THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELECTED MINISTRY FACTORS AND EFFECTIVE LOCAL CHURCH YOUTH EVANGELISM: A DELPHI STUDY

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Doctor of Philosophy

by
Dustin James Schadt
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APPROVAL SHEET

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELECTED MINISTRY FACTORS AND EFFECTIVE LOCAL CHURCH YOUTH EVANGELISM: A DELPHI STUDY

Dustin James Schadt

Read and Approved by:

[Signatures]

Hal Pettigrew (Chairperson)
Michael S. Wilder

Date April 23, 2010
To April,

my favorite person in the world.

Your love, support, and encouragement
have made this work possible. I love you,
and I cherish your example of Christlike
commitment and strength.

And to Jimmy Scroggins,

for believing in the power of Christ in me.
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<td>Annual Church Profile</td>
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<td>BYPU</td>
<td>Baptist Young People’s Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMB</td>
<td>North American Mission Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFM</td>
<td>Strategic Family Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Young Men’s Christian Association</td>
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<td>YWCA</td>
<td>Young Women’s Christian Association</td>
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PREFACE

I am grateful for the many people who made this work possible. My family and church have shown me great support over the course of my education. Dr. Hal Pettigrew and Dr. Michael Wilder have exhibited patience and wisdom in guiding my writing process. Dr. Tavis McNair has consistently been a strong source of input and help in this task. This dissertation has been more than an academic exercise. The Lord has used this writing and the doctoral process as an opportunity to shape and mold me to be more like Jesus.

Dustin James Schadt

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2010
CHAPTER 1
RESEARCH CONCERN

What does it take to reach young people with the gospel? In today’s diverse and rapidly changing youth culture, churches are presented with new opportunities and challenges to evangelizing youth. Young people are more connected than ever as four out of five teens carry a cell phone. This is a 40% increase since 2004 (Harris Interactive 2009, www.marketingcharts.com 2009, interactive/cell-phones-key-to-teens-social-lives-47-can-text-with-eyes-closed-6126/). On the other hand, Chap Clark explains that teens feel abandoned by their peers and more importantly, adults (Clark 2004, 180). Young people are both abandoned and connected at the same time. New challenges in the youth culture call for a new look at the best practices for evangelizing the next generation.

Introduction to the Research Problem

Despite the rapid growth in academic degrees, people, magazines, music, and companies dedicated to youth ministry, the strength of evangelism in local church youth ministries is low. For example, in the Southern Baptist Convention, 24,000 churches baptized zero young people in 2008 (Childress 2008, 1). Bo Boshers, youth ministry writer and student minister at Willow Creek Community Church, argues that too many youth groups are not outwardly focused. The gospel and seeing students come to know Jesus Christ is not a primary concern. Instead, many youth groups are characterized by excessive activity, visionless tradition, and an overwhelmingly inward focus (Boshers
Ross and Taylor, speaking about evangelism and youth ministry, argue, “We don’t need more programs. We need a strategy for youth that first allows them to respond to the gospel and then teaches them to share it with their friends” (Ross and Taylor 1997, 12). Steve Folmsbee proposes that one of the greatest needs of youth ministry in the twenty-first century is “ministries inviting students into a relationship with God through Jesus, baptizing them into the faith, and welcoming them on the journey to become like Jesus” (Folmsbee 2007, 22).

Many youth ministries are failing to reach even one young person with the gospel. However, some youth ministries are thriving in the area of youth evangelism. For example, 23,000 Southern Baptist churches baptized no young people in 2005, but in the same year one church in Texas baptized 653 youth, another in Arkansas baptized 135, and one church in Florida baptized 118 (Center for Mission Research 2005, 1). In 2008, a church in Houston baptized over 1000 young people. Numerous other Southern Baptist churches baptized upwards of 100 students in 2008, many of whom were in the same city as those who baptized zero young people. What is it about some youth ministries that make them effective in evangelizing young people with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

In 1997, researchers from the Huntington Institute conducted a study to gain a better understanding of how to effectively reach young people. David Rahn and Terry Linhart gathered a team of undergraduate students to look specifically at several common characteristics among youth ministries who were strong in peer-to-peer evangelism. The researchers asked local denominational youth leaders, educators, youth directors, writers, and parachurch ministry leaders for names of youth ministries that demonstrated strength in peer-to-peer evangelism over three or more years. The study used 109 churches as a
sample for the study (Rahn and Linhart 2000, 6).

Rahn and Linhart discovered that while many youth ministries struggled to reach young people, certain youth ministries and student leaders effectively reached unchurched students. The researchers identified several characteristics of youth ministries where peer-to-peer evangelism was strong. Rahn and Linhart concluded that evangelistic youth ministries dedicated effort toward prayer, exhibited a sense of calling to reach unchurched students, and consistently encouraged students to share the gospel among peer groups. This study shows that intentional and purposeful ministry efforts toward reaching youth can make a difference (Rahn and Linhart 2000, 118).

Rahn and Linhart’s study is helpful for understanding the characteristics and effectiveness of student peer-to-peer evangelism in the local church. However, Rahn and Linhart’s study focused specifically on the ministry factor of peer-to-peer evangelism and did not take a comprehensive look at all the ministry factors that go into effectively reaching students through the local church. Peer-to-peer evangelism can be a great evangelistic tool, but there are other factors such as evangelistic preaching and events that can also be used to draw youth into a relationship with Jesus (Rainer 1996, 21). Careful consideration should be given to the best ways to help churches that are struggling in the area of youth evangelism.

The Possibility of Reaching Students

What if a pastor of a church with little or no evangelistic activity among young people wants to change and begin to reach students? Consider the following fictitious scenario. John, a local pastor, has seen very few young people come to faith in Christ in his church. He also knows that hundreds of teenagers live in his community. Right
across the street from the church is a high school with nearly 2000 in attendance. John has a few adults in his church that want to reach young people with the gospel, but they do not know where to start. The pastor remembers Mike at his local denominational office who also has a burden for teenagers. He calls and asks for help, and with a smile Mike replies, “I have just the meeting for you. Meet us here at the office tomorrow at 9:00 am.” Puzzled, the pastor tries to imagine what Mike has in store for him.

The pastor shows up at the office with an open mind and heart. After pulling the doorknob and stepping into the office, the pastor sees a large group of nearly eighty men and women sitting in a room with Mike proudly standing at the front. The pastor curiously sits down. He looks around, sees men and women of different ages, and asks, “Who are all these people?” Mike responds and says, “These are the youth ministers at the top 100 churches in youth baptisms in the largest Protestant denomination in the United States. One of them saw over 600 youth baptisms in their ministry last year. All of them had over 30 baptisms in their ministry area. They are here to help you reach the young people around your church.”

Mike also informs John, “The youth ministers have agreed upon twenty ministry factors that seem to be effective in reaching teenagers. They have also ranked them in order of importance. Furthermore, they want to share their heart with you and tell you about their love and passion that drives their ministries to reach students. You can hear their heartbeat for reaching young people.” John’s eyes widen and his spirit lifts as he listens for hours at the strategies, programs, and passion in the youth ministers’ experiences with reaching young people.

The previous scenario reveals the intent of the research. Seminaries,
denominations, and local church leaders need the insight from local church youth ministers who are effectively reaching young people. To understand the big picture of what is effective in reaching students in the twenty-first century, the youth ministers of effective evangelistic youth ministries would have the best perspective. Youth ministers have a grasp on their churches’ context of ministry. They have developed relationships with churched and unchurched students. They have held numerous events, programs, and efforts at reaching young people. By collecting and analyzing the opinions of youth ministers doing effective evangelism among young people, this researcher could help those who care about young people move toward successful evangelism.

**Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between selected ministry factors and effective local church youth evangelism. Youth baptisms served as the indicator of effective youth evangelism and the research was gathered from the perceptions of youth ministers in effective evangelistic youth ministries in the Southern Baptist Convention.

**Delimitations of the Study**

The study was delimited to the top 100 Southern Baptist churches in youth baptisms as reported on the 2008 Annual Church Profile. There are over 44,000 Southern Baptist Convention churches (www.lifeway.com 2009, lwc/mainpage/0,1701,M%253D200901,00.html). It was not feasible for this researcher to conduct a sufficient study among all Southern Baptist churches in the United States. The amount of time and resources needed to conduct a nationwide study were not available. For the purposes of this research, the study was delimited to the most evangelistic Southern
Baptist Convention churches, as indicated by youth baptisms, in 2008.

The study was delimited to youth ministry. The study did not focus on age groups outside of 12 to 17 years old. Rather, the study was delimited to students who were 12 to 17 years old during 2008.

The study was also delimited to evangelism with youth baptisms as the indicator of evangelism. Although it is a worthwhile task, a study on evangelistic decisions alone is difficult to quantify. Ross and Taylor further explain the rationale for using baptisms as an indicator of effective evangelism:

Baptists acknowledge that baptism is not essential for salvation. However, it is a clear indication of new converts' willingness to be obedient to Jesus' command to follow Him... Churches who establish a high regard toward baptism are more likely involved in evangelism on a daily basis. Campus evangelism that is leading youth to Jesus Christ falls short if the strategy does not disciple those teenagers and assimilates them into a local body of believers. (Ross and Taylor 1999, 11)

Furthermore, the scope of the study does not include student retention after baptism or numerical youth ministry growth.

Finally, this study was delimited to those Southern Baptist churches who reported the needed information on the Annual Church Profile. There may have been other churches who had the level of youth baptisms needed to be a part of the study. However, since not every church reports on the Annual Church Profile, this study was delimited to those who actually filed their numbers with Lifeway Research.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions served as a guide for the study:

1. What ministry factors are the most effective in evangelizing youth ages 12 to 17?

2. What reasons do youth ministers give for indicating certain ministry factors as effective in evangelizing youth?
3. What correlation exists, if any, between the demographic information of youth ministers of effective evangelistic youth ministries and the number of youth that are baptized in their ministries?

**Terminology**

The following definitions help clarify terms in their usage in the study:

*Annual Church Profile.* The Annual Church Profile, or ACP, is distributed to and collected from churches within the Southern Baptist Convention in order to understand demographic and numerical trends within Southern Baptist churches. Churches voluntarily report pertinent data on the profile via online survey or written copy. Baptisms and Sunday school by age group, worship service attendance, and giving are all reported to the Southern Baptist Convention, which then makes the information available for churches and research projects (Annual Church Profile 2008).

*Baptism.* According to the *Baptist Faith and Message* of 2000, baptism is:

The immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. (Baptist Faith and Message 2000)

This researcher does not equate baptism with salvation nor does this researcher equate evangelism with baptism. Evangelism and subsequently salvation in the life of a new believer is a separate event from that of baptism. Baptism is a person's public proclamation of faith in Christ. Baptism is also a declaration to the principalities that Satan is ultimately defeated in the life of that believer through identification with the death, burial, and victorious resurrection of Jesus.

*Delphi.* The Delphi method is an exercise in group communication among a
panel of geographically dispersed experts (Adler and Ziglio 1996). The goal of a Delphi study is to develop a consensus on a topic or problem among a group of experts in a given field. Delphi studies allow several experts to provide input on a topic without allowing each participant’s input to hamper diversity and creative contribution (Custer, Scarcella, and Stewart 1999, 12).

Effective evangelistic youth ministry. For the purposes of this study, an effective evangelistic youth ministry is one that falls in the top 100 in the number of youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention as reported on the Annual Church Profile in 2008.

Evangelism. Chuck Lawless defines evangelism as “being, doing, and telling the good news of Jesus Christ, depending upon the triune God to draw His own unto Himself and His church” (Lawless 2001, 2). Again, Ross and Taylor’s argument for baptisms as an indicator of the presence of evangelism is helpful for understanding the focus of the study. Evangelism must be not only about winning converts but also leading them to become a part of the local church body. Baptism is the first step of obedience in the life of a new believer.

Ministry factors. Ministry factors are the variables within a ministry that work toward the overall purposes and goals of the ministry. Ministry factors may encompass principles and practical outcomes of those principles. The term ministry factors is purposely a broad term used to encompass any one of a number of factors indicated by youth ministry professionals as effective in reaching students with the gospel. A ministry factor can be a strategy, passion, program, or even specific people who contribute to effectiveness in local church youth evangelism. Peer-to-peer evangelism is one example
of a ministry factor. Rahn and Linhart identified peer-to-peer relationships as effective in reaching young people (Rahn and Linhart 2000). Another example of a ministry factor is evangelism during a summer camp, retreat, or other off-campus youth activities (Bergler and Rahn 2006).

**Youth.** Throughout the study, the terms “youth,” “young person,” “teenager,” and “student” are used synonymously to refer to a person between the ages of 12 and 17. On the Annual Church Profile, churches were asked to indicate “the number of youth, 12-17 years of age, who were baptized” (Annual Church Profile 2008). These ages are typical in describing young people involved in youth ministry.

**Youth minister.** The term youth minister in this research refers to a person in a local church whose responsibilities include “overseeing and correlating the total education program for youth” (Zuck and Benson 1978, 182). The term youth minister can be used synonymously with minister of youth, youth pastor, student pastor, student minister, minister of middle school, minister of high school, middle school minister, and high school minister.

**Youth ministry.** Mark A. Lamport, writer and professor of youth ministry, defines youth ministry as:

The purposive, determined, and persistent quest by both natural and supernatural means to expose, transmit or otherwise share with adolescents God’s message of good news which is central to the Christian faith. Its ultimate end is to cultivate a life transformation of youth by the power of the Holy Spirit that they might be conformed to the revealed will of God as expressed in Scripture, and chiefly in the person of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Lamport 1996, 62)

**Procedural Overview**

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist
Convention was contacted to gather a list of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms for the year 2008. This researcher also contacted Lifeway Research to gain further information on the churches included in the top 100. This researcher included as a part of the sample for the study the churches in the top 100 in youth baptisms that reported the following data on the Annual Church Profile in 2008: total baptisms, number of resident members, primary worship service attendance, total Sunday school, youth Sunday school, and overall church giving.

This researcher contacted the youth ministers of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms that met the inclusion criteria and invited them to participate in a three-round Delphi study hosted on the Internet. A Delphi study is unique in that it allows participants to voice their opinions and perceptions without the bias of the input of other participants in the study. This type of study synthesizes the collective opinion of a given group for forecasting or reaching agreement in qualitative measures (Sackman 1975, 8). The three rounds of the study were conducted in a 9-week period.

In the first round of the study, each youth minister was directed to an Internet site explaining the research protocols. The round began with the youth minister providing demographic and youth ministry information such as youth ministry tenure, average number of hours in their workweek, age, and education level. This researcher reviewed significant relationships between the demographic and ministry information with effectiveness in local church youth evangelism. The youth ministers’ demographic data is also helpful in painting a picture of the characteristics of this group of youth ministers. Definitions for major terms such as “ministry factors” and “evangelizing” were discussed. The youth ministers finished the first round of the study by responding
to the question, “In your experience, what are the ministry factors you consider to be effective in evangelizing young people?” Youth ministers had the freedom to answer the question with an open-ended response.

Before implementing the second round of the study, this researcher reviewed the answers from round 1 to determine the unique individual ministry factors submitted by the respondents. Each of the ministry factors were summarized into a one-sentence description. This researcher then compiled all of the individual ministry factors into a randomly generated list for use in round 2. Every unique factor was included as a part of the second round of the study.

The second round of the study directed youth ministers to the Internet site that again explained the research protocols. The second round listed the individual ministry factors indicated by youth ministers from round 1. After reading each ministry factor, the youth ministers were asked to rate the importance of that ministry factor in youth ministry evangelism on a 4-point scale. Before implementing the third round of the study, this researcher reviewed the responses from round 2 and determined the top 15 ministry factors indicated by the youth ministers. This researcher then compiled a list of the most highly ranked ministry factors for use in round 3.

The third and final round of the study directed youth ministers to the Internet site to complete the round 3 survey. Each of the ministry factors in the top twenty from round 2 were listed and respondents had the opportunity to rank-order the factors from most important to least important. This researcher then compiled all of the rank-ordered answers and determined the rank-ordered consensus among the group.

The third round of the study also included follow-up interviews with youth
ministers. The final question of the third round asked the participants if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. The answers to the follow-up interview helped add breadth and depth to the final rank-ordered list of ministry factors. Interview answers were analyzed using Creswell's data analysis spiral.

**Research Assumptions**

1. The presence and frequency of youth baptisms is a viable indicator of a level of effectiveness in youth evangelism.

2. The youth ministers participating in the research answered all questions in an accurate manner.

3. Ministry factors have a relationship with the presence and frequency of youth evangelism.

4. The youth ministers in the study are experts in the area of local church youth evangelism.

5. The youth ministers in the study have related backgrounds, provided helpful input, and worked to revise judgments for the purpose of attaining a consensus.
CHAPTER 2
PRECEDENT LITERATURE

The following chapter is a review of the literature that is relevant to the research. This chapter will provide a foundation for the research and will assist in analysis of the findings. This researcher will also demonstrate the need for the particular nature of this research.

Theological Basis

Before looking at the historical, environmental, and developmental factors surrounding evangelism and teenagers, certain theological points must be discussed. Jay Kesler suggests:

Your personal theology will have an effect on everything you do in youth work. It will influence the type of message you bring, the response you expect, the progress of the youth among whom you minister, your method of counseling, your attitude toward others, and how you measure results. In short, all we do relates to what we actually believe. (Kesler 1983, 23)

The following discussion will point to theological topics pertaining specifically to the conversion of teenagers.

Evangelism

A proper review of evangelism is foundational to this research. The literature base provides many different definitions of evangelism. The following discussion will review the New Testament language regarding evangelism as well as provide a definition for evangelism. The importance of evangelism will also be discussed.
Language

The English word *evangelism* comes from the Greek word *euaggelidzo*, which is transliterated in English as “preach the gospel.” *Euaggelidzo* is derived from the word *euaggelion*, which means “gospel” (Terry 1997, 2). Evangelism is literally the process of gospelizing. More broadly, *The Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* defines *euaggelion* as:

> The glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom. After the death of Christ, the term comprises also the preaching of (concerning) Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God. (Strong 1996, G2098)

Several words are used to describe the act of proclaiming the gospel message. *Kerussien* (to ‘proclaim’), *euaggelizeshai* (to ‘tell good news’), and *marturien* (to ‘bear witness’) all describe the act of speaking about the good news (Green 2003, 76).

*Martureo* (verb) and *marturion* (noun) are both used in Scripture when individuals provided witness to what Christ did in their lives. The Greek word *martyr* means literally “a witness.” *Matheteusate* is the Greek verb used in Matthew 28:19 which is transliterated as “make disciples” (Reid 1998, 11). James Barr wisely notes in his book *The Semantics of Biblical Language* that several words help make up the one biblical concept of proclamation (Barr 2004, 201).

The English word “gospel,” translated from *euaggelion*, is of great importance as it appears 97 times in the New Testament (Schwandt and Collins 2006). Literally the word means “good news” or “evangel” and does not mean just any good news, but rather the basic message of salvation (Terry 1997, 4). Mark Dever provides an account of what the good news is not. In his book *9 Marks of a Healthy Church*, Dever recounts:

1. The good news is not simply that we are okay.
2. The good news is not simply that God is love.
3. The good news is not simply that Jesus wants to be our friend.
4. The good news is not simply that we should live right. (Dever 2004, 77-90)

Citing 1 Corinthians 15, Alvin Reid defines this “good news” as “the specific message that Jesus died and rose again” (Reid 1998, 10).

**Definition**

Definitions for evangelism are as diverse as the number of books written on the subject. Lewis Drummond defined evangelism as:

> A concerted effort in the power of the Holy Spirit to confront unbelievers with the truth about Jesus Christ and the claims of our Lord with a view to leading unbelievers into repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and, thus, into the fellowship of His church so they may grow in the Spirit.”

(Drummond 1992, 9)

As a more concise summary, D. T. Niles defined evangelism as “one beggar telling another where to get food” (Niles 1951, 96). A single, clear, all encompassing definition is necessary for summarizing the New Testament teaching on evangelism.

Chuck Lawless’ definition will serve as a summary point of evangelism for the purposes of this research. Lawless defines evangelism as “being, doing, and telling the good news of Jesus Christ, depending upon the triune God to draw His own unto Himself and His church” (Lawless 2001, 2). Evangelism is more than good deeds or simply inviting people to church. Evangelism encompasses a gospel-centered lifestyle and proclamation of the gospel message. Ultimately, evangelism relies upon God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit to change the hearts of men with the message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Importance

It is clear from Scripture that evangelism is important. Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples the call to evangelize and “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19-20). Luke, in the book of Acts, recounts the words of Jesus telling his disciples that they will be witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). This call to evangelize is an all-inclusive imperative to preach the gospel, the good news of salvation in Jesus, to all people. The Baptist Faith and Message states clearly, “It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others” (Baptist Faith and Message 2000).

Evangelistic Mandate

As an institution, the church is charged with the evangelistic mandate as seen in Matthew 28:18-20:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Jesus tells his disciples that it is their responsibility to go and make disciples of all nations. Mark 16:5, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:21, and Acts 1:8 also point to the task given to believers to take the gospel to all people. The early leaders of the church took this call seriously and stopped at nothing to preach the gospel (Green 2003, 106-15).

The Lausanne Committee defines a people group as “the largest group through which the gospel can flow without encountering significant barriers of acceptance or
Young people represent a massive people group for those seeking an opportunity to carry out the evangelistic mandate. Scroggins also affirms that evangelism among students must be seen as a cross-cultural missionary effort (Scroggins 2003, 7).

Smith and Denton describe the most prominent religion among teens in America as “moral therapeutic deism” (Smith and Denton 2005, 162-63). Many young people see God as a divine moral guide who helps when life presents challenges. Barna further reveals that 6 out of 10 young people believe that a good person can earn eternal salvation through good deeds. Over 50% would claim that Jesus committed sins while he was on earth (www.barna.org 2008, teenagers.asp). Moral therapeutic deism is a long way off from biblical Christianity.

The church, taking the evangelistic mandate seriously, must make an intentional effort to reach young people with the gospel. Edwin Starbuck, over a hundred years ago, found that “conversion does not occur with the same frequency at all periods in life. It occurs almost exclusively in the years between ten and twenty five” (Starbuck 1899, 28). Pastors, youth ministers, and lay volunteers should see and feel the mandate to go out and reach a nation of ripe young people who need Jesus. While challenging, the task of reaching students in local middle and high schools can provide churches an opportunity to see many young people make a connection with the Savior.

**Regeneration**

The goal of evangelism should be regeneration and conversion. Without regeneration and conversion, a person will be eternally separated from God, delivered unto the consequences of their own sin. Therefore, a proper understanding of
regeneration and conversion is necessary for understanding evangelism.

God is holy and perfect. Man has sin. God cannot allow any sin into his presence. Therefore, a supernatural work is necessary to restore the relationship between God and man. Regeneration is the act where the Holy Spirit renews a person from the inside out. Regeneration is not an act of the human will to try harder to be a better person nor is it a life-long process of growing to be a better Christian. Rather, Grudem defines regeneration as “a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us” (Grudem 1994, 699). Warfield explains regeneration as

the redemptive renewal of humans on the basis of a restored relationship with God in Christ, and presents it as involving “a radical and complete transformation wrought in the soul (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23) by God the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 3:5), by virtue of which we become ‘new men’ (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10), no longer conformed to this world (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9), but in knowledge and holiness of the truth created after the image of God (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10). (Warfield 1952, 351)


Paul, in instructing his young church leader on the work of Christ, explains:

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He [God] saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. (Titus 3:4-6)

Strong’s lexicon reveals that the word regeneration, or paliggenesia in Greek, has connotations of a renewal or restoration of life after death. In ancient use, the word was used to describe cities that were broken down and built back by another entity (Strong 1996, G3824).

