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**ADULT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN YOUTH-BASED MINISTRY**

May 17, 2008

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LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**ADULT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN YOUTH-BASED MINISTRY**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
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BY

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**“Adult Leadership Development in Youth-based Ministry”**

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## Abstract

This project compares the “adult-based youth ministry” paradigm with the “youth-based youth ministry” paradigm, shows the benefits and advantages of the latter, and invites adult advisors to shift to it. A psychology called “choice theory” is introduced and may be considered a useful alternative to the psychology at work in adult-based youth ministry. The science of adult learning called “andragogy” is also introduced as a means for adult advisors to utilize choice theory in their practice of the youth-based ministry paradigm. Both choice theory and andragogy are embedded within the youth-based ministry paradigm making it a comprehensive way of seeing and practicing youth ministry at a time when the church needs to renew its ministry with youth. A workshop was designed to enrich adult advisor’s understandings of the youth-based paradigm, to give practice time for certain skills associated with the paradigm, and to serve as a means to research the participant’s perceptions regarding the paradigm. Follow-up research tested for levels of resistance/acceptance to the paradigm and differences between theory and actual practice. Adults who become skilled in the youth-based ministry focus on advising youth as they discern their passion for God, life, and faith, develop their gifts and leadership skills, and can grow as faithful, responsible participants in the life, mission, and work of the church.

## Contents

Abstract .....	4
Table of Figures .....	6
List of Tables .....	7
<b>Prologue</b> “The Takeover” .....	1
<b>Introduction</b> “Setting the Stage for Adult Leadership in Youth-Based Ministry” .....	9
<b>Chapter 1</b> “The Shoulders Upon Which I Stand” .....	33
<b>Chapter 2</b> “The Pertinent Dynamics of Choice Theory in Youth-based Ministry” .....	51
<b>Chapter 3</b> “Adult Leadership Development—An Andragogical Design utilizing Choice Theory” .....	71
<b>Chapter 4</b> “The Findings and Responses” .....	95
<b>Chapter 5</b> “Conclusions and Recommendations of this Project” .....	141
<b>Appendix A</b> Original Workshop Design.....	158
<b>Appendix B</b> Participants’ Evaluation Survey .....	186
<b>Appendix C</b> Follow-up Online Survey .....	200
<b>Appendix D</b> Follow-up Telephone Survey .....	208
<b>Appendix E</b> Thirteen Skills Adult Advisors Need for Youth-based Ministry.....	212
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	214
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	218

## Table of Figures

Fig. 1. The natural maturation toward self-direction as compared with the culturally permitted rate of growth of self-direction. Source: (Knowles, E. Holton, III, and R. Swanson, 63).....	77
Fig. 2. Shift toward Youth-based Ministry and Andragogy in Practice .....	84
Fig. 3. Skill 1—Asking questions .....	121
Fig. 4. Skill 2—Exploring new areas and guiding the youth.....	124
Fig. 5. Skill 3—Not taking over in most circumstances.....	126
Fig. 6 Skill 4—Guide the group for maximum participation.....	129
Fig. 7 Skill 5—Discerning qualities and gifts in youth. ....	132
Fig. 8 Skill 6—Making Use of Available Resources.....	136

## List of Tables

<b><u>Table 1</u></b> Workshop Participants Location/Gender/Age Breakdown .....	92
<b><u>Table 2</u></b> Respondents' personal way of practicing youth ministry .....	97
<b><u>Table 3</u></b> Respondent's level of importance of shifting to the youth-based ministry paradigm .....	100
<b><u>Table 4</u></b> Respondent's personal acceptance levels to making the shift to youth-based ministry .....	102
<b><u>Table 5</u></b> Respondent's perceptions of their particular settings in Youth Ministry .....	104
<b><u>Table 6</u></b> Respondent's perception of acceptance levels in their current youth ministry setting.....	108
<b><u>Table 7</u></b> Respondent's objection to claim that empowered youth helps quality programs emerge.....	112
<b><u>Table 8</u></b> Challenge levels of choice theory claim on current practices of youth-based ministry .....	114
<b><u>Table 9</u></b> Respondent's levels of opposition to claim that youth-based ministry is in youth's quality world because it meets basic needs they have .....	116
<b><u>Table 10</u></b> Respondents who are low resistance and high likelihood to Skill 1.....	122

**Prologue**  
“The Takeover”

A Narrative Describing Two Adult Leadership Paradigms

*“We’re a rainbow, made of children  
We’re an army singing songs.  
There’s no weapon that can stop us  
Rainbow love is much too strong.”<sup>1</sup>*

“What do they think they are doing? This isn’t the way it’s supposed to go.”

These thoughts whirled through my mind as I flopped down into an overstuffed chair, lost in surprise, my mouth wide open. On the last evening of this week-long high school Music, Art, Drama, and Dance camp (MADD Camp), I sat bewildered watching a small group of headstrong counselors literally take control of the simulation game that my co-director Lynne<sup>2</sup> and I carefully designed during the preceding months.

This week long simulation was the scheduled activity for each evening after supper for three hours. Here we were with the predetermined, yet climactic ending only an hour or so away, and these counselors decided to take matters into their own hands! Their actions stalled the foreordained conclusion of the game, they held up the process which delayed everything else for that evening, and they seemed to do it all with no regard or respect for the amount of hours that Lynne and I put into planning this event!

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<sup>1</sup> Lyrics to the chorus of the song “Rainbow Made of Children,” sung to the tune of “Will the Circle be Unbroken?”

<sup>2</sup> Lynne (Decker) Spencer-Smith and I co-directed MADD camps during the summers of 1986-1989 in the Rocky Mountain Conference, United Church of Christ. At the time, Lynne was an active lay woman working with youth in her church as well as in the RMC. Since then, she has become ordained, and at the time of this writing, serves a local church in the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ.



In our planning sessions, we envisioned that this was going to be THE MOST AMAZING CAMP PROGRAM.... EVER! Each cabin at Camp LaForet, in Colorado Springs, would be a separate “nation.” The object of the simulation game was to have each nation living peaceably with its neighbors, have a fair, just, and productive economy while caring for citizens of its own country. Much like the real world, they would have different relationships with one another. There were some nations that didn’t get along with others and some that did. Much like the real world, they would have their own economies, different styles of government, and different social customs and needs. There were countries rich in resources and strong in power. There were countries with needs beyond their own resources.

Part of the resources was currency, which for all nations were small bags of M&M chocolate candy. Another part of the nation’s resources was a commodity unique to that nation which could be bought and sold with M&M’s. Lynne and I carefully designed the simulation so that each nation needed some other nation’s commodity in order to have a productive economy. This ensured that negotiations would have to take place between nations in order for the national and global economies, as well as the morale of the nations to thrive.

Lynne and I also decided during the planning of this simulation that a little twist was necessary for the last night. All nations were to come together in a sort of “United Nations” to create a just and peaceful world. Each country held a “key” (which was really a piece of a large puzzle). In the end, as they negotiated with one another satisfactorily, each nation’s “key” would be contributed and put together with the other “keys” making a map directing them to a wonderful “treasure” for everyone.

For the first four evenings, all went according to plan. The youth began to understand who they were in the midst of the wider world. Selected youth ambassadors for nations went out and made bargains with other nations. Trading commodities with other nations happened harmoniously. M&M's were shared. Some wealthy nations which had acquired more wealth were all too happy to share that wealth for some commodity with a poorer nation. Poorer nations spent time negotiating with wealthier nations in order to build themselves up.

Everyone went through the right motions; all the right words were said.

That last night, the entire camp was present in the lodge. The ambassadors were negotiating left and right. Youth from all nations were all around the sides and up in the balcony of the main hall in the lodge. Everybody was happy. No problem. Soon the keys would be contributed, and we'd get to the treasure in no time. It was the most amazing camp program... ever!

That is, until Lynne and I were met by surprise.

The simulation was too simple. Too programmed. Too scripted. Too predictable. Too-preplanned by Lynne and myself leading the youth and counselors by the hand through preplanned activities.

In my satisfaction of the game going like clockwork, I didn't notice that some of the counselors were up to something. When they pulled Lynne aside to tell her what was up, she was totally surprised. The counselors had observed the campers, just as Lynne and I had, but they were watching through different eyes and recognized that the outcome

was happening too easily. “They’re not taking any of this stuff seriously,” said Scott, the staff’s ring-leader to Lynne. “It’s all coming together too easily. It’s not realistic,” he said with several of the staff members gathered around. “So, we’re going to do something, but you have to promise not to tell Galen.” Lynne gulped. This program was a joint effort. “Why not,” she asked. “...because he’ll want to plan it all out and take control.”

What the staff was up to was a takeover. They were going to present themselves to the “United Nations” as a country that had not been recognized in this global community or included in the negotiations. They were going to seize all the keys to the puzzle and hold them “captive” until they were satisfied with the negotiations which would now include them.

It happened quickly. They moved in. Scott and the counselors went to the bargaining tables, explaining to the youth ambassadors that there was something wrong with the key pieces that needed to be fixed. Banking on their pre-established authority as counselors, they said to the youth, “Could we have your key for a few minutes? We need to fix something” to which the youth obediently obliged and handed them over. Within minutes, the counselors controlled every key. Once Scott had them all in hand, he jumped up onto the table and announced, “We are in control now! You have to do what we say, and we have to be satisfied before we can continue toward the treasure!” Then the unthinkable happened! Scott demanded that all the ambassadors, and only the ambassadors, were to meet with him and the rest of the counselors in a back room off the main hall of the lodge immediately. I was not welcomed.

“What do they think they are doing? This isn’t the way it’s supposed to go. These counselors are ruining this game! All those plans were unraveling!” My mind ran wild with those thoughts. They undermined Lynne and my efforts. My heart felt wounded by the sting of betrayal, disappointment, frustration, and anger. I was too close, too invested in the success of the curriculum, the success of the simulation and... in my success as a co-director. I had to get out of the place. I had to clear my head. I stepped outside. What do I do now? Uncertainty gripped me. I was out of control and felt lost because of it.

After a few minutes outside, I felt an irresistible tug to get back in there and watch how this was going to turn out. I went around the lodge, and came in the door on the other side. I said nothing. I was trying to control the plethora of questions and feelings running through me. Scott and the other counselors had not yet come out of the back room, but I noticed the emotional energy level among the rest of the youth had shifted upwards in intensity. Somebody started as a lone voice up in the balcony— *“We’re a rainbow made of children, we’re an army singing songs...”* That’s all that was needed. The entire group started singing! They sang louder and louder. They sang it again. They sang, and they sang, and they sang. Again, and again, they sang the song.

Finally, Scott, the counselors, and the youth ambassadors came back into the main hall. The singing stopped abruptly. Emotions were running high. “What do you want?” Scott shouted, engaging and empowering the youth at the same time with his question. “Our key back!” the youth shouted back. “What will you give for it?” Scott demanded. “We will loan you some of our M&M’s,” one youth said, to which Scott snapped back, “We don’t want your M&M’s. Not good enough!” “How about our commodities?”

another youth asked. “We will help you get established as a nation by trading our commodities with you.” Scott shot back, “We already are a nation! We don’t need your commodities. Not good enough!” “We will make a free enterprise system so that what you need, we can make, and you can buy from us” ventured a third youth. “No! NOT GOOD ENOUGH!”

A needed pause took place as the negotiations settled down for a moment. Finally, a youth ambassador spoke up. “We can share all our resources with you. What we have is yours.” Scott paused. “That’s good, but you are not there yet.” Catching on, another youth said, “We can share what is most precious to us with you.” “What is that?” Scott asked. “Our friendship,” said the youth. Another youth shouted out, “We can share mutual love and respect with you.” “Now you’re getting there!” said Scott. “We can share our faith in God with you!” said another youth. “You will always be welcome in our nation, to be among our people, and ours among yours. We can share the leadership of our world together!” Scott looked around. “Now,” said Scott, “that IS good enough. It’s time for you to find this treasure together. Ambassadors...?”

And, as if on cue, a cue designed in the back room negotiations, the youth ambassadors came forward. The keys to the puzzle were given back. They had to work together to complete the puzzle. Once put together and interpreted, it indicated that the treasure was in the chapel. When we gathered there, we worshipped together. In the context of that worship moment, we discovered that the treasure for everyone was the presence of God in each of us, the peace of God that comes through each of us, and the Spirit of God that inspires each of us to work for God and to live with each other in peace.

After the worship time together, we spent over an hour debriefing the entire simulation game. Youth and adults shared together what experiences they had, what it was like to negotiate, what it was like to have everything thrown for a loop, and what it was like for the youth to experience empowerment.

The next day, after the youth had gone home, Lynne and I had our closing staff meeting. Thoughts and feelings were shared. Everyone wanted this simulation game to be a powerful experience for our youth. Lynne and I thought it would happen through the leadership of our intricate planning. Our game was adult-designed. It was curriculum driven. We led it by counting on the youth and counselors to follow the instructions of our game. If they followed the instructions, the treasure would be achieved.

The counselors believed otherwise. The powerful experience would come, but not through the “top down” mentality. It would come through work and struggle. It would come when the curriculum and the best laid plans were side-tracked by some head-strong, but astute counselors. It would come with people being infinitely more important than design. It would come as youth were empowered in response to the upheaval and given the opportunity to engage in their own choices and direction. The powerful experience would come as Lynne and I learned that all we needed to do was lay the ground work, and the youth would take it from there.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Lynne and I collaborated on this story, the events of which occurred during the summer of 1988.



## Introduction

### “Setting the Stage for Adult Leadership in Youth-Based Ministry”

*“Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.”*  
Proverbs 22:6 (NRSV)

*“We know that our young people can’t catch the faith without being around people of mature faith. Those who have it need to be hanging out with those who are on the quest”* (Contos, 8).

From 1992 to 2000, I was the chair of the Youth Ministry Steering Committee in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. The committee was formed mid-summer with our first planning retreat occurring in mid-August. During those planning retreats, we not only planned the major youth events for the conference, but we also took time for the youth and adults to start learning and practicing skills needed to lead these events.<sup>1</sup> Youth were learning how to plan, prepare, lead, and evaluate the activities of the event. Those four steps are the basic planning process in youth-based ministry and are explained in greater detail in the next chapter. Adults were learning how to empower the youth to do that process effectively. Over the years, the more planning retreats we had, the more I practiced this style of youth ministry, the more I realized I was enriching adults’ understanding as adult advisors as much as I was enriching the youth in the concepts of youth-based ministry.

At these planning retreats, I provided leadership for the youth to “practice” the youth-based ministry concepts, and for adults to practice advising and supporting the

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<sup>1</sup> By ‘youth’ I am referring to individuals or groups roughly in all phases of adolescent development. In the context of western culture, the age range is roughly equivalent to 12-19 years of age. By ‘adult’ I am referring to anyone 21 years and older working with youth in the capacity as an adult youth advisor. These people could be pastors, Christian educators, youth pastors, college graduates, camp counselors, lay volunteers, even parents. Some exceptions to the age 21 rule might be high school graduates who are in some kind of advisor-in-training program preparing to become an adult youth advisor.



youth, thereby turning these retreats into “mini planning/training sessions.” I came to these retreats prepared for all sorts of activities and games to take place which would help teach those youth to be the actual leaders at the larger youth events. In the beginning of the retreat, I asked for youth volunteers to lead upcoming sessions called “learning moments” and gave them their choice of activities and appropriate resources needed to carry out those sessions.<sup>2</sup> I also asked for adult advisors to be resource people for the youth as they prepared. The adults were to guide, assist where needed, and ask questions to help the youth think through the plans. The youth then implemented what they prepared, led the sessions, and everyone discussed how it went afterwards.

During this evaluation, feedback was offered on the content of the session, how the youth themselves fared in leading the session, and what they could do to improve their leadership skills. Adult advisors also heard from the youth about how strongly or not the youth felt supported, guided, and empowered to lead the session. One of the youth leaders at that time who is now a pastor reflected upon his experiences with this process:

“I remember how you planned out the committee planning events so well—you led us in games and devotions, and we practiced them together. We then took what we practiced to the larger group [at the youth event]. I do this now with my kids here—I will have a student lead a devotional in the context of the steering committee, and then I will ask them to lead it in the large group. The other thing I saw was a faith that I wanted to have. It was teaching faith by example. I wanted to be that excited about my faith. It was contagious” (Russell III, 22).

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<sup>2</sup> What I called “learning moments” were hour-long workshops designed specifically for the planning committee. I focused on the basics of youth event leadership—the art of leading a discussion with youth, the art of planning a workshop, the art of planning and leading worship, etc.—using youth-based ministry concepts.

## Two Youth Ministry Paradigms

The ability of youth to make choices in their youth ministry programs and the need for adult advisor empowerment go hand in hand in youth ministry. “Adults and youth share the partnership of the immediate youth ministry mission, dividing responsibilities according to gifts, experiences, and developmental concerns” wrote Dave Rahn, Professor of Educational Ministries (Dean, C. Clark, and D. Rahn, 170). Adult advisors who empower youth deliberately offer support and encouragement for youth to carry out their decisions. Instead of being told what to do, the youth can discern and choose what to do and how to do it. Instead of an adult being “in charge,” youth can find out what being “in charge” is like. These experiences and others like them can be powerful learning moments which describe some characteristics of the youth-based ministry paradigm.<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes, even though the ability to choose might be there, for whatever reason, in many settings of youth ministry, youth are not empowered to discern, make, or carry out their decisions. Adults with authoritative leadership in the program or in the church may have the power to make decisions or may be unwilling to give up that power. When that happens, the ministry of the church tends to have a “top-down” feel to it: what faith convictions the adult leader(s) have the youth are supposed to have. What program the adult leader(s) plans the youth are supposed to do. This easily can mutate into the ‘what the pastor, the priest, or the authoritative adult(s) say goes’ mentality. Sometimes the

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<sup>3</sup> I owe the definition and use of the term ‘paradigm,’ to Marcus Borg in his book The Heart of Christianity: “A paradigm is a comprehensive way of seeing, a way of seeing as a whole. Sometimes called a gestalt, a paradigm is a large interpretive framework that shapes how everything is seen, a way of constellating particulars into a whole” (Borg, 4).

“top-down” approach is revealed as the leadership of the church, when faced with a not-so-pleasant task, adopts the mentality, “We’ll just tell our youth to do this or that...”

Remember how easy it was for the adult counselors to acquire the keys to the puzzle from the youth in “The Takeover?” They were banking on the “top down” approach—the adult-based youth ministry paradigm—and the youth willingly obliged! Youth are so programmed with adult-based leadership. It’s embedded in our systems and our way of thinking, so much so that not one youth resisted the request or grew skeptical... until it was too late!

The system in place within the varieties of settings for youth ministry may also cause a lack of empowerment, especially when the ‘we’ve never done it that way before’ mentality is at work, or when youth representation is not present at board meetings, church councils, consistories, congregational meetings, or other policy-making groups within the system.

Authoritative adults, systemic issues—these are two of several factors that reveal the church’s perpetuation of adults making decisions in youth ministry settings. This diagnosis is the research problem this project addresses. I claim in this project that there is a viable response to this problem, and it lies in the dynamics of youth-based ministry embedded with a working psychological theory and learning techniques that feature a freedom we all cherish: the freedom to choose!

On the one hand, my bias is that I am an advocate for the youth-based ministry paradigm. I strive to be a youth-based minister in the particular settings of youth ministry where I work. On the other hand, I affirm that both ways of seeing youth ministry are

enhanced by what each has in common. For example, both paradigms associated with the church's ministry usually have God in Christ at the center.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Roland Martinson rightly points out that "youth ministry belongs to God through the ministry of God's whole church..." and "...youth ministry can be understood as one of the many facets of life and mission of Jesus Christ's church" (Martinson, 12, 14). Because of this common denominator, many lives have been touched by God's Spirit. Many people have found new meaning in their lives as they moved from faithlessness or indifference to becoming faithful, faithing individuals, and servants of God making a difference in the lives of others. These kinds of experiences happen regardless of which paradigm of youth ministry is practiced; indeed many of the church's ordained clergy have heard their calling for ministry in part because they have participated in one or the other youth ministry paradigm.

A second commonality of the youth ministry paradigms is that both contribute something of value toward the overall purpose of the church and its ministry, namely increasing the love of God, neighbor, and self.<sup>5</sup> In both paradigms, the Spirit of God has and continues to lead adults and youth toward living lives of loving compassion toward God and others, faithful service, and courageously witnessing for peace and justice.

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<sup>4</sup> By 'church's ministry,' I am acknowledging that youth ministry is a part of the overall picture of Christian ministry. I also am referring to the fact that youth ministry and all its various settings can be found within the church universal, i.e., the Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox branches of Christianity. I am not referring to civic, community, or special interest groups for youth.

<sup>5</sup> Many scholars and theologians have wrestled with the purpose of the church and its ministry over the centuries, and there are perhaps dozens of adequate statements which work well. For the purposes of this project (and indeed for much of my ministry with youth and the local church), I affirm H. Richard Niebuhr's statement: "The purpose of the church and its ministry is the increase among men [women, youth, and children] the love of God, neighbor, [and self]" (H. Richard Niebuhr, 31, adaptations mine). In some youth ministry programs, this expressed purpose is not expressed at all in any way. Rather, among the participants of the program, this purpose seems to be implied as a given. I remain a skeptic, however, as to how effective unarticulated but implied purposes are for any group.

A third feature common to both paradigms is the presence of what I call “The Three “S’s” of Youth Ministry” (a Spiritual emphasis, a Social emphasis, and a Service emphasis). No matter what the setting for youth ministry, i.e., one on one settings, church youth group meetings, special events, summer camps, weekend retreats, etc., if the overall approach to programming youth ministry events includes a balanced presence of the three “S’s,” the chances are strong a high quality youth ministry program is or can be established.

If these three commonalities are so significant, why would I advocate for youth-based ministry so strongly? A detailed examination of both paradigms will help to make the reasons clear.

### **Adult-based Youth Ministry Paradigm**

Adult leaders in youth ministry often function from the familiar and conventional paradigm of youth ministry called “adult-based youth ministry.” In most settings of youth ministry found in the church today, this paradigm is most commonly practiced. Youth ministry of this type for many individuals and churches has offered an excellent and efficient structure when designing youth ministry programs. Adults can control what goes on in the church’s (or appropriate faith community’s) ministry to youth. The details for the programs, events, and activities can usually be accomplished by adults in as little time as possible. Adult-based youth ministry still is perhaps the dominant paradigm at work in churches and many other youth ministry settings today.

Several characteristics describe the adult-based youth ministry paradigm. Adults typically lead and direct the programs and events *for* the youth with little or no

involvement by the youth themselves. Adults use their more advanced organizational skills, more practiced detail-planning abilities, and more mature social skills to plan events and activities in which they *hope* youth will participate. Thinking back to “The Takeover” again, it is clear that Lynne and I used our advanced knowledge and skills to create the simulation game of nations and ambassadors. Nice and creative, but very adult-based.

Adults know how to tap into the hundreds of resources at their fingertips. Popular publishers such as “Group Publishing,” “Youth Specialties,” and “Youth Worker Journal,” offer creative, exciting resources for youth and youth gatherings, mostly for adults to use and lead in the youth ministry setting where they work. Available educational resources frequently incorporate the pedagogical method of the knowledgeable teacher transmitting the required information to the unknowledgeable youth. As a result, adults who teach youth often do so by following the curriculum, or by covering the prescribed list of “church” subjects taught in the prescribed way— “the way they’ve always been taught.”

Additional resources within the congregation or faith community are accessible most often through the networks of relationships adults have established, so adults make the contacts. Adults cover the details. Adults bring the resource to the youth, their youth meeting, their youth event, the educational class, or the project.

Using these resources can provide for quick and convenient programs for the youth, and a certain satisfaction for adults can be gained by successfully implementing such programs. Sometimes the mentality ‘It’s always better when I just do it myself’

becomes a prominent sentiment among adult advisors. And, it is true! All the youth need to do is show up and take in what was planned for them. Adults do the leg work and often take control of the leadership making for increased efficiency in the youth ministry program.

Strong emphasis is placed on having a good time. Adults tend to schedule an abundance of activities which feature socializing and having fun. The less-frequently scheduled events and activities are the service project opportunities and faith-building programs. This is not to say that socializing and having fun in youth ministry are unimportant. It is to say that our culture tends to emphasize the former declaring that it is more entertaining (and therefore, more important) to socialize, have fun, be competitive, and live materialistically. Culturally-oriented adults who program youth ministry activities often acquiesce to culture's influence by scheduling an excess of laser tag events, bowling parties, mini-golf outings, game days, video/pizza events, or other similar social, fun-oriented events. It is not uncommon to have all-night lock-ins planned without thoughtful, faith-enriching programs or worship opportunities as a main emphasis of the event. If a meaningful program is planned, it frequently has a short amount of time devoted to it. Instead, the more common plan is for youth to come to a lock-in with their latest technological toys and just "chill" with one another. Usually there is an abundance of junk food on the table, and the DVDs that are watched in the late night, early morning hours more often than not amplify culture's influence.

Adult-based youth ministry has some prominent concerns associated with it. If the cultural influence is strong in adult youth advisors, and if the 'It's always better if I do it myself' mentality is also operating, then very little responsibility is taken by the youth.

Very little self-discipline grows in youth. Youth leadership skills have little chance to take root.

Another concern is that the program or the scheduled activities become more important than the youth themselves. Youth ministry is reduced to something mostly about numbers. Success in youth ministry is gauged on whether or not the attendance at a youth gathering was strong. Having fun is the important thing so that the next event hopefully will have more participants. Congregational and faith community members steeped in culture deem a youth ministry program successful if the youth are drawn in, they keep coming back, or if they fill the pews on Sunday morning.

Concerns are raised about faithfulness to scriptural roots. Adult-based youth ministry can be seen as detracting from several biblical principles basic to the church's ministry and mission. For example, Paul calls upon the new Christians in Ephesus to build up the body of Christ by equipping the saints for ministry of the church (Ephesians 4:12). If today's adult leaders do not give youth the chance to make choices in their faith growth or in creatively designing their events and programs, and if youth are not given the responsibilities to implement these events and to learn from their mistakes, then opportunities for youth to become equipped to do the ministry of the church are reduced. They will be less empowered to contribute to the ministry of the church as youth and quite possibly not contribute in the life of the church as adults, either.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This is not to say that the practice of youth-based ministry is immune to detracting from biblical principles. Anything human beings take part in can detract from biblical principles, especially if emphasis is so high that it takes the place of God. Additionally, practicing youth-based ministry does not guarantee that one will be a contributing member in the life of the church. However, in healthy settings and practices of youth-based ministry, there are increased opportunities to serve and contribute for both youth and adults.



Even though our society has grown comfortable with high emphasis on self, numbers, possessions, opulence, new updates and technological advances, people of Christian faith have long attempted to resist culture's influence. What amounts to culture's acceptable and worthwhile lifestyles, norms, and values are incompatible to Christianity (White, x). There is a tension between living in this world and being set apart from it, between living a life of selfishness and consumption and a life of faith discernment and service to others.

As already suggested, adult-based youth ministry is not all bad. Much can be said for its value and efficiency, its ability to transmit the tenets, theology, and practices of the Christian faith. Youth are told what to believe, what to do, how to practice faith. However, inasmuch as the adult-based youth ministry paradigm has functioned well for many people for many years and has some advantages and positive selling points, given our ever-changing culture, the complicated needs that youth and adults have in today's world, and the needs of the Christian church, I have found the adult-based youth ministry paradigm less than compelling. Youth receive the message that their abilities, presence, and importance are to be in the background in the life of the church: seen and not heard, as it were. The results in the long run can quite possibly be catastrophic: youth either abandon the church and faithful practices of Christianity, go searching for faith answers elsewhere, as in secular culture or other religions, or a very common result, the youth become carbon copies of the adults in control. The adult-based paradigm often operates from what our culture expects in youth ministry, making it prone to culture's norms and mores.

## Youth-based Youth Ministry Paradigm

Youth-based ministry is prone to the same cultural norms and mores. In practice, however, it may be more effective in promoting the tenets, theology, and practices of the Christian faith. In my understanding and theology of youth ministry, I believe God continuously invites youth and adults to be in a covenantal relationship with God that is life-giving and holy. Certainly, in our culture, high value is placed on individuals having the freedom to decide what to believe about God, their faith, the church, or how to live and behave as an individual in the world. In youth ministry settings, that high value is no different. Youth desire to make choices about their faith and their events which are heard and respected by others and are considered part of the mission of the church (Hendricks, 7). Because people have the ability to make choices, each person is free to choose how to respond to God's invitation.<sup>7</sup>

In youth-based ministry, youth are given the opportunity to choose their own emphasis and direction. They do most of the planning for their programs, events, and

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<sup>7</sup> Such an invitation may be accepted or rejected with prevailing circumstances. On the one hand, to blindly assume that a person's response to God's invitation is simply a matter of choosing either "yes," or "no" without considering extenuating circumstances such as genetics, gender, environment, conditions of mental faculties, etc. would be unrealistic. On the other hand, a person called by God into ministry or service may feel apprehended by God and believe to have no choice in the matter whatsoever because of that person's current circumstances. Consider Paul's (Saul's) call into ministry where he was blinded by a "light from heaven" (Acts 9: 1-19). Under those circumstances, he might have perceived that he had no choice but to become a missionary for Christ. Some might even say he was "forced" to be Christ's missionary. However, if within Paul there existed a resolute willfulness to disobey or reject the call, being a human being with free will, he *could* have rejected the call, if he desired that strongly enough. Other biblical characters have demonstrated a willful disobedience, like in the story of Jonah, when the prophet chose to reject God's call and run away from it, but then later accepted it under different circumstances (Jonah 1-2). Still others called by God offered resistance or questioned the call only to have responded with acceptance, like Moses (Exodus 4: 1-17), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1: 4-7), and Mary (Luke 1: 26-35), to name a few. Ultimately, a decision was made by those biblical characters to respond on their own volition to follow God's call, which is perhaps as it should be if we are to believe that God wants willful, devoted servants led by a heartfelt desire to serve God; not metaphorical, artificial puppets yanked here and there as if connected to the strings of a Master Puppeteer.

activities using their gifts, creative abilities, energy, and their passion for God, justice, love, and life. Adults are there to first step out of the visible leadership in the youth ministry settings, and second, to work with the youth, advising, nurturing, coaching, and mentoring them, equipping them as the saints doing the work of ministry. Adults call forth the gifts of the youth, encouraging their passion and zeal so that youth may step up and lead their programs, events, and activities, giving them valuable experiences of life and leadership as they journey through adolescence and participate in the life of the church.

Some characteristics of the youth-based ministry paradigm are articulated by Thom and Joani Schultz in the following paragraph:

Young people themselves do most of the planning, preparing, and executing for youth ministry programs, activities, and service mission. Selected youth people plan youth group meetings and special events. They decide on the content and how to pull it off. They delegate to the other young people the responsibilities for directing games and crowd breakers, song leading, praying and leading Bible studies and discussions to other young people. The kids do the publicity; make many of the youth ministry's financial decisions, handle disciplinary problems within the group; and plan and prepare lock-ins, retreats, and trips. They're in charge of setting goals and shaping the future of youth ministry in the church... Adults relinquish the spotlight—to perform in its glow. And to suffer in the spotlight when the performance is less than good. Young people are the visible doers. Adults are the humble servants. Adults are involved in youth ministry, not for their own glory, but to satisfy a Christ-like craving to see young people grow to be all they can be as God's children (Shultz, 16-17).

While one part of the above paragraph emphasizes that gifts and responsibilities of the youth arise from within themselves, the other part emphasizes that youth are nurtured by loving, faithful, and faithing adult advisors. Adults in the youth-based ministry paradigm help to create a positive and healthy atmosphere in which youth may

grow and practice their faith, develop and practice their leadership skills and abilities as they lead their youth programs, events, and activities.

Youth-based ministry occurs in all kinds of settings for youth ministry. Generally, most of those settings can be categorized into three focal points: individual, meeting, and event centered settings. In an “Individual-centered” youth-based ministry, rich responses to God’s invitation are highly likely, especially in one-on-one ministry or similar. Youth are guided by the adults who actively practice their faith and youth-based ministry skills offering time, conversation, presence to youth. In such settings, youth can grow in faith freely without the external demands that they believe certain doctrine or adhere to certain church traditions. They can experiment by putting their faith into practice, especially when facing moments of celebration and triumph, difficult issues, or turning points on life’s journey. With adults practicing youth-based ministry skills, individual youth can sense that genuine adult advisors are valuable to their faith journey.

In “Meeting-centered” and “Event-centered” (Jones and Potts, 8), youth-based ministry settings, or in other settings where adults practice empowerment, youth can have the main decision-making and leadership responsibilities for the development and implementation of their youth ministry programs. Leadership skills can develop as youth actually experience being leaders. Social skills start to mature. Faith and trust in God and each other tend to grow when youth assume responsibility for their youth ministry program. Youth ownership is enhanced and presumably leads to greater participation by other youth (Dean, Clark, and Rahn, 169). These are the likely results when youth are given greater autonomy to shape their own worship, their own service projects, and their own physical space. Carol Lytch reports that one youth minister in her project called

“Choosing Church” focused her efforts on teaching leadership skills to younger teens, so that by the time they were seniors, they were capable of running the youth group (Lytle, 195).

Youth-based ministry rests on the belief that the youth of the church are vital to the church not only as its leaders for tomorrow; they are, in fact, part of the leadership of the church for today. This belief has some biblical support. God often uses the youngest, the most unprepared, or the most unlikely of people for God’s purposes. By the power of the Holy Spirit at work in those people, God’s purposes get accomplished. Consider how God knew of David’s capabilities to be a king even as he was a youth out tending sheep (1 Samuel 16: 11-12). Consider how the gospel of Mark was probably written by a “certain young man” who was an eye witness to Jesus’ passion (Mark 14:51-2). Scholars suggest that this youth was none other than Mark himself. Consider how Jesus called some of the most unlikely of sorts as disciples: a tax collector, fishermen, and perhaps even a youthful Andrew. Yet, Jesus believed in them. He placed his greatest trust in them. Jesus empowered this unpromising group fairly early on in his ministry with authority to proclaim the message, cast out demons, and to cure every disease and sickness (Mark 3: 13-19, Matthew 10:1) effectively saying, “I’m not the only one through whom God works.”

