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A Seven Strand Cord: Braiding Together Leadership Development for Mid-Adolescents

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This research is a product of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program at George Fox University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

A SEVEN STRAND CORD: BRAIDING TOGETHER LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT FOR MID-ADOLESCENTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
RICHARD BARRETT BARTLETT II

PORTLAND, OREGON

AUGUST 2006

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DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

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DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2006

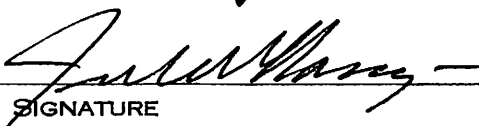
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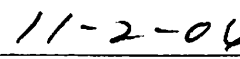
**A SEVEN-STRAND CORD:
BRAIDING TOGETHER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
FOR MID-ADOLESCENTS**

***WE THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ THIS
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Rick Bartlett
Fresno, CA.
August, 2006

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Tim Martens was in a crisis and he didn't know what to do. He talked to his mom about it and all she said was, "That's nice, dear." When he talked it over with his dad, all George Martens had asked was, "But how will you make any money?" Tim talked with his friends about it and all he got from them was a new nickname, "Rev."

On the outside, Tim appeared to be a typical high school student. He was an 11th grader at Washington high school and was involved in one sport, the Yearbook committee, and the snowboarding club. He was active in his church's youth group, and in many ways it was Tim's relationship with his church that was the source of his problem.

During the previous spring, Tim had attended a national youth conference sponsored by his denomination. While he was there he had listened to a speaker talk about a "call" to ministry. During the talk, Tim's heart had begun to race; he started thinking about times in his life when he felt God nudging to him to consider being a youth pastor. When the speaker finished and an invitation was given for anyone to indicate a willingness to serve God in ministry, Tim's hand had shot up.

When he got home, Tim spoke with his youth pastor about his commitment. "That's awesome! Way to go Tim," was all his youth pastor had said. It was now 5 months later and at this point nothing else has been done. Tim felt a call from God but he didn't know how to answer it.

Wendy Braun lives halfway across the country from Tim. She attended the same national youth conference as Tim although they never met. In the same meeting she also

indicated her willingness to dedicate her life to serving God full-time. She attends Bluff's high school and is very involved there. She runs for the cross-country and track teams, participates in Campus Life, and is Student Council President. She finds she needs to carry a cell phone and PDA just to keep track of her commitments.

When Wendy told her youth pastor about her response and commitment, her youth pastor told her, "That's great! You can start teaching 4th grade Sunday school next week." So, the following week Wendy began teaching this class of energetic ten and eleven year olds.

Five months later Wendy started to feel the strain of this added responsibility on an already over-committed life. When she approached her youth pastor about it he said, "Well, if you want to learn how to be a leader in the church, you've got to start by serving someplace."

Tim and Wendy both have a problem. They sense a call from God to serve in ministry, in whatever capacity that means, but neither they nor their church have a plan or vision for how any sort of preparation will take place. At this point, the investment and development from their churches is minimal. For Tim, it's simply a "wait and see" situation. For Wendy, it's the "go fill a need and you'll become a leader" development approach.

Without one knowing about the other, they have both come to a similar set of questions. As they lay awake at night trying to figure out what is happening, Tim and Wendy ask themselves "Did I hear God correctly?", "If I am to somehow serve the church someday, what will that look like?", "How do I get prepared for leadership?".

“Will my church invest in me?”, and “Should I have someone who will walk alongside me who will show me the way?”

Because Tim and Wendy are students who are aware of their world and the changes taking place in the larger society, they also ask “What will my role in church leadership look like in ten years? Will it be any different to a pastor’s today?”

In both of these stories, the Church is missing an opportunity to encourage, discern, and affirm an emerging leader. Tim and Wendy will be “coming of age” in an uncertain future, and this will mean their experience of a hit and miss leadership development strategy will not fully prepare them for serving in that “future” church.

This paper will address Tim and Wendy’s situation; to be prepared for the emerging culture, mid-adolescents who are being “called” or “shoulder tapped” as leaders need remixed, intentional approaches of leadership development.

Claim

The emerging culture is necessitating different leadership paradigms; preparation of leaders in a “business as usual” fashion is becoming inadequate. Mid-adolescents in churches who are being “called” or “shoulder tapped” as emerging leaders need an intentional process of leadership development.

This paper will recommend leadership development of mid-adolescents through the metaphor of a seven strand braided cord which includes these threads: discernment, an understanding of call, rite of passage events, mentoring, spiritual formation, service/ministry opportunities, and commissioning. The goal of this research is to suggest that these kinds of learning experiences, which the Church could be providing today, will

best prepare these young people to be effective leaders in the emerging culture. It will also suggest that this is not a sequential, developmental process, and the order in which these seven steps are taken is as unique as the individual and congregation.

The goal of this project is to help facilitate a “culture of the call” in Mennonite Brethren (MB) churches. It is believed that the findings of this research will be applicable to a much wider audience, but due to the project’s scope, the focus will be on the MB church. By introducing the metaphor of a seven strand cord of leadership development of mid-adolescents, it is hoped this will generate a motivation and a passion for churches to invest in and prepare these “called out” young people to reflect new ways of envisioning leadership in an emerging culture. There are three rationales for this goal. First, since change is a constant in this world, western society and culture will be different in ten to fifteen years when these students become fully-formed adults. Secondly, questions of “calling” and leadership are crucial in the emerging context, and historically, Anabaptist churches have had much to add to this discussion. Finally, although many methods of leadership development being used today have been doing a good job preparing individuals for leadership in the modern Church, Western culture is living through seismic shifts, and these current methods are not taking seriously cultural changes or their impact on the future of the Church. Therefore, a new leadership development matrix is needed to more adequately prepare leaders for change and for critical thinking necessary in the future. This matrix will be likened to a cord or rope where all seven strands are carefully braided together to create an environment for leadership development.

For seven years, my wife and I lived and worked in England. In our small town there was a long, narrow alley called the “rope walk.” We did some research and found that

“rope walk” was a common street name all throughout Britain. We discovered, not surprisingly, the rope walk was where, in pre-industrial times, rope was made. A ropessmith would use these long spaces to braid rope for sale to the local community.

The rope walk notion intrigued me. One popular metaphor for the Christian life is the concept of walking on a journey with God. This idea of the journey is not new since Bunyan wrote *Pilgrims Progress* in the 17th Century, but it is a concept with new verve in the 21st. As we discussed the rope walk metaphor, my wife pointed out the links between this metaphor and walking with God on a journey. Since the strands identified in this paper can only be shared from one life to another rather than in a classroom, this metaphor gained new life.

In this project the image of the rope walk will be turned into a metaphor for the leadership development of mid-adolescents. As the seven strands are identified and discussion is provided for how to braid the strands together, this image of a ropessmith working alongside spools of cord, weaving them together into a rope that is flexible and strong, should be the dominant image of this project. It is hoped that after reading this paper churches will create their own “rope walks” and find creative ways to braid these cords into the lives of their youth.

Definitions

Mid-adolescence is the new term which designates a young person in high school. Recent developmental research has identified three stages of adolescence: early, mid, and late. Early adolescence corresponds roughly with ages 11-14, mid-adolescence from 15-18, and late (or extended) adolescence from 19-25. One key factor for the emergence of

three stages of adolescence is an extended time for the process of identity formation. Jeffery Jensen Arnett writes, "Although research on identity formation has focused mainly on adolescence, this research has shown that identity achievement has rarely been reached by the end of high school."¹ The young people who are the focus of this paper are those who are still in the midst of identity formation and therefore mid-adolescents.

This paper will use "mid-adolescent" to refer to high school students or those who are roughly between the ages of 15 and 18. It will also use the terms "young people" and "students" interchangeably with mid-adolescent.

Leadership is another term that will be used throughout this project. It will be defined in context, in most instances, but for purposes of clarity it refers to leadership in a church or parachurch ministry.

It must be made clear that this is not a paper which incorporates the concept of "Student Leadership," a term used by youth ministry practitioners to define those mid-adolescents who are serving their youth group in a leadership role of some kind. The intention of this research is not to create another tool for youth pastors to use in their church to prepare young people to help out on Wednesday nights. This paper is focused on the long-term goal of creating a leadership greenhouse that will help any mid-adolescent develop in ways that will assist him or her in assuming leadership in the coming years. At the same time, it is understood that many of the mid-adolescents who have an interest in considering future ministry are the same students who are currently

¹ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Readings on Adolescent and Emerging Adulthood* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002), 23

involved in some aspect of leadership in their churches or youth groups. Through the process, it is hoped that the seven strands will prepare individuals for extended ministry beyond high school, and who love Jesus, who understand themselves, have had ministry/service opportunities in a sheltered environment, who are committed to the local church, and can therefore take on future leadership roles.

Young leaders refers to mid-adolescents who have been discerned by their local congregation as having a curiosity about leadership as well as some rudimentary skills and gifts in this area. These students may be involved in leadership in their local congregation, but this is not a necessary requirement. This is more likely to be a young person who has been “called” or “shoulder tapped” by God, their local congregation, or both and who believe they should consider serving God in ministry at some point in the future.

Call and vocation will both be defined in Chapter Three. In his book, *The Way of Life*, Gary Badcock defines these two terms almost interchangeably, “Vocation means ‘calling’ (from the Latin *vocare*, ‘to call’), and in the Bible, the call comes from God.”²

A call from God can come through a variety of means: supernaturally, an inward feeling, experiences that seem to point in a direction, a need to which one must respond, or through the local church. When a call comes through a local church it is sometimes known as *shoulder tapping*. *Shoulder tapping* means a church leader or pastor has approached an individual, tapped them on the shoulder, literally or figuratively, and said

² Gary D Badcock, *The Way of Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 3.

something like, "We think you have what it takes to be involved in ministry, why don't you consider it?" This can be a powerful and meaningful investment in the life of a person; simply to be affirmed and believed in by their local church as someone with leadership potential can have a tremendous impact. Unfortunately, in the Mennonite Brethren context, this old practice has all but vanished. Jim Holm, President of MB Biblical Seminary, states , "...what is troubling is that along the way the churches stopped the practice of calling people to consider pastoral ministry."³ This project seeks to revive this practice.

Mentoring describes a relationship between an adult and one or two mid-adolescents for the purposes of sharing life lessons with one another. The mentor is not the 'guru' with all the answers, but is seen as a fellow pilgrim on the journey of faith who is helping young people on the same path. Mentoring will be defined more completely in Chapter Four.

Emerging culture refers to changes taking place in western society due to shifts in a variety of areas, including philosophy, global capitalism, religious fundamentalism, and technology. These terms will be further defined in Chapter Five.

Anabaptism and *Mennonite Brethren* will be defined in Chapter Three.

Ministry Quest is a journey for high school students exploring opportunities in pastoral, congregational and missional leadership. It features retreats, church-based

³ Jim Holm, "The North American MB Call to Pastoral Leadership," *Direction* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2003), 203.

mentoring relationships and a short term ministry assignment. It is a program (funded by a grant from the Lilly Foundation) which is based at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, CA. Ministry Quest will be defined in Chapter Six and the Appendix.

Overview

This research project is the result of a life-long passion to see young people discerned, equipped, and released into ministry. Having been involved in a wide variety of youth ministry contexts in the USA and overseas for more than 24 years, I have seen many young people with leadership potential. Some have gone on to serve in a church, or with a parachurch organization, or as a missionary while others have chosen to use their gifts in other contexts. Throughout these years I have read, asked questions, and thought about the most effective way to develop leaders. This project is a continuation of that ongoing search and thought process.

A second reason for pursuing this topic comes from this doctoral program. Throughout this DMin course, whenever I have thought about the course title, *Leadership in the Emerging Culture*, I have always thought of it on two fronts. First, the “emerging culture” defines a place where society is headed in the coming years. It refers to the changes brought about as postmodern philosophy permeates culture. But equally important for me, when I’ve thought about the emerging culture, I have also thought about the mid-adolescents with whom I currently work. These high school students, who are growing up in a changing paradigm, truly are the “emerging culture”. They are shaping and being shaped by societal forces and will be “natives” in this new land.

I couldn't think of a better synthesis between learning and practice than to continue to investigate my questions.

Scope and Sequence

Leadership is an enormous topic and many people have written on this subject. Amazon.com alone has 177,256 "hits" on a recent search for "leadership."⁴ Therefore, this project will more narrowly focus on Christian leadership as it pertains to mid-adolescents growing into adulthood. This work will not survey the over 177,000 leadership resources available, but will primarily focus on a seven strand process of mid-adolescent leadership development: discernment, call, rite of passage events, mentoring, spiritual formation, service, and commissioning. The purpose of braiding this seven strand cord is to develop an atmosphere for leaders who are working in the same rope walk as Leonard Sweet, Walter Wright, and Henri Nouwen who all stress a leader is first and foremost a listener and follower of Jesus. It is believed by the author that an approach to leadership that first stresses "followership" of Jesus is what will be most effective in the emerging culture.

This project will also focus primarily on Mennonite Brethren (MB) youth. Although the literature review will cover a broad range of research, the implications will be drawn back to Mennonite Brethren young people in the USA and Canada. The Mennonite Brethren, as a denomination, will be defined more completely in Chapter Three. There is a primary reason for focusing on this small Anabaptist denomination. The

⁴ Amazon.com, accessed 22 August 2006.

author is a member of the MB church and a faculty member at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, CA. However, it is hoped that the implications of the research will have wider ramifications within the larger Church in North America.

Adolescent development will also be a topic in this thesis. This is a large issue that could cover the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual changes taking place as a result of puberty. This is too much information for the scope of this project however, and so for the purpose of this paper, the discussion will be narrowed down to a primary focus on cognitive development in mid-adolescents and the implications for leadership. Recent research on the teenage brain has provided a rich resource that pushes the theory of cognitive development way beyond the ideas of sequential developmentalists like Jean Piaget. These current findings provide the opportunity to look at both sides of the student leadership debate. The findings raise a number of questions; for example, due to developmental changes taking place in the “hard wiring” of their brains, are mid-adolescents even capable of thinking about leadership, calling, and vocation at all? Or are they not only capable, but in a perfect time and place in their life for beginning their own personal leadership journey? The Lilly Foundation was willing to invest millions of dollars in Seminaries all over North America because they believed high school students were ready to deal with questions of theology, vocation, and calling. However, is leadership ability revealed in the life of a “normal” teenager? This crucial question needs to be addressed if the claims of this paper are worth considering.

Due to the nature of the dissertation layout, this paper will not be presenting the seven strands of the leadership development cord in a sequential way. These strands are found throughout the chapters that are to come and will be synthesized in chapter six.

This is appropriate since the sequence of cords is not an indicator of the “right” way of leadership development. In fact, the way in which the cords are braided in a mid-adolescent’s life can be as individual as the person who is being developed. The strands- discernment, calling, rite of passage events, mentoring, spiritual formation, commissioning, and service/ministry opportunities- can be braided together in a variety of ways.

The next few chapters will draw out the seven strands of the cord by investigating the thesis question from a variety of angles. Chapter Two will explore the leadership formation of Joshua and his journey from “Moses’ aid since youth”⁵ to becoming a leader of the Israelite people following Moses’ death. Particular attention will be directed towards the question of how Moses prepared his protégé for leadership in an uncertain future. Did Moses know that Joshua was to be his replacement? The biblical text would indicate that he did not.⁶ Yet it is apparent Moses saw something in Joshua that let him provide opportunities for this young man. Are there insights that can be gained by the relationship of these two men that can assist in developing young leaders today? Three of the seven strands will emerge in Chapter two. First, service/ministry opportunities- Joshua spent many years simply serving as Moses’ aide, doing whatever needed to be

⁵ Num. 11:28 NIV.

⁶ Num. 27: 15-18 NIV. 15 Moses said to the LORD, 16 “May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community 17 to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD’s people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.” 18 So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him.”

done. He also served by being entrusted with leading the army against the Amelikitites.⁷ Second, Moses gave opportunities for spiritual formation in Joshua's life. These opportunities included being one of the men chosen to meet God on the mountain,⁸ and spending regular time in the tent of meeting.⁹ The third strand identified in this chapter will show that at God's command, Moses set Joshua up for success by commissioning him before the people.¹⁰ There are other ways that Moses invested in Joshua which will be briefly highlighted in chapter two, but these are the three primary strands that will emerge.

Since this work is grounded in an Anabaptist-Mennonite Brethren tradition, Chapter Three will focus on how this faith tradition has discerned and called leaders in the past. Special emphasis will be placed on discussing the ways Anabaptists have defined the 'priesthood of all believers' in light of leadership. There was a perception in the 1970's, supported by the writings of a group called the Deans Seminar at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary that, based on the early views of the radical reformation, true Anabaptist leadership could not be hierarchal in any way, but due to the "priesthood of all believers" everyone in the congregation was called to leadership.¹¹ Recent Mennonite scholars have challenged this view as historically inaccurate and as one reason

⁷ Exod. 17:8-16 NIV.

⁸ Exod. 24:9-13 NIV.

⁹ Exod. 33:7-11 NIV.

¹⁰ Num. 27:18-23 NIV.

¹¹ Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, *Study Project to Develop a Model for Theological Education in the Free Church Tradition* (Elkhart, IN, 1967).

for declining pastoral leadership in the Mennonite church. John Esau painfully summarizes this time in Mennonite history by stating:

But what have been the results of that theology? For all of its idealism and apparent use of certain biblical images, we have been left with a theology that has failed. It spoke the language of 'empowerment,' but its prime effect has been the disempowerment of both pastor and congregation. It wanted to clarify the truth that everyone is a minister of God, but it resulted in a confusion of roles and conflicts that have had an undermining effect upon the church.¹²

This discussion has relevance for today, particularly in the emerging church where, fueled by the ideas of thinkers like those in the Dean's Seminar and Jeffery Nielsen, the idea of a "flat" or "peer-based" leadership structure is having a renaissance.¹³ Anabaptists have a lot to contribute to this ongoing debate. The two strands that will emerge from this discussion of Anabaptist church history and theology are the strands of discernment and calling.

Chapter Four will explore the thesis question from the angle of adolescent development. It will ask the question, "Are mid-adolescents even capable of leadership development"? By focusing particularly on cognitive development, this chapter will provide insights into what makes teenagers do the things they do. It will take seriously the issues of the lengthening time of adolescence, as well as the claims that this is a period where, due to the socialization pressures of teenagers, they are unable to step outside the adolescent bubble and consider possibilities of leadership. This chapter will

¹² John A Esau, *Understanding Ministerial Leadership: Essays Contributing to a Developing Theology of Ministry* (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1995), xi-xii.

¹³ Jeffrey S. Nielsen, *The Myth of Leadership* (Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing, 2004). This book explores the concept of 'flat' leadership.

also focus on the final two strands of mentoring and rites of passage to assist mid-adolescents in transitioning from an assumed faith to an integrated one.

Chapter Five will address three important questions. First, why is a new paradigm for leadership development needed? Second, why is the focus on mid-adolescents? Third, why propose something new when there are already numerous youth leadership training programs available?

The discussion on the new paradigm provides an opportunity for a brief overview of the changes taking place in Western culture, technology, and religion. The implications of these changes for leadership mean preparing leaders for an uncertain future. Not uncertain in the sense that the future will not happen, but uncertain in the sense that the future will be much different to today.

Chapter five will also evaluate and critique six books concerned with “student leadership” and will examine them through a grid that asks these questions: first, does the author address emerging cultural issues? Second, does the author take seriously the developmental issues of teenagers? Third, are any of the seven strands present in this work? Fourth, is this book teaching focused- does the leadership development take place in a classroom setting- or is it life focused- are the principles passed on in the context of life on life transformation?

Finally, Chapter Six will summarize the seven step process of leadership development. It will look at each individual component and unpack why each one is a necessary step on the journey of leadership development for a mid-adolescent. The conclusions of this chapter will be to provide two models (one local church based and one based in a Seminary), emphasizing a practical outworking of a new method of

leadership development. This is imperative if the Church is to have leaders prepared for changes which the emerging culture will bring.

Appendix A is the Ministry Quest Operations Manual.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL EXPLORATION- MOSES AND JOSHUA

This chapter will explore the leadership development of the biblical character Joshua, son of Nun. Particular attention will be given to the way in which Moses prepared Joshua for leadership in an uncertain future. Fostering the image of the seven cords (discernment, calling, rite of passage events, mentoring, spiritual formation, service/ministry opportunities, and commissioning), this chapter will look at three of them in detail: service/ministry opportunities, spiritual formation, and commissioning. Special attention will be paid to the role each of these strands had in shaping Joshua's life. In addition to these three threads, this chapter will touch on the strands of rite of passage events and mentoring, foreshadowing what is to come in subsequent chapters.

This narrative is chosen intentionally. First of all, it describes the relationship of an older leader to a younger leader. Insights can be gleaned from the interaction of these two men that can provide hints for braiding a cord of leadership development. Secondly, the fact that Moses prepared Joshua during a time of transition into an uncertain future is significant for leadership today. Thirdly, in the arena of leadership development, the Old Testament is often ignored in favor of New Testament instances.¹ This is one small opportunity to redress that imbalance.

This chapter will seek to allow the text to direct the interpretation. However, since the text is being read in light of the seven strands of leadership development, it is

¹ A. Kay Fountain, "An Investigation Into Successful Leadership Transitions in the Old Testament," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 7, no. 2 (July 2004): 187.

acknowledged that a hermeneutic is being used. Therefore, this discussion utilizes the “ladder of abstraction” scheme of interpretation.² It is the goal of this paper to enter the ladder at the level of the text, particularly the interactions of Moses and Joshua, to move up the ladder to a general principle, and then to make application to the specific, leadership development among high school students today. There are difficulties in interpreting any text, particularly Old Testament narrative, and it is hoped that this method will ensure fair treatment of the biblical record.

Uncertain Future

The future is always uncertain. No one can know what the next day will hold, much less the months or years ahead.³ Even though this is true, it appears that humans live as if things will stay the same. However, Moses, probably more than any other biblical leader, recognized that the context in which he was exercising leadership was going to change. The Wilderness wanderings had to end sometime. He also knew directly from God that he would not be the one to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.⁴ His leadership was passed on with an uncertain future in view. Similar situations still exist today.⁵

² Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1987) 165-166. He writes, “The term, ‘ladder of abstraction’ may be defined as a continuous sequence of categorizations from a low level of generality up to a high level of specificity.”

³ “Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” James 4:14 NIV

⁴ Deut. 32:52 NIV

⁵ Gregory Mone, “Is Science Fiction About To Go Blind?”. *Popular Science* August 2004: accessed 18 August 2004
<<http://www.popsci.com/popsci/science/article/0,12543,676265-1,00.html>>. Mone

God's story, as seen in the Bible, is full of character and leadership transitions as this story is passed from one generation to the next: Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and his sons, David and Solomon, Elijah and Elisha, to name a few. One observation is that often these transitions are not a smooth transfer of leadership and power from one God-loving individual to his (in most cases) protégé or sons, but rather an awkward or even backwards shift from the God-lover to a sinful, apathetic, or foolish replacement. Examples of poor transitions would include: Eli and his sons, Samuel and his sons, Solomon and his son Rehoboam, or Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram.

There are very few stories in the scriptures of a balanced and strong transition in leadership. One of the successful stories is the transfer between Moses and Joshua. This story gives a picture of the power of an intentional relationship and identifies some of the ways Moses developed his aide into a leader who accomplished more than he himself was able.⁶

This chapter highlights the method of leadership formation Moses used with Joshua by moving chronologically through the Exodus story and wilderness wanderings. Particular attention is given to the sections of the narrative where Joshua's name is mentioned. However, due to the extensiveness of these references and the scope of this project, not every passage will be investigated as thoroughly as others.

writes, "Awed at the pace of technological advances, a faction of geeky writers believes our world is about to change so radically that envisioning what comes next is nearly impossible."

⁶ Num. 11:28 NIV

Service/Ministry Opportunities Through Leading in Battle

If one were to read the Exodus and wilderness story from the beginning of the book of Exodus, the first place Joshua's name is mentioned is Exodus 17:9. He appears on the scene as the man chosen by Moses to be the leader of the army in a battle against the Amalekites. It seems strange, given his future significance, that he would first emerge in this way. The reader is left to wonder, "Who is the man? Where did he come from?" Later, in the book of Numbers, the reader is given a clue to the answer. Chapter 11 verse 28 indicates Joshua "had been Moses' aide since youth." Knowing this about Joshua provides some understanding for why he is suddenly leading the army into battle. Not all scholars agree to this however. Dewey Beegle, referring to the writings of Martin Noth and Albrecht Alt, believes Joshua's name was inserted later into the narrative because of the suddenness of his appearance.⁷

In this battle narrative, the Amalekites attack the Israelites. It seems that prior to this battle the Amalekites had been attacking the rear of the Israelite migration where the old, weak, and infirmed were trailing behind (Deut. 25:18), and at this point the Amalekites bring a frontal assault. Moses does not lead the defense as some might suppose but instead chooses his aide to lead the Israelite army.

To a reader unfamiliar with the entire narrative, this decision by Moses may seem a curious choice. Why would he give the leadership of the army to another at this critical juncture? As has already been identified, Joshua had been serving Moses since he was a

⁷ Dewey M. Beegle, *Moses, The Servant of Yahweh* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 187.

youth, and so was no untested individual. He may have served as military leader all along. Alfred Geden surmises:

And if, during the march, he had held the position of military commander and organizer under Moses, as the narrative seems to imply, to him was due in the first instance the remarkable change, by which within the brief space of a month the undisciplined crowd of serfs who had fled from Egypt became a force sufficiently resolute and compact to repel the onset of the Amalekite hordes.⁸

If Geden is correct, Joshua had already demonstrated leadership ability long before this battle takes place and, at least in the case of the Israelite military, Moses had previously shared some of his leadership with his aide.

In the narrative, Moses places himself on a hill overlooking the battlefield. When Moses raises his hands Joshua prevails; when Moses' hands go down, the Amalekites prevail. It is unclear in the story the exact reason for this turnabout in the fighting. Many popular views claim that it was Moses' prayer and intercession for the army that created the turn of the tide in the battle. David Daiches, focusing on a textual variance, indicates:

The change from the singular 'hand' in verse 9 to the plural 'hands' in verse 12 is clearly a mistake: the attitude is not one of prayer but one of guidance and command. We are told that in his hand is his rod, which from his advantageous position on the hilltop he could use to signal the movements of the enemy to Joshua below.⁹

Instead of praying, Moses could have been signaling the movements of the opposition to Joshua so the Israelite army would fight to their best advantage. Beegle affirms this

⁸ Alfred S Geden, "Joshua," in *PC Study Bible*, Electronic Database Copyright (Biblesoft, 1996).