All three members of the Trinity participate in regeneration. God the Father kindly sent the Son. John 3:16 explains simply that God gave his one and only Son. The
Son then lived a perfect life on earth, died on the cross as a substitution for the punishment of man’s sin, and then rose from the dead, defeating death and making eternal life possible. The Holy Spirit then washes a man’s sin away and renews his heart. The new believer is brought into the relationship of the persons of the Trinity in a magnificent way.

Regeneration is entirely a work of God. The supernatural process of regeneration takes place in a man’s heart while man plays no active role. John 1:13 says that believers are “children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. Decision, will, or motives play no role in the great regenerating work of God in man. Ezekiel 36:26-27 also reveals the work of God in man in the process of regeneration when God says, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” It is God who causes the new birth of regeneration.

It is not clear in Scripture exactly how regeneration takes place. Naturally, a man is hopeless in his lost condition. In a sermon on John 3:1-10, John Piper argues firmly this point:

Before the new birth happens to us, we are spiritually dead. We are morally selfish and rebellious. And we are legally guilty before God’s law and under his wrath. When Jesus tells us that we must be born again he is telling us that our present condition is hopelessly unresponsive, corrupt, and guilty. (Piper 2007)

The process of movement from unresponsiveness, corruption, and guilt to the point of new life in Christ is a mystery. In John 5:24, Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” The event of crossing over takes place
miraculously, mysteriously, and instantaneously in a person’s life. Mark Dever explains that “Scripture presents us as needing to have our hearts replaced, our minds transformed, our spirits given life” (Dever 2004, 113).

**Conversion**

It is best to understand conversion closely with regeneration. Regeneration is an act of God on the inside of a person. Conversion is subsequently what happens on the outside after regeneration has taken place. A person who converts will exhibit a new inner life brought about by God’s regeneration of their heart. Grudem says of regeneration, “All areas of life are changed. A regenerated individual should expect a new love for God and his people (Matt 22:37-40), a heartfelt obedience to his commands (John 14:15), and the Christlike character traits Paul calls the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)” (Grudem 2005, 92-93).

Conversion happens when a person is regenerated by the work of the Holy Spirit and that person then repents of sin and places faith and trust in Christ. There is a turn from sin and self toward Christ and his redemptive work on the cross. The word *convert* means literally “to turn.” When used as a participle, convert describes a person who has turned (Vine, Unger, and White 1985, 128).

In the ancient world, conversion was not a common theme. One would either add a particular deity to existing religious beliefs, or identify him or her with one of the recognized gods. Roman religious policy was rather tolerant on religious beliefs. However, regardless of religious belief, loyalty was required from all subjects to Rome and the divine Augustus. This was a problem for Christians as the new believers were unwilling to submit to any other god but the God of Scripture (Green 2003, 21).
Christians were heavily persecuted for refusing to bow down to the authorities in the land. For an individual to accept the claims of Christ, their experience was a conversion; a total commitment and transformation to a new way of thinking and living.

Perhaps the most commonly known account of conversion is that of the apostle Paul. Acts 9 outlines the experience of Paul where he had recently finished hurling threats at followers of Christ. In an instant, Jesus appeared to Paul in a light from heaven. Paul (formerly known as Saul) soon put his trust in Jesus for salvation. Through his conversion, Paul was transformed from hater and persecutor of Christians to a devoted Christ follower.

Studying the conversion of the apostle Paul, Richard Peace developed a three-phase understanding of conversion in his book *Conversion in the New Testament*. He explains that in phase 1, a person sees himself for who he really is. In phase 2, a person has a turning experience where they encounter Jesus and submit to him as the Lord, the Son of God. In phase 3, a person’s faith commitment is translated into a new life experience with a different inner dynamic as well as a different outer lifestyle and calling (Peace 1999, 99-100).

Peace is wise to focus on the apostle Paul as an example of one who converted. However, using the apostle Paul’s experience as the sole determining factor of forming an understanding of conversion is not the best method. Luke 23:43 shows that the thief on the cross made a genuine profession of faith in Jesus as he was told he would be in paradise after his death. The thief did not experience the same process as the apostle Paul, but it is difficult to say he was not converted.

This study examined the relationship between ministry factors and effective
local church youth evangelism. The goal of evangelism should be conversion (Scroggins 2006). This study examined effective local church youth ministries that see young people regenerated and converted. Regeneration and conversion are separate acts from baptism. Regeneration and conversion encompass the inward transformation that takes place when a person places their trust in Christ. Baptism is the outward symbol of that regeneration and conversion that is made possible through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

**Secular Research on Conversion**

The amount of research in the area of religious conversion is significant. Those who focus their studies solely on Christian conversion may be surprised to review the breadth of literature written on conversion as a social, psychological, and even physical phenomenon. The studies look mainly at why and how people are recruited to religious groups, and why and how they decide to engage with the religious groups (Swatos 1998, 120). These studies will provide an understanding of the major theories of conversion and provide a basis and comparison point for the conclusions of this research.

**Lofland and Stark**

One prominent work on conversion and religious recruitment is the "world-saver" model of John Lofland and Rodney Stark. Lofland and Stark found seven characteristics that explain how people are recruited to and participate in particular religious organizations. The seven characteristics are divided into two categories with the first being the predisposed characteristics of the pre-convert and the second being the situational factors that surround the conversion experience. Lofland and Stark studied the accounts of conversion to the Unification church, or those more commonly known as the Moonies.
They found three predisposing characteristics of the pre-convert. First pre-converts experience enduring, acutely felt tensions in their lives. Second, pre-converts desire to gain a religious problem solving perspective. Third, pre-converts then self-identify as a religious seeker.

Lofland and Stark also found that four situational factors surround the conversion experience. First, pre-converts usually reach a turning point when old lines of action no longer work. Second, relationships between pre-convert and group members develop. Third, pre-converts weaken relational ties with non-group members. Fourth, pre-converts exhibit strong and consistent relational interaction with group members (Lofland and Stark 1965, 870).

Lofland and Stark’s model has been widely used in studies on conversion. Much criticism has also mounted on their study. Lofland and Stark studied only one religion. A more comprehensive study would have looked at the converts to a number of religions. Furthermore, Lofland and Stark chose an obscure religion for their study. The Unification church was in its infancy at the time of their study and little was actually known about the religion. The findings of the study would have more significance with a greater number and breadth of sample.

Lofland and Stark’s study is helpful for looking at the general factors that may influence a person to convert. The study is helpful in differentiating between the predisposed characteristics of the pre-convert and the actual conversion experience. This researcher’s target is to decipher what goes on in the actual conversion experience in the life of teenagers. Other studies have aimed at the psychological factors of the pre-converts while this research is aimed at these environmental ministry factors surrounding
Several of Lofland and Stark's points parallel New Testament accounts of conversion. The apostle Paul experienced an acutely felt tension on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). Simon entered into a relationship with Jesus through a strong relational tie with his brother Andrew (John 1:41). The Ethiopian eunuch identified himself as a seeker to Phillip (Acts 9:26-40).

**Long and Hadden**

Two main categories of conversion theories arose in the early 1980's. Some suggested that conversion should be seen as a form of brainwashing, in that new converts are usually tricked, forced, or manipulated into the conversion experience. The brainwashing thesis portrays converts as more passive and unsuspecting victims of forces that manipulate them into a new way of life (Wright 1991, 140). Another theory of conversion suggests that social drift, or a gradual move of association from one group to another, is more common in those who make new religious commitments (Anderson and Taylor 2006, 467).

With these two theories in mind, in 1983 Theodore Long and Jeffrey Hadden proposed a new approach to understanding conversion. They suggested that since conversion was primarily a socialization process, there could be individuals who experienced either form of conversion, via brainwashing or social drift. Long and Hadden explain that the differences in categories existed due to inadequate theoretical constructs and differing researcher perspectives (Long and Hadden 1983, 13).

Long and Hadden's perspective on conversion helped to broaden the understanding of conversion. Researchers tended to polarize the process by which people
convert. They concluded that those who seemed to be converts may only have been imitating the social norms of new groups.

**Wilson and Dobbelare**

Wilson and Dobbelare found that the majority of religious conversion experiences occurred in the context of interpersonal relationships. Studying the Nichiren Shoshu converts in Britain, the researchers found that only 6% of the recent converts encountered the religion outside of pre-existing relationships. 94% of the new adherents met the movement through their normal social interaction (Wilson and Dobbelare 1994, 50). David Snow also presents the argument that existing social networks are the most common bridge to those entering new religious movements (Snow 1980, 432).

**Lorne L. Dawson**

Dawson’s book, *Cults and New Religious Movements: A Reader*, is a strong work in reviewing the process of conversion and recruitment to new religions. Dawson provides a helpful summary of research on religious conversion by synthesizing the breadth of empirical data in seven key points. He lists the points roughly in the order of the degree of supporting data with the first as the most supported:

1. Recruitment to new religions happens primarily through existing social networks
2. Affective ties are important to new recruits
3. Intensive interaction with the new group is pivotal to the recruitment process
4. Involvement with new groups is strongly correlated with having fewer and weaker ties outside of the new group
5. Involvement is strongly correlated with having fewer and weaker ideological alignments
6. The active search for religious answers to one’s problems is correlated with conversion
7. Positive value from the new organization is a motivating factor for potential members (Dawson 2003, 119-20)
Joel Allison

Joel Allison’s insights from a 1969 study on the religious experience of incoming divinity students presents an intriguing perspective on adolescent conversion. Allison studied students who indicated they experienced some form of religious conversion. The conclusions from the study centered upon the students transition into adulthood. Allison claims that the students’ conversion experience “serves to alter a perception of the actual father as weak, ineffective, or absent by supplying instead an internal representation of a strong and principled substitute paternal figure with clear values and firm judgments” (Allison 1969, 23). While Allison does not claim that all adolescents’ conversion experiences are a result of father/child issues, this study does show that reputable scholars understand conversion as a possible outlet for challenging developmental transition.

Election

Grudem defines election as “an act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure” (Grudem 79, 2005). Verses such as Ephesians 1:12, Acts 13:48, 2 Timothy 1:9, and Revelation 17:8 all point to the idea that God chose who would be saved before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1 serves as a foundational chapter on the doctrine of election. Paul tells the church in Ephesus that God “chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Ephesians 1:4). Paul further affirmed this point saying that “God predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:5).

Klooser proposed a six-point summary of the doctrine of election:
1. Election is a sovereign, eternal decree of God.
2. The presupposition of God's eternal decree of election is that the human race is fallen; election involves God's gracious rescue plan.
3. Election is "election in Christ"; election involves rescue from sin and guilt and receiving the gracious gifts of salvation.
4. Election involves both the elect's salvation and the means to that end.
5. Election (as well as reprobation) is individual, personal, specific, particular.
6. Finally, the ultimate goal of election is the glory and praise of God. (Klooster 371-72, 2001)

Klooster wisely notes that election is not simply an inadvertent choice by God. Rather, the doctrine of election ties the sovereign choice of God with the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Through Christ's work, the elect may be rescued from their sin.

The question then arises whether or not people really have a choice in coming to faith in Christ. If God has already chosen beforehand who will be saved, then why should people worry about others coming to faith in Christ? A discerning theologian will also call to mind passages that bring the aforementioned into a tension. If God has chosen before the foundation of the earth who will be saved, man must still make confession of Christ to be saved. First Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9 reveal that God wants all men to be saved and come to faith. Romans 10:9 calls for men to confess Christ and believe in him in order to be saved. In Joshua 24:15, men are called to choose whom they will serve.

The various verses of Scripture that point both to God's sovereign election and man's choice must be held in a tension. God's sovereignty and human responsibility are not a contradiction. The two points must both stand in a proper view of election. By viewing these verses in a tension, with both groups holding veracity, a person may see that God works in the lives of people to bring them to faith and men make a real choice to trust in Christ.
Reflection on Election

When looking at the relationship between ministry factors and evangelism with teenagers, the goal is not to decipher a recipe for salvation. Rather, it must be understood that God chooses to work in the hearts of men to bring them to faith and people do make real decisions to trust in Christ. Christian Endeavor, a turn of the twentieth century youth emphasis organization, began out of a providential work of God. B. B. Taylor saw the work of God in the organization when he said, “The Christian Endeavor movement is a child of Providence but few, if any, who understand its spirit, methods, aims, and results will deny or even question” (Taylor 1895, iv). There is no perfect scenario or recipe for salvation. However, through consultation with youth ministry experts, this study shows that there are ministry factors that share a relationship with effective local church youth evangelism.

Ministry Factors in the Early Church

This research will use the term ministry factors to refer to the variables within a ministry that work toward the overall purposes and goals of the ministry. This research looked specifically at the ministry factors that share a relationship with effective youth evangelism in the local church. This researcher will outline the ministry factors that were prevalent in the early church in doing evangelism. The following section will also aid in this study by revealing several ministry factors that may now be in use in effective evangelistic youth ministries. This researcher will use Michael Green’s points on the methods of evangelism from his book Evangelism and the Early Church as a template for this discussion.
Synagogue Evangelism

The synagogue was a starting place for evangelism among the Jewish people (Green 2003, 301). The apostle Paul was even invited, after his conversion, to come and address those gathered at the synagogue. As seen in Acts 13:5, Barnabas and Saul “proclaimed the Word of God in the Jewish Synagogues.” Preachers in the synagogue were able to tailor their message to the hearers and present a compelling argument that Jesus Christ was truly the Messiah.

Roland Allen points out four characteristics of preaching in the synagogues. First, preachers were able to relate well to the people in attendance. They expressed sympathy, concern, and love for those who heard the message. Second, they spoke with boldness and courage as they presented the challenging message of the gospel. Third, the preachers had great respect for the hearers. Fourth, the preachers had strong confidence in the truth and power of the gospel (Allen 1962, 62).

Open-air Preaching

Open-air preaching was also a common method of evangelism in the early church. Following the example of Jesus, the disciples made preaching to whomever would listen a priority in their ministry. Open-air preaching can be seen in the New Testament in the areas of Jerusalem, Samaria, Lystra, and Athens. Open-air sermons often led to breakout discussions in smaller numbers of people. Those attending with the preacher were able to draw from the points of the message and call hearers to decision (Green 2003, 303).

Teaching Evangelism

R.C. Worley, in his book *Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church*,...
argues that there is no clear cut distinction between the work of an evangelist and the work of a teacher in the early church (Worley 1967, 59). Paul made it a point to teach the people in Ephesus during his stay. He did not present the gospel, leave the area, and hope for the best. Instead he made an intentional effort to instruct his listeners over time on the essentials of the faith. Green points out that Paul’s teaching provided strong intellectual content paired with an enthusiastic spirit (Green 2003, 316).

**Testimony Evangelism**

Testimonies were another important method of early evangelism. In the face of apparent martyrdom, followers of Christ announced their faith with boldness. Green explains, “There is no denying the zeal and the sense of discovery which marked the witness of the early church in both their public and their private testimony, in both their written and their spoken word” (Green 2003, 317). The early church evangelists were so passionate about their hope in Christ that they could not help but share their experience.

**Home Evangelism**

A family’s home became a prime field for evangelism in the early church. Composed of husband, wife, children, and slaves, the home formed a comfortable and hospitable environment for the exchange of dialogue about the gospel. As was the case of Cornelius in Acts 10, if the husband became a Christian, all those within the home often followed. In the first three centuries, Christian homes were making their mark on the children brought up in them. Polycarp and Marcion were both raised in a Christian home. There is no mistaking the impact of the faith of parents on children in the home (Green 2003, 318-21).
Personal Evangelism

Personal encounters allowed close dialogue between early evangelists and their listeners. Green reveals that Pantaenus led Clement of Alexandria to Christ, and Justin led the early church father Tatian to Christ. Visiting was another effective means of personal evangelism in the early church. Ananias was influential in Paul’s life when he made a visit to the house where Paul was staying. Ananias, formerly expressing fear about seeing Saul the persecutor, went beyond his comfort zone and visited Paul in love. In a home environment, Ananias went as far in Acts 9:17 to address Saul as “brother.”

Review of Ministry Factors in the Early Church

The evangelistic methods in the early church may have common characteristics with evangelistic methods present in youth ministries today. From a review of the literature, several connections can be made between ministry factors in the early church and contemporary youth ministry. First, the early evangelists went to the synagogue, which was a place for spiritual seekers. They used common understandings of Jewish faith to share the message of Christ. This type of approach may be echoed in contemporary youth ministries. A field for evangelism may be the modern day coffee shop that can also be a place for the exchange of ideas on contemporary issues, philosophical beliefs, and spiritual things.

Second, preaching was a central thrust of the evangelistic efforts of the early church. Whether formally in the synagogue or informally in open-air environments, the spoken truth of the gospel became a powerful evangelistic tool. Third, the connection between teaching and evangelism cannot be ignored. Paul did more than present a once in time message. He instructed people about Jesus, the church, and love. Many have
accused youth ministry of separating evangelism and discipleship. Jones in his book *Postmodern Youth Ministry* presents a helpful point when he says, “When we look at the long and arduous journey of the original disciples, their battles with confusion, doubt, and denial, journey seems like a more appropriate metaphor for faith than signing a sales agreement” (Jones 2001, 133). The early church leaders made it a point to follow-up their preaching with teaching about growing in Christ.

Fourth, testimonies were a major part of the conversion process in early church evangelism. The new converts of the early church could not help but share the hope they had in Christ. Youth ministers may do well to engage and equip their young people to share their own story of coming to know Christ. Fifth, the home may be an untapped field for evangelizing young people. Young people in the early church came to know Christ often when the parent made a commitment to Christ. Youth ministers may partner with their adult ministers and senior pastors in reaching entire families with the gospel. Fifth, personal evangelism was common in the early church. The relational nature of teenagers paired with the reality of the universal and compulsory school system creates an excellent environment for personal evangelism.

**History of Evangelism and Youth Ministry**

Evangelism has always been a driving force in youth ministry. Significant youth ministry organizations were developed primarily for the purpose of evangelizing young people. The YMCA, Young Life, Word of Life, and Youth for Christ were all started to reach a growing youth population with the gospel. Unfortunately, many local church youth ministries do not echo the vision of evangelizing young people. In 2008, 24,000 Southern Baptist Churches did not baptize one young person (Childress 2008, 1).
Significant research has been conducted on adolescence, but very little work has developed on evangelizing adolescents. G. Stanley Hall’s well-known work *Adolescence* brought the subject into mainstream language. Joseph Kett, in 1977, identified key eras of transition in the life of a teenager. In 1992, Mitterauer wrote his work, *A History of Youth*, in which he looked specifically at the sociological formation of the period of adolescence. Four years later in 1996, Palladino provided an overview of the emergence and growth of adolescence in America in her book *Teenagers*. In 1999, Thomas Hine wrote *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager* in which he outlines both the historical context and contemporary portrait of youth. More recently, Nakkula and Toshalis published their work *Understanding Youth*, which takes a look at the modern day teenager.

Although the scholarly work on the emergence of adolescence is significant, the work on the subsequent birth of youth ministry has been modest. One of the first studies on youth ministry came in 1917, when Frank Erb wrote *The History of the Young People’s Movement*. Erb detailed the birth of adolescence and the subsequent impact on society. However, the book said very little in terms of adolescent spirituality. A span of seventy-five years went by before Mark Senter wrote *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry*. Senter placed contemporary youth ministry in context as he argued that a vast change was on the horizon for the field of youth ministry. Mark Cannister, in the book *Starting Right*, also provided an account of the development of youth ministry.

Though the amount of scholarly work on the history of youth ministry is not vast, patterns of the life of youth ministry have emerged that provide a helpful framework for understanding the history of evangelism and youth ministry. This history will
incorporate Jimmy Scroggins’ template and descriptive titles of Mark Senter’s three eras of youth ministry history to aid in this discussion (Scroggins 2003, 8). The three eras in the history of youth ministry will be referred to as the era of Sunday school and the YMCA’s (1825-1875), the era of Christian Endeavor and the Denominational Youth Agencies (1881-1925), and the era of the parachurch revolution and professional youth work (1935-1987) (Scroggins 2003, 3).

Youth Ministry before 1785

Prior to the eighteenth century, the evangelistic efforts of the church were not directed specifically toward youth. It was not that ministering to youth was unimportant before this time, but rather adolescence as a period of life was not popularized. Prior to the twentieth century, there were only two major life stages; childhood and adulthood (Cannister 2001, 81). Mark Terry offers the following on the evangelization of youth:

The church paid scant attention to young people throughout most of church history. The church did not make special efforts to evangelize young people. Instead, the church evangelized young people in the same contexts as adults. Concerned pastors spoke with the youth of their communities just as they did the older flocks. At the camp meetings fiery evangelists preached the gospel to young and old alike. (Terry 1994, 173)

Several of the reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century also shared a concern for young people. Martin Luther realized the need to reach young people in Christian education. Luther once said:

I pray all of you for the sake of God and of youth, not to think slightingly of educational problems. For it is a serious and great matter, at the heart of Christ and all mankind, that we help and advise the young people. (Traber 1897, 227-28)

The Puritan pastor Cotton Mather also formed an alliance of young people dedicated to the concepts of seeking God and giving oneself to Christian service (Strommen 2001,
The Enlightenment

The Age of Enlightenment also shaped the future picture of youth ministry. Before the Enlightenment, theology was considered a chief source of authority. With an emphasis on reason and the scientific method, the enlightenment pushed the authority of Scripture out of the public realm and presented a dilemma for parents who wanted to raise their children in a spiritually nurturing environment. Senter comments, “Biblical Truth was reduced to truth. No longer did theology define the sciences. It gradually became just another discipline of study” (Senter 1997, 107). This new wave of thinking brought fresh challenges to parents who desired outlets for spiritual encouragement in the lives of their children.

Conclusions from Youth Ministry before 1785

Engaging youth who are outside the church is not just a contemporary idea. Even in the days of Francis Clark and Christian Endeavor, some evangelistic heartbeat can be seen. Cannister explains, “Christian Endeavor was open to ‘seekers’ interested in exploring the Christian faith, but was by no means reaching out to the heathen of secular society” (Cannister 2001, 84). The inclusion of the “heathen of secular society” transitioned from a tolerated inclusion to a driving emphasis with the parachurch revolution.

For the most part, young people simply transitioned from the hands-on care of their parents during childhood directly into adulthood. High school was not a reality for most families and youth did not experience large amounts of free time outside of their
normal family interaction. Without an external mechanism for age segregating youth, there was no need for a dedicated youth ministry effort. Instead, youth were most likely ministered to as a normal part of the church body.

Churches before 1785 may have missed out on an incredible opportunity for evangelism. While adolescence was not a popularized period of life, young people did face developmental issues as a part of their cognitive, behavioral, and physical development. Developmental theories developed during the twenty-first century may not fully generalize to the eighteenth century. However, people between the ages of twelve and seventeen did face developmental changes that deserved special address. Steve Patty explains that:

Ministry relationships and strategies should be qualitatively different in correspondence with the qualitatively different stages of adolescent development. Knowing well the general stage-characteristics of students, along with the particular needs in one’s own youth group, will be a potent combination for providing strategic ministry. (Patty 1997, 84)

Church leaders in the eighteenth century would have done well to tailor specific ministry efforts toward reaching a developmentally unique period of life.

*The Sunday School Movement and the Young Men’s Christian Association (1825-1875)*

This researcher will outline the Sunday school movement in England and America, the growth of the YMCA and YWCA, and the impact of the industrial revolution. This researcher will also provide conclusions from this period of youth ministry.

*The Sunday School Movement in England*

Robert Raikes was a wealthy English philanthropist who had a vision to see
young people engaged in activities that were helpful rather than harmful. His first attempts at realizing that vision came in 1780 when he gathered a group of underprivileged children in Gloucester, England to form his first Sunday school. While Christian education was not his primary objective, students did read the Bible, memorize catechisms, and attend worship services (Reed and Prevost 1993, 197-98).

