with her son.] No, I didn’t come. He wouldn’t want me here and everybody—they wouldn’t go in. Uh, they got in trouble, the police called me once, you know, because the kids would roam and no one was really watching them. You can’t watch, you know, and the kids at that age are not ready to be just—in a day academy, with
their cars and just kind of out at the lake, who knows where; you let them go to vespers, but you really, they have no accountability, from anybody. And, uh, it was a disaster. It was a mess. And I know some people don’t agree with these group CAYAs. I love it. I really love it. You know some kids come from troubled homes and just come into a home atmosphere, having a home-cooked meal, and just kind of having that feeling that these people are wrapping their arms around you. As a young person, I think it, it must be special. . . . I have a special burden; we have a special burden for the newcomers, because we were newcomers and we realized how hard it is to break in and so I reached out to the Z family and the Y family, they came in brand-new and I thought, and with the C family they are relatively new, and they were not from the Collegedale, I mean we weren’t, we haven’t been here forever. We’ve only been here for like two or three years. And that’s it. So that’s my burden—kind of like the misfits. . . . we encouraged some of these new parents just to come. Because they need it, the friendship, they need the love, as much as the kids did. This year our group is smaller, uh, but it’s very nice, it’s very diverse, kids from different backgrounds, you know and even different racial groups, we even have some of the black kids, that love coming to our CAYA and I just praise the Lord that there is no racial barriers. Everybody, they just like to come. (2009)

Survey Question

A survey was completed by thirteen of the fifteen teens who were interviewed. This survey was administered after their interview was over. An example of the survey will be provided in the appendix. The following question from that survey seems particularly relevant to the evaluation of the effectiveness of CAYA Community in facilitating an integrated approach to youth ministry, “How well has the following helped me grow in friendships with adults who are committed Christians?” (2009). After that question, there were nine options to rate on a scale of one to four. These nine options included family members as well as various ministries of the Collegedale Church. CAYA Community was one such ministry listed. After each of the nine options the teen was to circle a number. The number “one” represented the answer of “poorly,” the number “two” represented the answer of “adequately,” the number “three” represented the answer “does well,” and the number “four” represented the answer “excellent.” The
response of the thirteen teens surveyed resulted in: no number "one" replies, three number "two" replies, seven number "three" replies, and three number "four" replies. This then establishes an average response from the teens of the number "three." It seems safe to conclude, at least for the thirteen teens surveyed, that CAYA Community has helped them grow in friendships with Christian adults. Three teens felt CAYA Community was only doing this adequately, three teens felt CAYA Community was doing an excellent job of this, and seven felt like CAYA Community was doing this well. Consequently, this survey result also contributes to the conclusion that CAYA Community has been effective in helping to move the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church to become more integrated.

Evaluation of Justification for the Project

In the first chapter of this dissertation, the following reasons were provided as justification for this project:

1. The significant attrition rate among young people of the Collegedale Church.

2. The complete segregation of teens from their families and church family during the Friday evening youth ministry programming that was resulting in minimal spiritual impact and major behavioral issues among the teens.

3. The lack of willingness on the part of the adults to get involved.

4. The potential of significant spiritual benefits for young people when an integrated approach to youth ministry is implemented.
It seems appropriate to provide an evaluation of what effect, if any, this project has had on each of the reasons given as justification for the project.

**Attrition Rate**

The measurement of the effects of this project on the attrition rate of the young people growing up in the Collegedale Church goes beyond the scope and intent of this project. However, based upon other research provided in the literature review of this dissertation, it is assumed that this project will ultimately help to improve the retention of the young people growing up in the Collegedale Church. General observations made during the Collegedale Church’s Friday evening youth ministry programming, along with the interviews that were conducted, seem to validate one of the ultimate research conclusions made by Smith and Denton:

> The best social predictor, although not a guarantee, of what the religious and spiritual lives of youth will look like is what the religious and spiritual lives of their parents do look like. Parents and other adults, as we have suggested, most likely “will get what they are.” (2005, p. 261)

So ultimately it seems retention is primarily determined by the family and then only complimented by the church family. Perhaps the most significant effect the transition to CAYA Community has had in regards to retention is creating an opportunity for parents who are being intentional in mentoring their children’s spiritual development to do so in partnership with the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Colledgadale Church. This partnership then helps to create an increased influence of such parents beyond just their own children.
Bridging Segregation

Based on the contrast in the number of parents involved before and after this project, the interview findings, the interview quotations, and the results of the survey question documented previously in this chapter; it does seem that CAYA Community has helped to bridge what was once a complete segregation of teens from their families and church family during the Friday evening youth ministry programming. As was expected, the results of successfully bridging this segregation seemed to cause the behavioral challenges among the teens to disappear. Additionally, as has been documented, the spiritual impact has been significant for some of the teens involved. There is more work to be done in this area, as will be explained later in this chapter; however, an overall evaluation is that CAYA Community has been effective in helping to bridge the segregation.

Willingness of Adults to get Involved

CAYA Community seems to have helped increase the willingness of adults to participate in the Collegedale Church’s Friday evening youth ministry programming. The evidence of this is based on the contrast documented earlier between the number of adults participating before and after the implementation of this project. Therefore, the implementation of this project seems to have effectively achieved this particular reason provided as justification for the project. However, despite the significant increase in adult participation, there is still considerable room for improvement in this area as will be discussed later.
Spiritual Benefits

The final reason provided as a justification for this project is the potential of significant spiritual benefits for young people when an integrated approach to youth ministry is implemented. The interview finding, “CAYA Community helps teens connect with God and grow spiritually,” as was discussed previously, seems to indicate that for some teens CAYA Community has been a significant spiritual benefit for them (Cross, 2009). Therefore, the implementation of this project seems to have effectively achieved this particular reason provided as justification for the project.

Evaluation of Implementation Strategy
From Ephesians

The following principles were gleaned from Ephesians, and in chapter two were suggested as a potential implementation strategy for an integrated approach to youth ministry:

1. Establish the goal to unite all in Jesus (Eph 1:9-10).
2. Practice the pastors’ role as primarily trainer and equipper (Eph 4:12),
3. Develop a discipleship strategy that is implemented in families and church families (Eph 5:22-6:4; Deut 6:4-9; Eph 4:16).
4. Encourage love (Eph 4:15-16).

It seems appropriate to provide an evaluation as to how helpful these principles were during the implementation process.

Goal to Unite all in Jesus

Helping the young people of the Collegedale Church become life-long followers of Jesus has been a significant motivation behind this project. Research provided in the
literature review of this dissertation shows that the potential of this goal occurring significantly increases when an integrated approach to youth ministry is conducted. Had the other pastors of the Collegedale Church not been supportive of uniting all in Jesus as the ultimate youth ministry goal, this transition to an integrated approach in Friday evening youth ministry programming would have never happened. Additionally, often times in youth ministry settings there is significant pressure to grow the number of teens participating in the programs or to have flashy or entertaining programming that will attract families to the church. Had there been such pressure at the Collegedale Church, the transition to an integrated approach to Friday evening youth ministry programming would have never happened. Keeping a clear, long-term goal of uniting all in Jesus seems to have helped make the transition to an integrated approach to youth ministry possible.

Pastor’s Role

The principle from Ephesians 4:12 that describes a pastor’s role primarily as trainer and equipper was a significant key in the successful implementation of the CAYA Community programming. Had the youth pastor not been allowed to function in this capacity, leading an integrated approach to Friday evening youth ministry programming at the Collegedale Church would not have been possible.

Families and Church Families

The integration of families and church families in the Friday evening youth ministry programming was a significant motivator for the implementation of the CAYA Community ministry. Had this principle not been part of the value system of the
Collegedale Church’s youth ministry, CAYA Community would have never been created and the Collegedale Church would never have gone to an integrated approach to youth ministry during its Friday evening youth ministry programming.

**Love**

Love is something that teens can easily sense from adults. Without love, the CAYA Community programming could not function. The teens simply would not attend. Teens tend to vote with their feet; they do not tend to attend optional programs where they do not feel loved. Therefore, even if every other logistical and theological detail was in place, but there was no love in each group, CAYA Community would not exist.

**Evaluation of Ongoing Challenges**

Despite the effectiveness of these implementation principles from Ephesians and the apparent success in achieving the integration goal of this project, personal observation at the various CAYA Community groups reveals two ongoing challenges that must be managed. The first such challenge is the fact that the majority of parents are still not involved in the Friday evening programming of the Collegedale Church. By far, the majority of the teens attend the CAYA Community groups without any parent present. There is an ongoing need to communicate to parents the importance of their participation in order to achieve a more fully integrated approach to youth ministry.

The second constant challenge is the reality that many parents who are present are not focused on being a spiritual mentor for the teens. During a typical CAYA Community meeting, the group time begins around 6:30 p.m. and lasts two to three hours. Initially, several parents work together to provide a meal for all present. The number of people in attendance usually ranges from twenty to fifty. The first hour is spent with
everyone enjoying the meal and casual conversations. After the meal, there is often a time for the group to gather and worship God through singing. Then, if there is a large group present it will often divide into two or three smaller groups of 10-15 people each. These groups will then scatter around into various rooms in the house. At this point, the CAYA Community groups designed for teens in grades 9-12 will typically have a student leader who will then lead a devotional Bible study, and the groups designed for teens in seventh and eighth grades will typically be led by an adult. The devotional Bible study usually concludes with an attempt to help each person apply the text to their life. Finally, there is a time of prayer. After the Bible study, there is often fifteen to twenty minutes of casual connecting time before people start heading home.

Details vary by group, but often times during both the meal and Bible study the adults tend to cluster with other adults, and the teens tend to cluster with the teens. This tendency works against the goal of having a truly integrated approach to youth ministry. However, it does provide somewhat of a blended approach to youth ministry. There is some integration with adults and some segregation from the adults. The literature review demonstrated that perhaps such a blended approach to youth ministry could be ideal. However, despite this reality, ongoing work seems to be continually needed to manage this balance. This is true because our societal norm for all involved is to segregate by age. It seems that many of the adult leaders need to be regularly reminded and challenged to be intentional in their efforts to reach out to the teens and to connect with them.

CAYA Community makes no claims to be a magical program that transforms parents who do not invest spiritually in their children’s lives into those who do. Instead,
it provides an opportunity for those parents who do want to make such a spiritual investment in their children's lives to do so in partnership with the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church. The ultimate goal of CAYA Community is to help place the responsibility of spiritual mentorship on the parents, as God designed it, as well as help relationally assimilate teens into the whole congregation. The challenge is not those families who find alternative ways to achieve these same objectives. The concern is the apparent majority of parents who seem to be making no significant investment in the spiritual lives of their children. It is this challenge that will require future work on a much larger scale than just the transition of the Friday evening youth ministry programming of the Collegedale Church. However, the transition to CAYA Community seems to be an important first step in this major challenge faced by the Collegedale Church.

**Project Summary and Conclusion**

**Summary**

This research project has attempted to establish that when some of the principles from the book of Ephesians are applied to youth ministry, in order to remain faithful to Scripture, there is a need to practice an integrated approach to youth ministry. This remains true despite significant cultural differences that may be present within a local congregation. Additionally, it was demonstrated that the following ideas from the book of Ephesians could be useful when leading an integrated youth ministry:

1. Establish the goal to unite all in Jesus (Eph 1:9-10).
2. Practice the pastor's role as primarily trainer and equipper (Eph 4:12),
3. Develop a discipleship strategy that is implemented in families and church families (Eph 5:22-6:4; Deut 6:4-9; Eph 4:16).

4. Encourage love (Eph 4:15-16).

The literature review for this project provided a contemporary context. It demonstrated that teenager’s autonomy from adults is currently “unprecedented and astounding” (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 185). Additionally, the literature review revealed that there is a longstanding tradition in youth ministry to participate in this societal norm of segregation by segregating teens during youth ministry. Due to the ineffectiveness of a segregated approach to youth ministry as well as the effectiveness of an integrated approach to youth ministry, it was concluded that perhaps it is time to make a bold paradigm shift and pursue an integrated approach to youth ministry.

Finally, the narrative of the Collegedale Church’s journey toward a more integrated approach to youth ministry during their Friday evening programming was explored. This case study and assessment provided a tangible example of how CAYA Community was used to make a transition to a more integrated approach to youth ministry.

Conclusion

CAYA Community helped transform the culture of the Collegedale Church to become a place where parents are welcomed as valuable partners. CAYA Community has been helpful in transitioning into a more integrated approach to Friday evening youth ministry programming at the Collegedale Church.

Therefore, it is the conclusion of this project that families and church families can start practicing an integrated approach to youth ministry. It seems the long-term viability
of Christianity could partially rest on this needed structural change. Certainly the Holy Spirit can accomplish anything, with or without human structures. However, historically it seems the power and effectiveness of a partnership with the Holy Spirit can be maximized when Christian leaders choose to organize and lead in harmony with clear biblical principles. The leaders of each local congregation can develop unique youth ministry programming that is true to the Eph 4:16 imagery of being a connected body with each member working. If ever there was a time and a need for such work, it seems it is now.

**Recommendations**

Perhaps the real issue at stake is one of priority. Possibly the most significant recommendation that could be made is for each Christian to make integrated youth ministry a priority in their family and church family. Resources tend to be allocated to that which is a priority. There seems to be a need for each Christian ministry to consider how it might contribute to an integrated approach to youth ministry. This seems to be true whether that ministry is summer camp, education, women’s, or senior citizens. The imagery of Eph 4:16 appears to clearly communicate the idea of connection and productivity in partnership with each other rather than isolation and segregation.

If an integrated approach to youth ministry were to truly become a priority, it seems that in many denominations it would require a radical restructure and reallocation of resources. In the Seventh-day Adventist church, it appears that more resources would need to be provided on the local church level to provide a pastor to help train, equip, and coach families and church families to lead a customized, context-specific, integrated
approach to youth ministry. Such pastors could be assigned to districts of around seven churches since it would be the families and church families in each local setting who would be leading the youth ministry.

On the local church level, it seems each congregation would need to wrestle with developing a context-specific way to achieve an integrated approach to youth ministry. Many large churches may need to shift away from placing the highest emphasis on programs that merely attract and entertain teens. Perhaps many small churches would need to make sure there is age-specific programming to attract the young people and draw them into intergenerational relationships.

Adams’ (2009) dissertation advocating an Adventist house church movement appears to be a great way to naturally achieve an integrated approach to youth ministry. With this model, it seems the integration of young and old would be so natural that it would not require specialized programming nor youth ministry experts. Adams (2009) demonstrates that such house churches are significantly more effective evangelistically than the traditional approach of meeting in public buildings. Perhaps future research could evaluate the retention rates of young people growing up in such churches. Based on the research in this dissertation, it seems that the retention rates in such house churches would also be significantly higher than churches that meet in public buildings due to the high level of intergenerational interactions that occur quite naturally in such house churches. Additionally, perhaps future research could compare and contrast the effectiveness of a blended approach to youth ministry with a fully integrated approach. Also, a future study evaluating whether the transition to an integrated approach to Friday
evening programming at the Collegedale Church has helped to reduce the dropout rate of young people would be very helpful.

On the family unit level, for many it seems that choosing an integrated youth ministry would require a shift of priorities away from the primary pursuit of career, entertainment, recreation, or wealth. Instead, each family member’s top life priority could become personally walking with Jesus and being filled with His Spirit. Additionally, the adults in each family could make a priority of being present with one’s own children, grandchildren, or other young family or church family members to relationally share with them a passionate love and commitment to Jesus Christ.
YOUTH MINISTRY SURVEY

Please circle your response to the following questions using a scale of 1 – 4.

1 = poorly 2 = adequately 3 = Does well 4 = Excellent
N/A = Not applicable—does not apply to me

1. How well do you think the youth pastor of the Collegedale Church prepares God’s people for works of service? 1 2 3 4

2. I consider myself a committed follower of Jesus Christ? 1 2 3 4

3. How well do you think your church family has helped you learn to be a committed follower of Jesus? 1 2 3 4

4. How well do you think your family of origin has helped you learn to be a committed follower of Jesus? 1 2 3 4

5. My church has an atmosphere of people lovingly submitting to each other? 1 2 3 4
6. My home has an atmosphere of people lovingly submitting to each other? 1 2 3 4

7. CAYA seems to work toward building up the church with the goal of unity? 1 2 3 4

8. How well have the following helped you know the truth so that you are not swayed by all kinds of different opinions and ideas?
   a. My parents 1 2 3 4
   b. My extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles etc.) 1 2 3 4
   c. CAYA Community 1 2 3 4 N/A
   d. Sabbath School 1 2 3 4 N/A
   e. Pathfinders 1 2 3 4 N/A
   f. CAYA Sports 1 2 3 4 N/A
   g. Colledale Church Worship Services 1 2 3 4 N/A
   h. A. W. Spalding 1 2 3 4 N/A
   i. Colledale Academy 1 2 3 4 N/A

9. How well has the following helped you grow toward spiritual maturity which is evidenced by becoming more like Jesus, remaining connected to the church and serving others:
   a. My parents 1 2 3 4
b. My extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles etc.) 1 2 3 4

c. CAYA Community 1 2 3 4 N/A

d. Sabbath School 1 2 3 4 N/A

e. Pathfinders 1 2 3 4 N/A

f. CAYA Sports 1 2 3 4 N/A

g. Collegedale Church Worship Services 1 2 3 4 N/A

h. A. W. Spalding 1 2 3 4 N/A

i. Collegedale Academy 1 2 3 4 N/A

10. CAYA is led with a balance of Love and Truth? 1 2 3 4

11. CAYA helps me grow great friendships with:

a. My family of origin 1 2 3 4 N/A

b. People who are mentoring me in serving Jesus 1 2 3 4 N/A

c. People who are my age 1 2 3 4 N/A

d. People who are older than me 1 2 3 4 N/A

12. How well has the following helped me grow friendships with adults who are committed Christians:

a. My parents 1 2 3 4 N/A

b. My extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles etc.) 1 2 3 4 N/A
c. CAYA Community 1 2 3 4 N/A

d. Sabbath School 1 2 3 4 N/A

e. Pathfinders 1 2 3 4 N/A

f. CAYA Sports 1 2 3 4 N/A

g. Collegedale Church Worship Services 1 2 3 4 N/A

h. A. W. Spalding 1 2 3 4 N/A

i. Collegedale Academy 1 2 3 4 N/A
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUTH

1. How would you describe your current Christian experience?

2. How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

3. Describe your personal experience with biblical truth.

4. For you personally, what has happened in your life as the result of learning these biblical truths?

5. When do you feel the most connected to God?

6. When do you feel the most connected to your friends?

7. Describe any volunteer serving of other people that you have participated in this school year.

8. Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

9. Suppose your car wouldn't run, you were stuck at Wal-Mart, you couldn't get in touch with your parents, and you had to call an adult to help you. Name three people you would call.

10. How did you meet and get to know the adults mentioned in the previous question?
11. How about the same scenario as the previous question except this time you had to call some friends for help — no adults. Who would you call?

12. How did you meet and get to know the friends mentioned in the previous question?

13. Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

14. What have these people done that has been helpful?

15. How did you meet and get to know the people mentioned in the previous question?

16. Who do you think of when you hear the term “extended church family”?

17. As you look back over the last three years of your life, what are some programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

18. What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

19. What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

20. What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

21. What do you think are some things the current youth pastor could do in order to do a better job?
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ADULTS

1. How would you describe your child's current Christian experience?

2. How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

3. Describe your child's personal experience with biblical truth.

4. For your child personally, what has happened in his or her life as the result of learning these biblical truths?

5. When do think your child might feel the most connected to God?

6. Describe any volunteer serving of other people that your child has participated in this school year.

7. Describe how you think your child might feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

8. Suppose your child's car wouldn't run, he or she was stuck at, he or she couldn't get in touch with his or her parents, and he or she had to call an adult to help. Name three people your child would call.

9. How did your child meet and get to know the adults mentioned in the previous question?
10. How about the same scenario as the previous question except this time your child had to call some friends for help – no adults. Who would your child call?