⁹ David Daiches, *Moses The Man and His Vision* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975) 108-109.

assumption, linking the altar which Moses built and named “The LORD is my Banner” in verse 15 to the fact he was holding up a banner during the battle.¹⁰

Francis Schaeffer summarizes and defines the significance of Moses holding his hands up in the battle as follows, “... when everything is done, the power is to be understood as God's not man's.”¹¹ God is the principal actor in this narrative. The roles of Joshua and Moses are secondary to the work that God is doing. Schaeffer goes on to say, “Joshua also learned another important lesson through the conflict with the Amalekites: Power is not merely the power of the general and the sword, but power is the power of God.”¹²

The significance of Moses’ actions are ultimately unclear from the text. What remains clear is that Moses stood on the top of the hill and held his hands up with the assistance of Aaron and Hur. The reader is left to question whether or not this hand raising had to do with prayer, or simply the fact that Moses had a tactical advantage on the hillside and he was directing Joshua from the high ground. It is clear with Moses’ involvement that this first leadership experience for Joshua was not a solo affair but a team effort. The end result according to the text was, “Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.”¹³

¹⁰ Beegle, *Moses*, 189.

¹¹ Francis A. Schaeffer, *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975) 11.

¹² Ibid., 10.

¹³ Exod. 17:13 NIV.

What happened here in the development of Joshua as a young leader? As Moses' aide, Joshua would have been expected to perform the tasks of a servant for Moses. He would have been in the background, behind the scenes; making sure things went smoothly so Moses could be freed up to lead. In this story, Joshua moves from being an aide to being a partner. He has been given a leadership opportunity, and it is worth noting that Joshua was somehow able to turn a group of men who would have been expert brick makers and masons into an organized fighting force. That is no easy task, yet he accomplished the feat. Moses apparently recognized something in Joshua that caused him to trust that the younger man would be able to follow through and carry out this assignment. The narrative shows Joshua was up to the task.

There is one other piece to this narrative. Following the victory, God instructs Moses to write down that He will wipe out the Amalekites from under heaven. God also tells Moses to make sure that Joshua hears this. Why? One reason could be that since Joshua is the commander of the army it will be his job to ensure God's plan is carried out. Could this also be foreshadowing the role Joshua will play in the leadership of the nation in the future? Or is this a later addition to the text, inserted long after Joshua ascends to leadership? Or is this simply a glimpse into the future significance of Joshua and his leadership? Joshua was to be a person who would not "... let the Book of the Law depart from your mouth."¹⁴ Schaeffer sees this information about the future of the Amalekites as a significant aspect of Joshua's story, making the observation "Early in Joshua's life,

¹⁴ Josh. 1:8 NIV.

therefore, he was in a definite way wrapped up with the book.”¹⁵ He was not only to be one who *knew* the Book; he was to be *in* the Book.

Spiritual Formation through Meeting with God

One of the most important of the seven strands for developing high school students for leadership in the Christian church is the strand of spiritual formation. Simply put, spiritual formation is, “falling head over heels in love with God.”¹⁶ When asked about the most important commandment, Jesus answered “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”¹⁷ However, it is important to remember that spiritual development is not just for the individual’s sake; a person is formed “for the sake of the world.”¹⁸ Loving God and caring for others was something Moses modeled throughout Joshua’s development.

For an emerging leader in the Christian community, this is the key strand of preparation toward leadership in the future. Henri Nouwen frames this discussion in a question which assumes a positive answer, asking, “Are the leaders of the future truly men and women of God, people with an ardent desire to dwell in God's presence, to listen

¹⁵ Schaeffer, *Joshua*, 11.

¹⁶ Gary W. Moon, *Falling for God* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2004) 3.

¹⁷ Mt. 22:37 NIV.

¹⁸ M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 12.

to God's voice, to look at God's beauty, to touch God's incarnate Word and to taste fully God's infinite goodness?"¹⁹ The implication is yes, they are.

The strand of spiritual development, or connecting with God, is a significant aspect of Joshua's development. The narrative indicates that meeting with God, for Moses, was a priority and he appears to have provided opportunities to pass that priority on to Joshua as well.

Moving through the Exodus/Wilderness narrative sequentially, Joshua appears for the second time in Exodus 24. By way of overview, God invites the elders of Israel to meet with him on the mountain (24:1) where they see God and eat and drink with Him (24:9). Following this meal, God invites Moses to come up further to receive the tablets of stone with the law inscribed on them. Moses and Joshua set out together up the mountain (24:13). Although he is not earlier listed with the elders, this sequence in the narrative would imply that Joshua was actually with them for the meeting with God because following the meal Moses says to these elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you."²⁰

Spiritual formation happens when people find ways to be with God.²¹ In some instances, having a person farther along on the faith journey bring along a younger person

¹⁹ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1989), 29-30.

²⁰ Exod. 24:14 NIV.

²¹ Mike Yaconelli, *Messy Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002). In an insightful quote on page 97 he writes, "Christianity is not about inviting Jesus to speed through life with us; it's about noticing Jesus sitting at the rest stop."

to show him or her a new way of meeting God is a helpful step in the young person's journey. In this instance, it is Moses who introduces Joshua to a face to face meeting with God. Schaeffer sees this as an important part of Joshua's development. He writes, "Joshua was reminded of the interplay between the seen and the unseen worlds. There is no vast chasm between them; the unseen world is right here... Above everything and overshadowing everything is the reality of God in his glory."²² Joshua was given an opportunity to eat in God's presence. This was an incredible opportunity for Moses' aide which set a precedent for seeking God's presence in the future.

This experience of connecting with God did not end with the banquet; Joshua actually went with Moses further up the mountain, although probably not to the top,²³ and was waiting in that place for 40 days while Moses received the tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments.

Paul Stanley and J. Robert Clinton write that one of the most important roles of a mentor is to open doors for the person who is being mentored.²⁴ In this instance, Moses opened an important door; he provided Joshua with an opportunity to come and meet with God. Joshua was able to learn early on that Moses' method of leadership was spiritual leadership. Throughout their time together, Moses modeled a leadership that was based on being in God's presence and, as shall be seen later, he continued to model that the most important relationship for a leader is the vertical one.

²² Schaeffer, *Joshua*, 12.

²³ Beegle, *Moses*, 244.

²⁴ Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1992), 38.

Service/Ministry Opportunities through Getting it Wrong

Exodus 32 continues the Joshua narrative. The prior chapters contain detailed descriptions for the building of the tabernacle as well as receiving the Law from God (Exod 24-31). These texts reflect the time that Moses spent alone with God on the mountain. Where was Joshua during this time? The text is unclear, but as will be seen, Joshua and Moses come down the mountain together, implying that Joshua spent those 40 days at least someplace on the mountainside.

Chapter 32 picks up the narrative with the people in the valley wondering where Moses (and Joshua) had gone. It had been 40 days. The people asked Aaron for a god to lead them and amazingly, even though they had eaten and drank in God's presence, Aaron and the other elders created a calf made of gold for the people to worship.²⁵

As Moses and Joshua came down the mountain they heard the people "worshipping." The text indicates the people were actually shouting. When he hears this, Joshua - the army commander - immediately goes into action. In verse 17 he says, "There is the sound of war in the camp." Moses corrects his aide in verse 18 saying, "... it is the sound of singing I hear."

It is interesting that even though Joshua misread the situation, Moses did not condemn or belittle him although as the leader of these people he must have been feeling deep emotion over the situation. As a mentor, Moses simply set his apprentice straight. Because Moses was able to discern what the problem was, he was able to calm down the

²⁵ Exod. 32:1-6 NIV.

“soldier personality” of Joshua and help him to see that it was not a battle against a physical foe. The singing of the people was a symptom of a spiritual reality – a battle that had already been lost in the nation’s hearts.

What would Joshua have felt to watch what happened next? There is no way to know for sure. He would have seen his mentor burn with anger as he saw what the people had done. Joshua would have watched his hope fade as the jubilation of returning from 40 days on the mountain with God ended. He would have seen the two tablets that Moses carried with great reverence thrown down and dashed to pieces. He would have watched Aaron, a man who 40 days before had eaten in God’s presence, try to squirm out of his responsibility and pass blame onto the people for his actions. He also would have witnessed the Levites hacking through the crowd, putting people to death for their sin. He would have seen the tough side of leadership in action. Describing Joshua’s development as a leader, Schaeffer writes, “Here Joshua learned another truth: the terribleness of sin, especially among the people of God.”²⁶

Joshua got it wrong. So did Aaron and the Israelites. This narrative shows two different levels of failure. Joshua’s failure was in his assessment of the situation. Since his experience in leadership is the experience of a military leader, his assessment of this situation is through these military lenses. Moses removes these glasses and shows him another way of viewing reality. The Israelite nation also gets it wrong. The failure of the people is not trusting in God. The lenses they were wearing were the lenses of Egypt and the nations around them. These lenses taught that in order to have a god, one had to see it.

²⁶ Schaeffer, *Joshua*, 14.

The biblical narrative seems to indicate that a lack of trust in God is far more dangerous for God's people than not assessing a situation correctly. Joshua and the rest of the Israelite nation received a significant leadership lesson that day.

Spiritual Formation through Moses' Modeling

Following the narrative, Joshua's next appearance is recorded in Exodus 33. In this section, Moses models his dependence on and relationship with God.

Moses had a special tent that he called the "tent of meeting."²⁷ He would use this tent as a place to meet with God outside the camp. This tent served as the temporary focus for entering God's presence prior to the building of the tabernacle. When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud, representing God's presence, would stay at the tent entrance. Once Moses was inside, "The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent."²⁸

Once again, Joshua appears in the middle of a Moses narrative. When Moses would leave the tent, Joshua would stay. The story implies that Joshua was with Moses while Moses was meeting with God, or at the very least it could be assumed that Joshua remained outside the entrance. Moses modeled for Joshua the importance he gave to leadership linked in relationship with God. Similar to the experience with the elders on

²⁷ Exod. 33:7 NIV.

²⁸ Exod. 33:11 NIV.

the mountain, Joshua would have had the opportunity to witness spiritual formation in action.

Why did Joshua stay? It could have been to run and tell Moses if God appeared and wanted to speak to him, sort of like an early version of the AOL “You’ve got mail” voice. It could be that Joshua was simply there on guard duty keeping the tent clear of curious trespassers.²⁹ Others believe that Joshua had learned that being in God’s presence was an invaluable aspect of leadership and he would not leave the tent in order to spend time in the presence of God.³⁰ Whatever the reason, the strength of the statement is powerful. Joshua “did not” leave the tent. He remained in the location where God was known to be.

The strand of spiritual formation developed in Joshua. At some point in time, Joshua learned to hear the voice of God. “...the LORD said to Joshua...” (Josh. 1:1). This was apparently direct communication, not a message delivered through the high priest or a prophet. Since it appears that Exodus 33 is not a one time occurrence, it may be that by being with Moses as he talked with God and then sitting in or around Moses’ tent of meeting, Joshua learned to hear, recognize, and identify the voice of God.

Many years later in the story of God’s people, another older man helps a young man learn to hear God’s voice. Eli is the older man and Samuel is the boy who is both sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and willing to listen to the instruction of his mentor.

²⁹ Beegle, *Moses*, 272-273.

³⁰G. Brian Jones, Linda Phillips-Jones, and Wally Unruh, “Mentoring Examples in the Bible (Part 1)”. *Faith-Centered Mentoring and More* (2004) *Christian Mentoring and Life Skills Resources*, CCC/Faith-Centered Mentoring and More, 8 August 2005 <http://www.faithmentoringandmore.com/html/articles/idea_6.htm>.

These two stories have many similarities including the fact that theirs was a good transition of power.³¹

Service/Ministry Opportunity 2- Twelve Spies

In probably one of the best-known aspects of Joshua's early story, Joshua appears in Numbers 13 listed as one of the spies sent out to explore the land of Canaan. He was the representative from the tribe of Ephraim. Explaining why Joshua rather than one of Ephraim's elders would have been chosen, Beegle writes, "The most honored leaders of the tribes were the elders, which by definition means that they were older men. The rigors of an exploratory trip dictated that younger men, potential leaders, be sent."³² After spying out the land, only he and Caleb stood up and encouraged the people to obey God and enter the land. The response of the whole assembly was the desire to stone the two young men. If it had not been for the glory of Yahweh appearing at the tent of meeting,³³ they might have been killed. Schaeffer points out that this is another important part of Joshua's leadership journey which is applicable to today. He writes, "... Joshua learned another lesson. He learned that, even when the majority was totally against him, he had to be willing to stand with God. He had to resist his own people when they were wrong, even if it led to physical danger."³⁴

³¹ See Fountain, *Investigation into Leadership Transitions* (July 2004) for more on the transition of Eli and Samuel.

³² Beegle, *Moses*, 286.

³³ Num. 14:10 NIV.

³⁴ Schaeffer, *Joshua*, 18.

Here is a picture of a maturing Joshua, one who is chosen as an emerging leader of his tribe, and one who, after his return from spying the land, is not afraid to trust God and go against the crowd.

Symbol of Future Significance- Name Change

There is another very important aspect to this section of the Joshua narrative, one that is almost lost in the description of the spies' journey and subsequent adverse response of the people. It is found in a parenthetical statement, "(Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.)."³⁵ A change of name puts Joshua in a unique group of biblical people such as Abraham, Israel, and Peter. In Joshua's case, the change is noteworthy because of what it says about God. Gene Getz expresses the significance of this change by writing, "Moses' reasons were similar to the apostles. Hoshea means 'salvation.' From a human point of view, 'Hoshea' would be Israel's savior. But Joshua means 'the Lord is salvation.' From a divine point of view, God would lead Israel into Canaan."³⁶

What is the significance of this shift? How does adding "the LORD" into his name somehow change Joshua's point of view? In Semite culture, a name had deep significance.³⁷ In simple understatement, J.P.U. Lilley writes, "Moses changed his name to the divine structure."³⁸ Martens elaborates further, "Yahweh is the name by which God

³⁵ Num. 13:16 NIV.

³⁶ Gene A. Getz, *Joshua: Living as a Consistent Role Model* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 15.

³⁷ Elmer A. Martens, *God's Design* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 21.

³⁸ J.P.U. Lilley, "Joshua," in *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D Douglas (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1980), 816-17.

represents himself as present, here and now, to act, especially to deliver. It is in this way, essentially in a new way, that Israel will experience Yahweh. Yahweh is a salvation name."³⁹ By adding the divine connection to his name, Joshua would now be reminded daily that he was not the person bringing the people into the Promised Land, but rather it was Yahweh who would do it.⁴⁰

A name change is not one of the seven strands of leadership development. However, it is significant in this instance because it presents a link with rite of passage events which will be discussed in detail in chapter four. Here in this chapter it is worth mentioning that renaming is one way of affirming who the person has become as well as encouraging future growth in a particular area. Judging from what is known of Joshua's life and work, it is clear he took to heart the meaning of his new name.

Transition through Commissioning

God had spoken clearly that Moses was not going to enter the land of promise.⁴¹ A new leader would be selected to take the people to enter the Promised Land across the Jordan River. It appears from the narrative that Moses did not know who would follow him in leadership although he may have intended for one of his sons to follow him.

Moses asks the LORD to appoint a man to lead the people (Num. 27:15). Daiches points out, "It is interesting that while the priesthood is set up as hereditary, the

³⁹ Martens, *God's Design* 23.

⁴⁰ Schaeffer writes, "... so that Joshua would even in his name remember that it is not man who saves, but God who must save." Schaeffer, *Joshua* 17.

⁴¹ Num. 20:12 NIV.

leadership of the people is not. It is not one of Moses' sons, but Joshua the son of Nun, who becomes Moses' successor."⁴² Recent rabbinical writing leads in a similar direction. Whereas land and inheritance is passed from fathers to sons, spiritual leadership transition is not necessarily passed on in this way but rather to the individual whom God chooses. Writing on the transition/commissioning passage in Numbers 27, contemporary rabbi Shaul Regev, from Bar-Ilan University in Israel, draws a modern lesson and speculates that Moses more than likely wanted to include his sons in the leadership transition:

The above midrash connects the passage whose subject is the daughters of Zelophehad with the passage on the change of leadership and delivers the moral that spiritual leadership does not pass hereditarily, but is conferred on those who made the effort to receive it. Moses ostensibly wished to pass the mantle of leadership on to his sons, but the Lord told him to pass it on to his servant Joshua, who had not disdained to perform any service so long as he could be close by Moses in order to learn the Law from him. He did not boast about having been Moses' servant, rather he was prepared to perform even the most menial tasks, arranging seats and laying out mats.⁴³

After serving and assisting Moses for what could have been 40 years,⁴⁴ Joshua was selected to lead. This means that Joshua may have been about 70 years old by this time. Getz indicates the significance of Joshua's time of service by stating, "Note also that

⁴² Daiches, *Moses*, 204.

⁴³ Shaul Regev, "Light a Candle or Fill the Cup?" *Parashat Pinchas* 5762, 29 June 2002, Bar-Ilan University's Parashat Hashavua Study Center, 23 February 2006 <<http://www.biu.ac.il/JH/Parasha/eng/pinchas/reg.html>>.

⁴⁴ Fountain, *Successful Leadership Transitions*, 192.

Joshua served faithfully without even knowing that someday he would take over Moses' leadership role."⁴⁵

The transition in leadership, at God's command, included a time of commissioning.⁴⁶ This would have been an affirming way to bring Joshua into the place of leadership over the people. Since this was the same Israelite nation who had wanted to kill him years before when he and Caleb encouraged them to believe God and enter the Promised Land, this commissioning would be a chance for God and Moses to affirm Joshua's leadership and to confer on him a blessing.

This blessing involved the biblical practice of the laying on of hands. Moses was commanded to take Joshua and to "lay your hand on him."⁴⁷ Nelson's Bible Dictionary defines this practice as, "The placing of hands upon a person by a body of believers in ceremonial fashion to symbolize that person's authority or his appointment to a special task."⁴⁸ By this symbol, Moses was passing on his authority and leadership to his successor. However, Regev notices something unusual about how Moses carries out his instructions. He writes:

Later on we see that there is a discrepancy between the instructions given Moses and their implementation. Moses was commanded to lay his hand on Joshua's head and thereby to transfer part of the abundance which he had to Joshua...Moses, however, to show that he was not jealous of Joshua's leadership, prepared him more fully for

⁴⁵ Getz, *Joshua*, 20.

⁴⁶ Num. 27:18-23 NIV.

⁴⁷ Num. 27:18 NIV.

⁴⁸ "Hands, Laying on of," in Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, ed. Herbert Sr. Lockyer and F. F. Bruce (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986).

prophecy than he was instructed and therefore laid both hands on him, i.e., conferred on him a double portion of abundance.⁴⁹

Through this rite, Joshua would have been publicly identified before the people as Moses' successor. The formality and significance of the ceremony would have left no doubt in the minds of the people that it was Joshua who had been selected to lead the nation when Moses was gone. The public nature of the event would have also provided the opportunity for no one to be left out in this piece of news. The nation would have known that Joshua was the leader chosen by God and Moses, and affirmed by Eleazar the High Priest.

For Joshua, he would have experienced the realization that he was called by God and affirmed by Moses as the next person to lead the nation of Israel. His years of serving Moses had come to a conclusion. His years of serving the people had just begun.

Conclusion

Since this chapter has focused on successful leadership transition into an uncertain future, an obvious question in conclusion would be, "What did Moses do right in his apprenticeship of Joshua?" Apprenticeship is a two-way street and readers today will never know what Joshua also brought to the experience. It is difficult to know what kind of young man he was; for example, was he was a natural leader or was he shy and humble. He may have willingly obeyed and served Moses, or he may have done his tasks with gritted teeth. What can be known from the narrative is that Moses provided opportunities which align themselves with several of the seven strands of leadership

⁴⁹ Regev, *Light a Candle*.

development, allowing for Joshua to learn and grow in leadership. These strands that apply to this story have been highlighted throughout this chapter but will be reviewed in summary.

The seven strands as listed in chapter one are discernment, an understanding of call, rite of passage events, mentoring, spiritual formation, service/ministry opportunities, and commissioning. This chapter has not covered all of these strands, nor have those covered been highlighted in a sequential way. Rather, the narrative has been unpacked and links, where they were found, have been proposed. The parts of the story where the seven strands and the narrative have overlapped are described in the following paragraphs.

One strand identified from the narrative was the strand of ministry opportunities. Moses gave Joshua an education through service. Joshua is described as “Moses’ aide since youth,” a job which might have entailed administrative tasks, menial labor, or running errands. Learning to serve before taking on leadership is a significant aspect of a leadership development portfolio. Joshua was given an opportunity to learn what it meant to serve in the mundane areas of life which would have given him an insight into serving the people he would ultimately lead.

Moses also gave Joshua other roles. His position as military commander is a significant step into leadership. Joshua is given command and authority by Moses who, in most cases, would have been the natural choice for the military leader. Instead, he gives his young apprentice the job. Joshua shows significant leadership capacity in the narrative; he is able to take a group of slaves, who most likely had no experience with warfare, and prepare them to the extent where they were able to not only defend the

nation, but defeat the opposition. The strand of ministry opportunities is seen in Joshua through a lifetime of service to Moses and his experience leading the army into battle.

In serving, Moses also modeled how to confront an aide who was/is wrong. On the way down the mountain, Joshua misinterprets the sound from the party the Israelites are having around the golden calf as the sound of battle. He thought the people were under attack. He probably felt helpless and anxious to get down quickly and start ordering his troops to regain control of the situation. In this instance, Moses had been told the truth by God, so he knew the reality of what was happening. Moses was most likely feeling angry himself and could have easily snapped at Joshua and his overzealousness. Instead, he gently instructs and sets Joshua straight. Joshua learns that leaders make mistakes, a truth he would repeat in the Promised Land with the Gibeonites in the book of Joshua chapter nine.

Moses provided Joshua with another service/ministry opportunity by sending him out as a spy. The twelve spies' intelligence work in the land provided Joshua with another occasion for leadership development, and the return and affirmation of God's plan to enter the land gave him the chance to stand up for what was right and true even in the face of tremendous opposition. His experience facing an angry mob who wanted to kill him must have given him a different perspective of leadership. By this time, Joshua must have developed a faith and confidence in God that allowed him to boldly stand with Caleb and call the people to action.

In this overall story, Moses also demonstrated a second strand by providing for the development of a spiritual leader. He modeled and gave Joshua opportunities to connect with God. By taking Joshua onto the mountain with the elders to be in God's presence

and by modeling a friendship with God in the Tent of Meeting, Moses provided Joshua with opportunities to know the leadership he was observing was not simply done through cleverness of the human mind or diplomatic skill, but through a deep abiding relationship with God.

Spiritual formation was important because Moses was preparing Joshua for leadership in an uncertain future. He was not sure what life for the Israelites would be like in the Promised Land, but he did know that it would be much different than it had been in Egypt or living in tents in the desert. In the midst of a changing future, Moses knew that the only way he could effectively lead was to stay connected with God.

The last of the seven strands identified in this chapter is the strand of commissioning. Being commissioned by Moses and Eleazar before the people would have been a culmination and completion of his apprenticeship as a leader. To have these men lay hands on Joshua and speak words of affirmation and blessing, while also giving the task of leading a nation, must have been both encouraging and daunting. The narrative continuing in the book of Joshua reveals that as a leader, Joshua proved to be a person who honored this commissioning.

Joshua was prepared by his experiences with Moses to be the leader of a nation. He learned and experienced, in large and small ways, at least three of the seven strands of leadership development identified in this paper. In preparing his apprentice, Moses wove together ministry opportunities and service, spiritual formation, and commissioning. These are crucial strands in the development of a young leader.

Throughout the years, leadership development among Anabaptists has followed a similar pattern of braiding together some of the same and additional strands from the seven strand cord. The Anabaptist rope walk is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

ANABAPTIST/MENNONITE BRETHREN CONTRIBUTIONS TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The previous chapter identified three of the seven strands of leadership development: service/ministry opportunities, spiritual formation, and commissioning. This chapter will continue by identifying two more of the seven strands, discernment and calling. These two strands run throughout the scriptures in the stories of Moses, Jeremiah, David, Isaiah and others. They also appear in the history and tradition of the Anabaptist/Mennonite Brethren stream of the Christian faith. It is from this historical stream that the next strands will be identified.

What is the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition? What does this tradition practice, particularly as it relates to leadership development? This chapter will look at three historical “snapshots” from Anabaptism to provide a picture of discernment and calling; snapshot one, the foundation of the Anabaptist movement in the 16th century; snapshot two, the developments among Mennonites in Russia up until the turn of the 20th century; and snapshot three, a summary of Anabaptist and Mennonite Brethren understandings of being “called” and the implications for today.

Anabaptism was a movement that arose during the time of the Protestant Reformation. The Anabaptists believed the reformers did not go far enough in reforming the Catholic Church. Also, the Reformers like Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli believed the local government had authority over the church; Anabaptists believed it was not the state who legitimized the church but rather the Holy Spirit who was responsible for any

legitimacy that was needed. Arnold Snyder adds, “Anabaptism became a ‘church’ movement when adherents insisted that the properly biblical way of forming the church was through the freely chosen baptism of adult believers. The true church, they maintained, was made up only of persons who had, in full conscience and choice, publicly committed themselves to the Body of Christ on earth.”¹ These adherents stuck to these beliefs, often at great personal risk.

Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren refer to a branch of Anabaptism that grew out of a connection to a leader named Menno Simons. The “Mennonites,” as they were known, eventually found themselves in the Ukraine up until and through the Russian Revolution at the beginning of the 20th century. The Mennonite Brethren believers left the Mennonite Church in the Ukraine in the later part of the 1800’s as a pietistic reformation movement.

Anabaptists and Leadership

In order to focus on issues of discernment and calling pertinent for the Mennonite Brethren, it is important to go back to the “roots” and identify how the Anabaptists, also known as “radical reformers,” dealt with issues of leadership development. This was not a systematic procedure since the 16th century Anabaptists were often too busy trying to avoid capture, imprisonment, torture and death rather than develop a detailed ministry philosophy. However, from their writings and court documents, a number of factors can be determined about their views on leadership and the practices they employed.

¹ C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology* (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 1995), 1.

In a discussion on leadership, three aspects of the Anabaptist theology and practice were distinctive for that time. First, they worked at creating a new society or community; second, they lived with a shared sense of leadership; and third, at least according to some scholars, they strongly emphasized the priesthood of all believers.