This belief is further grounded in the theological idea that youth ministry is vital to the church’s mission and ministry and thus, an integral part of the extending ministry of Jesus Christ. Youth have faith, vitality, energy, passion, and enthusiasm which are among their many God-given gifts, and God constantly invites people of faith to use their gifts in ministry. When adults believe in the work of the Holy Spirit within each person

for the “common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7), there is no reason to think that the Holy Spirit is not in the youth themselves as they grow in faith, take on responsibilities within their youth groups and the church, and become instruments of God’s purpose. When youth use these gifts, when guided by skilled adults who are on the faith journey with them, the love of God, neighbor, and self tends to increase not only among youth, but all of God’s people.

Therefore, youth-based ministry is much more than social events or activities held under the auspices of the church’s ministry. Youth-based ministry is about ministry to youth, by youth, and for youth (a “2 x 4” ministry). It is more about “being” the church as opposed to “doing stuff” at the church or in wider church settings. It is more about balancing the three “S’s” (the Spiritual, Social, and Service emphases) and understanding all three as growth opportunities.

In all three of the “S’s” of youth ministry, critical questions are raised: who does the creating/planning, preparing, implementing, and evaluating of the youth ministry program—the youth or the adults? What role do the youth and adults play in effective youth ministry programs? This project claims that in the youth-based ministry paradigm, youth become the main creators, planners, implementers, and evaluators of their programs with adults taking the appropriate complementary and necessary role of ‘adult advisor,’ walking with the youth on the journey.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> I prefer the term ‘adult advisor’ to other terms such as ‘adult sponsor,’ ‘adult chaperone,’ ‘adult leader,’ or ‘adult guarantor.’ Both ‘adult counselor’ and ‘adult mentor’ come closer, but even those terms connote a teacher/student relationship which can be misconstrued to have adult-based foundations. The term ‘adult advisor,’ in my opinion, seems to capture best certain aspects of the youth-based ministry paradigm such as the orientation toward choice, the give and take dialogue youth and adults engage in, and

The picture is not total affirmation for youth-based ministry, however. A prominent concern about youth-based ministry from the adult-based paradigm's perspective is a lack of trust that adults have in the ability of youth to be responsible for their own faith growth and their youth programs. A higher failure factor is a threatening risk especially if the cultural emphasis of success is predominant. Failure is not tolerated in many cultural circles. Other related concerns occur if adult leaders are too deeply invested in the success of a program, or if an adult is concerned that his or her reputation within the larger faith community will suffer if the youth are seen as struggling or even failing in their events or activities. In both cases, these are undesirable results.

Youth-based ministry is also cumbersome, and in many cases, very slow. Youth of today are stretched to the limit! They are as over-extended in their scheduled activities as they possibly can be. Youth often wait until the last minute to get their responsibilities accomplished because they have so many extra-curricular activities and events going on. Not only that, youth are not experienced advance planners. Consequently, procrastination can and often does become an issue. When the mentality of "It's faster and easier if I do it myself" is present, it is usually the result of a concern that youth-based ministry is not streamlined for efficiency (Schultz, 25-27). These are some of the frustrations that come with youth-based ministry. The best way often is not the easiest, simplest, or most convenient way.

Yet, I have observed youth-based ministry effectively reach an inner desire of youth to be a part of something spiritually significant, wonderfully creative, and

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the involvement adults can have with youth on the journey while incorporating the necessary guidance youth need.

inherently passionate in their lives. I do not claim that youth-based ministry is the only effective paradigm of youth ministry which fosters that kind of spiritual significance, but in my experience, I have witnessed it do exactly that. One respondent in a previous study was describing the kind of influence youth-based ministry had on his life. He wrote, “Youth-based ministry had a profound impact on my life. The encouragement and love which I received helped me develop in more ways than I could ever list.” Another youth respondent wrote, “I came home from events with a new appreciation for God, myself, and my own abilities, and the abilities that others had to offer. I felt like I was worth living because God had given me such great gifts, and others were able to recognize that as well” (Russell III, 57).

### **The Invitation for Adults to Shift toward Youth-based Ministry**

Given the fact that the freedom to choose is highly valued in our society and my sense that the adult-based youth ministry paradigm has become less than persuasive, even with the concerns associated with the youth-based ministry paradigm, the faith and leadership skill developments in youth outweigh those concerns. The youth-based ministry paradigm is a means for the church to have faithful, dedicated, high quality leaders and ministry programs now and in the future. It encourages adult advisors to exercise a set of leadership skills and abilities which do not focus on adults leading youth meetings, programs, or youth events, but rather on advising and assisting youth leaders as *they* choose how to lead *their* meetings, programs, and events. Adults are called upon to be a guide and resource to the youth as the youth run the show. The adult advisor’s focus is on sharing life’s journey with youth. They help youth to discern the benchmarks and guideposts along the way without imposing their own wishes and ideas. Adult advisors



strive to cultivate an environment where the influence of the Holy Spirit is felt, the development of Christian faith/theology takes place in individuals, and quality programming takes place in youth-ministry groups.

I recall a high school youth sharing with me her thoughts about her future out by the campfire one evening at a youth planning retreat. The reason we were having this conversation was because she was contemplating going into the ministry, and she asked why I felt called to be a minister. I shared my story with her, and I offered her support and encouragement. She later wrote that although she decided ministry was not exactly what she was called to do, I helped her see that she could minister to others in her community and church with her special talents and abilities (Russell III, 20).

Whereas popular youth ministry programs are inclined to teach biblical doctrine, religious convictions, and church practices from authoritative teachers, youth-based ministry invites faithful adults to share faith stories and moments of insight they have learned from the biblical story, the church's story, and their own story. Conversations can happen in a multi-way dialogue, instead of a one way transmission of information. Youth and adults engage in meaningful growth instead of youth becoming "passive consumers," doing what they are told to do because 'that's what they are supposed to do' (White, 203).

Whereas the adult-based paradigm frequently sends the message to youth that *their* faith, their ideas, their ability as planners and leaders, and even their importance in the church or other youth ministry settings are sub-par and something less than vital, youth-based ministry stresses that all those characteristics are not only vital, but life-

giving. Thus, an invitation is extended to adults to shift toward a paradigm of youth-based ministry and learn skills that can grow, nurture, and sustain it.

In this way, youth might have the opportunity to be not so much the passive consumer, but rather, they would become engaged partners with adults. David White describes the shift as a reframing of youth ministry which can cultivate a personal faith in relationship to their lives:

As long as youth ministry is seen as the transmission of established ideas and practices, the only appropriate role for youth will be as passive consumers. However, if youth ministry can reframe its activities to make them more organically related, then it can reorient youth in conversation with Christian faith and the texts of their lives, opening them to more creative responses. Once their lives are viewed not simply as scripted, but as appropriated through critical reflection and constructive action, then young people can have a greater sense of their own power in shaping their lives in relation to their faith. Apart from these critical and constructive habits, young people risk cultivating faith that is too easily assimilated to dominant cultural views (White, 203-4).

Patricia Hendricks' insightful book entitled Hungry Souls, Holy Companions, calls for a paradigm shift in youth ministry as well. The shift she describes emphasizes a movement toward integrating spirituality with youth ministry "by exploring contemplative prayer, discernment, spiritual direction, community, and Sabbath-living" (Hendricks, 77). I found support for my invitation for adults to shift to the youth-based ministry paradigm in Hendricks' words:

This paradigm is a spiritual formation model that views youth ministry as more than entertainment. It challenges youth to be formed into the image of Christ. This shift moves away from looking at youth as "blank slates" needed to have information poured into them to a new attitude that views youth as people who already experience God in their lives. The purpose of youth ministry is to affirm those experiences of God and to give youth a language to express their knowledge and the questions about God. Churches that believe youth are people who experience God and who, in their own way, thirst for God have an attitude that

draws youth into the life of the congregation and invites them to stay. Those churches value and respect the opinions and ideas of young members (Hendricks, 77).

Such a shift takes time—baby steps in many instances! “We cannot guarantee you overnight success,” wrote Thom and Joani Shultz in the epilogue of their book. “In fact, the youth-based ministry at our current church did not really begin to cruise until its second year” (Schultz, 200). Simply educating both youth and adults in the concepts of the youth-based ministry paradigm takes time. Patience, care and nurture, even a willingness to experience a “hybrid” or a blending of paradigms<sup>9</sup> as the journey progresses are important as a youth-based ministry gets started and grown in any of the settings in which it may be found.<sup>10</sup>

### **An Overview for this Dissertation**

Given the distinction between the adult-based youth ministry and youth-based youth ministry paradigms and the overall intent for adults to respond to the invitation of shifting to the youth-based ministry paradigm while learning the necessary skills accompanying it, the rest of this dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 entitled, “The Shoulders Upon Which I Stand” acknowledges that this project does not stand alone or in a vacuum. Many scholars have gone before me and this project and the work of these people are the metaphorical shoulders upon which I stand. A review of

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<sup>9</sup> An example of a “hybrid” might be when small responsibilities are delegated to capable youth. Little by little, with support, encouragement, and guidance, youth learn how to take their responsibilities effectively. As time goes on, more responsibilities are delegated until youth begin assuming responsibility without the need for an adult to delegate it anymore. Another example of a “hybrid” form of youth-based ministry may be when a youth leader in the system, i.e., the youth group president or a “youth representative” serves on an official board as the youth liaison to the adult-led authoritative group. Such a presence constitutes a blending of paradigms—a youth-based presence in an adult-based setting.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A for details on some settings for youth-based ministry.

their works in youth ministry, Christian education, and psychological theory will be offered in this chapter substantiating the assumptions I make in this project. For the sake of brevity, I list the three assumptions below:

1. *Youth ministry is a vital part of the mission of the Christian church.*
2. *Adult advisors are integral to the development of youth-based ministry.*
3. *In the youth-based ministry paradigm, a collaborative environment is created allowing for youth and adults to work together on the process and content of the program. This collaborative environment is conducive to the mutuality of creative gifts by youth and adults, and that the wise choice for both process and content often emerges.*

While the review of the works of the authors offer a rich understanding in youth-based ministry, none of them contribute a psychological response to the church's insistence on practicing adult-based youth ministry. Chapter 2 entitled, "The Pertinent Dynamics of Choice Theory in Youth-based Ministry" introduces a psychological theory designed by Dr. William Glasser, M.D. which I contend is this needed contribution. The pertinent dynamics of choice theory, or internal control psychology, when combined with youth-based ministry, offer a 'useful alternative' to the widespread practice of external control psychology found frequently in adult-based youth ministry. Glasser's theory also provides extensive support for the youth-based ministry paradigm and identifies the reasons for the perpetuation of the adult-based youth ministry paradigm.

Chapter 3 entitled, "Adult Leadership Development Workshops—An Andragogical Design incorporating Choice Theory," focuses on andragogy as a technique for youth and adult learning and is used as a means to practice choice theory in youth-based ministry, especially in educational settings. The relationship andragogy has with choice theory is discussed and compared to the relationship between external control

theory and pedagogical learning techniques. Next I offer a description of the workshops which took place in late August, 2007. The chapter wraps up with some concluding remarks about the workshops, and the research methods used in this study.

Chapter 4 entitled “The Findings and Responses to the Research,” is a reporting of the acceptance and/or resistance levels of workshop participants to the youth-based ministry paradigm enhanced with choice theory. This data was obtained during the last hour of the workshop. Differences in the levels the acceptance and/or resistance levels one to two months after the workshop will also be discussed, and finally differences five months after the workshop. The data obtained is largely the comments and perspectives offered by the workshop participants.

The final chapter entitled “Conclusions and Recommendations of this Project,” will address the questions such as:

- 1) What learning points can be made as a result of this research?
- 2) What might the next steps be?
- 3) What recommendations can be made as a result of this research?

The project concludes with the thought that history repeats itself. Both youth and adults can perpetuate the vitality of youth-based ministry by teaching and practicing it with youth who are just now in their adolescent years. Such perpetuation will contribute to the ongoing conversation regarding youth ministry in the life of the church.

What is at stake here is the future of the mission and ministry of the Christian church. Is the church’s ministry with youth about enforcement? This is what you are to do, what you are to learn, and when you’re supposed to do and learn it because that’s the

way we've always done it in the church. Or, is it about empowerment? Here is an opportunity to make responsible choices—it will give you excellent learning experiences in faith, leadership, and life in the church and in the world. Both involve adults working with youth, but one invites possible resistance to the church's mission and ministry now and in the future; the other, possible rejuvenation.



**Chapter 1**  
“The Shoulders Upon Which I Stand”

*“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.” 2 Timothy 1:5 (NRSV)*

*“The treasures of the wise men of old which they left behind by writing them in books, I unfold and go through them together with my friends, and if we see something good, we pick it out and regard it as a great gain if we thus become useful to one another.”*  
(Socrates)

One can find in the strip malls and shopping centers of our communities bookstores of every kind, from the small, private shops mostly selling used books to the large, corporate stores which often come complete with centers for music, CDs and DVDs, computers, online connections, a coffee shop, and sometimes a restaurant. Walk into any of these stores, small or large, and books are in abundance under different categories and topics. The religious section usually is filled with the written work of hundreds of authors. Even the “youth” or “youth ministry” section often has plenty of resources available.

The bookstore image reminds me of the abundance of people contributing to the conversation regarding youth ministry. Embarking on this project and honing in on its specific trajectory, affirming the influence of other authors and researchers who have gone before me is important. Obviously, it is impossible for me to have read every book on the subject, but as I look at the stacks of books in my office on youth-based ministry, adult learning theories, Christian educational resources for youth, and different working psychologies, not only must I recognize the primary resources I have used, but I think I



have the makings of a mini-bookstore! The works of the primary authors will be reviewed in connection to three assumptions I am making in this project.

**Assumption 1: Youth ministry is a vital part of the mission of the Christian church.**

Christian denominations have an enormous responsibility of helping youth grow as Christians. While the main responsibility is on the parents of youth, ideally the church's responsibility builds on what the parents have established. The church's responsibility calls for a deepening of a passion for God. It nurtures faith and enables youth to discern their spiritual gifts while involving them in the life and mission of the church's ministry. Ultimately, accomplishing this responsibility well contributes to the church's ongoing mission of increasing among men, women, youth, and children the love of God, neighbor, and self to varying degrees of effectiveness.

Unfortunately, many youth ministry programs have abandoned or avoided the hard work of creating programs conducive to youth discerning God's presence and their gifts. Often youth ministries in local church and wider church settings resort to entertainment and social planning and leave behind programs that promote spirituality and service in the church and the community (White, 115). One result is that the passion for God in many youth is in peril. The creative energy in youth gets stifled, and God, faith growth, spiritual discernment, and the Christian church's mission and ministry, including youth ministry, suffer because of it.

I valued the book Effective Youth Ministry written by Roland D. Martinson because he recognizes this problem of youth ministry by identifying several of its myths and the foundations. Myth #1 is that youth ministry is the responsibility of the youth

minister or pastor or church member who is good with the kids. Foundation #1 recognizes that youth ministry belongs to God and is the responsibility of the entire congregation. Myth #2 says that youth ministry is equated with the established youth group in the church. Foundation #2 switches the focus to a much wider berth—youth ministry involves a whole church ministering with every youth in the congregation focusing on people, not events. Myth #3 suggests that youth are the future church while foundation #3 affirms that youth are not only the church of the future; they are also a significant part of the church of today (Martinson, 11-14). Myths #8 and #9 address the question as to who has the leadership responsibilities in a youth ministry program. Myth #8 says the youth do; myth #9, the adults. Foundations #8 and #9 identify what I have previously articulated, that youth and adults must work in a blended, delicate mix together (Martinson, 17).

In my early teenage years, in my home church's youth group, many of our activities, programs, and events were planned by us as a group with adult advisors working alongside us. Youth Sundays, lock-ins, retreats, our regular Sunday night "YF" or "Youth Fellowship" meetings, etc. were all designed by all of us together. As time went along, we grew up going our separate ways. I went on to college, seminary, and eventually into the church as a pastor. Occasionally, I have had the opportunity to reconnect with some of my former teenage friends and adult advisors at different events over the years. Many of the youth are active in their local churches, several serving in leadership roles. Many are practicing their faith as they raise children in the church, a couple of people even doing so in our same childhood church. A few dedicated individuals actually are serving as adult advisors, returning to youth ministry with the

youth of today. On rare occasions, some adults who were my advisors continue to minister to youth in their particular settings. Youth ministry needs to repeat itself in this way. The vitality of youth ministry as part of the mission of the Christian church depends on it.

With the importance of youth ministry as a vital part of the church's ministry in mind, it becomes clear that youth ministry is set apart from other youth organizations offered in our schools and communities. Steve Clapp and Jerry Cook in their book Youth Workers Handbook state that "no other activities offer youth what the Christian community does. When we try to be as entertaining as motion pictures or television, we inevitably put ourselves in a losing position. When we offer genuine Christian community, young people find in the church what they desperately need and cannot find elsewhere" (Clapp and Cook, 14).

Youth organizations outside the church are highly acclimated to cultural standards, and the church community is susceptible to such standards. But, the church community functions by a different mandate. If its ministry is done properly by following the ways of Christ first, a stark contrast between the ways of culture and the ways of Christ begins to emerge. It is in the counter-cultural ways of Christ that give youth the opportunity to know the relevance and meaning of life as Christian people, and it takes faithing adult advisors to help open those doorways of faith for youth.

Youth ministry as part of the mission of the Christian church also gives strength to the biblical principle basic to the Christian ministry: the "priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:9). This principle will mean much to youth with the youth-based ministry

paradigm in place. Their skills in making decisions, delegating responsibilities, and discerning their God-given gifts will likely get nourished by church members when youth-based ministry is working. Youth will experience a broad-based approach to the church's ministry and mission. Chances are they will gain a deeper understanding of the value of the whole community of faith when using their gifts in ministry together.

**Assumption 2: Adult advisors are integral to the development of youth-based ministry programs.**

Youth-based ministry promotes a unique relationship between adult advisor and youth. Both adult and youth are in ministry together, each with key responsibilities. Youth are not given the run of the mill of their programs, events, and activities willy-nilly, without supervision or guidance. Adults are not the 'gophers' ('go for' this and 'go for' that) for the youth, nor are youth for the adults. Rather, adult advisors who intentionally engage youth help them own and lead their youth ministry programs. But, more importantly, adults guide youth in discerning their spiritual gifts. This potentially opens the door for youth to grow up choosing to discover a deeper love of God, neighbor, and self, and the church!

Adult advisors move with the youth on their journeys through critical life stages of development. Youth, generally speaking, are in the midst of issues of identity and intimacy, according to the American social psychologist, Erik Erikson. Questions such as "Who am I?" or "Do I belong?" come to the forefront during the adolescent years in areas related to self-esteem, sexuality, independence, and faith, among other issues. During this stage of development, youth "look most fervently for [people] and ideas to have faith

in... and in whose service it would seem worthwhile to prove oneself trustworthy” (Erikson, 128). Faithful adults can be the ones on the journey in whom the youth can have faith. Adult advisors in youth-based ministry deliberately communicate to youth that their “essential worth comes from God, whose Spirit lives in every person, that God is the source, restorer, and sustainer of all human life, and that every person carries God’s autograph, and has infinite worth” (Martinson, 44).

Adult advisors help promote faith growth within youth, creating an environment where leadership skills may grow, develop, and be practiced. They share the journey with youth providing the wisdom of experience. This wisdom enables youth to discern where and when they might be ready and able to use their gifts. It encourages youth to experiment with exercising leadership in their youth ministry. The more guidance the youth has in this discernment process, the more hands-on experiences in actual leadership situations, the more the youth are empowered to develop into faithful Christians who are eager to serve God and Christ’s church. Adult youth advisors call forth the gifts of youth into service to God, and they do it by recalling their own experiences of faith! At the very least, adults serve, teach, care, love, and offer support to the youth right alongside them in appropriate, complementary ways.<sup>1</sup>

In a nutshell, adults advisors encourage youth to make choices which foster a joy for life, a desire to grow in faith, and a freedom to live, move, and have being in a caring, authentic Christian community where people believe in each other, where youth are treated as first class citizens (Myers, 14), and where there is encouragement to act justly,

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<sup>1</sup> Resources such as Adult Advisor Position Description and Covenantal Agreement are available upon request.

love kindness, and walk humbly with God in that community and outside it (Micah 6: 8). A tall order, to be sure! But, it is one that adults within the church are to attend to.

Thom and Joani Shultz devoted an entire chapter on the basic qualities and skills adults need in youth-based ministry in their book Involving Youth in Youth Ministry written in the mid 1980's. Also in the eighties, William Myers described the adult advisor as a person engaged in an "alongside ministry." He notes that the adult is with the youth on their pilgrimage in an "interesting mix of prayer, business, and social fun. Here youth and adults do all three together" (Myers, 40).

A few years later, in Youth Workers Handbook, Steve Clapp and Jerry Cook encouraged the youth-based ministry paradigm. In chapter 2 they identify theological guidelines for adult advisors to keep in mind as they do youth work in the church. These guidelines reflect upon the importance of faith in God in Christ as well as the importance of scripture. The guidelines also touch on elements and characteristics of the Christian church, i.e., its bent toward true wholeness of youth in the sense that the church needs to be concerned about every aspect of life within our youth ranging from their physical to their spiritual well-being (Clapp and Cook, 17).

In Chapter 4 they wrote, "Almost all successful youth programs rely heavily on youth involvement in the planning and decision making process." This chapter illumines several good reasons for this: "1) people of any age participate more fully in events and projects which they have helped plan, 2) involving youth in the planning process saves adult leaders the frustration of 'guessing' what teenagers want to do, 3) if things fail, the burden does not rest on the adult leader or advisor, and 4) when events are successful, the

youth and adults who helped plan will share the resulting pleasure and satisfaction”  
(Clapp and Cook, 34).

Clapp and Cook also emphasized the importance of adult advisors being aware that at the core of their ministry is their personal faith in God and a growing sense of what it means to follow Christ’s way of life. Personal faith and basic Christian understandings within the adult advisor are some of the vital ingredients needed to increase the chances that youth can begin the same. Adult youth advisors are in the unique position to share faith experiences with the youth, to listen to the youth’s perspectives of life, and to offer pieces of adult wisdom garnered from their own journeys of faith. Such moments of sharing can open the doorway for meaningful growth and faith maturation within youth.

Martinson’s chapter on “Leadership for Youth Ministry” (chapter 8) also underscores that effective youth ministry needs capable leaders; he identifies what adult youth ministry leaders can do in their ministry with youth. He articulates what pastors and youth ministers can and should be doing in youth ministry. He concludes the chapter by offering leadership training and a training model, portions of which were helpful as the workshop for this project was developed (Martinson, 72-84).

Theological Themes of Youth Ministry, written by William Myers is a work that uses the seasons of the church year as a framework. As Myers takes the reader through each season, some theological points are developed contributing to adult leadership development in youth-based ministry. For example, as the church season of Advent opens the church year with a promise, so also Myers’ work opens with Advent’s

theological idea of promise. The promise is the potential offered in an alternative vision of youth ministry; mainly that youth ministry is in the context of the community. He suggests that ministry *with* youth should be the operating metaphor for youth ministry. Here the community asks member youth to serve, not by themselves, but as part of the community (Myers, 11).

A strong contribution to this project is Myers' chapter 3 called "Guarantors: Epiphany." Myers defines guarantors as "someone who is appropriately anchored in adulthood but who walks with youth on their journey. Guarantors share the burden of the journey, help read the road maps and offer encouragement. They incarnate 'adulthood' in ways that encourage young people to grow" (Myers, 35). Adults responding to the invitation to shift to a youth-based ministry program and acquire the necessary skills to nurture and sustain that program are essentially learning to be guarantors, 'showing forth' the way for youth on the journey.<sup>2</sup> They move with youth on their journeys through adolescence. They know the stories of the Christian faith and their own faith stories. They are authentic with youth and engage youth in meaningful conversations, administrative responsibilities, and fun activities.

Such adult guarantors are wonderful beacons of hope for youth as they grow and mature in the faith, as they are welcomed in the church to use their creative gifts, and as they help the church fulfill its mission to increase the love of God and neighbor. By working alongside youth and empowering them, adult advisors are actively fulfilling the

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<sup>2</sup> The word 'Epiphany' means 'to show forth;' hence Myers' connection of this church season with the concept of 'guarantor.'



biblical instruction to equip the saints for the ministry of the church (Ephesians 4:12). Youth gain leadership skills, self-understanding, and faith foundations.

An adult advisor who functions as a guarantor has an enormous responsibility because youth, in general, have a high regard for the wisdom and experiences of adults in their lives that are close to them.<sup>3</sup> At a recent seminar I attended, much of the information presented reflected recent research indicating that youth value highly the insights of their parents and other significant adults in their lives.<sup>4</sup> In fact, youth often mirror the attitudes and perceptions of these adults. Christian Smith, with the National Study of Youth and Religion has written "...American youth actually share much more in common with adults than they do not share, and most American youth faithfully *mirror* the aspirations, lifestyles, practices, and problems of the adult world into which they are socialized... adolescents may actually serve as a very accurate *barometer* of the condition of the culture and institutions of our larger society... American teenagers actually reflect back to us the best and worst of our own adult condition and culture" (Smith). Youth Specialties authors Chap Clark and Kara Powell verify this research by writing, "Although it's clear that peers play an important role in the developmental life of teenagers, research has shown that a network of adult relational support, committed to the long-term care and growth of adolescents, plays a profound role in providing the kind of

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<sup>3</sup> The adults in the lives of youth and in their "quality worlds," are primarily parents, however. One should never presume that adult advisors working in youth-based ministry replace the youth's parents' extremely important role and fulfillment of the baptismal vow to raise their sons or daughters in the Christian faith.

<sup>4</sup> The seminar took place on October 15, 2007 and was entitled, "Will Our Youth Still Be Christian?" The seminar featured Dr. Bob McCarty who is the Executive Director at the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, and Dr. Tony Campolo, professor emeritus at Eastern University. I was a panelist and respondent to the material presented by both Dr. McCarty and Dr. Campolo.

relational support they need to grow into the people God created them to be” (Clark and Powell, 134).

In Ross Snyder’s book entitled On Becoming Human, he emphasizes the network of adult relational support. In chapter 10 called “A Habitat for Yourself Composed of Fellow [Human Beings],”<sup>5</sup> Snyder identifies that people need each other to form lasting relationships and community. He starts out by defining that a fellow human being is someone you believe in and who believes in you. Adult advisors working in youth-based ministry learn to believe and trust in the capabilities of youth, and youth begin to believe in and trust in the adult advisors. Together they begin to know each other and believe in something significant other than just themselves, in this case, youth-based ministry with all its benefits and drawbacks. Together they experience the freedom and autonomy of their best gifts being used for a common cause—the fostering of productive and healthy youth and youth-based ministry programs (Snyder, 82).

In Snyder’s chapter 14, “The Public Opinion You Help Form,” he offers good identifiers of what adults can do to thresh out ideas in a youth-based ministry setting. Snyder states that sometimes students sit passively and expect the teacher to arouse their interest. The same happens in the settings of youth ministry! Youth who have never known empowerment usually are well-experienced in being told what to do. In youth-based ministry settings, however, youth are given the power and responsibility to develop their ideas. Adults share in the co-creation of the ideas and its development. Adults learn to talk with youth in meaningful conversations related to who they are as human beings

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<sup>5</sup> I am not using Snyder’s original language, which is exclusive in form, but not meaning.

and how their ideas may develop. Adults and youth learn to receive each other's feelings and ideas in ways promoting the growth of each. Adults learn how to be "agents of meaning" for youth, helping them to become alive and the unique human being God intended them to be. All these ideas Snyder offers contribute to the role of adult advisors in youth-based ministry.

Excellent insights for the adult advisor can be found in Donald Grigg's book Teaching Today's Teacher to Teach, chapter 3, called "The Roles of the Teacher."<sup>6</sup> One insightful example is Griggs' use of the term 'transmitter' as a role a teacher plays as opposed to the role of a 'translator.' On the one hand, the transmitter receives information from one source and passes it on to the listener. In the case of a teacher or an adult advisor acting as a transmitter, that person likely will tell youth what they are supposed to learn or what they are supposed to do for their activities, meetings, or events. There is no dialogue, just one-way transmission of information.

Griggs notes the problem with that role is that the success of the transmitted information lies almost completely in the hands of the recipient who can engage in learning the information in the classroom setting, or not (Griggs, 39). In youth ministry settings, youth can passively go along with what is handed to them for activities and programming in their youth ministry program, or not. Too often disengagement occurs. There is another problem in that there is no freedom for the youth to have a say in what they are learning and doing. There is limited personal investment in their learning, and

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<sup>6</sup> Often when the word 'teacher' appears in Griggs' work, for the purposes of this project, it is a simple and useful exercise to replace it with the term 'adult advisor.'

likewise, opportunities for leadership skills to develop and a personal faith to grow are hindered.

On the other hand, the role of translator is one who receives information from a source and is in between another receiver facilitating communication between the two. Of course, a familiar analogy would be a translator facilitating diplomatic relationships between people of other nationalities who don't speak the same language. A translator who knows both languages is vital.

In the case of Christian education and youth ministry, an adult advisor in the role as a translator is one who knows the stories of God, the language of faith, the Bible, Christianity, and the church, and listens very carefully to the youth and their language. Communication between the two parties becomes possible through the translator. The translator relies on a third voice, mainly the translator's inner thoughts, feelings, experiences and insights. Teachers and adult advisors will become more "familiar with the content of the Bible and the essence of the Christian faith, and at the same time work at learning more about the world of their learners (youth). In this way, teachers (and adult advisors) will help the learners see the relevance of ancient words of Scripture to their life and faith today. Thus, the Bible will become a living word of God and not just a collection of irrelevant writings" (Griggs, 40). Adult youth advisors and Christian educators stand in between God, faith, and the youth, know the language of both, and encourages dialogue, involvement, and growth.

The last resource associated with this assumption is Dr. William Glasser's work, The Quality School Teacher, the companion volume to his work, The Quality School.

Even though Dr. Glasser's contribution to this project will be thoroughly discussed in chapter 2, this resource was helpful because of its emphasis on adult leaders (in this case, school teachers) who work with youth. Certain parallels are noted when comparing youth-based ministry to Glasser's concept of the "quality school." Within a quality school, teachers must first realize that in order to persuade youth to make high quality choices in their education, they must establish a "warm, totally non-coercive relationship" with the youth (Glasser, The Quality School Teacher, back cover). Glasser notes that high quality choices often come when the youth are empowered to take ownership, when they work together with teachers agreeing upon what to learn or create, and when they solve the problems together. He advises that teachers start by talking with the youth:

As you talk to them, tell them that it is *their* [italics mine] school, not your school, the principal's school, or their parents' school. By their school, you mean that nothing is going to be forced upon them, that together you will agree on what is useful to learn, and that you will work with them to solve all problems. You will have to work hard to prevent them from turning their problems over to you, as they are used to doing (Glasser, The Quality School Teacher, 2).

When translating Glasser's words into the context of adult advisors in youth-based ministry, adult advisors can learn how to say to the youth that the program and events are theirs. It is not mine, nor the pastor's, nor their parents. It is theirs to do with as they choose, and the adult advisors are present to work with them, to guide them, to share the effort of doing quality youth ministry with them, and to establish warm and productive relationships with them. This ownership by the youth and the promotion of healthy relationships provide a marvelous segue to the third assumption of this project.

**Assumption 3: In the youth-based ministry paradigm, a collaborative environment is created allowing for youth and adults to work together on the process and content of the program. This collaborative environment is conducive to the mutuality of creative gifts by youth and adults, and that the wise choice for both process and content often emerges.**

Given that youth and adult advisors are in an appropriate, complementary relationship journeying and working together, especially in the settings of youth-based ministry where program planning takes place, an environment hospitable to creativity and innovation by both youth and adults can surface. In such a choice-oriented planning environment, ideas of all shapes and sizes, good ones, bad ones, ideas that are right on target and others that are outlandish are all affirmed. However, even with the plethora of ideas, adults and youth have a general sense of appropriateness allowing for a programming idea to develop which best meets the needs at the time. Sometimes the wise choice emerges as a group consensus; other times it evolves into its own as the discussion ensues.

At a planning event a few years ago, the youth, adults, and I were designing a youth event around the topic of ‘seeing the light of God in you and in others.’ We had come to the phase of planning the Saturday evening worship, which was the main worship for the weekend event. Ideas using light abounded. Some were totally impractical and way out there, such as stringing Christmas tree lights on every tree lining the pathway up to Vesper Point (a good hike out into the woods!) and lighting each tree individually as the whole group passed by. Other ideas seemed to be without much creative spunk, such as the one where everyone would bring a flash light, and in the worship, all at once and on cue, the flashlights would be turned on. As the conversation went on, the wisdom and creativity of the group came up with the idea that Christmas

tree lights would be used to decorate each cabin, flashlights would be used on the hike to Vesper Point, and in the worship service each person would have a luminescent tube which emitted light when shaken vigorously. One by one the youth shook their tube illuminating it, laid it on the ground in the shape of a cross in the darkness. The theme of that youth event, “Turn the Light On, the Light is in You” came alive that night quite meaningfully for all of us.

As exemplified by that experience, the wise choice for process and content comes about when the following four step planning process is used. In Schultz’s book, Involving Youth in Youth Ministry, their chapter called “The Steering Committee” offers good background for this planning process in youth-based ministry programs (Shultz, 100-121). Many of the ideas shared in this chapter, refined through practice, have evolved into the four phase planning process I use and offer as a resource. Youth actively plan, prepare, implement, and evaluate their youth-based ministry programs and events. If youth are to be empowered by adults to be responsible for their youth-based ministry programs, then they need a structure within their particular youth ministry setting with clear roles and responsibilities articulated for the youth.