11. How did your child meet and get to know the friends mentioned in the previous question?

12. Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

13. What have these people done that has been helpful?

14. How did your child meet and get to know the people mentioned in the previous question?

15. Who do you think your child might think of when he or she hears the term “extended church family”?

16. As you look back over the last three years of your child’s life, what are some programs or activities that you think have helped your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

17. What would you say have been significant challenges in to your child’s spiritual growth?

18. What do you think your child has found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

19. What are the primary ways your child has learned biblical truth?

20. What do you think are some things the current youth pastor could do in order to do a better job?

21. Describe the effects on your family of your child’s participation in the Collededale Church’s youth ministry.
CAYA COMMUNITY LEADERS' TRAINING MANUAL

Section 1: The Big Picture

The CAYA Vision—Ephesians 4:11-16

1. Youth Pastor’s job is to prepare God’s people for works of service (Eph 4:12).

2. Primary disciplers of young people are the church family (Eph 4:16).

3. Primary discipleship units are the family and church family (Deut 6:4-9 & Eph 4:11-16; 5:21-6:4).

4. Youth ministry is to help grow the church family in unity (Eph 4:11-16).

5. Youth ministry is to help grow young people in biblical truth in a way that helps them know and love Jesus (Eph 4:13-14).

6. The goal of youth ministry is to partner with God’s Spirit, parents, and the extended church family in such a way that our young people grow into spiritually mature adults which is evidenced by:

   a. Our young people being connected, serving, and growing in a Christian community and

7. We are to lead our youth ministry with a perfect balance of truth and love—never should they be separated (Eph 4:15).

8. The youth ministry is to promote strong relational connections between the young people and their family and church family (Eph 4:16).

9. In order for young people to grow spiritually we must connect them with the extended church family, give them a job based on their giftedness, and then partner with them to ensure the effective fulfillment of that job (Eph 4:16).

10. We must architecturally design a youth ministry that builds constellations of committed Christians of all generations around the lives of our young people during their elementary school years in order to provide the spiritual support, stability and direction they need during their teens and twentides (Eph 4:16).

CAYA’s Core Values

1. Help youth fall in love with Jesus.

2. Partner with families in discipling teens to be committed followers of Jesus Christ.

3. Create an environment where it is safe for youth to develop their faith, explore the Bible, grow spiritually, and learn to value the Seventh-day Adventist worldview and lifestyle.

4. Honor God and others by the choices we make.

5. Value and nurture relationships daily with God and others.
6. Encourage responsibility, helping youth realize the joy of service to God and fellow man through ministry and evangelism.

7. Involve youth and encourage them to use their gifts and talents.

The CAYA Mission

1. Love God
2. Show Others Love
3. Show Others How to Love God

Primary CAYA Programs

1. Earliteen and Youth Sabbath Schools
2. CAYA Community
3. CAYA Athletics

Why CAYA Community?

Hebrews 10:19-25

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (NIV)

John 13:34-35
"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (NIV).

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7

The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers. If in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers. Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of others. (White, 1948, pp. 21-22)

God has told us to live this way

It gives families opportunities to effectively accomplish the CAYA

1. Vision
2. Core Values
3. Mission
4. Strategy
5. Goal
6. Objectives

The Strategy

Connect Activities
Grow Activities
Serve Activities

CAYA Community Goal

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Goal

Have CAYA Community groups actively involved in providing opportunities for families with teenagers to accomplish the five purposes of worship (connect), fellowship (connect), spiritual growth (grow), ministry (serve), and mission (serve) for 2008-2009 school year.

Testimony Example

One of our CAYA Community groups partnered with our church's homeless ministry. We house homeless people in our church for a week at a time, several times a year. Here is a testimony as an example of what we are trying to accomplish:

On Saturday evening, a whole CAYA group (yeah, I mean about 30 people—kids and their parents) came out to provide an evening of worship and games for the kids. They had an incredible evening of fun! Our four teens/preteens absolutely loved it—and felt right at home with the crowd.

The mother of the four kids stayed up. One of the CAYA mothers came upstairs, making four of us around the table playing table games...then we just talked for a while. I don't remember how we got on the topic, but she started to talk about her troubles. Pregnant at an early age, she now has four kids from the ages of nine to 15, and has basically been bringing them up on her own. With no education, she has a lot of trouble getting any kind of job. She often felt as though she were all alone with no one to understand how she really felt. We told her about the God of second chances—that wonderful CAYA mother was supposed to be there—she had all the right words), and how God wants to fill that empty hole she felt. We asked her if we could pray for her, so we all held hands and prayed—the three of us for her. She was crying hard by the end. She said she had never prayed before except to ask God to end her life, so she wouldn't have to wake up to repeat it over and over. She said that, just that morning, her mother had told her to turn to God. Apparently, an older couple from a Baptist church in town has picked up her children and taken them to church every Sunday for the last five years—that her kids sometimes beg her to go with them, and she will not. But she said that she wanted to give God a chance (PTL!).

When she left the next day, she again thanked me for the prayer we said for her, and she hugged me for a very long time!

Sometimes this is the end...but 'twas not to be the end...
I got a call from the one of the coordinators for IHN [Interfaith Hospitality Network] a few days later saying that this same mother had serious dental-health issues and wondered if we could help. (I think we're getting that reputation as two of our guests have been treated. Thanks to the generosity of the dentist for lowering his prices and the kind donations of several people, we were able to cover these costs). Then she called me back to say that they managed to make appointments at the health department—for $60 they'll pull teeth (the only treatment they do).

Then, two days before Thanksgiving, I got a call back saying that this same mother had a wait of three months at the health department! (This tooth has been in pain for over a year!). So I was able to get her in the next day at one of our dentists...and decided I would worry about the cost later. Again, she had a God experience—she gave me the biggest hug as she came out the door saying, "I don't feel any more pain!" The whole way back, she could not stop talking about the experience, ever so thankful, and telling me how the dentist prayed with her "even before he put in the needle. (E-mail from Director of Collegedale Church’s Homeless Ministry)

Specific CAYA Community Objectives

Reaching Out

1. During group time, everyone is encouraged to invite someone new to the group.

2. People who are in attendance are personally greeted and made to feel welcomed, especially by the student leaders.

3. A list of the group and new people you would like to be part of the group is maintained, prayed over, and then the people on the list are called before each meeting.

Building Community

1. During the group discussion/Bible study time the group size is 12 or fewer.
2. The group is arranged in a circle with no one sitting behind others and the group leaders are spread around the circle.

3. The talking time is equally shared among everyone without any one person dominating.

4. People are affirmed.

Spiritual Growth

1. Participants are asked how their “TAG” time has gone since we last met.

2. The Bible is opened, read, and discussed

3. There is an extended prayer time where everyone is invited to participate and CAYA, and its leaders are prayed for.

Mission

Our CAYA Community group has either done a mission project or has one planned for this semester. Date: __________ Activity ________________________________

Ministry

Our CAYA Community group has either done a ministry project or has one planned for this semester. Date: __________ Activity ________________________________

Prepared and Organized

The leaders are well prepared and things are well organized.

Prayer
The people in this CAYA Community group are being prayed for regularly outside of meeting time by the leaders.

Records

Number of Youth attending: _______
Number of Adults attending: _______

The Details

Typical Evening

6:45 pm. Leaders arrive (15 minutes)

7:00 p.m. Students arrive/Food & Connecting (45 minutes)

7:45 p.m. Greeting, icebreaker game, singing, announcements, and planning (15 minutes)

8:00 p.m. Break into Small Groups (60 minutes)

9:00 p.m. End Small Group time, hang out, talk (30 minutes)

9:30 p.m. Students go home

Supervision

1. Please make sure there are at least two adults physically present and supervising all students at all times. Please make sure the adults don’t cluster in one location while the students are out of sight in an entirely different area.
2. Please recruit sufficient adults who have already filled out our CAYA Volunteer Application form (available at www.collegedalechurch.com) to staff each CAYA Community group.

3. You should have a minimum ratio of at least one adult for every eight students for seventh- and eighth-grade groups and one adult for every twelve students for ninth- to twelfth-grade group. If you cannot obtain sufficient approved adult volunteers on any particular evening CAYA Community is scheduled, please cancel the meeting rather than running it with insufficient supervision.

Dangers of Insufficient Supervision

1. Lack of supervision places our students in a vulnerable situation where they could be endangered due to poor decisions made as a result of strong peer pressure present in a group setting.

2. It places the homeowner and volunteers present in a vulnerable and liable circumstance if any harm came to a student.

3. It places the entire CAYA Community ministry as well as the Collegedale Church and the Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in an extremely vulnerable position legally.

The Bible Study

The Promise
As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isa 55:10-11, NIV)

Curriculum

1. Dialogical/conversational, not one directional teaching—NOT A DEVOTIONAL TALK
   a. Use primarily biblical stories
   b. This Bible study is devotional—application focused

2. Curriculum Options
   a. Choose a story from anywhere in the Bible and use the template provided in this training manual along with the Serendipity Bible
   b. Purchase study guides
      - InQuest Ministries www.inquest.org
      - Simply Youth http://www.simplyyouthministry.com/resources-small-groups.html
      - Group http://www.group.com/

Group Format

1. Connecting Time

2. Prayer
3. Scripture text

4. Digging Questions

5. Application Questions

6. Prayer

Group Facilitating Techniques

1. Arrange to include! Have all group members in a circle. Do not allow a second row of by-standers or eavesdroppers – especially a back row of adults! NO DOUBLE PARKING!

2. Create the right number! A CAYA Community Bible study should have no more than 14 people participating in the study. If there are more than 14 people, multiply into two groups and have the second group meet in a different room of the house. Also, in order to have a good discussion, it is helpful to have at least seven people participating in the study.

3. Spread the energy! Spread leaders out evenly around the circle.

4. Affirm, affirm, and affirm! Affirmation encourages further conversation.

5. The icebreaker question is important—the one who answers it is more likely to answer a spiritual question! PRIME THE PUMP!

6. Lead with questions. Questions are a powerful way to lead discussion. Craft your questions carefully and intentionally making sure they are open ended (can’t be answered with a “yes” or a “no”) and that they lead the conversation in the direction you want it to go.
7. Challenge participants to create questions. When the participants also create questions it helps to greatly increase the conversation. Challenge everyone to think of one question.

8. Facilitate; don’t teach!

9. Quiet space. Learn to be comfortable with quiet space in the discussion. Do not fill the quiet space every time there is a lull in the conversation.

10. Share! The students should do 75% of the talking and the adults 100% of the listening. But make sure the students get equal talk time – don’t allow a few talkers to dominate – especially adults!

11. Prepare! Always be well prepared for leading the discussion at least one day before the small group meeting.

12. Pray, pray, pray! CAYA Community is a spiritual journey that the host of evil does not want any of us to participate in. Therefore, we must pray earnestly and work diligently!

**Schedule**

1. The second and third Friday evenings of each month September through April have been designated as the time when CAYA Community will meet.

2. So far as possible, please try to follow this schedule.

3. When necessary feel free to adjust the schedule for your group as needed.

**Coaching**

1. The youth pastor and assistant youth pastor will serve as coaches for group leaders.
2. Your coach would be happy to serve as a guest facilitator upon request.

**Extra Options**

1. The CAYA youth pastors are eager to partner with you to lead your CAYA Community group in some additional activities such as:
   a. Connect activities like a Saturday night game night, an outdoor vespers, night hike, etc.
   b. Grow activities like a spiritual retreat, a creative prayer experience etc.
   c. Serve activities like a “Home Blessing,” serving homeless people, prayer walks in neighborhoods, repairing widow’s homes etc.

2. These activities can be arranged for by contacting one of your youth pastors:
   a. Tim Cross timcross@southern.edu, cell (423) 309-1860
   b. Arne Fowler ame@hairyteeth.com, cell (423) 595-4299

**Financial Partnership**

1. Each CAYA Community group whose adult and student leaders have gone through training, completed volunteer screening, and participates in the coaching process become eligible for financial partnership with CAYA funds.

2. Eligible CAYA Community groups can receive reimbursement for expenses as follows:
   a. Up to $200 worth of receipts can be reimbursed for any expense associated with achieving the specific CAYA Community Objectives outline in this training manual.
b. Up to $600 worth of receipts can be reimbursed for any expense associated with activities strategically designed to foster spiritual growth for your CAYA Community group. These activities must be in addition to your regularly scheduled Friday evening meetings, and your entire CAYA Community group must be invited to the event. Such events need to be carefully planned with the youth pastor in advance of the expenditures.

c. Up to $200 worth of receipts can be reimbursed for service activities done by your CAYA Community group for people in our community who are not members of our church.

d. Up to $50 worth of receipts can be reimbursed for connecting activities done by your CAYA Community group at a time other than your normal meeting time.

Roles and Responsibilities For CAYA Community

The Role of the Youth Pastors

1. Personal Trainer, Coach, Adventure Sport Guide, foreman, or a ship’s captain—not a subcontractor.
   
a. Cast the vision.
   
b. Coordinate volunteers.
   
c. Train leaders.
   
d. Screen leaders.
   
e. Coach leaders.
f. Support leaders.

g. Raise awareness of CAYA Community.

h. Assist people in connecting with a CAYA Community group.

i. Participate in the groups as trainer and coach.

j. Guest facilitate Bible study when invited.

k. Partner with CAYA Community groups in the planning and implementation of additional connect, grow, and service activities.

2. Provide communication and coordination among CAYA Community groups.

3. Rationale for the youth pastors serving in this role.

   a. Scripture teaches that we are to practice the priesthood of all believers with pastors serving primarily as trainers and coaches.

   It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. (Eph 4:11-12, NIV)

   “You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5, NIV).

   “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light” (1 Pet 2:9, NIV).

   b. Ellen White teaches that we are to practice the priesthood of all believers with pastors serving primarily as trainers and coaches.

   The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them. Give each one something to do for others. Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are
under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God. (1948, vol. 9, p. 82)

Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them—the burden of leading souls into the truth. Those who are not fulfilling their responsibility should be visited, prayed with, labored for. Do not lead people to depend upon you as ministers; teach them rather that they are to use their talents in giving the truth to those around them. In thus working they will have the co-operation of heavenly angels, and will obtain an experience that will increase their faith, and give them a strong hold on God. (White, 1915, p. 200)

In some respects the pastor occupies a position similar to that of the foreman of a gang of laboring men or the captain of a ship's crew. They are expected to see that the men over whom they are set, do the work assigned to them correctly and promptly, and only in case of emergency are they to execute in detail. The owner of a large mill once found his superintendent in a wheel-pit, making some simple repairs, while a half-dozen workmen in that line were standing by, idly looking on. The proprietor, after learning the facts, so as to be sure that no injustice was done, called the foreman to his office and handed him his discharge with full pay. In surprise the foreman asked for an explanation. It was given in these words: "I employed you to keep six men at work. I found the six idle, and you doing the work of but one. Your work could have been done just as well by any one of the six. I cannot afford to pay the wages of seven for you to teach the six how to be idle."

This incident may be applicable in some cases, and in others not. But many pastors fail in not knowing how, or in not trying, to get the full membership of the church actively engaged in the various departments of church work. If pastors would give more attention to getting and keeping their flock actively engaged at work, they would accomplish more good, have more time for study and religious visiting, and also avoid many causes of friction. (White, 1915, pp. 197-198)

Volunteer Leaders' Role

1. Recruit and select another family or two to team up with.

2. Assign one person as your adult CAYA Community leader.
3. The adult CAYA Community leader works with the other student and adult leaders in dividing up the following responsibilities:

a. Develop a schedule of where your group will meet and when.

b. Communicate group meetings to group members and potential new members including invitations and posted schedules at Earliteen or Youth Sabbath School.

c. Encourage student leaders and participants to be bold and persistent at inviting new people to your group each time.

d. Develop a schedule of hosting responsibilities for each CAYA Community group meeting including:

   i. A location prepared and ready for the group meeting; a rotation of homes is a great idea. The SAU Student Park is a great option; reservations for the Student Park can be made through the SAU president’s office 236-2801.

   ii. Food prepared for the group meeting. A full meal is not required; a simple snack and drink can work just fine.

e. Group facilitators prepared and ready to lead the Bible study by Thursday prior to the group meeting.

f. A person to direct the flow of the evening during the group meeting.

g. A person to be in charge of supervision of student participants—this person should have no other responsibilities the evening they are in charge of supervision.
h. In partnership with youth pastors, plan at least one service activity per semester.

4. All leaders are to focus on developing friendships with the participants of your CAYA Community group with the goal of having a long-term influence in their lives to choose to be a committed follower of Jesus.
APPENDIX E

MAJOR THEMES AND SUPPORTING COMMENTS

In this research project, the themes were defined as major themes when six or more comments from the interviews were organized together in that particular theme category. In order to maintain anonymity, each youth was assigned the letter Y and a number. Additionally, each parent was assigned a letter A and a number. Additionally, the questions asked by the interviewer are in italics. The resulting findings and their supporting comments are as follows:

1. Busyness is a significant challenge for teens’ spiritual growth in Collegedale.

What would you say there have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

“Time . . . the lack there of—Job, school, Pathfinders—oh I just don’t have time” (Y1, 2/19/09).

So another way of saying it would be busyness?

Yes, very. Like a lot of times I just don’t have time. Finally I just started doing the car thing. And you know that is the only time I really have so I have just had to do something. Because I was just like ‘This is not working,’ I’ve got to fit it in somewhere and I need a block of time, so I was like ok right now. (Y1, 2/19/09)
What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

"Time, schedule, busyness, and personal stuff they get in the way of my devotions. Stubbornness—I want to do my own thing rather than what God says” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“The friends I hang out with that are doing something you don’t want to do, going out with my ex-girlfriend, lots of school work you don’t have time to sit down and read your Bible—busyness” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“Being busy and not knowing how to approach the Bible, like where to start” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“Distractions of daily life, busyness, worldly distractions” (Y14, 4/8/09).

“Very busy schedule, being overwhelmed with school has made me numb and apathetic, stressed” (Y15, 5/6/09).

What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

Just do the right thing anyway even when I don’t feel like it. Be proactive. Don’t let feelings get in the way of what I should be doing. Do my spiritual life not based upon my feelings but rather upon my values. (Y3, 3/12/09)

“Find friends who do influence you for Jesus and talk with them about your challenges. I’m still learning on how to cope with busyness. It’s hard. I’m tired right now—quite a contrast from my home school days” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“As far as being busy is concerned, it’s just a matter of choosing to make time, being proactive about it” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“Sabbath” (Y15, 5/6/09).
What would you say have been significant challenges to your child’s spiritual growth?

“She wants to do everything and she gets too tired. She gets very depressed—she doesn’t know balance yet” (A12, 4/22/09).

What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

“I try to talk to her beforehand as to what she can accomplish and what she can’t, but it tends to ebb and flow” (A12, 4/22/09).

2. CAYA Community helps teens connect with God and grow spiritually.

As you look back over the last three years of your life, what are some of the programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

CAYA Community a huge one, last year. I had a religion class with Mrs. R and Mr. N did a lot and even his Spanish classes—probably Spanish was one of the most spiritual experiences that I had at CA—also a couple of other classes but mainly like CAYA community. (Y2, 2/19/09)

“CAYA Community” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“Being a leader in CAYA Community” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“CAYA basketball, CAYA community, and Sabbath School, church. I love to hear our senior pastor—I usually go to the second service” (Y5, 4/28/09).

“Senior survival, CAYA community, CA choirs” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“CAYA Community, weeks of prayer at school, and prayer conference” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“CAYA Community” (Y9, 3/26/09).
“Sabbath school, CAYA Community—especially leading out” (Y10, 4/22/09).

“CAYA Basketball, CAYA community—especially when I got to be a leader this year, The Deep End Sabbath school” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“The CAYA Community Spiritual retreat, the choir trip last year, weeks of prayer” (Y12, 4/8/09).

“Prayer room, CAYA Community, going around preaching at other churches” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“Camp—the biggest one. Prayer conference—a big one; those two are the most. In addition, CAYA Community” (Y14, 4/8/09).

“CAYA Community, Cohutta Camp, Cool Camp” (Y15, 5/6/09).

As you look back over the last three years of your child’s life, what are some of the programs or activities that have helped them connect with God and grow spiritually?

“CAYA Community, corporate church worship, enjoying Sabbath as a day of worship” (A2, 3/10/09).

“Bible conference, CAYA Community spiritual retreat, family worships, going to a Christian school, Chapel talks; her involvement in spiritual activities, weeks of prayers, CAYA Community—she has grown in her willingness to lead out” (A3, 2/19/09).

