

WHAT MATTERS TO YOUNG ADULTS

Slide 1: What Matters To Young Adults

Slide 2: Threads (discuss research process)

What's The Big Deal?

- 18 to 34 U.S. population is 74 million today
- In 1980, 100,260 YAs were baptized in SBC churches.
- In 2005, 60,362 YAs were baptized in SBC churches.
- Other denominational trends

Eight-Month LifeWay Research Project (Market Driven Research Analysis)

- 18-34 year olds – demographic focus
- Based on interviews with un-churched Young Adults, Young Adult church members, and Young Adult leaders
- Confirmed by survey, data, key images
- Diversity in polling - geographic, socio-economic, racial, gender, etc.

Other Discussion

- Pew Research, Barna Group, LifeWay Research
- Books – *unChristian*, *Lost and Found*, etc.

Slide 3: Napoleon Dynamite clip

Slide 4: Liam Video

COMMUNITY

Slide 5: Community

The church has, for generations, spoken of community. However, most of us would agree that community has been an aspiration rather than an expressed value. We have “aspired” to build community, but it has scarcely been realized. And, that has not gone unnoticed by those inside and outside the church.

Slide 6: Team Hoyt Video

Together Is Better – Slide 7a

Key Image: There's No Place Like Home

- “I want a place I can call my own and be a part of. I want to be heard and nurtured in an environment where you know someone enough that you’re not ashamed to ask for something.”
- “I’m hungry to be known intimately and to be challenged.” (family)

What Stands Out:

- An interest in casual, authentic encounters
- A desire for relational equity through both presence and programs
- An obvious desire to both listen to and process content
- A desire for relationships that go beyond “hello” and “hi”
- An interest in both equity and accountability in relationships
- A general longing for companionship and/or friendships
- A desire to process hurts or frustrations with others
- A desire for relationships that are available despite the circumstances

“That’s the first time I had ever seen what doing life with Jesus day to day looked like. I saw people with their knees in the dirt – they didn’t have it all together. They had their problems, too.”

- A belief that quality is greatly contingent upon transparency
- Honesty and vulnerability may help in both reaching and keeping young adults
- An interest in seeing a relationship with Jesus lived out in everyday life
- A desire to address and be open about the struggles of life

Together Is Better – Slide 7b

- Postmoderns, both church and unchurch, indicate that having the opportunity to interact with members of a group multiple times per week was very important.
- Postmodern, both church and unchurch, desire to participate in a maximum number of small group activities that promote relationship/belonging.

Refresh Our Memories – Slide 8

* But, sometimes it is difficult for us to separate ourselves from the bizarre imagery that comes to mind when we think of community. (peace, love, and LSD, David Koresh or Warren Jeffs and their twisted, religious sects come to mind. Others may think about urban gangs or organized crime cells. Others may think of Jihadist militias.)

- “Living near” may be best described by physical proximity to one another or it may rather simply describe a relational closeness. In most cases, it means both.
- The Early Church (Acts 2:42-47)

More Than Coffee – Slide 9

Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz has said, "We're in the business of human connection and humanity, creating communities in a third place between home and work." In his influential book, *The Great, Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg argues that third places are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place. Oldenburg calls one's "first place" the home and those with whom one lives. The "second place" is the workplace — where people may actually spend most of their time. "Third places," then, are "anchors" of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction.

Some Reminders – Slide 10

- Community should encourage honesty, authenticity, and freedom to ask questions.
- Community should endorse a connection between one's actions and their personal convictions.
- Community should minimize church jargon.
- Community should provide an atmosphere where it's OK to not know all the answers.
- Community should be full of personal illustrations and life application.

It's also important to differentiate between our need to provide a God-honoring community and what the secular world might be seeking.

The Challenges of Community – Slide 11

Technology, Velocity, Security, Family and Relational Dysfunction

Where Challenge Meets Opportunity – Slide 12

A Paradigm Shift – Slide 13

Thanks For Listening – Slide 14

DEPTH

Slide 15: Depth

Let's start off with a basic question with a complex answer:

- What is depth?

- Why, in your opinion, do young adults value depth?

The problem is that everybody wants it, but nobody knows how to get it, or even define what it is.