- The first planning step is to identify the needs and interests the youth have in order to create a youth event. The topics explored are based on the discussion and comments the youth make. Theme, activities, schedule, etc. are drawn up on paper.
- Second, the preparing is the homework part, and details are taken care of in advance. Adults learn how to advise, support, coach, cheerlead, assist,

and ask appropriate questions to empower, equip, and enable the youth to implement the event.

- Third, the youth implement the youth event. They lead the activities, worship moments, workshops, exploratory groups, large group activities, etc.
- Last, the planning team evaluates how the event went, what could be done better, what worked well, what new needs have come up as a result of this event. This planning process then starts all over again for the creation of the next youth event.<sup>7</sup>

The chapter called “Equipping Youth with Decision-making Skills” builds on those roles and responsibilities and gets at the heart of youth taking a healthy dose of responsibility for their youth-based ministry programs (Shultz, 157-163). The Shultz’s also recognize that adults need to learn the skills needed for youth-based ministry so that when they minister to youth in this way, they are in fact, helping youth learn similar skills. As the Shultz’s put it, “enabling young people to weigh alternatives and make their own decisions is a centerpiece of youth-based ministry... And, the decision-making skills they’re taught in youth-based ministry will go with them for the rest of their lives” (Shultz, 157).

As with all projects, there are invariably many more good resources than can possibly be reviewed within the scope of the work. Suffice it to say that the resources on

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<sup>7</sup> While this process works best with the “Meeting centered” and “Event centered” settings of youth-based ministry, it also works in Individual centered, educationally centered, and other settings.



youth-based ministry, adult learning, psychologies, and Christian educational resources are the primary ones for this work. These authors, their works, their concepts, and practical ideas, are indeed the shoulders upon which I stand. Their contributions lay the foundation for this project.

But, now it is time to venture forth and offer my contribution to the conversation regarding youth ministry. While the authors cited here have offered excellent insight and understandings in youth-based ministry, none have contributed a working psychological theory explaining why the youth-based paradigm works. Choice theory and andragogy are those contributions, and adults learning to practice both enable a comprehensive form of the youth-based ministry paradigm to emerge. This project encourages adult advisors in youth-based ministry to develop a unique set of leadership skills and abilities which focuses on advising and assisting youth leaders as *they* choose how to lead *their* meetings, programs, and events.

At the heart of this adult leadership development is choice theory. Indeed, one of the skills I encourage adult advisors to have down pat is a working knowledge of Glasser's theory. The less than compelling nature of the adult-based youth ministry paradigm leads me to offer this theory as a possible useful and helpful response to the limitations of the adult-based youth ministry paradigm and the church's obsessive use of it.

## Chapter 2

### “The Pertinent Dynamics of Choice Theory in Youth-based Ministry”

*“Do not remember the former things,  
or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth,  
do you not perceive it?”  
Isaiah 43: 18-19 (NRSV)*

*“As an advisor, you will not be able to function as a dictator—at least not for very long.  
Working with youth is a mission of mutuality” (Clapp and Cook, 145).*

Thus far, I have offered an invitation for adults working with youth to make a shift from an adult-based youth ministry paradigm toward youth-based youth ministry paradigm. Responding to that invitation implies that an adult advisor strives to learn the characteristics of the youth-based ministry paradigm, choice theory, and the necessary skills and abilities associated with the paradigm. This chapter focuses on choice theory and its relationship to the youth-based ministry paradigm.

Dr. William Glasser is a pioneer in the field of human behavior, especially in the area of making choices. There can be little question that the freedom to choose is highly valued in our western culture. Such a value is part and parcel with our ‘free society’ supported by our nation’s history and constitution. Not surprisingly, the same high value is integral to youth, adults, and youth ministry programs within the church.

This project assumes that choice theory’s pertinent dynamics offer a psychological basis for the youth-based ministry paradigm.<sup>1</sup> Adults working with youth,

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<sup>1</sup> Originally, Glasser called the theory “control theory” or “internal control theory” which is the counterpart to “external control theory.” Now, Glasser has gone to the term “choice theory” because of the increased accuracy and use of the term.

whether they are pastors, lay people, or both, can learn choice theory so that youth are empowered to draw on their gifts and energy. What this means specifically is that adults step back from the familiar and conventional means of doing adult-based youth ministry and allow for the choices of the youth to come to fruition in the varied settings of youth ministry. Adult advisors using choice theory trust implicitly that the Holy Spirit is at work, and all the learning experiences that come with engaging youth-based ministry benefit youth, adults, and the church's ministry for the common good of all.

I recall working on the worship service with one Confirmation class for their Confirmation Sunday. I simply told the youth what the essential were in a worship service. Then I encouraged them to let their creative ideas take over. As I talked with them and asked questions, the youth not only designed the whole worship service, but they came up with an innovative way of expressing their faith to the congregation by designing a wooden cross. Each youth shared part of their faith journeys and then placed their names somewhere on the cross that had meaning for them. One youth in that class wrote "...it brought very different teenagers together on sharing their faith journeys...bringing us all together under the love of God" (Russell III, 19).

This choice-filled environment, a basic choice theory ingredient, is vital for faith growth in youth and quality youth-based ministry programming, but it is not something that comes naturally. It must be created by youth and adults who are willing to learn and practice healthy behaviors such as caring, listening, supporting, negotiating, encouraging, loving, befriending, trusting, accepting, welcoming, and building esteem (Glasser, Choice Theory, 21). Adults making the paradigm shift learn to work with youth and their programs from a psychological basis of choice, instead of the opposite where youth are

expected to think, speak, act, and have the same faith adults have. Youth come to rely on adults who are skilled in cultivating and nurturing this environment of choice.

Part of Glasser's reasoning for developing choice theory is that "we need a new psychology" (Glasser, 5). Adult-based youth ministry generally falls into the category of Glasser's 'external control psychology,' which essentially adheres to the premise that people believe they can control others to do what they want them to do. Youth-based ministry generally falls into Glasser's internal control psychology, or choice theory, which operates from the premise that people are "always behaving, but we are also always trying to choose to behave in a way that gives us the most effective control over our lives. In terms of choice theory, having effective control means being able to behave in a way that reasonably satisfies the picture in our quality worlds" (Glasser, Choice Theory, 71). From what I have observed when working with youth-based ministry, choice theory offers a possible alternative to external control psychology and adult-based youth ministry, and in my opinion, is the psychology at work in youth-based ministry.

In certain settings or with certain individuals, however, choice theory does not always offer a useful or helpful alternative, especially when youth with special needs are involved. For example, youth with serious medical or psychological conditions where high structure is required may not fare as well with the less-structured environment choice theory requires. In an e-mail to Dr. Glasser, I asked the following question: "Is there any type of person, group of people, or particular setting or situation(s) where choice theory does not offer a useful alternative?" This question comes out of a concern from a parent with an autistic child. This parent claims that her son did not fare well when she practiced choice theory with him because he requires much more adult

decision-making and a more structured environment than the less-structured environment and need for adult decision-making that choice theory advocates.”

Dr. Glasser referred me to his associate Dr. Robert Wubbolding and author of Reality Therapy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.<sup>2</sup> In an e-mail response, Dr. Wubbolding wrote, “In general I can say that there are some people such as autistic children who require more directive intervention than others. It is totally unrealistic to allow total freedom for people who cannot handle a variety of choices. It is up to the adults to set boundaries within which the child or youth can make choices” (Wubbolding). In a follow-up telephone interview, Dr. Wubbolding emphasized that the amount of choice offered is geared to the person (s) involved. Boundaries are set based on the capabilities of the youth. Likewise, the amount of structure is determined by the people involved and the setting of the program.

Dr. Wubbolding also clarified that choice theory explains why all people behave: our choices meet our needs and fulfill our image of what is in our quality worlds. It is the theoretical justification for our actions. “Reality therapy,” he said, “is the implementation and the delivery system of choice theory. It is an application of choice theory in practice. The key is self-evaluation. The youth can ask questions such as ‘Is what I’m doing helping or hurting? What choices can I make now in this youth ministry program that will improve what I’m expecting or doing’ (Russell III)?

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<sup>2</sup> “Reality Therapy,” a term coined by Dr. Glasser (his book has the same title), is a breakthrough psychological approach helping people deal with their problems. A very general definition of Reality Therapy emphasizes that one’s problems are not so much in the past needing to be brought up and re-hashed but are to be solved in the present by the choices one makes now. Reality therapy is a practical application of choice theory in the field of psychiatry and psycho-therapy.

## **Pertinent Dynamics of Choice Theory**

Pastors who serve local congregations for long periods of time often witness milestone moments of ministry within the same families. Having served local congregations for over two decades, I have known this phenomenon to a degree. In one particular church, I experienced the privilege of baptizing a three year old boy named Ryan in my first year there. His parents made this decision for him on his behalf. Ten years later, Ryan was a youth in the confirmation program. When Ryan was confirmed, he essentially re-affirmed his baptism. He also confirmed that his parent's decision to have him baptized was a good decision. Ryan chose to claim that decision and its consequences as his own. He was choosing to be confirmed based on his faith, and he did this of his own free will. From that point on, Ryan chose to be active in the youth ministry program at the church. He often led different events and activities in the youth ministry program and participated in wider church youth events as well.

Yes, Ryan went through the confirmation program, and yes, he confirmed his faith. However, it wasn't all that easy. Something happened to Ryan between his baptism and the beginning of the Confirmation. Ryan came to Confirmation reluctantly. He openly complained he was "forced to be there." By the time he grew into adolescence, typical of many youth his age, much of his passion for God, for faith, and for the church had dwindled almost to non-existence.

What happened? For one, school happened. Ryan went to public schools where students are told what material to learn, and unless the students can prove they know the required material, they will not pass the course. A logical result of this type of pedagogy

is that students learn only what they have to know so that they can pass the exams. They often want to get out of school as fast as they can, and if it weren't for the friendships they make in school and the required attendance, many probably would not even attend whatsoever.

Ryan came to Confirmation expecting it to be something like school. He was not alone. Many youth come into church confirmation programs with the presupposition that their experience will be another school experience in a typical classroom setting. He thought that I, as the pastor, was going to lecture all the time about boring Bible stuff, church stuff, and God stuff. He thought he would have to take notes, memorize stuff, do worksheets and homework, take quizzes, tests, and a final exam, just like in school. Worse, he had heard from rumors that he and others in his confirmation group would have to do "something" that demonstrated they knew the basics of Christianity in front of the entire congregation in order to "graduate." If he could get through all that, then he would have completed the course and would join the church, which, of course was another thing he was "supposed" to do.

In short, Ryan thought he was going to have to learn material he really didn't want to learn. He thought I was going to be just as aloof and disconnected with him as his other teachers in school were. Is it any wonder that Ryan didn't want to be in the confirmation program? So Ryan turned off Confirmation, the church, and me, too. He was just going to go along to "get it over with" because it was expected of him.

Thankfully, the disconnection I experienced with Ryan was short lived. Ryan found affirmation as a person in class, and in so doing he found acceptance in our faith

community. He discovered that at no time was he going to be forced into doing something he didn't want to do, but he actually was able to make choices that put him in charge of his experience. He could work by himself or with a team of his friends. He could choose from a list of different activities and became empowered to fulfill them. These were the kind of experiences which led Ryan to not only attend and complete Confirmation, but also to become active in the life of the church and continue his faith journey. Ryan's experiences were an example of youth-based ministry having choice theory at its core.

Dr. Glasser articulates the dynamics and details of choice theory in his book Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom. For the purposes of this project, choice theory's pertinent dynamics are that 1) we choose everything we do, 2) what we choose meets our "Basic Needs and Feelings," 3) it fits within the images of our "Quality World" and 4) is part of our "Total Behavior." These four dynamics undergird effective and high quality youth-based ministry and serve to offer an alternative to the psychology of adult-based youth ministry.

In youth-based ministry, the first dynamic of choice theory, we choose everything we do, emphasizes the freedom that youth have to choose activities or to design events which makes use of their interests, energy, passion, and meets their needs (Glasser, Choice Theory, 3-24). With such freedom, youth can explore faith, leadership, and/or one's gifts and abilities, plus much more. This freedom permeates into all parts of the program, from ministry with individuals, to fellowship groups, and to the large, special events of youth ministry.



Likewise, adults working in youth-based ministry programs choose to let youth choose! Adult advisors make the decision to let the youth take responsibility. Let them experiment with planning details, become acquainted with leadership opportunities, know the blessings of well-planned, well-received activities and programs, the banes of trial and error, and if necessary and appropriately safe, fall flat on their faces. Adult advisors resolve to create an environment that motivate youth to develop high quality events and activities. Adults working with youth can choose to learn the skills which are helpful in empowering youth in their youth ministries.

Why would adult advisors make these kinds of choices? Because these choices are need-satisfying for both adult advisors and youth! No matter how the youth fare with their newfound empowerment, no matter how well a youth-led activity comes off, no matter how much criticism others might levy against the youth or adult advisor, as youth-based ministry is implemented faith-filled adult advisors love watching youth grow in faith, gain leadership experience, mature in social skills, and discern their God-given gifts and abilities. Youth learn that they are responsible for their choices they make, and that they can create high quality experiences, especially with adult advisors alongside them advising and encouraging them.

Choice theory also teaches that choices are always present as to how to respond to any and all circumstances. Responses may be as numerous as the stars; some may be noticeable only to yourself or to others as well. Other responses will likely be physical, emotional, and intellectual, even sub-conscious! The old adage attributed to American author, speaker, and leadership expert John Maxwell seems to ring true: “Life is 10 % of

what happens to me and 90% how I react to it” (Maxwell). William Glasser puts it this way:

What happens outside of us has a lot to do with what we choose to do, but the outside event does not cause our behavior. What we get, and all we ever get, from the outside is information; how we choose to act on this information is up to us. Therefore, the information that the students get from the teacher, which includes how this information is given, is very important... But the students are the ones who make the ultimate judgment about how important it is to them. The more important they think it is, the more they will do what they are asked and the better they will do it (Glasser, The Quality School, 41).

The second principle of choice theory is basic need fulfillment (Glasser, Choice Theory, 25-43). Glasser claims that every person has five basic needs, each one uniquely and genetically programmed. The first need is the need to survive physically. The other four needs are psychologically based: 2) love, acceptance and belonging, 3) freedom, 4) fun, and 5) power. Choice theory states that each person is always behaving in ways which meet these needs. Youth find their need for acceptance and belonging fulfilled more deeply in choice theory-based youth ministry programs. They love having the freedom to do their own thing, exploring at their own pace the issues of faith and church with adult guidance, and sometimes above all else, youth love to have fun in their youth ministry programs, events, and activities.

Satisfying our need for power can be a double-edged sword. On the one side, those in power often define reality and try to force those not in power to do things the way the powerful see fit. For example in youth ministry settings, youth serving as officers (President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.) of their youth fellowship group have the responsibility to be leaders in the group. Our society typically gives power and control to these authoritative figures in a group, and with such power there exists

temptations to exert influence, sometimes coercively, upon the rest of the group to conform to the wishes of the officers (which is the essence of external control psychology). Adult youth advisors working in a ministry setting with officers are wise to watch for power being used inappropriately, i.e., when manipulation is used to get desired results, or something similar.

On the other side, our need for power is beneficial when it is for the common good. People obtain power when they do something well, when their voice is heard, or even when they help another person succeed. I am aware of at least a dozen youth and a few adults who worked with me on UCC Conference planning teams and committees and later discerned God calling them into ordained ministry—a fact that I believe can be attributed, at least in part, to the youth-based ministry environment conducive to faith growth and maturation (Russell III, 25).<sup>3</sup> Because I teach youth-based ministry and role model it, when a youth continues on the journey toward ministry after their participation with me on a committee, I feel affirmed and powerful.

In personal relationships, choice theory explains that people behave in ways that fulfill their need for power. A critical element of youth-based ministry is, of course, personal relationships, so care must be taken as choices are made which fulfill a need for power and dominance over another person. Glasser offers this guidance:

In a choice theory society, where the emphasis is on getting along with one another, forcing others would be practiced less often. There would be little reason

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<sup>3</sup> This is a huge claim, to be sure; one which is outside the scope of this project. However, in a previous study, some respondents indicated that the experiences on the planning team, at least for those individuals, helped them to discern their call into ordained ministry.

to judge each other, and more effort would be to negotiate differences. The powerful would find that there is more power in getting along with people than trying to dominate them (Glasser, Choice Theory, 39).

In other words, the real power is found in the joy of nurturing relationships. For youth, a stronger sense of self-worth is fostered as youth are affirmed by loving and caring adults who advise them along the way. A stronger sense of community can grow helping to keep “youth group” in the quality world of a youth.

“Quality world” is a term coined by Dr. Glasser, and is the third pertinent dynamic of choice theory. Our quality world is our small, personal world that is based on our unique perceptions of what is important to us and what is of the highest value and quality for us. Our quality world is “made up of specific pictures that portray, more than anything else we know, the best ways to satisfy our needs. What these pictures portray falls into three categories: 1) the *people* we most want to be with, 2) the *things* we most want to own or experience, and 3), the *ideas or systems of belief* that govern much of our behavior” (Glasser, Choice Theory, 45). When thinking about the ability of people to make choices and the high value our culture gives freedom of choice, one’s ability to choose understandably becomes a key part of our quality worlds. As it is, our freedom to choose governs much of our behavior. By the same token, things that are of low value and do not fit the pictures we have of what is important to us and are taken out of our quality worlds (Glasser, Choice Theory, 44-61).

A recent e-mail making its way around the internet presents a scenario illustrating the concept of our ‘quality world.’ This e-mail asks its readers about people and events in our culture’s recent history. “Can you name the team that won the World Series last

year?” was one question. Another question pertained to which team won the Super Bowl last February. “Who won the Oscar for ‘Best Actress’ this past year?” “What movie won ‘Best Picture’ last March?” “What candidate won the Senate race in your state last November?” and other such inquiries. The author of the e-mail presumed that the reader would have a difficult time answering all the questions (I know I did!).

The next part of the e-mail asked questions such as, “Do you remember who your teacher was in fifth grade?” “What was your school counselor’s name?” “If you were in the school play, what was the name of that play?” “Who was your best friend while growing up?” “What was the name of your third grade Sunday School teacher?” “Who was your pastor in high school?” “What were the names of the adult youth leaders at your church?” “Where did your youth group go for a youth event?” In other words, “Who were the most significant people in your life over the years, and what events had the strongest influence on you?” This time the author presumed the reader would have no trouble remembering these individuals and events (in my case, the author presumed correctly).

The teachers, school counselors, music and play directors, youth advisors, pastors, mentors, sponsors, best friends, parents, grandparents, etc., are not only memorable to us, but are the most important people in our lives. We might not be able to remember what our culture deems as important during the last year, but we sure do remember how our lives were touched by loved ones and events which occurred over the years because deep down we know these are what really matter to us. These people, memorable events, and what we believe fit the images of what we have in our quality worlds.

The fourth pertinent dynamic of choice theory is the concept of “Total Behavior” (Glasser, Choice Theory, 62-88). This dynamic rests on Glasser’s claim that all we ever do from birth to death is behave, and all our behaviors, including our feelings, are chosen to satisfy the basic needs we have. The claim is developed further with the idea that we also always choosing to behave that gives us the most control in our lives, mainly that we are behaving in ways that reasonably satisfies the images we have in our quality worlds (Glasser, Choice Theory, 71).

Glasser theorizes that his claims are based first on his dictionary’s definition of the word ‘behavior’ as the *way* of conducting oneself. The word ‘way’ in that definition illumines the concept of ‘total behavior.’ Glasser points out that behavior can mean several things. He theorizes that the way people conduct themselves is comprised of four inseparable behavioral components: 1) activity—when we think of a person behaving, we usually associate that person with doing something, 2) thinking—our minds are always thinking, even when we are asleep, 3) feeling—whenever we behave, we are always feeling something even if we not be paying attention to what we are feeling, and 4) physiological—there is always something going on with us physically, our heart is pumping, our lungs are breathing, etc. (Glasser, Choice Theory, 72).

In every behavior a person does at any given moment, all four of those components are occurring simultaneously, and they cannot be separated one from the other. Not only can the components not be separated but each one affects the other. To identify a particular behavior by all four components is cumbersome, so the obvious component becomes the name or the label of the behavior. For example, a youth may be leading a game as part of a workshop at a youth event. The main visible activity is the

leadership of the game, and it is labeled as such. However, because the youth chose to be in the leadership position, that choice has an effect on all four components. It can be assumed that the youth is thinking about what he or she is doing. Depending on how the game is going or what circumstances are happening at the time, the youth may be experiencing a wide variety of emotions, too: excitement and inner satisfaction if the game is going well, or frustration if not so well, or anything in between. It also goes without saying that the youth's heart is beating, lungs are breathing, etc., but these physiological behaviors are affected as the emotional behavior is experienced. If the youth is inexperienced with leading the game, his or her pulse may increase due to a nervous feeling. Palms may become sweaty, and so forth. If leading the game is no problem, then the emotional response may not be nervousness but a confident feeling. As such, a physiological response may be a relative calmness or poise. Regardless of the specific responses, each behavioral component is affected by the choice to lead the game, therefore, leading the game is deemed as a total behavior. Glasser, in fact, maintains that all our behaviors are total behaviors (Glasser, Choice Theory, 72).

In the youth-based ministry setting where adults are learning skills enabling youth to take responsibility, awareness of total behavior is valuable for several reasons. For one, adults who are knowledgeable about choice theory and choose to give youth responsibility for their youth programs know that such a choice makes it conducive for youth be in more effective control of the activities in their lives. With more effective control of their lives, youth are more free to choose behavior that reasonably fits the images in their quality world and meets their basic needs at the same time.

Contrarily, if an adult chooses to be in control of a youth program and uses external control to get the youth to do what they “are supposed to do,” an end result might be that youth become aware that in such a setting they have less effective control of their lives. As such, an individual youth could choose to take attending and participating in the youth program out of their quality world. In our society, youth are responding less and less to the adult-based youth ministry paradigm as may be evidenced by the widespread malaise of low participation by youth in the church’s youth ministry programs. Attempts to impose a program upon the youth, or worse, attempts to “force feed” youth biblical doctrine, religious convictions, or church practices, are often experienced by youth, consciously and sub-consciously, as forms of external control by well-meaning adults.

The second reason is that Glasser contends people are always trying to choose the best behavior which gives them some sense of better control of their lives (Glasser, Choice Theory, 74). If an environment conducive for youth to choose their programs, events, and activities is created by adult advisors, then youth can experience a greater effectiveness of control of their own lives, meet the images in their quality worlds, and participate in a need-satisfying program. Likewise, adult advisors have more effective control of their own lives by fulfilling their needs and making the image of what is in their quality worlds, in this case working with youth, become reality.

The third reason is that adult advisors who understand total behavior also understand that there is always a possibility that a different choices can be made, even when one choice was already made. For example, if an adult advisor recruited to lead the youth ministry program at a local church is told by the pastor or Christian Education



director to design a program which will teach the fundamentals of Christianity, the adult advisor may choose to use pedagogical learning techniques and external control by telling the youth what to learn, what activities to do, etc. Indeed, the pastor or director may insist that these two aspects of the adult-based youth ministry paradigm be used. In order to meet the needs the adult advisor has at the time, (possibly a high need for love and acceptance from the pastor or director mixed in with perhaps a high need level for power and lower need levels of freedom and fun), the adult advisor may well choose to design such an adult-based program. If the adult advisor has a quality world image of him or herself as the adult leader in charge, coordinating all the details, presenting the material to the youth as the knowledgeable teacher, or acting as their supervisor, then it is almost certain that an adult-based paradigm program will be designed and implemented.

This doesn't mean that another choice—the youth-based paradigm choice—cannot be implemented. Choice theory states that an individual cannot control anyone except him or herself. Glasser writes, “If you make one choice, you can make another—better—one. You are choosing what you are doing, but you are capable of choosing something better. When you learn that you are capable of choosing something better, the concept that you choose your misery can lead to optimism” (Glasser, Choice Theory, 77). All this underscores the choice theory idea that people are only in control of their own lives—that's it. Adults cannot force youth to do anything—unless under severe punishment or pain and suffering. And even then, the best choice is usually about survival; behavior chosen under such duress, however, usually does not go well or bode well. Instead, youth-based ministry implies that individuals, both youth and adult advisors, take responsibility for their choices—all choices—even the indirect ones.

Ross Snyder's book, On Becoming Human, is about human beings becoming who they are meant to be in the sense of growing, maturing, developing, and "actualizing" oneself. This book arguably can be considered as a precursor to Glasser's book Choice Theory because emphasis throughout is on developing one's "life world" which is similar to Dr. Glasser's concept of the "quality world" (Snyder, 19). I found much to affirm in this book, much to connect to "choice theory," and "youth-based ministry." Even at the end of the book, there is plenty to affirm about the role adult advisors play in youth-based ministry, what purposes retreats and youth events ultimately serve, and the inner workings of the Youth Ministry Team.

Snyder states that "You were meant to be. It is right for you to be fully alive. You were not born for the purpose of obeying someone else, or being a branded member in a herd. You were born to become a unique, particular expression of a human being. And you are the only one who can make something of your one life on earth... And all your life, world events and situations not of your own making will set conditions in which you must make your way. But you remain in charge of your decisions and what you intend to mean in those events" (Snyder, 17). Snyder's words read and sound very much like Glasser's statement that "we are much more in control of our lives than we realize" (Glasser, Choice Theory, 4), and that "choice theory explains that stimuli, in the sense that they can consistently *control* a human being to make a specific choice, do not exist. Since information does not make us do anything, we can choose to ignore it or act on it in any way we see fit" (Glasser, Choice Theory, 17).

These four dynamics of choice theory lay excellent groundwork for the necessary development of adult leadership skills in youth-based ministry. In my experience, Dr.

Glasser's theories, when applied to youth-based ministry, can help pastors, church leaders, Christian educators, lay volunteers, even parents develop their leadership skills as adult advisors. This means that skilled adult advisors can call forth the gifts of youth into service to God. It means that youth are enabled to make choices that will create church leaders for today and in the future. It also means that youth begin to experience a sense of ownership in their youth ministry programs, events, and activities. When these four dynamics are combined with the wisdom of caring, non-coercive adults, high quality events often occur. The non-controlling atmosphere adults foster enable youth to experience the freedom of choice helping them to develop their own programs and become integral contributors to the church's overall mission and ministry.

### **Youth-based Ministry as a Quality Community**

Very typically in the adult-based youth ministry paradigm, adults use different forms of external control psychology (adults plan events and activities *for* youth). Local churches have the telltale signs of external control psychology. In many churches, youth become members of a local congregation upon the completion of Confirmation class. However, the extent of their membership is that they are told to do certain tasks around the church which often the adults do not wish to do themselves, such as picking up trash around the church grounds, watching the little kids so the adults can do their thing, or serving the adults at a sit-down dinner at the church, etc. This is external control because the youth receive instructions from an external source—the adults—and along with it are implicit implications that the youth are expected to follow through, or else a negative response from adults may result. Those negative responses, often used to externally manipulate the behavior of the youth, may take a soft form such as giving a disapproving

glance. A harder form is not uncommon either, such as when adults openly disrespect youth by publicly declaring that a youth-generated idea is ill-conceived. One frequently vocalized reason is that youth don't know enough about church life at their age (Glasser, Choice Theory, 5).

Another telltale sign is what Glasser calls "schooling," which is another form of external control psychology. Schooling happens when school boards, principals, teachers, and the like,

...adhere rigidly to the idea that what is taught in school is right and those students who won't learn it should be punished. It is defined by two practices, both of which are enforced by low grades and failure. The first practice is trying to make students acquire knowledge or memorize facts that have no value in the real world. The second practice is forcing students to acquire knowledge that may have value in the real world, but nowhere near enough value to try and force them to learn it" (Glasser, Choice Theory, 237).

As a result, youth take the teachers, the school, and the whole idea of education out of their quality worlds. Recall Ryan from the previous chapter? Think of how easily he expected the confirmation program to be like school, and how even more easily he didn't allow it in his quality world. Ryan was 'schooled' by external control psychology and by pedagogical learning techniques.

In many youth ministry settings, youth are 'schooled' in the church. Whether it is in Confirmation classes, Sunday school, youth group meetings, or if they are being told what programs are planned for them, the message is the same: learn what you are supposed to learn, and/or do what has been planned for you. Adults often assume they know what youth want, and what they need without ever letting the youth share just

exactly what they want and need. Tragically, the result frequently is that youth programs, church leaders, and even church itself are taken out of the quality worlds of youth.

Glasser describes a “quality community” in which an entire community has made a commitment to change to choice theory—a community where people mutually respect the idea that you won’t try to force someone to do what you don’t want to do, and likewise, they do the same for you. In Glasser’s estimation, this becomes a community where you live a quality life and draw closer to the people you need (Glasser, Choice Theory, 310).

In a similar way, youth-based ministry, when practiced well, reflects a form of Glasser’s “quality community.” Youth-based ministry can reach those youth who are on the journey of faith, of social maturation, and of leadership skill development. In the educational setting, youth-based ministry counteracts ‘schooling’ and encourages learning knowledge that is important and applicable to one’s life journey. Adults who learn choice theory are better able to empower the youth on this journey helping them to know the relevance and meaning of life as a Christian.

Learning choice theory is good; practicing it is even better. Empowering youth to learn and practice it alongside you as an adult advisor in youth-based ministry is best. Now what is needed is an adult-learning technique consistent with the dynamics of choice theory that will open up the pathway for adults to develop youth-based ministry leadership skills. That technique is where we next turn our attention.

### Chapter 3

## “Adult Leadership Development—An Andragogical Design utilizing Choice Theory”

*“After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.”*

Luke 2:46-7 (NRSV)

*“Adults are essentially volunteers in learning.”*  
(Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education, 79).

The mid-week educational program at Chapel Hill UCC starts with dinner and fellowship followed by an adult education class.<sup>1</sup> The topic for a typical six week class (sometimes longer) is always chosen by the group themselves. Most of the classes are a Bible study, some are a book study, and on occasion we have done a study based on a film series. For this mid-week program, which averages between twenty-two and twenty five participants, usually I am the primary teacher. It is my practice to have study materials each Wednesday to assist class participants in their learning. These materials highlight the main ideas of the class, the basic goals I hope the class accomplishes, basic objectives to help accomplish the goals, and the general outline or the “session plan” of the class. Often additional resources are attached as part of the hand out ready to be used when needed.

So far, this sounds like a typical pedagogical scenario. The ingredients of teacher, learners (adult students), main ideas for the class session, goals, objectives, the session plan, and resources are all in place. In a typical pedagogical scenario, the resources, class session and curriculum are used to make the not-yet knowledgeable learner become

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<sup>1</sup> Chapel Hill UCC is located in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, where currently I serve as its Pastor and Teacher.

knowledgeable, and when the learner becomes knowledgeable and can demonstrate that, usually through testing, then the teacher has succeeded in getting the learner to learn.<sup>2</sup>

Some things, however, are remarkably different in the adult education class offered at Chapel Hill UCC. First, there is no testing to demonstrate learner competency. That would be highly unusual in a church setting. Second, the “classroom” is where we eat together. Eight long tables are set up in a big square enabling the twenty plus participants to eat together, to see each other, and to engage in conversation. Then, when all the dishes are done, we share in the class together around the same tables. Each person has the materials needed, including me, the “teacher.” If a new person came late to the class, it would likely be difficult to immediately know who the “teacher” was and who the “learners” were because everyone has the same materials, and we sit “in the round,” as it were. As the class time continued, the newcomer still might have difficulty discerning who was the teacher because I do not use the materials and resources as a curriculum followed to the letter, but rather as a guide which can facilitate learning for everyone.

Another feature of our class which makes it difficult for a late newcomer to identify the teacher is that we frequently have smaller group activities allowing for several learners to assume responsibility for presentations and small group leadership. The emphasis is on the learner’s experience of learning and not so much on acquiring

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<sup>2</sup> There are several definitions and theories as to what “learning” is and when it takes place. In general, I am moving forward on three assumptions that learning refers “to (1) the acquisition and mastery of what is already known about something, (2) the extension and clarification of the meaning of one’s experience, or (3) an organized, intentional process of testing ideas relevant to problems” (Knowles, E. Holton, III, and R. Swanson, 11).

facts from me, a book, or a lesson plan. I, as the “teacher” often join a small group and participate as a learner.

Further, the late newcomer might wonder who the teacher is because, as is typical in these classes at Chapel Hill UCC, everyone engages in the discussion, most notably offering relevant life experiences, stories, illustrative thoughts, and related concepts. In fact, no one really is directing the conversation, with the exception of the moments where I as “the teacher” sense that the conversation has moved too far away from the main idea for the class, or a topic has had enough time for exploration. At that point, I would guide participants back to the main focus of the lesson plan perhaps revealing that I was in fact the “teacher.”

Much of what I have described as a typical adult education class at Chapel Hill UCC fits within the general characteristics of adult learners and an adult education setting associated with andragogical learning principles. Just as this project assumes choice theory to be at work in youth-based ministry, andragogy as a means to practice choice theory is also assumed. Let’s explore andragogy as a learning technique for youth and adults looking at how andragogical principles apply to youth-based ministry.

### **The Principles of Andragogy**

Andragogy, “the art and science of helping adults learn,” starts with a basic understanding that older youth, young adults, and adults in learning situations and settings have special needs and requirements as learners that are different than those of young children and younger youth (Knowles, 38). Dr. Malcolm Knowles, a principal



American scholar in the adult learning field ventured forth this concept by utilizing the term ‘andragogy’ to develop a distinctive theory of adult learning (Lieb, 1).

Knowles offers andragogy as an emerging technology complete with assumptions, a how-to-do-it manual, and a section on “designing and managing particular learning activities, in the andragogical spirit of helping adults learn, in contrast to the pedagogical spirit of how to teach adults” (Knowles, 16).