“All power seminar—Leo Scriven, CAYA Community, Cuba mission trip—friends he made on that trip” (A4, 5/8/09).

“CAYA Community for sure! Church life – prayer meeting, faithful Sabbath attendance” (A6, 3/26/09).
“I think CAYA definitely has been. We have gotten so involved in it, and our little group has really grown—just the opportunity for the kids to take leadership” (A8, 3/25/09).

“CAYA Community—he helps lead now; he and his girlfriend have been doing a group study at her house on the Friday nights when they do not have CAYA Community” (A9, 4/22/09).

“CAYA Community because it has caused student Y10 to take leadership” (A10, 3/27/09).

Camp, church (discussion on the sermon), recent prayer conference where he ended up leading by himself and had a huge growth experience, CAYA Community—he prepares for and lead. More growth takes place when somebody verbalizes their faith than just listening to someone else talk about it. (A14, 4/9/09)

“CAYA Community definitely has been one of the biggest one, drama, religion classes, Bible teacher. I love Collegedale Academy. I can’t say enough good things about it” (A15, 4/21/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Mom and dad, mom’s parents—grandparents, teachers, Bible teacher, chaplain; CAYA group has been huge influence over the past few years and CAYA Community adult leaders” (A15, 4/21/09).

Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

There is a huge absence of love, huge! Last week I led out in CAYA, and we talked about love, and I just realized that it’s like the most important. I don’t remember what verse it is—the love chapter, at the end “faith hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.” Without love, your faith doesn’t matter,
hope in the future, none of that matters at all. And I think we have love for each other, we have love for families. But like in our youth department, there are kids that are not as easy to love as others, and that’s what I think we struggle with. We love our friends—that’s easy. (Y2, 2/19/09)

Which is humanly natural?

“Right” (Y2, 2/19/09).

And that’s why I think that supernatural love is so important, and I want to constantly pray for that and that’s really what I’m working on because when you have that love for everybody so much changes your attitude toward people. Their attitude toward you, the way people see you changes, and I think that is the most important thing that we need to work on. (Y2, 2/19/09)

Okay so you feel like that is our huge growing edge? And by the way, I’m assuming you mean the youth themselves?

“Yes absolutely! If you really, truly loved all those people down there, there’s not the gossiping going on that happens. There’s not that judging for what so-and-so is wearing—like it doesn’t exist” (Y2, 2/19/09).

And right now it does?

Right and they are teenagers. I understand that you’re immature—I understand that—but I have been asking God to blind me to the prejudices I have against other people, to help me to see them for who they are, you know accept them. None of us are perfect. (Y2, 2/19/09)

Good! Good, that is profound! How about the truth? Do you think the truth element is present in our youth ministry?

I think it is with the youth themselves. Truth is not a big deal because everyone is in the whole, “Well, whatever makes you comfortable,” but I do think there is absolute truth that we do have to follow. As far as the leaders of youth, I think that they are doing a great job at that, but the youth themselves—it’s more like “oh, that makes me feel uncomfortable or I might have to change. Too much to morph to, to do that so I’m going to just be the best person that I can. (Y2, 2/19/09)
And this is my belief; you can believe that if you want to?

"Exactly. They don’t want to step on people’s toes. They want people to be able to be creative” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So it doesn’t matter whether it agrees with the biblical truth or not—that’s what I think so that’s good for me?

“You love Jesus. That’s all that matters. That is true but once you love Jesus there are certain things that…” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So really what you are saying then is that for the youth themselves we are not doing too well with either love or truth?

“Unfortunately, yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

3. CAYA Community is an enjoyable, intergenerational, spiritual experience that helps to create bonds between adults and teens.

“Oh, I think I CAYA community is great” (Y2, 2/19/09).

Suppose your car wouldn’t run, you were stuck at, you couldn’t get in touch with your parents, and you had to call an adult to help you. Name three non-family people who you might call.

A CAYA Community adult leader was named (Y12, 4/8/09).

CAYA Community adult leaders were named along with school faculty (Y14, 4/8/09).

Four of the adult CAYA Community leaders were named or the youth pastor (Y15, 5/6/09).
Suppose your child’s car wouldn’t run, she was stuck at Wal-Mart, she couldn’t get in touch with you, and she had to call an adult to help her. Name three non-family people who you think she might call?

CAYA Community adult leaders were named along with the youth pastor (A3, 2/19/09).

CAYA Community adult leaders were named along with teachers (A12, 4/22/09).

What do you think are some things the current youth pastor could do in order to do a better job?

“The mission program and CAYA Community have been good; it’s mainly just being involved, spending time” (A4, 5/8/09).

“The CAYA Community spiritual retreat was really good; it was a great combination of fun and a spiritual time” (A4, 5/8/09).

“Kids pick up from you when you are just doing regular things more than when you are preaching at them, so it’s been time together on stuff like backpacking trips” (A4, 5/8/09).

Describe the effects on your family of your child’s participation in the Collegedale Church’s youth ministry.

“For me, it’s been great” (A4, 5/8/09).

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

“I definitely think the CAYA groups are contributing to the unity of our church. I’ve gotten to know other kids in the groups and often times other parents are there, and I have gotten to know them as well” (Y6, 3/25/09).
Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

“CAYA community—I definitely believe both are there—love and truth. I love CAYA Community a lot!” (Y6, 3/25/09).

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

“I am really only aware of CAYA Community – I think it has been very positive in contributing to the unity of our church” (A6, 3/26/09).

Describe the effects on your family of your child’s participation in the Collegedale Church’s youth ministry.

It’s been the best thing since I moved here to Collegedale! We would not feel connected to this church if we had not found CAYA Community. It has been a tremendous blessing to our family to integrate into this large church. (A6, 3/26/09)

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

Definitely not taken away; it’s helping. It’s hard in a church this size to see where the kids fit in. I think the kids feel loved in this church. I think the CAYA ministry has helped—the small groups—because I’ll tell you when our son was here, he would come to the Vespers and it was just one big group. He got in trouble so many times. (A8, 3/25/09)

That’s what I found when I arrived here.

“It was a mess. I dreaded those Friday nights” (A8, 3/25/09).

Did you used to come out too?

No, I didn’t come. He wouldn’t want me here, and everybody they wouldn’t go in. Uh, they got in trouble, the police called me once, you know, because the kids would roam, and no one was really watching them. You can’t watch, you know, and the kids at that age are not ready to be just in a day academy, with their cars, and just kind of out at the lake who knows where. You let
them go to Vespers, but you really, they have no accountability, from anybody. And, uh, it was a disaster. (A8, 3/25/09)

“It was a mess. And I know some people don’t agree with these small group CAYAs. I love it. I really love it” (A8, 3/25/09).

You know some kids come from troubled homes and just come into a home atmosphere, having a home-cooked meal, and just kind of having that . . . feeling that these people are wrapping their arms around you. As a young person, I think it must be special. (A8, 3/25/09)

“I think CAYA Community is going well” (A10, 3/27/09).

Describe the effects on your family of your child’s participation in the
Collegedale Church’s youth ministry.

“It has drawn us to the CAYA Community groups at times” (A10, 3/27/09).

“CAYA Community is great” (Y14, 4/8/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Mom and dad, mom’s parents, grandparents, teachers, Bible teacher, chaplain. CAYA group has been huge influence over the past few years—CAYA Community adult leaders” (A15, 4/21/09).

4. CAYA Community provides teens with an opportunity to learn to be spiritual leaders.

As you look back over the last three years of your life (or your child’s life), what are some of the programs or activities that have helped you (them) connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Sabbath school, CAYA Community—especially leading out” (Y10, 4/22/09).
As you look back over the last three years of your child's life, what are some of the programs or activities that have helped them connect with God and grow spiritually?

"CAYA Community—because it has caused student Y10 to take leadership" (A10, 3/27/09).

“I think CAYA definitely has been. We have gotten so involved in it, and our little group has really grown—just the opportunity for the kids to take leadership” (A8, 3/25/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

Evangelistic meetings, youth meetings, youth rallies, church—not Bible class at school unfortunately. I really wish that it was. Leading CAYA Community, leading Sabbath School; we don’t talk about religion in my home, it is not something that is forced in my home. For me personally, I think that’s great. (Y7, 3/25/09)

“CAYA Basketball, CAYA community—especially when I got to be a leader this year, The Deep End Sabbath School” (Y11, 5/6/09).

Camp, church (discussion on the sermon), recent prayer conference where he ended up leading by himself and had a huge growth experience, CAYA Community—he prepares for and leads. More growth takes place when somebody verbalizes their faith than just listening to someone else talk about it. (A14, 4/9/09)

“But I still believe CAYA Community plays an important role for kids who don’t have a spiritual home atmosphere and provides leadership opportunity for kids” (A14, 4/9/09).

5. CAYA Community creates an environment where teens can explore and discover truth.
Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

“Truth. There is a lot of it, I think. I don’t know, just because when you go so deep with CAYA, I found that in our CAYA group” (Y1, 2/19/09).

You have a chance to ask honest questions and talk about what’s really going on?

Yes. Because I have it with like the leaders’ homes and like, um, this year like they started, like the parents won’t really be in the same room . . . and more people will talk, just because I guess they feel more comfortable and stuff, but like we go really deep sometimes, which is really random because you don’t think of at least the people who are in our CAYA group, getting deep, at all? Like, we think of them as surface level people, like we get really deep sometimes . . . but a lot of people they are just shallow people, you know, normally you don’t get anything out of them. (Y1, 2/19/09)

But they are willing to go there as well?

“Yeah, it’s really nice” (Y1, 2/19/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

Own personal Bible study, personal stuff we’ve done, church, CAYA and school—a lot from school actually. Like Bible classes and stuff? Bible class, but then Mr. N our Spanish teacher, we have spent entire class periods in worship. (Y1, 2/19/09)

For you personally what has happened in your life as a result of learning these biblical truths? Have you seen a cause-and-effect type of thing?

I’m a better person—not perfect at all. Knowing the truth in the Bible, developing a relationship with Jesus, just makes me want to be more like Him. Like the things in the Bible that he wants us to be, like our beliefs. We have been going over them and CAYA like the Adventist beliefs and that has helped me a lot with how I feel like I should live my life. (Y2, 2/19/09)

What are the primary ways you think your daughter has learned Biblical truth?

“Mom and dad, sermons at church, some CAYA community discussions” (A2, 3/10/09).
What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

“Through doing Bible work and CAYA community; also through personal study” (Y4, 3/18/09).

Describe your personal experience with Biblical truth.

“I feel like I have understanding of biblical truth , and I find it to be very relevant in my life right now” (Y7, 3/25/09).

For you personally, what has happened in your life as the result of learning these biblical truths?

“Praying for forgiveness in my own life and toward other people, we talked about it in CAYA community, learned about it in Scripture, and then went and did it” (Y7, 3/25/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned Biblical truth?

Evangelistic meetings, youth meetings, youth rallies, church—not Bible class at school unfortunately. I really wish that it was. Leading CAYA Community, leading Sabbath school. We don’t talk about religion in my home, is not something that is forced in my home. For me personally, I think that’s great. (Y7, 3/25/09)

“CAYA community. There is truth present in our group” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“In my CAYA community group and Sabbath school—both truth and love seem to be present” (Y13, 5/7/09).

CAYA Community is a very positive thing—it applies what you’re talking about at church in his life and ultimately strengthens the church. I’m not sure how relates to unity. I think it helps unify the young people, but I’m not sure about the whole church. (A14, 4/9/09)

“For student Y14, I think CAYA has been a good thing. It has helped him learn to verbalize his faith” (A14, 4/9/09).
What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

"Bible teacher at school, personal devotions, CAYA Community" (Y15, 5/6/09).

6. CAYA Community helps to create unity by providing an environment where teens can experience love, acceptance and friendships.

You think it [CAYA Community] adds to the unity?

"Yeah, it does. Cause you get to know people a lot better. Not from just school, but from church, when people come . . . and a bunch of different things, I like that about it" (Y1, 2/19/09).

Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

"I think there is a lot of both. You feel a lot of love. I will just say, you feel a lot of love. Especially when you’re involved with CAYA, I’ve noticed you really start feeling the love" (Y1, 2/19/09).

So you would see it as contributing to unity or distracting?

"I think it is contributing" (Y2, 2/19/09).

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

"I think CAYA community and small groups have helped the church come together in unity" (Y4, 3/18/09).

Who do you think of when you hear the term “extended church family”?

"CAYA community is the first thing I think of. Actually, I guess CAYA community is all I think of” (Y4, 3/18/09).
How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

"CAYA Community does help with the unity of our church" (A4, 5/8/09).

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

“I definitely think the CAYA groups are contributing to the unity of our church. I’ve gotten to know other kids in the groups and often times other parents are there, and I have gotten to know them as well” (Y6, 3/25/09).

Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

“CAYA community. I definitely believe both are there—love and truth. I love CAYA Community a lot!” (Y6, 3/25/09).

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

“I am really only aware of CAYA Community. I think it has been very positive—contributing to the unity of our church” (A6, 3/26/09).

Definitely not taken away, it’s helping. It’s hard in a church this size to see where the kids fit in. I think the kids feel loved in this church. I think the CAYA ministry has helped—the small groups, because I’ll tell you when our son was here, he would come to the Vespers and it was just one big group. He got in trouble so many times. (A8, 3/25/09)

That’s what I found when I arrived here.

“It was a mess. I dreaded those Friday nights” (A8, 3/25/09).

Did you use to come out too?

No, I didn’t come. He wouldn’t want me here and everybody they wouldn’t go in. Uh, they got in trouble, the police called me once, you know because
the kids would roam, and no one was really watching them. You can’t watch, you know, and the kids at that age are not ready to be just in a day Academy, with their cars and just kind of out at the lake who knows where; you let them go to Vespers, but you really, they have no accountability, from anybody. And, uh, it was a disaster. (A8, 3/25/09)

“It was a mess. And I know some people don’t agree with these small group CAYAs, I love it. I really love it” (A8, 3/25/09).

You know some kids come from troubled homes and just come into a home atmosphere, having a home-cooked meal, and just kind of having that . . . feeling that these people are wrapping their arms around you. As a young person, I think it must be special. (A8, 3/25/09)

This year our group is smaller, uh, but it’s very nice. It’s very diverse, kids from different backgrounds, you know and even different racial groups. We even have some of the black kids that love coming to our CAYA, and I just praise the Lord that there is no racial barrier. Everybody—they just like to come. (A8, 3/25/09)

*How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?*

“I think Sabbath school is united with the church, but I don’t think athletics is as united with the church. CAYA Community, I think, is pretty connected with the church” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“CAYA community and CAYA athletics includes more people than just people from our school. It, therefore, helps bring unity to our whole church. It helps widen our circle of friends” (Y11, 5/6/09).

*Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.*

“There is a lot of love—definitely a lot of love. People are very accepting” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“CAYA community. There is truth present in our group” (Y11, 5/6/09).
How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

“I don’t think our main youth Sabbath School is very unified at all. But I do think our CAYA Community groups are unified” (Y12, 4/8/09).

“The CAYA community groups are really impacting because it includes lots of people, because even if they don’t go to our church or school, they attend our group” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“But I still believe CAYA Community plays an important role for kids who don’t have a spiritual home atmosphere and provides leadership opportunity for kids” (A14, 4/9/09).

“Certainly doesn’t take away from the unity of the church. It has taken my son into the unity of the church—it adds to the unity of the church” (A15, 4/21/09).

Who do you think your child might think of when he or she hears the term “extended church family”?

“She would see her church family as mainly her CAYA community group and maybe a few other teachers that she has had” (A12, 4/22/09).

Who do you think of when you hear the term “extended church family”?

“My CAYA group” (Y15, 5/6/09).

[CAYA Community] “It’s been great. His friendship circle has gotten really tight, but yet they’re still open to new kids that come in” (A15, 4/21/09).

“My CAYA group, youth pastor, assistant youth pastor, adult volunteers—just the people I see when I come to Sabbath school at church” (Y3, 3/12/09).
7. Christian education helps young people connect with God and grow spiritually.

As you look back over the last three years of your life what are some of the programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

CAYA community is a huge one, and last year I had a religion class with Mrs. B. and my Spanish teacher did a lot and even his Spanish classes. Probably Spanish was one of the most spiritual experiences that I had at Collegedale Academy, so a couple of classes, but mainly like CAYA community. (Y2, 2/19/09)

“Senior survival, CAYA community, Collegedale Academy choirs” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“CAYA Community, weeks of prayer at school and prayer conference” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“Weeks of prayer, prayer conference” (Y9, 3/26/09).

“The choir trip last year, weeks of prayer” (Y12, 4/8/09).

As you look back over the last three years of your child’s life what are some programs or activities that have helped your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Going to school—Christian education” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Bible conference, CAYA Community, spiritual retreat, family worships, going to school, Christian education, Chapel talks, her involvement in spiritual activities, weeks of prayers, CAYA Community. She has grown in her willingness to lead out” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Chapels, not so much Sabbath school, interactions at school, school activities like gymnastics, going to Chambliss home” (A5, 3/24/09).
The music at Collegedale Academy, choir and orchestra, weeks of prayer at the school, the school has really come around, and I think the church has too. Now with our little Bible study Sabbath school class—that has been a real blessing. (A8, 3/25/09)

“Collegedale Academy as a whole is huge” (A11, 3/27/09).

“CAYA Community definitely has been one of the biggest ones—drama, religion classes. I love Collegedale Academy. I can’t say enough good things about it” (A15, 4/21/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

My grandmother P and her husband O. Definitely need them. The chaplain at Collegedale Academy. He was one the first people I opened up to as to where I am really at. My Spanish teacher—he is young enough that I can relate to, and yet he’s very grounded in what he believes. (Y7, 3/25/09)

“My dad, my Sabbath School teacher, and one of my teachers at Collegedale Academy” (Y12, 4/8/09).

“My dad, my friend, senior pastor at the Collegedale Church and my Spanish teacher at Collegedale Academy” (Y14, 4/8/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Mom and dad, a pastor at the Collegedale Church, and the Development Director at Collegedale Academy” (A2, 3/10/09).

“Grandma, chaplain Collegedale Academy, youth pastor at the Collegedale Church, mom and dad” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Dad and mom, his teachers at Collegedale Academy” (A6, 3/26/09).

“Chaplain at Collegedale Academy, beyond that I’m not sure” (A7, 4/8/09).
"Some of the teachers at Collegedale Academy—prayer in the classroom, very meaningful" (A8, 3/25/09).

"Collegedale Academy’s chaplain, Collegedale Church’s youth pastor, mom and many teachers at Collegedale Academy—some of the most wonderful people" (A13, 5/5/09).

"Mom and dad, mom’s parents, grandparents, teachers, Bible teacher and chaplain at Collegedale Academy. CAYA group has been huge influence over the past few years along with the two families primarily leading that group" (A15, 4/21/09).

What have these people done that has been helpful?

"Grandma homeschooled, chaplain at Collegedale Academy preaching at The Third, hanging out in chaplain’s office, youth pastor—CAYA spiritual retreat, preparing to lead CAYA Community" (A3, 2/19/09).

"Praying together in the classroom, the compassion and the love, just being around certain teachers—the way they love those kids, and they are there for them after school" (A8, 3/25/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

"Through people, teachers and even friends" (Y12, 4/8/09).

"Personal Bible studies like devotions, and my own in-depth Bible studies, the Bible study groups, the chaplain at Collegedale Academy, other adults" (Y13, 5/7/09).

What are the primary ways your child has learned biblical truth?

"School Bible classes, preparation for baptism, church, home" (A3, 2/19/09).

"Bible at school" (A5, 3/24/09).
“Bible classes at school, Sabbath school, church, devotionals at the home. He’s
got his Bible by his bed; he writes and journals about it” (A15, 4/21/09).

What have you found helpful thus far in your journey in learning that biblical
truth?

“Reading, praying, and discussing” (Y2, 2/19/09).

You’re talking about the Bible when you’re talking about reading?

“Yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

Is there any type of context that has been more helpful than others for doing that?

Not really. When I have a question I pray about it, but I feel better after I’ve
talked it over with someone that I trust. I know that we have the same
beliefs—like my dad—he’s great about it! I’ll have a question out there like
that does not make sense, and we’ll go to the Bible and other places. So I
think the Bible and discussion, like that really helps me to see what I believe.
(Y2, 2/19/09)

Is your dad pretty much your default person that you typically go to?

“Yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So what I’m hearing you say is saying is that probably the main foundation for
you obtaining biblical truth is first of all you studying it for yourself and then
talking it over with your dad?

“Yes, and it is mainly my dad. But I’ve gotten all the beliefs that I have from
growing up in the in the school system and my mom too. My dad and I are the
ones that normally sit down like discuss it” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So you would say the school system has contributed to your understanding of the
biblical truth?

“Oh, yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).
What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

My parents, but more recently teachers at Collegedale Academy. Now I am digging deeper with the teachers, and then I go to find out what I think about it, what the Bible is really about. I talk with my friends some and my parents a lot. Also, I spend personal time in the Bible, but I have a harder time bringing stuff out of it, so that's why I like to go and talk to other people about it and then make a decision what I believe. (Y11, 5/6/09)

“My Bible teacher at Collegedale Academy, personal devotions, CAYA Community” (Y15, 5/6/09).

What are the primary ways your child has learned Biblical truth?

“School” (A4, 5/8/09).

“School” (A9, 4/22/09).

“School—the busy work in Bible classes are not great, but there is some content that's helpful” (A12, 4/22/09).

Growing up in at his home receiving some saturation, homeschool with his mom for the first seven years of school was a real foundation, his continued Adventist education, family worships is a much deeper level of processing things spiritually, connecting with the heart and making it more meaningful happens at the home more than school. (A14, 4/9/09)

“Bible classes at school” (A15, 4/21/09).

Describe your personal experience with biblical truth. Now what I mean by that is do you feel like you understand Scripture, like do you know why you believe, from Scripture what you believe? Where is your experience with biblical truth?

I pretty much think I do know stuff like that. It’s more stuff I’ve done on my own, a lot of it. Just like . . . preachers and teachers they focus on these main sections and then like in my readings and stuff I come across stuff. It’s like, “Hey, I have never ever, ever heard of this before. And it has lots and lots of meaning, just . . . they like to focus on the big things, and it’s like what about the little things? Little things matter, little things can change the whole world. (Y1, 2/19/09)
So from what you're saying then is that you feel like you have a pretty good grasp on biblical truth?

"Yes" (Y1, 2/19/09).

And that has come more from your own personal time in the word than from anybody else preaching?

"Yeah. Like I've brought it up to people before, and they're just like, what?" (Y1, 2/19/09).

Like a section of Scripture or something?

"Yeah, like I'll talk to my grandma a lot about it. And stuff like that" (Y1, 2/19/09).

And my Spanish teacher at Collegedale Academy . . . he gave us eight questions every Christian should know, and so you just sat there and it's like, I don't know the answer. Like it was really sad because we had trouble answering it, and I don't remember them but the eight are really hard questions, but they made sense. Like if someone was to ask that, you would be like, I don't know. (Y1, 2/19/09)

What are the primary ways you have learned Biblical truth?

"Own personal Bible study, personal stuff we've done, church, CAYA and school—a lot from school actually" (Y1, 2/19/09).

Like Bible classes and stuff?

"Bible class, but then our Spanish teacher. We have spent entire class periods in worship" (Y1, 2/19/09).
Describe your personal experience with biblical truth. What I’m looking for is, do you feel like you have a good understanding of the biblical truth? Or do you feel like you have just a surface level knowledge, or where do you think you are with biblical truth?

I believe I have more than a surface level; I am definitely not like... I have questions a lot and I don’t know how—I’ve noticed about myself, like our Spanish teacher at Collededale Academy is a really good example. He has a question, and he digs into the Bible and he finds the truth for himself. I’m not at that point yet, like I can read something and it’s like oh what does that mean—if it contradicts like two verses. I will think about it, and I can recognize it and I know what I believe, but I still need help with coming up with the truth. I’m not there yet (Y2, 2/19/09).

You don’t know how to use the tools and go through the process yet?

“Yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

Who would you say would be the three most important people that help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“My mom and dad—both my parents, and probably my Spanish teacher at Collededale Academy” (Y2, 2/19/09).

What have these people done?

My Spanish teacher, just the way he lives his life has been just such an example to me and how he doesn’t care—like he builds a relationship with us, but then beyond that he tells us what’s so hard to hear. But because we have a relationship with him, and he’s not afraid to step on toes like so many other people are and to tell us how it is. I really appreciate that. He’s always willing to discuss and talk to. (Y2, 2/19/09)

It sounds like to me though that he must do that in love?

Absolutely, because it could come from, I could almost say any other teacher at Collededale Academy, some of the things he says, and it’s sad that we are like that, but when it comes from him is totally different than anybody else. Like, he can really just—I don’t know if it’s relate because I know he has told us his story and is not a good one. Like, he has had a rough life, and he’s not proud of that, but he doesn’t hide it at all. (Y2, 2/19/09)
He’s candid?

“Yes, and that’s what teenagers love is honesty. That is where the biggest…. When someone is honest with us that’s huge, and I really have a lot respect for people who do that” (Y2, 2/19/09).

When do you feel the most connected to God?

“Week of prayer, prayer conferences” (Y9, 3/26/09).

When do you think your child feels the most connected to God?

“At school when the chaplain has her working on something that she has to research, and there are people hanging out to ask questions” (A13, 5/5/09).

Describe your personal experience with biblical truth.

This year I think I’ve got a lot more of understanding than I ever have before because of my religion teacher at Collegetdale Academy. I think I gained a better understanding that I could have with like five years of other religion teachers. (Y15, 5/6/09)

8. A supportive constellation of spiritual family and friends is a critical ingredient for helping young people to grow spiritually.

What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

“The friends I hang out with, doing something I don’t want to do, going out with my girlfriend, lots of school work, you don’t have time to sit down and read your Bible—busyness” (Y6, 3/25/09).

What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

“Having people I can turn to help me” (Y4, 3/18/09).
“Having the courage to turn away from the friends who are negatively influencing me and having some friends who are a positive influence on me” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“Find friends who do influence you for Jesus, and talk with them about your challenges” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“Hanging around people who you admire—their relationship with God” (Y7, 3/25/09).

What would you say have been significant challenges to your child’s spiritual growth?

“The connection between his art and spirituality—so much of art isn’t spiritual, students in a Christian school who are not Christians, his grandparents have a negative attitude towards the Seventh day Adventist church” (A15, 4/21/09).

What have you found to be most helpful in helping your child work through this spiritual challenge?

“He has adopted the approach that God has not put us here on earth to hate people, but rather to pray for them and help them. Also, I have worked to find Christian artists and see what kind of work they are doing” (A15, 4/21/09).

“Probably the support of the other girls on the CAYA basketball team and the coaches” (A5, 3/24/09).

When do you think your child feels the most connected to God?

“In good times, when he meets a new girl if she is spiritual” (A4, 5/8/09).

“Having spiritual conversations with dad and close friends” (A11, 3/27/09).

“When he is quiet and reading and journaling—quiet but with friends” (A15, 4/21/09).
Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“My dad. When I question things he also questions me back to make me think; my uncle, my brother” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“Chaplain, history teacher, prayer room coordinator” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“Two of my friends” (Y15, 5/6/09).

What have these people done that has been helpful?

“My two friends have been willing to talk at a more in-depth level and pray with me” (Y15, 5/6/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

“A godly girl who has been a close friend” (A4, 5/8/09).

“Dad, Sabbath School teacher, CAYA basketball coach, possibly her mom too” (A11, 3/27/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

My parents, but more recently teachers at Collegedale Academy. Now I am digging deeper with the teachers, and then I go to find out what I think about it, what the Bible is really about. I talk with my friends some, and my parents a lot. Also, I spend personal time in the Bible, but I have a harder time bringing stuff out of it, so that’s why I like to go and talk to other people about it and then make a decision what I believe. (Y11, 5/6/09)

“Through people, teachers and even friends” (Y12, 4/8/09).

“Personal Bible studies like devotions and my own in-depth Bible studies, the chaplain at Collegedale Academy, other adults” (Y13, 5/7/09).

What are the primary ways your child has learned Biblical truth?

As you look back over the last three years of your child’s life, what are some programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Cuba mission trip—friends he made on that trip” (A4, 5/8/09).

9. Christian education can help provide a supportive constellation of spiritual friends.

Suppose your car would not run and you were stuck at a store and you could not get in touch with your parents and you had to call an adult for help, who would be three adults that you would call?

“Chaplain at Collegedale Academy, History teacher or language teacher at Collegedale Academy, or the youth pastor at the Collegedale Church” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“My cousin, uncle, or grandma” (Y2, 2/19/09).

Okay so these are all family. Now how about if there were no family members?

“The Development Director at Collegedale Academy or one of my friends’ parents” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So how did you meet these people you just talked about?

“Collegedale Academy’s Development Director – I have been friends with his daughters. He is seriously probably one of the biggest mentors in my life. I got to know him through sports and all that” (Y2, 2/19/09).

Okay, same scenario but now you have to call three of your friends; who would you call?

“Friend 1, 2, and 3” (Y13, 5/7/09).
“Y, Z, or A” (Y2, 2/19/09).

Now, how did you get to know them?

“I’ve known them for a long time—school” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“Through school for Z and A; Y, I’ve known him all my life” (Y2, 2/19/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Mom and dad, a pastor at the Collegedale Church, and the Development Director at Collegedale Academy” (A2, 3/10/09).

“Grandma, chaplain at Collegedale Academy, youth pastor at the Collegedale Church, mom and dad” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Chaplain at Collegedale Academy, beyond that I’m not sure (A7, 4/8/09).

Some of the teachers at Collegedale Academy – prayer in the classroom, very meaningful” (A8, 3/25/09).

“Youth pastor at the Collegedale Church, mom, chaplain and many teachers at Collegedale Academy—some of the most wonderful people” (A13, 5/5/09).

“Mom and dad, mom’s parents, grandparents, teachers, Bible teacher and chaplain at Collegedale Academy. CAYA group has been huge influence over the past few years along with the two families primarily leading that group” (A15, 4/21/09).

Who would you say would be the three most important people that help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“My mom and dad—both my parents— and probably my Spanish teacher at Collegedale Academy” (Y2, 2/19/09).
My grandmother and her husband. Definitely need them. The chaplain at Collegedale Academy. He was one the first people I opened up to as to where I am really at. My Spanish teacher—he is young enough that I can relate to, and yet he’s very grounded in what he believes. (Y7, 3/25/09)

“The chaplain and the history teacher at Collegedale Academy as well as the leader of the prayer room” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“My dad, my friend, senior pastor at the Collegedale Church, and my Spanish teacher at Collegedale Academy” (Y14, 4/8/09).

What have these people done?

My Spanish teacher—just the way he lives his life has been just such an example to me, and how he doesn’t care—like he builds a relationship with us, but then beyond that he tells us what’s so hard to hear. But because we have a relationship with him and he’s not afraid to step on toes like so many other people are and to tell us how it is. I really appreciate that; he’s always willing to discuss and talk. (Y2, 2/19/09)

It sounds like to me, though, that he must do that in love?

Absolutely, because it could come from—I could almost say any other teacher at Collegedale Academy, some of the things he says, and it’s sad that we are like that, but when it comes from him is totally different than anybody else. Like he can really just—I don’t know if it’s related because I know he has told us his story, and is not a good one. Like, he has had a rough life, and he’s not proud of that, but he doesn’t hide it at all. (Y2, 2/19/09)

He’s candid?

“Yes, and that’s what teenagers love is honesty. That is where the biggest....When someone is honest with us that’s huge, and I really have a lot respect for people who do that” (Y2, 2/19/09).

What have these people done?

“Praying together in the classroom, the compassion and the love—just being around teachers like the music teachers and math teacher—he is an angel, the way he loves those kids, and he is there for them after school” (A8, 3/25/09).
“Saying what they believe, and sharing where it is in the Bible, and saying to not be judgmental” (Y13, 5/7/09).

How did you meet and get to know the people mentioned in the previous question?

“School” (Y13, 5/7/09).

Suppose your child's car would not run and they were stuck at a store and they could not get in touch with you and they had to call an adult for help, who are three adults that they would call?

“CAYA Community leaders, math or language teacher at Collegedale Academy” (A12, 4/22/09).

How about the same scenario as the previous question except this time they had to call some friends for help – no adults – who would they call?

“Friend 1, 2, and 3” (A12, 4/22/09).

How did your child meet and get to know the friends mentioned in the previous question?

“CAYA Community, school” (A12, 4/22/09).

Who do you think your child would think of when they hear the term "extended church family"?

“I think she feels connected in some ways to people in our CAYA community. She would see her church family as mainly her CAYA Community group and maybe a few other teachers that she has had” (A12, 4/22/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned Biblical truth?

“Personal Bible studies like devotions, and my own in-depth Bible studies, Bible study groups, the chaplain at Collegedale Academy, other adults” (Y13, 5/7/09).
When do you think your child feels the most connected to God?

"At school when the chaplain has her working on something that she has to research and there are people hanging out to ask questions of" (A13, 5/5/09).

Suppose your car would not run and you were stuck at a store and you could not get in touch with your parents and you had to call an adult for help, who would be three adults that you would call?

"Adult 1, 2, and 3" (Y15, 5/6/09).

How about the same scenario as the previous question except this time you had to call some friends for help – no adults – who would you call?

"Friend 1, 2 and 3" (Y15, 5/6/09).

How did you meet and get to know the friends mentioned in the previous question?

"School and CAYA community” (Y15, 5/6/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

"My Bible teacher this year at Collegedale Academy and my friends” (Y15, 5/6/09).

What have these people done that has been helpful?

"My Bible teacher taught at a more in-depth level; my friends are willing to talk at a more in-depth level and pray with me” (Y15, 5/6/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned Biblical truth?

"My Bible teacher at Collegedale Academy, personal devotions, CAYA Community” (Y15, 5/6/09).
10. The youth of the Collegedale Church connect with adults through their involvement in Collegedale Academy.

*Suppose your car wouldn't run, you were stuck at Wal-Mart, you couldn't get in touch with your parents and you had to call an adult to help you. Name three people you would call.*

*How did you meet and get to know the adults mentioned in the previous question?*

"School; she is my teacher" (Y3, 3/12/09).

"A is a really nice guy. I like hanging out in his office during study halls and stuff at school" (Y6, 3/25/09).

"A is just a well-rounded guy. I'm friends with his daughter, and so I go into his office sometimes at school, and he is just around and is a great guy" (Y8, 5/6/09).

"School" (Y13, 5/7/09).

"School" (Y14, 4/8/09).

*Suppose your child's car wouldn't run, they were stuck at Wal-Mart, they couldn't get in touch with their parent, and they had to call an adult to help them.*

*Name three people your child would call.*

*How did they get to know these adults?*

"School" (A4, 5/8/09).

"School" (A5, 3/24/09).

"School" (A12, 4/22/09).

"School" (A13, 5/5/09).

"School" (A14, 4/9/09).

"School" (A15, 4/21/09).
11. Church can be a helpful partner to parents in discipling their children.

What would you say have been significant challenges to your child's spiritual growth?

"Being a kid and the inconsistency of our family" (A1, 2/11/09).

What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

"Having a chance to refocus and refresh ourselves. And having a church that we feel connected to that helps us in that process" (A1, 2/11/09).

As you look back over the last three years of your child's life, what are some programs or activities that have helped them connect with God and grow spiritually?

"CAYA Community for sure! Church life – prayer meeting, faithful Sabbath attendance" (A6, 3/26/09).

"Definitely prayer conferences, not Bible teachers at the Academy, the Deep End Sabbath School class by the teacher there, senior pastor’s preaching" (A12, 4/22/09).

Camp, church—discussion on the sermon, recent prayer conference where he ended up leading by himself and had a huge growth experience, CAYA Community—he prepares for and leads. More growth takes place when somebody verbalizes their faith than just listening to someone else talk about it. (A14, 4/9/09)
Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“My dad started a tradition of taking us to church regularly, my mom with the whole musical side of things, previous senior pastor. I really enjoyed all the sermons” (Y10, 4/22/09).

“My dad, my friend from Collegedale Academy, Senior Pastor at Collegedale Church, and Spanish teacher at Collegedale Academy” (Y14, 4/8/09).

Describe the effects on your family of your child’s participation in the Collegedale Church’s youth ministry.

Keeps us busy. It can be good and bad—it pulls you in many directions – that part is exhausting. On the flipside, if they are doing positive things in connecting with people that are a positive influence, that’s a good thing. I think the programs have kept her surrounded by positive activity. (A11, 3/27/09)

“It’s positive. We would do anything to connect her with the kids and with something that is good” (A12, 4/22/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

Through people, teachers and even friends. My parents have taught me the most—I was homeschooled through eighth grade. I have also learned biblical truth from growing up in the Seventh-day Adventist church and attending Sabbath school all my life. (Y12, 4/8/09)

12. An intergenerational church worship experience is an effective way to partner with families in raising spiritual young people.

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

“Own personal Bible study, personal stuff we’ve done, church, CAYA and school—a lot from school actually” (Y1, 2/19/09).
Like Bible classes and stuff?

"Bible class, but our Spanish teacher—we have spent entire class periods in worship" (Y1, 2/19/09).

"Church" (Y14, 4/8/09).

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

I've never really thought about that. I kind of see it as two different issues. Going to Sabbath School has not always been a priority for me. Mom and dad are really involved, so I know that they would like me to come. But personally, I don't make a connection. I guess that goes into a different question. Like, I go to church every single weekend. I feel like that's where I really sit down, and I can have time with God but down in the youth room it seems disconnected to me—like it doesn't seem like the same place. I think of Sabbath school and of church as two different places, and if that's the youth ministry you're talking about. (Y2, 2/19/09)

As you look back over the last three years of your child's life, what are some programs or activities that have helped them connect with God and grow spiritually?

"CAYA Community, corporate church worship, enjoying Sabbath as a day of worship" (A2, 3/10/09).

"Church—discussion on the sermon" (A14, 4/9/09).

As you look back over the last three years of your life, what are some programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

"Church too, but mainly family" (Y3, 3/12/09).

"CAYA basketball, CAYA Community, Sabbath School, church. I love to hear the senior pastor—I usually go to the second service" (Y5, 4/28/09).
What are the primary ways your child has learned biblical truth?

“School Bible classes, preparation for baptism, church, home” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Church” (A9, 4/22/09).

“Church” (A15, 4/21/09).

When do you feel the most connected to God?

“In church, when I read the Bible by myself. As I pray through the day. Probably I feel most connected through the little daily instances that take place” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“During a regular church service, singing a hymn and thinking about the words” (Y10, 4/22/09).

Who do you think of when you hear the term “extended church family”?

The people sitting around me in church that I do not know—that seems like I could talk to about anything, just right off the bat. I look out and see the love of God radiating from their faces as we worship together with music, and I feel a connection. I know they love me. I know God and I love God, but I don’t know them, but I still feel connected. I have church friends, and I have church close family—but these are the people I think about when I hear the word extended Church family. (Y7, 3/25/09)

What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

“Distractions of daily life, busyness, worldly distractions” (Y14, 4/8/09).

What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

“Weeks of prayer helped bring the focus back to what’s really important, those times when you can refocus, church—sermons” (Y14, 4/8/09).

13. Parents perceive that youth feel connected in the Collegedale Church.
Describe how connected you think your child feels to their church family.

“I think there’s a good connection with her church family” (A3, 2/19/09).

“He feels connected and valued in his church family especially when working with the sound system” (A4, 5/8/09).

“Very connected” (A6, 3/26/09).

“Quite connected” (A10, 3/27/09).

“She feels connected – very strong” (A10, 3/27/09).

“I think she feels connected in some ways to people in our CAYA Community, she would see her church family as mainly her CAYA Community group and maybe a few other teachers that she has had” (A12, 4/22/09).

“She feels connected and loved” (A13, 5/5/09).

“In the youth ministry and at the Third, he feels very involved—like this is his church and his Sabbath School” (A15, 4/21/09).

14. The youth ministry of the Collegedale Church helps to create unity within the church family.

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

“I think that our youth ministry helps to create unity. I think providing nursery during worship services could cause disunity” (A1, 2/11/09).