Raikes' work grew as his Sunday school groups multiplied and spread. The efforts of the movement spread specifically to teenagers in 1798 when the groups opened to young ladies (Sholund 1968, 60). By his death in 1811, Raikes had over 400,000 young people gathering across England for his meetings. Raikes had a heart for the young as evidenced in his wishes for those attending his funeral:

As a proof of his love for children, each child who attended his funeral was presented with a plum cake and a shilling, in accordance with his will. During more than thirty years of his life this man had given freely of his time, talents and money. (Benson 1946, 123)

It would not be long before Raikes' same vision to engage young people would spread to the United States.

The Sunday School Movement in America

William Elliot of Virginia used Raikes’ model as a template when he opened the first Sunday school in the United States in 1785. Elliot’s Sunday schools quickly began to grow and spread all over the country. In an effort to provide organization, oversight, and growth to the Sunday school, the American Sunday School Union was formed in 1824. Upon the opening of the Sunday school to teenagers in 1825, the organization certainly succeeded in growing the movement as over 30,000 professions of faith were made throughout the Mississippi Valley (Cannister 2001, 79). However, the evangelistic fervor behind the Sunday School Union soon dissipated as the newly berthed
Sunday school’s vision for reaching students declined. Before long, little evangelistic activity marked the work and groups reverted to merely reciting memorized verses (Senter 1992, 90).

Dwight L. Moody’s Sunday school in Chicago was an exception to the decline in evangelistic activity in Sunday school. Moody had a desire to reach the young people in his community with the gospel. Because of an excess of teachers, the Sunday school director at this church would not assign Moody young people to teach. Therefore, Moody went out and won the loyalty of young boys on the street. On the Sunday after hearing that he would not be given a class to teach, Moody gathered eighteen children he had recruited from the street to form his first Sunday school. By 1859, Moody’s group had grown from zero to over 600. In just four years, Moody ministered to over 1500 students in his Sunday school (Moody 1900, 55-61).

The YMCA and YWCA

The Sunday school movement was not the only ministry effort aimed at engaging young people in spiritual connections. In the mid 1800’s, George Williams became the architect of The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), which purposed to give Williams’ morally challenged London coworkers an opportunity for Christian interaction. It was not long before the YMCA spread to the United States into New York and ultimately to women (through the YWCA) in Boston.

The YMCA and YWCA further delved in foreign missions with the Inter-Collegiate YMCA Movement and the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance. Robert Wilder and Robert Speer made a nationwide effort to enlist young people in missions work. Wilder and Speer’s work would come to be known as the Student Volunteer
Movement for Foreign Missions (Borgman 1987, 64).

**The Industrial Revolution**

The Industrial Revolution was one of the greatest forces at work in the formation of adolescence. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the workforce of America gradually moved from a rural focus to a more industry and manufacturing emphasis. The introduction of the steam engine into American industry caused further growth across the country.

Before the revolution, youth were given a more safe and honorable place in society as they worked on family farms. Campolo notes, “Young people were major contributors to the economic well-being of their families, and they were well aware of their value” (Campolo 1987, 38). The new factories brought jobs into communities but initially paid low wages. With financial stress, families were forced to send younger members to work in the mostly poor conditions of industrial manufacturing.

A significant shift occurred toward the end of the revolution when wages began to rise to the level where a working parent could support their children without having to send them out to work. Young people were no longer a part of the economic engine of the family. Instead, youth had new significance, freedom, resources, and presence. The Industrial Revolution also brought new wealth into the hands of believers who in turn were able to dedicate greater resources to Christian work.

**Conclusions from the Sunday School Movement and the Young Men’s Christian Association**

Passionate would be a word to describe the efforts of those who desired to reach young people from 1825 to 1875. Even without a distinct youth culture, men such
as Robert Raikes, George Williams, and Dwight L. Moody stopped at nothing to make a
difference in the lives of young people. These men did not start with a program or
facility. Rather, they sought to reach the young people around them by engaging them in
a Christian fellowship group. Sparing not even his health, Moody would sometimes
minister non-stop on Sundays from early morning until late at night with only a few
 crackers and cheese to eat (Moody 1900, 58).

Christian Endeavor and the Rise of Denominational Youth Work (1881-1925)

This researcher will outline the development of Christian Endeavor and the rise
of denominational youth work. This was a time of formation that would shape the form
of youth ministry for a century to come.

Theodore Cuyler

Theodore Cuyler began what could arguably be one of the first local church youth ministry groups. He essentially brought the YMCA model into the local church when he gathered a group of forty young people at the Brooklyn Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church (Strommen 2001, 28). Senter argues that Cuyler is underestimated in his influence on the early form of youth ministry (Senter 2004, 31). Sholund would go as far as at to say Cuyler’s ideas “prevail today in most young people’s meetings in Protestant churches across the nation” (Sholund 1968, 62). Contemporary youth ministry could hold strong resemblances to Cuyler’s form of ministering to youth.

Francis Clark

Francis Clark was the pastor of the Williston Congregational Church in
Portland, Maine when he felt the need to reach young people. He frequently gathered
youth at his house for fellowship and saw young people’s receptivity to spiritual things. He believed that, “the life of Christ and His teachings appeal especially to the young: how natural, almost inevitable, it is for a young person to be drawn to Christ and to accept him as Pattern and Guide when He is winsomely presented” (Clark 1916, 14). Clark borrowed from the principles of Cotton Mather and Theodore Cuyler when he penned what was to become the Six Essential Characteristics of the International Christian Endeavor Society. The characteristics were similar in format and content to prior Christian societies dedicated to reaching out to young people. It is difficult to overstate the influence of Christian Endeavor on early and even modern youth ministry.

**Denominational Work**

Christian Endeavor groups spread to a variety of denominations. While the mission of the movement remained the same, the distinctiveness of each church ministry brought diversity. Strommen points out that Lutherans and Baptists never officially participated in Christian Endeavor, but rather chose to start their own organizations (Strommen 1988, 26).

Southern Baptists claimed that the youth-directed efforts of the time did not effectively plug young people into church. In the fear of losing denomination loyalty, Southern Baptists dedicated effort toward forming groups that would turn out to be very similar in structure to Christian Endeavor. By 1895, an office was formed to support the work of the newly established Baptist Young People’s Union and a general secretary was hired to meet organizational needs. A full-time youth director was appointed in the Third Baptist Church of St. Louis, Missouri in 1937 modeling a new opportunity for those seeking a profession in youth ministry (Beasley 1988, 60-62).
Southern Baptists were not alone in the creation of distinct denominational youth organizations. The influence of Christian Endeavor extended to most of the denominations who in turn formed groups that closely resembled Francis Clark’s model. Strommen points out, “Separate and deeply denominational though these organizations were, it was Christian Endeavor that had inspired their creation” (Strommen 2001, 29).

The Creation of a Youth Culture

In his book Reaching a Generation for Christ, Senter proposed that youth ministry did not come into being until the late eighteenth century (Senter 1997, 107). In 1875, the Supreme Court made a decision that would become a mile marker on the road to the creation of a youth culture in America; they voted to allow public funds to be spent on high school education. By 1918, every state in the union had compulsory attendance laws requiring students to attend high school through sixteen years of age. This move made high school a universal life experience for young people. Young people across the country now experienced a period of time that was separate from the direct supervision of their parents.

Also at the turn of the nineteenth century, the legal age of marriage increased (from 12 to 18 in the United States) and young people were delayed further from entering adulthood (Cannister 2001, 82). Biological factors also contributed to the prolonging of adolescence. The age of puberty was gradually falling and young people faced an even longer period of time where they possessed the biological capability of having children but lacked the sociological ability to start a family (Davis 1996, 27). These three factors, the universal, compulsory high school, the rise of the legal age of marriage, and the falling age of puberty all contributed to forming a new, unique experience for nearly
every young person in America -- adolescence. At the same time, enlightenment
philosophy, scientism, theological liberalism, sophisticated materialism, and the impact
of the Scopes Monkey trial all changed the look and approach of youth ministry
(Borgman 1987, 66). With this emerging period of life and changing secular culture
came new ways of doing youth ministry evangelism.

*The Parachurch Revolution (1935-1987)*

At the turn of the twentieth century, conversion research was growing and
Edwin Starbuck, one of the premier researchers in the subject, noted, “This much we can
say with certainty, that spontaneous awakenings are distinctly adolescent phenomena”
(Starbuck 1899, 62). An evangelistic spirit was growing in youth ministry. Two young
men set out in the early 1900’s to preach the gospel across Great Britain. After several
successful crusades, the evangelists noticed a trend in their converts: youthfulness. The
trend in the age of the converts led Fredrick and Arthur Wood to focus on young people
with a series of Young Life Campaigns, which quickly reached thousands. Around the
1930’s, several other evangelistic movements were stirring.

*A New Wave of Ministries*

Percy Crawford developed the Young People’s Church of the Air in
Philadelphia in 1931, while Paul Guiness had a desire to reach the youth of Canada.
Lloyd Bryant started The Christian Youth Campaign of America in 1929 in an effort to
reach youth in New York City. In 1935 the name was changed to The Association of
Christian Youth in America and the ministry was restructured after the Young Life
model. The Miracle Book Club, by 1938, had planted over 1000 clubs across the country
in an effort to evangelize young people and see new converts in turn become evangelists
Young Life

Jim Rayburn sought to introduce adolescents to the idea that faith in God could be fun, exhilarating, and life changing (www.younglife.org/aboutyounglifehistory.htm). Rayburn’s Young Life strategy met the new demands of a youth culture by taking the message of salvation to the students. Instead of inviting teenagers to church or youth group, Rayburn called on men and women to go out into students’ culture. Senter comments on Rayburn’s heart:

As much as any, he wanted young hearts to hear the gospel, but more than most, he was willing to go to any extreme in order that the opportune time and situation might be provided. He wanted each young person in America to be relaxed and happy enough to enjoy a special meeting with Jesus of Nazareth. (Senter 1987, 69)

Rayburn’s approach represented a drastic change in youth ministry evangelism. Past pioneers in youth ministry called for youth to make great Christian commitments and dedicate themselves to a creed. Rayburn and others sought to provide environments to introduce people to Christ.

Word of Life

Evangelist Jack Wyrtzen started the Word of Life ministry in the 1940’s. For years, Wyrtzen shared his faith wherever and with whomever he could. However, it was not until he was given air time at a New York City radio station that he quit his job
selling insurance in order to devote full-time effort toward his ministry. Bible clubs, camps, and the Word of Life Institute all flourished under Wyrtzen's 50 years of leadership (Word of Life 2010, www.wol.org/about/jack).

**Youth for Christ**

Youth for Christ also rose up in the 1940's with large youth evangelistic rallies. Eight men came together to form the initial leadership team of Youth for Christ with Billy Graham, an evangelist, as their first full-time staff person. Borgman comments on Youth for Christ saying, “Skeptics labeled it a passing fad, and critics found its excess and mistakes, but Youth for Christ became and continues to be a mighty force for youth evangelism around the world” (Borgman 1987, 70).

**Conclusions from the Parachurch Revolution**

The parachurch revolution further reveals that historically, the main thrust of youth evangelism has come from outside the local church. Rayburn and Wyrtzen were parachurch ministers who grew their ministries out of a desire to see young people come to faith in Christ. The large evangelistic youth rallies of the mid 1900’s were mostly conducted by large-scale youth organizations such as Word of Life, Youth for Christ, and Young Life. Very little is mentioned in the history of youth ministry of the role of the local church in evangelizing youth. Tony Jones echoes this point when he says,

> In the middle of the twentieth century, parachurch outreach ministries like Youth for Christ and Young Life blossomed because the church shirked its duty. In some ways, the boom of professional, church-based youth ministry grew as an embarrassed reaction to the success of those ministries. Is it heresy to say that if the church were doing its job Youth for Christ and Young Life would be put out of business? (Jones 2001, 116)

A large research gap exists in discovering the role of the local church youth ministry in
Two specific ministry factors for reaching young people arose out of this period of youth ministry. First, the evangelistic youth event became a common theme among parachurch ministries. Youth for Christ dedicated time, money, and effort toward gathering large groups of teenagers with the intent of sharing the gospel with them. Second, evangelistic campus ministry began to take shape as Jim Rayburn made Young Life a bridge between the local high school and the church. Instead of waiting for students to come to the church, Rayburn developed a strategy to connect with young people in their own familiar environment.

**Current Youth Ministry**

Several youth ministry trends are notable in the twenty-first century. This researcher will outline contemporary writers who have distinct perspectives on evangelizing teenagers. Current trends and people in twenty-first century youth ministry will also be discussed.

**Voddie Baucham**

Author and speaker Voddie Baucham created a large stir in the youth ministry world when he began to declare that youth ministry is unbiblical. Influenced by David Allen Black and individuals within Vision Forum Ministries, Baucham now campaigns heavily for a new model of reaching and discipling teenagers. Baucham makes several arguments against contemporary youth ministry:

1. There is no clear biblical mandate for the current approach.
2. The current approach may actually work against the biblical practice of family discipleship.
3. The current approach is not working. (Baucham 2007a, 179-90)

Dropout rate statistics serve as a validating point for Baucham’s point that youth ministry
is not working. Conversely, Baucham calls for parents to assume the role of spiritual
shepherd in their children’s lives rather than allow age-segregated youth ministry models
to usurp the parent’s role. Baucham’s argument echoes a prior statement from Yaconelli:

The youth-leader-as-savior approach, extrapolated from parachurch ministries like Young Life and Youth for Christ, has generally been destructive for all concerned. Alone and segregated from the church community, youth ministers are soon exhausted. Expected to be walking icons of the risen Christ, they are not allowed to be fallible, and their own need for Christian nurture goes unmet. Left as the sole mediator between the adult and youth congregations, youth ministers quickly become isolated, lonely and spiritually alienated. And even with the most well-intentioned ministers, the bait-and-switch strategy rarely works—teenagers often accept the youth minister as their personal savior but are rarely able to transfer their devotion to Jesus Christ. (Yaconelli 1999, 450)

Baucham also argues for a new emphasis in local church youth evangelism. Evangelism, according the Baucham, is not about getting a young person to simply walk an aisle and sign a card, only to later leave the faith. Rather, evangelism is about making disciples. In Baucham’s view, parents should be the ones who teach their children how to be a true disciple with a faith that lasts through and beyond the college years (Baucham 2007a, 186-87).

A discipleship-based approach to youth ministry is not a new idea. Cannister points out that there has always been a tension between evangelism and discipleship in youth ministry. Pointing to Horace Bushnell, Cannister contrasts the views of Horace Bushnell, with a more discipleship focused model, and contemporary Evangelical revivalists who insist that conversions are the number one goal in youth ministry (Cannister 2002, 59). As the influence of Baucham and others continues to spread, youth ministers will continue to develop new ways to equip fathers and mothers to disciple their own children (Wright 2007, 13).

Baucham presents a strong point in encouraging parents to disciple their own
children. However, Baucham may take his position too far by creating an imbalance between parents discipling their own children and the church engaging a youth culture with the gospel. Baucham argues that youth ministry has dropped the ball on evangelizing young people. However, Baucham proposes no plan in his book for reaching teenagers who are not a part of a strong family. This leaves millions of teenagers across America with no access to a church that will do whatever it takes to reach them with the gospel.

_Tony Jones_

Several youth ministry writers have commented on the need for a change in typical methods of evangelizing youth. Writers have criticized “bait and switch” methods of evangelism where some type of hook is used to draw people into a meeting with the intent of later presenting an evangelistic message (Mittelberg and Hybels 2000, 231). Tony Jones and others call for a more missional and communal approach to build creative and relational ways for people to encounter Jesus. Table 1 contrasts Jones’ understanding of typical methods of youth evangelism with Jones’ recommendation for effective youth evangelism. Mark Driscoll in his book _Radical Reformission_ also proposes that the typical large group presentation of the gospel may not be the most fruitful method of evangelism. He says:

> Those who walk forward, raise their hand, pray a prayer, sign a card, or indicate by some other means their decisions are deemed converts and told to assimilate into churches. Whether they were truly converted is debatable, and the odds of their assimilating into churches are uncertain, unless they already have trustworthy friendships with someone in a church who can serve as tour guide, introducing them to the language, values, and systems of the church. (Driscoll 2004, 67)

Others are also proposing that there is a different, more effective way to do
Table 1. Jones’ perception of typical youth evangelism compared with his proposed methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Method</th>
<th>Jones’ Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism: mainly cognitive</td>
<td>Evangelism: transforming the whole person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation occurs when individuals come to Christ</td>
<td>Salvation occurs when individuals encounter a community of believers and trust Christ in connection with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation is simple; reductionistic; accept Jesus into your heart</td>
<td>Salvation is complex, mysterious, and difficult to define</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation can be lived out as an individual</td>
<td>“No one can be a Christian middle school student without the support of other Christians” (Jones 2001, 122).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency; take kids to a big event and allow another person to mass minister to everyone</td>
<td>Evangelism is best in a one-on-one context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propositional</td>
<td>Story-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of trickery</td>
<td>Authentic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best understood as a line; point by point through propositional truths</td>
<td>Best understood as a web; doctrines are intertwined in a number of biblical stories, excerpts of poetry, wisdom, and narrative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth evangelism. Jim Hampton of Nazarene Youth International argues for a “two road” approach to youth evangelism in a postmodern context. One road of evangelism calls for what he calls “in-time” conversions where a youth is presented the gospel and in an instant makes a decision to trust Christ. The second road is more of a community-based method that he explains as “come experience life here [church community], and as you do, you'll find salvation” (Hampton 37, 2000).

**Sunday School**

Outreach through the Sunday school is popular among youth ministries. The FAITH strategy is one such method that calls for Sunday school groups to visit and
engage prospects in a propositional outline of the gospel. Participants meet once a week over a twelve-week period. Those trained in FAITH visit newcomers to the youth ministry in an effort to share the gospel and connect the person with the Sunday school group (www.lifeway.com, faith/whatsnew.html). Jeff Hessinger, student pastor at First Baptist church of Temple Terrace, Florida, said, “Over the past six years I have seen the FAITH Sunday school evangelism strategy focus our ministry’s attention and energy on the Great Commission” (Hessinger 199, 25).

**Campus Ministry**

Campus ministry is another evangelistic tool that is prominent among youth ministries. Barry St. Clair’s book *Penetrating the Campus* gives a step-by-step process for reaching students in local schools with the gospel. He lays out eleven points in the process of making a difference on school campuses:

1. Know the school
2. Detail the school
3. Attend school events
4. Study the school yearbook
5. Subscribe to the school newspaper
6. Interview students
7. Interview teachers
8. Visit the hangouts
9. Define their basic motivations
10. Serve a need
11. Look for ways to meet the need (Clair 1993, 2-36)

Campus missionaries may also be a part of an effective evangelistic youth ministry. Campus missionaries are students who see the campus as a mission field. These students are equipped, educated, encouraged, and empowered to reach the lost students in their school (Childress 1999, 87-98).
Evangelistic Ministry Events

Evangelistic ministry events have typically been held as an effective means for reaching young people through the local church. In his book *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*, Doug Fields reveals that an evangelistic program can be a healthy tool for reaching students. A strong evangelistic event, according to Fields, will incorporate four aspects: a positive environment, an element of fun, student involvement, and an understandable message (Fields 1998, 117).

Camps and Retreats

Experiences away from the church and school, according to a study by Bergler and Rahn, are highly effective at reaching young people. After interviewing seventy students who recently made professions of faith, Bergler and Rahn concluded that the intentional relational environment of a camp or retreat is conducive for seeing young people come to faith in Christ (Bergler and Rahn 2006, 71). Conversion research shows that individuals may be more conducive to make a new religious commitment in a setting outside of their everyday life.

Prayer Ministry

Prayer ministry can be the empowering factor in youth ministries who reach young people. Gina Howard feels strongly that prayer is the vital factor in effective evangelism among teenagers. She says that prayer helped move their youth ministry to a renewed focus and success in reaching young people. They used prayer walking, intercession for the lost, and specific prayer meetings as an intentional effort to bring their requests before the Lord (Howard 1997, 111-17).
Conclusions from Current Youth Ministry

Tony Jones argues that confrontational, large-group, propositional-based evangelistic methods are now ineffective in reaching teenagers (Jones 2001, 118). Jones also argues that propositional based evangelism outlines are not the biblical method for sharing Christ (Jones 2001, 127). Some would argue that through the influence of postmodern culture, students simply do not make spiritual decisions in the contexts that worked in the past. However, Jones’ position seems to run contrary to models of evangelism proposed in Scripture.

In Romans 10, the apostle Paul writes to the Romans and tells them that those who call upon the name of Jesus will be saved. He further explains that no one can call upon the name of Jesus unless they have heard of him, and no one can hear of Jesus unless someone preaches to them. Preaching, according to the Scriptures, will allow people to come to faith in Jesus. It would be difficult to interpret “preaching” in this context as anything other than speaking the truth of the gospel to another person.

Also, in Acts 2, Peter preaches to a large crowd gathered around him. With the large crowd in mind, Peter stands and presents a point-by-point gospel presentation. After the sermon, Peter gives an invitation and calls for the individuals in the crowd to repent and be baptized. The effect of his preaching, through the work of the Holy Spirit, brought 3000 people to accept the message of the gospel and be baptized. The new believers may have eventually entered into a community of believers, but they began their journey with individual decisions after hearing a propositional gospel presentation.

Youth ministers must continually seek the best practices for their own ministry context. However, there are timeless methods of reaching people that transcend
socioeconomic and geographic lines. Paul says in Romans 10:14 about non-believers, “How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?” At some point, an unbeliever must be presented the gospel message in order to be saved. This may, in some contexts, be best conducted in a one-on-one encounter. However, a discerning youth minister will understand that the task of presenting the gospel to groups of students, who are ready to listen, is a timeless method.

**Fowler’s Stages of Development**

James Fowler’s book *Stages of Faith* is a foundational work in the field of faith development. Fowler is the professor of theology and human development at Emory University where he focuses on understanding how people develop in their spirituality. Fowler borrows from the work of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lawrence Kohlberg in looking at the psychological development across the lifespan (Kirst-Ashman and Zastrow 2004, 34). Fowler’s work is particularly helpful for the purposes of this research in showing how teenagers make religious commitments.

According to Fowler, faith is a universal phenomenon. All people express faith is some sort of greater power or deity. Fowler’s work is more concerned with how people believe (structure) more than what they believe (content). His concern is not to help discern the particular theology of those developing their faith. Rather, Fowler’s work is helpful in understanding the process of a person’s interaction with their faith (Fowler 1995, 120).

In stage 0, primal faith is exhibited in infancy. There is a predisposition to truth that is based upon the baby’s relation with the people around him. In stage 1, those in early childhood show intuitive/projective faith and they are strongly influenced by
images, stories, and symbols. Stage 2 moves young people to a mythic/literal faith where faith can capture life-meaning in stories, but is still limited to concrete thinking. A young person with mythic/literal faith will understand God in terms of moral reciprocity. Basically, God sees their actions and if they are acting morally, then God is happy with them and on their side. In stage 3, adolescents and post-adolescents exhibit synthetic/conventional faith with coherent beliefs and values. Teenagers begin to adopt belief systems of their larger community and see God as less of a scorekeeper of their personal morality and more of a personal friend.

Young adults next move into stage 4, individuative/reflective faith, where they begin to establish their own religious identity that is marked by individual conscious thinking about assumptions and practices of the group. Their faith is privatized and becomes a part of their own identity. In stage 5, those in their midlife experience conjunctive faith where they become aware of limitations of self and achieve greater awareness that leads to humility in beliefs. Stage 6 is the height of faith development. Adults who reach this stage practice universalizing faith where they reach the pinnacle of understanding their faith and develop a sense of communion with the greater power (Fowler 1995, 117-214).