New Community

In the initial years of this Spirit-led movement, the adherents saw themselves as creating a new community similar to the Early Church in Acts 2. Lois Barrett writes, "From its beginnings, Anabaptism understood the church as intended to provide an alternative society that brought people into the reign of God and itself pointed toward the reign of God."² This 'alternative society' practiced Christian community in many ways that would resonate with people today, including more openness to the Spirit in life and ministry as well as wider roles for women.³

Unfortunately, as most new movements do, Anabaptism lost both the spark of the Spirit, as well as the openness to women, that it initially had. Snyder and Huebert write, "It thus would be a mistake to characterize early Anabaptism as a 'golden age' of pure spiritual equality that opened up the same leadership possibilities for men and women

² "Anabaptist Evangelism in the Context of Modernity and Postmodernity," 1998, in *Anabaptist Witness in a Postmodern Society*, ed. Ronald W. Waters (Mt. Joy, PA: New Life Ministries, 1998), 5.

³ See Snyder, *Anabaptist History*, 230. The early Anabaptist movement was far more open to manifestations of 'the spirit', and thus allowed wider roles to women than would be the case in the later communities.

alike, for such was not the case.”⁴ Even though the movement started with a call to renewed community with opportunities for all in ministry, Anabaptism ultimately did not go far enough to include both men and women in leadership.

The concept of the people of God as a new community is not a radical idea. But in this time, where the Church and State were interconnected, the only community that people experienced was a feudalistic or nationalistic one. The 16th century Anabaptists, among others, recaptured one of the New Testament’s central messages: Jesus came to establish a new community. This “radical” view is now so common that in many branches of the contemporary church it is almost taken for granted. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, this vision for community is being rediscovered as one of the key tenants of the emerging culture.

A Shared Sense of Leadership

A second Anabaptist snapshot shows a shared sense of leadership. Since leadership for the Anabaptists was understood over and against the dominant paradigm – the local priest - they took a view that emphasized leadership as service, to one another and their neighbours. In the local communities that formed and gathered to open the scriptures together, each person brought something to the meeting. In fact, so widespread was this communal leadership that even in court a “leader” of a particular local congregation could not be identified. Reformed historian John Kiwiet has found, “One of the witnesses in court made the following statement about the early Anabaptists: ‘They have no rulers,

⁴ C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert, *Profiles of Anabaptist Women* (Waterloo, Ontario: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1996), 11.

one is like the other, all are equal in the service of one another.”⁵ This was often due to pragmatic reasons with leaders captured and in prison, but there are also clear indications that the idea of shared leadership among men and a greater participation for women was part of the framework in this emerging movement. Much of the idea of shared leadership was no doubt due to the fact that Anabaptism attracted people from the lower levels of society. For these people, this new message was truly “Good News.” As Snyder writes, “As had been the case with medieval ‘heretical’ groups, Anabaptist members came to be drawn primarily from the labouring classes and joined secret conventicles led by lay pastors.”⁶ These conventicles served as the base for the new communities of believers based on personal belief rather than the legacy from the state.

Because they were led by lay pastors who generally did not have ministerial training, and because the adherents came from the lower levels of society, the Anabaptists were generally suspicious of the professional clergy. They found the concept of the “priesthood of all believers,” which by implication included shared leadership, to be something that they practiced.⁷

Priesthood of All Believers

The third leadership snapshot from the early Anabaptists is a practice of the priesthood of all believers which may have arisen less from a theological point of view

⁵ John J Kiwiet, "The Call to the Ministry Among the Anabaptists," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 11, no. Spring (Spring 1969): 30.

⁶ Snyder, *Anabaptist History*, 2.

⁷ 1 Pet. 2:9 NIV.

and more out of a strong sentiment of anti-clericalism that was already widespread in the culture of the late Middle Ages. Recent Mennonite literature has discussed the concept of a community hermeneutic found in the priesthood of all believers and has come to conflicted findings. Fueled primarily in recent years by the Deans Seminar at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary⁸, these two themes, priesthood and clericalism, have re-emerged to shape Mennonite literature and church polity today. However, the question on the historicity of this “rosy” image of Anabaptists is not without critics. Karl Koop reports, “...the concept of the hermeneutical community, as expressed in the writings of John Howard Yoder and others, may well be a modern interpretation of sixteenth-century Anabaptism.”⁹

How did Anabaptists understand clericalism? This question is best answered when understood within the wider socio-cultural and political climate that occurred during the period in which the Anabaptists emerged. These were the turbulent years of the Reformation, and leaders like Luther, Calvin and Zwingli were rediscovering and recreating a new view of theology while at the same time still identifying with a local political system for the protection of their reformed views. This was also a time of upheaval for the Catholic Church ‘system’ and, as Koop states, it was a time of general anticlericalism within the wider medieval society. “The anticlerical spirit of the late Middle Ages permeated the Reformation period and became a primary engine of social,

⁸ See Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Study Project to Develop a Model for Theological Education in the Free Church Tradition (Elkhart, IN, 1967).

⁹ Karl Koop, “Worldly Preachers and True Shepherds,” in *The Heart of the Matter*, ed. Erick Sawatzky (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2004), 25.

religious and eventually, political change.”¹⁰ So, although Anabaptists are known for being anticlerical, it is probably safer to say that this was an idea that had more general appeal than just this particular group. In later years, Anabaptists turned to a clergy/laity system just as so many movements had before them.

If the concept of the priesthood of all believers was actually something that Anabaptists believed, what did they mean? This is a difficult question to answer, primarily because there are differences of opinion on the subject. General views of the Anabaptists’ indicate there was a strong belief in the priesthood of all believers. In previous paragraphs, Karl Koop pointed out the questions in that view. In contrast, Marlin Miller, who wrote the article on “priesthood of all believers” for the Mennonite Encyclopedia found, “Anabaptist writers in the sixteenth century rarely refer to the priesthood of all believers, although they have much to say in opposition to clericalism.”¹¹ With this quote, the conversation comes back, full circle to the anticlericalism discussion.

By way of background, it is important to note that the priesthood of all believers is taken from Martin Luther’s works¹² and although it is also used by Menno Simons in his writings, it is primarily used to encourage believers to a life of discipleship, not a way of

¹⁰ Ibid., 27.

¹¹ Richard A Kauffman, Gayle Gerber Koontz, *Theology for the Church- Writings by Marlin E. Miller* (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1997), 118.

¹² "Recovering, Rethinking, and Re-Imagining: Issues in a Mennonite Theology for Christian Ministry," in *Understanding Ministerial Leadership*, ed. John A Esau (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1995), 5.

choosing leaders.¹³ John Calvin avoided this description of the church completely. Gary Badcock comments, “In fact, no mention is made of the priesthood of all believers in the whole of Calvin's discussion of ministry. We may with some justice surmise that it is even deliberately excluded from consideration.”¹⁴ Although Luther wrote on this theme and Calvin appears to have avoided it, Anabaptists certainly did not discover how to practice this biblical principle. John Esau summarizes, “... the notion of the ‘priesthood of all believers’ is a common Christian theme, claimed again across the entire spectrum of Christian theology; and we serve neither ourselves nor our Christian witness by thinking of it as a defining concept of Anabaptism. It is not.”¹⁵

The two-fold emphasis on anticlericalism and the priesthood of all believers altered as the Anabaptist movement became more institutionalized. The concept of leadership changed as a corrective to the “Spirit-led” excesses of earlier times. Snyder, in his history of the Anabaptists, wrote specifically about the Swiss Brethren, one of the Anabaptist groups, who had initially stated that a direct call from God was the rule, not the exception.¹⁶ However, as the movement grew, significant changes occurred in the role of the Spirit and the selection of leaders. He observes:

Although the movement from pneumatic enthusiasm to the congregational election of male leaders took place among the Swiss in only two years (1525-1527), the same general pattern would be repeated over a longer span of time elsewhere in the

¹³ Ibid., 5.

¹⁴ Gary D Badcock, *The Way of Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 93.

¹⁵ Esau, *Recovering, Rethinking and Re-Imagining*, 5-6.

¹⁶ Snyder, *Anabaptist History*, 254.

Anabaptist movement, for the same basic reasons: direct spiritual revelations and pneumatic manifestations came under suspicion, and were replaced by the revelation of written Scripture, interpreted by a male leadership. ... The diminished role of women in Anabaptist congregations was thus roughly proportional to the victory of letter over spirit in Anabaptism.¹⁷

In this changing context, the direct role of the Holy Spirit was replaced by the interpretation of the Word.

The implications of this decision for leadership was a transfer from the individual's sense of calling as an exclusive determinant of leadership, to a leadership in which a person (in this case now a man) was chosen based on ability by the congregation, or by lot, for the leadership role. Snyder points out an ironic shift that occurred over time stating, "The priesthood of all believers, which continued for a time in early Anabaptism, was replaced in later Anabaptism by a clergy/laity distinction."¹⁸ This change, which is a common historical pattern for new revivalist movements, was brought about by a move from dynamic community to more established congregation. In the case of the Anabaptists, this was primarily brought about by an ending of persecution which resulted in greater freedom of worship and more time to think about issues like leadership. This new freedom brought a change in leadership to the Anabaptist/Mennonite church that lasted for hundreds of years.

Summary of Anabaptists

How was leadership defined in a practical way for early Anabaptists? One way leadership was manifested meant that as Kiwiet stated earlier, those who were

¹⁷ Ibid., 258.

¹⁸ Ibid., 367.

persecuting and interrogating the Anabaptists could not discover their leaders. Also, because this was a movement of the Spirit, leadership arose from a more vague sense of being “called by God.” Kiwiet writes, “The call to Christian leadership is therefore for the Anabaptist, in the first place, a direct and personal experience.”¹⁹ This personal, dynamic, God-initiated call was often in opposition with what the Anabaptists observed as the non-spiritual selection of clergy for the State churches. Snyder’s widely-held view reflects, “Early Anabaptist anticlericalism often was based on the true, spiritual call of Anabaptist preachers, contrasted with the worldly call of the mainline clergy.”²⁰ The role and function of the Holy Spirit in this radical reformation movement cannot be overemphasized, particularly in the implications for leadership and leadership development. Kiwiet continues, “In all these testimonies of the leaders and members of the Anabaptist movement there is a strong awareness of the spiritual and charismatic basis for any office in the Church.”²¹ The emphasis the early Anabaptists placed on the Spirit is also seen in revivalist movements happening around the world today.²² The fact that this movement occurred among people who were in the lower strata of society is

¹⁹ Kiwiet, *Call to Ministry*, 31.

²⁰ Snyder, *Anabaptist History*, 366.

²¹ Kiwiet, *Call to Ministry*, 32.

²² Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8. Writing about the rise of the church in the Southern hemisphere, Jenkins writes, “They preach messages that, to a Westerner, appear simplistically charismatic, visionary, and apocalyptic. In this thought-world, prophecy is an everyday reality, while faith-healing, exorcism, and dream-visions are all basic components of religious sensibility. For better or worse, the dominant churches of the future could have much in common with those of medieval or early modern European times.”

significant. For them, shared leadership and the priesthood of all believers manifested itself not from the trained clergy, but from among those who felt a call to ministry.

The snapshots in this section have shown three primary aspects of leadership in the Anabaptist movement. There was a belief among the Anabaptists that they were creating a New Testament community. There was a shared sense of leadership that was so pervasive their enemies could not figure out who the “real” leaders were. Finally, there was a strong anticlerical spirit in the wider culture that spilled over into the Anabaptist’s practice. This reaction to clericalism led to a greater participation from the community in matters of faith and life. Unfortunately, as the movement aged, the sense of the Holy Spirit that was prevalent in the early days was exchanged for an emphasis on the Word.

It needs to be stated that strong leadership did appear during this time. There were leaders like Menno Simons who arose from a variety of communities. The manner in which the leader came to be was usually not through an office or position, but as a person called by God. What seems clear, at least for the scope of this chapter, is that in the early Anabaptist movement, there was a strong sense of God’s call to leadership, and that in the early years, the leadership was shared throughout the local congregation.

The Ukraine

This chapter will fast-forward the Mennonite story, skipping over the group migration from Netherlands and Switzerland and the years in Prussia, and will resume in the Ukraine. It was in the late 1850’s and in this location that the Mennonite Brethren emerged from the wider Mennonite church. How was leadership developed and seen in the Mennonite Brethren as the movement appeared in the Ukrainian context?

The twin strands of discernment and calling became more focused in this renewal movement. In keeping with what was understood as the 16th century model, the practice of leadership development was through discernment and shared leadership. John E. Toews writes about Mennonite Brethren at this time in history, “During the era of shared leadership leaders were called out from the church and formed in the life of the church. Leadership was authenticated by the community of believers. That is, the authority to lead was derived from the oneness with and the trust of the church.”²³ It appears that by the late 1800’s the church took a much more active role in discerning and selecting leaders in the congregation than the initial Anabaptist practice. This shared leadership model followed the Mennonite Brethren on their migration to North America.²⁴

Compared to the Spirit-led calling to leadership that the 16th century Anabaptists practiced, the 19th century Mennonites functioned with a stronger emphasis on calling out leaders from within the congregation.²⁵ The individual’s occupation did not matter, for if the congregational leadership discerned a man for leadership, it was expected that he would accept. In fact, part of the affirmation for baptism was a willingness to accept

²³ John E. Toews, "Leadership Styles for Mennonite Brethren Churches," 22 leaves presented at the Mennonite Brethren Board of Reference and Counsel Study Conference on Current Issues in Church Leadership (Clearbrook, BC: Mennonite Brethren Board of Reference and Counsel, 8 May 1980), 3.

²⁴ See John A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Fresno, CA: Board of Christian Literature General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1975), 303. He writes, “The pattern that emerged in early M.B. congregations can be best described as a ‘multiple lay ministry.’ The churches elected and subsequently ordained several brethren from their own midst for the preaching of the Word and the spiritual supervision of the congregations.

²⁵ J. B. Toews, *A Pilgrimage of Faith: The Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia and North America 1860-1990* (Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1993), 54.

ordination for ministry. J.B. Toews, sharing his father's story, writes, "In keeping with Mennonite Brethren practice, they (the church leaders) called to him to accept affirmation as a minister of the gospel. He was ordained that spring on Pentecost day."²⁶ Toews father continued to serve as the local school teacher, serving the church in a voluntary capacity, and joining a team of leaders looking after the church.

The model of discerning and calling multiple leaders continued for many years in the Mennonite Brethren church. The leadership team was made up of men who were not paid for their pastoral leadership.²⁷ This multiple, volunteer leadership model functioned well in the Ukraine and continued long after another migration, this time to North America, until a change took place among these German-speaking communities as more and more Mennonites were assimilated into the "melting pot" that is North America.

A change in leadership structure in the MB church occurred in North America in a move away from the team-led, congregationally discerned leaders to a more "parish priest model." In another historical irony, almost all contemporary MB congregations have moved the leadership structure back toward paid, professional clergy, the very style the early Anabaptists rejected. This has worked to lessen the instances where individuals,

²⁶ J. B. Toews, *J.B.: The Autobiography of a Twentieth-Century Mennonite Pilgrim* (Fresno, CA: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1995), 5.

²⁷ Toews, *Pilgrimage*, 57. These men were not simply ignorant farmers who were chosen as leaders, Toews writes, "The practice of referring to early Anabaptist and Mennonite Brethren leaders as 'lay ministers' must be qualified when we review the training for ministry. Any inference that these ministers were amateurs is incorrect. Both the sixteenth-century Anabaptists and the early Mennonite Brethren knew the Bible well."

and now especially young people, are discerned and called into leadership.²⁸ At a time when the emerging church is looking to multiple leadership models, the scions of the Anabaptists have been moving away from this and embracing evangelical, North American leadership structures.²⁹

In order to minister effectively in the emerging culture, this could be the time that Mennonite Brethren rediscover their roots and return to a congregationally called, multiple leadership model.

What Does it Mean to be “Called”?

This chapter is emphasizing two of the seven strands of leadership development, discernment and calling. In the previous sections, it has been shown that the early Anabaptists focused on calling for leadership in many ways as a reaction against the formal selection of leaders in the state churches. In the intervening years between the 16th and 19th centuries, Anabaptists added congregational discernment to calling in leadership selection. In many ways, the congregational discernment became the call for those who were chosen to lead in the Mennonite Brethren church. In contemporary times, the pendulum has shifted once again to a strong emphasis on personal calling and has downplayed congregational discernment. The purpose of the seven strand cord of

²⁸ Jim Holm, "The North American MB Call to Pastoral Leadership," *Direction* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 204. "Everything changed with the move to a salaried, educated, one-pastor leadership model. Whatever strengths that model has brought to the MB church, one downside has been the increasing difficulty of recruiting young people for leadership."

²⁹ See Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003). In chapter ten the authors present a detailed plan for team leadership based on Ephesians chapter 4.

leadership development proposed in this project is to bring the seven strands together rather than choose one over another. At this point in the process, in order for this discussion to proceed further, it is important to understand more deeply the strand of calling. What does it mean to be called?

Biblical Structure

Calling encompasses a significant part of the biblical literature. This can be seen in the numerous call story narratives in scripture: Moses, Gideon, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Mary mother of Jesus, and Paul are some of the most obvious examples. In addition, as scholars have studied these passages, they have discovered patterns and forms in the biblical narrative in the manner in which people were called. Using the Old Testament examples of Gideon, Moses, Isaiah and Ezekiel, Norman Habel identifies a six-fold structure to call accounts. His identification includes: 1) divine confrontation, 2) introductory word, 3) commission, 4) objection, 5) reassurance, and 6) sign.³⁰ These six stages in the calling of a prophet or leader identify them as an individual whom God has selected for a specific work.

Sometimes this dramatic, Old Testament method of “call” is not an accurate predictor for long-term fruit in contemporary ministry. In a research project with youth pastors, Len Kaegler conducted interviews to determine the manner of their call. Through his study, Kaegler identified three “types” of call among these youth pastors.³¹ The

³⁰ Norman C. Habel, "Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *Zeitschrift Fur die Altestamentliche Wissenschaft* 77, no. 34 (1965): 298.

³¹ Len Kageler, "What Does It Mean to Be "Called" to Youth Ministry?" *Christian Education Journal* xvi, no. 3 (Spring 1996): 57.

interesting discovery he made was that those who had what he termed an “Old Testament” call were less likely to stay long-term in a ministry location than the person who understood his or her call in a more practical, action-oriented, “this is what I like to do” way.³² Could this be due to the fact that if an individual is relying exclusively on a direct, inner call without any discernment from their local congregation, it becomes easier for the leader to demand obedience because, “God told me, so you’d better do what I say?” This is a good reason for the twin strands of calling and discernment working together in an individual’s life to maintain balance and accountability.

Story vs. Narrative

It is important at this point to also make a distinction between a call story and a call narrative. They are not the same. A call story concerns the events of what has happened whereas a narrative is a reflective interpretation of those events. In a provocatively titled book, *God’s Yes was Louder than My No, Rethinking the African American Call to Ministry*, William H. Myers writes about both story and narrative, making this distinction:

It is a narrative structured with one main purpose: to persuade the hearer of the veracity of the story. Hence ... call stories and call narratives are not necessarily the same... one reason is dominant. In order for the narrator to accomplish his or her purpose - persuade the hearer to believe the story - he or she needs to select, arrange, and modify the story.³³

³² Ibid., 58.

³³ William H. Myers, *God's Yes Was Louder Than My No* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 69.

Individuals who feel “called” often frame that story in a call narrative. The individual may share that narrative in a variety of ways with family, friends and their local congregation. However, the definition of “call” is broader than an individual’s story. It involves the entire community of faith, and it stretches across the entire Kingdom of God.

Calling in a Wider Context

The call of God is for everyone and begins with a call to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.³⁴ No other aspect of call can be considered for a Christian leader until this call has had a response. Clayton Beyler writes, “The Christian’s calling is thus the call to salvation. From the Biblical perspective it is impossible to draw a line between those in the church who are called and those who have not been called.”³⁵ Garry Friesen agrees, “Accordingly, in the epistles Christians are frequently designated as ‘the called’. That is, they are sinners who have not only heard God’s invitation through the gospel but have responded to it in faith.”³⁶

There is also a second, general call. It is the call for all believers to join with God in bringing the Kingdom of God to the entire earth.³⁷ This is the Christian’s vocation.³⁸ This

³⁴ Acts 2:38-39 NIV.

³⁵ Clayton Beyler, *The Call to Preach* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1963) 1.

³⁶ Garry Friesen, *Decision Making & the Will of God* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1980), 313.

³⁷ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1998), 35.

³⁸ Susan Willhauck, “Cultivating a Culture of the Call: A Model for Lay Theological Education,” *Theological Education* 38, no. 2 (2002): 111. “Christian vocation is the call

means working in Christ's love and engaging in Kingdom building activities, such as, feeding the hungry, caring for the poor, and sharing the good news of Jesus. All believers have this call, not just those called to serve in ministry. Gary Badcock, in his book on Christian vocation, summarizes this Kingdom participation call as "The Christian calling is to love."³⁹ The Apostle John summarized the primary virtue and role of Jesus-followers by writing, "Love one another."⁴⁰

What About a Call to Leadership?

Following God's call first to a relationship and second to help advance His Kingdom are primary callings for every believer. At the core, these two calls make up a follower of Jesus' vocation. The word "vocation" comes from the Latin *vocare* which means "to call."⁴¹ These are important beginning points for all believers to recognize; however, this project is concerned with developing leadership. In this section, the span of understanding call will be widened from God's call to everyone and His call to believers, to a call for specific leadership. It will be shown that not everyone is convinced that a specific call is necessary for leadership, although some will also argue that it is essential. The Anabaptists in the 16th and late 19th centuries believed that a call to leadership came through two places: directly from God and from the local congregation. They were also

that comes from being made new in Christ, a call to all baptized Christians to do God's work in the world and in the church."

³⁹ Badcock, *Way of Life*, 108.

⁴⁰ 1 John 4:7 NIV.

⁴¹ Badcock, *Way of Life*, 3.

convinced that these calls needed to be congruous. What about specific calls to leadership, and how does one balance what are known as an “inner” and “outer” calls?⁴²

Inner Call and Outer call

It is important to clarify at the beginning that for Anabaptists the call to leadership is not to be the ‘boss’ but to serve with a heart for the people being served. Badcock emphasizes, “A call to ministry is first and foremost ... a call to service rather than to lordship.”⁴³ Erik Sawatzky agrees, “Leadership is more than position and performance. Leadership, understood positively, is essentially a matter of the heart.”⁴⁴ Mennonite Brethren theologian John E. Toews puts it this way, “Leadership in the church means freedom to serve; it does not involve the right to rule.”⁴⁵

Inner call- “God and me”

In a classic chicken and egg scenario, which manner of leadership call comes first? Some would argue that for the individual the inner call needs to be primary. Ardean Goertzen, writing about those in vocational ministry, makes this observation “Their vocation initially depends not upon worthiness, spirituality, or acceptability, but solely

⁴² Beyler, *Call to Preach*, 13. Beyler defines these two calls as follows, “Another set of terms describes the call as an ‘inner’ call or an ‘outer’ call. By the inner call is meant the call of God directly to the individual. .. By the outer call is meant the call by the church. In both sets of terms the basic conviction is that God calls.”

⁴³ Badcock, *Way of Life*, 93.

⁴⁴ Erick Sawatzky, *The Heart of the Matter: Pastoral Ministry in Anabaptist Perspective* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2004), 230.

⁴⁵ Toews, *Leadership Styles*, 11.

upon their being chosen by God as his representative.”⁴⁶ This is certainly the early model of the 16th century Anabaptists, and in those days this call included women as well as men. Unfortunately, the issue of women being called by God into leadership eventually proved to be too much for these groups of believers. Snyder writes:

In its broadest outlines a fundamental tension can be seen within Anabaptism because of the crucial role played by the Holy Spirit in 'calling' men and women *alike* to lives of costly discipleship. The initial call of the Spirit was never considered to be gender-specific...⁴⁷

God's call is not gender-specific. In this project, the underlying assumption is that in developing leadership in adolescents through the seven strand cord, both young men and women are being called.

The call of God can come at any time in a person's life, even when it is not convenient. One of the central themes that arise from the biblical survey of call narratives is that these people were often “interrupted” by God in the course of their normal, daily life. In the same way today, for teenagers growing up in the Church, issues of vocation and call can emerge naturally through normal discussions about future college and career, or they may get an “interrupting” word from an adult who shoulder-taps them to consider ministry. Because a young person is questioning college and vocation, navigating developmental issues of individuation (discussed in chapter 4), and also discerning church expectations, the adolescent finds him or herself with a burning question on their heart, “What is God's will for my life?”

⁴⁶ Ardean L Goertzen, "Re-Institutionalizing the Pastorate," in *Understanding Ministerial Leadership*, ed. John A Esau (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1995), 90.

⁴⁷ Snyder, *Anabaptist History*, 268.

Also during adolescence, the North American evangelical Christian cultural rite is to go away, maybe to a camp or retreat, and “get a call” from God.⁴⁸ The goal of this exercise is often to figure out which college to attend or which person to marry. Sometimes the young person also desires to know what they “should do with their life”. This often means what kind of job they should have.

However, there are dangers when a person’s call is simply personal and found through exclusively individual experiences. Like the youth pastors in Kaegler’s survey, a strictly personal call can easily lead to abuse of any power the person has; it could also be subject to the emotion of the moment; or the person might question the call when circumstances change. There is definitely a risk in relying exclusively on an inner call from God. Beyler offers this warning to those who rely exclusively on an inner call:

When priority is given to the inner call, the individual might understand the call...as coming directly from God. ...If the individual believes that his call came prior to or independent of the call of the church, the meaning of the call will be largely dependent upon inner feelings, which will need to be cultivated to keep the sense of call alive.⁴⁹

At the same time, there were many biblical characters and Christian leaders who received an inner call and who exercised leadership in a faithful and God-honoring way. The question that needs to be asked to emerging generations is “Why go it alone?” If the opportunity arose to also have the church community affirm and bless a call to leadership, why would anyone who was seeking to lead as a servant avoid that?

⁴⁸ This is true in the MB denomination as well as many others. The stories in the Narrative, though fictional are based on a compilation of real young people who responded to an appeal from the stage at a MB national youth conference in 2003.

⁴⁹ Beyler, *Called to Preach*, 17.

Call in Community

If it is taken as a given that all believers in Jesus are called to Kingdom ministry, while at the same time some receive an inner call from God to leadership, what else can an outer call provide? Can community discernment play a role in a person's decision to serve in leadership?