“I think Sabbath school is united with the church, but I don’t think athletics is as united with the church. CAYA Community, I think, is pretty connected with the church” (Y11, 5/6/09).
“CAYA community and CAYA athletics includes more people than just people from our school. It, therefore, helps bring unity to our whole church. It helps widen our circle of friends” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“I guess it helps the unity, I mean lots of people are involved in it” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“The CAYA community groups are really impacting because it includes lots of people, because even if they don’t go to our church or school, they attend our group” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“I think our youth ministry contributes to the unity of our church, but to what extent is the question” (A3, 2/19/09).

“CAYA Community does help with the unity of our church” (A4, 5/8/09).

It is challenging to build family community in a church as large as the Collegedale church, but I do think that CAYA definitely adds to the unity of the church. When I first moved here we started doing CAYA, and it really helped me get to know people and start connecting. (Y9, 3/26/09)

“I think the programs are important to help the kids to connect” (A9, 4/22/09).

“I think our youth ministry causes community and not division” (A9, 4/22/09).

“I think the youth ministry contributes to the buildup of the church. I think overall the youth ministry does a lot of good for the church” (Y10, 4/22/09).


“The youth ministry of our church is definitely not taking away from the unity of our church; I think it is adding to it for sure. CAYA Community is great” (Y14, 4/8/09).

“Certainly doesn’t take away from the unity of the church. It has taken my son into the unity of the church; it adds to the unity of the church” (A15, 4/21/09).
15. The youth of the Collegedale Church connect with adults through their involvement in the Collegedale Church.

Suppose your car wouldn’t run, you were stuck at Wal-Mart, you couldn’t get in touch with your parents, and you had to call an adult to help you. Name three adults you would call, and how did you get to know these adults?

“I have gotten to know the B family through CAYA community” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“I have gotten to know P through my involvement at church” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“I got to know C through CAYA Athletics” (Y5, 4/28/09).

“I have gotten to know S from church” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“Church” (Y9, 3/26/09).

“CAYA Basketball” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“CAYA Community and really good friends with her daughter” (Y12, 4/8/09).

“Church” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“CAYA community and being friends with their children” (Y15, 5/6/09).

Suppose your child’s car wouldn’t run, they were stuck at Wal-Mart, they couldn’t get in touch with their parents, and they had to call an adult to help them. Name three people your child would call. How did they get to know these adults?

“Through her activities at the church” (A3, 2/19/09).

“My child has gotten to know P through his involvement at church” (A4, 5/8/09).

“From the CAYA basketball team” (A5, 3/24/09).

“They are part of our CAYA group” (A8, 3/25/09).

“They are part of our small group” (A10, 3/27/09).
"CAYA" (A12, 4/22/09).

"Church" (A13, 5/5/09).

"Friends with his children and CAYA Community" (A14, 4/9/09).

"Through CAYA Community" (A15, 4/21/09).

16. The youth of the Collegedale Church connect with adults through their long-term network of family and friends.

_Suppose your car wouldn’t run, you were stuck at Wal-Mart, you couldn’t get in touch with your parent, and you had to call an adult to help you. Name three people you would call. How did you get to know these adults?_

"B was the first person to ever see me, so she is basically like my aunt. Very long-term family friend" (Y1, 2/19/09).

"C is like my second mom, or one of my many moms" (Y1, 2/19/09).

"T is basically like a brother—got to know him through my dad’s work” (Y1, 2/19/09).

"A-- friends with his daughters that he seriously probably one of the biggest mentors in my life. I got to know him through sports and all that” (Y2, 2/19/09).

"B— I’ve known my whole life. I’m over at their house all the time” (Y2, 2/19/09).

"C is my friend’s mom, and I am just really close with her” (Y2, 2/19/09).

"Friends’ parents” (Y6, 3/25/09).

"Friend of the family” (Y10, 4/22/09).

"E is like a second dad to be, F helps us no matter what, and he is a long-time family friend” (Y11, 5/6/09).
Suppose your child’s car wouldn’t run, they were stuck at Wal-Mart, they couldn’t get in touch with their parents, and they had to call an adult to help them. Name three people your child would call. How did they get to know these adults?

“Growing up with the children of these parents” (A2, 3/10/09).

“Friends with their children” (A6, 3/26/09).


17. There is segregation in the Collegedale Church between the world of youth ministry and the rest of the church.

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry? Does the youth ministry of our church contribute to the unity of our church or does it disrupt the unity of our church?

“I think we are moving in the right direction to bring unity to help make it move beyond the high school years. I don’t think we are there yet, but I think we are moving in the right direction” (A2, 3/10/09).

I have been very thankful for CAYA basketball, but I feel bad about pouring so many of our resources into so few kids. For those who make it, it’s awesome, but for the kids who don’t, it is sad. I have not seen any unity or drawing the kids into the main church as a result of the youth ministry. But neither have I seen the opposite, of sending kids away from the church. I wish we would have church-wide gym nights. When you play together you stay together. (A5, 3/24/09)

I don’t think it takes away from it, but I’m not sure how much it contributes. I think there is a detachment between our youth ministry and our church at
large. I see the youth ministry and the rest of that church as two separate coexisting worlds—not interacting with each other much. (A11, 3/27/09)

CAYA community has been big for us because we have been involved in it. I don’t see how that really connects to the church other than the fact that all the kids who come to our CAYA Community group also come to church here. Certainly this group of kids, who have bonded pretty well have done things for this church, like a prayer room. CAYA community has probably kept the kids engaged in this church. Our youth ministry program is not divisive. The point of reference is more school than church for the youth, I don’t see it fitting tightly with the church, but there are relationships. (A12, 4/22/09)

CAYA Community is a very positive thing. It applies what you’re talking about at church in his life, and ultimately, strengthens the church. I’m not sure how relates to unity. I think it helps unify the young people, but I’m not sure about the whole church. (A14, 4/9/09)

I’ve never really thought about that. I kind of see it as two different issues. Going to Sabbath School has not always been a priority for me. Mom and dad are really involved, so I know that they would like me to come. But personally I don’t make a connection. I guess that goes into a different question. Like, I go to church every single weekend. I feel like that’s where I really sit down, and I can have time with God, but down the youth room it seems disconnected to me like it doesn’t seem like the same place I think of Sabbath School and of church as two different places, and if that’s the youth ministry you’re talking about…. (Y2, 2/19/09)

I have not been in a CAYA community group over the last couple years, and I really haven’t been going to Sabbath School much over the last couple of years, but CAYA athletics has really helped me grow spiritually. When I was involved in CAYA Community, I really did not see the connection between it and the church. (Y5, 4/28/09)

“I think there’s room for improvement in the area of unity. There are some young people who are connected with the church, but there are others that are not really connected at all” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“I see our youth ministry is more separate than united with the church. I don’t see it helping to unify our church. The CAYA Athletics teams (basketball) seem to unify the school more than the church” (Y12, 4/8/09).
“I haven’t seen too much of an effect. The church and the youth ministry seem like two totally different worlds” (Y15, 5/6/09).

“I think it’s good. It’s not really connected—sometimes with some things like Pathfinders and stuff” (Y1, 2/19/09).

Unpack that a little for me.

“Pathfinders— it just seems like its own separate thing. It doesn’t really have a lot of support from like church members. Because they never see it, and they are a bunch of old people. It’s just like, it’s different” (Y1, 2/19/09).

It’s like a totally different world?

“Yeah” (Y1, 2/19/09).

And not really?

“I don’t think of it as a church thing” (Y1, 2/19/09).

Really, interesting.

“I don’t think of it as a church thing at all” (Y1, 2/19/09).

You just think of it as a standalone thing?

“Yep, it’s just Pathfinders. I don’t think of it connected to like our actual church. In any way, actually—any way whatsoever” (Y1, 2/19/09).

You think that is a good thing or a bad thing?

A bit a both. It’s good because it is kind of its own organization. But it’s bad because, especially with like Oshkosh and stuff, when you are trying to fund raise and stuff, people are like, “What’s Pathfinders?” and they don’t really know and it’s just like, “Hello, we have been doing this a long time. It’s huge, and you still don’t know about it?” (Y1, 2/19/09)
So do you think it is something we should try to work on? To try to make it actually a more integrated part of our church?

A little, it’s not like a big thing, I just wish people would know a little bit more about it. ‘Cause it’s like, Oshkosh . . . Old people say, “Oh, I remember that when I was little.” It’s like, “We’re here. We’re still around.” (Y1, 2/19/09)

How would you describe your child’s connection to her church family?

“I don’t think she has much of a relationship outside of school and CAYA basketball” (A5, 3/24/09).

What do you think are some things the current youth pastor could do in order to do a better job?

I would like to see us empowering the youth to use their spiritual gifts more throughout our entire church. We need to teach them to be part of the body of the church by being part of the body of the church. Just as they are expected to do chores at home, they should be working to do the work of the church. If a child does not have a musical gift, they virtually do not get to use their gift in this church. (A11, 3/27/09)

18. Members of a young person’s extended family can serve a significant role in leading them to be committed followers of Jesus.

So from what you’re saying then is that you feel like you have a pretty good grasp on biblical truth?

“Yes” (Y1, 2/19/09).

And that has come more from your own personal time in the word than from anybody else preaching?

“Yeah. Like I’ve brought it up to people before, and they’re just like, what?” (Y1, 2/19/09).
Like a section of Scripture or something?

“Yeh, like I’ll talk to my grandma a lot about it. And stuff like that” (Y1, 2/19/09).

When do you think your child feels the most connected to God?

“When she is reading her Bible and discussing it with her grandma” (A1, 2/11/09).

“During family Bible study—recently with the extended family with his grandparents 50th wedding anniversary” (A14, 4/9/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“My grandpa” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“My grandmother and her husband—definitely them” (Y7, 3/25/09).

“My grandma” (Y9, 3/26/09).

“My grandma” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“My grandma” (Y9, 3/26/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

“When I was homeschooled, my grandma and I would do Bible studies together” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“My grandpa on my mom’s side, who is a pastor, and my cousin” (Y8, 5/6/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Grandma” (A3, 2/19/09).

“My child’s aunt who is my sister” (A5, 3/24/09).
19. Personal stubbornness can be a significant challenge for a young person’s spiritual growth.

What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

“Stubbornness—I want to do my own thing rather than what God says” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“Doing what you know is right” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“Wanting to do my own thing and fly solo” (Y9, 3/26/09).

I am kind of a do-it-yourself type of guy, so it is difficult for me to turn things over to God in prayer and trust him to take care of it—like not wanting to bother God to take care of my problems. Also, sometimes I’m too logical and not as focused on a relationship with God. (Y10, 4/22/09)

“Myself, pride or struggling with having regular worship time” (Y12, 4/8/09).

What would you say have been significant challenges to your child’s spiritual growth?


20. Important characteristics for effectively influencing young people to choose to be committed followers of Jesus are:

   a) Authentic
   b) Approachable
   c) Supportive
   d) Loving

Important techniques for effectively influencing young people to choose to be committed followers of Jesus are:

   a) Model
b) Inspire

c) Relational

d) Honor freedom of choice—do not use force

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“My dad, my friend, senior pastor, Spanish teacher” (Y14, 4/8/09).

What have these people done?

“My parents, just being there gives me a picture of God” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“Senior pastor—his preaching, and the youth pastor—from what he says sparks ideas in my mind” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“Being real, nothing fake, and they are living what they believe” (Y14, 4/8/09).

My parents have never stuffed anything down my throat. They’ve always let me come to it at my own time, and dad and mom both are always open to discuss things and talk to me about…. I’m very comfortable talking about anything, like, spiritually with them. (Y2, 2/19/09)

And I’m assuming most anything else as well?

“My mom more than my dad. My dad covers the God stuff. For my mom, everything else” (Y2, 2/19/09).

My Spanish teacher, just the way he lives his life, has been just such an example to me, and how he doesn’t care—like he builds a relationship with us, but then beyond that he tells us what’s so hard to. But because we have a relationship with him, and he’s not afraid to step on toes like so many other people are and to tell us how it is, I really appreciate that. He’s always willing to discuss and talk. (Y2, 2/19/09)

It sounds like to me though that he must do that in love?

Absolutely, because it could come from—I could almost say—any other teacher at Collegedale Academy. Some of the things he says, and it’s sad that we are like that but when it comes from him, is totally different than anybody
else. Like, he can really just—I don’t know if it’s related. Because I know he has told us his story, and is not a good one. Like he has had a rough life and he’s not proud of that, but he doesn’t hide it at all. (Y2, 2/19/09)

He’s candid?

“Yes, and that’s what teenagers love is honesty. That is where the biggest....

When someone is honest with us, that’s huge, and I really have a lot respect for people who do that” (Y2, 2/19/09).

What would you say have been significant challenges to your child’s spiritual growth?

“The distractions of this world—music, popular culture, TV, movies” (A2, 3/10/09).

“When her parents go through slumps spiritually, being a teenager, friends, media” (A3, 2/19/09).

What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

“Allowing her to make those decisions—work with her and pray for her. Trust the Holy Spirit to influence. The less you say and let them process, the better” (A2, 3/10/09).

“Gently, and very wisely, talking it through. Pray, pray, pray” (A3, 2/19/09).

To talk together, just go into his room and talk about things—don’t go in with a condemning attitude. God operates on the law of freedom, and we cannot force people in the area of spirituality. We can force their bodies, but we cannot force their hearts. (A4, 5/8/09)

“We have talked about it. I always try to be open and answer her questions” (A5, 3/24/09).

“Prayer, checking in with him, let him know we are there for him” (A6, 3/26/09).
“Talking through the issues and asking what would Jesus do? Would this be a stumbling block, would this bring us closer to Christ? Value- and principle-based conversations, and helping them work through appropriate applications” (A8, 3/25/09).

What do you think are some things the current youth pastor could do in order to do a better job?

Really get to know kids on a personal level, like all the kids so you’re someone that they can go to. If they have a positive image of you, they can translate that to their image of God. Get to know them, spend time with them, and be there. Continue to pray and stay close to God. If you live what you talk, by God’s power, people will see something different in what will make them drawn to listen to what you have to say is God in you. Spend time with the kids so they know you and time with God so He shines through. (Y6, 3/25/09)

21. Actively involving young people in ministry can help them connect with God and grow spiritually.

As you look back over the last three years of your life what are some programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Being involved in student leadership when I first joined this church—being a leader in CAYA Community, being a Bible worker” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“Sabbath school, CAYA Community—especially leading out” (Y10, 4/22/09).

“CAYA Basketball, CAYA community—especially when I got to be a leader this year, The Deep End Sabbath school” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“Going around preaching at other churches” (Y13, 5/7/09).
“When I am out of my element—when I know that there’s absolutely nothing I can do to make it happen, like a prayer conference when I was a leader—knowing I could not do it by myself, and I had to rely on God” (Y14, 4/8/09).

As you look back over the last three years of your child's life what are some programs or activities that have helped her connect with God and grow spiritually?

“CAYA Community, Meals on Wheels, giving Bible studies to children” (A13, 5/5/09).

Recent prayer conference where he ended up leading by himself and had a huge growth experience. CAYA Community—he prepares for and leads. More growth takes place when somebody verbalizes their faith than just listening to someone else talk about it. (A14, 4/9/09)

What are the primary ways you have learned Biblical truth?

“Leading Sabbath school” (Y7, 3/25/09).

What are the primary ways your child has learned Biblical truth?

“Going on mission trips and preaching the truth” (A8, 3/25/09).

When do you feel the most connected to God?

“When I am out of my element—when I know that there’s absolutely nothing I can do to make it happen, like a prayer conference when I was a leader—knowing I could not do it by myself and I had to rely on God” (Y14, 4/8/09).

When do you think your child feels the most connected to God?

“At school when the chaplain has her working on something that she has to research” (A13, 5/5/09).

22. Family influence is the primary way young people connect with God and grow spiritually.
Who would you say would be the three most important people that help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“My mom and dad, and probably my Spanish teacher” (Y2, 2/19/09).

“My mom and grandma. I guess my dad—I don’t know” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“My dad and my foster mother” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“My parents” (Y5, 4/28/09).

“My mom and dad” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“My mom, my dad, and my grandpa” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“Mom and dad, and my grandma” (Y9, 3/26/09).

“My dad—started a tradition of taking us to church regularly; my mom—with the whole musical side of things; previous senior pastor—I really enjoyed all the sermons” (Y10, 4/22/09).

“My dad. When I question things, he also questions me back to make me think; my uncle, my brother” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“My dad, my Sabbath School teacher, and one of my teachers at Collegedale Academy” (Y12, 4/8/09).

“My dad, a close friend, our senior pastor, my Spanish teacher” (Y14, 4/8/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Mom, dad, and brother” (A1, 2/11/09).

“Mom and dad, pastor, teacher” (A2, 3/10/09).

“Grandma, mom and dad” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Adopted dad” (A4, 5/8/09).
“Mom and dad, her aunt my, CAYA basketball coach” (A5, 3/24/09).

“Dad and mom” (A6, 3/26/09).

“Mom and dad” (A8, 3/25/09).

“Mom” (A9, 4/22/09).

“Dad, Sabbath School teacher, CAYA basketball coach, possibly her mom too” (A11, 3/27/09).

“Mom and dad, peers, certain pastors—people that she has heard or seen at prayer conferences etc.” (A12, 4/22/09).

“Mom” (A13, 5/5/09).

“Mom, dad, and my older sister” (A14, 4/9/09).

“Mom and dad, mom’s parents – grandparents, teachers at Collegedale Academy as well as the chaplain there. CAYA group has been a huge influence over the past few years as well as the two families leading it” (A15, 4/21/09).

*What have these people done that has been helpful?*

“Grandma homeschooled” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Mom and dad—sharing from their own personal devotions and personal experiences, having family worship together almost every night” (A3, 2/19/09).

“My foster mom introducing me to Jesus in the Seventh-day Adventist church” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“My dad hangs out with me, listens to music and spends time with me” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“My parents just being there gives you a picture of God” (Y6, 3/25/09).

Valuing Scripture, talking about the fundamentals of faith, making sure that religion is a way of life not just for formal events. Family worship—three
days of the week. Some formal Bible study recently. In homeschool, they
started with worship everyday—regularly and consistently. (A14, 4/9/09)

“They have been willing to answer any questions I may have and/or provide me
with any extra material that might help answer the question” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“Encouraging a lot, provide Bible texts, listening” (Y9, 3/26/09).

What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

“I think the unwillingness to give up things that I didn’t want to give up, or
thinking that I would not have as much fun, or that people were not going to
accept the lifestyle of a Christian, is much” (Y2, 2/19/09).

“We used to have family worship, but we really don’t anymore. We all have our
own individual worships, but we don’t have a family worship anymore. Being in
an Adventist school my whole life—everything is so the same” (Y11, 5/6/09).

What would you say has been significant challenges to your child’s spiritual
growth?

“The distractions of this world: music, popular culture, TV, movies” (A2,
3/10/09).

“When her parents go through slumps spiritually, being a teenager, friends,
media” (A3, 2/19/09).

“School because he struggles with that—he senses our disappointment. This has
been a de-motivating thing for him, and it translates into spirituality” (A4,
5/8/09).

“Her dad’s two-year depression” (A5, 3/24/09).

“I haven’t seen any really; he is kind of steady. When his girlfriend broke up with
him, he was the lowest I’ve ever seen him” (A6, 3/26/09).
"Busyness, friends that don’t yearn for God, secular entertainment" (A8, 3/25/09).

"Faith—really believing that God is hearing his prayers or answering his prayers” (A9, 4/22/09).

“She would get frustrated with things that were beyond her control—we worked with her on learning how to pray about things like this, and taught her how to determine which things to let go of and which things to work on” (A11, 3/27/09).

“My daughter wants to do everything, and she gets too tired. If she gets too tired, she can get very depressed—she doesn’t know balance yet” (A12, 4/22/09).

“Realizing that people are imperfect; learning how to get along with people” (A13, 5/5/09).

“Modern culture – music, movies” (A14, 4/9/09).