**Conclusions from Fowler's Stages**

Fowler's synthetic-conventional stage proposes that adolescence is a period of life where young people's faith is conformed to the identity of the group in which they interact. It may be the case that the close association of non-Christian youth with Christian youth will draw the non-Christians to conform to the beliefs of Christianity. This would be consistent with the findings of Rahn and Linhart who found that peer-to-
peer evangelism, in close relationships, is effective in reaching young people (Rahn and Linhart 2001, 27).

Table 2 places the synthetic-conventional stage in context across the lifespan of spiritual development. According to Fowler, young people between the ages of 12 and 17 conform to their environment. Fowler said, "The central meaning behind the terms synthetic and conventional; conventional, in that it is seen as being everybody's faith system or the faith system of the entire community. And it is synthetic in that it is nonanalytical" (Fowler 1995, 154). The faith community surrounding an adolescent is therefore greatly important in their spiritual life.

Table 2. Fowler’s stages of faith development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>Intuitive-predictive</td>
<td>Egocentric, becoming aware of time. Forming images that will affect their later life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>Mythical-literal</td>
<td>Aware of the stories and beliefs of the local community. Using these to give sense to their experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>Synthetic-conventional</td>
<td>Extending faith beyond the family and using this as a vehicle for creating a sense of identity and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Early adult</td>
<td>Individuative-reflective</td>
<td>The sense of identity and outlook on the world are differentiated and the person develops explicit systems of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Conjunctive</td>
<td>The person faces up to the paradoxes of experience and begins to develop universal ideas and becomes more oriented toward other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Universalizing</td>
<td>The person becomes totally altruistic and they feel an integral part of an all-inclusive sense of being. This stage is rarely achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The individuative-reflective stage is also helpful for understanding how
teenagers and young adults develop in their faith. Young people who enter this stage begin to truly own their faith. They begin to transition out of mere conformity to the faith community and learn to embrace their individual understanding of their values and beliefs (Fowler 1995, 182). A local church can help promote this process by surrounding the individual with a loving and open environment for healthy dialogue about the personal changes taking place. Also, a youth ministry can reach out to those who are beginning to make their faith more personal and individual. As young people begin to ask questions about their prior faith experience, wise youth ministers can help build bridges for the individual to trust in Jesus.

Fowler’s work supports the idea that those who desire to reach young people through the local church must make the church environment conducive to unchurched students. The faith community can help an unchurched student see an identifiable set of biblical beliefs and values to which they may be compelled to conform. In John 13:35, Jesus told His followers, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Youth ministries that exhibit a genuine sense of love for Christ and one another will present to non-believers a clear entryway into a relationship with Jesus.

Fowler’s work must also be studied and integrated cautiously. Fowler’s work is not focused on the God of the Scriptures. It is merely an attempt to show the process of faith development for any religion. Fowler may also downplay the overall working of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life. For example, through the work of the Holy Spirit, even a child can exhibit a very high level of faith. Jesus said in Mark 10:15, “I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” The Holy Spirit can work in incredible ways at any point in a person’s life.
Factors Prevalent in Conversion of Youth

This researcher has traced the evangelistic emphasis through the history of youth ministry. This researcher will now show the studies that pertain specifically to the factors surrounding conversion among youth. David Rahn, Terry Linhart, and Thomas Bergler have each contributed to the research base in youth evangelism.

Rahn and Linhart’s Study

In 1997, a team of researchers from Huntington College set out to identify youth ministries that had student leaders who were strong in peer-to-peer evangelism. Rahn and Linhart’s conclusion was that a strong student leadership program should view peer-to-peer evangelism as a top priority. Evangelism should not be the only priority of student leadership, but rather, “In the grand smorgasbord of ministry done in Jesus’ name, the main reason for creating a separate ‘youth buffet table’ is evangelism” (Rahn and Linhart 2000, 19).

Two main questions guided the purpose of their study. First, what are the differences between student leaders who reach their friends for Christ and those who do not? Second, what are the common factors in youth ministries where teenagers reaching teenagers for Christ is the norm? (Rahn and Linhart 2000, 8). These questions helped form the design of the study that has become a significant work in the area of youth evangelism in the local church.

David Rahn and Terry Linhart, along with ten undergraduate students, asked local denominational youth leaders, educators, youth directors, writers and parachurch ministry leaders for names of youth ministries who have demonstrated strength in peer-to-peer evangelism over three or more years. The result was a list of 109 youth ministries...
with a history of student leader effectiveness in evangelism. The list of youth ministries was then divided into three categories based on recommendations by youth ministry experts. Those who received the highest recommendations were included in the first category. The second category included the youth ministries who might be worth a close look, but there were questions about the fit for the purposes of the study. The third category included the youth ministries that did not fit the purposes of the study or were unresponsive (Rahn and Linhart 2000, 9).

Youth ministers, adult volunteers, and students were all surveyed via quantitative instruments and group discussions. The study provided 7 characteristics that were indicative of effectiveness in peer-to-peer evangelism in student leadership. The characteristics were then tested in a second round of studies in a more focused effort toward the most effective student leaders. The second round of the study confirmed the characteristics of the first round. According to Huntington College’s research team, the 7 characteristics of effective student leaders in evangelism are:

1. A sense of calling
2. A close and faithful walk with Jesus, evidenced by consistent spiritual disciplines and the fruits of the spirit
3. An others-focused mentality
4. A dedicated prayer life
5. Consistently inviting others to outreach events
6. Telling others the message of God’s love
7. A mature faith in Christ motivated by a desire to make Christ’s name known (Rahn and Linhart 2000, 118-19)

Conclusions from Rahn and Linhart’s Study

The team from Huntington College made a significant contribution to the study of youth ministry evangelism. The eight characteristics above were derived from a study of those youth ministries considered to be effective in peer-to-peer evangelism.
Furthermore, the eight characteristics were then tested in almost an entirely different set of youth ministries. However, the study focuses solely on the activity of peer-to-peer evangelism by student leadership. Campus ministry, partnering with parachurch ministries, evangelistic preaching, and other methods deemed effective in evangelizing students were not considered in this study. A significant gap in the research is represented by the fact that the study does not take into account several factors that may lead to effective evangelism in local church youth ministry.

**Bergler and Rahn’s Study**

David Rahn teamed up with Thomas Bergler in another study on youth evangelism. The National Network of Youth Ministries contacted these two Huntington University professors to discover what evangelism factors are most commonly present among recent conversion stories of adolescents. With a team of university students, Bergler and Rahn embarked in a study aimed at gathering data from adolescents around the country.

A network of youth ministry professors was contacted in order to establish a connection with local churches around their respective colleges. Local church youth ministers were asked if they knew of any 16-20 year olds who had begun to follow Jesus as recently as the year 2003. Seventy young people were included as the sample for the study. The recent converts were then contacted for participation in the study by a team of two Huntington University professors and four university students. Bergler and Rahn developed a set of questions in a pilot study that would aid them in their research project. The questions were as follows:

1. Tell me everything you remember about your experience of first choosing to become a follower of Jesus Christ.
2. Of all the special influences you just described about your decision to become a follower of Christ, which one would you identify as the most important?

3. Indicate, on a seven-point scale, the level of their parents’ religious commitment.

4. Describe your religious experience, on a seven-point scale, while they were children age 10 years old or younger. (Bergler and Rahn 2006, 65-70)

The interview technique allowed the interviewer to follow-up initial responses by the young people with three additional promptings. The scores for each answer were then calculated.

**Conclusions from Bergler and Rahn’s study**

Four notable conclusions stand out from the study. First, the influence of a friend was a significant factor in the conversion of teenagers with little family religious involvement and for those with no memorable religious experiences as a child. This point echoes the results of Rahn and Linhart’s study in 2001. Both verbal influence through sharing the message of Christ and the non-verbal influence through living a life dedicated to the principles of Christianity were common in conversion stories. Bergler and Rahn concluded that those wishing to evangelize teenagers should equip Christian teenagers to articulate their faith to their non-Christian friends (Bergler and Rahn 2006, 71).

Second, camps, retreats, and conferences were common in conversion stories. Several researchers have found that physical and psychological separation from normal environments, combined with intense interaction with group participants, plays an important role in long lasting life change (Lofland and Stark, 1965; Straus, 1979). The verbal invitation from a friend was influential in an unchurched student’s decision to attend a camp, retreat, or conference. Bergler and Rahn concluded that those wishing to evangelize teenagers should make use of church camps, retreats, or conferences. They
also concluded that those wishing to evangelize teenagers should equip Christians to invite their non-Christian friends to camps, retreats, or conferences. A verbal invitation from a friend is especially important for the conversion of those students with less religious backgrounds (Bergler and Rahn 2006, 72).

Third, youth ministries that produce teenage conversions may tend to influence new converts to devalue their childhood religious experiences. Even in families with high levels of religious involvement, some teenagers did not speak highly of their religious activity prior to their conversion experience. The researchers stated, “Research on conversion testimonies suggests that converts modify their ‘before’ and ‘after’ life narratives to reflect the expectations of the religious group they have joined” (Bergler and Rahn 2006, 72). This conformity to the group would be consistent with Fowler’s findings.

Fourth, the intent of Bergler and Rahn’s study is different than that of this researcher’s study. Bergler and Rahn did not look specifically at the ministry factors that influenced the students’ decisions to trust Christ. This researcher’s study intentionally focused on what youth ministries did to reach young people. Also, the small number of young people included in the study is a limitation. This researcher sought the experiences perspectives of youth ministers who have each seen at least 30 baptisms in their ministry. This researchers scope of study brought a more broad understanding of the factors influencing evangelism in local church youth ministry.

Factors in Effective Church Evangelism

Thom Rainer has conducted significant research on churches that are effective in reaching the unchurched. He has studied churches across the country in an effort to
determine characteristics that may lead to evangelistic effectiveness. This researcher will outline Rainer’s findings.

*Effective Evangelistic Churches*

In his book *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, Thom Rainer outlines the results of a study of 576 churches that exhibited effectiveness in evangelism. Rainer used two criterion to determine whether or not a church was effective in evangelism. First, a church had to have at least 26 baptisms. Second, a church also had to have a resident member to baptism ratio of no less than 20 to 1. The church would need to reach, using baptism as an indicator, at least 1 person for every 20 members (Rainer 1996, 6).

Five hundred seventy-six Southern Baptist churches were included in the sample of the study. Rainer and his team inquired of dozens of leaders in churches, denominational work, theological education, family ministries, music ministries, and others to determine what they would ask the churches in the sample. The researchers received feedback looking for information on evangelistic methods, worship style, theological beliefs, and preaching types. The study was conducted via a survey instrument developed by the team as well as extensive interviews with staff members of more than 100 of the churches in the sample (Rainer 1996, 4-9). The study yielded several prominent characteristics of effective evangelistic churches:

1. A strong pulpit ministry that is Scripture focused, Holy Spirit empowered, and intentionally evangelistic
2. A fervent prayer ministry
3. A healthy and evangelistic Sunday school ministry
4. A worship style that is appropriate for the ministry context
5. An overall attitude of evangelistic intentionality within the church
6. Vibrant community ministries
7. A missions-mindedness
8. A view of evangelism and discipleship as a both/and not an either/or (Rainer 1996, 49-185)
The findings of this study may have implications for youth ministries seeking to evangelize young people. One point that is of particular importance is the view of evangelism and discipleship as a both/and. There may be too many youth ministries with an overemphasis on either evangelism or discipleship. Chad Childress, director of student evangelism for the North American Mission Board, said this about the lack of baptisms in many Southern Baptist churches:

Reports indicate that there are no less youth responding to Christ at events and in churches. It's simply harder to get them baptized these days. I believe it is because we as a convention have trained our leaders that evangelism and discipleship are separate. We must re-marry the two in our theology, teaching, and practice. (Childress 2005, 1)

Those involved in youth ministry must remember that in the Great Commission, Jesus told his followers to go and “make disciples” (Matt 28:28-20). He did not tell them to go and focus all their time on those within the church. He also did not say to go and make shallow converts. Instead, he told them to make disciples and to teach them everything that he commanded.

Profile of the Current Study

The local church faces a great challenge in reaching teenagers in the twenty-first century. While local church youth evangelism has not been absent, parachurch youth evangelism has taken center stage in efforts to reach young people. The majority of research and writing efforts have focused on ministries outside of the local church. A few researchers have pointed to certain ministry factors as effective in evangelizing young people in the local church. However, these studies do not solicit the opinion of youth ministers of effective evangelistic youth ministries nor do they attempt to arrive at a rank-ordered list of ministry factors. After reviewing the precedent literature, this
researcher has demonstrated that there is a significant need for a more comprehensive look at how local churches effectively evangelize young people.

The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship between ministry factors and effective youth evangelism in the local church. Youth ministers of churches in the top 100 churches in youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention in 2008 served as the population for the study. This researcher used a three-round delphi technique to discover the relationship between essential ministry factors and effective youth evangelism in the local church. The study was conducted over a three-month period and the three rounds of the delphi study were hosted on the internet.

**Summary**

First, the biblical foundation for evangelism, regeneration, conversion, and election were discussed in order to provide a theological framework for the study. Second, this researcher reviewed the importance of evangelism in the history of youth ministry in order to show the incredible need for a study on youth evangelism. With evangelism serving as one of the driving forces in the formation of youth ministry, it is evident that a study of evangelistic youth ministries is necessary. No other work has been conducted with the particular method and population that were used in this study.

Third, this researcher reviewed literature pertaining to ministry factors and evangelism. Secular developmental theorists like James Fowler help show the process by which teenagers progress in their faith journey. Finally, a look at the writing on evangelism and ministry factors was reviewed. Studies have been conducted to show characteristics of evangelistic churches as a whole but no study exists that seeks to study specifically the relationship between ministry factors and effective local church youth
evangelism. Furthermore, the studies on youth ministry evangelism are focused on single ministry factors and do not point to a broad spectrum of ministry factors that are effective in evangelizing adolescents. This researcher will conduct research that will be the first of its kind both to collect a number of ministry factors that are effective in evangelizing youth and to rank-order those ministry factors based upon expert opinion. The follow-up studies will also provide breadth and depth to each ministry factor.
A review of the precedent literature has shown the theological basis for the research study. The precedent literature has also briefly traced evangelism as one of the driving forces throughout the history of youth ministry. The prominent theories on conversion were also presented to show the research pointing to the factors prevalent in making religious commitments. Developmental issues surrounding conversion were also outlined to form the remainder of the context for the basis of the research study.

A Delphi method was utilized for the design of the study. A Delphi study is intended to build a consensus among a group of experts on a given topic without allowing group bias to distort individual input. The Delphi study for this research included 3 rounds of inquiry in order to build a consensus among a group of youth ministers of effective evangelistic youth ministries. The particular nature of the Delphi study will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

Research Question Synopsis

The following three research questions were utilized in the research study:

1. What ministry factors are the most effective in evangelizing youth ages 12 to 17?
2. What reasons do youth ministers give for indicating certain ministry factors as effective in evangelizing youth?
3. What correlation exists, if any, between the demographic information of youth ministers of effective evangelistic youth ministries and the number of youth that are
baptized in their ministries?

**An Overview and Benefits of Delphi**

A Delphi study is designed to build a consensus among a group of individuals without allowing group bias to influence the overall outcome of the process. Opinions are gathered from each participant independently before allowing the other participants in the study to view the collective responses. This allows each participant to make a thoughtful contribution to the overall consensus.

The Delphi method is an exercise in group communication among a panel of geographically dispersed experts (Adler and Ziglio 1996). Developed in the 1940’s by the Rand Corporation, Delphi was originally intended to forecast the impact of technology on warfare. The Delphi method was also used to determine the probability, frequency, and intensity of possible enemy attacks. Where more traditional and scientific forecasting methods fell short, Delphi allowed several experts to provide input without allowing each participant’s input to hamper diversity and creative contribution (Custer, Scarcella, and Stewart 12 1999). The Delphi method soon spread to use in politics, education, and health-related fields.

Delphi methods include two or more rounds. The intent of the first round of the study is to gather a number of responses from participants on a given question or topic. Each participant provides their response without hearing the responses from other participants. The researcher then gathers the responses from the first round and organizes them in order to best present the collection of responses back to the participants in round 2. The second round of the study allows participants to see the collection of responses from the group without knowing the contributor of each response. The participants may
then modify their responses from round 1. Subsequent rounds of the study will further 
narrow the focus of the answers and provide the respondents an opportunity to hone in on 
a consensus. Fowles provides a ten-step approach to conducting an effective Delphi 
study. The ten steps are:

1. Formation of a Delphi team to undertake and to monitor the project.
2. Selection of one or more panels to participate in the exercise. Customarily, the 
   participants are experts in the investigation area.
3. Development of the first round Delphi questionnaire.
4. Testing the questionnaire for proper wording (e.g., ambiguities, vagueness).
5. Transmission of the first questionnaires to the panelists.
7. Preparation of the second round questionnaires (and possible testing).
8. Transmission of the second round questionnaires to the panelists.
9. Analysis of the second round responses. Steps 7 to 9 are reiterated as long as 
   desired or necessary to achieve stability in the results.
10. Preparation of a report by the analysis team to present the conclusions of the 
    exercise. (Fowles 1978, 305)

**Benefits of a Delphi Technique**

There are distinct advantages to the Delphi technique. The Delphi method 
helps avoid the bandwagon and halo effect. Anonymity is provided to the group of 
participants and the feedback from the survey is gathered in a structured format. The data 
from the study may then be analyzed using statistical methods. The following section 
will outline advantages of the Delphi method.

**The Bandwagon and Halo Effects**

Gathering the opinion of experts is a great way to gain insight on a particular 
topic. However, collecting the opinion of experts must be completed with care. Simply 
calling for responses within a group presents challenges. One such challenge is the 
bandwagon effect. Allowing one person to speak while the rest of the group listens to the 
response can actually cloud the opinion of group members. Coleman argues that as one
person offers an opinion, others will be more compelled to offer the same opinion. Thus, as one perspective is offered, others will "jump on the bandwagon" and be influenced by the first perspective, regardless of whether the evidence for the first perspective is conclusive or not (Coleman 2003, 75-77).

The halo effect is similar to the bandwagon effect. The halo effect refers to a cognitive bias where the perception of a particular trait is influenced by the perception of the former traits in a sequence of interpretations (Linstone and Turoff 2002, 4-6). A strong Delphi study will lead members to provide input without allowing individual bias to cloud the response of others.

Anonymity

A proper Delphi study will ensure anonymity in response among the group of experts. Participants in the study do not see the responses of others in the first round. In the second round, respondents see the anonymous responses of others. This allows respondents to give their own unique response without the influence of hearing another person's perspective. The goal of the study is for each respondent to continue providing feedback through the series of rounds in order to allow individual input while building consensus among the group.

Statistical Group Response

The Delphi method also promotes a statistical response from the respondents. While Delphi does utilize opinion as a primary tool of measurement, the responses from respondents are measured and analyzed using statistical methods. Opinions are usually gathered using a form of numerical scale and rank order is often calculated. A statistical response allows the researcher to view a bulk of information in an understandable format.
Researchers in the field of Christian education have utilized the Delphi method. James Graham from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary used the Delphi method to discover competencies for youth ministers in Southern Baptist churches. Graham used a variety of members for his expert panel including youth ministers, youth ministry educators, senior pastors, and ministry volunteers (Graham 2005, 15-20). Daniel Lambert from Cincinnati Christian University conducted a Delphi study with youth ministry professors and consultants in order to determine research needs in North American Christian Youth Ministry (Lambert 1999, 14-26). Both of these studies utilized a three-round approach to Delphi. The structure of Graham and Lambert’s study is similar to this study.

Research Procedure

The research study utilized a three-round Delphi process with each round hosted on the Internet. The study was conducted via the Internet for several reasons. The Internet platform provides a universal and easily accessible platform for collecting data. The Internet also makes compiling the data more streamlined and the survey tools integrate well with statistical software. Making invitations and communication via email is more cost effective than physical mail invitations and reminders. The population was sent email invitations and reminders with links to participate and become a part of the study.

Population

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention was contacted to gather a list of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms for
the year 2008. The study actually reported 103 churches because the 99th spot was occupied by 5 churches who reported 33 youth baptisms. The youth ministers from each of these 103 churches served as the population for the study. The selection of these youth ministers as the population was perhaps the most important part of the Delphi study process. Selecting the most appropriate subjects for the study directly relates to the quality of the data (Judd 1972; Taylor and Judd, 1989; Jacobs 1996).

The crucial element in the Delphi method is choosing the correct experts to participate in the study because it directly relates to the quality of the results generated (Judd 1972, 173-86). According to researcher Juri Pill, participants in Delphi studies must have somewhat related backgrounds and experiences on the subject at hand. Participants must also be capable of contributing helpful inputs and be willing to revise their initial or previous judgments for the purpose of reaching or attaining a consensus (Pill 1971, 57-71). The sample used in the research study best met the qualifications outlined by Pill. The participants in the study were highly trained and competent within the area of knowledge related to the study (Oh 1974).

**Sample**

There is no set standard for determining an appropriate sample size in a Delphi study. Kaplan explains, "Throughout the Delphi literature, the definition of [Delphi subjects] has remained ambiguous" (Kaplan 24, 1971). The optimal procedure for selecting a sample size is a balancing act. Too few subjects will cause the study to have poor representation regarding the target issue. Too many subjects will require an enormous amount of compilation on behalf of the researcher. Subsequently, the
respondents will have longer lists of questions requiring much more time to analyze which will in turn lower the response rate (Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson 1975).

In a Delphi study, it is recommended that researchers use the minimally sufficient number of subjects (Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson 1975). Witkin and Altschuld argue that that approximate size of a Delphi study is generally under 50 (Witkin and Altschuld 1995, 1-10). Ludwig noted that the number of participants in the study is “generally determined by the number required to constitute a representative pooling of judgments.” Ludwig also explains that the majority of Delphi studies have used between 15 and 20 respondents (Ludwig 1994, 1-7). The original goal for the research study was to gather input, through all three rounds, from at least 30 respondents. In the end, this researcher had 31 participants complete all three rounds of the study.

This researcher also contacted Lifeway Research to gain further information on the churches included in the top 100. The information from NAMB and Lifeway Research were used to discover statistically significant characteristics of churches that are effective in evangelizing students. This researcher included as a part of the sample for the study the churches in the top 100 in youth baptisms that reported the following data on the 2008 Annual Church Profile: total baptisms, number of resident members, primary worship service attendance, total Sunday school, youth Sunday school, and overall church giving.

Limitations of the Generalization

Because of the limited breadth of the sample size and the delimitations of the study, the data derived from the study might not necessarily generalize to churches of all sizes, ethnographies, locations, and denominations. All of the sampled churches
employed a youth minister. Therefore the findings of the study may not generalize to churches without a person in the position of youth minister. Furthermore, the findings of the study may not generalize to churches outside the Southern Baptist Convention or to churches around the world.

The findings of this study may generalize to churches of similar size of those included in the study. Also, churches in the Southern Baptist Convention who employ a youth minister were included as a part of this study. Therefore, the findings of the study may generalize to churches within the Southern Baptist Convention who have a person in the position of youth minister on their staff.