Knowles was one of the first scholars to distinguish between andragogy and pedagogy. The distinction is noted immediately in the words themselves. He identifies that the word ‘pedagogy’ has its roots in the Greek language. In a letter to the editorial department of G. & C. Merriam Company, publishers of the Merriam-Webster dictionary, Professor Knowles contrasted ‘andragogy’ with ‘pedagogy.’ ‘Pedagogy’s’ Greek roots indicate that the meaning of the word is “the art and science of teaching children”—the Greek stem *paid* (meaning “child”) and *agogos* (meaning “leading”) put together make the English word ‘pedagogy’ (Knowles, 37). In the same letter, Knowles requested for the clarification of the etymological root of the word ‘andragogy,’ reasoning that the Greek stem *andr* from the Greek word *aner* (meaning [“human”]) put together with *agogos* would indicate the meaning of ‘andragogy’ to be “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 38). The dictionary editors agreed that the word ‘andragogy’ was correct and offered a basis for contrasting it with pedagogy (Knowles, 306).

With the etymology of ‘andragogy’ vividly contrasting ‘pedagogy,’ Knowles points out two very basic problems with the word ‘pedagogy.’ The first problem is that the root meaning of the word which includes children is no longer applied in our day:

One problem is that somewhere in history the “children” part of the definition got lost. In many people’s minds—and even in the dictionary—“pedagogy” is defined as the art and science of teaching. Period. Even in books on adult education you can find references to “the pedagogy of adult education,” without any apparent discomfort over the contradiction in terms (Knowles, 37).

For adults learning youth-based ministry, andragogy is more applicable than pedagogy due to the fact that basic andragogical assumptions are more at work than are basic pedagogical assumptions. I cannot presume that in teaching adult advisors youth-based ministry skills that I am the knowledgeable teacher and they are the unknowledgeable learners. Such a presumption is more or less implicit in pedagogical learning. Knowles writes, “In traditional pedagogical practice (and contemporary programmed instruction) the function of the teacher is defined as ‘to teach.’ The teacher is expected to take full responsibility for what happens in the teaching-learning transaction. The learner’s role tends to be a passive recipient of the teacher’s instruction” (Knowles, 43).

What I can presume, however, is that most adults who decide to learn the principles of youth-based ministry are first of all, responsible for their own learning. Knowles recognizes that adults’ perspective of themselves often is that they desire to make their own decisions, are able to manage their own lives, or are in other words, self-directing (Knowles, 40). Youth-based ministry, by in large, involves adults learning self-

direction so they can role model it for youth who are learning to self-direct and govern their own programs and youth ministry events.

Knowles also contributes the concept that adults (and youth) who are involved in their own learning tend to be more invested in the event or its outcome. “There seems to be a law (or, at least, a tendency) of human nature that goes like this: Every individual tends to feel committed to a decision (or an activity) to the extent that he [or she] has participated in making it (or planning it)” (Knowles, 42). In youth-based ministry, when adults empower youth to create, prepare, lead, and evaluate their own programs and ministry events, the adults become committed to the outcome that youth are learning this process, and the faith growth, leadership skills, and social maturation that goes along with it. By the same token, the youth become committed to the development of their creativity, leadership skills, and high quality programs.

In youth-based ministry settings where andragogy is utilized, less importance is placed upon rigid pedagogical formula and more importance on opportunities for inquiry and original thinking. Likewise, less importance is placed upon adult advisor and subject matter; instead emphasis is on situations and the learner’s needs and interests. Andragogy emphasizes the experiential wisdom gained by youth and adults as learners, instead of relying solely on the wisdom and experiences of the adult advisor or adult teacher. Indeed, andragogical learning encourages the adult to be just as much of a learner as the youth themselves. Andragogy, therefore, has come to be understood as “an alternative to pedagogy; a learner-focused approach for people of all ages” (Dover).

Care must be given here, however. Knowles does not indicate that andragogy should replace pedagogy, especially for children and younger youth. He indicates that children need the pedagogical approach of instruction in the formative years, but as the child grows older, it is more appropriate for youth moving through mid-adolescence to be instructed using andragogical practices as Figure 1 below indicates.

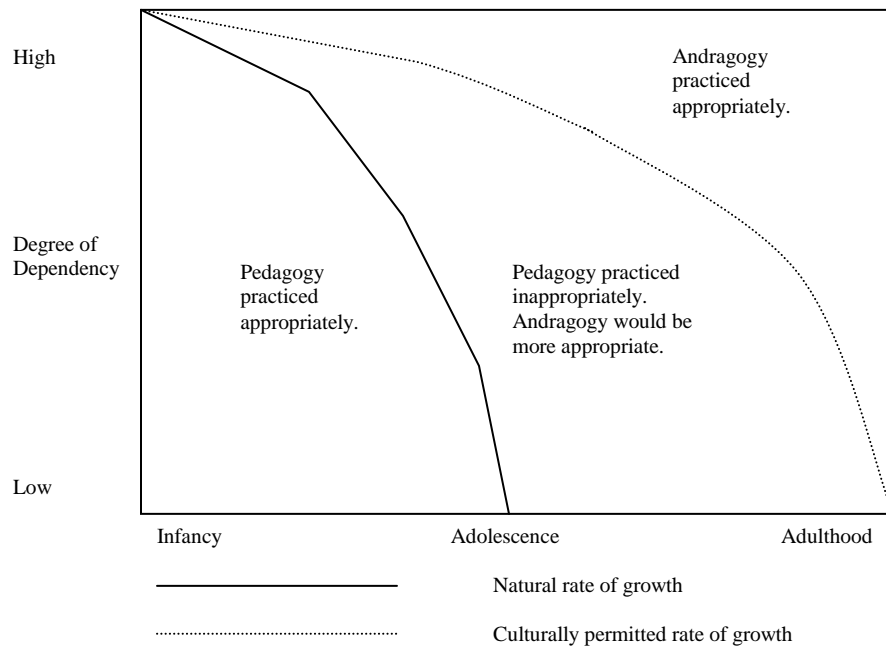


Fig. 1. The natural maturation toward self-direction as compared with the culturally permitted rate of growth of self-direction. Source: (Knowles, E. Holton, III, and R. Swanson, 63)

Knowles also indicates in the graphic that there is a cultural resistance to andragogy when considering the frequency that pedagogy is practiced, even for adults. The problem is that our culture does little to nurture and promote self-direction and investigative inquiry, especially among youth. Instead, what is more common is the practice of the teacher or adult advisor taking full responsibility for making all decisions

about what, how, and when something will be learned and, if it has been learned. This practice is an adult-directed experience and/or teacher-directed education, leaving the youth or adult learner to submissively follow the teacher's instructions (Knowles, E. Holton, III, and R. Swanson, 62). With the concept that older youth, young adults, and adults have unique needs and requirements for learning mainly, that adults learn effectively through mental investigation and by pooling the resources, wisdom, and experiences, Knowles' six Core Principles for andragogy started to form.

### **Six Core Principles of Andragogy**

Originally, these Core Principles were the assumptions Knowles made about andragogy as it emerged as a “technology of how adults learn.” Knowles wrote, “The andragogical model... is a system of alternative sets of assumptions, a *transactional* model that speaks to those characteristics of the learning situation” (Knowles, E. Holton, III, and R. Swanson, 72). He began with four assumptions that were different from the pedagogical model. Assumption number 6 was added in 1984, and assumption number 1 was added in 1990, both by Dr. Knowles. It was in the nineties that the six assumptions evolved into the Core Principles of andragogy (Knowles, E. Holton, III, and R. Swanson, 68).

Here are Knowles' six Core Principles of andragogy and brief clarifications in outline form (Knowles, E. Holton, III, and R. Swanson, 62-9):

- 1) The learner's need to know—Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking it
  - a. what
  - b. why
  - c. how

- 2) Self-directed learning—Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives
  - a. autonomous
  - b. self-directed
- 3) Prior experiences of the learner—the richest resources for learning reside in the older youth and adult learners themselves
  - a. Wider range of experiences, motivation, needs, interests, goals, etc.
  - b. Self-identity from experiences forms
- 4) Readiness to learn—Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations
  - a. life-related
  - b. developmental task
- 5) Orientation to learning—adults are life-centered (or task-centered or problem-centered) in orientation to their learning
  - a. life-centered, task-centered, or problem-centered
  - b. contextual
- 6) Motivation to learn—the most potent motivators are internal pressures
  - a. external value
  - b. internal value
  - c. personal payoff

Knowles six core principles are applicable in youth-based ministry in both programmatic and educational settings. Youth ministry in the church that incorporates youth fellowship groups, large youth events, educational opportunities such as Confirmation, Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, Bible study classes, and discussions as a youth group activity, etc., can easily put these principles into practice.

The following is a short summary of these six principles as they are applicable in youth-based ministry: 1) as older youth grow through mid-adolescence, their self-perception broadens, and they start to develop a curiosity as to what, why, and how they might need to know something. 2) As they become more aware of their autonomy, and they develop keener abilities to take responsibility for their actions and their lives,

including their youth ministry programs, of course! 3) Experience in living starts to accumulate; enjoyable activities held in common with peers, likewise. In a youth-based ministry setting, youth need the freedom to share their life stories and experiences, faith questions, etc., without ridicule. 4) A readiness to learn new things increases as youth move through different stages of development. Adult advisors learn to help youth grow in their readiness to learn by discerning and providing proper direction and support without overloading on either one. 5) More of life's problems also roll in and need to be resolved. Tasks to be done begin to multiply, perhaps slowly at first, then more frequently as youth mature. 6) External motivators (i.e., receiving credit for community service, serving on a youth steering committee looks good on one's college application, etc.) and internal motivators, (i.e., personal satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, etc.) begin to affect their decisions. For example, when the activities chosen by the youth come off well, whether in Confirmation class or in the youth group meeting at the church or some other setting, the internal motivator of personal satisfaction kicks in, and joy and acceptance can fill a tremendous need within the youth themselves. Faith can grow in that context.

I happened to see Ryan just a few months ago at a basketball game. He has now graduated from college and is holding down a full time job. I couldn't resist the opportunity to chat with him about that year in Confirmation, how it had affected him in the long term. He said it was one of the most important years of his life. As he looked backwards, he could see how that year helped shape who he is today. The experiences of his empowerment, the life-centered activities we did, his internal and external motivation all had direct relevance for Ryan. He says his faith is still present, and he relies on God

frequently, especially because he now perceives a need to make a job change—something more in line with his gifts and abilities. For Ryan, all six of andragogy's principles were at work within him to varying degrees during and after that year in Confirmation.

Just as in an educational setting where andragogical principles are applied and the orientation to learning is not so much curriculum-centered but much more life-centered, similarly, in an educational youth-based ministry setting with andragogical principles, the orientation to faith growth is much the same because faith is life-centered. Faith is applicable. Faith is relational. Faith is spiritual. I suspect that a youth-based Sunday school class can provide the same andragogical approach to learning for youth. However, most Sunday school classes for youth and most Confirmation classes in many other churches are seemingly irrevocably stuck to the all too familiar pedagogical approach to learning. The youth themselves, conditioned by the pedagogy of their regular schools, go along with this not knowing any different.

### **Andragogy as a Means to Practice Choice Theory**

Rightly understood, the dynamics of choice theory and the principles of andragogy are two sides of the same coin. One is the theory, the other a means to practice the theory. On the one side of the coin, in the field of youth-based ministry, choice theory explains that youth and adult advisors make choices which meet needs that fit the images of their quality worlds. The freedom of choice is highly valued in their quality worlds. On the other side, much learning goes on in the youth ministry setting, and andragogical learning techniques are consistent with that freedom of choice. Youth



and adults make choices and invest their time, gifts, and abilities in making youth ministry events happen.

The implications of choice theory and andragogy working in tandem in youth-based ministry settings are promising. A personal relationship with God customized by one's personal choices, gifts, and abilities stands a chance to be established and have meaning for all participants. This can be a strong internal motivator. Youth-based ministry which intentionally engages youth in their passion for God, faith, and discernment of spiritual gifts potentially opens the door for them to grow up choosing to discover a deeper love of God, neighbor, and self.

As youth choose God, a deeper revelation might well occur: God chooses youth. Not just youth, but God chooses people. All believers are God's chosen people as this passage declares: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2: 9). We are loved by our Creator! We belong to God! We are part of the new covenant God makes with humanity (Hebrews 8: 7-13). God's promise says, "I will be with you always..." (Matthew 28: 20), and "My grace is sufficient for you..." (2 Corinthians 12: 9). "I have chosen you..." (1 Thessalonians 1:4). Perhaps, God uses choice theory? Perhaps.

The youth's need for acceptance and belonging can be fulfilled. A stronger sense of self-worth is fostered (could be an internal motivator) as youth are affirmed by loving

and caring adults who advise them along the way. If those needs are met, chances are stronger that youth will keep Youth Group, Sunday school, Confirmation class, and other youth ministry settings in their quality worlds.

Youth experience a sense of ownership when choice theory and andragogy are used in the youth-based ministry paradigm. They are given the freedom to choose their learning activities complemented by the wisdom and guidance of adults. High quality learning is often the result when youth feel ownership in their programs. They invest more effort in making their event, program, activity, class, or Bible study work well. With that investment of their efforts, the learning that comes from those experiences is very formative and enriching to their growth.

Youth ownership also implies that youth can be the featured doers and performers of the youth-based ministry programs. As that happens, the adult advisor can move out of the limelight and does so with a focus on nurturing the skills of the youth who are in the limelight, consistent with andragogy's focus on the learner. Also, as adult advisors develop a genuine love and support for youth, the youth perceive that love and support; as a result, healthy and appropriate relationships can be born.

Another possible implication when choice theory and andragogy in youth-based ministry are applied is that the youth and adult will experience the joy of being in community with one another. When events and activities are created, designed, implemented, and evaluated by youth with adult guidance and advice, several youth share the load of making the event happen. One adult as the leader in charge or in control of the youth ministry and/or teaching ministry tends to cut off the joy of everyone in the

community sharing the experiences of the ministry together. Instead, in an andragogical learning setting, the adult advisor and/or teacher join in as a learner and all participants share in the effort. In my opinion, such mutual effort is what the Christian community is supposed to be about anyway.

I offer both the pertinent dynamics of choice theory and andragogical principles as possible useful alternatives to external control psychology and pedagogy commonly found in youth ministry programs. The original invitation extended to adult advisors to shift from the adult-based ministry paradigm to the youth-based ministry is intensified by recognizing the need to move from external control psychology and pedagogical learning to choice theory and andragogy. This shift can be viewed graphically using a quadrant matrix continuum in the graphic below:

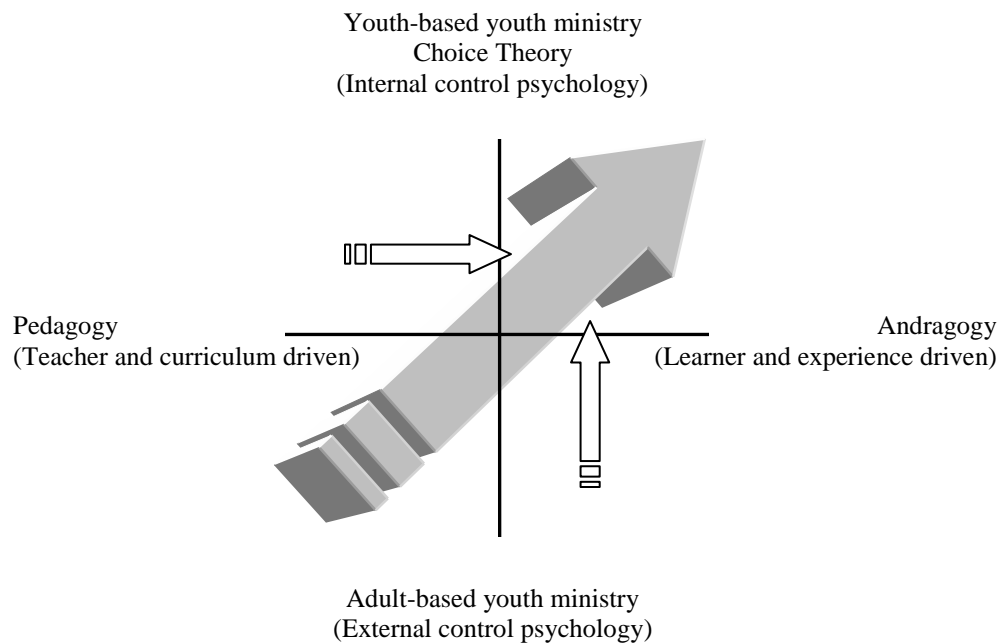


Fig. 2. Shift toward Youth-based Ministry and Andragogy in Practice<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> My gratitude goes to Dr. Frank Stalfa, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology, Lancaster Theological Seminary, for originating this figure and being able to envision my project in graphic form.

As the graphic indicates, the most people making the shift would move from somewhere on the lower left quadrant to somewhere on the upper right in their practice of youth ministry, hence the large arrow. This is because adult-based youth ministry is embedded with the practice of external control psychology and pedagogical learning techniques, and youth-based youth ministry has choice theory and andragogical learning techniques embedded within it.

I think it would be difficult for a person to be on the continuum as practicing youth-based ministry and choice theory but be teacher-oriented and curriculum driven simultaneously. Likewise, it would be difficult to be a practitioner of adult-based youth ministry and practice andragogical learning techniques. Such persons are rare, in my estimation. However, even though difficult, it perhaps is not inconceivable. Some people may find themselves in the other two quadrants moving to the upper right one, hence the minimized arrows on the graphic. But, such a person might likely experience inner conflict as to how to practice youth ministry. The conflict would likely occur because a person may believe that the youth-based ministry and choice theory concepts work, try it, but, in actual practice, almost inevitably rely upon the familiar adult-based, external control, and pedagogical learning techniques. Indeed, a few of the participants in the workshops found themselves reverting to their familiar practices of adult-based youth ministry after attending the workshop and trying youth-based ministry, as the next chapter will reveal.

In general, adults working in the adult-based youth ministry paradigm easily rely upon the curriculum and their authority to tell the youth what to learn and do. Not much

decision making and youth empowerment takes place in the lower left quadrant. In the upper right quadrant, adult advisors and youth have more responsibility for their choices than the adult-based ministry paradigms allows. Youth can, with adult advisors steeped in andragogical learning techniques and choice theory, choose their programs, events, and activities based on what their need levels are, what images are in their quality world, and how effective their choices are in giving them control in their lives.

I taught the Confirmation classes for several years at Community UCC and Chapel Hill UCC. I have found that the most effective classes were the ones when the youth were given the opportunity to be responsible for their learning, a basic andragogical principle. Granted, not all the curriculum I designed was covered, but the main goal was not to get through the material. Rather, it was more important for the youth to have an experience that cultivated and nurtured a meaningful and fulfilling relationship with God as the year progressed. Cultivating such a relationship meant constructing a learning environment which focused on experiential learning and choice-filled opportunities. For example, I found it less important to have the youth memorize the books of the Bible, the Apostle's Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the like, and more important that they choose from among several possible activities which helped them to explore those topics in depth. I found it less important that they hear me drone on and on about having faith in God, and more important that they choose to write a song, for example, about how their faith impacts their lives. It was more important for them to choose activities (like role plays, simulation games, making DVD's, doing service projects, etc.) that taught them the life of Jesus as opposed to forcing them to fill out a worksheet on the life of Jesus.

Choices abound for youth and for adults in the youth-based ministry setting. The more the choices coming from within individuals, the more effective control they have in their lives and their ministry programs, events, and activities. The more effective control, the more the images of what is in their quality world becomes reality. As their quality world become reality; the more basic needs are met. People are always choosing to behave in ways that meet their basic needs at the time.

We are so used to external control psychology, or in other words, having people tell us what to do, what to learn, what to think, what to choose, etc., that learning choice theory and the dynamics of andragogy requires the unlearning old habits and practices, especially in the area of the adult-based youth ministry paradigm which external control psychology adheres to so readily. Once an adult youth advisor's thinking regarding youth ministry shifts, a set of thirteen skills can be developed consistent with the youth-based ministry paradigm. The next section focuses on the workshop designed to help adults become acquainted with choice theory, andragogy, and develop the necessary skills for nurturing a youth-based ministry program.

### **The Background to the Workshop Design**

The intention of this workshop was first to assist adult youth advisors in comparing the paradigms of adult-based youth ministry with youth-based youth ministry. Second, participants would begin to develop a deeper awareness of the internal intricacies of youth-based ministry, including the benefits and dangers of youth-based ministry, the biblical, theological, and faith perspectives which undergird it, and the pertinent dynamics of choice theory. Next, adult advisor qualities and skills needed to support and

grow a youth-based ministry program in whatever setting were explored and practiced. Lastly, resources and experiences were shared.

During the workshop I provided ample resources useful for the youth-based ministry paradigm. Among those were 1) a possible structure of youth-based ministry, i.e., the three tiered structure of youth-based ministry—individual-centered, meeting-centered, and large event-centered ministry (Jones, back cover), 2) a possible balanced approach to youth-based ministry involving the three “S’s,” namely focal points on Social, Service, and Spiritual, 3) the five “I” movements of workshop/meeting design—Invite, Inform, Investigate, Illustrate, and Inspire (Griggs, 104),<sup>4</sup> and other “nuts and bolts” resources helpful to making a youth-based ministry flourish. Additionally, the principles of andragogy were inherent in the design of the workshop. In true andragogical and choice theory fashion, participants had the opportunity to choose the direction of their learning and the level of their involvement during the workshop.

At the heart of the workshop for this project are five foundational points. For one, the responsibility for critical learning about God, faith, theology, the church’s ministry, and leadership skills is no longer solely at the doorstep of adult advisors, youth ministers, pastors, or even parents. Instead, youth are intentionally empowered by adults who tap into youth’s natural curiosity, their strong sense of passion and energy, their choice-making abilities, and their developing ability to understand the complexities of their world (White, 202).

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<sup>4</sup> Each of the four sessions of the workshop was built on Griggs’ five “I” movements.

Second, contrary to a pervasive sense among many adults that it is normal for youth to have a general apathy for just about everything, I have found that in a climate where youth are empowered to make decisions in areas important to them, quite the opposite is true. Adults who practice andragogical principles and choice theory with youth find that youth tend to be high energy, passionate and compassionate, good natured, and desire to behave in ways that meet their needs and fits the images of their quality worlds giving them the most effective control of their lives. The most recent studies of youth ministry suggest that God, faith growth, parents, and significant adults (advisors, pastors, teachers, etc.) ARE in the quality worlds of many youth today (Smith). Youth value very highly the thoughts and opinions of these adults.

Third, youth need empowering adults to engage in conversation with them on things that matter for youth topics, which always fluctuate. This presumes that adults are deliberately in an ongoing process of conversing with youth in ways that build trust and opens lines of communication so that what is actually in the quality worlds of youth is known and not presumed. Adults learning skills related to choice theory and andragogy, such as asking questions, deep listening, planning details for youth events and programs, etc., are better able to build the trust needed so that youth can see the larger picture of living life with faithfulness and integrity. Youth getting to this point require partnership with adults (White, 203).

Fourth, this workshop is not built on a foundation commonly associated with educational events surrounding youth ministry, namely, that I, the workshop leader, need to pass on information to the workshop participants who don't know this information yet. This workshop presumes andragogical principles, practices choice theory, and utilizes



different learning techniques, all of which are designed to encourage the adult advisors to take the bulk of the responsibility for their learning and developing their leadership skills for youth-based ministry.

Last, the workshop participant is responsible to transfer what he or she learned in the workshop to their practice of youth-based ministry. This practice is needed because “where the rubber meets the road,” where theory is put into practice, is where youth are today. They are here in our communities. They are here in our churches. If youth are part of the church’s leadership today as well as part of the church’s leadership tomorrow, the adult youth advisors who are skilled in empowering youth to lead their youth ministry programs, events, and activities today stand to solidify the church’s ministry tomorrow.

### **Methods of Research**

The intention of this research was to find out how resistant and/or acceptant participants are to the concepts of the youth-based ministry paradigm embedded with choice theory and andragogy and the practice of this paradigm. Qualitative and subjective data will be acquired by means of written and verbal feedback from different workshop participants. The data will be acquired in three parts:

Part I. The concluding activity of the workshop was dedicated for each participant to evaluate their resistance levels to the concepts, insights, ideas, and skills offered. They evaluated their resistance levels to implementing what they learned at the workshop and assessed the value of their learning experience relevant to their setting(s) in youth ministry.

Part II: The online research survey was a follow-up research method used in response to the workshops held in August. This survey, available approximately two months after the workshop, requested that the respondents share their perceptions on how they practiced what they learned. It also researched the usefulness of the youth-based ministry paradigm based on perceived resistance levels and the extent that the youth-based ministry dynamics are practiced. The identifiable skills offered in the workshop were also examined in terms of how much they were practiced by the respondents. This survey was available one month after the completion of the workshop affording the participants the time needed to experience and practice the skills of the youth-based ministry paradigm

Part III: Lastly, I conducted-up telephone interview approximately four months after the workshop was completed with willing participants. Phone calls were made to a random sampling of five respondents who indicated they were willing to participate in a telephone interview.<sup>5</sup> Questions were asked about who has the power to decide which paradigm of youth ministry is used, what factors influenced their decision in choosing a paradigm, and where the resistance and support lie for the youth-based ministry paradigm. The five interviews were conducted approximately five months after the workshop, and two of the five respondents participated in all three research methods.

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<sup>5</sup> The random sample was selected by use of the following process. First, the computer randomly sorted the list of workshop participants who gave permission. Next, I followed a simple random sample formula: I took the total number of willing participants (20) and divided that number by the number of interviews I wanted to have (5). The result (4) indicated that the random sample would consist of every 4<sup>th</sup> person on the list.

### Constructive Criticisms of the Workshop

The workshops took place in late August; one was offered in the northern section of the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ, the other offered in the southern section.<sup>6</sup> The following table shows the breakdown of the workshop participants, age categories, and which workshop they attended.

**Table 1**

Workshop Participants Location/Gender/Age Breakdown

	Male Northern August 18	Female Northern August 18	Male Southern August 25	Female Southern August 25	Totals
Young adult (age 19-29)	1	0	0	1	2
Adult (age 30 +)	1	7	3	12	23
Totals	2	7	3	13	<b>25</b>

A major concern with this workshop was the time element. There simply was too much material for the amount of time allotted. With more time, participants could experience, reflect upon, and practice the concepts and skills advocated in this project, and of course, practice the dynamics and principles of choice theory and andragogy!

In addition to the time element, I noted some individuals struggled with making the choice of how they wished to work: individually, with a small group, or with the remaining large group. Some simply said, “I don’t care which way I work.” Others made the decision quickly.

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<sup>6</sup> For the detailed outline of the workshop, please refer to Appendix A.

Interestingly, some of the struggle seems to come from what might be engrained in people, mainly that when they come to a workshop, they expect to be told what to do, where to go, and when to start, etc. by the person leading the workshop. Because of this predisposition, choosing the way they can work, picking what they can do, or how they may take responsibility for their own learning throws a bit of a curve at the participant. Even for me, as a workshop leader, I felt the pull to lead people in what I want them to do or know. I consciously must resist that urge in order to employ the principles of choice theory and andragogy. I do need to strike a balance, though. I control the use of the materials and resources I bring, but I also must present them in empowering ways knowing that they may or may not be used.

Some of the most important content of the workshop was found in the “Learning Topics.”<sup>7</sup> However, when the choice is given to the participants to pick a learning topic, the topics are not investigated thoroughly enough. I consider this a disadvantage and am critical of the way I designed the workshop in this regard. While the design lends itself to accommodate the andragogical learning principle that adults are responsible for their own learning, I found myself wishing I had devised another way for the non-chosen learning topics.

As the workshops got under way in earnest, it was clear that the concepts of the youth-based ministry paradigm suggest a re-examination of current practices in youth

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix A for the details of each learning topic. For now, I list the five topics here: 1) “The Benefits of Youth-based Ministry,” 2) “The Dangers of Youth-based Ministry,” 3) “Biblical, Theological, and Faith Perspectives of Youth-based ministry,” 4) “Applying the Dynamics of Choice theory to Aspects of Youth-based Ministry,” and 5) “Helping the Congregation (or Faith Community) Become Involved.”

ministry. Such a refocusing stretches everyone into new territory. As with all new territories, crucial and subtle changes take place. Resistances become known, the blessings, likewise. The youth-based ministry paradigm, embedded with choice theory and andragogy, has both. How did the workshop participants receive the youth-based ministry paradigm? What changes did they experience? What differences were noted in actual practice? That is the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 4 “The Findings and Responses”

*“For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven... a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away...”*  
Ecclesiastes 3:1, 6 NRSV)

*“Resistance helps change happen. The resistance itself points to the need for something new. It encourages us to imagine the alternatives. And it energizes those who are called to work toward those ends”* (Palmer, 165).

When Christian author and Trappist monk Thomas Merton said, “We do not need to adjust to the world; we can adjust the world” (Palmer, 180),<sup>1</sup> I think his statement invites people to make an extraordinary shift from one way of decision-making to another. Instead of deciding to acquiesce to the ways of the world and behave as the world dictates and expects, it is a completely new perspective to consider that our choice of behaviors might have an impact on the world.

Merton’s perspective is akin to this project’s invitation for adults working in youth ministry to make the shift to a youth-based youth ministry paradigm. Instead of acquiescing to the expected adult-based leadership style where the bulk of the control and responsible choices of youth ministry programming lands in the laps of the adults, it is a totally different perspective to put it in the laps of the youth. In order to do this, specific leadership skills can be developed by adults to empower youth as they take control and make responsible choices, thereby making a viable response to the paradigm of adult-based youth ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> Merton is quoted by Brother Patrick Hart, Merton’s personal secretary. Parker Palmer received the quote in a personal communication from Brother Hart.

The critical factor, of course, is how strongly (or not) adult advisors respond to the invitation during the workshop and then, a few months after it. Because the invitation calls for adults to practice youth ministry in uncommon and unfamiliar ways (at least in comparison to the common and familiar practice of the adult-based paradigm in youth ministry), the resistance levels of the adult became the focal point of this research. The information received from the workshop participants was not about how well the workshops did or did not come off.<sup>2</sup> Nor was it about proving or disproving choice theory or the principles of andragogy. Rather, it was about their inner responses to the youth-based ministry paradigm, its particular dynamics, and developing their leadership skills, which includes the skill of understanding choice theory.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter I report the findings on the resistance levels to the youth-based ministry paradigm, choice theory, and six of the thirteen skills most closely related to choice theory's dynamics using the data from the Focus Group Evaluation Survey<sup>4</sup>, the Follow-up Online survey,<sup>5</sup> and the random sampling of Telephone Interviews.<sup>6</sup>

### **Resistance Levels to the Youth-based Ministry Paradigm**

As the workshop participants were introduced to the invitation to make a shift from an adult-based youth ministry paradigm to a youth-based youth ministry paradigm, I was interested first in their current practice of youth ministry. The first question asked

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<sup>2</sup> I use the terms 'respondent,' 'participant' or 'workshop participant' interchangeably. All three mean the same thing.

<sup>3</sup> Because andragogy is inherent in the practice of choice theory and the youth-based ministry paradigm, I did not test for how resistant people might be to it.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D.

respondents to place themselves on a continuum of 1 to 10, keeping in mind that ratings in the middle represent a blending of the two paradigms. Table 2 below illustrates the responses of each participant:

**Table 2<sup>7</sup>**

Respondents' personal way of practicing youth ministry

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals
Adult-based			<i>Blending of paradigms (hybrid)</i>				Youth-based			
	1	1	4	2	3	5	2	2		22
					1	1				

Of the twenty-five participants, twenty-two completed the Focus Group Evaluation Survey. Among the twenty-two, sixteen (72%) respondents rated themselves as practicing a blending of the two paradigms. Fourteen (64%) people lean slightly toward youth-based ministry (ratings of 6 and higher) and eight (36%) toward adult-based (ratings of 5 and lower). Two (9%) were strongly adult-based and 18% (four respondents) of the twenty-two rated themselves as solidly practicing youth-based ministry.

The idea that the youth can decide and choose, but adults frequently are ready to provide or start something was reflected in the comments offered by several individuals who rated themselves as practicing a blending of the paradigms. This is not such a bad

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<sup>7</sup> For some of the tables in this project, there may appear on the continuum an in-between rating, as is in the case of Table 2 above. Respondents literally gave a rating in between the numbers. For convenience, I assigned a .5 number to the rating. In the table above, one person gave a rating of 6.5 and another 7.5.



thing and reflects a characteristic of “hybrid” of paradigms. I often teach adult advisors to have ideas “up their sleeve...” ready to be thrown into the planning conversation, almost always as a question or a suggestion, when the planning process stalls.

It is when adults take over with their plans that a quick return to the familiar adult-based paradigm happens. This is not an uncommon occurrence. One person whose rating was 6 said “Let kids decide what to do, but [I] step in with a back-up plan if they don’t think of anything. I plan two things and let them choose which one they want to do.” Another person with a rating of 4 said, “I may encourage kids to make suggestions or choices, but if nothing is forthcoming, I launch something.” A third person with a rating of 4 was unwilling to let the youth experience failure, so the youth choose what to do, but only from a list of events and activities that the adult provided. The very familiar “That is the way it has always been done in the past” was offered by an individual with another rating of 4 on the continuum.

A follow-up question, “What choices are you making for the present way you do youth ministry?” also revealed some telling comments solidifying the idea that the conventional style of youth ministry is mostly adult-based youth ministry, even though there is a desire to incorporate the use of choice theory. One person’s response reflected this idea: “I choose to empower by allowing them the choice, but I also seek to carry it out entirely.” Another person wrote, “To have it—I must originate it. There’s participation for everything offered but very little youth leadership” underscoring the idea that there is very little youth empowerment within adult based youth ministry. Another similar comment is offered by this respondent: “Kids have so many choices/demands for what to do with their time; if you are not giving them something that meets them where

they are they will not choose to attend. Only the youth really know what appeals to them. Engaging them makes all the difference.” The ‘quality world’ dynamic of choice theory might well be inferred by that comment.