*What have you found most helpful in working through these challenges?*

Praying about it always has been my number one; also, reading the Bible. But knowing and realizing that none of that stuff matters when you have a relationship with God, and I think for a while there I was afraid I wasn’t going to be happy if I wasn’t living the life of like a normal teenager, but I have realized that true happiness really comes when I am just as close as I can be to God. That’s true, like examples—my sister she’s been such a role model for me—and pray about it really. (Y2, 2/19/09)

And I wish people that were choosing paths away from God could really experience that true happiness and that true joy. And they would realize that it is so much better and life is actually more fun, because when I used to hear people say that, I would be like, that is not true. It can’t be more fun, even if we are just talking earthly fun. No, I don’t believe it. But it is 100% true. (Y2, 2/19/09)
What have you found most helpful in working with your child through these challenges?

"Allowing her to make those decisions—work with her and pray for her. Trust the Holy Spirit to influence. The less you say and let them process, the better" (A2, 3/10/09).

"Gently and very wisely talking it through. Pray, pray, pray" (A3, 2/19/09).

To talk together, just go into his room and talk about things—don’t go in with a condemning attitude. God operates on the law of freedom, and we cannot force people in the area of spirituality. We can force their bodies, but we cannot force their hearts. (A4, 5/8/09)

"We have talked about it. I always try to be open and answer her questions" (A5, 3/24/09).

"Prayer, checking in with him, let him know we are there for him" (A6, 3/26/09).

"Talking through the issues and asking what would Jesus do? Would this be a stumbling block, would this bring us closer to Christ? Value- and principle-based conversations, and helping them work through appropriate applications" (A8, 3/25/09).

"Just telling him we have to persevere, looking at the stories in the Bible where people had to wait on God and trust in him—like Abraham with the birth of Isaac" (A9, 4/22/09).

"Purchased a plaque with the serenity prayer on it and talked about it with her, and things began to turn around slowly" (A11, 3/27/09).

"I try to talk to her beforehand as to what she can accomplish and what she can’t, but it tends to ebb and flow" (A12, 4/22/09).
"Talked through it with her and chose not to step in and solve it for her. I spoke with other church leaders about it, and prayed about it. I gave it some time" (A13, 5/5/09).

"That there is so much good contemporary Christian music available today is very helpful. Also, we help our kids find something other than watching movies on Saturday night—that's actually more fun" (A14, 4/9/09).

*Well, sin is fun for a season, but the season is very short.*

Yes. And living the Christian life it doesn't come without its mistakes at all, but knowing that God is there and when you are sorry and you ask for forgiveness. I'm not saying that you can go out and do whatever you want at all. You know what I mean? (Y2, 2/19/09)

*But that's the reality, it is the joy of being a Christian. God loves us and forgives us and save us.*

"Yes" (Y2, 2/19/09).

*What have you found thus far in your journey helpful in learning that biblical truth?*

"Reading, praying, and discussing" (Y2, 2/19/09)

*You're talking about the Bible when you're talking about reading?*

"Yes" (Y2, 2/19/09).

*Is there any type of context that has been more helpful than others for doing that?*

Not really. When I have a question, I pray about it, but I feel better after I've talked it over with someone that I trust and I know that we have the same beliefs—like my dad. He's great about it. I'll have a question out there, like one that does not make sense, and we'll go to the Bible and other places. So I think it's the Bible and the discussion, like, that really helps me to see what I believe. (Y2, 2/19/09)
Is your dad pretty much your default person that you typically go to?

“Yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So what I’m hearing you say is that probably the main foundation for you obtaining biblical truth is first of all you studying it for yourself and then talking it over with your dad?

“Yes, and it is mainly my dad. But I’ve gotten all the beliefs that I have from growing up in the in the school system, and my mom too. My dad and I are the ones that normally sit down, like, and discuss it” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So you would say the school system has contributed to your understanding of the biblical truth?

“Oh yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

“From my family, family worship, when I was homeschooled my grandma and I would do Bible studies together. Church too, but mainly family” (Y3, 3/12/09).

My parents, every morning having family worship, and we would study different things. They really guided me and presented it in a way that was not a turnoff. We read through the Bible, and then we would go around and read it and talk about it. (Y6, 3/25/09)

“My parents and my grandpa on my mom’s side, who is a pastor, and my cousin. I have read the Bible through myself, and I search for myself as well” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“My mom. We also used to do Bible studies together as a family” (Y9, 3/26/09).

My parents, but more recently teachers at Collegedale Academy. Now I am digging deeper with the teachers, and then I go to find out what I think about it—what the Bible is really about. I talk with my friends some and my parents a lot. Also, I spend personal time in the Bible, but I have a harder time
bringing stuff out of it, so that's why I like to go and talk to other people about it, and then make a decision what I believe. (Y11, 5/6/09)

Through people, teachers and even friends, my parents have taught me the most—I was homeschooled through eighth grade. I have also learned biblical truth from growing up in the Seventh-day Adventist church and attending Sabbath School all my life. (Y12, 4/8/09)

“Growing up in my family with my dad being a pastor, family worships, but it’s also a choice I have to make—a choice to believe what Scripture says” (Y14, 4/8/09).

What are the primary ways your child has learned biblical truth?

“From our family being open and honest in discussing values, standards and truth at home” (A1, 2/11/09).

“Mom and dad, sermons at church, some CAYA community discussions” (A2, 3/10/09).

“School Bible classes, preparation for baptism, church, home” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Worship at home, Bible at school, Sabbath School, Bible videos” (A5, 3/24/09).

Early on, we were just reading God’s word to our children. That was our main textbook. They enjoyed hearing God’s word. We read the whole Bible together as a family. We would take turns reading and just go around. Each child would read some, and we would discuss. They would ask questions, and my husband would be there as well. We still have family worships together now, but not as consistent as it used to be. The benefit of homeschool is that you have a little more flexibility with your time so that you have time to read the Bible, and slow down the pace of life. (A6, 3/26/09)

Going to a non-Adventist school, I had to be sure that they were equipped with the word of God, to be a witness—so that equipped them. Going on mission trips and preaching the truth. In home school, I had worked with them a lot on learning Bible truths. Also, having family worships and personal devotions. (A8, 3/25/09)

“Church, home and school, personal devotions” (A9, 4/22/09).

Growing up in his home, receiving some saturation; homeschool with his mom for the first seven years of school was a real foundation; his continued Adventist education; family worships is a much deeper level of processing things spiritually—connecting with the heart and making it more meaningful happens at the home more than school. (A14, 4/9/09)

*When do you think your child feels the most connected to God?*

“Having spiritual conversations with dad and close friends” (A11, 3/27/09).

“During family Bible study—recently with the extended family with his grandparents 50th wedding anniversary” (A14, 4/9/09).

What have these people done that has been helpful?

Valuing Scripture, talking about the fundamentals of faith, making sure that religion is a way of life not just for formal events, family worship—three days of the week. Some formal Bible study recently. Homeschool—they started with worship everyday regularly and consistently. (A14, 4/9/09)

*As you look back over the last three years of your child’s life, what are some programs or activities that have helped her connect with God and grow spiritually?*

“Bible conference, CAYA Community spiritual retreat, family worships, going to school—Christian education, Chapel talks. Her involvement in spiritual activities, weeks of prayers, CAYA Community—she is grown in her willingness to lead out” (A3, 2/19/09).

*How would you describe your current Christian experience?*

“I’m committed to Jesus and following Him, therefore I am a committed Christian. I love this church and our senior pastor’s sermons. My parents have given me a good solid foundation” (Y6, 3/25/09).

23. Difficulties can stimulate spiritual growth.
When do you feel the most connected to God?

“Hard times” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“When I am going through really hard times” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“When I am really stressed out” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“When I am going through bad times” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“Hardship” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“When I am out of my element—when I know that there’s absolutely nothing I can do to make it happen. Like a prayer conference when I was a leader—knowing I could not do it by myself, and I had to rely on God” (Y14, 4/8/09).

When do you think your child feels the most connected to God?

“When she is struggling with something” (A3, 2/19/09).

“When things are not good” (A4, 5/8/09).

When do you feel the most connected to God?

“When I really need him” (Y2, 2/19/09).

The times of desperateness?

Yes, and it’s weird because most people, like, when they’re going through really hard times, they question whether or not He’s there. But I just know that some things I’ve gone through I just couldn’t have without him, and I have no doubt that he is there with me the whole time. And that is really comforting to know that he is there. (Y2, 2/19/09)

So is that during the middle of it or in retrospect looking back on it?

“In the middle of it, I really feel His presence, and that’s when I cling to Him the most—like I just have to have Him” (Y2, 2/19/09).

Describe your personal experience with biblical truth?

I don’t know everything, but I have a much better grasp now than I did a few years ago as a result of dating my girlfriend and her parents not believing what
Seventh-day Adventists believe. I had to go and study it for myself and wrestle with what I believe. (Y6, 3/25/09)

24. Pastors and teachers can have a significant role in influencing young people to connect with God and grow spiritually.

*Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?*

“Chaplain and youth pastor” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Youth pastor” (A4, 5/8/09).

“Our pastor in California and two of the dads who worked with the teens there; the youth pastor at Hamilton Community Church, mom” (A9, 4/22/09).

“Mom and dad, peers, certain pastors, people that she has heard or seen at prayer conferences etc.” (A12, 4/22/09).

“Collegedale Academy’s chaplain, Collegedale Church’s youth pastor, mom and many teachers at Collegedale Academy. Some of the most wonderful people” (A13, 5/5/09).

*Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?*

“Youth pastor” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“Pastors, senior pastor, youth pastor” (Y6, 3/25/09).

Chaplain at Collegedale Academy, he was one the first person I opened up to as to where I am really at. Also, our Spanish teacher at Collegedale Academy—he is young enough that I can relate to, and yet he’s very grounded in what he believes. (Y7, 3/25/09)

“Previous senior pastor—I really enjoyed all the sermons” (Y10, 4/22/09).

“Chaplain, history teacher, prayer room coordinator” (Y13, 5/7/09).
"Bible and choir teacher at Collegedale Academy and two of my friends" (Y15, 5/6/09).

What have these people done that has been helpful?

"Chaplain preaching at the Third and hanging out in his office, youth pastor—CAYA spiritual retreat, preparing to lead CAYA Community" (A3, 2/19/09).

"Youth pastor has not given up on me and we’re like best friends" (Y4, 3/18/09).

"Senior pastor—his preaching, and youth pastor—from what he says sparks ideas in my mind" (Y6, 3/25/09).

"Saying what they believe and sharing where it is in the Bible, and saying to not be judgmental" (Y13, 5/7/09).

What have these people done that has been helpful?

"Bible teacher—taught at a more in-depth level" (Y15, 5/6/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

My parents, but more recently teachers at Collegedale Academy. Now I am digging deeper with the teachers, and then I go to find out what I think about it—what the Bible is really about. I talk with my friends some and my parents a lot. Also, I spend personal time in the Bible, but I have a harder time bringing stuff out of it, so that’s why I like to go and talk to other people about it, and then make a decision what I believe. (Y11, 5/6/09)

Through people, teachers and even friends. My parents have taught me the most—I was home schooled through eighth grade. I have also learned biblical truth from growing up in the Seventh-day Adventist church and attending Sabbath school my life. (Y12, 4/8/09)

"Personal Bible studies like devotions, and my own in-depth Bible studies, the groups, chaplain at Collegedale Academy, other adults" (Y13, 5/7/09).

"Bible teacher at Collegedale Academy" (Y15, 5/6/09).
What are the primary ways your child has learned Biblical truth?

"Chaplain at Collegedale Academy, and personal Bible study on her own" (A13, 5/5/09).

25. Preaching is an effective way to stimulate spiritual growth among young people.

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

"Previous senior pastor—I really enjoyed all the sermons" (Y10, 4/22/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

"Collegedale Academy Chaplain" (A3, 2/19/09).

What have these people done that has been helpful?

"Chaplain preaching at the Third worship service" (A3, 2/19/09).

As you look back over the last three years of your life what are some programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

"I love to hear the senior pastor—I usually go to the second service" (Y5, 4/28/09).

As you look back over the last three years of your child’s life, what are some programs or activities that have helped them connect with God and grow spiritually?

"Chapel talks" (A3, 2/19/09).

"All Power Seminar" (A4, 5/8/09).

"Church life – prayer meeting, faithful Sabbath attendance" (A6, 3/26/09).

"Senior pastor’s preaching" (A12, 4/22/09).
"Church—discussion on the sermon" (A14, 4/9/09).

What are the primary ways your child has learned biblical truth?

“Sermons at church” (A2, 3/10/09).

What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

“Distractions of daily life, busyness, worldly distractions” (Y14, 4/8/09).

What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

“Weeks of prayer helped bring the focus back to what’s really important, those times when you can refocus—church, sermons” (Y14, 4/8/09).

26. Sabbath School helps young people connect with God and grow spiritually.

As you look back over the last three years of your life, what are some programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Sabbath School” (Y5, 4/28/09).

“Sabbath school” (Y10, 4/22/09).


Through people, teachers and even friends, my parents have taught me the most—I was homeschooled through eighth grade. I have also learned biblical truth from growing up in the Seventh-day Adventist church and attending Sabbath school my whole life. (Y12, 4/8/09)

As you look back over the last three years of your child’s life, what are some programs or activities that have helped her connect with God and grow spiritually?


“The Deep End Sabbath School class” (A12, 4/22/09).
What are the primary ways your child has learned biblical truth?


"Sabbath school" (A15, 4/21/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

"Sabbath school" (Y14, 4/8/09).

“I have also learned biblical truth from growing up in the Seventh-day Adventist church and attending Sabbath School my whole life” (Y12, 4/8/09).

"Sabbath School" (A15, 4/21/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help you connect with God and grow spiritually?

“My Sabbath School teacher” (Y12, 4/8/09).

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?


Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

“As far as truth goes, I think we have truth. I am in the Deep End Sabbath school, and I think that there is lots of good truth there” (Y15, 5/6/09).

27. Prayer Conference helps young people connect with God and grow spiritually.

Who would you say have been the three most important people to help your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Mom and dad, peers, certain pastors, people that she has heard or seen at prayer conferences, etc.” (A12, 4/22/09).
As you look back over the last three years of your life, what are some programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

"Prayer Conference—definitely . . . the small groups we have there" (Y1, 2/19/09).

"Prayer Conference" (Y3, 3/12/09).

Prayer conference—100% prayer conference. I have been three times, and He has turned my life around three times when I served as a leader, and God showed up and worked powerfully. Then the group thanked me. It was amazing to me that God had actually used me to bless them. (Y7, 3/25/09)

"Prayer conference" (Y8, 5/6/09).

"Prayer conference" (Y9, 3/26/09).

"Prayer conference—a big one" (Y14, 4/8/09).

When do you feel the most connected to God?

"Prayer conference" (Y9, 3/26/09).

As you look back over the last three years of your child's life, what are some programs or activities that have helped them connect with God and grow spiritually?

"Prayer conference" (A7, 4/8/09).

"Definitely prayer conferences" (A12, 4/22/09).

"Recent prayer conference where he ended up leading by himself and had a huge growth experience" (A14, 4/9/09).

28. Scripture stimulates spiritual growth.

For you personally what has happened in your life as a result of learning biblical truths? Have you seen a cause-and-effect type of thing?
I'm a better person, not perfect at all. Knowing the truth in the Bible, developing a relationship with Jesus, just makes me want to be more like Him. Like the things in the Bible that he wants us to be like—our beliefs. We have been going over them in CAYA, like the Adventist beliefs, and that has helped me a lot with how I feel like I should live my life. (Y2, 2/19/09)

What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

"I think the unwillingness to give up things that I didn't want to give up, or thinking that I would not have as much fun, or that people were not going to accept the lifestyle of a Christian, is much" (Y2, 2/19/09).

"A lack of a personal confirmation that he is there, and to learn to trust him to lead me where he wants me to go" (Y5, 4/28/09).

"I am kind of a do-it-yourself type of guy, so it is difficult for me to turn things over to God in prayer and trust him to take care of it. Like not wanting to bother God to take care of my problems" (Y10, 4/22/09).

What have you found most helpful in working through these challenges?

Praying about it always has my number one, also reading the Bible. But knowing and realizing that none of that stuff matters when you have a relationship with God, and I think for a while there I was afraid I wasn’t going to be happy if I wasn’t living the life of like a normal teenager, but I have realized that true happiness really comes when I am just as close as I can be to God. That’s true, like examples—my sister she’s been such a role model for me—and pray about it really. (Y2, 2/19/09)

And I wish people that were choosing paths away from God could really experience that true happiness and that true joy. And they would realize that it is so much better and life is actually more fun, because when I used to hear people say that, I would be like, that is not true. It can’t be more fun, even if we are just talking earthly fun. No, I don’t believe it. But it is 100% true. (Y2, 2/19/09)

"Reading the Bible" (Y5, 4/28/09).

Oftentimes I will be reading my Bible like a history book instead of a focus on relationship with God and then a verse will come along that kind of makes my
heart swell and it kicks me back into a focus on a relationship with God. (Y10, 4/22/09)

*Well, sin is fun for season, but the season is very short.*

“*Yes*” (Y2, 2/19/09).

And living the Christian life—it doesn’t come without its mistakes at all. But knowing that God is there and when you are sorry and you ask for forgiveness. And I’m not saying that you can go out and do whatever you want at all, you know what I mean. (Y2, 2/19/09)

*But that’s the reality, it is the joy of being a Christian. God loves us and forgives us and save us.*

“*Yes*” (Y2, 2/19/09).

*What have you found helpful thus far in your journey in learning that biblical truth?*

“Reading, praying, and discussing” (Y2, 2/19/09).

*You’re talking about the Bible when you’re talking, reading?*

“*Yes*” (Y2, 2/19/09).

*Is there any type of context that has been more helpful than others for doing that?*

Not really. When I have a question, I pray about it. But I feel better after I’ve talked it over with someone that I trust, and I know that we have the same beliefs—like my dad. He’s great about it. I’ll have a question out there, like one that does not make sense, and we’ll go to the Bible and other places. So I think it’s the Bible and the discussion like that really helps me to see what I believe. (Y2, 2/19/09)

*Is your dad pretty much your default person that you typically go to?*

“*Yes*” (Y2, 2/19/09).
So what I'm hearing you say is that probably the main foundation for you obtaining biblical truth is first of all you studying it for yourself and then talking it over with your dad?

Yes, and it is mainly my dad. But I've gotten all the beliefs that I have from growing up in the school system and my mom too. My dad and I are the ones that normally sit down and discuss it. (Y2, 2/19/09)

So you would say the school system has contributed to your understanding of the biblical truth?

"Oh yes" (Y2, 2/19/09).

Describe your personal experience with Biblical truth.

"I think I have a good understanding of what the Bible teaches" (Y3, 3/12/09).

"I am still learning, but I feel like I have a good understanding of the truth" (Y4, 3/18/09).

"I feel like I have understanding of biblical truth, and I find it to be very relevant in my life right now" (Y7, 3/25/09).

"I feel like I have searched at it out for myself and my grandpa is a pastor so I can ask any questions I have. I would say I have a medium level of understanding of the truth" (Y8, 5/6/09).

"Yes I have like a good understanding of biblical truth" (Y9, 3/26/09).

I used to think I knew the Bible, but now I'm learning I don't know as much as I thought I did, so now I'm kind of in a learning mode. I hear a lot of varying opinions from my different teachers at CA. Go home and talk to my parents and read the Bible for myself and try to figure out what I believe about the subject. (Y11, 5/6/09)

I feel like I'm more easily swayed that I want to be. And I haven't spent enough time personally going through the Bible to know what is in there. I feel like I have a better knowledge than the population of the United States, but I still feel like I still have lots to learn. I have enough foundation in
biblical truth to recognize things that seem weird, but I don’t know how to go research it for myself. (Y12, 4/8/09)

“I haven’t read the entire Bible from cover to cover, but I feel like I have a pretty good grasp on what scripture is about” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“I feel like I have an understanding of the basic truths of the Bible but not in depth understanding” (Y14, 4/8/09).

This year I think I’ve got a lot more of understanding than I ever have before because of my religion teacher at Collegedale Academy. I think I gained a better understanding than I could have with like five years of other religion teachers. (Y15, 5/6/09)

For you personally, what has happened in your life as the result of learning these Biblical truths?

“It has affected my disposition, how I treat other people, how tolerant I am, and it makes me kinder to people” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“It has affected my dating relationships. I was dating a girl who had a different lifestyle than I do and so I chose to not date her anymore. And it has affected my friendship choices” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“Praying for forgiveness in my own life and toward other people, we talked about it in CAYA community, learned about it in Scripture, and then went and did it” (Y7, 3/25/09).