*Preparation Work*

With the list of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms and the Lifeway Annual Church Profile data, this researcher produced an Excel spreadsheet with all the demographic data and contact information for each youth minister. Some of the youth minister’s names and email addresses were included on the Annual Church Profile. For those who were not listed, this researcher searched the website of each church for the youth minister’s name and contact information. If the contact information was not on the website, this researcher then made a phone call to the church to gather the contact information. Three churches had no known website address, phone number, or youth ministers’ name. This researcher did not include churches and youth ministers who had no known contact information. Some churches did not choose to report individual pieces of data such as giving or youth Sunday school attendance. The respondents who did not provide complete data were not included as a part of the summary information for the churches.
Survey: First Round

Utilizing a single-stage sampling procedure, this researcher began by inviting all the individuals in the population, via email, to participate in a study on effective evangelism in local church youth ministry (see Appendix 1). The initial enlistment email included a link to the survey site where youth ministers could choose to participate in the study. To help promote participation, the enlistment email explained that the respondents would be able to receive two incentives for completing all three rounds of the survey. They would be able to receive a $25 gift certificate to Borders bookstore and a $1000 scholarship for one of their students to attend Boyce College. The data collected for the round 1 and 2 surveys was kept on the secure servers located at the www.surveymonkey.com headquarters. The third round data was stored on the www.suveygizmo.com database.

Several of the email addresses were incorrect from the first round. Some of the youth ministers were no longer working at the church and their email was terminated. Six of the email addresses included a typo and were simply not keyed in correctly on the Annual Church Profile or the church website. This researcher then contacted the churches to find the correct email address. Once the accurate email address was found, this researcher sent the initial enlistment email to those persons.

This researcher allowed a 3-week window for soliciting and receiving responses for the first round of the study. The initial contact with the population included a mass email with a link to the study’s website and this researcher’s contact information including cell phone number. This researcher received several questions about the study. Three respondents were not aware that their church was in the top 100 in youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention. Two respondents wrote back to ask not to receive
the gift certificates as they were happy to be a part of the research. This researcher sent personal “thank you” type emails to those who responded to the first round in order to show gratitude and also to boost participation in the future rounds.

Four days after sending the initial email, this researcher sent a follow up email to all those who had not yet responded to the first email (see Appendix 2). The gift certificate options were expanded to include Chick-fil-a and Starbucks. This researcher also shortened the email for those who do not prefer to read longer emails. Eight days later, a third email was sent to solicit the most responses (see Appendix 3). The third email was the most brief and included the subject line “I just need a few more experts!” The first line of the email read, "I only need 5 more participants to begin the study on youth evangelism in the local church. You're an expert!” The specific number of responses needed served as a motivator to get more respondents on board for the first round. For 6 of these third round emails, this researcher included a personal note to the youth pastor at the top of the email in order to make a connection with the person. After a fourth and final email reminder (Appendix 4), 41 people had responded to the first round survey.

Terminology and research procedures were explained on the survey (see Appendix 5). Demographic information such as youth minister’s age, tenure, number of hours in workweek, and youth ministry size were also collected to provide data for correlative statistical analysis. These questions flow out of the literature base reviewed in the prior chapter and reveal demographic characteristics that may have a relationship with effective local church youth evangelism. Respondents were then asked the open-ended response question, "In your experience, what are the ministry factors you consider to be
effective in evangelizing young people?" The question was followed with the instruction to answer the question open and honestly and not to share the answers with others at any time.

This researcher provided several text entry boxes on the website with headings “Ministry Factor 1,” “Ministry Factor 2,” “Ministry Factor 3,” etc. The participants were asked to provide a title for each ministry factor so that they could summarize their response. The participants were also instructed that they did not need to use every box.

**Survey: Second Round**

This researcher allowed participants to respond for 3 weeks after the initial enlistment email was sent. After receiving the results from the first round, this researcher determined the individual unique ministry factors provided by the participants. The responses were separated from the demographic information and compiled into a list of 37 ministry factors to be used in round 2. This researcher summarized each ministry factor into a one-sentence description. This researcher then took the comprehensive list of ministry factors and formulated them into a survey for round 2 (see Appendix 6). In round 2, respondents were given the opportunity to see the responses from the other participants in the study.

The second round of the survey asked the respondents to rate the effectiveness of each ministry factor on a 4-point scale responding to the instruction, “BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, please rate the effectiveness of each ministry factor.” The 37 unique ministry factors were then listed below with the opportunity for the respondent to rate the ministry factor as “somewhat effective,” “effective,” “very effective,” or “extremely effective.” The answer options were displayed as radio buttons.
A 4-point scale forces the respondents to make a choice on whether they feel that particular ministry factor is or is not effective. A 5 or 7-point system would allow the respondents to remain neutral on given questions and not give a clear indication of their assessment. Leedy and Ormrod explain, “If you use rating scales in your own research, you should consider the implications of letting your respondents ‘straddle the fence’ by including a ‘no opinion’ or other neutral response, and design your scales accordingly” (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 186-87).

The participants were notified via email that round 1 was complete and round two surveys would begin (see Appendix 7). The email contained a link to the round 2 survey allowing the participant quick access. The individuals in the research project responded faster in round 2 than in round 1. Similar to round 1, this researcher allowed 4 days before sending a follow up email to the participants (Appendix 8) and then a final email 6 days after the second email (Appendix 9). Eight participants were lost between the first and second round giving a total of 33 participants going into round 3.

Survey: Third Round

The researcher accessed the data from round 2 and determined the top 15 ministry factors from the round 2 surveys. This researcher gave ministry factors with a “somewhat effective” rating score a point value of 1, “effective” a point value of 2, “very effective” a point value of 3, and “extremely effective” a point value of 4. A mean score was then calculated for each ministry factor. The ministry factors with a mean score in the top 15 were included in the final round of the research study.

The third round of the study called for respondents to rank-order the compiled list of 15 ministry factors from round 2 (see Appendix 10). The ministry factors that did
not score in the top 15 after round 2 were not included in the third round. The ministry factors were randomized and listed in the survey as individual statements. For the third round of the survey process, a different survey tool was utilized. Surveygizmo.com is an online survey tool that allows for a more efficient method of soliciting rank-ordering from participants. The respondents were able to click arrow buttons, up and down, next to the ministry factors via the Survey Monkey ranking tool and arrive at a rank-ordered list in terms of effectiveness.

The participants were notified via email that round 2 was complete and round three surveys would begin (see Appendix 11). The email contained a link to the round three survey. This researcher allowed participants to respond for 4 days until sending a second reminder email (Appendix 12). Four days after sending the second email, 24 responses had been received, which was one fewer than the goal of 25. A third and final email for round 3 was sent (Appendix 13). Six days after sending the final email, 31 respondents had filled out the round 3 surveys.

This researcher then reviewed the responses, via the Survey Gizmo database, and determined a rank-ordered consensus among the group using the mean score for each ministry factor. The ministry factor with the lowest mean gained rank number 1, the next lowest total gained rank number 2, and so forth for the rest of the ministry factors. This list of ministry factors provided an answer to research question number 1, “What ministry factors are the most effective in evangelizing youth ages 12 to 17?”

Follow Up Interviews

The last question of the third round was, “Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview by phone?” Participants could answer yes or no, as the follow-up
interviews were voluntary among the participants. The survey then asked the participant to provide a phone number and time that were best for conducting the follow-up interview.

The follow-up interviews were conducted by this researcher after all participants had completed the final round of the study and the data was analyzed. This researcher followed a script for the interviews to allow for common comparison among the responses (see Appendix 14). Follow-up interviews allowed the researcher to hear the attitudes and perceptions behind the responses. For example, passion for reaching students was more notable in hearing a respondent’s voice more so than simply reading his or her response. This researcher conducted 10 follow-up interviews. Each interview was made using Skype software, and the interviews were recorded via a program called Audio Hijack Pro. The audio from the interviews was digitally recorded and then transcribed by this researcher. The follow-up interviews provided an answer to research question number 2, “What reasons do youth ministers give for indicating certain ministry factors as effective in evangelizing youth?”

Descriptive Analysis

Creswell’s data analysis spiral was used to analyze the data from the interviews. Two pieces of information were used in data analysis. First, this researcher wrote down observations of the answers, in real-time, during the interviews. These in-moment observations allowed this researcher to recollect the fluctuations in voice, tone, pitch, and intensity that were not captured by a simple transcript. Second, the audio from the interviews was transcribed word-for-word. This researcher put the data through the four-step process for data analysis as outlined by John Creswell:
1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis.
2. Read through all the data.
3. Begin detailed analysis with coding process.
4. Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis. (Creswell 2003, 191-93)

Leedy and Ormrod conclude that the Creswell data analysis spiral is "applicable to a wide variety of qualitative studies" (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 150).

**Correlative Statistics**

The final step in the process of this study involved running correlative statistics on the demographic information gained from the first round of the survey as well as with the church information gained from the Annual Church Profile. Two groups of statistics were calculated. Group 1 included as 1 variable only the youth ministries with youth ministers who participated in the study. Those who participated provided additional demographic information on the first round of the survey. The first round demographic information as well as the demographic information attained on the Annual Church Profile were tested for correlation in relation to the number of youth baptisms within the group.

Group 2 included as 1 variable the total group of youth ministries with youth baptisms in the top 100 in the Southern Baptist Convention in 2008 who reported total baptisms, number of resident members, primary worship service attendance, total Sunday school, youth Sunday school, and overall church giving on their Annual Church Profile. Those who did not report all of this demographic information were not included in the correlative statistical analysis. Data on the youth minister's age, number of students taken to summer camp, marital status and other demographic information was not available for the whole list of 100. However, church demographic data given in the
Annual Church Profile provided a strong base for correlative statistics. The demographic information provided on the Annual Church Profile was tested for correlative relationship to the number of baptisms within the group.

This researcher used Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between each demographic characteristic (variable 1) and the number of youth baptisms (variable 2) in their ministries. An alpha level of .05 was used for the purpose of this study. The tests were one-tail tests with a difference level of \( n-2 \) with \( n \) being the number in the sample for each group. This researcher will seek to discover statistically significant relationships between the variables.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted in order to test the validity and clarity of the research study. According to Leedy and Ormrod, the use of a pilot study to scrutinize an instrument to ascertain its validity for measuring the characteristics in question is a permissible method to address the issue of content validity (Leedy and Ormrod 2001, 99). The population for the pilot study included individuals who work full-time in the area of youth ministry. This researcher included full-time youth ministers and youth ministry educators in the pilot study. The individuals in the pilot study followed a similar procedure as those who were involved in the research study with the exception that no follow-up interviews were conducted.

Eleven participants completed all 3 rounds of the pilot. A group consensus was calculated with the pilot group. However, no correlative statistics were performed in the pilot study as this information was not available or applicable. As a result of the insight gained from the pilot study, modifications to the instrument and method were
made.

**Ethical Authorization**

Authorization for conducting research on human subjects was requested and gained from the Research Ethics Committee of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The following materials were included in the request: application, research abstract, proposed instrumentation, vita and the necessary risk assessment materials.
CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This research study is designed to discover the relationship between ministry factors and effective evangelistic youth ministry. A Delphi technique was utilized for the purposes of this research. The following sections will outline the compilation protocol, explain the method for answering the research questions, provide an analysis the findings, and show an evaluation of the design.

Compilation Protocol

Upon completion of the first round of surveys, this researcher accessed the respondents’ answers in Wufoo.com’s database. The open-ended responses were then separated from the demographic information to ensure anonymity. An Excel spreadsheet was used to organize all of the responses from the participants. The respondents provided 176 ministry factors in round 1. This researcher then deciphered unique ministry factors from the responses and created one-sentence description statements for each ministry factor. Many of the ministry factors were duplicates. For example, one respondent provided “Youth Camp” as an effective ministry factor while another respondent provided “Camp Life.” Upon reviewing the descriptions, it was determined that these two ministry factors were indicating one unique ministry factor. After analysis of the ministry factors provided in round 1, 37 unique ministry factors carried over to round 2.
The 37 unique ministry factors derived from round 1 were then randomized and used to create the round 2 survey so that the participants could provide insight on the effectiveness of each ministry factor. The second round of the survey asked the respondents to rate the effectiveness of each ministry factor on a 4-point scale responding to the instruction, “BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, please rate the effectiveness of each ministry factor.” The 37 unique ministry factors were listed below with the opportunity for the respondent to rate the ministry factor as “somewhat effective,” “effective,” “very effective,” or “extremely effective.”

This researcher accessed the data from round 2 and determined the top 15 ministry factors from the round 2 surveys. This researcher gave ministry factors with a “somewhat effective” rating score a point value of 1, “effective” a point value of 2, “very effective” a point value of 3, and “extremely effective” a point value of 4. A mean score was then calculated for each ministry factor. The ministry factors with a mean score in the top 15 were included in the final round of the research study.

The round 3 survey instructed participants to rank-order the list of the top 15 ministry factors compiled from round 2. A different web survey company, Survey Gizmo, was used for round 3. Survey Gizmo has a tool that allowed this researcher to create a survey response question with an easy to use graphic user interface. The participants in the research study were able to click and move each ministry factor in order depending on their perception of rank. This feature allowed the participants to put more thoughtful input into the rank-ordering process.

Upon completion of the third round of surveys, the responses were extracted to an Excel spreadsheet. The number ranking each ministry factor received, 1 through 15,
served as scores to help rank the list of ministry factors. An average score was compiled for each ministry factor and the factor with the lowest score became the top ministry factor, as indicated by the respondents, in effectively evangelizing young people. The delphi method provided a research process that built a consensus among the study participants.

Follow-up interviews were also conducted with 10 of the respondents to help add breadth and depth to the respondents' survey answers. Notes were taken during the interview in a Word document according to the specific questions of the interview (see Appendix 14). The audio from the interviews was also digitally recorded and then transcribed.

**Statistical Measures**

The demographic data derived from the Annual Church Profile and the round 1 surveys was copied to an Excel spreadsheet to allow this researcher to compute correlative statistics. Because no cross platform data array was available, each number had to be typed individually into the spreadsheet. The numbers were then checked for accuracy in transmission. This researcher used Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between each demographic characteristic (variable 1) and the number of youth baptisms (variable 2) in their ministries. An alpha level of .05 was used to determine the level of statistical significance. The tests were one-tail tests with a difference level of \( n-2 \) with \( n \) being the number in the sample for each group.

The demographic data was also analyzed with basic statistical measures including mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and range. The
presentation of the basic statistical measures allows the reader to see a representation of both the youth ministers and their respective churches that are effectively evangelizing young people. For unknown reasons, a portion of the churches chose not to provide certain church demographic data on their Annual Church Profile. The basic statistical measures were compiled only from the churches that provided that necessary data.

Findings and Displays by Research Question

The following section will show the answers to the research questions of this study. The survey process provided the answers to each question. The first question focused on the list of top ministry factors in effectively evangelizing young people. The second question explored the reasons behind the respondents’ answers regarding the ministry factors in reaching young people. The third question attempted to uncover relationships between demographic data of the youth ministers and their churches and the number of youth baptisms.

Research Question 1

The first research question sought to identify the ministry factors that are effective in evangelizing youth ages 12 to 17. The first round of the study asked the respondents to answer the open-ended question, "In your experience, what are the ministry factors you consider to be effective in evangelizing young people?" The respondents provided 37 unique ministry factors that they considered to be effective in evangelizing young people.

Round 2 called for the respondents, based on their experience, to assess each of the 37 ministry factors in terms of effectiveness. The round 2 survey instructed the respondents, "BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, please rate the effectiveness of each
ministry factor.” The respondents could then answer that the ministry factor is “somewhat effective,” “effective,” “very effective,” or “extremely effective.” This researcher gave ministry factors with a “somewhat effective” rating score a point value of 1, “effective” a point value of 2, “very effective” a point value of 3, and “extremely effective” a point value of 4. A mean score was then calculated for each ministry factor. Table 3 provides a list of those 37 ministry factors compiled from round 1. Table 3 also shows the mean score for each ministry factor with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest.

The goal of this particular Delphi research was to provide a way for the respondents to arrive at a rank-ordered consensus of the top 15 ministry factors. The round 2 surveys narrowed down the comprehensive list of ministry factors to the top 15. The round 3 surveys took the consensus a step further and asked the respondents to rank-order the top 15 ministry factors. Table 4 displays those top 15 ministry factors, in rank-order, as determined by the experience of the youth ministers.

Particular attention should be given to the difference in ranking between the mean scores from round 2 and the comprehensive rank designation from round 3. The difference between the two rounds reveals one of the major strengths of the Delphi method of research. By eliminating the lower ranked factors by the round 2 survey, only the top rated factors are available for assessment in round 3. If a ministry factor scores well in round 2, this would not necessarily mean that the factor would score the same in round 3. Limiting the number of ministry factors also helps the respondents focus on the top factors by providing a limited number of factors for review in round 3. Table A1 in Appendix 15 shows the difference in rankings between the mean scores in round 2 and
Table 3. Comprehensive list of ministry factors with round 2 mean score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Round 1 Ministry Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>A youth pastor who is passionate about evangelism as an example to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>Prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>A senior pastor who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Parents leading their child to Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Train and encourage students to witness to other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>Make evangelism a core value in your mission/vision statement and talk about it often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>Helping lost students feel a sense of love, value, and belonging within the faith community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>Emphasize repentance in evangelistic presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>Summer camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>Adult volunteers sharing the gospel through one-on-one personal relationships with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>A church body (non-staff) who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>Regular mid-week program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Relevant preaching and methods of programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>Teach and train students to be hospitable to visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>Accountability among the students to do evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Service opportunities as an outlet for evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>Use mission trips as a training opportunity to teach students how to do evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Use invitations as an opportunity for students to respond to gospel preaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Hold students to a high level of commitment in evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>Teach students about the character of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>Youth pastors spending time engaging students on local school campuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>Use small groups as an evangelistic tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>A conversational method of evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>Call and write students who visit your church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>Weekend retreats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>Disciple Now weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>Create opportunities for students to invest their time and resources toward a social justice cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>Excellent facilities are a strong tool in evangelizing young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>Organize campus Bible studies at students’ schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>Organize a specific team of students to go out and witness on a regular basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>Home visitation program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>Week long crusades as a method for sharing the gospel with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>Partner with local parachurch agencies to do campus ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>“High Attendance” emphasis days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>Utilize the F.A.I.T.H. evangelism strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>See You At the Pole rallies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Rank-ordered list of ministry factors after completion of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Ministry Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A youth pastor who is passionate about evangelism as an example to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Make evangelism a core value in your mission/vision statement and talk about it often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Train and encourage students to witness to other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A senior pastor who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Adult volunteers sharing the gospel through one-on-one personal relationships with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Parents leading their child to Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Relevant preaching and methods of programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Helping lost students feel a sense of love, value, and belonging within the faith community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Regular mid-week program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teach and train students to be hospitable to visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A church body (non-staff) who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Accountability among the students to do evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Emphasize repentance in evangelistic presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Summer camp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the rank-ordered designation in round 3.

Top Ministry Factors

The youth ministers in the study chose “prayer and reliance upon God” as the most effective ministry factor in evangelizing youth. Rounds 1 and 2 indicated this ministry factor as top ranking. In round 2, “prayer and reliance upon God” scored as a tie with “a passionate youth pastor.” The round 3 survey forced the respondents to rank-order the ministry factors leaving one top ministry factor after the survey portion of the study.
Of the 31 youth ministers who responded to the round 1 survey, 6 of those respondents specifically mentioned prayer as an effective ministry factor in reaching young people. While only 19.3% of the respondents in round 1 mentioned prayer, the delphi method allows all respondents an opportunity to rank the ministry factor higher in the following rounds. Even though one participant gave “Prayer and reliance upon God” a “somewhat effective” rating (the lowest of the four ratings possible), the rest of the respondents scored the ministry factor high enough for it to be the top ranked factor overall.

The first round of the survey allowed respondents to provide a description of each ministry factor. The 6 respondents who mentioned prayer as an effective ministry factor in reaching young people described their response in a different way. Table 5 summarizes the responses focused on prayer.

Ministry factors 2 through 5 were “a passionate youth pastor,” “evangelism as a core value,” “peer-to-peer evangelism,” and “a supportive senior pastor.” After the round 2 survey, “parents leading their child to Christ” was the third ranked ministry factor. “Evangelism as a core value” was able to move into a top 5 ranking after “parents leading their child to Christ” fell to number 7 out of 15 in round 3.

**Research Question 2**

Research question 2 was intended to provide a greater level of depth to the lists of ministry factors provided by the answer to research question 1. Follow-up interviews by telephone allowed this researcher to hear voice tones, clarify certain points with the interviewees, and gain a greater understanding of why each ministry factor was chosen.
Table 5. Round 1 responses focused on prayer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Description of Ministry Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>More than ever, our church is focused on prayer and total dependence on Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>This is the number 1 ministry factor. When you pray and fast, spiritual things happen. I can't explain it, other than to say things happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There is no doubt that prayer was the number 1 factor in reaching people. We spend much of our time asking God to draw lost students to our building and also praying that God would save them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prayer is a very important part of our ministry. We have a time each week where our staff meets together with the parents in our ministry to pray for their students. We also have a prayer team as a part of our student leadership team that prays each week before our Wednesday night services. Our plan is to eventually have this team of students pray together throughout the entire worship service each week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>We took pictures of each student, had them fill out a short questionnaire, and handed them out to core members of our church. These core members pray daily for a specific student. I try to keep them updated as often as possible on what’s going on in the life of the student they are praying for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Weekly groups meeting in homes for the purpose of prayer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Creswell’s data analysis spiral was utilized to organize the data. This researcher read through each of the transcripts to look for similarities and contrasts between the interviewees’ responses. Common items were highlighted to help form conclusions. At certain points during the interview, this researcher made comments on a note page regarding voice fluctuation and enthusiasm in the response. The following section will show notable items from each of the interview questions. Each of the questions in the follow-up interview was aimed at the overall purpose of providing more depth to the responses given in the surveys.
Common Themes

Question 1 asked the respondents “Why did you indicate ________ as the most important ministry factor in evangelizing youth?” The fill-in-the-blank for each person was changed to the ministry factor they chose to be the most effective. Of the 10 interviewees, only 3 unique ministry factors were chosen to be number 1. “Prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students” was chosen by 8 of the interviewees as the number 1 ministry factor.

Prayer and Reliance Upon God

As the interviewees expanded on why they chose, “prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students” as their number 1 ministry factor, this researcher found that the reasons were explicitly theological. Prayer and reliance upon God, as a ministry factor, was more of a philosophical and foundational understanding as to why God had worked so greatly in their ministry.

Interviewee 6 communicated earnestly that their evangelistic success was not about a particular method of ministry or specific program. Instead, he explained that since his church had such a great emphasis on prayer, there was not much of a rhyme or reason as to why God worked so intensely at particular times. He said:

I don’t think that any of our methods could take the credit for when God actually showed up. We had some great dynamic events where God didn’t show up and it was all in vain. And then we would have a normal Sunday morning, where before the pastor even gets up to preach, and because we had bathed things in prayer, people would just flood the alter. In the middle of the first song a dozen people would come forward and get saved… I would certainly say that of all the factors that were there, more than anything, it would have to be attributed to the fact that we cried out for God to do something.
This researcher then inquired as to whether prayer was developed into a formal program in their church. Interviewee 6 replied:

I meet with a group of teenagers 45 minutes before Sunday school starts on Sunday mornings, just a select group of guys...and we meet at 8:15am on Sunday mornings to pray. There are also several adults. At 6:30am every Sunday morning all of the deacons are invited to come to the church and pray before the Sunday worship services. You know, speed of the leader/speed of the team, so our pastor is always the first one here praying on Sunday mornings.

Interviewee 2 also affirmed that a specific program was not the most important thing in reaching young people. For him, the most important thing in a ministry was not what youth ministers or youth ministries do, but rather it is the act of God working that makes the difference. He explained that too many youth ministries were centered on a fun and games kind of mentality. Interviewee 2 explained:

What we don’t need is another method of reaching kids. We have methods; more methods than we could count. What we really need is for people to draw near to God in prayer and seek his face in total dependence upon him to draw lost kids to himself. We know from Scripture that God loves young people and wants to save them. What we need to do is show God that we want to be involved in what he is doing.