On the opposite side of the continuum, those leaning toward youth-based ministry were relying on previous training and previous youth work in another Conference of the United Church of Christ. Both of those individuals rated their practice of youth ministry as an 8. One person with a rating of 9 said, “If we engage in activities that are relevant and meaningful for the youth, we are providing a worthwhile activity and helping affirm who they are.” The person whose personal rating was 7.5 on the continuum made a comment reflecting not only the concept of adults empowering youth, but also how that can happen with Biblical awareness: “I am not interested in teaching them what the Bible says, as I was taught. On the contrary, I am deeply interested in discovering what they find in it, in how it speaks to them, if it does at all.”

Those practicing youth-based ministry indicated that their reasons were about increasing the increased levels of leadership, empowerment, and responsibility within the youth themselves. One person wrote, “I feel we need to empower the youth to step up to leadership positions and really take ownership of the group.” A second person said, “I try to advocate for the youth and have tried to facilitate the youth having access to their own treasury,” and a third humbly said, “[I give] them the room to do; implement their ministry—I am just the advisor.” One person touched on the planning phase of youth ministry with the comment, “Right now—they (youth) are actively involved in planning the calendar year.”

Once participants were thinking about whether or not they practiced youth-based ministry, I wanted to find out how important it was to them to make the shift to the youth-based ministry paradigm in their ministry setting. The responses to this question ranged from moderately important to very important. Table 3 below shows that nineteen (86%) of the twenty-two participants rated the importance of the shift as 8 or higher, and twelve (55%) individuals rated it as “very important.”

**Table 3**

Respondent’s level of importance of shifting to the youth-based ministry paradigm

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals		
Not important at all							Very Important					
					1	1	1	7	4	1	7	22

The reasons for this high level of importance are varied. Many people emphasized the high value of youth gaining leadership skills, learning responsibility, and decision-making skills, all attributes of the youth-based ministry paradigm. Some emphasized the importance of the church gaining leaders from youth as they develop their skills which is reflected in this relatively lengthy response:

To train and equip leaders for our church, we (the church) must take seriously the need to expect and provide for this from life’s beginning. Adults, who have not experienced the life of the church as important from their childhood/youth, seldom become true leaders of it as adults. This, combined with person’s need for the gifts and graces of faith, also has its most effective opportunity to help “grow a child” into healthy, faithful adulthood when begun in childhood.

One respondent articulated a strong importance because what was offered in the past no longer has the appeal it once had: “Youth are particularly lost at the moment. They are over-committed or un-engaged and what we have offered in the past isn’t working. So to get them involved as well as building life skills, I see the need to shift to more youth based.”

One comment associated with an individual who rated the importance as a 6 indicate a comfort with a blending of the two paradigms by writing, “I think a mix of adult-led and youth-led is good.” Another individual with a rating of 7 had the comment “I want them to feel like this is their youth group (ownership).”

Interestingly enough, the respondent’s personal way of practicing youth ministry (Table 2) shows that nineteen (77%) either see themselves as practicing adult-based youth ministry or a blending of the two paradigms. When compared with the data in Table 3 which shows that nineteen (77%) think making the shift to the youth-based paradigm is important, there seems to be a longing among the participants to move toward stronger levels of the youth-based paradigm. There may also be a sense that adult advisors would like to be practitioners of youth-based ministry, but the reality may not be there yet.

Sensing the importance and longing for the shift can be very different than accepting it. Accepting the shift implies a deeper level of desire. With acceptance of the shift, one can become willful to actually make it happen. Thinking that the shift is important is one thing; having the will to do it is another. Therefore, I invited workshop participants to assess their personal acceptance level to making the shift to youth-based

youth ministry. Fourteen (64%) respondents of twenty-two rated their personal acceptance level 9 and 10 respectively. No one rated the acceptance level below a 6 (see table 4 below).

**Table 4**

Respondent’s personal acceptance levels to making the shift to youth-based ministry

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals	
No Acceptance at all							Very acceptable				
					3	3	1	1	6	8	22

Overall, there doesn’t seem to be all that much resistance. Fifteen (68%) of the respondents were in the very acceptable range with eight individuals rating the level as a 10 (36%). This roughly corresponds with the perceived importance levels from Table 3 (more on those high ratings in a minute).

But, with seven (32%) people, there appears to be moderate resistance. Some of the notable reasons for this relate to the thought that youth are inexperienced and adults need to remain in control. This person with an acceptance level of 6 writes the following: “I will have difficulty with allowing the youth to handle all aspects. I am a ‘doer.’ When there is a goal defined, or an objective that I (or my group) want to attain, I make sure that details are in place and a process is defined to get there.” Another respondent with an acceptance level of 7 writes, “I don’t want the program to fail or a few kids to be ‘punished’ because of lack of responsibility. The youth are young and/or don’t know how to implement programs yet.”

An interesting perspective is offered by one participant who offers a critique of youth and parents in today's culture. With an acceptance level of 7.5, this person notes that "The reality of the churches I serve are that commitment is small and apathy great. The parents pass this on to their children and since you don't get scholarships (not many anyway) for church participation/being persons of deep faith—they'd rather go to a soccer game." Perhaps the "they" in that comment refer to both youth and their parents?

Now, responding to those high acceptance ratings, there seems to be an awareness of the value of youth-based ministry due to experience with the paradigm from previous youth ministry programs or settings. Some comments, both in the Focus Group Evaluation Survey and the online research indicate high praise for the "Leadership Now!" program at Lancaster Theological Seminary.<sup>8</sup> One person with a rating of 10 connects youth-based ministry with church membership by writing, "If we are going to make them members of the church at age 14 or 15, then we also need them to be participating in the life of the church and be meeting their spiritual needs." And another person with a rating of 9 writes, "[I'm] very open as this setting is one that has really motivated and nurtured me into the person I am today."

This project began with a premise that many youth ministry programs in a variety of settings function from an adult-based youth ministry paradigm. This turned out to be true in the descriptions of the particular youth ministry settings offered by the workshop participants. In Table 5 (on the next page), thirteen (65%) of the twenty participants (see

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<sup>8</sup> This program features the essence of the youth-based ministry paradigm. One comment likened it to "practicing what we preach." Another person wrote that "working with Leadership Now, the whole premise of the program is allowing youth to develop their leadership skills."

footnote) placed the setting in which they were most closely associated in the adult-based youth ministry paradigm, with four (18%) people rating it as a 3 and four more (18%) as a 4 on the scale. Two (9%) respondents rated their settings as a 1 and 2, respectively. On the opposite end, only one (5%) person rated their particular setting as a strong 9, two (9%) people as 8's, and four (18%) people responded with a weak 7.

**Table 5**

Respondent's perceptions of their particular settings in Youth Ministry<sup>9</sup>

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Totals</b>
Adult-based			Youth-based							
<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22*</b>

The settings described mostly are in the local church, specifically local church youth fellowship groups and Christian education venues such as Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, and Confirmation classes. Some other settings were related to wider church settings, such as Conference and Association events common to the United Church of Christ and seminary opportunities.

One person's comments revealed a 'passive consumer' mentality: "Sunday school curriculum [is] decided for them, they are told when they will go to confirmation, [and there is] not a variety of teaching techniques (usually what the teacher is comfortable with)." Two others' remarks indicate the same mentality, but include a desire to shift

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<sup>9</sup> \*One person offered no rating, and another person rated a range between 4 and 8. These two respondents are not included in the continuum.

away from adult-based youth ministry. Consider these words: “The Sunday school program is lectionary, all but one class, and the former youth program was 100% planned, led, and directed by the adult. I’m combating this approach heavily,” and “Because adults choose the curriculum and plan all of the Sunday school and most Vacation Bible School activities. We do have some youth involvement with VBS. I’m thinking that our teen youth groups do better at eliciting the youth’s ideas.” One person indicated that there would be acceptance in general, but that person believes that it will be difficult to put trust in the youth.

There is some resistance perceived in the pastoral leadership as well. One comment stated that a syllabus for Confirmation was sent out by the pastors of the church planned entirely by the pastors. Another person commented that the pastor “talks of the need of more youth involvement, but he started the youth committee of all parents who plan and run the events.” It is possible that such a circumstance could be a result of pastors practicing what is convenient; they may not necessarily be resistant. On the surface though, there appears to be a conflict of interests.

The online survey indicates that of eleven respondents, four (36%) perceived that pastors partially affirm the youth-based ministry paradigm and one (9%) totally affirms it for a total of five people (45%). One person in the telephone interview indicated that one source of resistance is with the pastor, the Christian Education committee leaders, and leaders of other committees in the church. Three (27%) said they don’t know; an interesting perception which perhaps reflects a sentiment of weak pastoral support for adult advisors.



One honest pastor suggested that she is her own nemesis when it comes to resistance to youth-based ministry. She said, “It’s easier to do youth ministry myself. To watch something never happen is difficult, which is possible if the kids plan. But, when it happens well, it comes from the youth. They receive internal motivators—the congregation is supportive. Worship planning really was from the kids; you can tell when it’s from their hearts.”

Other adults beyond the pastor can be resistant. One person described resistance within the setting in which she worked: “The youth-based paradigm is so counter to the Sunday school structure; I think it will be hard to present this to the wider church.” Another person in a telephone interview remarked that “Initially I am all for [youth-based ministry] in theory, but it’s difficult. I affirm it. Practically, it’s more difficult.”

Even the youth themselves in the ministry setting might be resistant to the youth-based paradigm because it is not what they are used to in most all of the settings common to their lives. In a telephone interview, one respondent indicated she perceives resistance from the youth because “youth are so enculturated with adults doing so much for them.” Another person in an interview said, “The kids themselves are resistant. They are so engrained with people telling them what to do. They’re also lazy.” The online survey seems to bear this out as seven (54%) of the thirteen respondents perceive that youth “partially affirm” the youth-based paradigm.

Two people perceived that resistance lies with some parents. Even though this person was one of those who rated the acceptance level an 8, the comments offered raise a concern about parents: “In watching most of the adults I see acceptance. I don’t see

acceptance in some of the parents that bring youth along. Adults that allow youth to mess up and fail are a huge factor in youth events. Also the youth show passion for what they are accomplishing.” Another person rated the level as a 4 wrote, “Parents are afraid to let go and also not motivating or accepting of the capacity of the youth to lead.” In the five telephone interviews, however, three of the five persons indicated that parents were among those who support the youth-based ministry paradigm.

Granted, these perceptions are subjective in nature. Such perceptions, however, may invite pastors to reassess how they are actually practicing youth ministry and what the messages they might be sending to adult advisors about youth-based ministry. Parents and other church leaders might well benefit from the same invitation. And, the youth? Well, we have to work *with* them, helping them to unlearn and undo the external control dynamic which is so familiar to them. I have found that once given the freedoms and the show of confidence from adults that they can do this, the youth are thrilled, affirmed, and excited to have the responsibility.

In short, the research from the initial Focus Group Evaluation Survey shows that many of the settings for youth ministry are adult-based, and that there are areas of resistance to the invitation to shift to the youth-based paradigm among different groups of people. One might think that this means the road will be difficult. Yes, it is not going to be easy or quick. However, the follow-up online survey indicates the perceptions of the respondents may have changed somewhat from the time of the workshop to the time of the survey, and in this instance, the change seems to be for the better! Of the thirteen online respondents, eleven (85%) perceived that the youth-based ministry paradigm is

accepted by adults in their particular setting of youth ministry: five (39%) “strongly agreed” with this statement and six (46%) “agreed” with the statement.

Compare that to the perceptions offered in Table 6 (below) from the initial Focus Group Evaluation Survey. Respondents were asked: “What level of acceptance is present in your current youth ministry setting to the idea of making a shift from the adult-based youth ministry to youth-based youth ministry?” The responses at the workshop indicated a general acceptance to making the shift, but comparatively, the initial perceptions of the participants were not as favorable—only thirteen (59%) of twenty-two respondents rated their acceptance as 6 or higher with only four of those (18%) rating their acceptance as very high.

**Table 6**

Respondent’s perception of acceptance levels in their current youth ministry setting

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Totals</b>	
No Acceptance at all			Very acceptable								
<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>

One woman at the workshop, when asked about the perceived level of acceptance to the idea of shifting to youth-based ministry, rated her particular youth ministry setting as an 8. She wrote, “Our congregation is open to youth participating more. As new leaders, I hope the other adults will be open to youth-based youth ministry.” But notice the heightened excitement in her words from the follow-up online survey a month after the workshop: “We just started our group in the spring. We put this into practice this fall

when the kids decided to do a worship service. I had just attended your seminar and we had the kids plan and implement the entire service. We did have to use some guidance along the way, but the kids did an awesome job.”

Another workshop participant rated the acceptance level as a 1—no acceptance at all. But, in the online survey, she indicates that while the youth-based paradigm is not yet fully implemented, she is “training the youth to work in this fashion.” This person even agreed with the statement that “This paradigm is accepted by adults in my setting of youth ministry.”

A third respondent originally rated the acceptance level in particular her setting as a 4 with the comment that the congregation has a “fear of wasting time and money on a program that doesn’t work. Their main focus is on number of participants and what they youth can do for the church.” Compare that comment with her follow-up comment on the online survey: “We are working towards this. [I received] great insight into how to make this happen and the tools for bringing other adults into the understanding of this style of working with youth. Time will tell how this is implemented. I think it will take time and patience to work into the picture.” That is quite a difference in perspectives coming from the same person!

The fact that the online survey shows a higher perception of acceptance by other adults can be considered cautiously as encouraging news. Perhaps when information was first shared in the workshop, there was some skepticism. The concepts were not as familiar. The invitation to shift, perhaps, was not as well-received. But notice what happened: among a high percentage of respondents, once they were in their actual

settings and implementing some of the paradigm's basic techniques, their perceptions of how well shift was accepted increased.

Of course, there also were some who found the acceptance levels worse. But, the 85% acceptance level in the follow-up survey versus 59% acceptance level in the original Focus Group survey looks encouraging. But, is it?

I indicated caution was in order. This is because the previous data are about perceptions of how others accept the youth-based paradigm. Perceptions are different than actual practice. I asked in the online survey about the actual practice of the paradigm. The first question was about the respondent themselves. Four (33%) of the twelve said they practiced youth-based ministry "only sometimes." Five (42%) of twelve practice it "most of the time," and two (17%) said "all the time." The second question was about the respondent's perception of the other adults working with him or her. The online survey shows that five (42%) of the twelve perceive that other adults "sometimes practice" youth-based ministry, four (33%) perceive they practice it "most of the time." No one indicated other adults practice this paradigm "all the time."

What does this mean? One possible meaning is that the respondent's acceptance of the paradigm may be one thing; putting it into practice, quite another. Most respondents themselves, on the one hand, find shifting to the youth-based paradigm as highly acceptable (see Table 4), yet on the other hand, in actual practice, only seven (59%) of twelve practice the paradigm with stronger frequency.

The same 'putting it into practice' issue is true for the other adult advisors as well. While the respondents indicated the 59% of the other adults working with them accepted

the paradigm after the initial workshop, and that number increased to 85% two months after the workshop, still the respondent's perceptions indicated that in actual practice, 75% of other adults actually practice youth-based ministry with only 33% practicing it most or all the time. It appears that youth-based ministry is a good concept in theory, but the resistance to putting it into practice is notable. Will that end result be the same for choice theory?

### **Resistance Levels to the Pertinent Dynamics of Choice Theory**

I have claimed that the youth-based ministry paradigm has choice theory embedded within it as a working psychology, and andragogical learning techniques are the means to practice choice theory. In fact, whenever I use the term youth-based ministry, I mean the paradigm complete with choice theory and andragogy. I have offered this paradigm as a viable alternative to adult-based ministry which enjoys widespread practice in the church's ministry. Similarly, adult-based youth ministry has external control psychology embedded within it and pedagogical learning techniques as a means to practice external control psychology. I also have made it clear that the fullness of the youth-based ministry paradigm includes a working understanding of choice theory and andragogical principles. Because choice theory is a major contribution to the conversation regarding the practice of youth-based ministry, I deemed it appropriate to find out specifically how people responded to the dynamics of choice theory.

Overall, the data from the Focus Group Evaluation Surveys indicate a low overall resistance level to the pertinent dynamics of choice theory. Three questions regarding choice theory's dynamics were asked as they relate to youth-based ministry. The first

question asked the adults about how objectionable they find the claim that when youth are given the opportunity to grow and mature in their faith in a choice-oriented environment (i.e., when they are given the freedom to choose the emphasis, direction, development, and implementation of their youth ministry programs) and are empowered by the adults working with them, high quality youth ministry programs are likely to emerge. Again using the continuum to report the data, the levels of the participant’s responses are indicated in Table 7 below.

**Table 7**

Respondent’s objection to claim that empowered youth helps quality programs emerge

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Totals</b>
No objection at all							Very objectionable			
<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>22</b>

Clearly, a large portion of the respondents have very little objection to the claim. In fact, many respondents recognize the fundamental significance of the claim. As one respondent put it, “In theory, and in practice, interactions of this nature are most effective where people have a say in what they are doing.” When people have a say in what they are doing, when they are invested personally, when they choose to be involved, high quality events occur frequently enough, faith growth happens, and leadership skills grow—these are the characteristics that make youth-based ministry effective.

Another man commented, “I’ve seen it happen. I’ve seen youth emerge as leaders and grow in faith when given the opportunity to explore faith and use their gifts.” Even

one participant sensed the importance of choice theory for her own growth: “I can see the validity of this since I have seen this work and this is how I learn and grow as a person. Cultivating leadership for now enables the learner/participant to feel ownership of their faith.”

Comments on the online survey also bear out a widespread low resistance to the claim. Two people recognized the importance of youth functioning in a choice-oriented environment because ownership issues start to emerge. One of those wrote, “We have allowed them to design worship and begin to take ownership of the spiritual exploration.” The other comment was similar with the added ingredient of adult advisor involvement: “Our group is junior high age so they are still young. It seems to work better if we suggest some ideas to begin with, and then let them take ownership of the idea as far as activities go.”

One person serving on the Penn Central Conference Youth Ministry Team with me and is involved with the summer camp ministry at Hartman Center <sup>10</sup> commented about the kind of quality that is possible in the choice-filled environment: “I feel the Youth Ministry Team is able to be a witness to local churches as to how this paradigm can work. Here at Hartman Center, I make a very strong effort to empower the Summer Service Team members and allow them to explore what it means to be in ministry and leadership positions.” Another man, also on the Youth Ministry Team, indicated that the youth-based paradigm with its choice-orientation not only helps youth explore faith and use their gifts, but his response on the online survey indicated that the paradigm is

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<sup>10</sup> Hartman Center is the Outdoor and Retreat Ministries center for the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ.



practiced and accepted in his experience with the Youth Ministry Team and Leadership Now. He said that the paradigm is accepted and gradually being worked towards his field education site.

The next question addresses a choice theory claim directly. I asked whether or not the claim that “We choose everything we do that meets our basic needs of survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun” challenged the workshop participants in their present way of doing youth ministry. Again, the responses were largely on the “does not challenge it all” side of the continuum while a few people were moderately challenged by the claim and two were very challenged by it as Table 8 below indicates.

**Table 8**

Challenge levels of choice theory claim on current practices of youth-based ministry

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Totals</b>
Does not challenge it at all							It challenges everything			
7	3	4	2	1	2	1		1	1	22

With seventeen (77%) of the respondents (ratings of 5 or lower) indicating that the choice theory claim does not challenge the way they practice youth ministry one might think that most everyone is practicing choice theory, or at least subscribes to the theory. One person who rated her level as 2 commented that “The youth advisors and minister are open-minded and committed to the youth.” Similarly, another person with a rating of 3 indicated that she is starting a youth-based ministry and choice theory can get the youth to come and get involved. A third person with a rating of 3 indicated

acceptance of the theory, but with caution: “Giving younger kids certain choices is not developmentally sound. But, I try to keep basic needs in mind when doing curriculum or programs because I think choice theory is accurate.”

One person with a rating of 1 indicated how the powerful force of culture is when external control psychology is used: “I don’t think there’s anything to challenge—in fact, I think this is why many youth do not choose to be a part of youth-based ministry. School events and work and sports meet these needs, and other choices are often threatened—e.g. if you don’t come to Sunday practice—you can’t play in the game; if you want off work for that mission trip—find another job when you get back.”

The basic need for fun was highlighted in some of the comments made. One person with a rating of 4 wrote, “Kids will feel more comfortable bringing friends to “fun” events more than events they consider not fun.” While I agree with the statement made, I also recognize the slippery slope it creates. “Fun” events can tend to dominate youth ministry programs and the temptation is to focus on the numbers of participants instead of the high quality of the whole program.

Some of the comments made by people who rated the choice theory claim as more of a challenge offer some insights. One person who indicated that the claim challenges everything (rating of 10) did so because her job performance was factored in. She wrote, “I work for the church so I have to take into consideration the church’s basic needs, not my own.” Upon checking the surveys, this person declined to rate the type of paradigm associated with her youth ministry setting, however, in her telephone interview, she indicated that the church is youth-motivated, but frequently leans toward adult-led

programs. Another person with a rating of 6 wrote that the claim produced a mixture of messages, thereby making it moderately challenging to the way youth ministry is practiced: “I have never thought of youth ministry in this fashion. I don’t like to think of youth with “power,” rather all of us being empowered. At times, these words don’t seem to fit.”

The last question asked for levels of opposition to the idea that youth-based ministry is in the “quality world” of youth. I asked this question knowing that recognition and acceptance of their individuality, their gifts, and their abilities to take responsibility meets some of the basic needs youth have. Again, the responses by the workshop participants were heavily on the “not opposed...” side of the continuum. While one person out of the twenty-two participants chose not to answer the question, only one person was moderately opposed to this choice theory dynamic (see Table 9 below).

**Table 9**

Respondent’s levels of opposition to claim that youth-based ministry is in youth’s quality world because it meets basic needs they have

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Totals</b>
Not opposed at all							Highly opposed			
<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>				<b>21</b>

When asked what specifically makes them answer as they did, the responses offered a variety of perspectives.<sup>11</sup> One person asked, “Why would youth include something in their quality world that they don’t own? By definition, youth-based ministry belongs in their quality world.” Why, indeed. One person bolstered the same idea by writing, “If it meets their needs, they will value it.”

As was revealed in the previous section, youth owning their programs is an important occurrence when youth-based ministry embedded with choice theory is practiced. These next comments add a sense of pride to the ownership issue by likening it to the youth being in charge of what happens. One person wrote, “I believe [that recognition and acceptance of their individuality, their gifts, and their abilities] would help [youth] on their journey; it would allow them to have a sense of pride and responsibility, and help them feel like they are in charge of what happens with them and to them.”

Two people wrote that their reasons for answering as they did were related to the kind of environment in their particular setting of youth ministry. One person who rated the opposition level as a 3 wrote, “I think it allows the youth to participate at a level that they are comfortable with and to extend themselves in a ‘safe/loving’ environment.” The other person with a rating of 1 commented, “I truly believe the church is one of the few places in their lives where the only expectations of youth are that they know a community of people who love and cherish them, value the gift of who they are and the gifts they have, and celebrate the persons they are becoming.” A comment offered by a person who

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<sup>11</sup> Most of the respondents made comments in response to their ratings which emphasized low opposition. The one person who rated the question as a 7 declined to comment.

rated the answer a 2 emphasizes the connection with youth empowerment and recognizing their gifts: “I believe in the youth and think that the only way to have our youth really feel empowered is by recognizing their gifts and utilizing them in ministry.”

The five people interviewed over the telephone were asked if choice theory had influenced them to reconsider the way they practiced youth ministry. Of the five, two said, “Yes, it had influenced them,” two said it “somewhat influenced” them, and one person said, “No it did not influence” her to reconsider her practice of youth ministry. The person who said no, however, serves with me on the Youth Ministry Planning team, and as such already practices the youth-based ministry paradigm embedded with choice theory.

### **Resistance Levels to Six Identifiable Skills for Adult Advisors**

As mentioned previously, acquiring a working knowledge of choice theory and andragogical learning techniques are important skills for adult advisors to have in practicing youth-based ministry. However, additional skills are needed, too. After several years of practicing this paradigm and teaching adults about it, I have been able to organize these skills into a useful set of thirteen.<sup>12</sup> An adult advisor who has a good working understanding and ability of these skills will be able to practice youth-based ministry more effectively. In practice, all thirteen skills reflect to a certain degree the dynamics of choice theory and andragogy, but six of these in my judgment, are closely relevant to those dynamics and techniques. These six are reported upon in the next several pages.

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<sup>12</sup> The complete list of the youth-based ministry adult advisor skills can be found in Appendix E.

As an overview, the six relevant skills are listed below:

1. An YBM (youth-based ministry) adult advisor knows when and how to ask questions.
2. An YBM adult advisor can sense when to let an individual youth explore new areas and unfamiliar issues and when to step in with adult wisdom non-coercively and gently guiding the youth back to center.
3. An YBM adult advisor knows not to take over in most circumstances, even when the youth-led meeting is floundering.
4. An YBM adult advisor knows how to guide the group to ensure there is a maximum amount of participation.
5. An YBM adult advisor knows what gifts and qualities to look for in youth which can benefit the individual, the meeting, or the program, and invites the youth to discern and utilize those gifts.
6. An YBM adult advisor knows that there are tons of resources available in the community and can bring those to the table if necessary, and more importantly, help guide and assist youth in the process of making use of those resources.

Respondents were asked in the Focus Group Evaluation Survey how resistant they were to these skills and how likely they would use this skill.<sup>13</sup> Then, the online interview asked about how much they practiced the skills. Next, the five people interviewed over the telephone were asked if these thirteen skills had influenced them to reconsider the way they practiced youth ministry. Of the five, two said, “Yes, it had influenced them,” two said it “somewhat influenced them,” and one person said, “No it did not influence” her. The person who said no, however, already practices the thirteen skills because she

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<sup>13</sup> Ratings Resistance included: “1, not resistant,” “2, somewhat un-resistant,” “3, resistant,” “4, somewhat resistant,” and “5, Very resistant.” Ratings for Likelihood included: “1, very likely,” “2, somewhat likely,” “3, likely,” “4, somewhat unlikely,” and “5, very unlikely.” For further details, see Appendix B, section C.

serves on the Penn Central Conference Youth Ministry Team. So, the influence to reconsider her practices was negligible.

The skill of asking questions is critical for youth empowerment and is a way to engage choice theory. When youth hear a genuine question, one without strings attached, or a hidden agenda, there is an underlying implication that youth may choose how to respond in their answer, which utilizes choice theory. For example, in matters of taking responsibility for the direction of their youth ministry, learning to ask the right questions in appropriate ways can be very empowering for youth. Adult advisors offering suggestions for program and activities in the form of a question can be helpful; e.g. “Does anyone know what concert is going on at the convention center?” Asking about a particular previously agreed upon goal or idea is helpful, too, e.g. “We’ve gotten good ideas—which ones fit in the categories of the three “S’s”?” One respondent wrote, “I want the youth to be more responsible and to become skilled at problem solving.” If those two qualities emerge because of asking appropriate questions, then well and good!

The skill of asking questions is especially needed in the planning phase of the four phase planning process and in the art of leading and nurturing, high quality discussions. Open-ended questions are always preferred, but sometimes questions just to stir the conversation may be helpful. One respondent said, “I always ask questions to get the youth talking. If it goes the wrong way, I ask another question (sometimes a loaded question.)”

An overwhelming “1, not resistant” response was registered for this skill. Nineteen (91%) of twenty-one respondents indicated as such, and fifteen (68%) of

twenty-two indicated they were “1, very likely” to use this skill (see the data in Fig. 3 below).

<i>Skill 1—An YBM adult advisor knows when and how to ask questions.</i>	
<b>Resistance levels</b>	<b>Likelihood of using this skill</b>
<b>19</b> = not resistant	very likely = <b>15</b>
<b>1</b> = somewhat un-resistant	somewhat likely = <b>3</b>
<b>1</b> = resistant	likely = <b>3</b>
<b>0</b> = somewhat resistant	somewhat unlikely = <b>1</b>
<b>0</b> = very resistant	very unlikely = <b>0</b>

Fig. 3. Skill 1—Asking questions<sup>14</sup>

In comparison, the online survey likewise indicates a high percentage (91%) of respondents (11 of 12) saying they either practice this skill sometimes, most of the time, or all of the time. Of the twelve people, six (50%) said they practice this skill most of the time and two (8%) said they practice this skill all the time for a total of 58% who strongly practice this skill.

If a person is resistant to this skill, would that person lean toward the adult-based paradigm? One might think so. However, this in fact is not the case for the one person who registered some resistance. She rated herself a moderate 6 (from Table 2), which leans her slightly toward the youth-based ministry paradigm. In terms of the likelihood that she would use this skill, she rated herself a moderate “3, likely” as well.

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<sup>14</sup> The data in all six skill boxes represent two separate questions: one on “resistance” and the other on “likelihood to use the skill.” No correlation between the numbers of respondents is intended nor should it be implied.



Another person indicated that she had no resistance (rated herself “1, not resistant”): “I like the idea and think it is important,” she wrote. However, she indicated a moderate “3, likely” to use the skill: Her comment was, “It is a skill I will have to work on. Talking is easier than listening.” She placed herself strongly on the adult-based side of the continuum (rating of 2 from Table 2), but her personal acceptance level to making the shift was a 7 (see Table 3). For this respondent, conceptually, practicing the skill of asking questions could happen, but telling youth ‘what is what’ is more her preference.

In addition to the two women just described, two other individuals who indicated they were “3, likely” to use this skill placed themselves on the youth-based side of the continuum with 6 and 7 (see Table 2). One of these was an unidentified person who rated the likelihood of using this skill “4, somewhat unlikely.” This person indicated a rating of 4 on the adult-based paradigm side of the continuum (see Table 2). Unfortunately, all four individuals declined to complete the online follow-up survey, so specific data on any differences in actual practice is unavailable. The other eighteen respondents rated that they were either “1, not resistant” or “2, somewhat un-resistant” to the skill and were “1, very likely” or “2, somewhat likely” to use this skill. Of those eighteen, a large majority rated themselves in the “hybrid” zone on the continuum (see Table 10 below).

**Table 10**

Respondents who are low resistance and high likelihood to Skill 1.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals
Adult-based			<i>Blending of paradigms (hybrid)</i>				Youth-based			
		1	3	2	2	4	2	2		18
					1	1				

On the one hand, the hybrid zone may be a good thing. It is appropriate when a transition is being made from the adult-based paradigm to the youth-based. Adults will need to ask lots of questions to help youth unlearn what is so common to them. Remember, youth empowerment is new to them. When it gets started, it often happens gradually. It will behoove adult advisors to blend the paradigms in the early stages of the transition.

On the other hand, it may not be a good thing because in the process of making the transition, the convenience of falling back to the old habits of the adult-based paradigm becomes too easy and very tempting. Without deep commitment, prayer, faith, and dedication on the part of the adult advisors, keeping the effort to grow toward youth-based ministry becomes that much more difficult.

The second skill, “*an YBM adult advisor can sense when to let an individual youth explore new areas and unfamiliar issues and when to step in with adult wisdom non-coercively and gently guiding the youth back to center*” is reflective of both choice theory and andragogical learning. For choice theory, one’s quality world is explored as basic needs are being met, and for andragogical learning, the readiness to learn life-centered concepts or tasks with the wisdom of another person’s guidance is also present.

The resistance levels for this skill are not as low as the first skill, but are likewise on the low end of the spectrum as the Figure 4 on the next page indicates. A few comments focus on the importance of an adult offering guidance. One person wrote about a need to be a guide right from the beginning of a discussion with youth so that “they don’t head in the wrong direction from the beginning.”

<i>Skill 2—An YBM adult advisor can sense when to let an individual youth explore new areas and unfamiliar issues and when to step in with adult wisdom non-coercively and gently guiding the youth back to center.</i>	
<b>Resistance levels</b>	<b>Likelihood of using this skill</b>
<b>11</b> = not resistant	very likely = <b>10</b>
<b>9</b> = somewhat un-resistant	somewhat likely = <b>6</b>
<b>1</b> = resistant	likely = <b>4</b>
<b>0</b> = somewhat resistant	somewhat unlikely = <b>1</b>
<b>0</b> = very resistant	very unlikely = <b>1</b>

Fig. 4. Skill 2—Exploring new areas and guiding the youth.

Another person indicated that “A small amount of gentle guidance is not only beneficial for the individual but the group as well.” One person was concerned as to when to step in with adult wisdom: “With some youth it is hard to gauge how far is too far. I probably tend to step a little too soon. This is so I don’t step in too late.” The one “resistant” respondent wrote simply, “There needs to be guidance.”

The person who indicated that she was moderately “3, resistant” to this skill remarked that exploration in unfamiliar territory while keeping moored to that which is familiar and center is “sometimes a hard balance to keep.” However, she also indicated that she was “2, somewhat likely” to practice this skill—in fact, she did complete an online survey and indicated that she does practice this “most of the time.”

As far as the likelihood of using the skill goes, the two respondents with a “4, somewhat unlikely” described extenuating circumstances that would make them unlikely to use this skill. One person wrote that “not talking is difficult, plus how to do this without hurting feelings or ‘staying back’ is something to learn.” The other person who

rated herself “5, very unlikely” to use this skill wrote, “Not sure I have a relationship with some of the youth that would allow this to happen.”

It is interesting that the first of those last two respondents interpreted the skill to mean “staying back”, which I assume means not contributing to the conversation. That is not the intention of this skill. Adults always share in the conversation but do so with this skill and other skills at work, such as building trust with the youth (one of the thirteen). The development of all these skills works in conjunction with each other while adults work alongside the youth.

The online survey shows a high percentage (83%) of individuals practicing this skill most or all of the time. Six (50%) of twelve said, “I practice this most of the time,” and four others (33%) said they practice this all the time. However, these individuals who worked online reported a high likelihood of using this skill. In other words, those who registered least amount of likelihood in the Focus Group survey did not complete the online survey.