As Anabaptists experienced freedom from persecution and longer periods of peace, there emerged a more well-defined emphasis on community and specifically on the community calling individuals for service and ministry. There seemed to be some debate, at least in the early years, which method of call was more important. Was the congregational call seen as more important than the individuals' experience with God? Or was it the experience with God that provided a conversation point with the community? It appeared, at least in early Anabaptism, that both were important in a person's call story, but preference still seemed to come from the inner call. Kiwiet puts it this way, "This function is first of all a result of God's personal call which then secondly needs to be recognized and confirmed by the church's external call."⁵⁰ In other words, the role of church is to simply confirm what the individual says is his or her story of an encounter with God. Is this the best option?

In contrast to Kiwiet, Paul Miller writes that the outer call is primary as he points out an interesting way outer calling worked with ordination:

Mennonites have in the past tended to give the call by the congregation more weight than the private inner call. In some areas the male candidates for baptism were

⁵⁰ Kiwiet, *Call to the Ministry*, 41.

required to promise that they would submit to ordination if the church should call them. It was more acceptable to Mennonite opinion to refuse to function after ordination than to refuse to accept ordination. It was considered a mark of pride and presumption for a man to step forward and offer himself for service in the ordained ministry.⁵¹

In daily practice, this role of the calling community, or “outer call,” was more than simply an initial call by the church. For Menno Simons, calling involved a three-part process that also included a continued testing of the individual’s call. Snyder reports “The inner call of God, Menno maintained, was a necessary first step; the commissioning by ‘the pious’ was a second step; but the continued testing of the legitimacy of the pastoral call was the undeniable third step.”⁵² This third step, the continued testing of a call is a significant “missing piece” in current leadership discussions.⁵³ The current assumption is that once a person has a call, he or she has it for life. Unfortunately, this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper; however, the question of the legitimacy of a lifelong call to ministry would make an excellent topic for further study.

If calling in community has become the preferred Mennonite option, what does it look like? Miller continues, “A more healthy pattern and more consistent with the brotherhood church and the priesthood of all believers might be to have the call come first as a tap on the shoulder by the church. This could then be God's agent to arouse the

⁵¹ Paul M. Miller, *Servant of God's Servants* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1964) 39.

⁵² Snyder, *Anabaptist History*, 368.

⁵³ Henry Schmidt, interview by Rick Bartlett, May, 30 2006, Fresno, “Call in the Mennonite Brethren Church.” Dr. Schmidt, past president of the MB Biblical Seminary also identifies a significant gap in current practice. He observes, “The one missing piece in our current calling system is at the back end. We have a clear process for calling out leaders but we have no process for exiting. Why do pastors who quit pastoring make that decision individually with little if any input from the discernment of church leaders?”

slumbering inner call.”⁵⁴ “Shoulder tapping” was one method that was used in the past in Mennonite Brethren churches for the congregation to call out leaders as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

When one model of calling people into leadership has worked for many years, it is difficult to find one to replace it, even if no one is using it anymore. Shoulder tapping- which is simply the way in which Mennonite Brethren leadership used to call leaders from within the congregation- is that model for the Mennonite Brethren church. Jim Holm believes Mennonite Brethren churches today have stopped this practice.⁵⁵ John Neufeld identifies this as a missing component in current church practice saying, “Our churches have encouraged ministry preparation and our schools have diligently instructed our students, but something is missing. That something is the identifiable call of the church.”⁵⁶ For Neufeld, the critical piece is that this call or shoulder tap is identifiable. The individual knows that he or she has been tapped for leadership.

Why has shoulder tapping gone out of vogue? One answer may be the rise of individualism and personal choice over active engagement with the local church. Another reason could be the fact that young people are removed from the local congregation and placed in their own group away from the rest of the congregation. Adults in the congregation simply do not know their youth anymore. Whatever the reason, there has been a significant shift. Holm summarizes it in this way, “In the past, the local

⁵⁴ Miller, *Servant of God's Servants* 39.

⁵⁵ Holm, *North American MB Call*, 203.

⁵⁶ John Neufeld, "Rediscovering the Calling and Sending Church," *Direction* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 193.

congregation was involved in both the *calling* and the *affirmation* of persons for pastoral leadership. Today the church is involved only in the affirmation.”⁵⁷ As mentioned earlier, “the call” for a young person could come at a camp, retreat, or a mission trip, completely divorced from the local congregation; this is tragic because those close to home could be the very people who know the young person best and would have the most encouragement to offer.

Is the role of the church simply to affirm and validate an inner call? Or should contemporary MB churches take a more active role in the selection of leadership candidates? Neufeld calls the church to be a “discerning community”⁵⁸ which implies a more proactive role in leadership development. Beyler would agree, stating, “A better approach would be to see the inner call as an essential part of the outer call. The believer’s church should have an active part in nurturing and calling individuals to specific ministries in the church.”⁵⁹ Churches in the Mennonite Brethren denomination that are making discernment an active part of their leadership development plans are finding that there are leaders within their congregations who are deeply encouraged and affirmed when they are called.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on two additional strands from the seven strand cord: calling and discernment. Anabaptists and their heirs, the Mennonite Brethren, have in the

⁵⁷ Holm, *North American MB Call*, 204.

⁵⁸ Neufeld, *Rediscovering the Calling*, 195.

⁵⁹ Beyler, *Call to Preach*, 17-18.

past been a tribe of believers who have actively practiced calling and discernment among all the congregation. Initially this call included women; increasingly in these days, the call is for men and women, young and old.

The seven strand cord requires these two components for it to braid effectively. All of the parts are important, but calling and discernment are the two main cords from which all the others are braided. Without a clear sense of call from God and the local congregation, a potential leader may not choose to lead, or they may be like an eight cylinder engine running on four cylinders. Congregational call comes from serving, being known, and discernment. Discernment is not simply drawing a name out of a hat (although on occasion the Anabaptists did cast lots for a leader⁶⁰), but a detailed culture of calling within the church.

To complete the braided cord, there are two final strands to discuss, the strands of mentoring and rite of passage events. To braid in these two threads, the next chapter will focus on adolescent development.

⁶⁰ Robert Friedmann, *The Theology of Anabaptism* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973) 148.

CHAPTER 4

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The discussion of leadership development, through the metaphor of seven strands in a braided cord, has so far uncovered these five strands: discernment, call, spiritual formation, service/ministry opportunities, and commissioning. These were found in the biblical narrative of Moses and Joshua as well as the church history and theology of the Anabaptist/Mennonite Brethren church. The two that will complete the group of seven are rite of passage events and mentoring. These final two strands will be braided within the context of adolescent development studies.

The topic of adolescent development is an extensive one because this season of change in a person's life is immense. The transformation that a young person goes through in adolescence, involving the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial areas, means that navigating these years can at times be marked by turbulence. G. Stanley Hall, the man credited with coining the term 'adolescence,' defined this time period as one of 'storm and stress.'¹ Popular books on adolescent development capitalize on this trend by having titles like, *Yes, Your Teen is Crazy*² and *Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall?*³ However, this prevailing view as a time of storm and stress has been questioned in recent years. Richard Learner and Nancy Galambos write,

¹ See Rolf E Muuss, *Theories of Adolescence* (New York: Random House, 1975), 35.

² See Michael J. Bradley, *Yes, Your Teen is Crazy* (Gig Harbor, WA: Harbor Press, 2003).

³ See Anthony E Wolf, *Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall?* (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 2002).

“...it is clear that although adolescence presents many challenges, the evidence is not consistent with the frequently reported belief that adolescence is a protracted period of storm and stress for most individuals.”⁴ Still, this myth of the emotional, out of control teenager persists in popular culture. However, not every teenager experiences this storm and stress to the extent that Hall suggests.

Since adolescence by definition is a transitional time of life, developmental issues have a large impact on the young person during this stage. “Adolescent development” is a multi-faceted topic that includes multiple entry points: physical, emotional, social, and spiritual, to name a few. This project will focus on two aspects of adolescent development: cognitive and identity. Like two sides of the same coin, these aspects are integrated and reflect one another. As will be seen, these subjects dovetail nicely with the twin strands of rite of passage events and mentoring.

Cognitive Development

Why focus on cognitive development out of all potential developmental tasks? Since this paper is concerned with developing leadership for the emerging culture, there are two main reasons. First, in light of assessment by thinkers influenced by postmodernity, the standard theorists of cognitive development are being re-evaluated; second, recent research on the brain has uncovered fascinating insights into the way that brain development in adolescents impacts all other elements of a young person’s life.

⁴ Richard M Lerner and Nancy L Galambos, "Adolescent Development: Challenges and Opportunities for Research, Programs, and Policies," *Annual Review of Psychology* 49, no. 1 (1998): 415.

Cognitive Developmental Theory

In the 20th century, the most dominant voice in the arena of cognitive development was Jean Piaget. He has been called the “grandfather” of understanding cognitive development.⁵ Piaget is best known for his stages of cognitive development theory. These four stages go from birth through young adolescence. Since they deal primarily with adolescence, the stages called “Concrete Operational” (concrete thinking) and “Formal Operational” (abstract thinking) are the two highlighted here. Because Piaget is taught in undergraduate psychology courses and his theory is well-known, he will be built upon from this point but not unpacked in greater detail.

The first reason for not going into more detail is that the theories of Piaget and others are increasingly being questioned by postmodern culture. The primary criticism has to do with their underlying assumptions: are there really stages at all? Piaget is known as a structuralist, meaning his stages depend not on independent skills or abilities, but that abilities have to be organized into structures in order to work effectively.⁶ One anomaly within this theory has been found through Piaget’s own research: children are not always consistent with their results from the same tests at different times. If there are true stages, the critics argue, there should be an observable consistency.⁷

Another concern with structuralists’ theories revolves around the question of timings and sequences. Critics want to know how and when movement from one stage to the

⁵ Helen Bee, *The Developing Child* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 225.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 256.

other occurs. Another question concerns individual differences. If these stages are uniform, why do similarly-aged young people respond in a different way? In an online-chat session, Leonard Sweet said:

...you need to be careful of all the ‘developmental’ schemas and ‘stages’ psychologies that are out there (Piaget being the most famous). They are based on false epistemological assumptions for postmodernity: as if we were expected to advance through life in sequential, linear, consecutive steps.⁸

This is an excellent critique of many of the developmentalists who dominate the discussion on adolescence. For people living in postmodern culture, life is “too messy” to fall into a neatly ordered sequence. Increasingly, views that place individuals in a box or create stages for people to traverse fall on deaf ears in this changing world. However, in order to engage in meaningful discussion on adolescent development, it is essential to examine and evaluate past and current theories; to refuse to entertain older views might be to miss out on some truths they may have discovered, despite current criticisms.

Secondly, in recent years, Piaget’s theories have also been challenged to include new ways of describing formal operations and the process of change that takes place in an adolescent’s thinking abilities. Leading this discussion is Harvard professor Robert Kegan who argues that there are levels and stages beyond Piaget’s formal operations stage. His focus is on the development of cognitive ability after adolescence and the need for a cross-discipline approach to determine and evaluate adult thinking. For him, contemporary life expects more than certain acceptable behaviors; rather, it is the acquisition of specific skills or the mastery of particular knowledge that is important. He

⁸ Leonard Sweet, *On Piaget* (Web CT Chat room 1, 15 December 2003).

answers the question, “What does society expect of a young person?” with, “So we want Matt to be employable, a good citizen, a critical thinker, emotionally self-reflective, personally trustworthy, possessed of common sense and meaningful ideals.”⁹ Kegan’s thesis is that this is an unreasonable expectation from a young person given their natural mental development. He further summarizes that we expect adolescents to be cross-categorical thinkers, which means combining abstract thinking and self-reflexive emotions with loyalty and devotion to a community of people or ideas larger than themselves.¹⁰ This is a large undertaking that is not adequately addressed by Piaget’s formal operations stage.

Therefore, the first reason for focusing on cognitive development of adolescents is because long-standing views of cognitive development are under scrutiny. The implications are that mid-adolescents need to be considered in broader categories than formal operations provides. As has been mentioned, life is too messy to categorize into stages, therefore each adolescent needs to be treated as an individual, not as a person in a stage.

Brain Research

While addressing cognitive development, one question that many adults and youthworkers would like to have answered is, “Why do teenagers act the way they do?”

⁹ Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 19.

¹⁰ Ibid., 29.

Recent information on brain development through the research of Dr. Jay Giedd is helping to answer that question.

The study showed that the human brain goes through a second growth “spurt” just prior to puberty. Reported in numerous newspapers and on-line journals, including a PBS-Frontline special, this new information unlocks some of the mystery of why teenagers behave the way they do. Sarah Spinks, the producer of the PBS-Frontline program explains why this is significant:

Giedd and his colleagues found that in an area of the brain called the prefrontal cortex, the brain appeared to be growing again just before puberty. The prefrontal cortex sits just behind the forehead. It is particularly interesting to scientists because it acts as the CEO of the brain, controlling planning, working memory, organization, and modulating mood. As the prefrontal cortex matures, teenagers can reason better, develop more control over impulses and make judgments better. In fact, this part of the brain has been dubbed ‘the area of sober second thought.’¹¹

This is the good news: the part of the brain responsible for reason and thinking before acting is growing and developing. The bad news is, because this part of the brain is underdeveloped, teenagers live with a feeling of invulnerability that Elkind calls the “personal fable.”¹²

Another finding in Giedd’s research, with implications for adolescent behavior, involves the rise and fall of neurotransmitters during this time. Katherine Partridge reports:

¹¹Sarah Spinks, 2002, PBS Online and WGBH/Frontline, accessed 29 October 2003, <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/work/adolescent.html>>.

¹² David Elkind, *All Grown Up and No Place to Go* (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1998), 44.

... the neurotransmitters or chemicals that enable transmission of signals from one part of the brain to another... impulsive or risky behaviour — staying out late, shoplifting, drinking, trying drugs — stimulates the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that's really good at stimulating the brain's pleasure centres. Ergo, more risk equals more joy! Bad timing that serotonin, another neurotransmitter that helps mediate impulsivity, is in decline.¹³

This is not new information in one sense; people have known that adolescents can at times take risks and lack judgment. This might explain why Aristotle said this about young people:

The young are in character prone to desire and ready to carry any desire they may have formed into action. Of bodily desires it is the sexual to which they are most disposed to give way, and in regard to sexual desire they exercise no self-restraint. ... They are passionate, irascible, and apt to be carried away by their impulses.¹⁴

Adolescents are also compassionate, committed, and loyal. Why do these qualities also arise if youth are predisposed to risky and impulsive behavior?

There is another side to Giedd's research. He has found that the way in which adolescents use their brain actually shapes their neural pathways and therefore influences their future cognitive functions. Spinks reports:

Giedd hypothesizes that the growth in gray matter followed by the pruning of connections is a particularly important stage of brain development in which what teens do or do not do can affect them for the rest of their lives. He calls this the 'use it or lose it principle,' and tells FRONTLINE, 'If a teen is doing music or sports or academics, those are the cells and connections that will be hardwired. If they're lying

¹³ Katharine Partridge, "Brainstorms," *Today's Parent* May 2003, *Today's Parent.Com*, accessed 29 October 2003, <<http://www.todaysparent.com/preteen/behaviordevelopment/article.jsp?content=1284540>>.

¹⁴ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Readings on Adolescent and Emerging Adulthood* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002), 2.

on the couch or playing video games or MTV, those are the cells and connections that are going to survive.’¹⁵

This is a tremendous challenge for adults concerned with adolescent leadership development. If this is a unique time of life when a young person can actually re-wire their own brains, it is imperative that the young person is given all the assistance they are willing to accept in this task.

How does Giedd’s research answer the initial question concerning adolescent behavior? On one hand, science has given a valid reason for the impetuosity of youth. On the other hand, there is also the news, if Giedd is correct, that adolescents have the opportunity to influence their brains by using them. Those who work with adolescents can assist their long-term cognitive functions by finding ways to help them ‘hardwire’ their brain through interacting with theology, music, and the arts.

If this is a time of life when an individual sets up the neural pathways that will be with him or her for the rest of their life, this raises significant questions concerning, as Giedd stated, “...lying on the couch or playing video games...” Are new technologies ‘rewiring’ a generation of brains that will think differently from previous generations? Neuroscientist Susan Greenfield thinks so. Greenfield argues that everything a person does leaves “a mark on the brain.”¹⁶ She also believes that since children today are growing up “assimilating technology,”¹⁷ to use Don Tapscott’s phrase, this will also leave

¹⁵ Spinks, *Frontline*, 2002.

¹⁶ Susan Greenfield, *Tomorrow's People* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 154.

¹⁷ See Don Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 40. Tapscott writes, “Because N-Gen children are born with technology, they assimilate it. Adults must accommodate- a different and much more difficult learning process.”

its mark. She writes, "... the new generation of brains will be fundamentally different from ours, in that they will be specifically suited, cognitively and physically, to computers and a cyber-world."¹⁸

At the same time, with the rise of computer technology and the vast amount of information on the World Wide Web, contemporary adolescents may experience what Tapscott calls a "generation lap."¹⁹ This means in many areas, and for the first time in history, young people no longer need an older generation to pass on information to them. He writes, "Society has never before experienced this phenomenon of the knowledge hierarchy being so effectively flipped on its head."²⁰ This may provide a perception that adults are no longer needed in an adolescent's life, but as future sections of this chapter will show, that is far from the case.

These are significant pieces in a discussion on developing young people for leadership in the emerging culture. More will be said in Chapter 5 about changes in culture and technology, but it will suffice for now to say that children today with a technological "mark on the brain" will grow into adults who create a different world in the coming years.

In sum, changes in the way scientists and developmentalists are viewing brain development should have an impact on programs concerned with the leadership development of adolescents. Research is showing both benefits and challenges in the area

¹⁸ Greenfield, *Tomorrow's People*, 169.

¹⁹ Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 36.

²⁰ Ibid.

of cognitive development. The benefits include a new way of looking at cognitive development generally as well as the opportunity for adolescents to “hardwire” their own brains through the activities and situations they find themselves in. The challenges include a scientific explanation for the risky behavior that is so common and widespread during this time in addition to the impact on brain development from technology that is only now being considered.

Still, the biggest objection to leadership development of adolescents based on these findings is the question raised earlier, “Are adolescents predisposed for risky and thoughtless behavior?” Giedd’s research seems to say that is certainly possible. Aristotle and general wisdom would agree that adolescents do engage in activities that challenge parental sensibilities, but are they always trapped in making an emotional response? The answer is yes, and no. Young people are “wired for passion.”²¹ It is part of who they are. They are also capable of rational thinking and reasoned response. They are eager to learn and to find a vocabulary to be able to speak out their inner thoughts and fears. Somehow each adolescent must balance this passion/reason teeter-totter in his or her own life.²²

Daniel Keating proposes a solution to this passion/reason dilemma with a healthy “both/and” answer. An answer that takes seriously reason and emotions in a way that

²¹ Kenda Creasy Dean, *Practicing Passion- Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 6.

²² See Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1995), 28. He writes, “In a sense we have two brains, two minds- and two different kinds of intelligence: rational and emotional. How we do in life is determined by both- it is not just IQ, but emotional intelligence that matters.” For wider discussion on EI see www.eiconsortium.org.

gives adults an opportunity to help shape the adolescent's critical thinking skills. His answer involves the young person and the educational environment in which they are a part. Arnett reports:

... Keating and others stress that critical thinking skills do not develop automatically or inevitably in adolescence. On the contrary, critical thinking in adolescence requires a basis of skills and knowledge obtained in childhood, along with an educational environment in adolescence that promotes and values critical thinking.²³

Here, then, is a place for those concerned about the cognitive development of adolescents to take action. Providing an arena for critical thinking skills to emerge can be of great value to the developing mind. Even with this encouragement, Keating offers a warning that this is not a failsafe plan. Decision making is a complex dance of many factors and can be undermined by something as simple as trying to impress one's peers.²⁴

Identity Development

“Who am I? Why am I here?” These questions get at the heart of one of the primary ‘tasks’ of adolescence, which is undertaking the issue of identity formation.²⁵

Due in large part to cognitive changes which allow a young person to think about his or her distinctiveness, identity formation is essential for an adolescent being prepared for leadership in the emerging culture. Erik Erikson, best known for his paradigm *The Eight Stages of Man*, and who is best known for his theory that all of life is moved through in

²³ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., 2004), 80.

²⁴ See Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 82.

²⁵ Muuss, *Theories*, 150. In a section talking about child development psychologist and Yale professor Arnold Gesell, he quotes Gesell saying, “The adolescent's central task is to find himself.”

stages, sees identity as the primary role of adolescence. He writes, “We may, in fact, speak of the identity crisis as the psychosocial aspect of adolescence.”²⁶

There is a contemporary problem with Erikson’s approach. The timeline for “adolescing” is shifting with changes in society. Adolescence has become extended; it no longer runs from the ages of 12-18 like it did when Erikson was creating his theory. Arnett reports on this trend stating, “It is a distinguishing feature of adolescence in our time that it begins far earlier than it did a century ago... adolescence also ends much later than it has in the past, because these transitions are now postponed for many people into at least the mid-twenties.”²⁷ There is a clear problem. Adolescence starts earlier and ends later than any time in the past.

Adolescence has always started in biology, but it ends when the young person is deemed an adult by his or her culture.²⁸ The fact that this transition has been extended is easy to understand with Western cultures’ obsession with youth and its underlying message of avoiding adulthood.²⁹ Even 40 years ago, this was apparently a problem. In 1965 Morris Rosenberg wrote a line that could come out of an adolescent development book today, “... late adolescence is a period of unusual status ambiguity. Society does not

²⁶ Erik H Erikson, *Identity- Youth and Crisis* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1968), 91.

²⁷ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, xv.

²⁸ Thomas Hine, *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 8. Hine observes, “Being a teenager is less and less what Erik Erikson proposed - a moratorium period in which to find your identity. Teenagers are losing their license for irresponsibility while, at the same time, they continue to be denied a role in their society, other than that of style setters and consumers.”

²⁹ See Dean, *Practicing Passion*, 78.

have a clear set of expectations for the adolescent.”³⁰ Today, the timing for the ending of adolescence is still unclear while simultaneously, to provide an adult identity shaped in capitalistic terms, society’s message to adolescents is clear: “be a consumer.”³¹

However, not all agree that there is ambiguity for adolescents as they discover their identity. David Elkind, in contrast to Arnett, observes society actually pushing young people to grow up too quickly. He writes, “In today’s society, therefore, the perception of adolescent sophistication has divested this age group of its lost erstwhile status. Instead, adolescents often have a premature adulthood thrust upon them.”³² The reason for this change is convenience, according to Elkind:

The shift from perceptions of childhood innocence and adolescent immaturity to those of childhood competence and adolescent sophistication did not correspond to any new discoveries in the field of child and adolescent psychology. Rather, it was the direct result of changes in society and the family. In the postmodern world, where we can no longer shield and protect children and youth in the ways we once did, we need to believe that young people are competent and sophisticated. Otherwise as parents and teachers, we would go mad with anxiety and worry.³³

Can both of these views be true at the same time? On the one hand, adolescence as a life-stage is growing longer, on the other hand, adolescents are expected to know, do, and understand more than they are cognitively capable of. This is a significant point that was

³⁰ Morris Rosenberg, *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), 4.

³¹ Dean, *Practicing Passion*, 61. Dean writes, “What is new for postmodern youth is the growing assumption that this fluctuating self is normative; maturity is no longer necessarily a goal of adolescence. In consumer culture, purchasing power - not an integrated identity - is the ticket to full franchise.

³² Elkind, *All Grown Up*, 7.

³³ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

raised earlier by Robert Kegan when he discussed the pressures contemporary society places on adolescents. The need for support during this time is also one reason for the twin strands of rite of passage events and mentoring. Both of these strands have the potential to assist the adolescent through this time. This will be discussed in more detail later.

Identity Formation Influences

What are the pieces that influence identity formation? Reinstating an old debate, some say identity is formed through environment.³⁴ Others, who will be highlighted in this section, would argue today that it is a mix of heredity, environment and the wider cultural story that impacts a person's identity formation.

In an excellent article on rites of passage, Daniel Scott approaches identity formation from a cultural angle. He writes:

Formational learning includes the symbolic. When one is working 'below' the rational level, experientially, individually, and collectively, much formation takes place through the symbolic. Images and symbols, rich with multiple meanings, come embedded in the rituals and stories of a people. Their meanings are implanted without the need for understanding all or any of the meanings.³⁵

³⁴ See Thomas F. Staton, *Dynamics of Adolescent Adjustment* (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1963), 23-24. He writes, "Most psychological characteristics are now believed to be acquired and, therefore... are not capable of being transmitted by heredity. Bravery, honesty, cheerfulness, shyness, patience, industry, laziness - all the thousand-and-one psychological qualities observed in people - seem to be not innate, but to result from the interaction of the person with his environment."

³⁵ Daniel G Scott, "Rites of Passage in Adolescent Development: A Reappreciation," *Child & Youth Care Forum* 27, no. 5 (October 1998): 330.

In this scenario, identity formation becomes a part of the environment/community, but the emphasis is different from the family base; now it also involves the stories and symbols of a culture.

With most things, what influences an adolescent to develop identity is likely to be all of the above: family of origin, environment, and cultural symbols. If a youthworker was working to develop leadership in young people, an area of interest would be the question of catalysts. Are there ways to help adolescents shape and create their own identity? Certainly, as will be argued, a return to some sort of rites of passage events may be one way to accomplish this. The alternative, as spelled out by Scott, is that “Formation can and does happen to us all, but it is inadvertent and often random. That does not mean that it is aimless or non-existent, only that it is unconscious or unrecognized. It may mean that, in our culture, we acquiesce in leaving the formation of our children to others.”³⁶

If formation is happening regardless of the intentionality, what have developmentalists thought about identity formation? Muuss, quoting James Marcia, identified both an experience of crisis and a personal commitment as critical for mature identity.³⁷ Marcia was influenced by Erikson and came up with an *Identity Status Interview* which places adolescents in one of four boxes to determine their identity status. These stages are called: diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure, and achievement.³⁸ They are

³⁶ Scott, *Rites of Passage*, 325.

³⁷ See Muuss, *Theories*, 69.

³⁸ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 179.

useful in that they help explain to a person where they are and point them to the next level.