When asked further about whether his particular context of ministry made prayer and reliance upon God more effective, the interviewee actually chuckled. He simply said, “No. No way.” He was adamant that from what he has seen in youth ministry, there seems to be a lacking in genuine dependence upon God to accomplish great things.

Interviewee 9 also revealed that there is nothing particular about his youth ministry context that made prayer and reliance on God as the most effective factor in his ministry. “Without prayer, we are simply relying upon ourselves,” he said. As far as prayer existing in a formal program, interviewee 9 indicated that prayer was more of an ongoing process in all that they do. Leadership meetings served as an opportunity for the volunteers in this church to prayer for lost students. In small groups, students were
encouraged to pray for their lost friends by name. Interviewee 9 also had a personal time of prayer each week where he asked God to save students that he had made a contact with that week.

In response to how their ministry practices the importance of prayer, interviewee 7 described an in-home prayer group that meets specifically for the purpose of prayer. Students and small group leaders in this group gather weekly during the semester for the purpose of prayer. The group prays for specific students who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus. They also pray for the programs that the youth ministry developed to effectively reach the unchurched students. What is especially interesting about this prayer group is that it is not even the youth minister who leads the group. Instead, it is an adult volunteer who had a vision for the in-home group and then worked to coordinate the group for the purpose of prayer.

Question 4 directed interviewees to explain what contexts they would consider their highest ranked ministry factor to be less effective or ineffective. For all of the interviewees who indicated prayer and reliance upon God to be the most effective factor, none of them felt that there was a context where the factor would not be effective. Interviewee 2 cautioned against seeing God as a “divine vending machine” where we simply tell God what we want and he always gives it to us. Rather, interviewee 2 explained the importance of a “genuine heart reliance” on God to do spiritual work in students’ lives.

**A Passionate Youth Pastor**

Interviewee 1 enthusiastically communicated the potential impact of a passionate youth pastor. He indicated, “A youth pastor who is passionate about
evangelism as an example to students” as the number 1 ministry factor in reaching students. This interviewee’s youth ministry saw over 200 youth baptisms in 2008. As an interviewer, this researcher heard intense voice tones as the interviewee spoke of his church and subsequently youth ministry’s “whatever it takes” mentality to reaching students. The interviewee explained:

I see it [passion] in my boss. My old boss and my new boss are the same way. I try to practice it. But I see it in my youth pastor all the time for years. It’s contagious when you see it from the top down. The reason I put that [answer to the survey] is because I see them constantly talking about reaching the lost. This passion is the driving force in our ministry. Students, parents, and leaders constantly hear about evangelism.

This interviewee said, “It’s contagious when you see it from the top down.” This statement seems representative of how a youth ministry may become effectively evangelistic by developing a sense of passion among the entire student ministry.

Another component to this passion is that the passion of the youth minister should flow out of the passion of the overall church. He explained that in his particular youth ministry, the prevalence of passion was simply an outflow of what was happening in the life of the overall church. Indeed, the numbers show that the church where this youth minister works baptized over 500 people in 2008. Interviewee 1 spoke of how his senior pastor frequently mentions personal evangelism encounters during his sermons and then exhorts the congregation to go out and reach people.

**Evangelism as a Core Value**

Interviewee 8 elaborated on why he chose “make evangelism a core value in your mission/vision statement and talk about it often” as the number 1 ministry factor in evangelizing youth. He thought there was too much of an emphasis on the actual program or environment where students trust Christ. Too often, in his experience, youth
ministries will spend an enormous amount of time on the details of the program and creating a sense of evangelistic urgency for a brief period of time. However, that sense of urgency is only a periodic emotion and is not necessarily part of the DNA of the youth ministry. He elaborates:

Evangelism should be something that is just known by your students, by your leaders, by your parents. You just know that if you are going to be a part of this church and youth ministry, it’s going to be about evangelism. And a lot of times it’s easy to fall into a mindset that we’re not about evangelism and this is about discipleship...sometimes we have to help students know that the big thing in discipleship is reaching people.

The interviewee also explained how his youth ministry communicates evangelism as a core value. At any and every opportunity with students, parents, and leaders, the youth minister will communicate the importance of evangelism. Every leadership meeting includes a time of teaching on the core values of the student ministry, including evangelism. Every Wednesday night service has a time of invitation for those who want to trust Christ. Parent meetings have a time of teaching about effectively leading a child to Christ. Interviewee 8’s goal is to “go after the hearts” of the students, parents, and leaders and help them understand the importance of evangelism in their everyday lives.

The Particular Contexts of Youth Ministry

In question 5, this researcher asked the interviewees “Is there anything about the specific makeup of your youth ministry that helped you to be effective in reaching students. The answers were diverse. No two youth ministers answered the same. Table 6 illustrates a summary statement from each interviewee as to why their particular context of ministry may help them to be effective in reaching students.
Assimilation

A question frequently arises when studying very large baptism numbers, “What are those ministries doing to keep all those students that get baptized?” Unfortunately, there is very little current research on retention rates among students baptized in Southern Baptist youth ministries. The sixth question on the follow-up interview was intended to gather information on how these youth ministers are assimilating the students that they baptize. This question is also meant to start a dialogue for further research on assimilation in youth ministry.

Seven of the interviewees indicated that they had no formal plan for assimilating newly baptized students into their ministry. The interviewees simply used their current ministry strategy to move students forward in the discipleship process. Small groups were a point of emphasis for the interviewees. Although most had no formal process for moving students into small groups, they enthusiastically articulated the importance of small groups to newly baptized students.

Table 6. Summary of responses to question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Summary of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We have gifted people preaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>We place great emphasis on students “out there” in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>We moved from an entertainment based ministry to an “experience with God and environment of love” type ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>We have the support of our senior pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>We are the largest and most attractive church in the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>We have a great relationship with local public school campuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>We have a huge group of adult leaders who have caught the vision for reaching lost students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The student ministries that had a formal assimilation process developed their strategy before their evangelistic events or programs took place. For example, interviewee 4 explained that summer camp was a big part of their evangelistic outreach. Before the group left for camp, the ministry team at his church developed a curriculum for new believers that they would start the second night of camp. The first night of camp carried a great emphasis on making a decision to trust Christ. Those who made decisions on the first night were then guided to a special small group the next morning that would begin studying the new believers curriculum that the team developed.

Interviewee 1 described another example of a formal assimilation process. Students who made a decision to trust Christ at one of their events received a handwritten note within 24 hours from a youth ministry staff member. A youth ministry staff member would then also contact the student via phone in the 24-hour period. The phone call is intended to encourage students toward a Sunday morning small group. After the youth ministry staff member made the phone contact, the student’s contact information was then forwarded on to the appropriate small group leader.

Additional Comments

The last question on the follow-up interviewees was, “Is there anything else you can say about how to effectively evangelize youth? If you were going to tell church leaders how to effectively evangelize youth, what would you tell them?” This question gave the interviewees a final opportunity to offer additional comments about youth evangelism. Providing interviewees an opportunity to offer an open-ended response proved to be a worthwhile endeavor. Several new insights were gained that assist in developing a greater understanding of youth evangelism.
Interviewee 1 emphasized pre-evangelism as a vital piece of the evangelism process. He explained that when a student trusts Christ at one of their events, it usually is not the first contact they have had with that student. Rather, the youth ministry makes great effort to connect with students long before they come to an evangelistic event. Campus ministry is a huge part of the youth ministry where this interviewee works. They have a close connection with the public high school located less than half a mile from the church.

He also explained that pre-evangelism is not simply a work of the youth pastor. This youth minister spoke of several of his adult volunteers who were actively involved in going to unchurched students' extracurricular activities. Several teachers from the nearby public high school attend his church and work in the youth ministry. Even the principal of the school is a member of the church. All of this exposure at the public high school allows the adult volunteers and youth minister to build relationships with unchurched students.

Interviewee 1 also shared a term that is helpful in understanding the evangelistic process in their church. Evangelism cannot be a responsibility that rests solely on the shoulders of the paid youth minister. Parents, the senior pastor, adult volunteers, and students need to all be involved in sharing the gospel and encouraging students to trust Christ. This interviewee called the process of getting everyone motivated, trained, and ready to reach students “ownership evangelism.”

Interviewee 2 repeated his concern for volunteer youth leaders and youth ministers to be committed to giving simple, straight to the point gospel presentations. “Far too many youth ministries,” according to interviewee 6, “are all about finding the
newest, latest, and greatest method of sharing the gospel. We don’t need all that. We need people who will stand up and tell kids about Jesus and how to get saved. That’s it.” More than a program or new method, this interviewee seemed to appreciate clarity in presenting the gospel to students.

Interviewee 6 provided a quote that echoes the parable of the shrewd manager in Luke 16:10, “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much.” This youth minister spoke previously in the interview of his admiration for his senior pastor who was effective at personal evangelism. Interviewee 6 said, “He who is faithful in reaching the masses must first be faithful in reaching the one. Quit worrying about having a revival with 300 kids… go after that one kid in your neighborhood. Instead of saying we’re going to reach all the campuses for Christ, just pick one.”

Research Question 3

Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient was utilized to determine the relationship between each demographic characteristic (variable 1) and the number of youth baptisms (variable 2) in their ministries. An alpha level of .05 was used to determine the level of statistical significance. This was a one-tail test with a difference level of $n-2$ with $n$ being the number in the sample for each group. This researcher used Microsoft Excel to conduct all statistical analysis. The statistical results provide an answer to research question 3, “What correlation exists, if any, between the demographic information of youth ministers of effective evangelistic youth ministries and the number of youth that are baptized in their ministries?”

A display of two sets of demographic characteristics helps provide a background to the statistical measures in the student. Mean, standard deviation,
minimum, maximum, and range are shown. Tables 7 and 8 reveal a broad range of
demographic characteristics in the data. One of the ministers in the study had been in his
current position for 1 year while another had been working in ministry for 34 years. One
youth minister took 40 students to summer camp while another took 1337. The youngest
youth minister in the study was 26 while the oldest was 51. In one youth ministry, there
was only 1 paid staff member while another employed 18 people. The youth ministers’
educational background was also diverse ranging from a high school diploma to
extensive doctoral work.

### Table 7. Demographic characteristics of study participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours Spent in Office</td>
<td>30.02</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Current Position</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students @ Camp</td>
<td>252.83</td>
<td>245.93</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1337</td>
<td>1297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Spent on School Campus'</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours in Youth Minister's Workweek</td>
<td>51.22</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Pastor Age</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Experience in Paid Youth Ministry</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Paid Individuals on Youth Staff</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education (1=high school, 2=some college, 3=college, 4=graduate, 5=post graduate)</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students in Leadership Program</td>
<td>35.82</td>
<td>20.41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The churches included in the study were also diverse. Several churches in the top 100 in
youth baptisms reported data that were far outside average of the group. For example, one
Table 8. Church demographics of study participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristic</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Baptisms</td>
<td>85.83</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>124.81</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1013</td>
<td>980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary worship service attendance</td>
<td>3230.65</td>
<td>2356</td>
<td>3679.77</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>23991</td>
<td>23906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total church baptisms</td>
<td>311.61</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>313.10</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sunday school</td>
<td>4974.90</td>
<td>3371</td>
<td>6856.73</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>50524</td>
<td>50444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Sunday school</td>
<td>760.21</td>
<td>3371</td>
<td>1730.09</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16436</td>
<td>16421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>$9,306,958</td>
<td>$5,573,270</td>
<td>$12,806,297.46</td>
<td>$92,170</td>
<td>$82,338,848</td>
<td>$82,246,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident members</td>
<td>5476.89</td>
<td>3608</td>
<td>6697.12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47035</td>
<td>47026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of the two churches reported a resident membership of 9 while also reporting 36 youth baptisms. One church experienced yearly giving of a little over $92,000 while another large church saw annual receipts totaling over $82,000,000. Table A2 in Appendix 16 shows a comprehensive list of the demographic information of the churches.

**Correlative statistics**

Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient helps show the linear dependence between two variables. For the purposes of this research, the collection of demographic characteristics of both the youth minister and their churches where measured in relationship to the number of youth baptisms in the group.

Table 9 reveals the correlation between the demographic characteristics of the youth ministers and their respective youth baptisms. The level of correlation among the variables is not significant enough to indicate a correlation between the two variables. In
Table 9. Relationship between demographic information of youth ministers in the population and youth baptisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristic</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours Spent in Office</td>
<td>.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Current Position</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students at Camp</td>
<td>.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Spent on School Campuses</td>
<td>.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours in Youth Minister's Workweek</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students in Leadership Program</td>
<td>-.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Pastor Age</td>
<td>.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Experience in Paid Youth Ministry</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education (1=high school, 2=some college, 3=college, 4=graduate, 5=post graduate)</td>
<td>-.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Paid Individuals on Youth Staff</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

comparison, the demographic information of the churches where the youth ministers serve revealed strong correlations.

Table 10 shows the correlative data between the church demographics and youth baptisms in the population. Where “hours spent in office” (the highest correlative statistic in youth ministers’ demographics) had a .176 correlation with youth baptisms (which is insignificant), “primary worship service attendance” had a statistically significant correlation at .903. All of the church demographics reviewed in this study have a highly significant correlation with youth baptisms. Even the lowest correlative church demographic on the list, “resident members”, has a correlation that is 4 times higher than the highest youth minister demographic.

Table 11 shows the ratios between the averages of the demographic information of the churches and the average number of youth baptisms. This information could be very helpful in determining benchmarks for effective local church youth
Table 10. Relationship between study participants’ church demographics and youth baptisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristic</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary worship service attendance</td>
<td>.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total church baptisms</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sunday school</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Sunday school</td>
<td>.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident members</td>
<td>.795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Ratios of church demographics to youth baptisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth baptisms/Primary worship service attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth baptisms/Total church baptisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth baptisms/Total Sunday school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth baptisms/Youth Sunday school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving/Youth baptisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth baptisms/Resident members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

evangelism. The churches in the study baptized 2.12% of their primary worship service attendance. Therefore, to benchmark with the churches in the study, a church with 1000 people in their primary worship services should baptize at least 21 students. As a portion of overall church baptisms, youth baptisms comprised 26.18% of the people who were baptized. The churches in the study also baptized 12.09% of their youth Sunday school attendance.

Several observations about the church demographics are helpful in understanding the makeup of churches in the top 100 in youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention. The size of the churches may be a significant factor in their high
number of baptisms. For example, 80 of the 103 churches included in the study reported a primary worship service attendance of 1000 or more. Four more churches reported primary worship service attendance in the 900's. Ninety-five of the 103 churches reported annual giving of over $1 million. Forty-two of the 103 churches reported giving of over $10 million dollars. In summary, the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention with the highest numbers of youth baptisms seem to be numerically large.

**Evaluation of the Research Design**

The purpose of this research was to understand the relationship between selected ministry factors and effective local church youth evangelism. This has been accomplished by utilizing a delphi method of research. Overall, the research method accomplished the intended purpose. Strengths and weaknesses are apparent after completing this study. After completing the study, this researcher understands that the methodology has certain strengths and weaknesses.

One strength of the study lies in the practical nature of the research. From a review of the precedent literature, no comprehensive works were available on the subject of youth evangelism. Furthermore, thousands of Southern Baptist churches did not baptize one young person in 2005. Churches need real help from experts that they can use to reach students in their community.

Another strength of this research methodology was the choice of population. One of the most important aspects of a delphi study is careful selection of the population. The North American Mission Board’s compilation of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms served as a great tool in pointing to churches where effective local church youth evangelism is happening. The response of the youth ministers at these churches was
solid and the insight they provided both in the surveys and the follow-up interviews exceeded expectations.

Certain improvements could also have been made in this research. Upon review of the ministry factors from round 1, this researcher placed preaching and programming in the same ministry factor. A better choice would have been to designate preaching as a single ministry factor and relevant programming as another ministry factor. Reorganizing the single ministry factor into two would have allowed the respondents to consider more specifically each of the ministry factors.

Another improvement that could have helped the study would have been to allow respondents to provide an open-ended response regarding challenges and obstacles to effective local church youth evangelism. The methodology in the study identified the ministry factors that share a relationship with effective evangelism. However, the study did little to point to the hindrances to effective local church youth evangelism. By understanding the challenges these youth ministers face, potential strategies for overcoming these challenges could be developed.
CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH DESIGN

In this concluding chapter, this researcher will discuss the extent to which the findings of the current study will help the reader better understand the relationship between ministry factors and effective youth evangelism. Conclusions from the answers to the research questions will be given. Finally, suggestions for further research will be examined and summarized.

Research Purpose

As the church moves further into the twenty-first century, the changing culture will present new challenges for youth ministers looking to make an evangelistic impact. In 2008, 24,000 Southern Baptist churches baptized zero young people (Childress 2008, 1). However, several churches have excelled in evangelizing young people. In 2008, the 103 churches included as a part of this study baptized a total of 8,832 students with an average of 86 youth baptisms in each church. In 2008, one church in Texas baptized over 1000 students (Center for Mission Research 2008, 1). Certain youth ministries seem to have great success in reaching young people.

This research identified the relationship between ministry factors and effective evangelistic youth ministries. A delphi technique was utilized to gather a list of the effective ministry factors and arrive at a rank-ordered list of these ministry factors by
effectiveness. Youth ministers of effective evangelistic youth ministries in the Southern Baptist Convention served as the sample for the study.

**Research Questions**

The following three research questions were utilized in this study:

1. What ministry factors are the most effective in evangelizing youth ages 12 to 17?

2. What reasons do youth ministers give for indicating certain ministry factors as effective in evangelizing youth?

3. What correlation exists, if any, between the demographic information of youth ministers of effective evangelistic youth ministries and the number of youth that are baptized in their ministries?

**Research Implications**

The following section will show implications of this study. This research has the potential to impact the way local churches do evangelism with young people.

Currently, limited research exists regarding the factors that are present in the conversion of young people. This research fills a gap in understanding what ministry factors are effective in local church youth evangelism. Most of the findings in this study can be traced back to references in the precedent literature. Implications will be organized according to each of the top 15 ministry factors in effectively evangelizing young people.

**Prayer and Reliance Upon God**

Overwhelmingly, youth ministers chose prayer and reliance upon God as the most important ministry factor in evangelizing young people. The pilot study, actual research study, and follow-up interviews all point to this ministry factor as the most effective. One respondent said:
Prayer is a very important part of our ministry. We have a time each week where our staff meets together with the parents in our ministry to pray for their students. We also have a prayer team as a part of our student leadership team that prays each week before our Wednesday night services. Our plan is to eventually have this team of students pray together throughout the entire worship service each week.

The precedent literature showed several references to prayer and its importance in youth evangelism.

In 1998, Gina Howard wrote about the importance of prayer in evangelism in an article entitled “Winning youth through intercessory prayer ministry.” In the ministry where Howard served, intentional intercessory prayer became the backbone of their evangelism process. She experienced a movement of students, adult volunteers, and parents feeling burdened about the unchurched people around them. Along with sending out evangelism teams and starting evangelistic conversations, they used prayer walking, intercession for the lost, and specific prayer meetings as an intentional effort to bring their requests before the Lord (Howard 1997, 111-17).

The definition of evangelism used for the purposes of this study points to dependence as vital to evangelism. Chuck Lawless defined evangelism as “being, doing, and telling the good news of Jesus Christ, depending upon the triune God to draw His own unto Himself and His church” (Lawless 2001, 2). At the core of evangelism, according to Lawless, is a dependence upon God to draw people to Himself. Evangelism is not necessarily a predictable cause and effect, programmed response, social phenomenon that we can observe and replicate with certainty. Lawless, and a consensus on the youth ministers of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention, agree that a dependence upon God is vital to reaching people.
Rahn and Linhart also devoted writing to show how a dedicated prayer life could impact a youth ministry. Their study of students who effectively reached their friends revealed that students praying for unchurched students by name was a component of an effective evangelistic process. Rahn and Linhart observed that students would carry notecards in their pockets and backpacks in an effort to remember the names of unchurched friends who needed prayer (Rahn and Linhart 2000, 118-19). In the follow-up interviews, interviewees 6, 7, and 9 all indicated that they regularly observed students praying for their friends by name.

Thom Rainer noted that a fervent prayer ministry was a key factor in effective evangelistic churches. While Rainer’s study looked generally at evangelistic churches, the respondents noted that church support was vital to the evangelistic effectiveness of the youth ministry. The prayer ministries of the churches in Rainer’s study exhibited the same characteristics the youth ministers described in the follow-up interviews. They prayed for unchurched people by name, gathered together specifically for the purpose of prayer, and exhorted the leaders of the church to pray for the unchurched.

*A Passionate Youth Pastor*

Before the members of the Sanhedrin and in danger of losing their life for preaching the gospel, apostles Peter and John told the members of the Sanhedrin, “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). The youth ministers in the study noted this same perspective of passion and persistence as the second most important ministry factor in reaching young people. Above any program or method, the driving burn in a person’s heart was valued most. Michael Green points out, “There is no denying the zeal and the sense of discovery which marked the witness of the
early church in both their public and their private testimony, in both their written and
their spoken word” (Green 2003, 317). Reflecting on his own life, a youth minister in the
study explained, “Through the years of ministry, I have seen that my direct relationship
with Jesus mirrors the health of the student ministry. When I am devoted to the King in
prayer, Scripture and other forms of worship, I am better at loving my family and leading
the ministry of sharing Christ’s love with the students.”

The precedent literature also pointed to Dwight L. Moody as a man who had
this kind of passion for reaching students. Moody would stop at nothing to reach the
young people in his community. Moody would sometimes minister non-stop on Sundays
from early morning until late at night with only a few crackers and cheese to eat (Moody
1900, 58). Interviewee 1, who saw over 182 baptisms in his ministry in 2008, saw this
same kind of passion in their youth ministry. He said, “It’s contagious when you see it
from the top down. I see them [the members of our youth ministry staff] constantly
talking about reaching the lost. This passion is the driving force in our ministry.
Students, parents, and leaders constantly hear about evangelism.” This interviewee later
used terms such as, “whatever it takes,” “stop at nothing,” and “relentless” to describe
what their youth ministry is doing to reach the students in their community.

The early pioneers of youth ministry had to be passionate to reach students.
They ministered in a day with little or no resources to reach students. Most started their
ministry with simply anyone who would listen. George Williams, who later become the
founder of the YMCA, started the organization with his morally challenged coworkers
(Borgman 1987, 64). One of the churches included in this research study had a total
church budget of over $80,000,000. Most youth ministry in the earliest days was started
with no budget and no formal concept of adolescence. Jack Wyrtzen with Word of Life and Jim Rayburn with Young Life had little more than a Bible and a burning in their hearts to reach students.

**Evangelism as a Core Value**

In the evangelistic mandate, in Matthew 28, Jesus says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.” These are Jesus’ last words before ascending into heaven. A person’s last words are important and can make a great impact on the hearers. Jesus communicated that to go with the gospel was of utmost importance.

The respondents in this research project felt strongly that youth evangelistic youth ministries will “Make evangelism a core value in your mission/vision statement and talk about it often.” In Matthew 28, Jesus commanded his disciples to go out to the nations. Evangelism had to be at the core of what they did. Jesus’ hearers then stopped at nothing to go out and share the gospel in the most remote parts of the known earth.