The third skill is interesting because it seems to reflect a difficulty people have when youth are invited to take responsibility for their own programs. The resistance here is noticeably higher (see Fig. 5 on the next page).

The comments reflect the resistance levels. One person wrote, “Don’t want to see them fail or be accused of letting them fail.” Clearly, there is concern here about the implications of failure for the youth and for the adult advisor. Concerns about how others perceive failure are powerful. Another person wrote, “I am a natural protector; it is hard for me to see my youth fail or suffer—no matter how beneficial it may be for them.”

<i>Skill 3—An YBM adult advisor knows not to take over in most circumstances, even when the youth-led meeting is floundering.</i>	
<b>Resistance levels</b>	<b>Likelihood of using this skill</b>
<b>7</b> = not resistant	very likely = <b>7</b>
<b>8</b> = somewhat un-resistant	somewhat likely = <b>5</b>
<b>5</b> = resistant	likely = <b>6</b>
<b>1</b> = somewhat resistant	somewhat unlikely = <b>4</b>
<b>0</b> = very resistant	very unlikely = <b>0</b>

Fig. 5. Skill 3—Not taking over in most circumstances.

“This is hard for me,” wrote another. “Even though it is a good learning tool, it’s hard to watch them fail.” Therefore, it is easier to take over and bail them out.

An interesting comment was made by a respondent who noted that every situation is different. The circumstances often inform an adult when to step in and take over and when not to. Consider this person’s comments for both the resistance and likelihood, respectively, of using this skill:

I have more resistance to when adult leaders are creating the floundering situation than when the youth are. I do have to remind myself to be clear about what the stakes are if the thing fails. Even when the task involves more people, e.g. the youth-created Christmas program that was still unplanned the day before the final rehearsal—life lessons are being learned.

I often feel the need to weigh the possible outcomes, and if the stakes are such that the whole congregation would experience failure, I’d step in with more guidance. Perhaps not as “gently” and non-directive as choice theory proposes.

Indeed, the effort to let the youth lead as much as possible can be a powerful learning experience. Many view it as an opportunity to grow; even the difficult experiences create excellent learning opportunities. Learning not to take over is a difficult skill to learn, but with knowledge of choice theory and andragogical learning

techniques, an adult advisor gets in the mix with the youth, raising questions, offering guidance, and enabling choices to be made. Essentially, the adult advisor works alongside with the youth; never waiting in the wings to swoop in at the last possible moment for the rescue with no preliminary sharing of the journey.

The online survey is consistent with these findings as well. Seven (58%) of the twelve respondents online said they would practice this skill only sometimes. Four (33%) said they would practice it most of the time. No one said they practice this skill all of the time. While these ratings are not encouraging regarding the practice of this skill in youth-based ministry, they do lead to a postulation that adults would rather revert to the adult-based paradigm rather than let the youth experience the potential negative consequences of their choices.

Of course, there are certain instances, some involving safety issues, when it is not only appropriate, but absolutely imperative that an adult take over using adult wisdom and expertise to resolve an unsafe situation. Other circumstances may exist, too, where an adult might take over. For example, if there is a consistent track record of youth struggling to pull an event off the ground, an adult advisor may use his or her discretion and literally “show” the youth how it’s done on occasion. These decisions are at the discretion of the adult advisor. Suffice it to say, learning to know when to take over is less important than learning not to. Acquiring the skill of when not to take over is vital for the youth-based ministry paradigm’s effectiveness. If adults really, truly wish to empower youth, letting them lead, even with the bumps in the road and problems to solve, the experience is invaluable.

Most of the time, if an event or activity fails and bombs out, it usually is not because the youth ‘just didn’t do it right.’ Almost always failure occurs due to a lack of preparedness by youth and/or adult. If the other youth-based ministry skills are in practice by adult advisors, i.e., asking questions, building trust, guiding the group for maximum participation, etc., and youth are working on their responsibilities as well, then catastrophic failure of an event, program or activity is often avoided. Program plans may not turn out exactly as they looked on paper, but milder forms of failure such as this, are valuable learning moments for empowered youth.

Support by adults working with the youth, offering feedback in the evaluation stage is vital for the youth and adults to learn from what actually happened. Indeed, adult advisors learn and grow through these valuable experiences as well. When the youth face problems in leading particular events and activities, we adults face the problem of helping them learn without taking over for them.

The fourth skill is essential for adult advisors to acquire because it gets at one of the basic assumptions I have found is true in youth-based ministry (articulated in chapter 2), mainly that a collaborative environment is created allowing for youth and adults to work together on the process and content of the program. As they work together, often the wise choice for both process and content emerges. The skill is “*An YBM adult advisor knows how to guide the group to ensure there is a maximum amount of participation.*” The data for this skill are in Figure 6 on the next page.

Skill 4—*An YBM adult advisor knows how to guide the group to ensure there is a maximum amount of participation.*

<b>Resistance levels</b>	<b>Likelihood of using this skill</b>
<b>16</b> = not resistant	very likely = <b>13</b>
<b>4</b> = somewhat un-resistant	somewhat likely = <b>5</b>
<b>1</b> = resistant	likely = <b>3</b>
<b>0</b> = somewhat resistant	somewhat unlikely = <b>1</b>
<b>0</b> = very resistant	very unlikely = <b>0</b>

Fig. 6 Skill 4—Guide the group for maximum participation

The data above suggests that 95% of the respondents (20 of 21) are in the two ‘not resistant’ categories to this the concept of an adult advisor guiding the group for maximum amount of participation. With everyone getting involved, there is much more youth empowerment. However, the likelihood of using this skill in practice is somewhat lower with eighteen (81%) respondents indicating they are more likely to use this skill.

Some comments reflecting the low resistance connect to one of choice theory’s basic needs of love and belonging. One person wrote, “I always try to ensure all youth are participating and not isolating—youth [group] is where youth come to be loved and accepted and made to feel a part.” Another person verifies that sentiment by writing, “Make sure all feel that they are a valued member of the group.” One other person made a Christian connection to the basic choice theory need: “Above all, I hope youth learn that everyone is valued and welcomed. It’s the way of Christ.”

When asked for comments regarding their ratings on the likelihood of using this skill, some affirmed their own skill proficiency, especially in the areas of guiding discussions. One person wrote, “I pray I can say the right encouraging words at the right



time for the one who needs it.” Another had a similar comment, “I am able to juggle conversations very well and speak with the youth on different levels.” Others noted that they would likely use this skill because maximum participation creates the opportunity for youth to have a voice in a world where often their voice is not noted, listened to, or trusted very highly. One participant echoed this sentiment: “This [skill] is crucial because this may be the only place for them to have a voice.” Similarly, another person wrote, “Very important to get all voices heard. This skill requires listening and awareness.”

Three (14%) had a moderate response to using the skill, while one person (5%) found it unlikely. A search through the actual Focus Group surveys determined if those four responding with less strength to this skill would likely find the adult-based ministry’s dynamics more to their preference. One person of these four leaned toward the adult-based youth paradigm with a rating of 4 on the continuum. The others leaned toward the youth-based paradigm with ratings of 7 and 8 (see Table 2). It seems that for these three of the four respondents, conceptually, this skill is a good idea; the likelihood of using it in actual practice, not so much.

Two months after the workshop, of this grouping of four respondents, one person completed the online survey and indicated that “I practice this skill most of the time.” It seems for this person, there was an increase in actual practice which is in keeping with her preference toward youth-based ministry (this person’s rating was a 7 on the continuum—see Table 2).

The previous respondent was part of a group of seven (58%) of twelve respondents who said they practice this skill most of the time and three (25%) of the twelve said they practiced this all the time, for a total of ten (83%) respondents. Note that the percentage (83%) of those indicating a stronger likelihood of using this skill (data from the workshop's Focus Group survey) nearly mirrors the percentage (81%) of those who indicated a stronger level of practicing this skill (data from the online survey). For this particular skill, conceptually, it may not just be a good idea, but also one worthy enough to practice.

The fifth skill for adult advisors involves discerning what gifts to look for in youth and inviting them to discern and utilize those gifts. This skill closely reflects choice theory because their gifts and abilities are in their quality worlds. Once youth are given the opportunity to discern and use their gifts, they become empowered. When they are empowered, they grow in their leadership skills, social skills, and in the settings of the church's ministry, their faith grows, too. While such growth is occurring, astute adult advisors, steeped in choice theory and andragogical learning techniques, will have a marvelous opportunity to encourage the growth the youth are making.

The resistance to this skill was extremely low and the likelihood of using it, extremely high as Figure 7 on the next page indicates. Virtually everyone was non-resistant to the concept of the skill—nineteen (91%) of the twenty one indicated they were not resistant at all, and sixteen (73%) of twenty-two respondents indicated that they were very likely to use this skill.

<i>Skill 5—An YBM adult advisor knows what gifts and qualities to look for in youth which can benefit the individual, the meeting, or the program, and invites the youth to discern and utilize those gifts.</i>	
<b>Resistance levels</b>	<b>Likelihood of using this skill</b>
<b>19</b> = not resistant	very likely = <b>16</b>
<b>2</b> = somewhat un-resistant	somewhat likely = <b>3</b>
<b>0</b> = resistant	likely = <b>3</b>
<b>0</b> = somewhat resistant	somewhat unlikely = <b>0</b>
<b>0</b> = very resistant	very unlikely = <b>0</b>

Fig. 7 Skill 5—Discerning qualities and gifts in youth.

Among the several reasons given for such low resistance, a couple stand out because they lend support for the idea that a working knowledge of choice theory is beneficial for youth to discern their gifts and abilities. One person observed that this skill can meet a basic need by saying, “This [skill] adds to belonging and ownership.”

Another person identified that they youth need to feel important (which is related to the need to be loved and belong), but also needs are fulfilled for the advisor, too: “All youth have gifts—some know what those gifts are and some don’t. It is our job to help them find those gifts so they feel important and needed.”

Another person’s remarks reflected on the andragogical principle that the learning is oriented toward life-centered learning: “I want to do this to maximize how the youth function in their lives, not just the group.”

Among the reasons for the reasonably high level of likelihood to use this skill, one person expressed the choice theory dynamic that offering comfort is in the quality worlds of adult advisors: “Too often youth don’t see the gifts in themselves. It is our

obligation to point out their gifts to them, encourage them to use their gifts and praise them when they are successful and comfort them when they fail.”

Even though reasonably high, the likelihood of practicing this skill is noticeably lower than the resistance to it. Several comments offered by participants suggest that implementing this skill beyond the conceptual stage would be difficult for them despite their apparent low resistance to the skill. Consider these hesitant comments which correspond to ratings of “2, somewhat likely,” and “3, likely:”

“This is hard. I do leadership prospecting, but not really anything else actively.

“I often forget to do this.”

“I will have to work on this skill.”

“Not always easy to do.”

“I will have a hard time giving the youth a ‘clean slate.’ My opinion and that of others in the church are very influential.”

All these comments reflect some tentative feelings regarding the youth-based paradigm skill of helping youth discern gifts, perhaps the paradigm itself. That last comment, in my estimation, reflects the perpetual practice of the adult-based paradigm in the church’. There is such a strong need to be in charge and control of the youth and their programs. It is embedded and pervasive in the church’s ministry. Not surprisingly, this person scored a 2 on the continuum of one’s personal practice of youth ministry. But, let’s see how the participants actually practiced this skill.

Two months after the workshop, the online survey revealed that in actual practice of this skill, two (16%) of twelve people said they practiced this skill “sometimes.” Six (50%) said they practice it “most of the time.” Four (33%) said they practiced this skill

“all the time.” Combining the “most of the time” practitioners with the “all of the time” practitioners gives a total of 83% who are practicing this skill regularly. Compare those numbers to the initial Focus Group survey’s levels of the likelihood to practice this skill—sixteen (72%) said they were “1, very likely” to use this skill, and three (14%) said they were “2, somewhat likely” to use it for a total of nineteen (86%) respondents.

Evidently, with 86% of the respondents saying they would likely use this skill and 83% actually using it, helping youth discern and use their gifts is in the quality worlds of the adult advisor practicing youth-based ministry. These encouraging results indicate that this skill is a good practice to continue.

I must point out, however, that again, of the twelve online survey participants, everyone initially rated their resistance to the skill as “not resistant,” with one person indicating “somewhat un-resistant.” Similarly, ten of the twelve online participants initially rated their likelihood to use the skill as “very likely” or “somewhat likely.” In other words, the three people who expressed the least amount of likelihood to use this skill didn’t complete the online survey.

The last skill highlighted in this research is “*An YBM adult advisor knows that there are tons of resources available in the community and can bring those to the table if necessary and, more importantly, can help guide and assist youth in the process of making use of those resources.*” This skill, when properly mastered, reflects choice theory because the youth are empowered to make the contacts with different resource people or organizations. However, youth are often unfamiliar with what resources are available in the community. Adults usually are the ones familiar with the available

resources and know how to get in contact with the appropriate people. As a result, once a resource is known to be available, both youth and adult presume that the adult will make the contact and secure that person. A great learning opportunity for youth is missed!

For example, at a recent youth event planned by the Youth Ministry Team, we had the Saturday afternoon filled with outside resource people coming in for a Mission Fair. All of the adults on the team were aware of several people who would be excellent as resource people and could easily have made the contacts and the arrangements to bring them to the youth event. However, the responsibility was given to a youth. At first, she didn't know where to begin. But, with our guidance, she was provided with a few e-mail addresses, phone numbers, a suggestion of whom to contact first, and a promise from the adults that we would be there to support her along the way. This empowered her and gave her energy to move forward. She enthusiastically followed the suggestions, made decisions on whom to contact, and secured a variety of resource people. Periodically I checked in with her via e-mail asking my standard support question: "How can I help you?" This question sincerely communicates a message of "I am with you on this journey. I am here for you." Along the way she had to solve the problem of one resource person saying "Yes, I'll be there" only to back out at the last minute. In that instance, she made some decisions how to handle that situation, and updated me about the changes. This was youth-based ministry in action!

How did the workshop participants respond to this skill? Figure 8 on the next page shows that there is generally a lower resistance and a moderate mix regarding the likelihood putting this skill into action.

*Skill 6—An YBM adult advisor knows that there are tons of resources available in the community and can bring those to the table if necessary, and more importantly, help guide and assist youth in the process of making use of those resources.*

<b>Resistance levels</b>	<b>Likelihood of using this skill</b>
<b>15</b> = not resistant	very likely = <b>13</b>
<b>6</b> = somewhat un-resistant	somewhat likely = <b>3</b>
<b>0</b> = resistant	likely = <b>4</b>
<b>0</b> = somewhat resistant	somewhat unlikely = <b>2</b>
<b>0</b> = very resistant	very unlikely = <b>0</b>

Fig. 8 Skill 6—Making Use of Available Resources

Some of the reasons offered for the low resistance include a desire to have a network of resources and several more at the ready. One person with no resistance made a response that was short and simple: “Networking—do not re-invent the wheel.” A second person (2, “somewhat resistant) remarked, “I really like other folks feeling they know the community (and they do) and have lots of ideas and resources of their own. That said, I do try to study and resource what’s available.” Complementing that thought, an additional person with no resistance wrote, “I feel a key component is to be a resource magnet” which is fine from the standpoint of having resources “up your sleeve,” to be offered when necessary. It is not so fine if the “resource magnet” is not making the youth become resource magnets, or so to speak, in their own right. Adult advisors working in youth-based ministry are not hesitant to share the wealth of knowledge.

A third person also with no resistance indicated that amassing resources from the web is a valuable practice: “I have developed a personal library of my own and download all sorts of free things from websites.”

One last comment from a person with a rating of “2, somewhat resistant,” that is worth noting here indicates some resistance due to a perception of prioritization: “You can’t be everything,” this person wrote. “Intuitiveness is more important than knowledge of resources.”

As far as the ratings of how likely the workshop participants would use this skill, sixteen (73%) indicated that it was “1, very likely” they would use this skill. One comment made was in reference again to a major resource in the Leadership Now program at Lancaster Theological Seminary. This participant (“1, very likely”) identified the excellent learning experience youth can have by going abroad. He wrote, “I was able to go to Taizé and Geneva last summer as an adult mentor with Leadership Now. I would like to get some of our youth this opportunity or similar opportunities... Locating a youth in the center of a far-reaching network expands and enriches their world and the world of their possibilities.”

Other comments reflecting the strong likelihood are related to building up a resource library, gathering resources, even allowing youth to find their own resources. Yes! Choice theory is at work with this last response. And, adult youth advisors also use other skills to ensure that the youth are supported in their choice of resources.

The participants least likely to use this skill offered a reasons relating to some ignorance about what is available “out there” and about the time element. Often youth and adults are so busy that, as this person says, “It may be easier to stay ‘in house’ sometimes.



Next, analyzing the data in terms of the resistance and likelihood levels found in the Focus Group survey compared with the data of actual practice from the online survey reveals some differences. Initially, all twenty-one respondents were “1, not resistant”—fifteen respondents (71%), or “2, somewhat un-resistant”—six respondents (29%). The levels of likelihood dipped down a little but were still strong: thirteen (60%) were “1, very likely,” three (14%) were “2, somewhat likely,” four (18%) indicated a moderate “3, likely,” and 2 (10%) rated a “4, unlikely” to practice this skill. Comparing that data to the actual practice, the online survey revealed that only four (33%) of twelve respondents practice this skill “all the time.” Two (17%) of twelve practice this skill “most of the time.” Combined, these are only half of the respondents. The low resistance and high likelihood of this skill in the initial theoretical stage of research appears to be exaggerated when compared to the fact that only 50% of the workshop participants are actually practicing this skill two months after the workshop took place in August.

This is a large difference between the conceptual idea of this skill and actual use of it. Once again, it appears that adults are more likely to want to hang on to adult-based tendencies when it comes to securing outside resources, even though there is acceptance to the idea of helping the youth learn how to use those resources. It is easier and more convenient if an adult makes the contacts with resources and makes appropriate arrangements for the youth ministry event at which the resource person is needed.

Adults also know, I suspect, that the resource persons themselves may be resistant to being contacted by a youth. After all, in our very adult-dominated culture, youth have very little clout. That is one reason why adults imbued with the skills of the youth-based

paradigm know how important it is to support the youth in their endeavors to make use of the resources available for high quality youth ministry events, activities, and programs.

### **Concluding Remarks to the Findings and Responses**

Reflecting upon the quote by Parker Palmer which began this chapter, I hope the resistances uncovered in this research do truly help change to occur, specifically a shift toward the youth-based ministry paradigm. Those resistances point to the need for something new in the church's variety of youth ministry settings. The alternative I have suggested relies on the choices adults can make to empower youth that sets them on a new path into new territory. As with all new territories, in the midst of wonders to enjoy, there are also uncertainties to guard against. As a result, the new territory will often spur resistance in some, but not in others.

A large part of this chapter is devoted to six youth-based ministry adult advisor skills which most notably incorporate the dynamics of choice theory. I looked for resistance to the concept of each of these particular skills and the likelihood of adult advisors using these skills. I looked to see how those skills were used in actual practice and compared that with the likelihood of using a particular skill. What I found out is that most of the skills, conceptually, are considered good ideas, but in actual youth ministry settings, there is a lesser degree of putting these skills into practice. The dynamics of the adult-based paradigm for youth ministry still has a good grip on current practices. What can we do about it? What have I learned? Where do we go from here?



## Chapter 5

### “Conclusions and Recommendations of this Project”

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

Romans 12: 2 (NRSV)

“God gave us a heart to know what makes us happy or sad.  
God gave us a soul to make us yearn for a more satisfying way of living.  
God gave us a mind to think and to create solutions to difficult problems.  
God gave us physical strength to build the world we dream of.”

(Bass and Richter, 172)

Throughout this project, I have endeavored to respond to the claim that in the variety of settings of youth ministry within the church, there is a perpetuation of adults making decisions. I offer another way for youth and adults to understand and practice youth ministry which involves the youth making most of the decisions and taking as much responsibility as possible for their events and activities. In the process, adult advisors work alongside the youth offering them empowerment, support, and advice. I call this the youth-based ministry paradigm.

During the twenty-five years I practiced this paradigm, I began to understand that choice theory offered a theoretical and psychological explanation as to why this paradigm works. My aim was to contribute that understanding to the conversation about youth ministry and to provide a workshop as a means for adult advisors to begin developing their youth-based ministry leadership skills in order to practice this paradigm effectively. By researching their responses to the workshops, I was able to learn how acceptant or resistant these adults were to the paradigm and the implications of their responses.

In this chapter, I offer four major learning points which will provide further clarity for adult advisors developing their leadership skills in this paradigm. I will then conclude this dissertation by suggesting the next steps for further study and conversation.

### **Four Major Learning Points**

The four major learning points offered here generally embellish what already is inferred in this work. The first two came as a direct result of working with and articulating the dynamics of the youth-based ministry paradigm, choice theory, and andragogy. The last two points come right out of the research data. In broad strokes, here is an overview of all four learning points followed by their respective explanations:

1. Choice theory and andragogy are embedded within youth-based ministry.
2. Understanding the pertinent dynamics and principles of choice theory and andragogy are part of the skill set needed to practice youth-based ministry.
3. The adult advisor's actual practice of youth-based ministry does not consistently reflect the theory behind it.
4. Adult advisors are regularly on their own in youth ministry.

### **Major Learning Point 1: Choice theory and andragogy are embedded within youth-based ministry.**

As I indicated, I started out in this project knowing that choice theory was at work in the background of the youth-based ministry paradigm. I had practiced the paradigm for years before reading Dr. Glasser's book, Choice Theory. Upon reading his book, I knew that Dr. Glasser's theory was behind what I had been practicing, and I wanted to share this awareness with the wider church; hence my decision to enter the doctorate program.

While I knew that choice theory was at work, I did not fully comprehend to what extent. It is intertwined in every aspect of youth-based ministry. When youth are empowered to choose their activities, choice theory is at work. When adult advisors advise youth on taking responsibility for their events and programs, choice theory is operating. As youth receive support by skilled advisors and are able to experience what it's like to implement a program, to see it come off the ground, choice theory is in service.

Later, as part of the Focus Study requirement for the doctorate program, I began studying andragogy, the science of how adults learn. As I learned the principles of andragogy, I immediately saw connections to choice theory. I learned that if an adult advisor is practicing choice theory in youth-based ministry, that advisor is also practicing the basic principles of andragogy if serving in an educational setting. Therefore, when Dr. Robert Wubbolding said, "Reality therapy is the implementation and the delivery system of choice theory. It is an application of choice theory in practice" (Russell III), I would qualify that statement to say that yes, reality therapy is the implementation and the delivery system of choice theory, mostly in the element of clinical counseling or psychotherapeutic practice. Andragogy is the implementation and the delivery system of choice theory in the educational element of youth-based ministry.

By the same token, I also learned that if one is practicing adult-based youth ministry, then automatically one is practicing external control theory and pedagogical learning techniques in the educational setting. This practice is filled with caution because external control psychology is as dangerous as it is destructive. As Dr. Glasser explains, "The seeds of almost all our unhappiness are planted early in our lives when we begin to

encounter people who have discovered not only what is right for them—but also, unfortunately, what is right for us. Armed with this discovery and following a destructive tradition that has dominated our thinking for thousands of years, these people feel obligated to try to force us to do what *they know* right. Our choice of how we resist that force is, by far, the greatest source of human misery” (Glasser, Choice Theory, 4).

**Major Learning Point 2: Understanding the pertinent dynamics and principles of choice theory and andragogy are part of the skill set needed to practice youth-based ministry.**

This learning point might easily be seen as a subset of the previous point, but I regard it as major learning point for four reasons: first, choice theory and andragogy are new and unfamiliar to most adults. As with most things that are new, fresh perspectives and insights open up new lines of thought and direction. Acquiring a working understanding of choice theory and andragogy offers the unique opportunity for youth to have authority and responsibility which are not present in the adult-based paradigm. In this context, choice theory and andragogy advocate that youth have more power than they realize, more gifts and energy than they previously thought. Skilled youth-based adult advisors let them have that power and offer affirmation, advice, care, and mentorship to them.

Second, understanding and practicing the principles of both will help adults create a choice-oriented environment and provide a framework for quality youth-based ministry programming. By framework I mean a deliberate program plan can be devised by adult advisors where the parameters of youth-based ministry are outlined up front with the

youth. The youth will hear immediately that they are loved deeply, that their creative abilities and energy are gifts that can be used, that they will be invited to take responsibility for the success of their program, and that they will learn by doing. They will begin to perceive that the adult advisors working with them are committed to their successful growth and maturation on their faith journeys, in the development of their leadership skills, and in their passion for God and the church. They will also sense that these adult advisors will work alongside them in an advisory ways. This framework sets the stage for youth to make choices which will enhance high quality programs.

This is no such easy feat for adult advisors, especially since resistances are present. However, if adult advisors choose to overcome the resistances and gain a deeper understanding of choice theory and andragogy, nothing short of a new skill is acquired.

Third, if knowing the ins and outs of choice theory and andragogy are part of the needed skill set for adult advisors, then workshop, training seminars, educational events for adults must be designed accordingly. The workshop I designed was intended to help adult advisors gain the skills of both the theory and learning techniques. As I will articulate more clearly in the “next steps,” educating adults in acquiring this skill requires time for participants to explore and learn the dynamics and to practice them. With enough time, especially in the practice of youth-based ministry, adult advisors will acquire the skill of knowing choice theory and andragogy inside and out as it pertains to youth-based ministry. I hope that skill will continue to inform them as they minister to youth.



Fourth, I started this project having worked with youth and advisors for the past twenty five years. During that time, I became aware of several skills adults needed to assist in the development of empowered youth and their programs. I honed, sharpened, and distilled those skills into a workable set of thirteen which became part of the research in this project. As I analyzed the data, I learned that acquiring a working understanding choice theory and andragogy was sort of “the mother of all the other skills.” I realized this after I designed and utilized the survey questions.

**Major Learning Point 3: The adult advisor’s actual practice of youth-based ministry does not consistently reflect the theory behind it.**

A wonderful aspect of conducting a workshop for adults on youth-based ministry is that participants usually arrive excited and are desirous to be there. They are expectant of something creative and useful for them. There generally is a sense that the workshop is not going to be boring, but energetic and lively. Friendliness complements the openness and fellowship. Most participants come with a love and a passion for youth on their hearts. They come with a desire to continue to nurture the lives of the youth in their ministries and a sense that these young people are VIP’s! I say “Amen!” to all that!

Adults want to affirm our youth and find ways to do that. They want to minister to youth that gives a high quality opportunity for their growth and maturation. In my experience, many adults affirm the concepts of the youth-based ministry paradigm. Several said that theoretically, it sounds good. Others said that they were willing to go to my particular setting and try to put this into practice. My research showed that most

participants at the workshop believe that making the shift to the youth-based paradigm is a very important step to take.

Then, when the workshop is over and the excitement dies down, that's when the participant must "practice what I preached." That's easier said than done, I found out. Out there in the real world of youth ministry, amid all the obstacles and resistances, practice is harder than preaching, and what is preached is practiced only some of the time. This has always been true. Talk is cheap, as the saying goes.

Sometimes it is easier for adult advisors to revert to adult-based ministry techniques, for the sake of preserving a semblance of a youth ministry program. This may occur for a variety of reasons, one of which is that the youth stare blankly at the adults when given the first chance of empowerment... all because there is such a lack of it in their lives! On other occasions, there are too many ideas batted around, and the process of whittling down to a consensus is exasperating. Adults can be tempted to make decisions for the group just to get it done. In my current practices of youth ministry, practicing these principles and skills takes concerted effort; every now and then an adult-based direction sneaks its way in! It is more difficult to practice what I preach.

This is a major learning point because adult advisors face a fair amount of resistance to the complete youth-based ministry paradigm. One form of resistance is when adults have a high need for control and power. Some adults are OK with the youth contributing to the planning process, but when it comes to letting the youth prepare for the event and actually be the leaders; the adults can frequently take control and not give it up very willingly or easily.

Another form of resistance is indicated by which youth ministry activities are perceived by adults to be better suited for youth-based concepts and which ones the adults believe they should take over. According to the adults participating in the online survey, certain activities clearly are more youth-based than others.<sup>1</sup> For example, the question was, “Is the youth-based ministry paradigm practiced for this particular activity in your particular setting of youth ministry? Then twenty particular activities were listed.

I find it interesting to note that of the twenty specific possible activities listed on the online survey, ten of these had more people saying “Yes, for this activity, the youth-based ministry paradigm is practiced in my particular settings.” Specifically, these activities generally are related to social, fun, group meetings, or one-time large events (i.e., Youth Sunday planning session and Youth Sunday itself). The specific activity with the highest amount of people saying “Yes, youth-based ministry is practiced” was “Recreational event planning” with seven (58%) of twelve respondents. Even “faith enrichment discussion groups” enjoys six (50%) of twelve people saying that the youth-based paradigm is practiced with it.

The specific youth ministry activities with the highest amount of people saying “No, for this activity, the youth-based ministry paradigm is not practiced” were educational activities or events, i.e., Sunday school (42%), Confirmation (50%), and Vacation Bible School (50%), and ministry to an individual (33%).

What this indicates appears to be that for the educational element of youth ministry, adult-based techniques are preferred and youth-based techniques are not. For

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<sup>1</sup> The data from the survey is available upon request.

the most of the social events and some spiritual events, youth-based paradigm is preferred and adult-based is not. The crux of the matter is that theoretically, all twenty of the activities on the survey can easily be offered with youth-based ministry concepts at work. But, actual practice shows otherwise.

A third form of resistance is when there is also a lack of trust in the unfamiliar, unconventional youth-based paradigm and an even deeper lack of trust in the youth. The commonly expressed sentiments are that youth are not old enough, or they just do not have enough experience. When combined, these two forms of resistance can effectively put a stop to youth empowerment. What is preached with fun and excitement in the beginning hardly becomes the common practice in the end. Instead, the practice of a comprehensive youth-based ministry paradigm becomes little more than words on the page in several settings. Thankfully, this is not true in all settings.

There are places in the variety of settings in youth ministry where the youth-based paradigm is practiced. Some large churches with a large youth group can have the paradigm working. Even some small churches with small youth groups practice it. Some workshop participants involved with the “Leadership Now” program at Lancaster Theological Seminary, the Penn Central Conference Youth Ministry Team, and the summer camp programs at Hartman Center all have indicated that these programs function with the youth-based ministry paradigm at work.

Where it is practiced or what size the group is does not matter much, however. What does matter is how receptive the adults are to the concepts. How acceptant are they to acquiring the necessary skills? How open are those who have vested power by the

church to the prospects of the youth having the control and responsibility of their programs, events, and activities? And, how willing are the adult advisors to stick with the youth-based paradigm, even when things get tough and there is a lack of support? That lack of support is noticeably limited, as the next learning point bears out.

**Major Learning Point 4: Adult advisors are regularly on their own in youth ministry.**

One of the more frustrating learning points is related to how weakly the adult advisors are supported in their ministries with youth. This lack of support is occurring in several areas in and outside the church's ministry. For some adult advisors, the pastors of churches are uninvolved in their youth ministries. I was astonished to learn that over half (56%) of the online survey participants indicated that they either did not know whether or not their pastors affirmed the youth-based paradigm, or they rated the pastor's affirmation of it as "non-applicable."

The Christian education personnel show limited support. Here as well, 50% of those surveyed said they didn't know the extent of the Christian educators' support of the youth-based paradigm, or they found that support as "non-applicable." Some parents seem to care less. I know this because over the years I have had some say blatantly that they didn't care where their kids were.

Even the youth themselves can be non-participatory and unresponsive to adult advisor pleas for involvement. One person from the online survey commented, "We are STRUGGLING to have a meaningful, effective youth ministry, though the youth Sunday school teacher is very approachable and respectful of youth. We have the process and are

working the concepts, but there are missing pieces which are significant, especially the piece about commitment and priorities [from the youth]. Another person said, “The adults involved would like to empower the youth to run the program. However, our active youth are involved in many different activities. We find that we have a consistent number of youth attending our youth group, however, there is a small number of consistently attending youth.”

To my astonishment, one area in the church’s ministry where there is a lack of support is the faith community! Adult advisors virtually are more often than not on their own in their ministries. An incredible 42% of the adults from the online survey indicated that they did not know if the President of the governing board, i.e., Church Council, Consistory, Board of Directors, Trustees, etc., affirmed the practice of youth-based ministry or not. Another 25% determined that the extent of that affirmation was “not applicable.” Similarly, the same percentages were indicated for the Governing Board itself. And, 54% of those surveyed said that they did not know the extent of affirmation for the paradigm from members of the faith community, or they found the extent of that affirmation “not applicable.”

These data point to a reality in the church’s settings of youth ministry: Adult advisors are out there, by themselves! They don’t know what kind of support exists from a variety of people within the church’s overall ministries. On top of that, the general population of the faith community, more often than not, does not own their youth ministries! Rarely do church’s leaders and general membership intentionally decide to make youth ministry a top priority. Seldom are there moments in worship that affirm the work an adult advisor is endeavoring to do. All too frequently advisors are not

commissioned by the faith community. There is no ‘sending them forth’ on their journeys with the youth. Rarely is there a sense that adult advisors are bolstered by the blessings of God and the faith community. I have found these situations to be true whether the advisors are of the adult-based paradigm, youth-based, or a hybrid paradigm.

Given the concerns highlighted in these four major learning points, the question asked is “Where do we go from here?”

### **Next Steps and Recommendations**

Where we go from here in part means looking at where we have been. Re-imagining youth ministry with the youth-based ministry paradigm means to re-imagine the assumptions that got the adult-based ministry to be dominant in the first place. The assumption that “I’m the adult in charge means I make the decisions for youth activities” can be re-imagined. The assumption that “I am in youth ministry to benefit my leadership skills, or to meet my needs” can be re-imagined. I look back now at the simulation game at Camp LaForet, and I realize that in my infantile youth ministry days, I was meeting my needs, and responding to leadership in youth ministry the only way I had experienced it—with adults in charge, making decisions. I was having fun, yes, and I was in charge. What a power trip!