Elkind also provides suggested catalysts for development. He writes,

The sense of personal identity is constructed by one of two means. One of these is the process of *differentiation* (the process of discriminating or separating out concepts, feelings, and emotions) and *integration* (putting the separated parts together into a higher-ordered whole). The other path to identity formation is the process of *substitution* (merely replacing one set of concepts, feelings, or emotions for another).³⁹

He goes on to encourage differentiation and integration as the preferred method of identity development. He writes, “In general, a healthy sense of identity is achieved when growth by differentiation and integration takes precedence over growth by substitution.”⁴⁰ But he goes on to warn of this path’s difficulties, “Growth by integration is conflictual, time-consuming, and laborious.”⁴¹ However, for a young person to be prepared fully for leadership in the emerging culture, he or she must go through this laborious path.

Timing of Identity Formation

As has already been mentioned, there is some debate on the timing of identity formation. Arnett’s findings indicate it is occurring at later and later stages of adolescence. He writes, “The other prominent finding in research on identity formation is that it takes longer than scholars had expected to reach identity achievement, and in fact

³⁹ Elkind *All Grown Up*, 18.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 19.

for most young people this status is reached - if at all - in emerging adulthood rather than in adolescence."⁴² Elkind completely disagrees. He believes young people are forced to create an identity at an earlier age. He says, "And it is certainly true that in today's world young people cannot postpone identity formation until adolescence. As we have noted earlier, from an early age children are confronted with the most sordid facets of life's continuum."⁴³ Again, is it possible that both are right? Is it exactly the fact that young people face adult life-issues at an earlier age that they create some kind of identity, maybe through substitution, but that they do not actually have 'closure' on their identity until late adolescence? Marcia describes a person who has not experienced crisis, yet has made 'adult' commitments as a 'foreclosure subject'.⁴⁴ Could that be what Elkind and Arnett are describing?

If it is true that, on one hand as Elkind states, young people are being forced to make adult decisions at earlier ages, and on the other hand as Arnett states, they are delaying a complete identity formation until late adolescence, what does that mean for leadership development of young people? Elkind states, "People who have acquired a sense of identity largely through a process of differentiation and higher-order integration do not lose their sense of self even under the most trying circumstances."⁴⁵ What about those who have yet to find their identity in this way? It would be tragic to find that an

⁴² Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 180.

⁴³ Elkind, *All Grown Up*, 17.

⁴⁴ See Muuss, *Theories*, 70.

⁴⁵ Elkind *All Grown Up*, 20.

adolescent who had been given a role of leadership at an early age, entirely rejected Christianity at an older age, yet this happens all the time. How can youth ministry address this issue? The twin strands of rite of passage events and mentoring are two ways to assist a young person with his or her identity formation.

This section has examined identity development in adolescents. It has identified the ongoing debate among scholars regarding identity formation. It has also shown that identity formation is critical in assisting youth in their journey toward adulthood. The next section will identify two strands of the braided cord and the way in which they can be used to assist a young person through their journey to adulthood.

The Twin Strands

Adolescents are undergoing many changes during this life stage and this chapter has looked at two: first, a growing in their cognitive abilities - which offers the challenge of short-term reduced reasoning – but with the benefit of a chance to “wire” their brain; second, identity formation which requires foreclosure in order to stick. In previous generations, this passage to adulthood would have been clearer; a young person would be brought up and raised to adulthood by apprenticing with a father, mother or someone in the town. In those days there was a clear sense of the young person learning from someone who was older.⁴⁶ As Tapscott has identified with his term “generation lap,”

⁴⁶ See Hine, *Rise and Fall*. Chapter 4 discusses the role of teens and work during the founding and early years of the United States of America.

today this is not the case. By and large, adults do not have meaningful interaction with teenagers.⁴⁷

Rite of Passage Events

One way to address the issues brought up by identity formation and cognitive development is to rediscover rite of passage events. The phrase, rite of passage, was identified in the classic study of cultures by Arnold Van Gennep in 1960.⁴⁸ In this book, Van Gennep studied the rites and rituals of numerous cultures and identified three stages an individual passes through in any transition. These three rites are: rites of separation (preliminal), transition rites (liminal- from the Latin *limen*, meaning threshold), and rites of incorporation (postliminal).⁴⁹ Adolescents, by virtue of their place in life, are in a liminal stage. They are in process of separating from parents yet are still in the transition stage before incorporation into society as adults. They stand at a threshold, waiting for an adult to offer a passage through the door. Thomas Hine offers this poignant picture:

A person standing at such a threshold must be invited to come through the door. But those with the power to extend the invitation are often ambivalent about surrendering their authority over the young people at the gate and welcoming them into the circle of adults. The young people, for their part, wait at the threshold because they fundamentally accept the values of the society of which they expect to become full members. But sometimes they are kept waiting at this door for years, and they must force elders to finally accept their claim to adulthood.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See Chap Clark, *Hurt- Inside the World of Today's Teenagers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004) 21.

⁴⁸ Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

⁴⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁰ Hine, *Rise and Fall*, 46-47.

What are some rites of passage that help guide adolescents through this door? Van Gennep found a number of different rites as he studied cultures around the globe. For example, the Thompson Indians in the early 1900's decided a boy was a man when the boy dreamed about an arrow, a canoe, or a woman.⁵¹ For Western culture, uncelebrated rite of passage events could be, turning thirteen, gaining a driving license, going to an R-rated movie, voting, being able to purchase alcohol, the first sexual experience, and others.

Van Gennep is quick to point out that these rites of passage are not necessarily puberty rites, although most often they occur during this time of life. He states, "...physiological puberty and 'social puberty' are essentially different and only rarely converge...Therefore it would be better to stop calling initiation rites 'puberty rites'."⁵² This corresponds with the idea that it is culture that determines adulthood, not completion of puberty. And yet, as the previous section identified, adolescence is a time of identity formation. Part of a search for identity concerns finding a place in society and the larger culture. Rites of passage assist a young person in making that transition.

However, in Western culture, rites of passage are disappearing. Elkind describes rites of passage a "marker" and spends an entire chapter discussing their disappearance.⁵³ The reason for this disappearance, according to Elkind, is the fact that society has seen adolescents as more competent than they really are. This was discussed in the section on

⁵¹ Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 68-69.

⁵² Ibid., 65-66.

⁵³ Elkind, *All Grown Up*, 111-134.

identity formation. If, the argument goes, society believes a young person is competent, what need is there for a ritual that welcomes them to adulthood? They are already there.

The trouble with this view is that adolescents do not feel like they are “already there.” If society and culture do not provide markers, or signposts on their journey, adolescents will create their own. This is happening today. Dean Borgman, professor at Gordon-Conwell seminary, picks up this point, “Since traditional rites of passage are being lost in this generational limbo, young people begin to create their own markers or rites of passage that are not conducive to their growth and welfare.”⁵⁴ This can be seen particularly in the hazing rituals of fraternities and sororities. In the vacuum created by vanishing markers, teenagers desperately create their own.

There are potential dangers in unsupervised rites. Without adults present and, as was shown in the section on brain development, teens are predisposed to risky behavior, “initiation rites” can often turn malicious. Ginny Olsen observes:

The danger with these self-created initiation rites is that they’re done without elders present. The elders’ role is to oversee the initiation process, making sure that the initiate is challenged but not harmed. With no elder present, too often these rites seek to humiliate a girl rather than humble and instruct her. It’s not an initiation rite, but a hazing.⁵⁵

Given a lack of models, or adult-led opportunities, adolescents will often revert to the lowest common denominator when creating rites of passage for themselves.

⁵⁴ Dean Borgman, *When Kumbaya is not Enough: A Practical Theology for Youth Ministry* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 72.

⁵⁵ Ginny Olson, "Fish Guts and Pig Intestines Rites of Passage for Adolescent Girls," *Youthworker* xxii, no. 1 (Sept/Oct 2005): 48.

Is there anything better happening in the church? Judaism has bar or bat-mitzvahs; does the Christian faith offer anything similar? In some denominations, a rite of passage could be seen as the act of confirmation. This is an opportunity for a young person to claim his or her faith as their own. In other denominations, the experience of baptism occurs during adolescence, at least for those who have grown up in the church. Could this also be seen as a rite of passage? To both these questions, the answer is “sure, they could.” But are these sacraments being used in this way?⁵⁶

Often they are not. Sadly, confirmation can be a ticket to graduate out of church. Kenda Creasy Dean explains, “When confirmation fails to lead to mission, it quickly mutates into a rite of passage out of the congregation.”⁵⁷ Another problem can be that the rites that are offered, baptism and confirmation, occur early in adolescence, therefore the Church misses a prime moment in the life of a teen, high school graduation.⁵⁸

Teenagers are in a liminal stage of life. They are looking for someone to invite them through the threshold into adulthood. If they do not find adults willing to offer a place of passage, they will often concoct rite of passage experiences on their own.

⁵⁶ For more on faith/spiritual development see, John H Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (Toronto: Morehouse Publishing, 2000). James W Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995). This aspect of mid-adolescent development is important, but outside the scope of this chapter.

⁵⁷ Dean, *Practicing Passion*, 166.

⁵⁸ See Carol E. Lytch, *Choosing Church* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 80. She observes, “... the senior year is a time that is ripe with opportunity for the church to offer rites of passage to give religious meaning to teens' transition to adulthood. Yet the official institutional rite of passage that the church offers is not synchronized with the timing of the American adolescent in the late twentieth century.”

What can the church provide for adolescents to help them through this doorway? In order to prepare young people for leadership in the emerging culture, they need to be welcomed into adulthood by the church. Rites of passage can take many forms. Sometimes it is as simple as giving meaning to the events and sacraments that are already being done. Other times it is creating new experiences, like pilgrimages, that can be given rich meaning. Other moments can simply be to say, “This event is a marker on your journey, as you stride forward in life, you can always look back at this time and know that you took one step through the threshold.” Drawing from Chapter 2, a rite of passage could be as significant as a name-change ceremony based on a young person’s character or God’s goodness, similar to Joshua’s name change in Numbers 13.

Rite of passage events can provide a rich pool of resources for adolescents who are developing in new ways cognitively, and who are searching for an identity beyond that of a consumer. Churches and concerned adults would do well to find the space and time to create these experiences for their youth. The next section moves from rites of passage and identity formation to mentoring.

Mentoring

The other side of the coin regarding adults’ interaction with young people is the area of mentoring. This strand was briefly touched on in Chapter 2 with the relationship between Moses and Joshua. Mentoring is simply a relationship between an older person and a younger person “in which one person empowers another by sharing God-given

resources.”⁵⁹ A relationship with a mentor can be one of the most significant relationships a young person can have.

In one of the most insightful sections of his book, Robert Kegan provides a proposal for how to help teenagers move ‘forward’ in their thinking and practice. He encourages adult leaders to provide a balance of challenge and support.⁶⁰ This is a critical piece for encouraging young people in the journey toward adulthood and leadership. Too much challenge and the young person will feel pressured and depressed when he or she cannot live up to the challenge. Too much support and that same teenager will feel that he or she is not being given room to grow and try things independently . This balance is essential, thus it becomes a necessary component for youth workers to incorporate into their work with adolescents who desire leadership opportunities.

The “proximal development” theory of Lev Vgotsky also promotes the importance of adults engaged in an adolescent’s life.⁶¹ This theory is defined as:

... the gap between what adolescents can accomplish alone and what they are capable of doing if guided by an adult or a more competent peer. According to Vgotsky, children and adolescents learn best if the instruction they are provided is near the top of the zone of the proximal development, so that they need assistance at first but gradually become capable of performing the task on their own.⁶²

⁵⁹ Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1992), 33.

⁶⁰ Kegan, *Over Our Heads*, 42.

⁶¹ See Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*, trans. Michael Cole et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 84-91.

⁶² Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 94.

Similarly to Kegan, Vgotsky proposes a metaphor for challenge and support which he calls “scaffolding.” Arnett reports, “Scaffolding refers to the degree of assistance provided to the adolescent in the zone of proximal development. According to Vgotsky, scaffolding should gradually decrease as children become more competent at a task.”⁶³ In both of these paradigms there is a need for adults to actively participate in providing scaffolding to assist the young person in his or her journey through adolescence.

It has not been surprising to find that many theorists promote the role of adults in assisting healthy adolescent development. Erikson writes, “... then clearly the adolescent looks most fervently for men and ideas to have faith in, which also means men and ideas in whose service it would seem worth while to prove oneself trustworthy.”⁶⁴ As has been shown, Daniel Scott’s piece on rites of passage is especially important given the emphasis on the role of proving oneself trustworthy. Identifying the need for adults to walk alongside young people he states, “One of the critical pieces in a reflective educational process is the role of guides, or ‘elders.’ It is elders who lead the initiand through the process of reflection, offering direction, experience, and affirmation.”⁶⁵ It is important to remind young people that becoming an adult is a developmental process, and

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Erikson, *Identity*, 128-129. Erikson wrote in the days before inclusive language.

⁶⁵ Scott, *Rites of Passage*, 326.

it does not happen overnight.⁶⁶ This is why it is so important for adults to be involved in the lives of young people throughout these turbulent years.⁶⁷

It has been shown that the computer and internet is capable of teaching young people a lot of facts and information, but at this stage in its evolution, it cannot replace adults for guiding adolescents through the social roles and expectations of adult life. This is something that must be passed on relationally. Arnett adds, "These ideas underscore the social nature of learning in Vgotsky's theory. In his view learning always takes place via a social process, through the interactions between someone who possesses knowledge and someone who is in the process of obtaining knowledge."⁶⁸ This is similar to Scott's view, "There must be adult personnel to provide support and context for those who are aiming at re-formation. They will need to be a variety of ages, patient, and open to others who are incomplete and uncertain. They will need to have experience and maturity to contribute to the process, acting as 'elders'."⁶⁹ It is clear adults have a key role to play. Ruby Takanishi agrees:

Another major shift is from viewing adolescents as inherently alienated from adults to seeing their need to be intimately connected with caring adults. Contrary to popular opinion, most adolescents are not alienated from their parents, families, and other adults. If there is a recurring lament that is shared by adolescents from all

⁶⁶ See Carl L Fertman and Josephine A van Linden, "Character Education," *Leadership for Student Activities* 28, no. 4 (December 1999): 18-23.

⁶⁷ See Jim Holm, "The North American MB Call to Pastoral Leadership," *Direction* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 210. Holm writes, "The most important thing local pastors can do is to give themselves to the mentoring of others."

⁶⁸ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 94.

⁶⁹ Scott, *Rites of Passage*, 332.

backgrounds, it is the lack of available adults who listen, hear, understand, and guide them.⁷⁰

If this is true, then all adults, and especially those with any connection to adolescents, need to take Mariam MacGregor's words seriously, "... it is increasingly important to recognize that every teen has the potential to be a leader. And it is equally important to recognize what our roles and our abilities are in helping every teen develop their leadership abilities to this potential."⁷¹

Conclusion

What can be learned by this look at adolescent cognitive development and leadership? It is obvious that this is a time of transition for young people. Old ways of thinking are changing as formal operations become the dominant cognitive function. In addition, identity formation is a critical component of this stage. Through the strands of rite of passage events and mentoring, adults can have a significant influence if they take the time to invest in the lives of young people.

This paper began by exploring cognitive development to find out the intelligence of preparing adolescents for leadership in the emerging culture. Can an adolescent be prepared today to be a leader? Here at the conclusion, are we closer to an answer? Newman and Newman warn against placing an adolescent in a position where he or she would have to stand against his or her peer group:

⁷⁰ Ruby Takanishi, "Changing Views of Adolescence in Contemporary Society," *Teachers College Record* 94, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 461.

⁷¹ Mariam G MacGregor, *Designing Student Leadership Programs: Transforming the Leadership Potential of Youth* (Denver, CO: Youthleadership.com, 2001), 7.

Especially in early adolescence, young people seek connections, supportive relationships, and an understanding of groups and communities, all of which help them take the risks that eventually give rise to an articulated sense of personal meaning. We believe it is a mistake to emphasize the need for teenagers to function autonomously, when their primary motivational orientation is to establish an understanding of groups and a basic sense of themselves as group members who feel valued and understood.⁷²

The authors are talking about early adolescence, and having three stages (early, middle and late) is part of the problem with coming up with a definitive statement on adolescence and leadership. When is the adolescent “beyond” some of the developmental hurdles and is there a way to help them “speed up” over them? What about the Newmans’ point? Should an adolescent be given a leadership role where he or she is expected to stand against his or her peers? Without providing any of the adult support that has been mentioned, probably not. However, given a balance of rite of passage events and mentoring, braided in with the other five strands, a young person has a good chance of being developed in a meaningful way.

Another concern when thinking of adolescent leadership revolves around identity formation. Is spending time creating specific, focused identity formation a worthwhile goal for those working with adolescents? A simplistic answer is yes. An adolescent must come up with his or her own identity; however, caring adults can journey alongside in more ways than are currently being done. Scott observes, “There are many signs in youth

⁷² Barbara M Newman and Philip R Newman, "Group Identity and Alienation: Giving the We Its Due," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 30, no. 5 (October 2001): 515.

subculture that a search goes on continually for ritual and formational activities. We need to see these activities in light of a desire for workable passage.”⁷³

This picture of a ‘workable passage’ is a good one. Adolescence is a time of ‘passages’ as is all of life, however this passage is a bit more narrow, the rocks are higher, and the river flows faster. It is a place of whitewater with greater potential for disaster. For adults working with adolescents, helping them navigate this passage is a critical role. Young people need someone to walk alongside them. They need mentors. Elkind offers this reminder, “In the autobiographies of many men and women who became successful despite adversity, there is almost always a significant person who recognized their special gifts and devoted time, energy, and skill to helping them realize their talents and abilities.”⁷⁴

One significant loss in recent years with the fragmenting of society along generational lines has been the disconnection between adolescents and adults older than their parents. These are the ‘elders’ that Scott is talking about, the individuals who could be helping adolescents navigate these turbulent waters. John Westerhoff explains why this age group is so important, “...true community necessitates the presence and interaction of three generations.... Remember that the third generation is the generation of memory, and without its presence the other two generations are locked into the existential

⁷³ Scott, *Rites of Passage*, 333.

⁷⁴ Elkind, *All Grown Up*, 171.

present.”⁷⁵ After discussing the cognitive development of adolescents, one obvious arena where they can use help is rising above the existential present. Providing a mentor from the generation above their parents can assist a young person navigating adolescence with a greater sense of history and their place in it. This relationship can also help to boost self-esteem and provide a sounding board of reason when the adolescent needs to make decisions. In a way, a relationship like this could provide another small component to a modern-day rite of passage.

Mentors could also serve the adolescents they work with by recognizing the ‘both/and’ nature of adolescence as an extended time of life, in combination with the fact that they are growing up too soon. This tension of the “now and not yet” provides many crisis points where a thoughtful youth leader could assist adolescents in their identity formation. In addition, events like camps and mission trips can also assist by providing places for adolescents to experience and think through their faith.

In the Mentoring relationship, is a formal curriculum needed? What specific knowledge or skills is the mentor seeking to nurture in the young person? In many ways these questions have been answered by the strand of spiritual formation. A mentor’s primary role in this model is to help the mentee grow in his or her walk with Jesus, as well as assist the young person to, in Giedd’s words, “rewire” his or her brain. Leadership development using the seven strand metaphor is not concerned with raising up leaders as CEO’s for the future church, rather the goal of these strands is to raise up “holy men and

⁷⁵ John H Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (Toronto: Morehouse Publishing, 2000), 52-53.

women” who are seen by the outside world as people who are full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.

Still, given that this is a project concerned with the emerging culture, there are some specific skills that will be suggested as valuable to becoming a leader in this culture.

These will be suggested in Chapter 6. However, before making curriculum suggestions, there are three questions that must be addressed. These three questions are the focus of the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 5

THREE KEY QUESTIONS

The previous chapters have identified seven different aspects of leadership development. These aspects, pictured as strands in a seven strand braided cord, have been identified as discernment, calling, rite of passage events, mentoring, spiritual formation, service/ministry opportunities, and commissioning. These strands have been identified through the biblical story, church history and developmental research. Alone, each strand is but one small part of the cord, like a thin piece of string that is easily broken. Together, and when braided by a local church, these seven strands have the potential to prepare an adolescent for leadership in the emerging culture.

As these seven strands have been identified throughout this project, three questions which were raised in Chapter 1, but have been left largely unattended, will now be addressed. These questions are, 1) Why is a new paradigm for leadership development needed? 2) Why focus on high school students? and 3) Why propose something new when there are already numerous youth leadership training programs available?

Why Is a New Paradigm Needed?

This project is proposing a combination of seven key steps in leadership development journey, using a seven strand cord as a metaphor to unite these steps. At this point, all the cords have been identified. However, there are still questions that need to be addressed in order to progress in this discussion. What is so different about the way leaders will need to function in the future compared to previous generations? If church history and the biblical narrative are the foundation for a model of leadership

development, why is a new model important or needed? This chapter will seek to address these questions.

Leadership arises in a cultural context, and in the transition from modernity to post-modernity this new context calls for a re-evaluation of current leadership development models. In order to provide an adequate evaluation, this chapter will survey some of the leading ideas on the future to offer the thesis that, due to constant cultural change at a rapid pace, the manner in which young people are developed for leadership in the emerging culture needs to be re-evaluated. It will seek to show how the strength and methods of the seven strand cord of leadership development will assist in developing leaders for an uncertain future.

Introduction - An Uncertain Future

This chapter will begin with a brief discussion on the future. It is obvious that no one can know the future, except God. So any ideas, suggestions or predictions are humbly offered. However, it is believed that given enough information, individuals can make informed predictions on how the future may look if current trends continue. It is also acknowledged that entire books have been written on this subject, and so to address this in a detailed way is outside the scope of this project; this really is part of a wide-ranging discussion that cuts across all academic disciplines and could be a doctoral thesis in itself. This chapter will limit the discussion to a look at three areas of potential change for the future: culture, technology, and religion.

This chapter will begin with a simple premise; the future will not be the same as today. Obviously this does not mean that in the future everything about humanity will change. People will still eat and drink, fall in love, and search for meaning in life.

However, given the fact that in recent years there have been fundamental shifts in the way people in the West think and live, it can be argued that significant changes will saturate the future wider society.¹ Charles Handy, a business writer in Britain, insightfully observes, “The paradox of aging is that every generation perceives itself as justifiably different from its predecessor, but plans as if its successor generation will be the same.”² This paper seeks to take the challenge of this quote seriously. How can leaders today prepare high school students to lead in what will certainly be a different world? These are times of similar uncertainty which are in many ways parallel to Moses, who knew that the future his people would experience would be radically different than the wilderness wanderings.

Obviously, future global events may make any prediction based on trends obsolete. Wars, tsunamis, famine or other unpredictable changes may all have an impact on what the future looks like; however, these are the very changes for which a young person, wrapped in the seven strand cord of leadership development, should be prepared. Since what is being proposed is not a “program” with “seven easy steps” but rather points on a journey of life on life transformation, leaders who are developed in this way will be much

¹ See Peter F. Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society* (New York, NY: Harper Business, 1993), 1. He writes, “Every few hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp transformation...Within a few short decades, society rearranges itself - its worldview; its basic values; its social and political structure; its arts; its key institutions. Fifty years later, there is a new world. And the people born then cannot even imagine the world in which their grandparents lived and into which their own parents were born. We are currently living through just such a transformation.”

² Charles Handy, *The Age of Paradox* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1994), 37.

more prepared to weather any changes that come upon the planet than those who are prepared by other, more formulaic, means.

Why spend time creating something new for developing leaders when what has worked in the past seems to be working today? Western society is changing. Even if it “feels” the same, the role of the church, as well as its impact on larger society, is different. Eddie Gibbs, an older church leader writes, “The ministry training I received over forty years ago was for a world that now no longer exists, and even at the time it was undergoing radical change. Consequently, the major challenge for leaders is not only the acquisition of new insights and skills but also unlearning what they already know.”³ The adolescents who are the focus of this project are not in the same position as Gibbs; they are still young enough that they do not need to unlearn much, if anything at all. But Gibbs’ point is well taken; here is a ministry veteran who has identified a cultural shift so significant that he can say it represents, “a world that now no longer exists.”

If Gibbs’ experience and Handy’s observations are to be accepted, where would a leader look to glean insights and trends that would assist in preparing a high school student for leadership? It would be prudent to consider the insights of futurists in the areas of culture, technology, and religion to see if there are trends worth noting that may have implications for the Church or Christian ministry. These three areas are not the only ones where individuals are seeking to determine the future, however, due to the scope of this paper these will be the three areas of focus.

³ Eddie Gibbs, *Leadership Next* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 9-10.

Cultural trends

The future of Western culture is a huge topic. This section will limit the discussion to an overview of postmodernity and the response of the Church. It has already been stated that culture in the West is undergoing a massive alteration. This shift is being identified and described in a philosophy known as postmodernism. Terry Eagleton, Professor of English at the University of Oxford, defines postmodernism as "... a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation."⁴ Postmodernism and its cultural adaptation, postmodernity, is a rejection of a worldview known as modernism, or modernity. Modernity, simply defined, is the Enlightenment belief that humanity would improve through rationality, science, and technology, purporting that the grand narratives of major philosophies and world religions would thrive. This success would result in higher human potential while ushering in a time of world peace.⁵ This modern view has been increasingly challenged by a variety of writers and thinkers, many of whom are on the cultural margins of society.⁶ Western culture, by and large, has embraced postmodernity as the new overriding philosophy precisely because it gives space to the ideas and voices

⁴ Terry Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), vii.

⁵ Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996). For a fuller discussion on the distinction of Modernity and Postmodernity see pages 2-10.

⁶ J Richard Middleton and Brian J Walsh, *Truth is Stranger Than It Used to Be* (London: SPCK, 1995). They write, "What we are witnessing is nothing less than a challenge to the center of our society from the margins." 13.

of others.⁷ Grenz identifies another key aspect of the postmodern world: people are no longer convinced that knowledge is inherently good, nor is it objective.⁸ Because of this new concept of knowledge, openness and tolerance have become society's highest virtues. Alongside these virtues, personal belief in what is right or wrong has become contextualized.⁹

At the same time, postmodernism has been defined and redefined by Christians in ways that range from "complete moral relativism"¹⁰ to "a chance to recapture lost features of the faith."¹¹ Dan Kimball, an emerging church pastor, notes one positive result to living in postmodernity is that it provides a way of looking at the world which is more accepting of mystery and wonder.¹² Unfortunately, modernity, with an emphasis on Newtonian science and Cartesian rationalism, has so influenced evangelicalism that when

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Grenz, *Postmodernism*, 7.

⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰ James Dobson, *Bringing Up Boys* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001) 199. Speaking specifically of postmodernism, Dobson writes, "This system of thought, also called moral relativism, teaches that truth is not only knowable from God, whom postmodernism perceives as a myth, or from many, who has no right to speak for the rest of us. Rather, truth doesn't exist at all. *Nothing* is right or wrong, *nothing* is good or evil, *nothing* is positive or negative. Everything is relative."