The goal of our session is to answer the following question:
How do you create an atmosphere of depth in a postmodern culture?

Slide 16: Postmodernism

We will try to do that by doing 3 things:

1. Examining the culture
2. Finding an overall “depth” paradigm of leadership in that culture
3. Give practical plan for cultivating an experience of depth

Slide 17: Post...modernism

Culture:

Postmodernism is most clearly seen in terms of what it is not.

Therefore, to examine the culture, we must first understand that it is first and foremost “post” the era of modernity. It is a rebellion against the principles of that culture.

Slide 18: Modernity Images

- Age of industrial revolution
 - Built on science
 - Therefore built on logic
 - Therefore faith is a logical experience
-
- Why would this generation reject that?
 - It doesn't make sense

Slide 19: Science and logic have not led to utopia as promised; they have led to Hiroshima

In terms of depth, a purely scientific and logical approach to faith is often seen as shallow because it does not embrace the mystery of faith.

These broad things, therefore, can be said about postmodernity:

Slide 20: Emphasis on mystery rather than logic

Slide 21: Story, not fact

Slide 22: Change, not stability

Slide 23: Distrust, not trust

Slide 24: This is particularly relevant to us because we are all leaders, and therefore we are all implicitly distrusted.

: Challenges of postmodernity:

- No absolute truth
- Pragmatism
- Syncretism

Positives of postmodernity:

- Return to genuine faith
- Embracing of story
- Craving for authenticity

Perhaps this moves us toward a better definition of depth

Slide 25: Teaching With Depth (all that translated)

A. Stats

- i. Following community, the second most important desire among young adult churchgoers is participation in small-group meetings to discuss life application of Scripture (71 percent).
- ii. Forty-six percent of the non-regular church attendees desired to explore a religious environment without pressure. (This was the number one requirement of the unchurched.)
- iii. Sixty-seven percent of churched young adults identified Bible studies about foundational Christian truths to be either important or very important.
- iv. The unchurched indicated that only 14 percent of a possible study time should be dedicated to teacher explanation or lecture as opposed to 40 percent for discussion and hands on learning.

B. What Does This Mean?

- i. Interest in theology, apologetics, worldview, other religions, etc.
- ii. The churched want to be equipped and the unchurched want to be informed
- iii. Shift away from modernism with its heavy logic and explanation and yet now there is a postmodern interest in the unanswerable
- iv. Obvious increased interest in spirituality – but not always our faith

C. Church Sitcoms

- i. Can't be resolved and conquered in 30 minutes
- ii. Demands struggle and process

D. Struggle

- i. Depth – everyone wants it, but no one knows what it is

- ii. It's more about the level of content – emotionally, intellectually, etc.
- iii. Goes beyond pure Bible knowledge –
- iv. John Calvin quote –
- v. Michael Kelley quote –
- vi. It's more than just knowing you should or shouldn't do something. It's about understanding the why behind it. Why does Scripture teach that? Why do I have a difficult time with this? What does that say about me?

E. The Bedrock

- i. 1 Peter 1:24 – “The Word of the Lord stands forever.”
- ii. Fads, Products, Personalities
- iii. God is never changing and yet constantly relevant

F. Key Characteristics

- i. Teach the entire Bible
- ii. Foster discussion
- iii. Provide exegetical Bible teaching
- iv. Sing theologically sound music
- v. Multiple Bible study options per week
- vi. Distribute the responsibility
- vii. Deal with the tough topics – no pat answers
- viii. Bible Study needs to be discussion/connection based
- ix. “It's not one person with all the answers.”
- x. “What draws people is a climate of honesty.”
- xi. Life application of scripture is crucial
- xii. Lecture style is not appealing
- xiii. Talking head video? Thumbs down

Slide 25 (continued): Leading with DEPTH

Toward a deep paradigm of leadership:

Slide 26: Old Model (pulpit)

Leader out front pointing the way. This doesn't work because it is built on the assumption that leaders are trustworthy and that the leader knows all the answers.