How can adult advisors begin to understand that there is another way? By re-imagining why an adult advisor wants to practice youth ministry, I believe is the first step. If we can re-imagine that adult advisors are in youth ministry for the youth, then immediately the “being in charge means making decisions” starts to evaporate. Can we re-imagine that adult advisors could receive a powerfully profound, inner, spiritual joy

and satisfaction not by being in charge but by observing our youth succeeding in their efforts at being in charge? Now that's a power trip... for youth! And, a joy ride for adults!

The next step might be re-imagining the assumption that the adult-base paradigm complete with external control theory and pedagogy, even though practiced for centuries, is not necessarily the most effective way of practicing youth ministry. Just because “that's the way we've always done it” does not mean that is the best way, or that it has to continue that way. Effectiveness is measured by the results, and right now in our culture, one result is that our youth are increasingly becoming disconnected from the church and its ministry. The adult-based paradigm I have observed losing the effectiveness it once had. Re-imagining our youth creating new images for their quality worlds, making choices that meet their specific needs, utilizing andragogical learning techniques, sharing in mutual love and affection, and growing up with adults who encourage the same thing, I believe can re-vitalize the effectiveness of youth ministry.

Adults who work with older youth and adults can re-imagine pedagogical learning techniques. I believe that any person teaching older youth and adults would benefit from knowing the principles of andragogy and choice theory dynamics. I dare to recommend that seminary professors, college professors, high school teachers, middle school teachers, pastors, youth ministers and directors, and in short, anyone and everyone working with older youth and adult education, should acquire the skill of being knowledgeable in choice theory and andragogy.



Adult advisors striving to work in youth-based ministry would benefit from learning all these principles of the youth based ministry paradigm. The workshop I designed for this project could be a starting point. Even with honest criticisms and modifications, the workshop could open the doorway for adults to bring out the best of their leadership skills so that they can bring out the best in our youth. One participant remarked in a follow-up telephone interview that “It was a great workshop and project, one that is sorely needed for our youth ministry programs today.”

However, as it is now—a one-day workshop—will at best, barely light a fire in the consciousness of the adult advisors, and at worst, not do anything of consequence to assist adults in making the shift to youth-based ministry. I recommend, therefore, that the workshop be modified to become an eight to ten week adult education course easily adaptable for teaching in a variety of settings. This modification provides ample time for the dynamics of the youth-based paradigm to be learned and comprehended as well as time to practice choice theory and andragogical learning techniques.

I further recommend that a section be added to use Donald Griggs’ phrase “to teach the teacher.” Ideally, this section would train potential workshop leaders. Those leaders than can lead workshops in multiple places and settings. The more we can educate our adult advisors on this comprehensive paradigm for youth ministry, the more the church will reap the benefits.

Lastly, I recommend that a network and support system be established so that adult advisors can get the support they would need as they continue shifting toward youth-based ministry. In my estimation, this support system would first need to start with

the pastor of local churches, Conference staff in wider church ministries.

Simultaneously, the members of the faith community, in my opinion, would need to collectively make decisions to support the youth, the adult advisors, and the concepts of the youth-based ministry paradigm. Included in the support from the faith community would be the leadership of the pastor (s), governing board, Christian education committees, the youth themselves, and a variety of creative and new technological advances such as online networking systems. Opportunities for adult advisors to use the Internet as a means to contact, chat, bounce ideas off of other adult advisors will become a powerful resource and support system now and in the very near future. When adult advisors choose to make use of the available resources, rely on each other for support while loving our youth deeply, then youth ministry becomes new again; nothing is impossible.

Ministry is best done when people choose it from within their inner spirit, I believe. Ownership and commitment to ministry endeavors is more likely to increase, and the effectiveness of the ministry tends to strengthen, too. I hope this project ultimately will have a strong role in strengthening the ministry of the church as our youth are nurtured in the choices they are making today.

The cycle continues, too. Youth experiencing empowerment and responsibility now will grow into adults. A shift occurs again. These grown up youth will need to gain adult advisor skills, step back, and empower a new crop of youth, thus sharing in leadership of the church all over again.





**Appendix A**  
Original Workshop Design<sup>1</sup>

**Adult Leadership in Youth-based Ministry**

*Adult Skills for Youth Empowerment*  
Workshop  
August 18, 2007 at Hartman Center  
August 25, 2007 at Lancaster Theological Seminary  
Led by Rev. Galen E. Russell III  
Doctoral candidate at Lancaster Theological Seminary

**The Workshop Design (A Synopsis)**

**Registration**

**Morning Sessions: A Comparative Exploration of Paradigms**

- A) “Comparing Adult-based Youth ministry with Youth-based Ministry, and applying Choice Theory”
- B) “Identifiable Qualities and Skills Adults Need for Youth-based Ministry”

**Afternoon Sessions: Putting Theory into Practice**

- A) “Developing and Practicing Adult Leadership skills”
- B) “More Practice time, Sharing of Resources, and Evaluation”

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<sup>1</sup> The Original Workshop Manual distributed to workshop participants is not included with this dissertation. It is, however, available upon request.

### **The Workshop Design (specific details and flow)**

- 9:00 a.m. Registration and Social Time—include introductions and handouts. Everyone must receive a hand out and be able to name at least three people in the group. Also, the Permission and Release Statement form must be signed and collected.

### **Morning Sessions: A Comparative Exploration of Paradigms**

- 10:00 a.m. Opening Session (A): *“Comparing Adult-based Youth Ministry with Youth-based Ministry, and applying Choice theory”*
1. **Invite Movement**—Welcome, Introductions, Prayer, Song—“Alive in God’s Creation”—and Overview (10 minutes)
  2. **Inform Movement**—PowerPoint Presentation: Background Information (20 minutes)
    - a. **MAIN IDEA OF WORKSHOP:** Participants are invited to shift from an adult-based paradigm of youth ministry to a youth-based paradigm, resting on the belief that the youth of the church are not the leaders of the church for tomorrow; they are, in fact, part of the church’s leadership today. Adult leaders who grow competent in youth-based ministry leadership skills focus on advising and assisting youth leaders in the many facets of their youth ministry program. These adults are deliberately off center stage but are vital in the supportive role as youth grow in their faith and their leadership skills.
    - b. **GOALS FOR TODAY’S WORKSHOP:** This four part workshop curriculum for adults is designed to help adults increase their knowledge of the youth-based ministry paradigm and to identify and practice some adult advisor leadership skills needed to grow and support a high quality youth-based ministry program.
    - c. **OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS:**
      - i. Comparing Paradigms
      - ii. Pertinent dynamics of Dr. William Glasser’s “Choice theory” which helps provide some psychological groundwork for youth-based ministry and a possible useful alternative for adult-based youth ministry.
      - iii. Biblical, theological, and faith perspectives will be offered as a learning topic and throughout the workshop.
      - iv. Identifiable qualities and skills adults need in Youth-based Ministry will be offered.
      - v. Practice time with those skills using experiential activities

- vi. Time to evaluate and share resources
- d. Comparing paradigms
  - i. What's in common with both?
    1. God in Christ is in the Center!
    2. Balance of events and activities—the three “S’s”
      - a. Spiritual
      - b. Service
      - c. Social
    3. Both serve and have served the church's general mission to “increase among men, women, youth, and children the love of God, neighbor, and self” to varying degrees of effectiveness (adapted from R. Niebuhr, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry, 31).
- e. Adult based youth ministry
  - i. Characteristics (what to look for—Use the graphic model)
    1. Adult-planned events/activities (Social events)
      - a. Adult's idea
      - b. Adult covers details
      - c. Adult leads the event
      - d. Youth come and go to events based on what's interesting to them.
    2. “Let's get the youth to do that!” (Service events)
      - a. Service projects around the church which few adults really want to do.
      - b. Instant recruits—“volunteers”—but they are really “draftees.”
      - c. Adult supervisor of the project is common.
      - d. Youth come and go to the events based on whether they want to help.
    3. Adults do the designing of Bible studies or worship and often the preaching/worship leadership, singing (Spiritual Events)
      - a. Adult leads/teaches/preaches at youth meetings or events.
      - b. Adult directs or is “in charge” of Youth Sunday's organization and flow.
    4. An adult teacher for Christian Education (Educational Events)

- a. Christian education opportunities have adult leaders/teachers even though it might be a cool class.
  - b. Confirmation taught by the Pastor or member of church staff.
  - c. No youth teach younger children
5. Adults do most of the talking in planning meetings (Administrative Events)
- a. Youth are invited to planning meetings for youth events, but adults plan and rarely delegate responsibilities
  - b. ABYM disguised as YBYM (Use graphic model)
    - i. Adults brainstorm, even though the design is YBM
    - ii. Youth quiet, or agree or disagree
  - c. Youth are not present at Church Boards, Consistories or Councils.
6. Adults control the youth group's funds
- a. Youth need authoritative approval to use budgeted line item for youth programs.
  - b. Youth need authoritative approval to spend their fund-raised money.
  - c. Adults deposit money or withdraw money from bank.
  - d. Adults manage youth funds.
- f. Youth-based Youth Ministry—General description:

Young people themselves do most of the planning, preparing, and executing for youth ministry programs, activities, and service mission. Selected youth people plan youth group meetings and special events. They decide on the content and how to pull it off. They delegate to the other young people the responsibilities for directing games and crowd breakers, song leading, praying and leading Bible studies and discussions to other young people. The kids do the publicity; make many of the youth ministry's financial decisions, handle disciplinary problems within the group; and plan and prepare lock-ins, retreats, and trips. They're in charge of setting goals and shaping the future of youth ministry in the church... Adults relinquish the spotlight—to perform in its glow. And to suffer in the spotlight when the performance is less than good. Young people are the visible doers. Adults are the humble servants. Adults are involved in youth ministry, not for their own glory, but to



satisfy a Christ-like craving to see young people grow to be all they can be as God's children (T. Schultz and J. Schultz, 16-17).

i. Characteristics

1. Youth-planned events/activities (Social events)
  - a. Ideas generated by youth
  - b. Youth cover details
  - c. Youth lead the event
  - d. Youth come because they've chosen what interests them and they're invested!
2. Youth see what service projects need to be done and are given the opportunity to choose (Service events)
  - a. Service projects not necessarily around the church.
  - b. Youth choose to take part.
  - c. Youth leader can supervise.
  - d. Youth come and go to the events based on whether they want to help, but peer friendship/encouragement often is good incentive!
3. Youth do the designing of Bible studies or worship and often the preaching/worship leadership/singing (Spiritual Events)
  - a. Youth leads/teaches/preaches at youth meetings
  - b. A youth leader is "in charge" of Youth Sunday's organization and flow.
4. An older youth can teach Christian Education (Educational Events)
  - a. Christian education opportunities have youth leaders/teachers even though it might be a cool class.
  - b. Confirmation taught by the Pastor or member of church staff, but that person empowers youth to be self-directed.
  - c. Confirmed youth teach younger children Sunday school
  - d. Older youth empowered to teach Confirmation for younger youth
5. Youth do most of the talking in planning meetings (Administrative Events)
  - a. Youth plan and delegate responsibilities
  - b. ABYM within YBYM

- i. Adults ask questions to help youth make good choices
      - ii. Youth dream and think through plans with adult wisdom, guidance, and consultation
    - c. Youth are represented on Committees and Church Boards, Consistories and Councils.
  6. Youth control the youth group's funds
    - a. Youth have authority to use budgeted line item for youth ministry programs.
    - b. Youth have authority to spend their fund-raised money for youth ministry.
    - c. Youth deposit money or withdraw money from bank.
    - d. Youth manage youth funds or are kept apprised of ongoing financial activity.
- g. Pertinent Dynamics of "Choice Theory"
  - i. We choose everything we do, including the joy we feel or the misery we feel. What we choose meets our "Basic Needs and Feelings," is part of our "Total Behavior," and fits within the images of our "Quality World."
  - ii. Basic Needs and Feelings (Glasser, Choice Theory, pgs. 25-43)
    1. Physiological need
      - a. Survival
    2. Four Psychological needs
      - a. Love, Acceptance, and Belonging
      - b. Power
      - c. Freedom
      - d. Fun
    3. Theoretically, these basic needs are genetically programmed in each individual uniquely
  - iii. Quality World

"This small personal world, which each person starts to create in his or her memory shortly after birth and continues to create and re-create throughout life, is made up of a small group of specific pictures that portray, more than anything else we know, the best ways to satisfy one or more of our basic needs" (Glasser, Choice Theory, pg. 44-5).

    1. the people we most want to be with
    2. the things we most want to own or experience

3. the ideas of systems of belief that govern our behavior

“All your significant conscious behaviors, that is, all behaviors that have anything directly to do with satisfying basic needs, are chosen,” says William Glasser. “Not only are we always behaving, but we are also always trying to choose to behave in a way that gives us *the most effective control over our lives*. In terms of choice theory, effective control means being able to behave in a way that reasonably satisfies the pictures in our quality worlds” (Glasser, Choice Theory, pg. 71).

iv. External Control Psychology (Glasser, Choice Theory, pg. 4-5)

1. Runs contrary to Choice Theory. Must give up external control psychology in order for Choice theory to work and for meaningful relationships to last.
2. Has dominated our thinking for thousands of years
3. Happens when we “encounter people who have discovered not only what is right for them—but also unfortunately, what is right for us.”
4. “Punish the people who are doing wrong, so they will do what we say is right, and then reward them, so they keep doing what we want them to do.”
5. Shows up in our schools, workplaces, churches, marriages, family life, and settings for youth ministry!

h. Learning Topics to investigate when making the shift in paradigms

- i. The Benefits of the Youth-based ministry paradigm
- ii. The Dangers of the Youth-based ministry paradigm
- iii. Biblical, Theological, and Faith perspectives to Youth-based ministry
- iv. Applying the pertinent dynamics of Choice Theory to aspects of Youth-based ministry
- v. Helping the Congregation (or Faith Community) Become Involved

3. **Investigate Movement**—(Self-Directed Workshop Time—25 minutes)

- a. General Process: Divide into three to four groups, or if someone works best or prefers to work individually, a person may do so. Each group and person:
  - i. Pick a Learning Topic to investigate (1 minute)
  - ii. Pick a leader (groups only—1 minute)
  - iii. Choose investigative activities—some are based on the eight different intelligences of Multiple Intelligences Theory (15 minutes)
  - iv. Sharing the discoveries with the rest of the group (8 minutes)

b. Learning Topics

i. Learning Topic: “The Benefits of the Youth-based Ministry Paradigm” (Shultz, 18-25)

1. Youth Ownership of Youth Ministry—when youth “own” their program, heightened interest and investment in it takes place. Possible activities:
  - a. (Previous experience activity): Tell a story of a youth who figured out that he or she “owned” the youth ministry program because the responsibility to shape the direction of the program was not left to an adult.
  - b. (Linguistic activity—“Word Smart”) Find a biblical story which expresses ownership and increased responsibility.
    - i. Some examples are: Jeremiah 1: 4-10, Mark 5: 1-20, Luke 4: 1-14
  - c. Other activities?
2. Life Skills Training—Active youth-led experiences teach life skills such as taking responsibility, developing leadership skills, decision-making skills, etc. Possible activities:
  - a. (Interpersonal activity—“People Smart” and Logical-Mathematical “Numbers Smart”) Do a role play on the topic—“the fund-raising project was better than anticipated. What do we do with the extra money?”
  - b. Other activities?
3. Enhanced self-worth and personal growth—Internal motivators of increased self-esteem and self-confidence builds.
  - a. (Spatial activity—“Picture Smart”) Create an art image or draw a portrait of a youth having just completed a meaningful Bible Study which was designed by and led by that youth.
  - b. Other activities?
4. Broad Distribution of Work—Adult youth advisor is no longer the main coordinator. Responsibilities are delegated to youth by youth. Everyone shares in implementing the youth ministry program. The adult advisor is able to look over the big picture and asks key questions to the youth.

- a. (Naturalist—“Nature Smart”) Plan an all afternoon/evening youth group meeting in the woods to learn about God’s creation).
  - b. (Logical Mathematical Smart “Number Smart”) Simulate the planning of a road trip to Back Bay Mission to help after Hurricane Katrina and cover all the details.
  - c. Other activities?
5. Youth Ministry Continuity—the strength of the youth program is not in an adult leader, rather it is in the youth themselves and caring adult advisors. When an adult advisor leaves, the youth ministry program does not fall apart.
  - a. (Intrapersonal—“Self Smart) Write a short, real life story when the youth program held up even when a strong and much beloved leader needed to leave. Perhaps it is your story?
  - b. Other activities?
6. Provides a good model for the whole congregation—Ministry is everybody’s job. Youth-based ministry is a mini-view of the larger church.
  - a. (Musical activity—“Music Smart”) Sing the song (or at least review the lyrics to) “I am the Church” (see resource section)
  - b. (Bodily-Kinesthetic—“Body Smart”) Do a choreographed movement simulating a group of youth taking responsibility for a sick member.
  - c. Other activities?
7. Enhanced youth evangelism—Youth-based ministry empowers youth to let their faith in Christ come through their actions with other youth. It’s not the pastor or the adult advisor’s job to tell other youth about faith or the youth ministry program—it’s the job of the youth.
  - a. (Interpersonal “People Smart”) Do a role play simulating a school hallway conversation about faith and life in Christ plus the goodness of leading worship, Bible studies, etc. at the youth ministry program.
  - b. Other activities?
8. Increased Youth Visibility—Empowered youth have more visibility in the faith community, and the faith community reveals its commitment to youth.

- a. (Linguistic “Word Smart”) Role play a youth doing announcements in church, or serving as a Lay leader in worship.
  - b. Brainstorm ways in which empowered youth can be front and center in the faith community.
  - c. Other activities?
- ii. Learning Topic; “The Dangers of Youth-based Ministry” (Shultz, 25-27)
1. Youth-based ministry is less streamlined than adult-based ministry—more people are involved, which usually results in a slower process to get things done.
    - a. Compare different attitudes (interpersonal and intrapersonal)
      - i. “It is faster and easier if I just did it myself!”
      - ii. “I want to help youth take responsibility for their programs giving them all the benefits, even if it takes forever.”
    - b. Make a chart depicting what activities are planned in your youth ministry and assign YBM or ABM to each activity (logical-mathematical and linguistic)
    - c. Other activities?
  2. A higher failure factor—Usually, youth do not have advanced organizational skills, well-practiced detail-planning abilities, or strong leadership abilities, which often will result in failed activities or very shoddily implemented activities.
    - a. Role Play an experience when a retreat is scheduled, but no one checked the school band and football schedule (interpersonal)
    - b. Other activities?
  3. Adults who will not “buy” into youth-based ministry (an incomplete listing follows)
    - a. The “star” youth advisor or youth pastor who likes the limelight and is reluctant to give it up,
    - b. The “dictator” director of the youth program who must control all details
    - c. The “detached” leader who lets the kids do it, but does not accept the adult role as an advisor

- d. The authoritative body in the ministry setting who have always set policy or controlled the funds, or
  - e. The people of the faith community itself. A congregation must properly be trained and readily endorse the fact that apparent failures are excellent tools for vital leadership in the future.
    - i. Activity: List the youth ministry settings with which you are familiar and see if any in the above list are found in those youth ministry settings.
    - ii. Activity: What movies, TV shows, or music videos can you think of that describes any one of the above list?
    - iii. Other activities?
- iii. Learning topic: “Biblical, Theological, and Faith, perspectives in Youth-based ministry.” *Construct creative ways to learn and share these eleven connections. Feel free to use available resources, including real life experiences, acting, drawing, role playing, word plays, pictures, even PowerPoint, if desired!*

1. “Building up the Body of Christ”

- a. Biblical: Ephesians 4: 11-16
- b. Theological: Paul calls upon the new Christians in Ephesus to be aware that God gave them gifts that would build up the body of Christ. They are to use those gifts and equip the saints for ministry of the church.
- c. Faith: Youth are the church of today, nothing less. God has given youth discernable gifts to use.

2. “The Priesthood of ALL believers”

- a. Biblical: 1 Peter 2: 9-10
- b. Theological: Ministry is carried out by people of all ages who follow the ways of God exemplified in Jesus Christ.
- c. Faith: Skills in making decisions, delegating responsibilities, and discerning their God-given gifts will likely be nourished by the church endorsing youth-based ministry.

3. “God often uses the youngest, the most unprepared, or the most unlikely of people for God’s purposes”

- a. Biblical: 1 Samuel 16: 11-12

- b. Mark 3: 13-19
  - c. Matthew 10: 5-14
  - d. Theological: Consider how God knew of David's capabilities to be a king even as he was a youth out tending sheep.
  - e. Consider how Jesus called some of the most unlikely of sorts as disciples: a tax collector, fishermen, and perhaps even a youthful Andrew.
  - f. Faith: Our youth are known by God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in youth, God's purposes get accomplished.
4. "The Holy Spirit is within each person for the common good"
- a. Biblical: 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11
  - b. Theological: The Holy Spirit is in the youth as they grow in faith, take on responsibilities within their youth groups, and become instruments of God's purpose.
  - c. Faith: Adult youth advisors trust implicitly that the Holy Spirit is at work in empowered youth, and all the learning experiences that come with engaging youth-based ministry benefit youth, adults, and the church's ministry for the common good of all.
5. "Give Away Responsibility" (Shultz, 27-29)
- a. Biblical: Matthew 18: 18-20
  - b. Theological: God's work is done and multiplied when believers share the responsibilities of ministry.
  - c. Faith: When adults give away the responsibility of the youth ministry program, God's work is multiplied.
6. "Challenge youth"
- a. Biblical: Matthew 14: 22-33
  - b. Theological: Jesus challenged Peter to do an incredible thing.
  - c. Faith: Youth are challenged to do an incredible thing within their youth ministry programs.
7. "Pick youth up when they fail"
- a. Biblical: Matthew 14: 22-33
  - b. Theological: In failure, Jesus is right there to pick up Peter and give him a new chance.



- c. Faith: When the going is slow, shoddy, or fails, in faith adults keep encouraging youth to go at it again!
8. “Believe in youth”
- a. Biblical: Philippians 4: 11b-13
  - b. Theological: No matter what the resources or how much, all things can be done through Christ’s strength.
  - c. Faith: Believe that the youth can do ministry through Christ’s strength.
9. “Stick Together”
- a. Biblical: Matthew 28:20
  - b. Theological: Christ is our partner which is God’s covenant eternally. God sticks with us.
  - c. Faith: Adults support the youth with encouraging and thoughtful actions emphasizing that they are not alone in doing youth-based ministry. Adults stick with youth doing youth-based ministry.
10. “Avoid Burnout”
- a. Biblical: Numbers 11: 11-17
  - b. Theological: Moses was overwhelmed with the magnitude of the people’s concerns and sin. God knows the value of shared leadership—it avoids burnout.
  - c. Faith: One person youth ministry leads to despair and frustration. Empowered youth help adult advisors and youth leaders avoid burnout.
11. “Trust the Holy Spirit”
- a. Biblical: John 14: 16-28
  - b. Theological: The Holy Spirit is promised by Jesus to come and live in the disciples.
  - c. Faith: The promise is true for youth-based ministry groups, not exclusively, however. God’s Spirit lives and works in people of faith of any age.
- iv. Learning Topic: “Applying the Dynamics of Choice Theory to aspects of Youth-based ministry.” *Construct creative ways to learn and share these four dynamics of Choice theory. Feel free to use available resources, including real life experiences, acting, drawing, role playing, word plays, pictures, even PowerPoint, if desired.*

1. We choose everything we do, including the joy we feel or the misery we feel. What we choose meets our “Basic Needs and Feelings,” is part of our “Total Behavior,” and fits within the images of our “Quality World.”
  - a. Application to Youth-based Ministry:
    - i. Youth (ages 12-18) start to increase in personal awareness as individuals with ability to make decisions and choices. Personal autonomy is heightened, meaning “that [youth] increasingly understand themselves as individuals who can make their own decisions about what to believe, what groups to join, and how and where they will place their loyalty” (Lyth, 3).
2. Basic Needs and Feelings (Glasser, Choice Theory, 25-43)
  - a. One Physiological need
    - i. Survival (not inclusive list below)
      1. Application to Youth-based ministry
        - a. The need to eat to survive. Youth love to eat! But, the other psychological needs are met by eating socially.
        - b. One meets the four psychological needs in order to survive.
  - b. Four Psychological needs
    - i. Love, Acceptance, and Belonging
      1. Application to YBM:
        - a. Youth have complex friendships and a deep need to be accepted, loved, and to experience being part of something important to them. A warm environment where youth are loved and respected, even given the lion’s share of responsibility in a youth-based ministry program helps to meet this need.

ii. Power

1. Application to YBM:

- a. Youth having the responsibility for their own programs brings power to the youth, but usually in the ministry setting, power is associated with benefiting others and the program itself, not pushing others down. There is more power experienced by youth getting along with each other than by trying to dominate.

iii. Freedom

1. Application to YBM

- a. Youth have the freedom to be who they are, create for themselves and express themselves creatively, take responsibility for their programs, events, and activities, and satisfy their basic needs without stopping others from satisfying theirs as well. Adult advisors respect that freedom by asking questions and exerting adult wisdom when appropriate.

iv. Fun

1. Application to YBM:

- a. Youth and adults have a need for fun, playfulness, laughter, and joy. Best learning comes from times of fun, and YBM gives opportunity for youth to have fun while they are learning and getting along with each other. Wise adult youth

advisors know that laughing and learning are the foundation for all successful relationships with youth and youth-led events.

- c. Theoretically, according to Glasser, these basic needs are genetically programmed in each individual uniquely.
  - i. Application to Youth-based Ministry:
    1. All five needs operate within each youth and adult based on pre-determined genetic need levels. Consequently, when youth and adults are together in YBM, Choice theory gives one of the best opportunities for all to negotiate and decide upon a high quality youth ministry program.
3. Quality World—“This small personal world, which each person starts to create in his or her memory shortly after birth and continues to create and re-create throughout life, is made up of a small group of specific pictures that portray, more than anything else we know, the best ways to satisfy one or more of our basic needs” (Glasser, Choice Theory, pg. 44-5)
  - a. the people we most want to be with
  - b. the things we most want to own or experience
  - c. the ideas of systems of belief that govern our behavior

“All your significant conscious behaviors, that is, all behaviors that have anything directly to do with satisfying basic needs, are chosen,” says William Glasser. “Not only are we always behaving, but we are also always trying to choose to behave in a way that gives us *the most effective control over our lives*. In terms of choice theory, having effective control means being able to behave in a way that reasonably satisfies the pictures in our quality worlds” (Glasser, Choice Theory, pg. 71).

- d. Application to Youth-based Ministry
  - i. The Quality Worlds of youth and adults are continually evolving. For youth,

often the people they most want to be with are their friends and/or a warm body of people who believe in each other. The thing they most want to own or experience is related to the recognition and acceptance of their individuality, their gifts, and their ability to take responsibility. The system of beliefs they most want is one that advocates a life world instead of a death world, a passion-filled world with meaning instead of a transparent, superficial world filled with the emptiness of cultural drivel.

4. External Control Psychology (Glasser, Choice Theory, pg. 4-5)
  - a. Runs contrary to Choice Theory. Must give up external control psychology in order for Choice theory to work and for meaningful relationships to last.
  - b. Has dominated our thinking for thousands of years.
  - c. Happens when we “encounter people who have discovered not only what is right for them—but also unfortunately, what is right for us.”
  - d. “Punish the people who are doing wrong, so they will do what we say is right, then reward them, so they keep doing what we want them to do.”
  - e. Shows up in our schools, , workplaces, churches, marriages, and family life.
  
- v. Learning Topic: “Helping the Congregation (or Faith Community) Become Involved”

*Create a 2 minute skit which highlights all six myths and foundations. Or, create a PowerPoint presentation doing the same. Or, design posters, charts, graphs, etc. which highlights the myths and foundations.*

  1. Six Myths and Foundations (Martinson, 11-18)
    - a. Myth one: “Youth Ministry is responsibility of pastor or youth director or adult advisor who is good with the kids.”
    - b. Foundation one: “Youth ministry belongs to God through the ministry of God’s whole church. It is the responsibility of the entire

congregation. Youth ministry is owned and operated by the congregation.”

- c. Myth two: Youth ministry is only for the youth and youth group within that congregation or faith community.
- d. Foundation two: Youth ministry is part of the church’s or faith community’s ministry with every youth deemed as a minister to reach out to other youth in the community.
- e. Myth three: Youth are the future church and youth ministry is preparing them for adult leadership.
- f. Foundation three: Youth are the church’s future, but they are the church of today. The congregation endorses and supports adult advisors in nurturing the gifts youth bring and encourages them to use those gifts in the ministry of the church today.
- g. Myth four: Youth ministry is no different than other forms of ministry to others in the church or faith community.
- h. Foundation four: Youth ministry IS different—different cultures, faith questions, issues, and needs. However, it still can be seen, even with its differences, as one of the many facets of ministry in Christ’s church.
- i. Myth five: Youth leadership and responsibility must come from the youth themselves for it to be authentic youth ministry.
- j. Myth six: Adults must lead the youth ministry programs because they know what’s good for the youth, and youth are often irresponsible and unable to carry out what they ought to be doing in youth ministry.
- k. Foundation five and six combined: Youth must be principal participants in youth ministry leadership, and adults are needed, too. A delicate mix of youth and adult leadership can be developed.

**4. Illustrate Movement (8 minutes)**

- a. Sharing of the Learning Topics by different Groups

**5. Inspire Movement (1-2 minutes)**

- a. Closing Word which highlights the main idea of the Opening Session—to compare the two paradigms of youth ministry by learning some background information, learning about Choice theory, and “working” on chosen Learning Topics.

BREAK (10 minutes)

11:00 a.m. Session (B) *“Identifiable Qualities and Skills Adults Need in Youth-based Ministry”*

- 1. Invite Movement**—(5 minutes)
  - a. Welcome Back! Song—“God’s Love for Us”
  - b. Recap of previous session and overview of this session
- 2. Inform Movement**—PowerPoint Presentation—25 minutes
  - a. Background information
    - i. Edgar Dale’s Cone of Learning
    - ii. *“I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand”*
    - iii. Several possible settings (and combinations thereof) in Youth-based ministry
      1. Individually centered
        - a. One on one time
        - b. Snack n Chats
        - c. Special projects for the individual youth
        - d. Birthday celebrations
        - e. Others?
      2. Meeting centered
        - a. Youth group meetings with different components
          - i. Ice breakers
          - ii. Games
          - iii. Worship
          - iv. Program
          - v. Snacks
          - vi. Closing
        - b. Special Interest groups
          - i. Music group
          - ii. Drama group
          - iii. Study group
          - iv. Recreational groups
          - v. Service group
          - vi. Others?
        - c. Administrative details
          - i. Handling finances
          - ii. Taking care of publicity

- iii. Discipline issues
- 3. Event centered
  - a. Service Projects, i.e., Mission trips, food pantry, etc.
  - b. Youth Sunday
  - c. Lock-ins
  - d. Retreats
  - e. Youth events
  - f. Trips
  - g. Others?
- 4. Educationally centered
  - a. Confirmation class
  - b. Sunday School class
  - c. Special Bible Study class
  - d. Vacation Bible School class
  - e. Others?
- 5. Outdoor and retreat Ministry centered
  - a. Summer camps
  - b. Camp Counselor or CIT's
  - c. Others?
- 6. Urban centered
  - a. Street missions
  - b. Recreational events
  - c. Others?
- 7. Other settings?
- iv. Helpful comparative images for adults using Youth-based ministry
  - 1. Transmitter vs. Translator
  - 2. Mentor vs. Orator
  - 3. An experienced "map reader" on the journey vs. someone giving directions
- b. Some Identifiable Adult Advisor Qualities needed for Youth-based Ministry
  - i. Engages in ongoing faith development
  - ii. Has a love for youth
  - iii. Has a respect for youth
  - iv. Secure in personal identity
  - v. Understands and is supportive of Youth-based ministry
  - vi. Is willing to try new, sometimes 'outside the box' ideas
  - vii. Is comfortable with some vulnerability
  - viii. Is mostly non-authoritative in leadership style
  - ix. Is easy going and comfortable with people
  - x. Easily works with other advisors on a team
  - xi. Others qualities?



- c. Some Identifiable Adult Advisor Skills needed for three basic settings of Youth-based ministry (non-inclusive):
  - i. Individual-Centered youth-based ministry
    1. *A YBM adult advisor knows when and how to ask questions to individual youth.*
      - a. which support a youth implementing plans for a meeting or event, i.e., Bible study, games, worship, workshops, retreats, etc.
      - b. when mentoring a youth working through certain issues of life—family crisis, relationship issues, etc.
      - c. about the extracurricular activities or interests in which the youth is involved, i.e., attending plays, soccer games, band concerts, mutual hobbies, etc.
      - d. other times?
    2. *A YBM adult advisor knows how to build trust with individual youth.*
      - a. Be present and attentive with individual youth for their benefit. Youth can often sense when an adult advisor is serving for their own personal gain and satisfaction (interpret both ways!)
      - b. Accept youth for being who they are but also encouraging growth to occur
      - c. Be willing to share faith perspectives or applicable personal stories, even if vulnerability occurs.
      - d. Know how to listen
        - i. Passive listening
        - ii. Active listening
        - iii. Reflective listening
      - e. Other ways to build trust?
    3. *A YBM adult advisor can sense when to let an individual youth explore new areas and unfamiliar issues and when to step in with adult wisdom non-coercively and gently guiding the youth back to center.*
      - a. Issues concerning relationships
        - i. Healthy vs. unhealthy
        - ii. Morality vs. immorality
        - iii. Faithful vs. unfaithful
      - b. Issues concerning faith and religion
        - i. Practicing faith growth vs. ignoring it
        - ii. Develop reverent, loving, worshipful relationship with God vs. developing the same for trappings of culture
      - c. Other issues?