¹¹ Leonard Sweet, *Aqua Church* (Loveland, CO: Group, 1999) 24. Sweet writes, "... incarnating ministry in postmodern culture may actually help the church capture certain features of the faith lost or muted in modernity."

¹² Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) 49. Speaking of postmodernism, Kimball writes, "... there actually are many refreshing aspects of going back to a more transcendent view of God, allowing for mystery, and bringing back the supernatural view of life."

people think of God, the first thoughts are of rules or laws, not mystery or wonder.¹³ In the wider culture, the opposite is happening. The postmodern culture is open to mystery and questions.¹⁴

James Dobson has a point as well. The idea of Truth, being universal and for all, is in question. A person is more likely to be concerned with truth that “works” for them, even if there are incongruities between belief and practice. The modern significance of the Bible as a book that is true and speaks to all people in all places is no longer taken as a given.¹⁵

In each instance, the concerns or affirmations come from what the person believes is a true “biblical” position. Since the biblical position is what every Christian believes he or she personally possesses, it is important for a leadership development path to have an objective framework to understand these different Christian responses to postmodern philosophy. This provides young people with an opportunity to evaluate their own, and other, positions.

In his introduction to *The Church in Emerging Culture*, Leonard Sweet identifies four primary responses to the current changes in culture. Using organic imagery, Sweet

¹³ Grenz, *Postmodernism*, 10.

¹⁴ See Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999) 94. He writes, “Postmodern people are turning away from their faith in reason to recognize the mysterious nature of the world in which we live.”

¹⁵ See Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 37. Lyotard writes, “the grand narrative has lost its credibility....”

reminds his readers that the word “culture” originally meant something grown in a laboratory.¹⁶ This organic metaphor provides four ways Christians are currently responding to cultural change. The four views are:

- Low change in message, low change in method- Garden
- Low change in message, high change in method- Park
- High change in message, low change in method- Glen
- High change in message, high change in method – Meadow¹⁷

Briefly defined, Garden people see their role as the protectors of what has been entrusted to them. They build walls to keep out trespassers and invite guests in through a gate. Purity is of primary value.

Park people are more open to mixing with others. They build paths and invite anyone to enter, as long as they obey the rules. They are willing to try new things or adapt new methods – always with the goal of attracting more people into the Park.

Glen people see themselves as a group under attack. Their role is to protect what they have been given in the face of dangers all around. They do not have the walls for protection that the Garden does, instead, they have to be constantly on guard in an open, rocky place.

Meadow people recognize that the longstanding, dominant, worldview is changing. They see a need to rethink everything. Creativity and innovation are the hallmarks of the meadow. One underlying motive may be a willingness to try just about anything to see if

¹⁶ Leonard Sweet, general editor, *The Church in Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 18.

¹⁷ Ibid., 18-38.

it furthers the cause of Christ. They are also open to learning from others and listening to the voices from the margins.

Since this is a project which focuses on the leadership development of adolescents, it is not within the scope of this paper to critique each of these positions. In reality, leadership will be needed in each of these four responses. For the purpose of this paper, this organic overview provides a useful vocabulary for discussing responses from the Christian community to postmodernity and cultural change. This overview is also useful since understanding this framework will be an important part of the curriculum of adolescent leadership development. This curriculum will be proposed in more detail in Chapter 6.

In summary, due to a culture which has by and large embraced postmodernity, young people today need different methods of leadership development to prepare them to lead in whatever organic style they find themselves. If left to current methods, these students will arrive in adulthood “ready” to lead but finding themselves ready to lead in an obsolete era.

Technological Trends

Every year since 1985, the World Futurist Society has been publishing its “Top 10 Forecasts” for the year.¹⁸ The 2006 list is heavily dominated by technology. This is the second future trend that will have potential impact on leadership in the Church.

¹⁸ *Top 10 Forecasts from Outlook 2006*. 2006, Forecasts Main Page, World Future Society, 16 May 2006 <<http://www.wfs.org/forecasts.htm>>.

At first thought, the idea of future technology having impact on the church is limited to office computers and presentation equipment for use in a Sunday worship service.

What futurists are saying, however, goes much farther than that. Many are claiming that because computers will increasingly begin to exhibit qualities thought unique to humans, technology will change the way we look at human life itself.¹⁹ If this view is even partially correct, leaders in the emerging culture will need to be ready and prepared theologically to respond to the inevitable question, "Will my avatar go to heaven?"

Views on the future of technology are as varied as views on postmodernism. On one hand, there are some thinkers, like Kurzweil, who believe humanity is headed for a "technological singularity" where machine intelligence surpasses the intelligence of humans.²⁰ On the other hand, commenting on information from a survey of young people in 2000, Reginald Bibby, one of Canada's foremost researchers, writes "It's clear that, underneath all the technology/change hype, what most people value, enjoy, think, believe, and hope for go on pretty much as usual."²¹ Rather than siding with one view

¹⁹ See Ray Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 6. Talking about computers he writes, "...they will increasingly appear to have their own personalities, evidencing reactions that we can only label as emotions and articulating their own goals and purposes. They will appear to have their own free will. They will claim to have spiritual experiences. And people - those still using carbon - based neurons or otherwise - will believe them."

²⁰ Gregory Mone, "Is Science Fiction About To Go Blind?". *Popular Science* August 2004: Science, 18 August 2004
<<http://www.popsci.com/popsci/science/article/0,12543,676265-1,00.html>>.

²¹ Reginald W. Bibby, *Canada's Teens* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co., 2001), 312.

over the other, how can those concerned with the leadership development of adolescents bring both extremes together?

Before answering this question, this project also recognizes that there is another option which is to reject technology altogether. Often called the Luddite view after a group of English textile workers who were upset at the way their trade was being replicated by machines, this name is often given to represent those who reject technology and change.²² This paper will not pursue this third option, assuming future leaders will need to know how to navigate technology wisely.

One way to bring the extremes together is by looking for points of similarity in both views. What do those who promote technology, the panacea for all troubles, have in common with those who see that technology is changing but who do not believe it will have the kind of impact that is being predicted? One area where both agree is the fact that technology is a part of society.

Computers and the internet are an obvious example. In a short space of time and for many people, the Internet has become the primary place for information and entertainment.²³ This constant exposure to media is having an impact on culture in general and young people in particular. The brains of children and young people are being “rewired” by exposure to technology. British Neuroscientist and Baroness, Susan Greenfield writes:

²² "The Luddites," *Spartacus*, May 2006, accessed 30 May 2006; <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/PRluddites.htm>>.

²³ Don Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 10.

Since the essence of the human brain has been ... adaptability to new external demands, perhaps we should simply face the fact that the new generation of brains will be fundamentally different from ours, in that they will be specifically suited, cognitively and physically, to computers and a cyber-world.²⁴

The fact that human brains are being rewired should be a fact that both extreme views on technology should be able to agree on.

This paper will not solve the problems or plumb the opportunities raised by technological advances. However, this broaches an issue for the preparation of future leaders; how will God's message be communicated to the next generation of individuals who are wired to think differently than their predecessors? One proposed answer to a shift in a rewired brain is a return to a narrative approach to reading the Bible.²⁵

Religious trends

Both of the changes discussed so far have deep implications for the Church. Cultural shifts have implications for how the church operates, causing it to question why it does what it does. Cultural changes also modify the way the message of the Church is passed on from one person to the next. Technological changes have implications too, although they may not be as obvious because they come more gradually. If technology is headed toward a singularity, or if brains are being rewired by exposure to digital media, the Church will need to think through an informed response.

The third and final trend to be discussed in this project concerns how Christianity could be impacted by the emerging culture. The focus will be on two of these changes;

²⁴ Susan Greenfield, *Tomorrow's People* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 169.

²⁵ See Winn Griffin, *God's EPIC Adventure*. 20 February 2006, accessed 30 May 2006; <<http://www.godsepicadventure.com/story/>>.

first, the rise of a more global Christianity, and second, a more multi-cultural world in the West.

Christianity is a global faith. Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission to go to “all nations” in Matthew 28. Since Emperor Constantine’s choice to make Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, the Western Church has, to a large extent, influenced civilization and culture. This cultural and theological dominance is about to change with the rise of the Church in the Southern hemisphere.²⁶ The increasing theological liberalism of the Northern church will be placed in tension with a conservative Southern church. Jenkins writes:

They preach messages that, to a Westerner, appear simplistically charismatic, visionary, and apocalyptic. In this thought-world, prophecy is an everyday reality, while faith-healing, exorcism, and dream-visions are all basic components of religious sensibility. For better or worse, the dominant churches of the future could have much in common with those of medieval or early modern European times. On present evidence, a Southernized Christian future should be distinctly conservative.²⁷

While North American Evangelical Christians may applaud the last line regarding the conservatism of the South, the description of the manifestations of the “spirit” in these churches is often far removed from most conservative Evangelicals in North America.

A leader in the emerging culture will need to be able to navigate this shift, aware of global theological thinking in ways that previous leaders have not. The World Wide Web will provide opportunities for leaders and churches in the North to partner together with churches in the South who often live under much greater hardship and struggle.

²⁶ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

A second religious trend that will impact leaders in the emerging culture is a continued mixing of cultures and religions. This is due, in part, to a greater mobility of people across the globe which brings with it an increasing spread of multi-culturalism and pluralism. As Western societies become more diverse, the cultures that are moving into Europe and North America are bringing with them their traditional faiths. In the past, especially in the United States, the “melting pot” was able to “melt” because even though the countries and cultures immigrants came from were different, they often shared a Judeo-Christian worldview.²⁸ With new levels of immigration coming from the Middle East and Asia, these similarities of worldview and religion can no longer be assumed. For high school students today, this is not as radical a change as it may be for older generations. Most high school students are used to this kind of diversity in the public schools.

These cultural, technological, and religious changes are the primary reasons for a renewed look at the leadership development of adolescents. Leadership development, by means of the seven strand cord, is able to address these issues and prepare students for leadership because this is not a program but a series of life on life transformation experiences for a young person.

Before taking time to look more closely at current leadership methods, one more question needs to be asked: “Why focus on high school students?”

²⁸ See Nina Boyd Krebs, *Edgewalkers: Diffusing Cultural Boundaries on the New Global Frontier* (Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press, 1999), 16. She observes, “The melting pot philosophy would be convenient if it would just work. It does, to a point, and then it falls apart because people treasure their uniqueness, which, for many, evolves from ethnic, cultural or spiritual history.”

Given Developmental Concerns from Chapter 4- Why High School Students?

Given the developmental concerns of the previous chapter, one additional question to be addressed is why this is a project focusing on high school students. There are two primary answers. The first, and most obvious, is that mid-adolescents today will grow up and become leaders in the coming years. The second comes from the focus of a grant the MB Biblical Seminary received from the Lilly foundation in 2002 to specifically work with high school students.

The Lilly Foundation gave money to Seminaries across the US and one in Canada for a project working with high school youth. According to the Lilly Foundation website, a project like this is within the goals of the family. "In keeping with the wishes of the three founders, Lilly Endowment exists to support the causes of religion, education and community development. The Endowment affords special emphasis to projects that benefit young people and promote leadership education and financial self-sufficiency in the nonprofit, charitable sector."²⁹ A project focused on young people and leadership development would target two of their three goals.

The Lilly Endowment youth grant began in 1998 and has spread to 48 Seminaries and Theological schools who are running youth projects. According to the Lilly Endowment website, the goals for the projects are two fold, "1) stimulate and foster an excitement about theological learning and inquiry, and 2) identify and encourage talented

²⁹ "About Lilly Endowment," *Lilly Endowment Inc.*, 2004, Lilly Endowment Inc., accessed 2 December 2004; <<http://www.lillyendowment.org/theendowment.html>>.

Christian youth to consider vocations in the ministry.”³⁰ The Lilly Foundation, and the agent who administers the grants, The Fund for Theological Education, also have two goals for these youth projects, one immediate and one long-range. “The immediate goal of these projects is to nurture in young people ways of thinking, practices and disciplines essential to the Christian life and to encourage youth to think theologically about contemporary issues. The long-term goal is to recruit a cadre of theologically minded Christian youth who will become ordained ministers and committed lay leaders in their churches and society.”³¹ It is also said amongst the project leaders that in informal surveys with pastors, the Endowment discovered that the majority of pastors serving today made that decision in high school.³²

If high school is a significant time to make decisions with lifelong implications, should not the Church be the primary people to help their own children consider a vocation in light of God’s plan for their life? Just a cursory look at the emphasis placed on high school students in their final years of school to get into a good college or university and to get a good job makes it clear that they are being marketed to by

³⁰ Christopher Coble, "Theological School Programs for High School Youth," *Lilly Endowment*, Youth Projects, 2004, Lilly Endowment, Inc., accessed 2 December 2004; <http://www.lillyendowment.org/religion_tpfhsy.html>.

³¹ Christopher Coble, "Theological School Programs for High School Youth," *Lilly Endowment*, Youth Projects, 2004, Lilly Endowment, Inc., accessed 2 December 2004; <http://www.lillyendowment.org/religion_tpfhsy.html>.

³² This obviously does not take into consideration that the world when that pastor made the decision to commit to leadership is undoubtedly different from the world of today. Years ago, becoming a pastor was often an occupation of respect in wider culture. Due to recent scandals and the loss of status for the church in general, that same level of respect is not as obvious today.

everyone else, so why not the Church? Research done by the Mennonite Church USA indicated that being asked by their congregation to consider ministry was a major factor for young people to pursue that as a vocational choice.³³ This project is written for those churches who wish to ask and encourage their youth to consider Christian leadership in the future.

There are a number of “student leadership” training books and curricula being used in churches across the United States and Canada. How are these student leadership training programs preparing high school students for leadership in the future? Are they taking the changes laid out here seriously? A survey of these methods is the topic of the next section.

Why Something New? There are Many Youth Leadership Development Methods

In Chapter 1, a reference was made to the thousands of books available in the field of leadership development. A few of these books deal specifically with developing leadership among high school students. Given the reality that for teens today, the “emerging culture” refers not only to the future but also the culture they currently live in, how do the authors of youth-oriented leadership training books address this issue? In this chapter, six books will be evaluated and critiqued. It will be shown that even though these authors have many good principles for leadership development, not one of them affirms that the culture where these young adults will take their stage as leaders will be

³³ Michael D. Wiese, *The Samuel Project: A Study of Pastoral Development in the Church* (Anderson, IN.: General Conference and Mennonite Church in the United States and Canada, 1999), 29.

different from the culture of today. This is a major oversight and therefore is a driving force in this research. Since this work is unique, and braiding the seven strands in leadership development is not being suggested by any of the current literature, there is a significant hole in this area. This dissertation seeks to fill this hole.

This is one of the most difficult sections to write. The difficulty does not arise from problems with the resources, or the personal struggles of the author. Rather, the difficulty rises from using current publications that talk about training and developing student leaders when this project is primarily focused on the pieces needed to develop students and to prepare them for leadership in the emerging culture. This is in many ways a semantic problem because in order to prepare a young person for leadership in the future, one must begin to plant principles and practices in his or her life today. The irony is that some aspects of the seven strand cord can look very similar to what is promoted in popular youth ministry resources for developing student leaders. Precisely because there is an overlap in some aspects of leadership content, this project will use current student leadership development materials and evaluate their effectiveness in preparing students who participate in these programs for the emerging culture.

In his book, *A New Kind of Christian*, Brian McLaren creates an interesting interchange between two of his characters. In the midst of a question and answer session at a local college, Neo, one of the novel's main characters, is asked a question by a student named Colby. Colby's concern revolves around Neo questioning the evangelical church and saying that it was in need of significant change. Colby points out the church in the US is growing - so how could Neo claim that it was dying? Neo asks Colby this question, "If it were 1910, what kind of transportation would you buy? What would be

the most reliable..?”³⁴ Colby answers the automobile would be the best choice in 1910.

Neo’s response is significant, both for transportation and for this discussion:

You’re right – automobiles had been invented only a decade or two before. But in 1910 they were still notoriously undependable. Not only that, there weren’t good roads for them to ride on, and there weren’t any gas stations around. So if you needed good, reliable transportation, you would not have bought a car in 1910.... if you wanted good, reliable transportation in 1910, you would have bought a horse and buggy. Why, never in history had better buggies been built! Do you see the point? We would expect that the best modern churches in history would exist today, right at the time when the modern world is passing...³⁵

The fact that significant work and ministry with student leaders is currently happening is the second reason why this section is difficult to write. In many locations the principles being taught in these books are very effective. Students are being developed as leaders. Young people are finding a sense of God’s call and following into full-time ministry. It is not the intention of this paper to criticize the success of others. Rather the goal is to ask, is there something more that can be done? How do the seven strands of leadership development being proposed line up with what is currently offered?

The following four questions will provide the grid for evaluating these leadership development books. First, does the author address emerging cultural issues? Second, does the author take seriously developmental issues of teenagers? Third, are any of the seven strands present in this work? Fourth, is this book teaching focused, i.e. does the leadership development take place in a classroom setting, or life focused; are the principles passed on in the context of life on life transformation?

³⁴ Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 43.

³⁵ Ibid.

Help, I'm a Student Leader³⁶

This is one of two comprehensive books written primarily for students. Doug Fields writes this book especially for the student leaders in Saddleback church where he is the youth pastor.³⁷ He explains this book is full of leadership tips and ideas to help students grow as leaders³⁸ and boldly states if the young person picking up the book reads, thinks about, and discusses the principles with other leaders, “I promise you’ll never be the same.”³⁹

Who is the target that Fields is addressing? Does he have an ‘ideal’ high schooler in mind? He lists 5 characteristics that indicate leadership potential in a young person:

1. You have a relationship with God.
2. You have a heart and mind open to learning and growing.
3. You want to help others.
4. You can handle being challenged.
5. You want your life to count for something.⁴⁰

In a commentary on his list, Fields explains that this journey is not about popularity, charisma, or speaking in front of others, rather, in his criteria, it’s all about serving

³⁶ Doug Fields, *Help I'm a Student Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

³⁷ Ibid., 10.

³⁸ Ibid., 9.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 11.

others.⁴¹ Service is an important principle that all leaders should practice, and is a definite tool for the emerging culture. How does Fields compare with the four criteria being used to evaluate these works?

The first criterion for evaluation asks if the author addresses issues of the emerging culture. To be fair to Fields, it may have been beyond the scope of his book. In fact, the book is very present oriented; the references to the future that are in the book talk about leadership in the same terms and picture as today. This is unfortunate, given the fact that massive changes are taking place in Western culture. The book does include comments and reflections by “Alyssa” a student leader from the Saddleback youth group. It is noteworthy that Fields thought to include the voice of an emerging leader. I commend him for having a young person comment on a book which due to the authors renown among Christian youthworkers, will be widely distributed. Unfortunately, simply including a teenage point of view does not necessarily mean that this book engages with the emerging culture.

The second criteria for evaluation concerns developmental issues. Does the author take adolescent development seriously? The answer is yes, and no. Fields is a youth pastor, and so obviously understands young people. He writes in a style that is engaging and conversational. A young person reading this book would feel valued and not talked down to. He seeks to communicate, as much as a book can, that he is providing both challenge and support. Since he is first and foremost writing for his own youth group’s student leaders, he can personally provide the support that he promises. For those who are

⁴¹ Ibid.

reading this on their own with very little support, it may breed levels of frustration. At times, Fields pushes students into areas that may make them uncomfortable. He asks them to serve their peers which goes against being “cool.”⁴² He encourages student leaders to step out and talk to new students on their high school campus, but does not comment on how different personality styles may find this difficult.⁴³ Finally, he encourages students to take the principles from the book into their relationships at home but he does not appear to take seriously the issues of individuation that are occurring.⁴⁴

The third criteria for evaluation is to assess whether the work includes any of the seven strands of leadership development identified in this current project.

There is no mention of the twin strands of being discerned or called into leadership. It may be that Fields assumes this is happening in a youth group or that because a young person is given or picks up this book, he or she has gone through some selection process to begin their leadership journey. Or it could be that since Fields writes for his own youth group context, he assumes the principles described in his previous book *Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry*⁴⁵ apply here as well.

⁴² Ibid., 19.

⁴³ Ibid., 122.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁵ Doug Fields, *Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 200-201. In chapter 9 - *Can Students Handle Responsibility* Fields encourages youth workers to do three things to find student leaders: look up – see who is doing the jobs other’s believe are beneath them; look toward – the corners where students are connecting with marginal kids; look around – to see who has stayed behind to make sure everything is done.

Being a leader who loves God first and foremost is strongly emphasized.⁴⁶ Fields devotes an entire chapter to spiritual formation and this most important relationship for a follower of Jesus. This strongly affirms an important component for Christian leaders throughout the centuries, but one that is being “rediscovered” as essential for today and in the emerging culture.

Another strand, service/ministry opportunities, abounds in this book. Fields does a good job of encouraging ministry that emphasizes serving others as key. By showing Jesus as a servant, he paints a picture for adolescents of how leadership really ‘works.’ Service arises out of passion and gifting. Fields takes this reality seriously by providing guidelines for readers to find and develop gifts in ministry.⁴⁷

There is no mention of rite of passage events, or even the fact that these students are in a liminal stage of life. Commissioning is not mentioned.

This entire book is an opportunity for Fields to “mentor” the students who read it. Mentoring as a concept only appears in the final chapter when Fields talks about the importance of the students reading this book to reach out and mentor a younger person. He calls this person their “Timothy.”⁴⁸ At this point, space is given to describe the mentoring relationship Paul had with Timothy and encouraging older teens to mentor younger ones. Although the concept of a high school student mentoring someone younger is obviously future-focused, there is nothing that explains how to prepare this younger

⁴⁶ Fields, *Help*, 43-56.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 132.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 127.

person apart from sharing what the student has learned from reading the book. There is no space given to the concept of the reader being mentored by an older adult (apart from the author). Mentoring is something the reader does to another, not something he or she should seek for their own leadership development.

For the fourth evaluation criteria, this book is a mixture of both teaching focus and life focus. The simple format of the book emphasizes a teaching focus. The author spells out principles in each chapter that the reader is supposed to integrate into his or her life in order to become a leader. There is no encouragement to talk about these principles with a youth leader or pastor. There is no encouragement to have a mentor, or to find ways for the young person's community to speak into his or her life. In many ways, this last point is indicative of the entire book as a whole; it is intensely individualistic. The apparent assumption of the author is that if a student picks up this book, he or she is automatically a leader and should therefore begin acting like one. Nowhere does it mention that discernment by the local congregation is an essential part of the process.

Fields does a very good job of making the book practical. This is definitely not meant to be a book that promotes 'head knowledge' over practice. He is clear that information is always followed by praxis. He provides numerous examples throughout the book of ways to integrate what is being taught into the real world of a teenager. Unfortunately, this book does not go far enough to encourage students to find someone who may be a bit older and wiser to journey alongside; someone who can provide a real life example of the principles being taught.

Help I'm a student leader is a book that provides young people, who are serving in their youth ministries, an excellent foundation for current service. It continues with an

individualistic view of leadership that implies that leaders are self-selected. But in the right hands and with the right support, it would provide some foundation for adolescents. Unfortunately, it does not address issues of the emerging culture and would therefore be an inadequate preparation tool for young people who will lead in that context.

*Leadership 101*⁴⁹

Denise VanEck serves as a staff member in another large church, in this case Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, Michigan. The pastor at Mars Hill, Rob Bell, is known for the “postmodern” teaching videos he produces known as “Nooma.”⁵⁰ VanEck is a youth ministry veteran and in this book she provides both content and opportunities for hands on reflection.

Even though VanEck works in a church that many in the US would consider to be a “cutting edge” emergent church, this book does not have anything devoted to understanding leadership in this context. Instead, this book is very current conscious, focusing on the here and now for high school students. Again, this is not necessarily bad, it is simply interesting to see that even a church that is trying to be innovative in how the message is communicated would still train leaders for an old paradigm.

Since VanEck has worked with youth, she does know their capabilities. The issues of adolescent development are clearly in focus for her. At the same time, the concepts and illustrations used come from corporate America and assume a level of self-understanding that most adolescents would not be able to relate to naturally. This book is also extremely

⁴⁹ Denise VanEck, *Leadership 101* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

⁵⁰ See <http://www.nooma.com>.

individualistic. It apparently is assumed that the student leader is reading and working through the book completely on their own. In a section on self-leadership, the issues raised require more maturity than an average sixteen-year-old is able to generate.⁵¹ The sheer volume of material covered, although good in the context of a nurturing environment, could easily overwhelm a young person.

VanEck includes some of the seven strands in the book. She includes a section on “calling,” although it is strangely the final chapter in the book.⁵² Would it not serve the student better to figure out this aspect of leadership before engaging with the other material? Her section on call would be helpful for a student struggling with finding out where he or she fits in God’s work. There are helpful insights into the call for everyone and that a call from God can change over time.⁵³ Throughout this section however, the idea of call is always an individual thing. In fact students are encouraged not to pursue their church community in this discernment process. She stresses, “Don’t be tempted to talk to people more than you talk to God about it and don’t make the mistake of getting too much advice. ... Ultimately, this is a place between you and God. He calls, you answer.”⁵⁴ As has been shown, an inner call is definitely one part of the equation, however, if it is the only part, the result is imbalance.

⁵¹ VanEck, *Leadership* 101, 76-92.

⁵² Ibid., 153.

⁵³ Ibid., 154.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 165.

Another strand that VanEck discusses is the strand of spiritual formation. This book is full of examples of biblical leaders in a variety of leadership situations. VanEck is careful to balance stories and examples from her life, the corporate world, and the biblical narrative. She has a large section on spiritual gifts and personality types, and includes a gift assessment as well. The Praying Leader is the title of chapter three; in this section, VanEck emphasizes conversation with God as the key to relationship. Unfortunately, she appears to link the goal of conversing with God to the reader's leadership, rather than simply because a relationship with God is a valuable part of life. She writes, "This chapter is about beginning the process of integrating your conversations with God into your heart and into your leadership."⁵⁵ For a high school student working through this book on their own, the message they could be left with is, "its all about you."

The third and final strand that VanEck mentions is the strand of mentoring. She devotes an entire chapter to this useful aspect of leadership development. The reader is encouraged both to find a mentor and to find someone to be a mentor to. This advice would work well for those students who find it easy to talk to adults, but would fall far short for those who may find it difficult to ask an adult they respect to mentor them.

This book is full of practical ideas for the reader. It is written in a workbook format that encourages students to fill in the blanks on a variety of pages. Unfortunately, because VanEck doesn't encourage community or working through this book in a context of a wider leadership development plan, it comes across as teaching focused rather than life focused.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 46.