When I was going to school at Girls Preparatory School and the issue of the Sabbath continually came up, football games were always on Friday night and everybody continually asking aren’t you going to be there? I had to wrestle with it, at first I felt bad, but then I realized what a blessing it was and what privilege it was to be home enjoying the Sabbath with my family on Friday evening. (Y8, 5/6/09)

When I was younger I used to be afraid of little things. Joshua 1:8 says that God will be with you no matter where you go and you do not need to be afraid. I learned to claim this promise and not be afraid. (Y9, 3/26/09)
“It has helped me to stop being critical of people” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“I pray for people and try to love them even when I don’t like them—it motivates me to have actions of kindness toward people, like talking to people to be friendly” (Y12, 4/8/09).

“What ever things are pure, helps me stay away from witchcraft and stuff like that, it affects my choice of which books I read, it changes the movies I go see, it affects my choice which TV shows I watch” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“The reason why I go to church and the reason why I live my life as a Christian have become more what I want rather than my parents telling me to do it—I believe that comes from Scripture” (Y14, 4/8/09).

“I have started tithing” (Y15, 5/6/09).

Describe your child’s personal experience with Biblical truth.

“She is grounded in the biblical truth” (A3, 2/19/09).

“He knows the main themes of Scriptures, not so much the details” (A4, 5/8/09).

“I think she has a grasp of Christianity, though she may not know all the details” (A5, 3/24/09).

“I definitely think he has a grasp of what the Bible is about and the truth of Scripture” (A6, 3/26/09).

“He’s a lot deeper than I am; he got some depth there” (A7, 4/8/09).

“I think she has a good understanding of biblical truth” (A8, 3/25/09).

“He’s got a good understanding of biblical truth” (A9, 4/22/09).

“Higher than average because he has read the Bible through more than once—he may be on a second or third time” (A10, 3/27/09).
"I think she is developing a deeper experience with the Bible right now" (A11, 3/27/09).

"I think she sees things more deeply than most 17 year olds. She has a pretty good grasp of Scripture and Adventist truth" (A12, 4/22/09).

"She has a pretty good understanding of truth" (A13, 5/5/09).

"I think he is getting strong or stronger in this area; he just recently made a decision for baptism. He is more methodical in his approach to life" (A14, 4/9/09).

"For 17 year old, I think he has a pretty good grasp on things on what’s true" (A15, 4/21/09).

What has happened in your child’s life as the result of learning these Biblical truths?

"It has influenced her choice of movies that she chooses to watch" (A1, 2/11/09).

"Enjoying the Sabbath—she looks forward to it as a day of rest and worship" (A2, 3/10/09).

"How she treats other people; she is a very kind person" (A2, 3/10/09).

"Her choice of friends—she is more discerning. Her choice in music" (A3, 2/19/09).

"He cares about people" (A4, 5/8/09).

"She’s conscious of Sabbath, she knows and try to obey the 10 Commandments" (A5, 3/24/09).

He has a very sensitive heart towards God and I think God has a special plan for his life and I have told him that, and I believe that God has called him for a special task – more so than my other children, the way he treats others. He is very sensitive toward other people. (A6, 3/26/09)
“He really tries to not talk bad about other people” (A7, 4/8/09).

Standing up for truth living out God’s principles in a very real way, using her influence as a leader at school for God, encouraging kids to spend time with God and having devotions, moral behavior in entertainment, what she does in her spare time. (A8, 3/25/09)

“Anger management” (A9, 4/22/09).

“He has a real sense of justice and responsibility with others, he doesn’t gossip or put others down; it has affected how he treats others also it has caused him to choose to observe Sabbath as a holy day” (A10, 3/27/09).

“A basic value system—which results in treating others well and a willingness to stand up for her beliefs” (A11, 3/27/09).

“How she dresses, she’s a good student that recognizes the dangers of pride in this area and desires a life of service to others and be more selfless” (A12, 4/22/09).

“Carefully keeping the Sabbath holy” (A13, 5/5/09).

“A willingness to be used by God even when he doesn’t feel ready” (A14, 4/9/09).

Interested in asking for his parents advice on how to handle his first dating relationship this year. Also conscientious about Sabbath observance. Also in the last six months he has started to honor his father and mother a lot more—to discuss things with us more. (A15, 4/21/09)

**When do you feel the most connected to God?**

“When I read my Bible or when I am praying” (Y5, 4/28/09).

“When I read the Bible by myself” (Y6, 3/25/09).

**When do you think your child feels the most connected to God?**
“When she’s reading the Bible and having her devotions, maybe family times” (A5, 3/24/09).

“When he’s reading God’s word” (A6, 3/26/09).


“During family Bible study—recently with the extended family with his grandparents 50th wedding anniversary” (A14, 4/9/09).

*What would you say have been significant challenges to your child’s spiritual growth?*


*What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?*


29. Personal time alone with God is the foundation of a growing walk with God.

*Describe your personal experience with Biblical truth.*

*Now what I mean by that is, do you feel like you understand Scripture, like do you know why you believe, from Scripture what you believe? Where is your experience with biblical truth?*

I pretty much think I do know stuff like that. It’s more stuff I’ve done on my own, a lot of it. Just like . . . preachers and teachers they focus on these main sections and then like in my readings and stuff I come across stuff, it’s like hey I have never ever, ever heard of this before. And it has lots and lots of meaning, just . . . they like to focus on the big things, and it’s like what about the little things? Little things matter, little things can change the whole world. (Y1, 2/19/09)
So for what you’re saying then is that you feel like you have a pretty good grasp on biblical truth?

“Yes” (Y1, 2/19/09).

And that has come more from your own personal time in the Word than from anybody else preaching?

“Yes” (Y1, 2/19/09).

For you personally, what has happened in your life as the result of learning these biblical truths?

What I am looking for is like a transfer from head to action type thing. Have you seen anything in you that you are different or you do things differently or something has changed as a result of the truths from Scripture?

“I think just like I’ve grown and stuff like the more read . . . like this year I have grown a lot. I can tell from last year, over the summer especially” (Y1, 2/19/09).

Are there any types of attitudes or actions that you think are evidence of that growth?

I have a really short temper, at least I use to, and this year, like it’s not really been that bad. I use to have a really bad temper Freshman year and Sophomore year. This year it’s been really good actually. I don’t know, yeah. (Y1, 2/19/09)

Anything else?

“That’s like the most prominent thing, it’s like my temper. I have a really bad temper sometimes and I don’t know, it’s just changed a lot in the past few years” (Y1, 2/19/09).
That’s one of the fruit of the Spirit, patience. That’s how God changes us, as we focus on getting to know Him, it’s indirect and He just changes us.

“And just because I’m patient now, I am so much happier. A lot, because I don’t freak out about stuff” (Y1, 2/19/09).

What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

“Time . . . the lack there of; job, school, Pathfinders, oh, I just don’t have time” (Y1, 2/19/09).

I am kind of a do-it-yourself type of guy, so it is difficult for me to turn things over to God in prayer and trust him to take care of it. Like not wanting to bother God to take care of my problems, also sometimes I’m too logical and not as focused on a relationship with God. (Y10, 4/22/09)

So another way of saying it would be busyness?

Yes, very. Like a lot of times I just don’t have time. Finally I just started doing the car thing. And you know that is the only time I really have so I have just had to do something. Because I was just like this is not working, I’ve got to fit it in somewhere and I need a block of time, so I was like ok right now. (Y1, 2/19/09).

What about reading? Surely you don’t read the Bible in your car?

“No, I do that at night” (Y1, 2/19/09).

What have you found to be most helpful in working through these spiritual challenges?

“Pray in car and read some at night. Read a book, and then read the Bible for twenty minutes or so” (Y1, 2/19/09).

Often times I will be reading my Bible like a history book instead of a focus on a relationship with God, and then a verse will come along that kind of makes my heart swell and it kicks me back into a focus on a relationship with God. (Y10, 4/22/09)
*What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?*

“Own personal Bible study, personal stuff we’ve done, church, CAYA and school—a lot from school actually” (Y1, 2/19/09).

“From reading the Bible for myself, and then going back and checking it when I hear ideas that seem crazy” (Y10, 4/22/09).

“Personal Bible studies like devotions, and my own in-depth Bible studies. The chaplain at Collegedale Academy, other adults” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“Personal devotions” (Y15, 5/6/09).

*What are the primary ways your child has learned biblical truth?*

“Personal devotions” (A8, 3/25/09).

“Personal devotions” (A9, 4/22/09).

“Personal devotions” (A12, 4/22/09).

“Chaplain at Collegedale Academy, personal Bible study on her own” (A13, 5/5/09).

“Devotionals at the home—he’s got his Bible by his bed. He write in journals about it” (A15, 4/21/09).

*Like Bible classes and stuff?*

“Bible class, but then our Spanish teacher—we have spent entire class periods in worship” (Y1, 2/19/09).

*When do you think your child feels the most connected to God?*

“When she is reading her Bible and discussing it with her grandma. Also, spending time out in nature” (A1, 2/11/09).
How would you describe your current Christian experience?

Well, what I am experiencing now is different than it has been the last couple of years. I just recently—I mean I have always been a Christian, believed in God and everything—but I think that it’s been the last couple of months, and I don’t know if it’s been going to college or what it is, but I’ve really started talking to God about everything. Like normally it would just be if something bad was happening, or if I really felt like I needed him but just knowing he is there in my everyday life now, it’s been a journey. It’s been more of a recent one. It’s really good. (Y2, 2/19/09)

I started thinking, you know, I say that I’m ready, but if I’m not daily studying and not daily digging in, how am I going to be ready? It’s not like I’m doing some Revelation study or anything like that. I started reading the Bible every single night, and that helps so much. My prayer life has been a lot more involved than it has been. (Y2, 2/19/09)

What would you say have been significant challenges to your spiritual growth?

I think the unwillingness to give up things that I didn’t want to give up, or thinking that I would not have as much fun, or that people were not going to accept the lifestyle of a Christian, is much. (Y2, 2/19/09)

“Struggling with having regular worship time” (Y12, 4/8/09).

What have you found most helpful in working through these challenges?

Praying about it always has my number on. Also, reading the Bible. But knowing and realizing that none of that stuff matters when you have a relationship with God, and I think for a while there I was afraid I wasn’t going to be happy if I wasn’t living the life of like a normal teenager. But I have realized that true happiness really comes when I am just as close as I can be to God. That’s true, like examples—my sister she’s been such a role model for me—and pray about it really. (Y2, 2/19/09)

And I wish people who were choosing paths away from God could really experience that true happiness and that true joy. And they would realize that it is so much better and life is actually more fun. Because when I used to hear people say that, I would be like, that is not true. It can’t be more fun, even if we are just talking earthly fun. No, I don’t believe it. But it is 100% true. (Y2, 2/19/09)

“Prayer” (Y7, 3/25/09).
Well, sin is fun for season, but the season is very short.

Yes, and living the Christian life. It doesn’t come without its mistakes at all, but knowing that God is there, and when you are sorry and you ask for forgiveness. And I’m not saying that you can go out and do whatever you want at all, you know what I mean? (Y2, 2/19/09)

But that’s the reality; it is the joy of being a Christian. God loves us and forgives us and save us.

“Yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

What have you found helpful thus far in your journey in learning that biblical truth?

“Reading, praying, and discussing” (Y2, 2/19/09).

You’re talking about the Bible when you’re talking about reading?

“Yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

Is there any type of context that has been more helpful than others for doing that?

Not really. When I have a question, I pray about it. But I feel better after I’ve talked it over with someone that I trust, and I know that we have the same beliefs—like my dad. He’s great about it. I’ll have a question out there, like one that does not make sense and we’ll go to the Bible and other places. So I think it’s the Bible and the discussion like that really helps me to see what I believe. (Y2, 2/19/09)

Is your dad pretty much your default person that you typically go to?

“Yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So what I’m hearing you say is that probably the main foundation for you obtaining biblical truth is first of all you studying it for yourself and then talking it over with your dad?

Yes, and it is mainly my dad. But I’ve gotten all the beliefs that I have from growing up in the in the school system, and my mom too. My dad and I are the ones that normally sit down like and discuss it. (Y2, 2/19/09)
So you would say the school system has contributed to your understanding of the biblical truth?

“Oh, yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

What are the primary ways you have learned biblical truth?

“Through personal study” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“Reading the Bible” (Y5, 4/28/09).

“I have read the Bible through myself, and I search for myself as well” (Y8, 5/6/09).

What are the primary ways your child has learned biblical truth?

“Home – in conversations, personal devotions, family worships” (A12, 4/22/09).

When do you feel the most connected to God?

“When I read my Bible or when I am praying” (Y5, 4/28/09).

“When I read the Bible by myself, as I pray through the day. Probably I feel most connected through the little daily instances that take place” (Y6, 3/25/09).

Describe your personal experience with biblical truth?

I don’t know everything, but I have a much better grasp now than I did a few years ago as a result of dating my girlfriend and her parents not believing what Seventh-day Adventists believe. I had to go and study it for myself and wrestle with what I believe. (Y6, 3/25/09)

30. Youth Sabbath School is not effective and needs to be improved.

I feel like Sabbath school needs an overhaul; people are not engaged. I feel like you’re not there a lot, and I think that’s part of the situation. The Assistant Youth Pastor gets really emotional about things, and it turns people off. They kind of back away. I really think we ought to try a small group approach to Sabbath School. (Y4, 3/18/09)
How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry. Do you see our youth ministry adding to the unity of our church or taking away from it?

It includes everything that the church does for the youth; everything CAYA does—CAYA community, CAYA Athletics, Sabbath School.

“I really appreciate all that stuff. I think the weakest area is Sabbath school. Everything that you just said I think that that blesses a lot of people and involves. It gets both generations involved” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So you would see it as contributing or distracting?

“I think it is contributing” (Y2, 2/19/09).

But you’re saying the Sabbath school component seems disconnected?

“Yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

What are some things that the current youth pastor could do to do a better job?

I think you do a good job of coming over to Collegedale Academy but other than that, I don’t know. I see you, go down to Sabbath School and I don’t really go there very often but other than that I don’t really know. Like you coming on the Texas trip. I think it was great for you to get involved with people but as far as Sabbath School and stuff, I wouldn’t really know what to say. I think it definitely needs improvement but I don’t think it’s your fault. (Y2, 2/19/09)

“Sabbath School needs some help, some improvement. Help improve Sabbath School” (Y14, 4/8/09).

“Sabbath School doesn’t seem to be going so well. My kids seemed to like it better before than they do now” (A6, 3/26/09).
As you look back over the last three years of your child’s life, what are some programs or activities that have helped her connect with God and grow spiritually?

“Chapels, not so much Sabbath school, interactions at school, school activities like gymnastics, and going to Chambliss home” (A5, 3/24/09).

Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

CAYA Community—I definitely believe both are there, love and truth. I love CAYA Community a lot! Sabbath school needs help. It’s a little boring. The things we talk about don’t really seem to help me grow. I don’t feel as connected in Sabbath School. The content is not very challenging some weeks. At times, I feel like I’m in kindergarten or something. Some weeks I don’t really get anything out of it. It is inconsistent. Some weeks it is relevant and helpful, other weeks it is not. (Y6, 3/25/09)

“There is a lot of love; definitely a lot of love—people are very accepting. In Sabbath School I don’t think there is as much truth taught...I think we can focus on deeper things” (Y11, 5/6/09).

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

“I don’t think our main youth Sabbath School is very unified at all, but I do think our CAYA Community groups are unified” (Y12, 4/8/09).

31. Serving others is part of the lifestyle of many youth in the Collegedale Church.

Describe any volunteer service that you have participated in this school year.

“Headstart and the soup kitchen thing, It’s fun...I like doing those. Those are fun” (Y1, 2/19/09).
“The Interfaith Homeless Network people—bring them food and hang out with them like Sabbath mornings” (Y2, 2/19/09).

“Headstart, leading CAYA community small group Bible study, on a daily basis with my friends, babysitting for youth pastor, Samaritan Center, prayer room” (Y3, 3/12/09).

Helping my friend. She is a single mom with young kids and does not have very much money. I help provide transportation for her and help her manage her money. I helped lead her to Jesus when I worked as a Bible worker a few summers ago. I also help out with the church’s sound system during worship services. (Y4, 3/18/09)

“Mission trip to Panama” (Y5, 4/28/09).

“Thanksgiving baskets at school” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“Panama mission trip. Serving the people down there really left an impression on me” (Y7, 3/25/09).

“Can collecting. In our CAYA Community group we bought all the Christmas presents for a family in need at Christmas. It was really fun” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“I have helped set up for the Interfaith Hospitality Network for the homeless. I’ve helped serve food to the homeless in downtown Chattanooga a couple of times” (Y10, 4/22/09).

“The Panama mission trip. We (CAYA basketball) go sing at the Lantern which is a Alzheimer’s nursing home, and also Headstart” (Y11, 5/6/09).

“Community kitchen, road cleanup, Sonrise” (Y12, 4/8/09).

I coordinate the outreach programs at Collegedale Academy. I helped my teacher clean her house. Then they force paid me, but it was intended to be voluntary. I just help people out randomly. I help deliver Meals on Wheels food for shut-in people. I help to lead our CAYA Community group. (Y13, 5/7/09)
“Prayer conference, CAYA Community” (Y14, 4/8/09).

“Meals on Wheels, help with the prayer room, Community Kitchen” (Y15, 5/6/09).

*Describe any volunteer service that your child has participated in this school year.*

“Community kitchen, feeding the homeless” (A1, 2/11/09).

“Providing Sabbath morning breakfast for the Interfaith Hospitality Network—our homeless guests at our church, Panama mission trip, leading CAYA Community” (A2, 3/10/09).

“Meals on Wheels, whatever programs the school has, Sonrise, Leading CAYA Community” (A3, 2/19/09).

“Running the sound system in church for the main worship services, Sonrise, leading a CAYA Community group” (A4, 5/8/09).

“Interfaith Hospitality Network hosting homeless in our church, but she got academic credit for doing it. Chambliss Home with a gymnastics team. Panama mission trip” (A5, 3/24/09).

Our CAYA group did a wonderful outreach of giving gifts at Christmas time to a family in need. We contacted Summit Headstart, contacted the social worker, got a name of a family and delivered gifts to the family’s home—it’s a really great experience. We have done this for the last three years. (A6, 3/26/09)

“Playing his guitar all the time for all kinds of different groups of people” (A7, 4/8/09).

“Gave Christmas gifts to a needy family as a CAYA group” (A8, 3/25/09).

“Helping out with the homeless as we host them in our church” (A10, 3/27/09).
"Panama mission trip, puppets. She worked with me in volunteering sometimes, invisible children, can drive, gave her shoes away during a chapel program" (A11, 3/27/09).

"Meals on Wheels, recruiting people for outward reach projects. She helps lead a CAYA Community group" (A13, 5/5/09).

"Feed the homeless, leading a small group at prayer conference, leading in CAYA Community" (A14, 4/9/09).

"Meals on Wheels, helps his grandparents, he does service projects with his CAYA group" (A15, 4/21/09).

Describe the effects on your family of your child's participation in the Collegedale Church's youth ministry.

"Gotten us involved" (A3, 2/19/09).

"We've gotten involved in CAYA basketball" (A5, 3/24/09).

It's positive; we would do anything to connect her with the kids and with something that is good. It's not inconvenient at all. It's the culture of her family—a continuation of serving and working as part of our church life. (A12, 4/22/09)

As you look back over the last three years of your life, what are some programs or activities that have helped you connect with God and grow spiritually?

"Prayer room, CAYA community, going around preaching at other churches" (Y13, 5/7/09).
As you look back over the last three years of your child’s life, what are some programs or activities that have helped them connect with God and grow spiritually?

“CAYA Community, Meals on Wheels, giving Bible studies to children” (A13, 5/5/09).

32. Though some young people experience truth and love in the Collegedale Church, a significant number of people feel there is considerable room for improvement in both areas.

Describe how you feel about the presence or absence of love and truth in our youth ministry.

“I think love and truth are both there, and it definitely starts with the leader” (Y14, 4/8/09).