4. *Other adult skills needed for individual centered youth-based ministry?*

ii. Meeting-Centered youth-based ministry

1. *A YBM adult advisor knows when and how to ask questions:*

- a. when brainstorming and making plans in a planning meeting for a youth group meeting
  - i. Are our activities achieving a balance between the three “S’s?”
  - ii. Is what we are planning faithful to what we believe?
  - iii. Are our planned activities in keeping with the advocacy of peace and justice for all people?
  - iv. Are the plans we are making meaningful to the rest of the group?
  - v. What is the message we are trying to convey in this youth meeting?
  - vi. Do we have an opening and a closing activity?

2. *A YBM adult advisor knows not to take over in most circumstances, even when the youth-led meeting is floundering.*

- a. Youth experiencing a problem and solving it on the spot is often a great teaching moment.
  - i. A good idea poorly planned.
  - ii. A good idea without good preparation.
- b. Saving the program or activity may be less important than the youth learning valuable lessons.

3. *A YBM adult advisor knows how to guide the group to ensure there is a maximum amount of participation.*

- a. Sits with the group and notices “wall flowers.”
- b. Encourages quietly non-participatory youth to engage in the meeting’s activities.

4. *A YBM adult advisor participates fully and actively in supportive and advisory ways:*

- a. Helps youth make decisions
- b. Helps lead some activities when asked
- c. Helps with the ‘dirty work.’
- d. Helps with crowd control and supervision, if asked

5. *A YBM adult advisor knows what gifts and qualities to look for in youth which can benefit the individual, the meeting,*

*or the program, and invites the youth to discern and utilize those gifts. (samples below)*

- a. Love for God, faith, church, etc.
  - b. Warmth of personality, ability to make friends, etc.
  - c. Organizational skills
  - d. Willingness to try new things or voice new ideas
  - e. Shows integrity and maturity
  - f. Takes initiative
6. *A YBM adult advisor knows when to exert adult wisdom.*
- a. When safety issues are immediate
  - b. When strong temptations potentially lead to trouble
7. *Other skills needed for Meeting-centered YBM?*

iii. Event-Centered youth-based ministry

1. *A YBM adult advisor knows when and how to ask questions, especially in the planning process.*
  - a. What topic is pertinent, current, or has significant meaning, or meets specific needs?
  - b. At the end of this event, what two or three major ideas will the participants leave within their minds?
  - c. With a topic and direction established, is there a phrase or a group of play-on words that capture what the event is about? The theme!
  - d. "OK, shall we think through this concept more carefully?"
2. *A YBM adult advisor has an ability to see wider perspectives beyond the confines of local settings for youth ministry and can creatively help youth to see those perspectives.*
  - a. Youth sometimes have a tendency to focus only on what is at hand or what is convenient. A YBM advisor comes to planning meetings with resources ready to be offered, but only when asked or when necessary.
  - b. When wider perspectives start to sink into youth consciousness, YBM advisors encourage, affirm, and nurture that growth within youth.
3. *A YBM adult advisor has the ability to see when immediate needs take precedence and can help youth perceive the importance of meeting those needs.*
  - a. Faith growth and spirituality may be a strong need and may have to take priority

- b. Developing strong friendships and relationships may take precedence.
- 4. *A YBM adult advisor knows that there are tons of resources available in the community and can bring those to the table if necessary and, more importantly, help guide and assist youth in the process of making use of those resources.*
  - a. Contacts and networks of people, companies, products.
  - b. Specific services adults have access to are often valuable.
  - c. Members of congregations
- 5. *A YBM adult advisor knows when to step out of the limelight and let the youth have the glory!*
  - a. Leading events or parts of events
  - b. Taking part when called upon, and/or inviting youth to participate
- 6. *A YBM adult advisor uses advanced people skills to promote and advocate for the YBM paradigm among adults and groups in settings for youth ministry.*
  - a. Can interpret and articulate the meaning and significance of youth taking lion's share of responsibility for their youth ministry program.
  - b. Invites a youth to join in the sharing of the significance of YBM.
- 7. *Other adult skills needed for Event-centered youth-based ministry?*

**3. Investigate Movement**—(Self-Directed Time—15 minutes)

- a. View of film Clip of “Freedom Writers”

—or—

- b. Using the whole group, with some designated as adults and some as youth, create and design a youth meeting, from start to finish.

**4. Illustrate Movement**

- i. Identify and discuss as many adult qualities and skills shown in the film clip.
- ii. Where were some of the dynamics of Choice theory exercised?
- iii. Identify as many “intelligences” shown in the clip as possible.

—or—

- iv. Identify and discuss the youth meeting simulation identifying and discussing as many adult leadership skill which were used.
- v. When were Choice theory's dynamics utilized in the simulation?
- vi. Identify the use of any "intelligences."

**5. Inspire Movement (5 minutes)**

- a. Wrap-up of what these morning sessions were about.
- b. Make connections to actual practices to youth ministry settings.

LUNCH BREAK (1 hour)

**Afternoon Sessions: Putting Theory into Practice**

1:00 p.m. Opening Session (A): *"Developing and Practicing Adult Leadership skills"*

**1. Invite Movement—(5 minutes)**

- a. Welcome Back! Song "I Am the Church!"
- b. Recap of morning session and overview of this afternoon
- c. Review resources on the hand out
  - i. Six Principles of Andragogy
  - ii. Five Movements of Workshops
  - iii. Pertinent Choice theory dynamics
  - iv. Sample Choice Theory Workshop for youth
  - v. Edgar Dale's "Cone of Learning"
  - vi. Eight different "Intelligences"
  - vii. Psalm 23 resources using Multiple Intelligences
  - viii. Identifiable Qualities of Adult Advisors
  - ix. Identifiable Skills needed for Adult Advisors
  - x. Youth-based ministry steering committee (or similar) structure
  - xi. Bibliography for further reading and resources
  - xii. "Alive in God's Creation"
  - xiii. "God's Love for Us"
  - xiv. "I am the Church"

**2. Inform movement—(5 minutes)**

- a. Q/A
- b. Time to practice what we're learning

**3. Investigate Movement—(Self-directed learning experience, 15 minutes)**

- a. Decide how you want to work and in what setting of youth-based ministry
  - i. Individual
    1. Individual-centered setting
    2. Educational setting
  - ii. Small group (2-8 people)
    1. Meeting-centered setting
    2. Educational setting
    3. Outdoor and Retreat setting
    4. Urban setting
  - iii. Large group (9 or more, or entire group)
    1. Meeting Centered
- b. Individual work
  - i. Individual setting: Design an individual-centered youth-based ministry for your particular setting. Think through as many details as possible including publicity, getting youth in on the planning stages, coordinating calendars, etc. Write down your image of what that program would look like.
  - ii. Educational setting: Think through and write down how you would teach a Confirmation class or a Sunday school class which gives the responsibility to the youth to direct their own course of study. Write down your image of what that class would look like, the details, the problems, the joys, how the youth might feel, etc.
- c. Small Group
  - i. Meeting-centered setting: Role play a planning session for a youth meeting. One of you is an adult; the other(s) are youth. Design from start to finish the youth meeting.
  - ii. Educational setting: Design a “team taught” Confirmation class which has the topic of learning the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. From opening to closing, plan different activities which uses different “intelligences.” (see resource suggestion)
  - iii. Outdoor and Retreat setting: The small group of you are camp counselors. Your job is to lead the rest of our group (we’re campers) in one activity that builds teamwork. Decide what the activity will be, plan to have us “campers” learn how to do the activity, and with your new empowerment skills, let us campers take turns leading it!
  - iv. Urban setting: Pretend you are in an inner city church. Two of you are adults, the rest of you, pretend you are youth. Together engage in a mock planning session in which all of you would design a workshop for three surrounding urban churches plus your own. What would your topic be? What would you like participants to learn and/or experience? What would the theme be? Goals? Objectives/activities to meet the goals? Keep in mind youth empowerment and leadership, and the five movements of Invite, Inform, Investigate, Illustrate, and Inspire.

- d. Large Group
    - i. Event-centered setting of youth-based ministry
      - 1. Choose a mock event to plan
        - a. Youth Sunday worship
        - b. Service Project
        - c. Teens Together (1 day event)
        - d. Other ideas
      - 2. Two adults, the rest are youth
      - 3. Move through the four stages of planning for youth events
        - a. Planning (Brainstorm ideas)
        - b. Preparing (covering details)
        - c. \*Implementing (youth lead!)
        - d. \*Evaluating (youth evaluate)
- \* - these two stages will be done in the last session today.

- 4. **Illustrate Movement** (15 minutes)
  - a. Each individual or small group shares what they have done.
  - b. Feedback on identifiable adult skills offered by the rest of the group.
- 5. **Inspire Movement** (1-2 minutes)
  - a. Words of affirmation and synopsis
  - b. Encouragement to use skills in your settings for ministry

BREAK (10 minutes)

2:00 p.m. Closing Session (B): *“More Practice time, Sharing of Resources, and Evaluation”*

- 1. **Invite Movement**—(1 minute)
  - a. Welcome Back!
- 2. **Inform Movement**—(1 minute)
  - a. What’s coming up in this, our last session
    - i. Implementation of the Event-centered setting (if chosen from the last session)
    - ii. Evaluation time
- 3. **Investigate Movement** (15 minutes)
  - a. Implementation of Event-centered setting plans.
- 4. **Illustrate Movement** (10 minutes)
  - a. Evaluation of the event by the team
  - b. Feedback from entire group
    - i. Identifiable adult skills

- c. Sharing of resources from others' experiences
5. **Inspire** (25 minutes)
- a. Evaluation time of this whole day's experience
  - b. Focus Group interview
  - c. Permissions for further follow-up
6. **Closing Prayer, Thank you, and Bon Voyage!**



**Appendix B**

Participants' Evaluation Survey<sup>1</sup>

*Adult Skills for Youth Empowerment*

August 18, 2007 at Hartman Center

August 25, 2007 at Lancaster Theological Seminary

Led by Rev. Galen E. Russell III

Doctoral candidate at Lancaster Theological Seminary

Thank you for participating in this “Adult Leadership in Youth-based Ministry” workshop. As a concluding step in the workshop, you are invited to participate in this Focus Group Evaluation Survey interview by sharing your honest and thoughtful responses to what you experienced today. Your candid comments are valuable and integral to this research project.

The following Evaluation Survey is designed to be filled out individually. However, we will move through each question as a group. This process allows for ample time to write responses and clarity about what specifically is being evaluated.

**Section A—The Main Idea of the Workshop:** “Participants are invited to make a shift from an adult-based paradigm of youth ministry to a youth-based paradigm.”

1. *When thinking about your personal way of doing youth ministry, where would you place yourself on the continuum below? Keep in mind the middle numbers represent a blending of the two paradigms.*

**Adult-based youth ministry**

**youth-based youth ministry**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

What specifically makes you answer as you did? \_\_\_\_\_

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What choices are you making for the present way you do youth ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> Only the data pertinent to advancing the thesis of this project are reported in the dissertation. The rest of the data is available upon request.

2. *In your opinion, how important is it that the shift to the youth-based ministry paradigm occurs in youth ministry settings?*

<b>Not Important at all</b>								<b>Very Important</b>		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

What specifically, makes the shift important or not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. *How strong is your personal acceptance level to making the shift from adult-based youth ministry to youth-based youth ministry?*

<b>No Acceptance at all</b>								<b>Very acceptable</b>		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

What makes you describe your acceptance level as you did?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. *In your opinion or based on your current awareness, where would you place the youth ministry setting with which you are most closely associated on the continuum below? Keep in mind the middle numbers represent a blending of the two paradigms.*

<b>Adult-based youth ministry</b>					<b>youth-based youth ministry</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What is the youth ministry setting with which you are most closely associated? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What specific details about that youth ministry setting make you answer as you did?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. *In your opinion, what levels of acceptance are present in your current youth ministry setting to the idea of making a shift from adult-based youth ministry to youth-based youth ministry?*

<b>No acceptance at all</b>					<b>Very acceptable</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What specific details describe this level of acceptance? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Section B—A Useful Alternative for Adult-based youth ministry:** “The applicable dynamics of Dr. William Glasser’s “Choice theory” help to provide a psychological groundwork for youth-based ministry and a useful alternative for adult-based youth ministry.”

6. *How objectionable do you find the claim that when youth are given the opportunity to grow and mature in their faith within a choice-oriented environment (i.e., when they are given the freedom to choose the emphasis, direction, development, and implementation of their youth ministry programs) and empowered by the adults working with them, excellent, high quality youth ministry programs are likely to emerge?*

<b>No objection at all</b>					<b>Very objectionable</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What specifically, are the reasons you chose that level of resistance? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. *To what extent does the Choice theory claim—“We choose everything we do that meets our basic needs of survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun”—challenge your present way of doing youth ministry in your particular setting, and why?*

<b>Does not challenge it at all</b>					<b>It challenges everything</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What would you say are the specific challenges? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. *What level of opposition do you have to the idea that youth-based ministry is in the 'Quality World' of youth because in youth-based ministry, recognition and acceptance of their individuality, their gifts, and their abilities to take responsibility meets some of the basic needs youth have.*

**Not opposed at all**

**Highly opposed**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

What specifically makes you answer as you did?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Section C—Identifiable Youth-based Ministry Adult Advisor Skills:** Please read through each of the thirteen adult advisor skills. Circle on the left side what level of resistance you might have toward developing this skill, and on the right side, circle how likely it is that you might use this skill in your current youth ministry setting. Then please share your comments why you chose the resistance and likelihood levels you did.

**Resistance levels**

**Likelihood of using this skill**

- 1 = Not resistant
- 2 = Somewhat un-resistant
- 3 = Resistant
- 4 = Somewhat resistant
- 5 = Very resistant

- Very likely = 1
- Somewhat likely = 2
- Likely = 3
- Somewhat unlikely = 4
- Very unlikely = 5

**1 2 3 4 5**    *A YBM adult advisor knows when and how to ask questions.*    **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Resistance levels**

- 1 = Not resistant
- 2 = Somewhat un-resistant
- 3 = Resistant
- 4 = Somewhat resistant
- 5 = Very resistant

**Likelihood of using this skill**

- Very likely = 1
- Somewhat likely = 2
- Likely = 3
- Somewhat unlikely = 4
- Very unlikely = 5

**1 2 3 4 5**    *A YBM adult advisor knows how to build trust with youth.*    **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_

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Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_

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**1 2 3 4 5**    *A YBM adult advisor can sense when to let an individual youth explore new areas and unfamiliar issues and when to step in with adult wisdom non-coercively and gently guiding the youth back to center.*    **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_

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Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Resistance levels**

- 1 = Not resistant
- 2 = Somewhat un-resistant
- 3 = Resistant
- 4 = Somewhat resistant
- 5 = Very resistant

**Likelihood of using this skill**

- Very likely = 1
- Somewhat likely = 2
- Likely = 3
- Somewhat unlikely = 4
- Very unlikely = 5

**1 2 3 4 5** *A YBM adult advisor knows not to take over in most circumstances, even when the youth-led meeting is floundering.* **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**1 2 3 4 5** *A YBM adult advisor knows how to guide the group to ensure there is a maximum amount of participation.* **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Resistance levels**

- 1 = Not resistant
- 2 = Somewhat un-resistant
- 3 = Resistant
- 4 = Somewhat resistant
- 5 = Very resistant

**Likelihood of using this skill**

- Very likely = 1
- Somewhat likely = 2
- Likely = 3
- Somewhat unlikely = 4
- Very unlikely = 5

**1 2 3 4 5**     *A YBM adult advisor participates fully and actively in supportive and advisory ways.*     **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**1 2 3 4 5**     *A YBM adult advisor knows what gifts and qualities to look for in youth which can benefit the individual, the meeting, or the program, and invites the youth to discern and utilize those gifts.*     **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**Resistance levels**

- 1 = Not resistant
- 2 = Somewhat un-resistant
- 3 = Resistant
- 4 = Somewhat resistant
- 5 = Very resistant

**Likelihood of using this skill**

- Very likely = 1
- Somewhat likely = 2
- Likely = 3
- Somewhat unlikely = 4
- Very unlikely = 5

**1 2 3 4 5**    *A YBM adult advisor knows when to exert adult wisdom.*                      **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**1 2 3 4 5**    *A YBM adult advisor has an ability to see wider perspectives beyond the confines of local settings for youth ministry and can creatively help youth to see those perspectives.*                      **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Resistance levels**

- 1 = Not resistant
- 2 = Somewhat un-resistant
- 3 = Resistant
- 4 = Somewhat resistant
- 5 = Very resistant

**Likelihood of using this skill**

- Very likely = 1
- Somewhat likely = 2
- Likely = 3
- Somewhat unlikely = 4
- Very unlikely = 5

**1 2 3 4 5** *A YBM adult advisor has the ability to see when immediate needs take precedence and can help youth perceive the importance of meeting those needs.* **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**1 2 3 4 5** *A YBM adult advisor knows that there are tons of resources available in the community and can bring those to the table if necessary and, more importantly, help guide and assist youth in the process of making use of those resources.* **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Resistance levels**

- 1 = Not resistant
- 2 = Somewhat un-resistant
- 3 = Resistant
- 4 = Somewhat resistant
- 5 = Very resistant

**Likelihood of using this skill**

- Very likely = 1
- Somewhat likely = 2
- Likely = 3
- Somewhat unlikely = 4
- Very unlikely = 5

**1 2 3 4 5**      *A YBM adult advisor knows when to step out of the limelight and let the youth have the glory.*      **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**1 2 3 4 5**      *A YBM adult advisor uses advanced people skills to promote and advocate for the YBM paradigm among adults and groups in settings for youth ministry.*      **1 2 3 4 5**

Comments about your chosen resistance level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Comments about the likelihood of using this skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Section D—Personal Data**

1. Please check the statement that best represents you:

- I am a youth (age 16-18)
- I am a young adult (age 19-29)
- I am an adult (age 30 and above)

2. Please check the appropriate box:

- I am a male.
- I am a female.

3. Please check the form of ministry which most clearly represents you (*see next page, too.*)

- I am a lay youth advisor in a local church setting.
- I am a youth minister (or youth pastor) in a local church setting.
- I am a Christian Education director (or something similar) in a local church setting.
- I am a teacher involved with youth Christian education in a local church.
- I am a pastor of a local church.
- I am a parent with one or more of my children in the youth ministry program within which I work.
- I serve in a youth ministry setting beyond the local church. What is it?

- 
- I serve in an Outdoor and Retreat Ministry setting for youth ministry.
  - I am a youth in training to become an adult youth advisor.

4. Please review the next two statements regarding follow-up research and check any that apply:

- Between September 25<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>, I am willing to go online to complete a survey offering more feedback regarding how I practice what I learned in the workshop in my specific ministry setting. I also give my permission for Galen to contact me with the online information as soon as it is available.
- I hereby give Galen permission to conduct a follow-up telephone interview with me approximately two months after today. He may call me to set up an appropriate appointment. My phone number is:  
Area code: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

- I understand that Galen will conduct a random sample of willing participants, and it's possible that I may not be called for a telephone interview.

Your name (*optional, but needed if you wish to participate in the follow-up telephone interview*).

---

*(Your signature here.)*

Thank you so much!

I appreciate your help and your feedback!

Galen



## Appendix C

### Follow-up Online Survey<sup>1</sup>

#### **Adult Leadership in Youth-based Ministry Galen E. Russell III**

Hello. Thank you for participating in the online portion of my research. Your answers, thoughts, and comments are very helpful to my project.

Recently, you participated in my “Adult Leadership in Youth-based Ministry” workshop in August. This workshop featured comparing adult-based youth ministry with the youth-based ministry paradigm and invited a shift to the latter. The workshop also explored the necessary skills adult advisors need to grow and sustain youth-based ministry in a variety of settings.

As a follow-up to the workshop in August, would you please take a few minutes to complete this survey? There are only 10 questions!

If you can’t finish the survey now, please come back later. I do ask that you complete it within two or three days of starting it. I appreciate that!

Thank you very much.

Galen

P.S. “NA” as a response means “non-applicable.”

I) Information about you

Please indicate the setting of youth ministry with which you are currently working.

**1. The setting for youth-based ministry I currently work with is... (Please check the one that most closely applies to your particular setting).**

- Individual-centered setting (one on one ministry at home, church, etc.)
- Meeting-centered setting (regularly scheduled gathering of youth)
- Event-centered setting (retreats, lock-ins, Youth Sunday, trips, etc.)
- Educational setting (Sunday school, Confirmation, Vacation Bible School, etc.)
- Outdoor and Retreat Ministry setting (summer camps, camp counselor, CIT, resource person, etc.)
- Urban youth ministry setting (recreational groups, street missions, etc.)
- Other settings? Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

<sup>1</sup> Only the data pertinent to advancing the thesis of this project are reported in the dissertation. The rest of the data is available upon request.

**2. What is your current position in the youth-based ministry setting? (Please check one most closely describes you).**

- I am a lay youth advisor in a local church setting.
- I am a youth minister (or professional youth pastor on staff) in a local church setting.
- I am a Christian Education director (or something similar) in a local church setting.
- I am a teacher involved with youth Christian education in a local church.
- I am a pastor of a local church.
- I am a parent with one or more of my children in the youth ministry program within which I work.
- I serve in an Outdoor and Retreat Ministry setting for youth ministry.
- I serve on a Conference or Regional youth ministry team
- I am a youth in training to become an adult youth advisor.
- I serve in another youth ministry setting. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

**II) The usefulness of the Youth-based ministry paradigm.** In this section, you are invited to share your thoughts about the youth-based ministry paradigm as it applies to your particular setting of youth ministry. Please circle the number representing your response, or check the box on the right if you do not know. Then, please share the reasons for your answer in the “My reasons” space below.

**3.** *The youth-based ministry paradigm is where adults utilize an ‘empowerment’ style and work with the youth as they do a large part of the planning and implementation for their events and activities.*

*This paradigm is practiced in my particular setting of youth ministry.*

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>I don’t know</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*This paradigm is accepted in my particular setting of youth ministry.*

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>I don’t know</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

My reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

---



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4. *In my particular setting of youth ministry, I have implemented youth-based ministry concepts at every opportunity.*

**Strongly agree**    **Agree**    **Neutral**    **Disagree**    **Strongly disagree**    **I don't know**  
**1**                    **2**                    **3**                    **4**                    **5**                   

My reasons: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. *What specific activities in your particular setting is youth-based ministry practiced?*  
 (please check one)

- |   |                              |                             |                                    |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ministry to an individual, i.e.<br>one on one, snack n chat, etc              | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Youth group meeting planning sessions   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Youth group meeting   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Retreat, lock-in, etc. planning sessions                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Retreats and lock-ins   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Youth Sunday planning sessions  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Youth Sunday  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Workshop planning   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Workshop  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Bible study   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Faith enrichment discussion groups  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Recreational event planning   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Recreational events   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Social activities, i.e., game night,<br>laser tag, mini golf, etc.            | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Service activities, i.e., mission trips,<br>service projects, etc.            | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Spiritual activities, i.e., youth worship<br>devotions, prayer meetings, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Sunday School class   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Confirmation class  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Vacation Bible School   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| Youth leadership seminars   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |

Other applicable activities? Please list on the blanks below:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6. *In my particular setting of youth ministry, to what extent have the following adults practiced the youth-based ministry paradigm? (If the youth-based ministry paradigm is not practiced by anyone, in your particular setting of youth ministry, including you, then please write "No one" in the comment box.)*

**A) You**

Not practiced at all	Practiced only sometimes.	Practiced most of the time.	Practiced all the time.	I don't know.	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**B) Professional youth minister on staff (if you are the youth minister, please do not answer.)**

Not practiced at all	Practiced only sometimes.	Practiced most of the time.	Practiced all the time.	I don't know.	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**C) Other adult advisors working with you in your setting (general consensus)**

Not practiced at all	Practiced only sometimes.	Practiced most of the time.	Practiced all the time.	I don't know.	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. *In my particular setting of youth ministry, to what extent have the following people affirmed the youth-based ministry paradigm?*

**A) Youth**

Not affirmed at all	Partially affirmed	Totally affirmed	I don't know	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**B) Pastor (if you are the pastor, please skip this one.)**

Not affirmed at all	Partially affirmed	Totally affirmed	I don't know	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**C) Associate/Assistant pastor (if you are the associate pastor, please do not answer)**

Not affirmed at all	Partially affirmed	Totally affirmed	I don't know	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**D) Christian Education Director or chair of CE committee, etc. (if you are this person, please skip this one.)**

Not affirmed at all	Partially affirmed	Totally affirmed	I don't know	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**E) President/moderator of Governing Board, i.e., Church Council, Consistory, Board of Directors, Trustees, etc. (if you are the president/moderator, please skip this one.)**

Not affirmed at all	Partially affirmed	Totally affirmed	I don't know	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- F) Governing Board itself (general consensus)**  
 Not affirmed at all  Partially affirmed  Totally affirmed  I don't know  NA
- G) Other adults in your setting of youth ministry or in the faith community NOT working with you (general consensus)**  
 Not affirmed at all  Partially affirmed  Totally affirmed  I don't know  NA
- H) Conference staff or appropriate person (if you are this person, please skip this one.)**  
 Not affirmed at all  Partially affirmed  Totally affirmed  I don't know  NA
- I) Other appropriate people in your setting of youth ministry or faith community? Please fill in the blank and indicate the appropriate level of response.**

Not affirmed at all  Partially affirmed  Totally affirmed  I don't know  NA

No one practices youth-based ministry, including me, in my particular setting.

**III) Identifiable Youth-based Ministry Adult Advisor Skills.** In this section, you are invited to share how you have practiced each of the fourteen skills listed below. Please check the appropriate response.

**7. "As an adult advisor in youth-based ministry I...**  
*...know what question to ask at the appropriate time."*  
 I do not practice this skill  I sometimes practice this skill  I practice this most of the time.  I practice this skill all the time.  NA

*...know how to build trust with youth."*  
 I do not practice this skill  I sometimes practice this skill  I practice this most of the time.  I practice this skill all the time.  NA

*...can sense when to let an individual youth explore new areas/unfamiliar issues and when to step in with adult wisdom gently guiding the youth back to center."*  
 I do not practice this skill  I sometimes practice this skill  I practice this most of the time.  I practice this skill all the time.  NA

*...know not to take over in most circumstances, even when the youth-led activity is floundering .”*

I do not practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I sometimes practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this most of the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this skill all the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	--	--------------------------------

*...know how to guide the group to ensure there is a maximum amount of participation.”*

I do not practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I sometimes practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this most of the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this skill all the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	--	--------------------------------

*...participate fully and actively in supportive and advisory ways .”*

I do not practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I sometimes practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this most of the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this skill all the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	--	--------------------------------

*...know what gifts and qualities to look for in youth which can benefit the individual, the meeting, event, or the program.”*

I do not practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I sometimes practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this most of the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this skill all the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	--	--------------------------------

*...I invite the youth to discern and utilize those gifts.*

I do not practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I sometimes practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this most of the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this skill all the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	--	--------------------------------

*...know when to exert adult wisdom.”*

I do not practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I sometimes practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this most of the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this skill all the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	--	--------------------------------

*... help youth to see wider perspectives for youth ministry beyond my particular setting.”*

I do not practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I sometimes practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this most of the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this skill all the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	--	--------------------------------

*... help youth perceive the importance of identifying and meeting immediate needs.”*

I do not practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I sometimes practice this skill <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this most of the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	I practice this skill all the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	--	--------------------------------

*... help guide and assist youth in the process of making use of the abundant resources available in the community.”*

I do not practice this skill	I sometimes practice this skill	I practice this most of the time.	I practice this skill all the time.	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*...know when to step out of the limelight letting the youth have the glory.”*

I do not practice this skill	I sometimes practice this skill	I practice this most of the time.	I practice this skill all the time.	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*...use my advanced people skills to promote and advocate for the youth-based ministry paradigm among adults and groups in my particular setting for youth ministry .”*

I do not practice this skill	I sometimes practice this skill	I practice this most of the time.	I practice this skill all the time.	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**IV) Your Permission, please.**

**8. Please read and check the first two boxes below. This gives me your permission to use the information you provide in this survey.**

- I am willing to participate in this study offering honest answers to the best of my ability and knowledge.
- I give Galen permission to use all the information I provide in this research study for the Doctor of Ministry course work and other appropriate uses.

Your name (optional)

---

(Your signature here.)

Thank you so much!

I appreciate your help and your feedback!

Galen



## Appendix D

### Follow-up Telephone Survey<sup>1</sup>

#### Adult Leadership in Youth-based Ministry

Hello. Thank you for participating in the telephone follow-up interview portion of my research. Your answers, thoughts, and comments are very helpful to my project.

Recently, you participated in my “Adult Leadership in Youth-based Ministry” workshop in August. This workshop featured comparing adult-based youth ministry with the youth-based ministry paradigm. The workshop also explored the necessary skills adult advisors need to grow and sustain youth-based ministry in a variety of settings.

As a follow-up to the workshop in August, I appreciate you taking the time to answer a few questions. May I please have your permission to record our conversation for the next 15-20 minutes or so?

Yes                       No

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of the interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### A) Information about you

Please indicate the setting of youth ministry in which you are currently working.

2. **The setting for youth-based ministry I currently work with is... (Please check the one that most closely applies to you).**

- Individual-centered setting (one on one ministry at home, church, etc.)
- Meeting-centered setting (regularly scheduled gathering of youth)
- Event-centered setting (retreats, lock-ins, Youth Sunday, trips, etc.)
- Educational setting (Sunday school, Confirmation, Vacation Bible School, etc.)
- Outdoor and Retreat Ministry setting (summer camps, camp counselor, CIT, resource person, etc.)
- Urban youth ministry setting (recreational groups, street missions, etc.)
- Another setting? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> Only the data pertinent to advancing the thesis of this project are reported in the dissertation. The rest of the data is available upon request.

3. **What is your current position in the youth-based ministry setting? (Please check one most closely resembling you).**

- I am a lay youth advisor in a local church setting.
- I am a youth minister (or professional youth pastor on staff) in a local church setting.
- I am a Christian Education director (or something similar) in a local church setting.
- I am a teacher involved with youth Christian education in a local church.
- I am a pastor of a local church.
- I am a parent with one or more of my children in the youth ministry program within which I work.
- I serve in an Outdoor and Retreat Ministry setting for youth ministry.
- I serve on a Conference or Regional youth ministry team
- I am a youth in training to become an adult youth advisor.
- I serve in another youth ministry setting. What is it? \_\_\_

4. Did you complete the online survey? Yes  No

5. In your particular setting of youth ministry, who has the power to decide about which paradigm is used? [another way to say it... “Who decides which paradigm of youth ministry is to be practiced?” Does any one person have such a responsibility? Group? Is it simply assumed? Who can change it?” Some options include...]

Pastor?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth pastor?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assoc/Assistant pastor?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Director of Christian Education?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governing board?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lead adult advisor?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult advisor team?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
A parent or group of parents?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
The congregation or faith community?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
The youth steering/planning team?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
The youth?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Someone else? \_\_\_\_\_  
 I don't know.

Please describe what you know about who makes the decisions in your particular setting of youth ministry?



6. After having experienced the workshops in August, what differences, if any, have you noticed in the way you practice youth ministry and why?

7. What factors, if any, concerning the youth-based ministry paradigm influenced you to reconsider the way you practice youth ministry? [let them talk!—possible options are...]

The benefits of youth-based ministry      Yes         No         somewhat  

The dangers of youth-based ministry      Yes         No         somewhat  

The biblical basis of youth-based ministry      Yes         No         somewhat  

Choice theory as a working psychology      Yes         No         somewhat  

The fourteen skills for adults      Yes         No         somewhat  

Other factors of the youth-based ministry paradigm? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Where have you encountered resistance to the youth-based ministry paradigm?

9. Where have you encountered support for the youth-based ministry paradigm?

**E) Your Permission, please.**

10. Please ask for permission to use the information you provide in this survey.

I am willing to participate in this study offering honest answers to the best of my ability and knowledge.

I give Galen permission to use all the information I provide in this research study for the Doctor of Ministry course work and other appropriate uses.

Thank you so much!

I appreciate your help and your feedback!

## Appendix E

### Thirteen Skills Adult Advisors Need for Youth-based Ministry

- 1) *An YBM adult advisor knows when and how to ask questions.*
- 2) *An YBM adult advisor knows how to build trust with individual youth.*
- 3) *An YBM adult advisor can sense when to let an individual youth explore new areas and unfamiliar issues and when to step in with adult wisdom non-coercively and gently guiding the youth back to center.*
- 4) *An YBM adult advisor knows not to take over in most circumstances, even when the youth-led meeting is floundering.*
- 5) *An YBM adult advisor knows how to guide the group to ensure there is a maximum amount of participation.*
- 6) *An YBM adult advisor participates fully and actively in supportive and advisory ways.*
- 7) *An YBM adult advisor knows what gifts and qualities to look for in youth which can benefit the individual, the meeting, or the program, and invites the youth to discern and utilize those gifts. (samples below)*
  - a. Love for God, faith, church, etc.
  - b. Warmth of personality, ability to make friends, etc.
  - c. Organizational skills
  - d. Willingness to try new things or voice new ideas
  - e. Shows integrity and maturity
  - f. Takes initiative
- 8) *An YBM adult advisor knows when to exert adult wisdom.*
- 9) *An YBM adult advisor has an ability to see wider perspectives beyond the confines of local settings for youth ministry and can creatively help youth to see those perspectives.*
- 10) *An YBM adult advisor has the ability to see when immediate needs take precedence and can help youth perceive the importance of meeting those needs.*
- 11) *An YBM adult advisor knows that there are tons of resources available in the community and can bring those to the table if necessary and, more importantly, help guide and assist youth in the process of making use of those resources.*

- 12) *An YBM adult advisor knows when to step out of the limelight and let the youth have the glory!*
- 13) *An YBM adult advisor uses advanced people skills to promote and advocate for the YBM paradigm among adults and groups in settings for youth ministry.*

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