Because of the individualistic nature of this book, the young people who are being developed may find it difficult to lead in the new paradigms of leadership that encourage more collaboration and sharing of leadership and vision.

Developing Student Leaders

Ray Johnston wrote *Developing Student Leaders* in 1992.⁵⁶ At that time, the concept of “Postmodernity” was still in its infancy, and the “emerging culture” referred to what was to be the strong economic years of the Clinton administration. Although at the time of writing, Johnston was chair of the youth ministry department at North Park College and Seminary, his focus for this book is on the practical, hands on tools for youthworkers who were developing student leaders.

Unlike Fields and VanEck, Johnston’s book is not written for students. Instead, Johnston was the first to write on this topic for the growing youth pastor market, and at that time the majority of practitioners were looking for hands-on tools, not philosophical books that focused on the reasons behind student leadership development. Because of this, Johnston’s book does not address anything but how to develop leaders in the local church context.

Because Johnston is a youth ministry practitioner, he does understand adolescent development. This book takes both the needs and abilities of high school students into consideration when suggesting ways to get them involved in leadership and service.

⁵⁶ Ray Johnston, *Developing Student Leaders* (Zondervan, 1992).

Since this book is written for youth leaders, not students, many of the seven strands are missing from the discussion. One area that he does give a lot of attention to is discernment. This is developed through an elaborate, thorough application and screening process for student leaders.⁵⁷ This application process gives opportunity for the youth leader to discern the potential leader, not only through prayer and community counsel, but also how well the student completes the application process. Johnston encourages youth leaders to look for students who demonstrate ability while also building ability into those who need it. He writes, “A key to recruiting and selecting leaders is to identify and work with those who are ready for commitment, dedication and development, while working at developing readiness in those who may be leaders in the future.”⁵⁸

Because Johnston’s book is designed for youth leaders, it cannot simply be teaching focused. The principles that Johnston promotes can only be implemented in the context of a local youth group or congregation. This fact makes Johnston’s book much easier for churches to implement. It is written in a workbook format that is full of practical ideas that any youthworker could easily put into practice. Even though these principles are life focused, there is very little written about helping high school students to grow personally in leadership. Instead it is written from the point of view of a busy youth pastor who wants to find ways to involve his or her youth in leadership in order to lighten the youth ministry load.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 81-87.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 84.

Johnston's book is not designed to develop students into leaders for the emerging culture as much as it is about developing and using leaders for today (or 1992 when it was written).

The Top 12 Resources Youth Workers Want

Jonathan McKee began full-time in youth ministry the year after Johnston wrote his book. In 2002, ten years after Johnston, McKee put out a book titled, *The Top 12 Resources Youth Workers Want*.⁵⁹ In this book, McKee provides numerous practical resources for youth ministry.

One of the chapters in this book is on student leadership. It is included in this project because, like Johnston, it is written for the youth worker and because there are still few resources on this topic. McKee writes for youth leaders, giving practical advice not necessarily on how to develop student leaders, but how to develop students to become the next generation of youth workers.⁶⁰

It is unfortunate that a book written so recently would not include any reference to cultural changes or shifts. But McKee does not mention these at all. Instead, the focus is primarily on the present, developing young people into leaders for the youth group.

Given the shortness of his chapter,⁶¹ there is not sufficient space for McKee to focus on adolescent development. He does take seriously the wide variety of interests and gifts

⁵⁹ Jonathan R McKee, *The Top 12 Resources Youth Workers Want* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2002).

⁶⁰ Ibid., 176.

⁶¹ Ibid., 176-195.

in high school students and provides opportunities for service in a wide variety of areas. McKee also gives students the chance to make a commitment that is realistic with their liminal stage of life.

McKee covers two of the seven strands. Like Johnston, he places discernment not in the hands of the local congregation to call and affirm a young person, but in an application that helps to screen out students. “This simple request seems to filter out some of the students who aren't terribly motivated.”⁶² Applications and clear job descriptions are very important in ministry. It is essential that individuals know what they are getting involved with before they make a commitment. At the same time, an application can never take the place of discernment or a congregation affirming any person for ministry.

The other strand that McKee uses is mentoring. He requires all student leaders to find a mentor to meet with weekly. This mentor must be a Christian who is willing to go through a set curriculum that McKee provides and to talk with the young leader about highs and lows during that week.⁶³ The selection of the mentor is left up to the student. He or she is responsible to find and ask the mentor to support them.

McKee's approach appears to be a good balance between teaching and life focus. He provides numerous resources in this chapter of “nuts and bolts” for retreats, applications, and meetings. At the same time, he is working in the context of a youth group which would provide opportunity for the high school student to practice and learn in a

⁶² Ibid., 181.

⁶³ Ibid., 188.

supportive environment that encourages leadership development. The student has a mentor and meets with him or her weekly.

McKee's short chapter provides significant tools for developing student leaders. However, he does not even consider whether or not the principles he is advocating will provide appropriate preparation for these students once they leave the safety of the youth group. This chapter is good, but not good enough.

Contagious Faith

In *Contagious Faith*, Dave Rahn and Terry Linhart write about how to empower student leaders into evangelism.⁶⁴

The principles gleaned from this book are based on extensive research. There is no mention of how what was learned might translate into the emerging culture, but that is because this is a book to help youth leaders develop their high school students to share their faith with their friends today. Will the principles that are taught to high school students in the "pray, invite, tell" strategy work in the coming years? This is not a question that this book addresses.

Both authors take development seriously and they include a detailed chapter on this topic. They question the ability of teenagers, particularly younger adolescents, to be involved in leadership due to a still-forming personality.

Only one of the strands makes an appearance in this book. An entire chapter is given to discussing the role of adults in student leadership.⁶⁵ Although in this chapter Rahn and

⁶⁴ Dave Rahn and Terry Linhart, *Contagious Faith* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2000).

Linhart do not speak specifically of mentoring, they do describe aspects of a healthy mentoring relationship: caring for the student leader, providing accountability that went both directions, life coaching, Bible study and teaching, and a clear challenge in the context of support. The authors operate from the assumption that this book will be used by youth workers who have already selected student leaders, so there is no mention of how these students have come to be called “leaders.”

Like McKee, since this is a book written for youth leaders, it is a balanced picture of teaching and life focus. It is the responsibility of the youth leader, not the young person, to find ways to implement the leadership principles presented in these pages.

The Student Leadership Training Manual for Youth Workers

The final book surveyed for this project is *The Student Leadership Training Manual for Youth Workers* by Tiger McLuen and Chuck Wysong.⁶⁶ These men are veteran youth leaders and they have produced a book of thirty-one training meetings in a workbook style format. The first section gives a philosophy of leadership development and it is from this section that material will be gathered for the evaluation. The other three-fourths of the book are practical pages to help youthworkers train and develop the student leaders in their groups.

Although this book/workbook gives many good ideas for training student leaders, the authors fail to address any cultural changes that students may face in the emerging

⁶⁵ Ibid., 40-52.

⁶⁶ Dennis McLuen and Chuck Wysong, *The Student Leadership Training Manual for Youth Workers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

paradigm. Unfortunately, this failure to address culture includes issues students may face today, so this is a doubly unfortunate oversight. The impression from the authors is that this is all about developing students for today with only their future usefulness in the church as a thought for tomorrow.

Because the authors are youth ministry veterans, they do take issues of adolescent development very seriously. Sprinkled throughout the first section are insights and encouragements to give students an opportunity to be involved in ministry, coupled with challenges not to give them too much, and to remember they are still kids. The authors write:

Work on mentoring your student leaders and doing everything you can to ensure their success in leadership. Be sure they have the skills needed to do the jobs you're asking them to do. Develop them in their leadership, and provide positive models for them. It may mean extra time in preparation and encouragement, but ministry success breeds greater willingness to risk again.⁶⁷

The practice of mentoring is one of the seven strands, although in this case it is simply mentioned in passing. According to the quote above, this relationship is part of the youth leader's job description; however, there is nothing about adults mentoring specific students. There is a considerable amount written in this book about the roles of adult leaders in youth ministry, but from the philosophy section of this workbook, youth leaders are not expected to participate in a mentoring relationship in the lives of these leadership-identified teens.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 24.

Calling and discernment are reduced to a short section on screening and processing the selection of student leaders. The entire process is removed from the local church and is primarily in the hands of the youth leaders and an application form.

This is a very teaching focused program. The authors provide thirty-one weekly sessions with the expressed purpose of training and preparing student leaders.

Summary evaluation

Given the initial criteria by which these leadership development programs were evaluated (addressing the emerging culture, in line with adolescent development, integrating the seven strands, and teaching centered vs. life centered), not one of them tackled all four areas adequately. The consequences are two-fold; 1) programs that are focused on the present, rather than preparing students for the future, and 2) programs that miss offering holistic preparation for students.

In addition, in all of these books the focus of training and preparing student leaders is removed from the life of the local congregation. Certainly the fact that this training occurs within the context of a church's youth ministry program means that the local congregation is involved. However, the entire process is placed either on the individual student to discern and prepare him or herself, or it is placed on the youth ministry. Therefore, leadership development is assumed to be happening in the youth ministry context rather than in the multi-generational setting of the congregation.

One other general observation from some of these models concerns how programmatic leadership development has become. The implication is that by simply

following the author's program, a functioning leader will emerge. Unfortunately, programs rarely change people; interactions with other people do.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to answer three questions that had been left unasked up to this point in the project. The first question was a question of need. Why is a new paradigm even needed? The section on society's changes sought to provide an answer. Western culture is undergoing rapid change in numerous areas, therefore, business as usual leadership development will not adequately address these significant changes.

The second question was a question of practicality. Why spend time working with high school students when everyone knows they are flighty and unreliable? This question was initially addressed in Chapter 4 and was continued in the discussion on the Lilly Foundation funded projects. The key point is that people make significant life decisions in high school and the Church should be actively involved in assisting teens in making good decisions.

The third question was also a question of need. Why produce something new when there is already an overabundance of books and resources on leadership development? By providing an overview and evaluation of the current Christian student leadership development literature, it has been shown that there is a need for something that integrates leadership development with cultural changes and to prepare young people for leadership in the emerging culture.

Given the fact that Western culture is undergoing rapid changes, and that current models of student leadership development are not addressing the issues that arise with

these changes, a new leadership development paradigm for high school students is needed. Chapter 6 will braid all seven strands together and identify one way this problem can be solved.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The times are changing. This statement is true, with or without a reference to Bob Dylan. The future, in whatever form it will take, will be similar and yet very different to today.

Early in the research for this project the author was asked, “How will the changes you describe really impact the church? When I was a young man there was a lot of talk about ‘a new world,’ it seems to me like nothing has changed. People still attend congregations that, apart from worship styles, haven’t changed that much since I was a kid.”

This is a difficult question to answer. On the one hand, the questioner is right, there will be a future that is similar to today because people will still carry on with activities that humans have practiced for thousands of years, behaviors like falling in love, eating, sleeping, taking care of their children, and so on. On the other hand, if current projections are correct and children are in fact having their brains “rewired” by their exposure to technology, then there will be a fundamental change in some human behaviors in the future. This change is coupled with societal changes that raise new questions like: what makes up a family, what is the definition of personality when computers have self-awareness, and what is the nature of life itself? These questions will force the church to reconsider church leadership.

To answer the questioner, it has been the findings of this research that the scope of change which is happening across a wide spectrum of human experience will usher in a

time unlike any in human history. This leads to an additional question, “Will leaders in the Church be ready for this shift?” In order to survive, the Church will need to rethink its methods and prepare leaders in different ways.

This project set out to discover an effective way to prepare today’s mid-adolescents for leadership in the emerging culture. The journey has proceeded through the story of Moses and Joshua, Anabaptist/Mennonite Brethren history and theology, adolescent development, current practices, and issues of the emerging culture. This biblical/historical/developmental journey has identified seven strands that, when braided together, create strength and flexibility that a mid-adolescent will need to lead effectively in the emerging culture. These strands have been identified as: discernment; calling from the local church, as well as from God; rite of passage events; mentoring; spiritual formation; commissioning; and service/ministry opportunities. When all these strands are braided together in a church-based rope walk, a strong cord of development appears that can create an environment for leadership to emerge.

The seven strand cord metaphor is intentionally non-sequential and non-linear. This is due to the fact that in the emerging culture, “seven easy steps” to leadership development will prove to be inadequate for the myriad of situations that will face leaders in the coming years. In order to be prepared for a changeable world, leaders need flexible development methods.

It is important to note that this proposal is not designed to be another “program” for leadership development, but instead these seven strands create an environment for conversation and interaction. They allow older adults to speak into the life of a young person. They create space for God and emphasize a relationship with Jesus as the most

important part of ministry. By giving room for multiple times of public affirmation and blessing, they are able to provide guideposts on a journey toward adulthood and leadership that a young person is able to return to again and again.

Contrast this environment of the braided cord with a leadership development program that emphasizes information transfer. Although the goal of most “twelve-week discipleship programs” is internal transformation, the material presented is often divorced from daily life. The classroom-based presentation speaks as loudly as the content and so a young person may attend a class, follow through on assignments, and may even practice some of what they are learning, however, if the end result is to check one more thing off the “to do” list, and not a focus of life on life transformation, this model may not adequately prepare youth for the challenges of future society and the church.

The seven strands were identified through three primary venues: biblical studies, church history and theology, and finally, adolescent development studies. The next section will revisit the findings from these chapters as well as Chapter 5, which addressed current training practices.

Summary of Chapter Two

Using the Exodus narrative and the relationship of Moses with his aid Joshua, Chapter 2 developed the strands of ministry/service opportunities, spiritual formation, and commissioning.

Ministry/Service Strand

The narrative demonstrated that under Moses’ supervision, Joshua was given opportunities for ministry/service: as Moses’ aid, as army commander in a key battle

against the Amalekites, and later, as one of the twelve spies. While serving in these ways, Joshua was able to succeed, to learn about encountering opposition, and to experience standing up for what he believed. He also learned how to deal with failure in the narratives of the golden calf and the elders who prophesied apart from the rest of the group.

In previous times, in order for young people to learn a trade, they were apprenticed to a “master” who taught him or her how to do whatever it was the master did. Experiential learning, although not called by this name, was the norm. Today, there is a need for emerging leaders in the local congregation to be apprenticed with a “master.” Ministry/service opportunities are one way that this can be facilitated.

There are two ways this strand could be viewed. Ministry opportunities imply that the young apprentice is given a chance to demonstrate his or her leadership by taking responsibility for a specific program or project. For high school students this could be as a camp counselor, the director of a VBS program, or a team leader on a mission trip. The key is that the young person is stretched with the task for seeing something through. The second, a service opportunity, implies a time and place for the young person to serve another person or group without necessarily implying leadership. This could be working in a downtown food distribution center, visiting the elderly, or reading to children in an after-school program. Service opportunities move an individual away from self and put the focus on others.

Another benefit to giving these types of opportunities to young people is that it helps move their faith from a “head” issue to a “life” practice. The book of James is well known for an emphasis on deeds to demonstrate faith; giving mid-adolescents

opportunity to do something with their faith provides room for that practice. Ministry opportunities, particularly for those who have grown up in a church setting, create movement from “head” to “hands” which also assist the individuation process by creating a lived-out faith.

Service/ministry opportunities also provide a chance for a young person to have his or her heart broken by the things that break the heart of God. As hands begin to serve, hearts can begin to break as the needs in a community are seen.

Spiritual Formation Strand

Joshua was also given unprecedented opportunities for spiritual formation by simply being with Moses. In addition to having access to Moses’ intimate relationship with the Almighty, Joshua was part of the group of elders who met Yahweh on the mountain. Following a banquet in God’s presence, Joshua spent forty days up the mountain while Moses received the Law. Joshua was also able to have unrestricted access to the tent of meeting, sometimes staying long after Moses left.

Society today is enamored with celebrity. Unfortunately, this interest goes beyond the general population and enters the Church as well. Leaders are judged not necessarily by their piety or passion for God, but by the ability they have to draw a crowd or to get things done. This type of leader can have “success” in many areas today. However, with changes coming to society and a culture that increasingly emphasizes authenticity, this type of leader will find his or her influence waning. Postmodernists are looking for spiritual people. This is seen in the great respect given to someone like the Dali Lama, or Mother Teresa. In a world of shallow people, there is a great need for individuals who have depth of character.

Depth of character, according to Peter, is found first of all in relationship with Jesus, and secondly by persevering under suffering.¹ Young people who are being braided into a pattern of leadership development need to know that an intimate, living relationship with Jesus - formed for the sake of others - is the most important part of current and future church leadership. Without that relationship, their other service is in vain.

Just like Joshua participated in a variety of opportunities to connect with God, young people need to know that there are many ways to develop this vital relationship. In recent years, the Church has made “personal devotions,” which usually means Bible reading and prayer on your own, the plumb line for spirituality. This practice fails to take into consideration the wide variety of God-created differences that each person has and with it the opportunity for a multiplicity of ways to develop a relationship with God. Introducing young people to the rich experiences of the saints of old (the mystics, contemplatives, and Desert Fathers, just to name a few), is one way to help them discover the many paths they can walk to develop intimacy with Jesus.

This is one area where a mentor is extremely significant, and this will be highlighted in more detail in the section on Mentoring.

Commissioning Strand

The transition between Moses and Joshua was one of the few in Scripture that went well. This was due in a large part to the time and energy put into ensuring Joshua was affirmed and commissioned in front of all the people as the next leader. This ceremony

¹ 1 Pet. 1: 1-9 NIV.

identified Joshua as the individual chosen by God to guide the nation into the Promised Land. This experience would have given an added boost to Joshua's confidence as well as silenced any critics who may have wished for a different successor to Moses.

There is power and affirmation in commissioning. For example, a young person who has been called to the front of a church and prayed over as he or she prepares to go on a mission trip, leaves that experience with the feeling they are blessed and that they represent the sending church in the new location. They are ambassadors, they are the called out ones, and they are the hands and feet of that sending church.

There is power, as well, in the prayers of the leaders and the congregation for that individual. The young person leaves or serves with the knowledge that they are covered in prayer.

Commissioning for local ministry also provides authority for that person. Like it did for Joshua, being brought before a group of people and identifying a person brings with it a position and value which they would not have otherwise. Sometimes it is difficult to lead in a setting where people have known you for your entire life. As Jesus said, a prophet is not accepted in his hometown.² Commissioning provides added authority to serve in a local context.

In this act of commissioning, Joshua is affirmed before God, Moses, Eleazar and the entire nation as the person selected by God for leadership. When a congregation encourages a young person to consider ministry, when they affirm giftings and pray for that young person, when they provide a sense of calling and purpose, and when they

² Luke 4:24 NIV.

assist in helping this young person move one step closer to adulthood, they are providing a priceless service.

Life on Life Transformation

The Moses/Joshua story provided richly colored threads to the seven strand cord. By providing a model of leadership development which emphasized life on life transformation coupled with learning experiences, Moses offered Joshua more than a leadership program; he offered his life to his apprentice. Joshua was prepared for whatever tasks lay before him because he emerged with a deeply rooted relationship with God, a clear commission and purpose before the people, and the practical experiences in leadership to put him on a firm foundation. The results, as seen in the book of Joshua, show a leader who was prepared for an uncertain future, one which saw a nation move from wilderness wanderings to conquest and settling of a land.

Summary of Chapter Three

Chapter 3 used the history of early Anabaptism and the Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church to identify the twin strands of discernment and call. Using the Anabaptist/MB church as a model, this chapter also showed how important shared leadership was to the founders of this movement.

Discernment Strand

Because of an ecclesiology that emphasized shared leadership, there was great importance among Anabaptists and MB's in a local church for taking the initiative to encourage an individual into a position of leadership in the congregation. This involvement took the form of the twin strands of discernment and calling. These churches

practiced community discernment and took seriously the importance of developing the next generation of leaders.

In many ways, being discerned by a congregation offers strength and confidence to an individual who might not feel particularly qualified to lead. Simply knowing that a local congregation is standing behind you can provide confidence to step forward on the journey of leadership.

This strand is particularly significant to an adolescent. This is a life-stage when they are discovering their identity, and being discerned by their local congregation as a young person who shows promise of leadership, a passion for Jesus, and a willingness to learn, helps solidify that identity by rooting it in the Christian story. In many ways this calling out becomes a marker on their journey toward adulthood and provides significant affirmation.

In a world where markers toward adulthood are vanishing, a clear discernment process conducted by a local congregation can become a signpost for a young person. This is especially significant for the mid-adolescent when it shows him or her that others are seeing something in their life that they may not see in themselves. When this is coupled with a clear voice from the congregation discerning the individual toward specific ministry, the signpost becomes as large as a billboard.

It is important for an adolescent who is being prepared for leadership in the emerging culture to have a clear sense of his or her purpose, identity, and direction; a clear discernment process from a local congregation can provide that and be a marker for the young person in times of doubt or frustration.

Call Strand

It is important for all people to understand that they are called by God. This is the heart of the good news of the gospel. God desires to be in relationship with each person on planet earth. Unfortunately, many people reject this offer. At the same time, God also calls people to serve Him in unique and different ways. According to lists given in the epistles of Paul, some are called to leadership, others to teaching, to administration, to service, and so on.

In the context of a local church, a young person who has his or her gifts affirmed and is “called out” by the congregation to exercise those gifts in the local situation is a person who will grow in his or her individuation. Ministry often causes a person to figure out what they like or do not like about themselves and the type of service they do.

In many contemporary instances, individuals receive a call at a camp or retreat which is removed from their local congregation and context. They then return home and ask for a blessing on what they have already decided to do. In the seven strand cord model, calling returns to integrating the local church and an individual’s sense of God’s call. This both/and aspect of call brings together the church and individual’s call to help a person understand his or her passions and to discover where the gifts and abilities they have can be used to further God’s kingdom. Call becomes a much more communal experience rather than an exclusively individualistic one. This strengthens the individual’s awareness of being called when the inner call may be in question. Having the church call and stand alongside the young person gives that individual the room to wrestle with what the call of God means in their life.

Other Findings

This chapter also showed that historically, the Anabaptists, and to some degree the Mennonite Brethren, practiced a leadership structure that utilized multiple individuals involved in ministry. Ironically, today as more emerging expressions of church are discovering and embracing this approach, Mennonite Brethren are moving the opposite direction, buying into the latest trend of “pastor as CEO” model.

Summary of Chapter Four

The framework of adolescent development provided the window to identify the final two strands. Chapter 4 utilized a variety of developmental theories and particularly focused on cognitive development to identify the reasons behind some adolescent ... behavior. This chapter highlighted identity formation as a significant part of individuation and highlighted the need for adults to become involved in the lives of adolescents. Using these findings, this chapter encouraged concerned adults to create opportunities to provide teenagers with significant rites of passage, and to get involved in young lives through mentoring.

Rite of Passage Events Strand

Rites of passage were identified as markers or signposts on the journey toward adulthood. These practices are tied closely with the developmental aspect of identity formation. This strand is essential in order to assist a young person as they navigate the life stage of adolescence- a required aspect of their life’s journey but one that is ambiguous both in duration and how to traverse it successfully. Without adults providing

markers and acting as guides, a young person has no way of knowing how to become an adult apart from what they learn from media.

This strand asks adults for a two-fold commitment: to *plan* and *provide* for adolescents. The call goes out for caring adults to plan events that adolescents can participate in that offer a mix of challenge and support. Adults are asked, as well, to plan times of ritual and blessing that drives a signpost into the ground as a marker for the young person as he or she navigates into the future. The second commitment is to provide. Young people need elders, those who are ahead on the journey who are willing to walk alongside them and to affirm their growing adulthood. They also need provision of safe spaces to be kids and to be free from the pressures of growing up too fast too soon.

A local church can see themselves not only as persons who pass on the faith to the next generation, but also as the adults who walk with a young person as he or she transitions into adulthood. Rite of passage events are one way a local congregation can accomplish this task.

Mentoring Strand

The second strand identified in Chapter 4 is the other side of the coin to rite of passage events. Adult mentoring was also identified as a major strand in the leadership development of mid-adolescents. Mentoring provides an adult who walks alongside the young person on his or her journey. Using Vygotsky's image of scaffolding, mentors are called to bring a balance of challenge and support to an adolescent.

This is similar to the rite of passage events but is different because this requires a longer term relational component. Whereas a rite of passage event is generally short-term and could be a weekend run by someone from the young person's local congregation, mentoring requires sustained, regular contact. This is best accomplished in the context of a young person's community, whereas rite of passage events can happen in the local congregation and also from locations outside the local context, such as camps and retreats.

The strand of mentoring is necessary because it removes the seven strand cord from the realm of a program and puts it clearly in the section marked, "Danger, life on life transformation, this will change anyone who gets involved." For many adults, organizing and running a program is much easier than investing day in and day out in a young person's life, however, if young leaders are to be prepared for the emerging culture, this step of mentoring is indispensable.

What qualities should a mentoring relationship develop? The answer to this question is the context for numerous books and articles, so what follows are simply suggestions. The first suggestion for a mentoring curriculum is spiritual formation. The key trait emerging leaders will need is to be people who are deeply spiritual. A mentor would seek to provide encouragement and opportunities for spending time with God, learning to listen to His voice, mining the scriptures for life and truth, developing a vibrant prayer life, and assisting the young person in knowing that he or she is uniquely loved by God. Leaders in the emerging culture will need to be individuals with a passionate relationship with Jesus.

A second aspect of the mentoring relationship would be to help identify the young person's call narrative. In which ways has God been active in his or her life, and how can they move forward today based on God's faithfulness in the past? The mentor could provide significant help here by guiding the young person in a reflection of his or her life.

Another element of mentoring should include developing characteristics of a leader in the emerging culture. What these characteristics are is a constantly moving target, but some of the qualities that should prove essential, in addition to the two already mentioned, would include: 1) transparency in personal relationships and leadership- in a time of authenticity, leaders need to be willing to share the reality of their lives; 2) a preparation for a future of change- if all that is being said about the incredible transitions taking place is true, future leaders need to be prepared and continue to prepare for this massive change; 3) a person who practices reflective theology- the leader will need to be a person who can exegete scripture and culture, and come up with meaningful ways to connect the two; and 4) be leaders who listen to those they lead- processing will be important to people who embrace postmodernism's ideology that everyone deserves his or her voice to be heard.

Summary of Chapter Five

Chapter 5 addressed three questions that had been raised in this discussion. These questions were: first, what are some cultural changes that are coming and how will they impact the church; second, why work with high school students and not an older group; and third, why is another leadership method or style needed at all?