**Peer-to-Peer Evangelism**

A large amount of the precedent literature points to peer relationships as a common element in new religious decisions. Conversion research, biblical history, contemporary studies on youth ministry, and biblical theology all point to relational networks as key to evangelism. Those who desire to reach students with the gospel should consider recruiting, training, and empowering students to share the gospel with their friends. Driscoll noted that people need “trustworthy friendships with someone in a church who can serve as tour guide, introducing them to the language, values, and systems of the church” (Driscoll 2004, 67). One respondent noted in the study, “When our students who are passionate about their relationships with Jesus, invest in their
friends and share Jesus with them or invite them to church, it is the most influential factor. Personal relationships are the foremost factor in students accepting Jesus.

In conversion research, Wilson and Dobbelare found that the majority of religious conversion experiences occurred in the context of interpersonal relationships. Studying the Nichiren Shoshu converts in Britain, the researchers found that only 6% of the recent converts encountered the religion outside of pre-existing relationships. 94% of the new adherents met the movement through their normal social interaction (Wilson and Dobbelare 1994, 50). David Snow also presents the argument that existing social networks are the most common bridge to those entering new religious movements (Snow 1980, 432). Lofland and Stark identified new relationships as a key factor in the conversion process (Lofland and Stark 1965, 870).

In biblical history, the first thing Andrew did after coming to faith in Jesus was go and find his brother Simon and he told him about the Messiah. Pantaenus led Clement of Alexandria to Christ, and Justin led the early church father Tatian to Christ (Green 2003, 339). Ananias was influential in Paul’s life when he made a visit to the house where Paul was staying. Ananias, formerly expressing fear about seeing Saul the persecutor, went beyond his comfort zone and visited Paul in love. In a home environment, Ananias went so far as to address Saul as “brother” (Acts 9:17).

In contemporary youth ministry research, Bergler and Rahn found that the influence of a friend was a significant factor in the conversion of teenagers with little family religious involvement and for those with no memorable religious experiences as a child (Bergler and Rahn 2006, 71). Rahn and Linhart sought to discover the common factors in youth ministries where evangelism was the norm. They found that a strong
student leadership program, with an emphasis on evangelism, was a common factor among evangelistic youth ministries. The researchers concluded that the gospel could more easily spread through the relationships built by these student leaders (Rahn and Linhart 2000, 9).

Developmental theory also points to peers as a possible highly influential element in the evangelism process. Fowler’s synthetic-conventional stage proposes that adolescence is a period of life where young people’s faith is conformed to the identity of the group in which they interact (Fowler 1995, 154). By encouraging students to form safe relationships whereby students can share the gospel with their friend, the connection between the students can break down barriers to communicating about weighty spiritual topics.

_A Supportive Senior Pastor_

Francis Clark was a pastor in Maine in the days before high-end technology and an abundance of youth ministry resources. He was a man who had a passion to reach teenagers. Young people would frequently gather at his house for fellowship and encouragement. Clark encouraged these young people to commit themselves to Christian values. Instead of merely treating teenagers as children, Clark had a distinct vision for ministering to youth in the unique period of adolescence (Clark 1916, 14).

The youth ministers in this research project spoke highly of their senior pastors and the support those senior pastors bring to the youth ministers. Not only did the youth ministers mention their senior pastors as supportive, they explained that the senior pastor often stood as a shining example of a person who personally evangelizes others. Three interviewees in the follow-up interviews spoke of frequently hearing their pastor tell
stories of their personal witnessing encounters. Not one of the interviewees mentioned a lack of support from their senior pastor in the evangelistic endeavors of the youth ministry. One youth minister encouraged, “If the Senior Pastor has no vision to reach students, then the church will not reach students.”

**Adult Volunteers**

Based strongly on adult volunteers, Sunday school is a common component in many Southern Baptist churches. Jeff Hessinger, student pastor at First Baptist Church of Temple Terrace, Florida, said, “Over the past six years I have seen the FAITH Sunday school evangelism strategy focus our ministry’s attention and energy on the Great Commission” (Hessinger 199, 25). Rainer also concluded that a healthy and evangelistic Sunday school ministry was prevalent in the effective evangelistic churches he studied (Rainer 1996, 81-97). One may conclude that the adult volunteers who lead those youth Sunday school classes play a vital role in reaching students.

One youth minister spoke highly of his adult leadership team that went out and reaching young people with the gospel. His team seemed to work autonomously without his involvement. The youth minister conveyed a sense of pride and admiration for these adults. The adult team would go to football games, meet students for lunch at school, and encourage students to pray specifically for their unchurched friends.

**Preaching and Programming**

Rainer pointed to a strong pulpit ministry as a prominent characteristic of effective evangelistic churches (Rainer 1996, 14-15). Interviewee 8 echoed Rainer’s assessment of the importance of preaching. He explained that a large portion of the
evangelistic effort of their youth ministry was focused on evangelistic preaching and calling students to repentance and faith.

In contrast, Tony Jones articulated a view for a different form of evangelism (Jones 2001, 112-43). Jones’ recommendation for effective evangelism in the current ministry context calls for evangelists not to focus so much on bringing people to a point of decision for Christ. Rather, Jones argues that salvation occurs when individuals encounter a community of believers and trust Christ in connection with others. According to Jones, the faith decision is not necessarily when individuals come to Christ. Furthermore, Jones contends that sermons are best understood as a web and no so much point-by-point messages through propositional truths (Jones 2001, 127).

Two of the interviewees during the follow-up conversations described a form of evangelistic preaching that would be contrary to what Jones considers to be effective. These youth ministers regularly stood in front of students in a large group setting and preached gospel messages with the intent of bringing students to a decision to trust Christ. The round 1 surveys also indicated that evangelistic gospel preaching at summer camp was an effective component of a youth ministry’s evangelism strategy.

In Acts 2, Peter preaches to a large crowd gathered around him. With the large crowd in mind, Peter stands and presents a point-by-point gospel presentation. After the sermon, Peter gives an invitation and calls for the individuals in the crowd to repent and be baptized. The effect of his preaching, through the work of the Holy Spirit, brought 3000 people to accept the message of the gospel and be baptized. The new believers may have eventually entered into a community of believers, but they began their journey as Christians with individual decisions made after hearing a propositional gospel
Jim Rayburn championed relevant methods of programming in youth ministry. He sought to introduce adolescents to the idea that faith in God could be fun, exhilarating, and life changing. Rayburn developed a collection of relevant and engaging games that pointed young people toward spiritual truths. One of Rayburn’s famous quotes was, “It’s a sin to bore a kid” (Young Life 2009, aboutyounglife/history.htm). Relevancy became a focal point for the ministry of Young Life and this same value continues through contemporary youth ministry.

Programming seemed to become a secondary issue in the discussion of evangelizing young people. Programming would include the specific methods that the youth ministers were using to reach students. What seemed much more important than the actual programs was the sense of passion that drove the youth minister and his team to do the programs. Those who desire to reach young people must think passion before programs.

Love, Value, and Belonging

While Jones’ denouncement of propositional, decision-based gospel preaching may not have ties with examples in this research, Jones’ emphasis on the importance of community was echoed by the participants. Jones stressed that the community of believers is vital in evangelism (Jones 2001, 82-109). A youth minister in the round 1 survey explained:

Sounds simple, but so many places are not a place where students feel welcomed and loved. We have worked hard to train student leaders to not just greet, but show the love of Jesus when people arrive. Our goal is for no one to make it in the building more than two steps before they are given a hug, asked how they are, and they are greeted. Belonging comes before believing. When we accomplish this, we reach people, when we slack, we don’t. It is that simple.
Conversion research also points to the importance of love, value, and belonging.

In the book *Cults and New Religious Movements: A Reader*, Lorne L. Dawson studied the process of conversion and recruitment to new religions. He concluded that “Affective ties are important to new recruits” (Dawson 2003, 119-20). Those who undergo a new religious commitment do so often in environments with people they enjoy. Lofland and Stark also noted the prevalence of a sense of belonging in new religious commitments. The new converts they interviewed spoke highly of the vibrancy, warmth, openness, joy, and positive outlook of the members they first met in the new group (Lofland and Stark 1965, 870). Wilson and Dobbelaere saw a third of the respondents in their study indicate “the quality of the membership” as a primary reason initially associating with the new faith community (Wilson and Dobbelaere 1994, 50).

**Mid-Week Program**

One of the respondents answered, “Throughout the school year we have a weekly Wednesday night service geared toward reaching teenagers in 6th - 12th grade. We consistently give opportunities on these nights for students to accept Christ.” This researcher did not review anything in the precedent literature that pointed specifically to a Wednesday night program as effective in reaching young people. Nonetheless, the respondents in the survey formed a consensus that the mid-week program can be used as a great tool in reaching young people. Speaking of a Wednesday night program, one respondent noted:

> You have to speak, program, and create an environment at your church that forms a partnership between you and your students. They live on mission, share Jesus to their friends, and bring them... and you provide a great environment for a lost person to come. It is not being seeker sensitive; just sensible. We do this primarily through our Wednesday night service.
Hospitality

Hospitality was highly valued among the participants in this study. The precedent literature points toward community and openness to outsiders as key to the conversion process. Lofland and Stark found that conversion usually happens when relationships between pre-convert and group members develop (Lofland and Stark 1965, 870). An environment of hospitality can help associate newcomers. A youth minister at a church who saw 48 youth baptisms in 2008, said, “We have trained a group of teenagers about the importance of hospitality. The number ONE reason teenagers avoid church is fear of rejection and nervousness. When teenagers eliminate that obstacle for each other it breaks down all the barriers to growth. It creates a safe place.”

The youth minister further described a story of how one student purposefully connected with new students every week. He explained how a 10th grade girl stands at the door of their large meeting room and waits to greet a girl that she does not know. She then sits with that girl during the large-group message and then walks her to her small group room. After the class is over, the 10th grade girl in his ministry then writes a follow-up note to the girl who visited. The youth minister explained that this girl repeats this same process nearly every time that a visitor comes. He also affirmed that this one young lady has helped connect almost a dozen young people to their youth ministry. The tone of his voice seemed to exhibit great pride in this young lady.

Supportive Church Body

Unfortunately, no precedent literature was found that specifically points to a supportive church body as a factor in reaching students. However, the follow-up interviews revealed that youth ministers in the study felt that the evangelistic intensity of
their youth ministry was a component of the overall evangelistic ministry of the church. Without the earnest support of senior pastors and the overall church body, it would be difficult to imagine that these youth ministries would have the effectiveness that they experience. One of the youth ministers commented:

Many youth pastors want to be cutting edge, reach the lost on their terms, and forget that a whole church staff is with them in the battle. I have a pastor that is aware of the need to reach students and gives full backing and support along with a supervisor that challenges me to be creative in reaching students. Needless to say, a pastor and staff that back you will put their money where their mouth is and fund your ministry in the budget. They will also cast vision about your area to other church leadership, finance advisors, etc. With the backing and blessing of staff and Pastor, you have a green light to reach students under the authority of the church you are ministering in.

**Accountability**

When it comes to helping students share the gospel with their friends, accountability was a common theme among the respondents in the survey.

Accountability for evangelism happened mostly in the context of ongoing relationships between adult volunteers and students. One youth minister explained:

Students need to be held accountable for their faithfulness. However they will follow the leadership of their adults. The youth pastor is expected to be faithful as that is our job. The real meaningful change comes when students know they can expect to see their adults with them and available to them. My adults are considered mini-pastors and I expect them to spearhead issues and be the frontline.

Rahn and Linhart concluded that a strong student leadership program should view peer-to-peer evangelism as a top priority. The student leadership programs they observed involved adults meeting with students on a regular basis to help students in their commitments to the leadership program (Rahn and Linhart 2000, 19).
**Preaching Repentance**

The theology portion of the precedent literature detailed the necessity of repentance in coming to faith in Christ. Conversion happens when a person is regenerated by the work of the Holy Spirit and that person then repents of sin and places faith and trust in Christ. (Vine, Unger, and White 1985, 128). A youth minister at a church with 76 youth baptisms in 2008 remarked:

> Evangelism should focus much time on helping students understand that their sin is an offense to a holy God and not just "bad things." Until a student realizes that he/she needs a savior they will not understand our evangelism apart from it being an attempt to self promote a church, denomination, etc. Students must see that their sin is something that breaks the heart of God and they must be willing to turn from it to Christ.

In the follow-up interview, this youth minister spoke of how he preaches verse-by-verse expository messages to his students and calls them to a point of repentance and decision.

**Summer Camp**

The precedent literature pointed to summer camp and off-campus overnight activities as effective in reaching students. Summer camp did make the list of the top 15 ministry factors but it was ranked last. Despite the lower ranking, the youth ministers mentioned summer camp as effective in reaching teenagers. The youth minister at the Southern Baptist church with the sixth highest number of youth baptisms stated:

> Our camp is a big deal. Our students know that camp will be fun and worship will be awesome. The ultimate purpose is to bring kids to Christ. The students who are Christians will be challenged in their walks with the Lord. Our students know that camp is for their lost friends. They are encouraged to bring as many lost friends as possible. Our church provides scholarships for students who can't afford it. The gospel is shared with each student that goes to camp.

Bergler and Rahn also concluded that the intentional relational environment of a camp or retreat is conducive for seeing young people come to faith in Christ (Bergler and Rahn
Conversion research also shows that physical and psychological separation from normal environments, combined with intense interaction with group participants, plays an important role in long lasting life change (Lofland and Stark, 1965; Straus, 1979).

Two respondents indicated that summer camp needs to change. The respondents were unimpressed with models of summer camp that overemphasized fun and games at the expense of strong biblical teaching and practical ministry experience. They argued that many youth summer camps are about fun and games and are becoming less appealing to students. One youth minister said:

This generation wants to be a part of something bigger than themselves, they want and need a cause to be a part of. They need to be given big opportunities to do big things. This will draw even lost kids. In my experience, the days of camps are coming to a close for this very reason. Students can hang out with friends and vacation with friends anytime so going with the church is no big deal. What most students would rather do is dump the camps and go do something that makes a difference. I believe in the next 10-15 years we will see camps along with their cheesy entertainment style fun dead and mission trips thriving!

Parents Leading Children to Christ

The youth ministers in the study indicated, “Parents leading children to Christ” as the 7th most important factor in reaching young people. Michael Green pointed out the importance of the family in his book *Evangelism and the Early Church* (Green 2003, 318-21). Steve Wright’s recent book *ReThink* details how youth ministries should co-champion the family and the church (Wright 2007, 75). Wright challenges the status quo of youth ministry and asks church leaders to evaluate whether the current youth ministry model is working. Voddie Baucham, in his book *The Family Driven Faith*, contends that the current youth ministry model is unbiblical. With Steve Wright, Voddie Baucham, and others standing up to declare the importance of parents and family in youth ministry, it is
interesting that the respondents in this research study indicated parents as the 7th most important factor in evangelizing young people.

One of the youth ministers in the study seemed to have a vision for encouraging parents to evangelize and disciple their children. This particular youth minister even mentioned Steve Wright by name as an influencer in his life. However, this youth minister did not provide a plethora of specific recommendations as to how to help parents lead their children to Christ. He did mention that if a student makes a decision to trust Christ as a youth event or summer camp then a youth staff member would call their parents that evening.

This research project reveals that the process of moving youth ministries to further emphasize parents and families has a long way to go. When forced to rank-order the importance of ministry factors, youth ministers promoted 6 other factors, including adult volunteers and a passionate youth minister, as more important than parents. The youth ministers in the study could have been reflecting on specifically what the youth ministry is doing to reach unchurched and unconnected kids who may not have Christian parents to lead them to Christ. However, this does not negate the middle-ground level of importance that the youth ministers ascribe to parents.

Research Applications

Churches should be considering what they could do to reach the young people in their community. The evangelistic effectiveness in half of all Southern Baptist churches is dismal. In 2008, 24,000 Southern Baptist Convention churches baptized zero young people (Childress 2008, 1). The following conclusions are provided to help churches understand the most important things, according to this study, to reach students.
Churches who want to reach students must be praying churches. Prayer and a genuine reliance upon God are perhaps the most important things a church can do to see God work in a great way in the lives of young people. Churches could ask themselves, “What is our plan for students, parents, adult volunteers, and staff to pray for unchurched students by name?” An intentional plan for calling out to God to work in the hearts of students in the community can take a church from futile evangelistic work to a great outpouring of the Spirit of God.

Churches also need to think seriously about how they might pray for the students in their community. Although the youth ministers in the survey agreed that prayer was important in reaching young people, most had no intentional strategy to pray for unchurched students. Youth ministers should pray consistently, with a team of parents, adult volunteers, and students over the names of unchurched students in the community. When people in the church catch a vision that they need to depend on God for a great work in students’ hearts, and they act on that vision with intentionality and persistence, greater things may happen.

Bible colleges, Christian colleges, and seminaries should offer courses centered on student evangelism. In McNair’s review of 6 Christian academic institutions with youth ministry course offerings, only 1 of the institutions targeted youth evangelism (McNair 2009, 119). In 2008, the population division of the United States Census Bureau estimated there to be 41,568,985 young people between the ages of 10 and 18 years old (http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrhlNC-EST2008-sa.html). With over 41 million young people in the U.S., 24,000 churches in the largest protestant denomination in the world baptizing zero young people, and very little formal training to
reach contemporary teenagers, the gospel effectiveness among youth does not appear to be promising.

Youth ministers must develop a passion for reaching people. A youth minister at one of the largest Southern Baptist churches in America said, “Too many youth pastors expect the students to do it [evangelism] but do not evangelize with their own lives. We need to lead the charge.” The youth minister exhibiting a prominent example of personal evangelism could serve as a motivating factor to ignite peer-to-peer evangelism, volunteer-to-student evangelism, and an overall sense of expectancy for people to come to faith in Christ.

Churches should consider how to hire and keep a qualified and passionate youth minister. The demographic characteristics revealed that in the top 100 churches in youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention, the mean age of the youth minister was 34 and the average amount of paid youth ministry experience was 12 years. Some may feel that the role of a youth minister should belong to a younger person who has the energy to keep up with students. This research study showed that the youngest youth minister was 26 years old and the eldest was 51 years old. Some of the youth ministers in the study had Ph.D. degrees and most had completed graduate level studies.

There is a gap in the literature that is substantial enough to support a comprehensive book on youth evangelism. While the number of titles relating to evangelism, missions, youth ministry, and church growth are numerous, there is no contemporary comprehensive work on evangelizing students. A proper treatment on the subject would include a history of youth evangelism, a review of different methods of
youth evangelism, and current models and examples of youth evangelism. The work could also review current parachurch efforts to reach students.

A book written specifically on youth evangelism could be helpful in youth ministry classes, church youth teams, and even parachurch ministry training. A writer could take portions of this research project and inquire further with the youth ministers in the study to gain more insight into what they are specifically doing to reach young people. A work on youth evangelism could have great influence on how churches are aiming to reach young people.

Churches could take the list of the top 15 ministry factors and evaluate their ministry based on them. They could ask themselves whether evangelism is a core value in their mission or vision statement. Youth ministers could develop a plan to get students to talk to their friends about Jesus. Senior pastors should ask themselves whether they are ready to do what it takes to lead their church to reach young people. The sermons preached by youth ministers should be evaluated on whether they emphasize repentance and are relevant to students.

The study also indicated that “parents leading their child to Christ” is an important ministry factor in reaching young people. While the current study is aimed specifically at what youth ministries and do to reach young people, youth ministers must realize that parents can be key in leading young people to Christ. Some students do not have a Christian mother and father. However, youth ministries should still plan to reach unchurched parents and lead entire families to Christ. Youth ministers can also help parents understand developmental theory and the specific life stage of students in middle
and high school. This type of teaching could aid parents in leading their children to become lifelong Christ-followers.

With current trends pointed toward a change in how youth ministries work with families, the present time may be fertile for real change to be made in helping parents become the primary shepherds in the life of their children. This research study revealed that according to the youth ministers in the population, parents are not nearly as important as other factors. If churches are to help equip mothers and fathers to more proactively engage their children in spiritual connections, great change must take place in youth ministry.

Leadership also appeared to be an important factor in evangelizing young people. It could be argued that the top 5 ministry factors in evangelizing young people are leadership factors. Leadership is not simply a program. It seems that if churches want to get serious about reaching young people, they must find and develop men and women with leadership capabilities in reaching young people. Table 12 shows the possible connections between the ministry factors and leadership.

**Research Limitations**

This study identified the ministry factors that are effective in local church youth evangelism. The study was not meant to describe how every local church youth ministry might evangelize young people. Although statistical methods were applied to the data, the ministry factors mentioned are based solely on the perceptions of the youth ministers in the sample. Because of the limited breadth of the sample size and the delimitations of the study, the data derived from the study might not necessarily generalize to churches of all sizes, ethnographies, locations, and denominations. All of
Table 12. Relationship between ministry factors and leadership implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry Factor</th>
<th>Leadership implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students</td>
<td>The youth minister must lead his team to develop a burden for crying to God to save the souls of young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A youth pastor who is passionate about evangelism as an example to students</td>
<td>Youth ministers must be an example to adult volunteers, parents, and students. The youth minister cannot expect what he is not doing himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make evangelism a core value in your mission/vision statement and talk about it often</td>
<td>The youth minister must cast a vision for reaching people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train and encourage students to witness to other students</td>
<td>The youth minister must equip others to evangelize. He should encourage those who are in the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A senior pastor who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel</td>
<td>The senior pastor cannot keep himself out of the equation of reaching young people. He must support his team leaders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the sampled churches employed a youth minister. Therefore the findings of the study may not generalize to churches without a person in the position of youth minister. Furthermore, the findings of the study may not generalize to churches outside the Southern Baptist Convention or to churches around the world.

Suggestions for Further Research

This researcher has several suggestions for further research. First, a researcher may develop a similar Delphi study utilizing particular demographic characteristics as a determining factor in choosing the population (churches in one state, a certain size, ethnicity, etc.). The particular culture of the state, socioeconomic status surrounding the church, or ethnicity may reveal new information about how to do effective evangelistic
youth ministry in the local church. A sample other than the one in the current research may provide different and significant results.

Second, a researcher may take the top 15 ministry factors deemed to be effective in evangelizing youth and test their frequency in a number of youth ministries to determine whether they have a correlation with effectiveness. The results of such a study would support or weaken the findings of the current study or provide new information about evangelizing teens. Such a study would be worthwhile.

Thirdly, a researcher could take the top ministry factor, prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students, and do a descriptive study of youth ministries where that ministry factor is a main priority. Similar to former youth evangelism studies, a researcher could ask local denominational leaders, youth ministry professors, and youth ministers for names of youth ministries who exemplify the most effective ministry factor. By studying those youth ministries, a researcher may then discover the characteristics that go into the particular ministry factor.

Fourth, a large amount of work could be conducted on the link between the evangelistic effectiveness of the overall church and the evangelistic effectiveness of the youth ministry. What is happening in churches that have a large number of children and adult baptisms but very few youth baptisms? What is happening in churches that have a large number of youth baptisms but very few children or adult baptisms?

**Conclusion**

What will youth ministries do in the next year, decade, and century to evangelize young people? With over half of all Southern Baptist churches baptizing zero young people, the current approach to youth ministry certainly has room for improvement
Will youth ministers develop a passion for reaching young people? Will churches seek to hire qualified youth ministers with strong leadership skills that can rally a team and foster the support of his senior pastor and his church? Will parents become more vigilant in taking a role in leading their children to faith in Christ? Only time will tell how youth ministry will change. The world has yet to see what will happen if 1000’s more churches will develop a passion and embrace a vision to do whatever it takes to reach this next generation for Christ.
August 6, 2009

Dear [Youth Minister Name],

My name is Dustin Schadt and I am a youth pastor at a church in Louisville, Ky. You are a youth minister at one of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms in the SBC. I need your help.

I'm conducting research as a part of the fulfillment for the degree Doctor of Philosophy at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I want to find out what you are doing to reach young people.

