



Forgotten Kingdom: God's Reign in the 21st Century Church

Developing Young Leaders

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Proposition: Young people are the future of our church but they are also part of the church. Too many churches have infantilized the youth and told them one day you can be a part of the church. They need to be included in the ministry of the church and be trained to be disciples and leaders today.

Introduction: I was invited to speak during the lectureship in 2006 on this exact topic: Developing Young Leaders. In that session I outlined seven basic steps for developing young leaders in the church today. Those steps are very simple:

STEP #1 – Connecting (John 4:1-30, John 13:1-20)

We need to establish trust.
We need to tell our story.

We need to strengthen priorities.
We need to be more receptive.

STEP #2 – Recruiting (Matthew 14:22-33, Matthew 26:31-35)

Jesus = 120, 70, 12, 3, 1
Most leaders will reveal themselves.

Spend time with them individually.
Don't force or manipulate them.

STEP #3 – Teaching (Matthew 5-7, Matthew 28:18-20)

Use the teachable moments.
Try not to lecture or critique.

Find ways to make application.
Celebrate when they succeed.

STEP #4 – Mentoring (I Timothy 1:1-3, I Timothy 3:15-16)

There are dozens of Bible examples.
Teens can mentor their peers.

You can mentor your leaders.
A mentor is more friend than judge.

STEP #5 – Equipping (Ephesians 4:11-16)

Find their talents and strengths.
They need accountability.

They need responsibility.
This is true discipleship.

STEP #6 – Coaching (I Corinthians 12:27-31, I Corinthians 13:1-13)

We need to move to the sidelines.
They will not be there forever.

Birds have to leave the nest to fly.
Find ways to give them freedom.

STEP #7 – Approving (Luke 24:13-35, Matthew 25:14-30)

The leaders may not shine clearly.
Honor the mature leaders.

Seek out the wise leaders.
Have fun with the spiritual leaders.

I still believe in this seven step process. There is no doubt in my mind that if we follow this seven step plan of action we can develop young leaders in church today. However, in this particular lesson I would like for us to ponder the value in developing our young leaders. We might consider this as the prequel to the seven steps. Why should we be developing young leaders in the church today? What are the benefits? How can we do it effectively?

Discussion:

I. The Biblical Mandate

Proverbs 22:6 - *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* **How's our training?**

Matthew 28:18-20 - *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.* **How's our replicating?**

II Timothy 2:2 - *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.* **How's our training?**

Why do we consistently see ministry groupings in the Bible?

How did Jesus send out his disciples? **Mark 6:7, Luke 10:1**

II. The Ignored Reality

What is the real problem? Why?

What can we learn about the mentoring methods of T.B. Larimore?

How church leaders do you have? Elders? Deacons? Teachers? Ministers?

Do you have less than you did when you started? Why?

What does that say about leadership planning and training?

What is the significance of **Ephesians 4:11-16**? What is the pattern for ministry?

Have you read the book of Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua? How many times does Moses or Joshua identify the leaders?

Why is Moses and Joshua focused on who's next?

III. The Current Stats

What books most effectively tackle this subject? Any recommendations?

STATS FOR MENTORING:

- 45 percent of unchurched young adults identified the opportunity to receive advice from people with similar life experiences as very important (Lifeway).
- 68 percent of churched young adults identified the opportunity to receive advice from people with similar life experiences as very important (Lifeway).
- Youth are five times more likely to graduate if they have a meaningful relationship with an adult (Michigan Dropout Prevention Summit 2008).
- Without effective intervention as many as 70% of children with disengaged parents will become involved with the criminal justice system (United States Senate Report).

Youth who spend time with mentor regularly for at least 12-18 months are (PEW study):

- 53% less likely to skip a day of school
- 46% less likely to start using illegal drugs
- 27% less likely to start drinking
- 37% less likely to skip a single class at school
- 33% less likely to get into a fight
- More trusting of their parents or guardians

In the church, we should take notice (United States Census Bureau Records):

- Every year more than 4000 churches close their doors/1000 new church starts.
- Every year, 2.7 million church members fall into inactivity for at least one of three reasons: abuse, disillusionment, or neglect!
- The United States now ranks third (3rd) following China and India in the number of people who are not professing Christians (most of those are young adults).
- ½ of churches in the US did not add any new members in the last two years.
- 22% of people in the US in 1992 claim to frequently attend church (2-3x a month).
- 33% of people in the US in 2002 claim to frequently attend church.
- 40% of people in the US in 2012 claim to frequently attend church.
- Very few churches have programs for new converts, mentoring youth, etc.

Who is mentoring our young people? Why?

About 40% of a teenager's waking hours are spent without companionship or supervision.
What are they doing with that time?

How is social media compounding the problem?

IV. The 5:1 Approach (Sticky Faith)

What can we do to become a 5:1 church?

What can we do to establish 5:1 programs & ministries?

How can we implement 5:1 teaching in our congregations?

What will happen if we create an atmosphere for 5:1 worship?

How can we develop young leaders through 5:1 mentoring?

What about 5:1 events & special days? What will happen?

Is it possible to advocate for 5:1 parenting? Explain.

How can we engage in 5:1 outreach in our communities?

Conclusion: Building “sticky faith” is a complex process. Developing an environment where biblical mentoring is routine can take considerable time and energy. Thankfully, we have examples of those who have been successful! There is no silver bullet. No magic wand. No red pill. No book, no method, and no program will fix this. WE have to train up that child in the way they should go. WE have to take the gospel into all the world. WE have to teach them to observe all the things the Lord commanded us. WE have to commit what we know to faithful men. WE have to equip the Saints for ministry. That means living out Jesus’ call to make disciples. Let’s do ministry like Jesus. Let’s follow the biblical pattern. Let’s develop young leaders!



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