I believe in this church. There is a lot of love and truth present; however, I do think that sometimes we overlook things that we should say that are true in fear of offending people—which equates to needing to be more truthful. I think the kids feel undervalued at times which equates to lack of love, because of how the young people are spoken to or not spoken to by the rest of the church. (A1, 2/11/09)

“I definitely see love because you have this program for eternal interest. I see truth as well” (Y9, 3/26/09).

“The presence of love depends on who you are. I have felt loved in our church—yes, I think there’s truth in our church as well” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“In CAYA basketball there is definitely love and truth. I think over the last couple years of my involvement in the youth ministry, both love and truth has been a part of the youth ministry” (Y5, 4/28/09).
There is a lot of love in our CAYA Community group. Truth is something we need to work on; we are struggling to get everyone talking. We are trying different strategies to achieve this. There is truth, but sometimes we don’t go as deep into truth in our group. But we did spend two weeks talking about Sabbath as in what is appropriate to do on Sabbath and what is not. (Y4, 3/18/09)

Love and truth can blind each other. We do a pretty good job of blending love and truth here in our church; however, I do think there could be a lot more love and acceptance in our youth group. We need to work on making friendships in our youth ministry, not just associates. (Y7, 3/25/09)

Here in our church it seems like the need is for more love because people are critical at how people dress or whether they are sitting in their seat. They’re afraid to break down our perfect little community here. People are friendly but not really loving. (Y7, 3/25/09)

I think we over emphasize the love part to the neglect of teaching the truth part. I think one of the main reasons that a lot of kids leave the church is because they don’t know what Seventh-day Adventists believe. All they see is the culture of it and they see they get preached to, but they don’t know what we believe. They are not ever taught what Seventh-day Adventists believe. I think this applies both to Sabbath School and Bible classes. (Y10, 4/22/09)

There is a lot of love—definitely a lot of love. People are very accepting. In Sabbath School I don’t think there is as much truth taught in our youth ministry. I think we can focus on deeper things. In CAYA community, there is truth present in our group. (Y11, 5/6/09)

I think they are more absent than present. The love that the youth pastor and assistant youth pastor show for the kids is evident, but as far as love between the youth themselves—their cliques and friends, yes—but not a lot of love for everybody. The natural friendships are taking place but the supernatural love is not very present. There are certain people who show godly love to others, but as far as a whole group is concerned, true godly love is pretty absent. I see that truth is definitely there—like in the Deep End Sabbath School for example. Also, the girls CAYA basketball coach definitely presents truth and love through his coaching, I’m not on any of his teams, but I have just seen him do this. He has also given several chapel talks. I think we have more truth than love. (Y12, 4/8/09)

I think that we love a lot, but there is not enough emphasis on truth. I think there needs to be more of an absolute truth in people’s minds. I think we need to show people more that this is right and this is wrong. We need more of this. (Y8, 5/6/09)
"We need more truth, less frills. We need to state what the core thing is straight out. In my CAYA community group and Sabbath School, both truth and love seem to be present" (Y13, 5/7/09).

Cliques and exclusivity work against an atmosphere of love in our youth ministry. As far as truth goes, I think we have truth. I am in the Deep End Sabbath School, and I think that there is lots of good truth there. (Y15, 5/6/09)

There is a huge absence of love, huge! Last week I led out in CAYA, and we talked about love. I just realized that it’s like the most important. I don’t remember what verse it is—the love chapter, at the end, “faith hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.” Without love, your faith doesn’t matter, hope in the future, none of that matters at all. And I think we have love for each other, we have love for families. But like in our youth department, there are kids that are not as easy to love as others, and that’s what I think we struggle with. We love our friends—that’s easy. (Y2, 2/19/09)

Which is humanly natural.

"Right" (Y2, 2/19/09).

And that’s why I think that supernatural love is so important, and I want to constantly pray for that. That’s really what I’m working on because when you have that love for everybody so much changes—your attitude toward people, their attitude toward you, the way people see you changes, and I think that is the most important thing that we need to work on. (Y2, 2/19/09)

Okay so you feel like that is our huge growing edge? And by the way, I’m assuming you mean the youth themselves?

“Yes absolutely! If you really, truly loved all those people down there, there’s not the gossiping going on that happens, there’s not that judging for what so-and-so is wearing like it doesn’t exist” (Y2, 2/19/09).

And right now it does?

Right, and they are teenagers. I understand that you’re immature—I understand that, but I have been asking God to blind me to the prejudices I have against other people, to help me to see them for who they are, you know accept them. None of us are perfect. (Y2, 2/19/09)
Good! Good, that is profound! How about the truth, do you think the truth element is present in our youth ministry?

I think it is with the youth themselves, truth is not a big deal because everyone is in the whole, "Well, whatever makes you comfortable." But I do think there is absolute truth that we do have to follow. As far as the leaders of youth, I think that they are doing a great job at that, but the youth themselves—it’s more like, "oh, that makes me feel uncomfortable or I might have to change." Too much to morph to, to do that so I’m going to just be the best person that I can. (Y2, 2/19/09)

And this is my belief. You can believe that if you want to?

"Exactly. They don’t want to step on people’s toes. They want people to be able to be creative" (Y2, 2/19/09).

So it doesn’t matter whether it agrees with the biblical truth or not. That’s what I think so that’s good for me?

"You love Jesus that’s all that matters. That is true, but once you love Jesus there are certain things that…” (Y2, 2/19/09).

So really what you are saying then is that for the youth themselves, we are not doing too well with either love or truth?

"Unfortunately, yes” (Y2, 2/19/09).

How would you describe the unity of our church in relationship to our youth ministry?

It seems like there are a few people who care a lot and many people who care very little about youth ministry. When I put a lot of time into music to worship, and then I get negative feedback from the older adults, it is really discouraging. Youth feel like they are more accepted outside of church. You go play a concert at a college and people are super nice to you, but then you come and play praise music here at the church and it’s like, “Turn it down, do this, do that”—very negative, very critical. What is the initiative as a young Christian to choose this type of environment over the world? (Y7, 3/25/09)
“There are definite factors of disunity or tension between the young and the old; this is especially illustrated in the area of music” (Y7, 3/25/09).

Suppose your car wouldn’t run, you were stuck at Wal-Mart, you couldn’t get in touch with your parents, and you had to call an adult to help you. Name three people you would call.

“Church members and friends’ parents” (Y7, 3/25/09).

How did you meet and get to know the adults mentioned in the previous question?

“High school friendships, hanging out with their kids. There have been a lot of people who have taken me under their wings so to speak” (Y7, 3/25/09).

As you look back over the last three years of your life, what are some programs or activities that have helped your child connect with God and grow spiritually?

“I think CAYA definitely has been, we have gotten so involved in it, and our little group has really grown—just the opportunity for the kids to take leadership” (A8, 3/25/09).

I have a special burden. We have a special burden for the newcomers . . . because we were newcomers, and we realized how hard it is to break in. So I reached out to the Z family and then the Y family. They came in brand-new and with the T family they are relatively new, and they were not from Collegedale. I mean we weren’t; we haven’t been here forever. We’ve only been here for like two or three years. And that’s it. So that’s been my burden—kind of like the misfits. (A8, 3/25/09)

You know it was so exciting to talk with the Y family when I was there and find out that they had been new and they got into your group like that, and they didn’t have the experience of, that the Z family had such a hard time breaking in and everything like that.

Yeah, I didn’t know about that until ?, and it was when Mrs. Z—you remember when she talked to me. It was kind of like the time when we all met
her, and she was kind of drowning in all this mess, and you know. And daughter Z didn't even want to go to Sabbath school. And I thought what in the world? We've got to stop this. And then right away we got her to come. And last year we did have a very large group . . . but we encouraged some of these new parents just to come. Because they need it, the friendship. They needed the love as much as the kids did. (A8, 3/25/09)

This year our group is smaller, uh, but it’s very nice. It’s very diverse. Kids from different backgrounds, you know and even different racial groups. We even have some of the black kids—that love coming to our CAYA, and I just praise the Lord that there is no racial barriers. Everybody, they just like to come. (A8, 3/25/09)

33. Each young person interviewed is a Christian.

How would you describe your current Christian experience?

“Committed Christian” (Y3, 3/12/09).

“Yes, I am a committed Christian” (Y4, 3/18/09).

I do consider myself a Christian, but I haven’t really seen God working mightily in my life and I am still waiting for confirmation of His presence in my life. I have made limited use of Christ, but I’m still working on getting into the Bible myself and processing what Christianity is really all about. (Y5, 4/28/09)

“I’m committed to Jesus and following Him; therefore, I am a committed Christian. I love this church and our senior pastor’s sermons. My parents have given me a good solid foundation” (Y6, 3/25/09).

“It is definitely a growing relationship. I am a committed Christian” (Y7, 3/25/09).

“Ups and downs, it’s really hard because I am so busy. But I am a committed Christian” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“I have invited Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior, and I desire to walk with him; however, right now I am going through a low time spiritually” (Y9, 3/26/09).

“I am a committed Christian, and I am so close to God” (Y10, 4/22/09).
"I am a committed Christian, and I am growing in that relationship, but I am in a downturn right now" (Y11, 5/6/09).

"I am a committed Christian, and I’m growing in my relationship with Jesus” (Y12, 4/8/09).

"I am a committed Christian who is on a journey with Jesus” (Y13, 5/7/09).

"I am a committed Christian and growing in my relationship with Jesus” (Y14, 4/8/09).

“It’s good, but I don’t know how to describe it really. I don’t know, for a while it was kind of like ups and downs, but now it’s just going up” (Y1, 2/19/09).

What do you attribute that to?

"I don’t know. This school year has been really good. Last year was kind of . . . It wasn’t fun” (Y1, 2/19/09).

Do you attribute that more to the academics of the school setting or friendship stuff?

“A bit of both, it was just kind of really stressful. I am having a really good year this year” (Y1, 2/19/09).

So I am going to state something that you implied. I am assuming that you consider yourself as a committed Christian to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

“Yes” (Y1, 2/19/09).

How would you describe your current Christian experience?

Well, what I am experiencing now is different than it has been the last couple of years. I just recently—I mean I have always been a Christian, believed in God and everything—but I think that it’s been the last couple of months, and I don’t know if it’s been going to college or what it is, but I’ve really started
talking to God about everything. Like normally, I would just be if something bad was happening or if I really felt like I needed him, but just knowing he is there in my everyday life now, it's been a journey. It's been more of a recent one; it's really good. (Y2, 2/19/09)

So you think a lot of it has to do with thinking about the future and where you're going or is it just everything?

"I don't know exactly. I've been trying to think when it started. I don't know if it was that whole back in September. Something happened when everybody started studying Revelation. What was that?" (Y2, 2/19/09).

When David Gates spoke?

No, it was after that. I started thinking, you know I say that I'm ready but if I'm not daily studying and not daily digging in, how am I going to be ready? It's not like I'm doing some Revelation study or anything like that. I started reading the Bible every single night and that helps so much in my prayer life. It has been a lot more involved than it has been. (Y2, 2/19/09)

So obviously the assumed baseline is then. Is that you have invited Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior?

"Yes" (Y2, 2/19/09).

How would you describe your child's current Christian experience?

"I think she is connected with Christ, committed and growing in that relationship" (A1, 2/11/09).

"She is a committed Christian and getting more of a personal relationship with Jesus" (A2, 3/10/09).

"She is a committed Christian, her relationship with Christ seems to have its ups and downs" (A3, 2/19/09).

"He is a committed Christian, though he struggles with his Christian walk as many of us do" (A4, 5/8/09).
She loves Jesus. She has an open spirit, and she has always been a joyful child. I believe this is the fruit of her spirituality. She does take time for her devotions. She will ask questions. She is a committed Christian. (A5, 3/24/09)

My son is committed to Jesus Christ, growing strong and the teenage years have not been bad at all. With all four of my children, all I can attribute it to is the early foundation of bringing them up in Christ. (A6, 3/26/09)

“He is committed to Jesus and growing in that relationship: He’s probably more of the spiritual leader at home; I get encouragement from him” (A7, 4/8/09).

“She is a committed Christian and has a walk with the Lord” (A8, 3/25/09).

“I think my son is a committed Christian and has blossomed spiritually” (A9, 4/22/09).

My son is the easiest of my four children because he is very spiritual. He reads his Bible faithfully at night, and he has a committed relationship with Jesus. He’s not real flashy with it; I really respect him – very strong. (A10, 3/27/09)

“She is a committed Christian, very in tune to it right now” (A11, 4/1/09).

“Extremely dedicated to Jesus, on the fire with a real burden for certain things” (A13, 5/5/09).

“Committed to Jesus Christ and growing a relationship with Him” (A14, 4/9/09).

“A dedicated and committed Christian and still growing” (A15, 4/21/09).

34. There is an expectation for youth pastors to be relationally connected with young people in order to minister to their needs and lead them to be committed followers of Jesus.
What do you think are some things the current youth pastor could do in order to do a better job?

“What you’re doing with this interview is really cool because you’re not going to get to know people unless you ask them questions. So just engage people and ask them questions” (Y8, 5/6/09).

“Continue working on learning the kids names” (A1, 2/11/09).

Connect with the kids, know their names—that is very flattering to people. Taking the time to get to know them, to listen, to go to their functions, hang out at their basketball game, hang out where they hang out. That is kind of what Jesus did. It’s just being there for the kids; it means so much. (A8, 3/25/09).

“Just really trying to connect with them and be with them and accept them for who they are and where they are. Being available and let them know you care about them” (A9, 4/22/09).

“The relationship you have with the kids, I think, is the most important thing” (Y2, 2/19/09).

I wish there was more time to connect one-on-one with these kids. Just sit with the kids and be connected more one-on-one with these kids. The pastor has a role that parents and other of adults can’t play in there. For the pastor needs to establish enough of a connection with the kids so they feel comfortable coming to the pastor with questions and problems. (A3, 2/19/09)

“You need to spend more time in Sabbath School. You need more of a presence in Sabbath School. Have more social events” (Y4, 3/18/09).

“I am not sure, the Slip ‘n Slide that you did to begin the school year was really fun” (Y5, 4/28/09).

“More gym night things on Saturday night for the whole church to come and connect and play together” (A5, 3/24/09).
Really get to know kids on a personal level, like all the kids so you’re someone that they can go to. If they have a positive image of you, they can translate that to their image of God. Get to know them, spend time with them, and be there. Continue to pray and stay close to God. If you live what you talk, by God’s power, people will see something different in you and that will make them be drawn to listen to what you have to say—that is God in you. Time with the kids so they know you, and time with God so he shines through. (Y6, 3/25/09)

Just rub shoulders; be with the kids. I appreciate you, and I admire you. You were there for us, and prayed for us in the parking lot when my son was going through his breakup with his girlfriend—we really appreciated that. (A6, 3/26/09)

“I wish you had a more of a constant presence at youth Sabbath School” (A12, 4/22/09).

“I think you are doing a good a job. I like how you come around to CAYA community groups; be present, be involved” (Y11, 5/6/09).

I’ve heard some say that it would be nice to have more social things that kids could come to, but I think what you’re doing are the important core things, continue being visible at school and chapel. Just be interested in the kids—it’s a picture of Christ. Stay the course on the things that we know are right. (A14, 4/9/09)

“The CAYA Retreat was really cool. I would like to do that again. More low key time to hang-out-together-type-of-stuff” (Y15, 5/6/09).

Always try to understand what kind of glasses the youth are seeing you through. Everybody has got something that is between you and them as the youth pastor. You are just wearing a big target on your back as the youth pastor, because you are the focal point for a lot of youth. So I would really try hard to see myself from the youth’s eyes. Put yourself back as a teenager, maybe even as a teenager that you never were, and try to look at yourself and say what about me doesn’t look like God? What about me isn’t attractive? Try to be as real and as tangible as you can be. That’s what youth are; we are just a lie detector, the whole generation. If we sense anything at all that is fake, or even if we just think its fake, it’s an automatic turnoff. So if you make sure that you are coming at people with straight talk, but with a loving approach, I think that’s great because that’s really all that you need. You don’t really need to change. It’s really asking the question, What do they need
to see about me, what do I need to showcase, to lead them more to Christ.”
(Y7, 3/25/09)

So when I stand up to speak, from your perception, do a lot of youth see me as fake?

Maybe not fake—I don’t think fake is the word. I think people know that you have a good heart, but I do think that there are a lot of youth who see you as something that they can’t relate to. Why? I don’t know. There is probably a plethora of reasons. But maybe it’s because they feel like since you do have such a good relationship with Jesus, they feel like that if . . . I don’t know how to describe that. It’s almost as if you are too nice to young people, not too nice, what’s the word? Sometimes I think that they just need to be looked in the eye and say, “Hey, how you doing?” Some kids, it just really flips them in the other way when someone asks them too many questions. It puts you at a real predicament, because you want to be really kind, but at the same time teenagers are very guarded. I would just always be aware of indicators where kids want you to talk to them more or less. I would always be sure to make kids feel like they are welcomed, but I would always wait to let them make the first move into deep conversation. And then you can just really impact them, if they make the first move. They are going to really remember it a lot more.
(Y7, 3/25/09)

So if I hear what you’re saying, you’re saying there is like a gulf between me and the kids?

Yes, not just with you, but with a lot of our pastors, a lot of pastors in general because a pastor is in a weird place. A pastor is a person who has a deep relationship with God, and you are trying to bring other people to that level without seeming like you are better or without seeming like you know what is best, and they don’t. There is a lot of dangerous ground that you have got to get over to really connect with kids and teenagers. (Y7, 3/25/09).

Do you feel like what you’re talking about is more interpersonally or upfront when speaking to everyone? Or is it both and are they related to each other?

They are related to each other. No one my age wants to see someone who talks to them different when they’re up on stage. Just because someone is asking you to give your life to a God that you are just now getting to know Him, you naturally won’t let yourself do it unless you are 3,000,000% positive in God and in the person who is telling you this. Because you are the immediate fall back. (Y7, 3/25/09)
Any suggestions on how to bridge that gulf?

Always be remembering what it’s like to be our age. And always be interested in the things that are most important to the people that you are talking to, because the youth have a heart and is full of both good and bad things. I think, however, through a deep conversation or just by being very observant, I think you can see what it is that makes these kids the way they are. And I think that that makes a great youth pastor. Somebody who is aware fully of what is going on in these kids lives even without them telling you. I think that would be really good. (Y7, 3/25/09)

What do you think are some things the current youth pastor could do in order to do a better job?

“Definitely like being there for people and talking to them and all that good stuff” (Y1, 2/19/09).

By being there, you mean being present more at specific functions? Or?

“Like that, like being there when people need you and stuff like that and being available” (Y1, 2/19/09).

“Change, definitely being there, I don’t think I’ve ever seen you at Pathfinders. I saw you once, definitely” (Y1, 2/19/09).

So show up to Pathfinders more?

“Yes. Show up twice a month, go to CAYA, Show up to Pathfinders at least once per month” (Y1, 2/19/09).

35. There are a minority of the people in the Collegedale Church who understand the youth pastor’s role to be primarily one of spiritual leadership.

What do you think are some things the current youth pastor could do in order to do a better job?

I think the adult volunteer mentorship approach to doing this ministry is the right direction, like we have been doing. Continue this program like we’re doing; get more adults involved. Continue to work on improving the
partnerships with Colledgdele Academy, Spalding, Southern, our church at large—so there's more synergy involved in our youth ministry. (A2, 3/10/09)

Work on drawing in more kids to the CAYA Community groups. Identify on a piece of paper all the kids who are in a community group and all the kids who are not, and focus on those that are not to make sure they feel welcomed and invited. (A5, 3/24/09)

I would like to see us empowering the youth to use their spiritual gifts more throughout our entire church. We need to teach them to be part of the body of the church by being part of the body of the church. Just as they are expected to do chores at home, they should be working to do the work of the church. If a child does not have a musical gift, they virtually do not get to use their gift in this church. (A11, 3/27/09)

“Do more advertising for CAYA Community—to both Colledgdele Academy students and other people. Do more student led things” (Y13, 5/7/09).

“I am concerned about the kids getting connected with a CAYA Community group—especially kids that are more on the fringe” (A10, 3/27/09).

“Provide more opportunities to volunteer that would be presented to him. He would do more. Provide some good ideas; he wants to volunteer with his friends” (A15, 4/21/09).
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Youth Pastor of the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists, Collegedale, Tennessee, 2001-present.

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