Slide 27: New Model (crowd)

Leading from within

Creating an Atmosphere of Depth is Moving Toward that Model:

Slide 28: From information to exploration

Socratic method of teaching is also Jesus' method of teaching
This is a discovery rather than lecture oriented approach
Involves self-discovery as well as God discovery – Calvin quote
Craft the questions

Slide 29: From admiration to identification

Old model was trying to get people to live up; we need an acknowledgment of
living down
This isn't just about sin

Slide 30: From dispensation to revelation

Don't just teach information; teach yourself
Logos – content
Pathos – emotional
Ethos – Who is the speaker?

All of this points to the need not for more classes, but for a way of life.

How do you craft this experience, specifically in a Bible study setting?

Slide 31: Read the text

Slide 32: Question the text

Slide 33: Learn the text – this is the bulk of your study time

Slide 34: Find the 3 AM of the text

Slide 35: Personally reflect on the text

Slide 36: Draw up the outline

Slide 37: Seek to lead others to discover the content on their own

Worth noting...

Evangelism and Discipleship are trending together, rather than apart. This is clearly seen in the area of responsibility, or using service opportunities not for the spiritually mature but for evangelism as well. This leads us to conclude that depth is an all encompassing attribute, something that characterizes bible study, experiences, relationships, and leadership.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility – Slide 38

- 66 percent of churched young adults rated the opportunity to meet the needs of others (locally and globally) as extremely important in their lives, and 47 percent of unchurched young adults said the same.
- Young adults desire to utilize their talents and abilities through a maximum number of opportunities to meet needs.
- Young adults will participate in hands-on outreach activities on a frequent basis that meet the needs of others.
- Young adults desire to determine their own beliefs through a maximum number of hands-on learning experiences.
- Young adults desire to benefit others through a maximum number of global service projects.

Choices Make A Difference – Slide 39

Impact of Increased Awareness – Slide 40

The Broken Link – Slide #41

Remembering Our Heritage (brief intro) – Slide 42

William Wilberforce Video – Slide 43

Remembering Our Heritage (explanation) – Slide 44

- An Incomplete Gospel
- An Incomplete Jesus – Luke 4: 18-20, Luke 19:9-10

Both/and NOT Either/Or – Slide 45

- Unify The Body
- Reach The Lost
- Local vs. Global
- Others and Within

Messy – Slide 46

CONNECTION

Slide 47: Connection

Slide 48: “Sam”

Slide 49:

- “I need advice from someone who has gone through the things I’m about to go through.”
- “I’m looking to find a mentor.”
- “Save me some headaches, some money, or whatever...”

Slide 50: Picture of Sherpa

Slide 51: The Biblical Model

- Jethro mentored Moses. Moses mentored Joshua and the elders of Israel. And Joshua mentored the other remaining leaders of his army.
- Eli mentored Samuel. Samuel mentored Saul and David. Ahithophel and Nathan the prophet also mentored David. David became Israel's greatest king.
- Elijah mentored Elisha. Elisha mentored king Jehoash and others.
- Mordecai mentored Esther. Esther mentored King Artaxerxes, which resulted in liberating God's people.
- And finally, Jesus mentored the twelve apostles who established the Christian church. The twelve mentored hundreds of other leaders, including Paul. Paul mentored Titus, Timothy and many others. Timothy mentored "faithful men" such as Epaphras. Epaphras and the other faithful men mentored others also which led to a chain reaction that resulted in dozens of new churches in Asia. Ultimately, this specific mentoring chain is the beginning point of our churches today.

Slide 52: What They Are Saying

- Both church and unchurched young adults desire a maximum number of small group activities that promote relationship and belonging.
- Both church and unchurched young adults desire a maximum number of opportunities to connect with a mentor.
- Both church and unchurched young adults desire to participate in small group meetings to discuss life application of Scripture with a maximum frequency.
- Both church and unchurched young adults desire to determine their own beliefs through a maximum of hands-on, practical learning experiences.

- Both churched and unchurched young adults desire information and advice from a maximum number of individuals who have that experience.

Slide 53: Two images – one of a “modern” church, one of a cathedral

Slide 54: These images:

+

or

x

(notes – focus here on the method of Jesus pouring his life, not just his bible study, into the twelve)

Slide 55: Picture of a hammer and nails, house under construction, etc.

Slide 56: Threads Summary