**Why?**
In 2005, **23,000** Southern Baptist Churches baptized **zero** young people (Childress 2005, 1) None. In 23,000 churches, not one young person was baptized. Is that alarming? This is where you come in. Your ministry reaches young people. I (and over 20,000 churches) need your experience, wisdom, and insight.

**What do you want me to do?**
Complete a 3-round survey. I know you are busy. I assure you this will not take up much of your time. In my pilot study for this project, one respondent said "Survey was easy, clear, and fast.." 
Round 1 will take about 10 minutes.
Round 2 will take about 5 minutes. You'll take this survey in about two weeks.
Round 3 will take about 3 minutes. You'll take this survey in about three weeks.
In each round you will answer questions on youth evangelism. I consider you to be an expert on this subject and your help is greatly appreciated.

If you complete all three rounds of the survey, I'll give you a $25 gift certificate to Borders bookstore and offer you a $1000 scholarship for one of your students to attend Boyce College (www.boycecollege.edu).

**How do I participate?**
Go here for the first round or copy and paste the following link into your browser: http://thirst2009.wufoo.com/forms/round-1-survey/
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at dschadt@email.com. My cell phone number is (502) 555-1997.

DJS
APPENDIX 2

ENLISTMENT FOLLOW UP EMAIL

August 11, 2009

Dear [Youth Minister Name],

You are busy. You have 5,000 things to do before the end of the day. Several guys have already gotten on board with the project and today I need your help.

My name is Dustin Schadt and I am a youth pastor at a church in Louisville, Ky. According to NAMB, you are a youth minister at one of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms in the SBC.

I'm conducting research as a part of the fulfillment for the degree Doctor of Philosophy at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I want to find out what you are doing to reach young people.

Why?
In 2005, 23,000 Southern Baptist Churches baptized zero young people (Childress 2005, 1) None. In 23,000 churches, not one young person was baptized. Is that alarming?

What do you want me to do?
Complete a 3-round survey. I know you are busy. I assure you this will not take up much of your time. In my pilot study for this project, one respondent said "Survey was easy, clear, and fast..." Round 1 will take about 10 minutes. Round 2 will take about 5 minutes. You'll take this survey in about two weeks. Round 3 will take about 3 minutes. You'll take this survey in about three weeks. In each round you will answer questions on youth evangelism. I consider you to be an expert on this subject and your help is greatly appreciated.

If you complete all three rounds of the survey, I'll give you a $25 gift certificate to Borders, Chick-Fil-A, Starbucks, or Amazon.com and a $1000 scholarship for one of your students to attend Boyce College (www.boycecollege.edu).

How do I participate?
Go here for the first round or copy and paste the following link into your browser:
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

My email is dschadt@email.com and my cell phone number is (502) 555-1997.

Dustin Schadt
August 21, 2009

Dear [Youth Minister Name],

I want to thank you for time and willingness to be a part of something that has great potential to help us reach the next generation!

I only need 5 more participants to begin the study on youth evangelism in the local church. You're an expert!

What do you want me to do?
Complete a 3-round survey. I know you are busy. I assure you this will not take up much of your time. In my pilot study for this project, one respondent said "Survey was easy, clear, and fast."
Round 1 will take about 10 minutes.
Round 2 will take about 5 minutes. You'll take this survey in about two weeks.
Round 3 will take about 3 minutes. You'll take this survey in about three weeks.

In each round you will answer questions on youth evangelism. I consider you to be an expert on this subject and your help is greatly appreciated.

If you complete all three rounds of the survey, I'll give you a $25 gift certificate to:

- Borders
- Chick-Fil-A
- Starbucks, or
- Amazon.com

I can also offer a $1000 scholarship for one of your students to attend Boyce College (www.boycecollege.edu).

How do I participate?
Go here for the first round or copy and paste the following link into your browser:
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. My email is dschadt@email.com and my cell phone number is (502) 555-1997.

Dustin Schadt
August 29, 2009

Dear [Youth Minister Name],

Help! This is the last time I'll email to get guys on board for this youth evangelism project.

We have 36 youth pastors on board and this Monday is the deadline to enter.

To complete round 1 of 3, go to:


Thanks for your time and help!

Dustin
APPENDIX 5

ROUND 1 SURVEY

Round 1 of 3 - Introduction
The purpose of this survey is to discover the relationship between ministry factors and effective local church youth evangelism.

All information gathered from this survey is CONFIDENTIAL and will be reported ANONYMOUSLY. The data, as reported, will not be attributed by name to any individual. Your privacy will be fully protected. At no time will your name be reported or in any way identified with your responses. You will be asked to rate your honest opinion on questions regarding local church youth evangelism. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

Clicking the "submit" button at the end of the survey will serve as your informed consent for the use of your anonymous responses to be included in the research.

Please:
• Be as specific as you can on each response.
• Be as honest and accurate as you can.
• DO NOT answer in terms of what you would like to see happen. Rather, reflect upon your ministry experience.
• DO answer in terms of what you have observed.
• Be thoughtful about your responses.
• Do NOT share your responses with anyone.

This is Round 1 of 3 in the survey process. After a few brief demographic questions, round 1 will gather ministry factors from the respondents.

Round 2 will then include a list of all of the unique ministry factors listed by respondents in round 1. After reading each ministry factor, respondents will be asked to rate the importance of that ministry factor in youth ministry evangelism on a 4-point scale.

In round 3, the top twenty ministry factors from round 2 will be listed and respondents will have the opportunity to rank order the factors from most important to least important. This researcher will then compile all of the rank-ordered answers and determine the rank-ordered consensus among the group.
Terms Important for This Research

Effective Evangelistic Youth Ministry
For the purposes of this study, an effective evangelistic youth ministry is one that falls in the top 100 in the number of youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention as reported on the annual church profile in 2008.

Evangelism
Chuck Lawless, Dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth, defines evangelism as “being, doing, and telling the good news of Jesus Christ, depending upon the triune God to draw His own unto Himself and His church” (Lawless 2002). Evangelism must not only be about winning converts but leading them to blend into the local church body.

Ministry Factors
Ministry factors are the variables within a given ministry that work toward the overall purposes and goals of the ministry as a whole. Ministry factors may encompass both driving principles as well as the practical outcomes of those principles. The term ministry factors is purposely a broad term used to encompass any one of a number of factors indicated by youth ministry professionals as effective in reaching students with the gospel.

Youth
Throughout this study, the terms “youth,” “young person,” “teenager,” and “student” will be used synonymously to refer to a person between the ages of twelve and seventeen.

Youth Minister
The term youth minister in this research refers to a person in a local church whose responsibilities include “overseeing and correlating the total education program for youth” (Zuck and Benson 1978, 182). The term youth minister can be used synonymously with minister of youth, minister of middle school, minister of high school, middle school minister, and high school minister.

Youth Ministry
Mark A. Lamport, writer and professor of youth ministry, defines youth ministry as:

...the purposive, determined, and persistent quest by both natural and supernatural means to expose, transmit or otherwise share with adolescents God’s message of good news which is central to the Christian faith. Its ultimate end is to cultivate a life transformation of youth by the power of the Holy Spirit that they might be conformed to the revealed will of God as expressed in Scripture, and chiefly in the person of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Lamport 1996, 62)
Demographic Information

Name ________________________________

Church ________________________________

Your Age __________

Years experience in paid youth ministry __________

Years in current position __________

Approximate number of hours you work per week __________

How many of those hours are spent in an office __________

Approximate number of hours you spend on middle and high school campuses each week __________

If your youth ministry does some form of summer camp, how many students did you take last summer? __________

If you have a program of student leadership, how many students are a part of your program? __________

How many paid individuals serve on your youth staff __________

Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

Highest Education Level Attained

☐ Highschool ☐ Some College ☐ College Degree ☐ Graduate ☐ Doctoral

Marital Status

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed

Survey Question

Please answer the following question open and honestly. Keep in mind that ministry factors may include programs, passions, strategies, or specific people. Feel free to provide as many ministry factors as you can recollect. Please title each ministry factor as a way of summarizing your response. You do not need to use every box. Fill in a name for your ministry factor. Then describe the ministry factor in the space below it.
Fill in a name for your ministry factor. Then describe the ministry factor in the space below it.

Please do not share your responses with anyone.

"In your experience, what are the ministry factors you consider to be effective in evangelizing young people?"

**Ministry Factor #1** – ________________________________

Description of ministry factor

**Ministry Factor #2** – ________________________________

Description of ministry factor
Ministry Factor #3 – ______________

Description of ministry factor

Ministry Factor #4 – ______________

Description of ministry factor

Ministry Factor #5 – ______________

Description of ministry factor
Ministry Factor #6 – ________________________

Description of ministry factor

Ministry Factor #7 – ________________________

Description of ministry factor

Ministry Factor #8 – ________________________

Description of ministry factor
Ministry Factor #9 – 

Description of ministry factor

Ministry Factor #10 – 

Description of ministry factor
APPENDIX 6

ROUND 2 SURVEY

Name ________________________________

The list below is a comprehensive list of unique ministry factors given by respondents in round 1. Individual responses you provided may have been merged with others to provide simplicity and specificity to each ministry factor.

All information gathered from this survey is CONFIDENTIAL and will be reported ANONYMOUSLY. The data, as reported, will not be attributed by name to any individual. Your privacy will be fully protected. At no time will your name be reported or in any way identified with your responses. You will be asked to rate your honest opinion on questions regarding local church youth evangelism. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

Clicking the “submit” button at the end of the survey will serve as your informed consent for the use of your anonymous responses to be included in the research.

Please:
• Be as specific as you can on each response.
• Be as honest and accurate as you can.
• DO NOT answer in terms of what you would like to see happen. Rather, reflect upon your ministry experience.
• DO answer in terms of what you have observed.
• Be thoughtful about your responses.
• Do NOT share your responses with anyone.

This is round 2 of 3 in the survey process. Round 1 gathered ministry factors from the respondents.

Round 2 includes a list of all of the unique ministry factors listed by respondents in round 1. After reading each ministry factor, respondents are asked to rate the importance of that ministry factor in youth ministry evangelism on a 4-point scale.

In round 3, the top twenty ministry factors from round 2 will be listed and respondents will have the opportunity to rank order the factors from most important to least important. This researcher will then compile all of the rank-ordered answers and determine the rank-ordered consensus among the group.
Terms Important for This Research

Effective Evangelistic Youth Ministry
For the purposes of this study, an effective evangelistic youth ministry is one that falls in the top 100 in the number of youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention as reported on the annual church profile in 2008.

Evangelism
Chuck Lawless, Dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth, defines evangelism as “being, doing, and telling the good news of Jesus Christ, depending upon the triune God to draw His own unto Himself and His church” (Lawless 2002). Evangelism must not only be about winning converts but leading them to blend into the local church body.

Ministry Factors
Ministry factors are the variables within a given ministry that work toward the overall purposes and goals of the ministry as a whole. Ministry factors may encompass both driving principles as well as the practical outcomes of those principles. The term ministry factors is purposely a broad term used to encompass any one of a number of factors indicated by youth ministry professionals as effective in reaching students with the gospel.

Youth
Throughout this study, the terms “youth,” “young person,” “teenager,” and “student” will be used synonymously to refer to a person between the ages of twelve and seventeen.

Youth Minister
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NOTE:
These are the unique ministry factors compiled from round 1.
Please remember not to share your answers with anyone.

**BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, please rate the effectiveness of each ministry factor:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry Factor</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Extremely Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A conversational method of evangelism</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult volunteers sharing the gospel through one-on-one personal relationships with students</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A senior pastor who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A youth pastor who is passionate about evangelism as an example to students</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use invitations as an opportunity for students to respond to gospel preaching</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner with local parachurch agencies to do campus ministry</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize a specific team of students to go out and witness on a regular basis</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular mid-week program</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home visitation program</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent facilities are a strong tool in evangelizing young people</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth pastors spending time engaging students on local school campuses</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Somewhat Effective</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>Extremely Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend retreats</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize campus Bible studies at students’ schools</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week long crusades as a method for sharing the gospel with students</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize repentance in evangelistic presentations</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use small groups as an evangelistic tool</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach and train students to be hospitable to visitors</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents leading their child to Christ</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping lost students feel a sense of love, value, and belonging within the faith community</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability among the students to do evangelism</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciple Now weekends</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize the F.A.I.T.H. evangelism strategy</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See You At the Pole rallies</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer camp</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat Effective</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>Extremely Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold students to a high level of commitment in evangelism</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach students about the character of God</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service opportunities as an outlet for evangelism</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant preaching and methods of programming</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“High Attendance” emphasis days</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call and write students who visit your church</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use mission trips as a training opportunity to teach students how to do evangelism</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A church body (non-staff) who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make evangelism a core value in your mission/vision statement and talk about it often</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create opportunities for students to invest their time and resources toward a social justice cause</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide authentic and engaging worship experiences targeted toward students</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
August 28, 2009

Dear [Youth Minister Name],

Thank you for sticking with this evangelism project. We have over 40 of the best youth pastors in the country giving their expertise on what it takes to reach the next generation.

This 2nd round of the survey takes less than five minutes to complete.

Please click this link or copy and paste the link below into your browser to complete round 2 of the project.


I consider you to be an expert on this subject and your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dustin Schadt
September 1, 2009

Dear [Youth Minister Name],

The results of this survey are incredibly insightful. Churches need your help!

Please click this link or copy and paste the link below into your browser to complete round 2 of 3 in this project.


I consider you to be an expert on this subject and your help is greatly appreciated.

Dustin
September 9, 2009

Dear [Youth Minister Name],

We are about to move on to the last and shortest round of the survey. I wanted to make sure you were in on round 2 before we all moved on to round 3.

I know you're busy, but if you could take a few minutes and fill out round 2 of the survey, it would be much appreciated. You can copy and paste the link below into your browser:


THANK YOU!

Dustin
APPENDIX 10

ROUND 3 SURVEY

According to the youth ministers of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention in 2008, the top 15 ministry factors for evangelizing youth are listed below.

The purpose of this survey is to discover the relationship between ministry factors and effective local church youth evangelism.

All information gathered from this survey is CONFIDENTIAL and will be reported ANONYMOUSLY. The data, as reported, will not be attributed by name to any individual. Your privacy will be fully protected. At no time will your name be reported or in any way identified with your responses. You will be asked to rate your honest opinion on questions regarding local church youth evangelism. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

Clicking the “submit” button at the end of the survey will serve as your informed consent for the use of your anonymous responses to be included in the research.

Please:
• Be as specific as you can on each response.
• Be as honest and accurate as you can.
• DO NOT answer in terms of what you would like to see happen. Rather, reflect upon your ministry experience.
• DO answer in terms of what you have observed.
• Be thoughtful about your responses.
• Do NOT share your responses with anyone.

This is round 3 of 3 in the survey process. Round 1 gathered ministry factors from the respondents. Round 2 included a list of all of the unique ministry factors listed by respondents in round 1.

Terms Important for This Research

Effective Evangelistic Youth Ministry
For the purposes of this study, an effective evangelistic youth ministry is one that falls in the top 100 in the number of youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention as reported on the annual church profile in 2008.
Evangelism
Chuck Lawless, Dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth, defines evangelism as “being, doing, and telling the good news of Jesus Christ, depending upon the triune God to draw His own unto Himself and His church” (Lawless 2002). Evangelism must not only be about winning converts but leading them to blend into the local church body.

Ministry Factors
Ministry factors are the variables within a given ministry that work toward the overall purposes and goals of the ministry as a whole. Ministry factors may encompass both driving principles as well as the practical outcomes of those principles. The term ministry factors is purposely a broad term used to encompass any one of a number of factors indicated by youth ministry professionals as effective in reaching students with the gospel.

Youth
Throughout this study, the terms “youth,” “young person,” “teenager,” and “student” will be used synonymously to refer to a person between the ages of twelve and seventeen.

Youth Minister
The term youth minister in this research refers to a person in a local church whose responsibilities include “overseeing and correlating the total education program for youth” (Zuck and Benson 1978, 182). The term youth minister can be used synonymously with minister of youth, minister of middle school, minister of high school, middle school minister, and high school minister.

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Round 3

The top 15 ministry factors from round 2 are listed below. Please rank-order the factors from most important to least important. This researcher will then compile all of the rank-ordered answers and determine the rank-ordered consensus among the group.

(Note: the “\” and “/” signs are representative of the arrow buttons on the actual internet site that allowed the respondent to click and change the rank order of each ministry factor.)
Adult volunteers sharing the gospel through one-on-one personal relationships with students

Emphasize repentance in evangelistic presentations

A youth pastor who is passionate about evangelism as an example to students

Helping lost students feel a sense of love, value, and belonging within the faith community

Accountability among the students to do evangelism

Prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students

A church body (non-staff) who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel

Train and encourage students to witness to other students

Teach and train students to be hospitable to visitors

A senior pastor who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel

Relevant preaching and methods of programming

Parents leading their child to Christ

Regular mid-week program

Make evangelism a core value in your mission/vision statement and talk about it often

Summer camp

Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview by phone?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Best phone number to reach you? (Please include area code)
(____)______-__________

Best time of day to reach you?
_______:______ _____ (am/pm)
APPENDIX 11

ROUND 3 EMAIL

September 20, 2009

I am incredibly thankful for your time and input. This is the last round of the survey process. In this final round, you will rank order the top 15 ministry factors collected over the course of the survey.

Click here or copy and paste the link below into your browser to complete round 3.

www.surveygizmo.com/s/181389/round-3-survey

With Greatest Appreciation,

Dustin
September 28, 2009

We just need a few more respondents to complete the entire youth evangelism survey process. This is the shortest survey in the process and takes less than five minutes. I'm excited to have our results.

Click here to fill out the survey or copy and paste the link below into your browser:

http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/181389/round-3-survey

Dustin
September 28, 2009

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http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/181389/round-3-survey

Dustin
APPENDIX 14

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Script

Thank you for your participation in this research project. This follow-up interview will be conducted to provide depth and breadth to the answers given during the three rounds of the study.

All information gathered from this survey is CONFIDENTIAL and will be reported ANONYMOUSLY. The data, as reported, will not be attributed by name to any individual. Your privacy will be fully protected. At no time will your name be reported or in any way identified with your responses. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

Please understand that this follow-up interview will be recorded.

As with prior rounds of the study:

• Be as honest and accurate as you can be.
• DO NOT answer in terms of how what you would like to see happen. Rather, reflect upon your ministry experience.
• DO answer in terms of what you have observed.
• Be thoughtful about your responses.
• Do NOT share your responses with anyone else.

Do you mind if I record this interview?

1. Why did you choose “Prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students” as the most important ministry factor in evangelizing youth?

2. You indicated “Prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students” as the most important ministry factor in evangelizing youth. Is there something about the particular context of ministry that makes this factor effective?

3. Tell me about how you fulfill that number one ministry factor in your context.

4. In what contexts would you consider your highest ranked ministry factor to be less effective or ineffective?
5. Is there anything about the specific makeup of your youth ministry that helped you to be effective in reaching students? (demographic information of the church, budget, demographic information of the youth minister or youth ministry)

6. Are you able to effectively assimilate the students you baptize to become growing disciples? How? Or why not?

7. Is there anything else you can say about how to most effectively evangelize youth? If you were going to tell church leaders how to effectively evangelize youth, what would you tell them?
APPENDIX 15

DIFFERENCE IN RANKINGS BETWEEN THE MEAN
SCORES IN ROUND 2 AND THE RANK ORDERED
DESIGNATION IN ROUND 3

Table A1. Difference in rankings – round 2 v. round 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry Factor</th>
<th>Round 3 Rank</th>
<th>Round 2 Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of lost students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A youth pastor who is passionate about evangelism as an example to students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make evangelism a core value in your mission/vision statement and talk about it often</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train and encourage students to witness to other students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A senior pastor who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult volunteers sharing the gospel through one-on-one personal relationships with students</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents leading their child to Christ</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant preaching and methods of programming</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping lost students feel a sense of love, value, and belonging within the faith community</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular mid-week program</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach and train students to be hospitable to visitors</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A church body (non-staff) who is supportive about reaching young people with the gospel</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability among the students to do evangelism</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize repentance in evangelistic presentations</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer camp</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 16

**COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF CHURCH DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE TOP 100 CHURCHES IN YOUTH BAPTISMS IN 2008 IN THE SBC**

Table A2. Church demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Youth Baptisms 2008</th>
<th>Total Church Baptisms</th>
<th>Resident Members</th>
<th>Primary Worship Service Attendance</th>
<th>Total Sunday School</th>
<th>Youth Sunday School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church 1</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>2305</td>
<td>47,035</td>
<td>23,991</td>
<td>35,573</td>
<td>3,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church 2</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>16,121</td>
<td>16,380</td>
<td>20,150</td>
<td>No Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church 3</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>1683</td>
<td>30,124</td>
<td>17,233</td>
<td>50,524</td>
<td>16,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church 4</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>10,329</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>8,324</td>
<td>932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELECTED MINISTRY FACTORS AND EFFECTIVE LOCAL CHURCH YOUTH EVANGELISM: A DELPHI STUDY

Dustin James Schadt, Ph.D.
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Chairperson: Dr. Hal Pettegrew

The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship between selected ministry factors and effective youth evangelism in the local church. Youth ministers of churches in the top 100 churches in youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention in 2008 served as the population for the study. This researcher used a three round delphi technique to discover the relationship between essential ministry factors and effective youth evangelism in the local church.

The first round of the delphi study involved contacting the youth ministers of the top 100 churches in youth baptisms and inviting them to be a part of a study on youth evangelism. In the first round, the youth ministers were instructed to answer the question, “In your experience, what are the ministry factors you consider to be effective in evangelizing young people?” The answers for all the respondents were then compiled and the unique ministry factors among the answers were used in round 2. A total of 41 youth ministers responded to the round 1 survey. Round 2 utilized the unique ministry factors from round 1 and asked the youth ministers to score the individual ministry factors in terms of effectiveness from 1 to 4 with 1 being “somewhat effective” and 4 being...
“extremely effective.” The 15 highest scoring ministry factors carried over to round 3. A total of 33 participants completed round 2 of the survey. Round 3 presented the respondents with the task of rank-ordering the list of the top 15 ministry factors from round 2. Overall, 31 youth ministers completed all three rounds of the study.

Follow-up interviews were also conducted with the youth ministers to add breadth and depth to the insight gained from the list of the top 15 ministry factors. The number one ministry factor in evangelizing young people, according to the respondents in the research project, was “prayer and reliance upon God to work in the hearts of students.” A close second was “a youth pastor who is passionate about evangelism as an example to students.”

One overarching conclusion of the study was that the ministry factors that were most effective were not necessarily specific programs or reproducible activities. Rather, the most effective factors were intangible qualities centered upon a dependence on God and a passion to reach people. The researcher concluded that the most effective ministry factors in reaching young people evangelistically centered upon leadership, drive, passion, and vision.

Keywords: Delphi, youth ministry, evangelism, best practices, baptism, student
VITA
Dustin James Schadt

PERSONAL
Born: September 1, 1980, Louisville, Kentucky
Parents: Michael and Deborah Schadt
Married: April Michelle Schrenger, July 27, 2002
Children: Makenzie May, born December 1, 2005 and
Macy Jane, born May 29, 2007

EDUCATIONAL
Diploma, Male High School, Louisville, Kentucky, 1998
B.S., University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky, 2002
M.Div., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 2005

MINISTERIAL
Interim College Minister, Highview Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, 2001
Minister to Middle School Students, Highview Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, 2001-2005
Minister to Students and Teaching Pastor, Highview Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, 2005-

ACADEMIC
Garrett Fellow, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001-2009

ORGANIZATIONAL
International Center for Youth Ministry
Metro Associates Conference