To address the first question, Chapter 5 provided a short overview of three areas of significant change that have implications for leadership in the emerging culture. These changes are culture, science/technology, and religion. Through interaction with these three change areas, this chapter showed a need to be prepared for a changing cultural landscape and, therefore, a need for a new leadership formation paradigm.

The second question was addressed with a pragmatic answer. Initially, the motivation for this research was due to funding from the Lilly Endowment. However, over the course of this study, it has become clearer to the author that this is a significant discussion and need in the Church today. If leadership development of today's high school students is conducted in a business as usual fashion, these same young people may not be adequately prepared to take the leadership role that is necessary for a different cultural context when they reach adulthood.

The third question was addressed by looking at an overview of six Christian leadership development materials available for youth today. These materials were evaluated through a four question grid and although they were shown to be working in a variety of contexts, unfortunately these programs are not adequately designed to prepare adolescents for the emerging culture. Not one of these programs even addressed the fact that preparation for students today will have implications for leadership in the coming years. Therefore, a new method is needed.

Sequencing

As the cords have been re-identified, it is worth noting that the sequence in which they have been discovered, or the way in which they are integrated, is not significant.

This is not a stage and sequence proposal, although some may argue that there may be a logical ordering which creates a sequence for their implementation. Because this is about life on life transformation, a local church rope walk could choose to braid an unlimited pattern with these seven cords.

For example, an individual with a strong passion and commitment to Jesus who has been nurtured by a local church may be commissioned by that church and sent out on a short-term service/ministry opportunity. While there, this person may meet up with a mentor who walks alongside him for a short while. Upon his return, this person, upon reflection with a local mentor, comes to discover that this trip was a rite of passage event. Upon further reflection and prayer, this person may sense a call to go to the people he has visited and serve them full-time. The leadership board may meet and decide that they wish to begin a discernment process with this individual, resulting in a call by the congregation into full-time Christian work.

Or a different person may be discerned by their local congregation. She may be called, and then put through a rite of passage event that helps her understand her unique place as God's child. Throughout this part of her journey, she is given a mentor who helps her grow in spiritual formation. She participates in numerous service/ministry opportunities, and, when she decides to become a youth pastor, she is then commissioned for ministry.

These strands can be organized in any fashion. In an age when ordered steps and sequences are suspect, a flexible model is needed. Instead of a set series of steps, what is offered is an image of a seven strand cord, one that is taken from individual strings but

when braided together is stronger than any one alone. The beauty of this model is that it is unique to each individual, yet corporate in the shaping of a leader.

Workable Proposal

In this final chapter and conclusion, a workable proposal will be suggested for churches to create a rope walk for braiding seven strand cords for all of their high school students.

Due to changes coming to Western society that will make “business as usual” leadership development programs inadequate, this project proposes that local churches adopt and implement a philosophy of leadership development based on the seven strand model. Some suggestions in which this could be implemented have already been described in this chapter.

As a proposal, what would an implementation of the seven strands look like in the life of a mid-adolescent? This paper started with the fictional stories of Tim and Wendy; as a conclusion and proposal for implementing the seven strands, two different stories will be told. “Rachel” and “Kevin” are two mid-adolescents, who also sensed God’s call to ministry at the same National youth event. For the sake of this story, their churches adopted a leadership development philosophy based on the rope walk - seven strand cord metaphor. Therefore the experiences they had were very different to Tim and Wendy.

Rachel is an eleventh grader who is active in a couple of sports as well as Campus Life and youth group. Her engaging personality and self-confidence had already caught the eye of her youth leaders as well as the church leadership. The church had in place a “leadership discernment committee” who was given the task of identifying and shoulder

tapping potential leaders regardless of their age. This group had already spoken with Rachel and begun the process of discerning a call to leadership on her life. As a part of this process, the church had provided her with a mentor, an older, retired missionary who had served for many years in Zaire, now called the Democratic Republic of Congo. This woman, who was Rachel's grandmother's age, met with Rachel weekly to study scripture, pray together and to explore ways to love Jesus more deeply. This woman had also the opportunity to share her story of ministry and call with Rachel.

Rachel attended the same youth conference as Tim and Wendy. After the session inviting those who felt God's call to respond, she ran up to her youth leader with eyes aglow. "This session really confirmed what you and the church have been saying. More than ever, I want to serve in ministry."

When she returned home, she spent a long time debriefing her experience with her mentor. Rachel's mentor continued to affirm her gifts and abilities, as well as stressing spiritual formation as key for developing in ministry. At around the same time, Rachel began to help with the middle-school group on Wednesday nights. The opportunity to serve younger girls was something that she really loved, and she appreciated the feedback on her leadership that she received from the youth pastor.

Toward the end of her junior year of high school, Rachel's church hosted a "girl's night," with a speaker who shared what it means to be a Christian woman. This was a significant event for Rachel and the others who were there, and provided a marker on her journey toward womanhood.

On the final Sunday of summer, right before Rachel began her senior year, the church held a special service where they recognized and commissioned Rachel as a

missionary to her local high school campus. They affirmed Rachel's call from the youth conference, the work of the discernment committee, and the confirmation from Rachel's mentor. At the service, Rachel was called forward and her mentor and pastor prayed over her, sending her out to serve.

Kevin's story is different, but with similar results. When he returned from the national youth conference, he met with his youth pastor to talk about what he had felt. "I think God is asking me to be a pastor," he said. His youth pastor, Brian, told Kevin about a process that the church had in place when an individual expressed sensing a call from God. "First, you need to meet with the Board of Elders for a discernment meeting. I will bring you with me with a recommendation that they affirm your call and that you enter the leadership development process. Usually, they like to discern people so the church can be involved in the calling part, but since you sense this call from God, we can also proceed in this way. Second, the Elders will find someone to meet with you as a mentor, and you'll meet with this person every other week to study, pray, and share together. Since I just finished my mentoring with Jeff who went off to college, I'd like to recommend you meet with me. How does that sound?" Kevin thought that would be great.

Following the positive time with the Elders where Kevin was highly affirmed in his process, he began to meet with Brian regularly. During this time, Brian began to invite Kevin to come and participate in a variety of ministries he was involved in. Kevin began to serve in the youth group and once a month at the rescue mission downtown. Brian began to invest his life in Kevin and Kevin began to grow as a believer in ways he would not have thought possible.

On the occasion of Kevin's high school graduation, Brian and Kevin's parents created a rite of passage experience to encourage Kevin to continue on this path for his future. They asked people who had been significant in Kevin's life to write a one-page letter to affirm and encourage him in some way. Kevin's mom created a scrapbook with all these letters as a signpost on his journey. In addition, Kevin's dad and Brian worked together with six other men to create an experience for Kevin where he walked a loop around a lake with each of the men strategically placed at points along the trail. His dad started the walk with Kevin and shared one piece of advice. Brian was at the next point on the trail and took Kevin from there to the next man, sharing advice along the way. This continued all around the loop with all eight men sharing with Kevin what living as a Christian man means. They all celebrated with a barbeque following the hike.

Upon high school graduation, Kevin decided to attend a denominational college with the goal of becoming a youth pastor. On the Sunday before he left for college, his church commissioned him, affirming this direction and offering to provide him with an internship next summer when he returned home.

These two fictional stories raise a question, "How will a person equipped by the seven strands be prepared for leadership in the emerging culture?" He or she will be a person with a clear sense of their identity coming out of a discernment and call process by God and their local congregation. This person will have walked for a significant time with a mentor and developed a deep spiritual life. He or she would have participated in rites of passage events on both a large and small scale. They would have had ministry/service opportunities in the context of a safe and caring environment where they would have learned how to fail and lead well. Finally, this person would have been

commissioned by their local congregation to serve and to lead in whatever context was appropriate.

This prepared person would be more able to navigate the emerging culture through a greater sense of self, a deep spirituality, an experience of mentoring and a mentor to go back to throughout life, markers on the journey to adulthood, and a life prepared not by a program but by life on life transformation.

A more fully-developed strategy for braiding a seven strand cord that partners local churches with a denominational seminary is called Ministry Quest, an initiative of the MB Biblical Seminary. Ministry Quest is seeking to create an opportunity for leadership to emerge from high school students across North America. What follows is a short description; more on Ministry Quest is available in the appendix.

Ministry Quest

The MB Biblical Seminary's Ministry Quest program is designed to help churches discern, develop and call high school students into leadership. Ministry Quest is not a program as much as it is a journey for high school students who explore opportunities in pastoral, congregational and missional leadership. It features leadership retreats, church-based mentoring relationships, a short term ministry assignment, and church ministry observations.

Ministry Quest is rooted in its relationship to the local church. In order to participate, a young person must be discerned and nominated by his or her local church. Following each of the two retreats, the participant returns to the church for thirteen sessions of mentoring with a member of their local congregation. These mentors are chosen by the

church to guide and help the young person with spiritual formation, to process the books they are reading, and to provide someone to talk with about God's call on their lives.

This initiative is framed by two rite of passage events, *Charting Your Course* and *Setting Your Sail*.

Charting Your Course

After congregational discernment, the first rite of passage event is a fall retreat held in Fresno, CA. This retreat is geared towards an understanding of call narratives, as well as helping teenagers understand that the most important part of ministry is an abiding relationship with Jesus. During the retreat, students are challenged to understand leadership in new ways and are provided a theological vocabulary to assist them in describing their experience with God.

The first retreat is followed by thirteen sessions with an adult mentor back in the participant's local congregation. The mentoring sessions are followed by a second discernment process with the pastor, mentor, and the student, to determine if the second stage would be beneficial. If all three agree, the student attends the second retreat.

Setting Your Sail

The second retreat is an additional rite of passage event which focuses more on the individual and who they are as a person uniquely called by God. This event physically and mentally pushes students with a high ropes course, exploring an understanding of spiritual gifts, temperament, servant-leadership, theological insights, and building on what was learned during *Charting Your Course*.

The Setting Your Sail retreat is followed by thirteen mentoring sessions which continue to focus on spiritual formation and is concluded with a short-term ministry/service opportunity based in the local church.

At the end of the one year program, the congregation is asked to hold a commissioning service for the young person, not necessarily to commission them for a lifetime of ministry but to acknowledge the steps that the young person has taken during that year. It is an opportunity to bless and affirm what the congregation has discerned and to send the young person back to their high school campus or university with the support and blessing of the church.

Primary Observations

There have been a few primary observations after running this initiative for the past four years. The first is the tremendous benefit that having a mentor has on the development of the young person. Comments are frequently made like, “I never want to be without a mentor again.” This strand has proven to be one of the most meaningful in the responses from students.

Another observation has to do with the value and worth that comes to a high school student when his or her church discerns and calls them into Ministry Quest. The simple fact that they have been noticed, that there are people back home who believe in them, and that God has a purpose for their life is very significant in the formation of a young person.

Ministry Quest is a program that is deeply rooted in the Anabaptist/Mennonite Brethren tradition. It combines discernment, an understanding of calling that is more than

the congregation 'blessing' an inward call, ministry/service opportunities, rite of passage events, spiritual formation, and mentoring, to restore to the church a cohort of young leaders who are preparing for the emerging culture.

Suggestions for Further Study and Issues that Arise

One significant issue for Ministry Quest, particularly for Mennonite Brethren, is the fact that one-half of the Ministry Quest participants are female. This has two major implications. First, in MB churches in the United States, women are currently affirmed for pastoral ministry but are not allowed to hold the position of Senior or lead pastor. In Canada, the Mennonite Brethren churches passed a recent resolution to allow churches to individually make that decision. Even with this openness in Canada, this has implications for the young women who are being discerned by their local church as leaders, given encouragement to understand their unique call to ministry, and participating in rite of passage events and mentoring, all with the goal of future leadership, who are then often told by their denomination that there is no place for them to use their gifts. It could be that in coming years, due to the influences of the emerging culture which affirms women in ministry, and due to the fact that emerging leaders have been told all their lives that equality is to be expected, the "brick wall" will be removed and women will be embraced in a variety of leadership roles in the MB Church; for now that is not the case.

Second, young men are being equipped through a rite of passage event to see young women as peers in ministry and ministry preparation. This will have implications for leadership in the emerging culture. Just as young people expect multiculturalism, so they have come to be taught and expect equality of the sexes. If the Church does not find ways

to embrace these gifted young women, they may find other places to serve which would be a great loss to the MB Church.

Another issue for further study concerns the changes that take place in a young person who is being developed by the seven strands. Youth who participate in the MQ program are, in the words of one youth pastor, “ruined for normal.” What does it mean for a young person to have participated in a program that creates opportunities for individuation, only to return home and find that his or her friends are still in a liminal mindset? On another note, is this a problem at all? Has the Church settled for “normal” and therefore sold out to society? Should the highest goal of youth ministry be to create “normal” students? Or was the Kingdom that Jesus taught about and died for about more than that? These are significant questions that need to be addressed in future research.

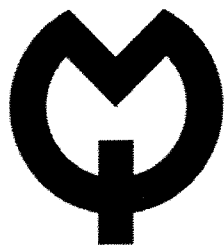
Conclusion

This project began with the fictional stories of Tim and Wendy. Both had sensed a call to ministry and had asked their local congregation to train and prepare them to answer this call. How would Tim and Wendy’s lives have been different if their respective churches would have engaged the rope walk metaphor? Instead of uncertainty, Tim and Wendy would have gone through a discernment process which in their case would have affirmed their call to ministry. Instead of feeling abandoned and lost, the church could have provided rite of passage events and mentoring to assist these motivated young people on their journey. Instead of living from camp to camp, waiting for the spiritual “high,” a mentor could have assisted them in diving deeper into the spiritual life. Instead of frustration and overloading, their mentor and the church could have provided meaningful service/ministry assignments to provide places to test out a

calling. Finally, instead of the call shrinking and disappearing, the local church could have held a commissioning and blessing event to recognize the call of God on Tim and Wendy's lives.

There are many high school students like "Tim" and "Wendy" in local churches; students who believe they have something to offer the church today and in the coming years. Some are receiving components of training and leadership development, but it is the emphasis of this project that this will not be enough. The experience of Tim and Wendy need to be much more like Rachel and Kevin. In order to be prepared for the emerging culture, today's high school students need leadership development that brings together a variety of strands, similar to the old rope walks where craftsmen braided ropes of various lengths and uses. Being intentional about leadership development in this way will prepare a new walk of leaders to serve the Kingdom of God.

APPENDIX A



Ministry Quest

transforming lives through the power of a call

Operations Manual

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Introductions / Acknowledgements

I often tell people when they ask about Ministry Quest that it's like "Youth Pastor's Heaven" because I get the opportunity to work with a wonderful team of people who are passionate about seeing high school students challenged to explore ministry as a vocation. I also get to work with high school students who are the 'best of the best' in their youth groups; students who have demonstrated a love for Jesus and his Church as well as an interest in ministry. Lastly, I get to tell my story to a wide variety of people because at its core, the story of Ministry Quest is my story.

I was discerned and called out by my local church. My pastor and youth pastor saw something in me that I didn't see in myself and they encouraged me to change my dreams of being a Forest Ranger to being someone who served in ministry full-time. And they didn't just encourage, they provided opportunities for me to do something as well. I was given roles in Sunday morning worship, I helped with VBS, I learned service through painting the building, and I spent a summer as an intern. They opened doors of opportunity that only they could open, and I know that I am in ministry today because of these two men.

For the team who helps 'deliver' Ministry Quest, I say a heartfelt "Thanks." To Jim Pankratz and John Neufeld who created the framework for much of this program, thank you for creating something that is so focused on the local church rather than the seminary. For Anne Friesen, thank you for your tireless work on curriculum and logistics and for the way you continuously stretch me to think in new ways. For the Fresno 'team'- Rhonda Dueck, Mike Haynes, Cam Priebe and Mike Rea- thank you for your dedication and passion for this program; your heart for these students is evident.

The MB Biblical Seminary faculties from the Fresno and BC campuses have done an excellent job teaching these students. There has been openness and flexibility in teaching high school students that is commendable. The staff at the Seminary have provided housing, and helped with rooms and logistics; thank you for making our campuses welcoming places.

Thank you to former President Henry Schmidt and current President Jim Holm for beginning this program and now encouraging its continuation. You both have modeled to the Ministry Quest participants' servant-leadership; thank you for being accessible.

Finally, thank you to my wife Karen, and my family who let me pursue my passion for training and releasing young leaders into ministry.

Called to Ministry

Common wisdom would agree that there is an apparent leadership crisis in the church. This crisis is not referring to individuals currently in ministry, but to the lack of individuals ‘waiting in the wings’ to move into ministry positions.

In 1999, the MB Biblical Seminary conducted a survey of the two North American MB conferences to identify leadership needs for the next decade. The results highlighted an impending crisis of leadership for our churches with an estimated 550 to 600 new pastors, missionaries and other professional ministry staff needed over the next ten years. The survey confirmed what many already had intuited about the leadership situation within the North American MB Church. The findings have been frequently quoted and have been a wake up call to the denomination. These findings are consistent with studies of other denominations in North America in recent years.

The MB Biblical Seminary’s Ministry Quest program is designed to help churches discern, develop, and ‘call’ high school students into leadership. Ministry Quest, as the title suggests, isn’t a program as much as it is a journey for high school students exploring opportunities in pastoral, congregational, and missional leadership. It features leadership retreats, church-based mentoring relationships, a short-term ministry assignment, and a church ministry observation.

We are finding in our affiliated churches that many high school students are active in Christian service; some have demonstrated significant leadership ability; some are considering pastoral leadership or missions as a vocation; and some teenagers haven’t really thought about ministry but clearly ‘have what it takes’ for church leadership and simply need someone in the church to help them discern their abilities.

The MB Biblical Seminary is part of the historical Anabaptist tradition. How did this historical and contemporary background shape the structure and format for Ministry Quest? What influences did Anabaptist/Mennonite Brethren practices of leadership development have on this project? There are many. These influences came out in three practical components of the project: first, the need for students to be discerned, called, and nominated by their local church; second, the focus on calling; and third, the mentoring experience that takes place in the local church.

First, the nomination process: before a young person can come on a Ministry Quest weekend, he or she has to be discerned and nominated by his or her local church. This program is not self-selecting so a young person who thinks he or she is a leader or is called to ministry must come through the local church; they cannot simply put their name forward. Ministry Quest wants to make sure that the young people who come on the project come with the full blessing and support of the church. In discussions with these young people, it is often this sense of call from the local church that provides enormous encouragement to consider ministry, as well as a sense of purpose, for the adolescent who by virtue of their life-stage is trying to answer the questions, “Who am I?” and “Why am I here?”

The second connection with the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition is the focus given to ‘calling’ on the Ministry Quest weekends. Over the 5 day event, young people hear the call stories of about 20 individuals, spend time looking at biblical call stories, and reflect theologically on issues of God’s will and call. This program operates under the assumption that all believers are called to ministry by joining God’s grand plan to bring his Shalom to the earth. At the same time, we recognize a need for called and

gifted individuals to lead our churches and it is both aspects of calling that are emphasized. We seek to encourage high school students to discern their call whether it is vocational ministry or to serve God in the marketplace. Since the root of the word vocation means “calling”, the retreats focus not on finding, but on thinking about God’s vocation for each individual.

The third component is church-based mentoring. When a church nominates a young person, they also have to provide the name of a mentor for that person. This mentor could be anyone of the same gender who is growing in faith, loves teenagers, and is interested in passing on life lessons to a young person. Ministry Quest provides materials for the mentor and participant to follow, and encourages them both to continue to explore issues of calling during the 26 sessions they spend together. Jim Holm, MB Biblical Seminary’s president, sees this as critical for local pastors to be involved, stating, “The most important thing local pastors can do is to give themselves to the mentoring of others.”¹ In discussion with Ministry Quest participants, the mentoring relationship is one component of the project that has been a surprising benefit for the students. Many were hesitant about beginning a relationship with someone they didn’t know from their church but they all have found it encouraging and affirming.

Ministry Quest is a program that is deeply rooted in the Anabaptist/Mennonite Brethren tradition. It combines discernment, an understanding of calling that is more than the congregation blessing an inward call, and mentoring, with the purpose of

¹ Holm, J. (2003, Fall). The North American MB Call to Pastoral Leadership. *Direction*, 32(2), 210.

restoring to the church a cohort of young leaders who are preparing for the emerging culture.

Pedagogy of the Project

The weekend events exist to facilitate learning. This includes the organized sessions with Seminary faculty and staff, as well as the ‘organized space’ where students are given time alone to talk with each other, participate in small Bible studies called SOAP groups², or worship together. Even if it doesn’t always look like it, everything that is done on the weekend is done with purpose and planning. As a further mode of learning during the weekend, the participants see a transparent program and are allowed to see ‘backstage’ and discuss the planning of the weekend, how changes are made in the schedule, and why.

This comes from a pedagogy that is experience-based and fluid. We believe that the participants are both the recipients and active developers in a learning situation. This is a more dynamic, fluid system where the teachers bring who they are and what they know to the table with an agenda, for sure, but also with a willingness to go someplace new if necessary for the group. We are convinced that leaders need to be people who can exist in that kind of system, so modeling it now helps them sharpen skills for the future.

Presenters are seen as people not coming to teach a lot of facts to the students, but as fellow-learners who have prepared a situation where learning takes place. Because they are Seminary faculty, they bring a wealth of wisdom and experience to a teaching situation and also shape the direction of the session. At the same time, they are

² SOAP comes from a prayer journal produced by Wayne Cordeiro and New Hope Christian Fellowship in Hawaii. SOAP stands for: Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer, and creates the format for the small group meetings.

sensitive to the ‘Aha!’ moments that arise when students are allowed to think for themselves and come to their own conclusions. Since intrinsic motivation is more important for life than extrinsic motivation, coming to their own conclusions on theological issues fully framed by a Seminary professor who encourages orthodoxy is, in our opinion, a healthy way to educate.

We do believe that in order to ensure that something is being learned, taking the final few moments of each session to ask Ignatian-type questions, or to provide an evaluation moment, is necessary.

Topics covered in a MQ retreat include Calling, Servant Leadership, Theology, Biblical Interpretation, God’s Will, the Emerging Culture, and others.

Values

Ministry Quest is a values-driven experience. The entire program is shaped by what we believe and hold important. These values have grown and changed over the three years the project has existed. In 2005, the MQ team approved these core values for Ministry Quest:

Leaders Exploring Call

Life on life transformation

Supporting the local church in Discerning / Training / Equipping / Releasing Leaders

Intentionally creating community

Unique learning opportunities

What do we mean by these values? Let's define each one.

The first value is for leaders to explore call.

By calling these high school students 'leaders' we are making a value judgment about them; we are saying in effect, "We believe you are a leader today, not only a 'future' leader, or a 'young' leader." We believe strongly that young people can be effective leaders even with the issues and transitions of adolescence.

By saying these leaders are exploring call we are taking seriously two things; first, that these young people are exploring a lot of different options for their lives, and second, that figuring out a call is a process. Participants are figuring out who they are and how they stand as individuals different from their friends or parents. We are also helping them to explore something specific, a call, or actually a greater appreciation for what Call is in the life of an individual as well as a congregation.

Exploring God's call is essential to Ministry Quest, it is our *raison d'être* – we exist to help students 'check out' ministry and calling. One way we currently model this value is to have students think through and present their story, framed as a call, to the rest of the group. Second, a major focus of the Setting Your Sail retreat is a personal inventory that includes: skills, values, interests and spiritual gifts. This helps further define call. Another way to think through 'calling' is to help participants evaluate what they are experiencing on the retreats as a way of teaching reflective thinking. Currently we participate in the Ignatian Examen each evening of the retreat. We also find that having our retreats on a campus of higher education also helps with personal evaluation and an encouragement to consider a college or university education. Another method is to build into the program a short 'check in' time at the end of each session where participants respond to the material in some way. Finally, creating 'purpose statements' for each session with learning goals help presenters and participants stay on track to where the session is heading.

Life on life transformation

Ministry Quest is a journey concerned with changing one life at a time. We place a high value on mentoring and the role of the local church in the transformation of a teenager. If young people can connect with an adult they get to know and trust, then he or she will be transformed. At the same time, the mentor will be transformed too.

Also, during the retreats there is very intentional time given to hearing and sharing stories, both from the students and from the staff team. Students are placed in

small groups with a leader to talk and share; in these groups the leaders' share their stories as well since staff team members aren't there just to facilitate a group time.

In addition, students participate in six 'Ministry Observations' during the year. These observations are a time for the young person to spend time with his or her pastor, youth pastor, or another person in ministry, simply 'being with' that person as they 'do' ministry. These observations could include a hospital visit, wedding, sermon preparation, funeral, worship practice, or a different form of ministry.

Another way of framing the 'life on life' picture is to call it discipleship. Ministry Quest is a discipleship program for leaders who are High School students. We see discipleship in a holistic way. Rather than a twelve week course, we seek to build into the lives of students two important things: the importance of having a mentor, and the need to always keep growing in faith and in a walk with Jesus.

Support the local church in Discerning / Training / Equipping / Releasing Leaders

Ministry Quest has its start and finish in the local church. This program is not an attempt to establish a parachurch organization based at the seminary, or to bring youth away from their local church and into the influence of this endeavor. On the contrary, all the staff of Ministry Quest are people committed to the church and the capacity of the church to train up and release younger leaders into ministry. To emphasize this value, in order for a young person to be a participant on Ministry Quest, he or she must be nominated by his or her local church. The local church provides a mentor for the participant from within the congregation or pastoral staff. The local church reaffirms the participant halfway through the program year, and provides Ministry Observations for the participant, and also coordinates a short-term ministry assignment.

In contrast, the MQ staff provides two 5-day retreats, the mentoring curriculum, a website with web board, help and advice, and support during the year.

This vision essentially drives all other visions. We exist to serve and support the church in its calling and discerning of any leaders, not just high school students³. This value arises from our Anabaptist ethos and is part of who we are as a Seminary. Our long-term goal is to see local churches began to take leadership development more seriously and do it in their own context. This is how MB's used to 'do' leadership in the past and we would like to see that vision revived and revamped for the 21st Century.

Intentionally creating community

On the MQ weekends, a high percentage of time is spent helping the students connect with one another. This is made easier by the fact that most of the students come to this event by themselves and are therefore detached from their home situation. When they are at home, these students often find themselves a bit apart from the rest of their youth group. Ministry Quest participants are students who have been discerned as being passionate for Jesus, trying to figure out the Christian life, and being ready and willing to serve. Sadly, it appears that this mindset is the minority in many youth groups. So, when a bunch of these students get together, there is a natural synergy and affinity. "These people get me," is a comment that is often heard on MQ weekends, meaning they are understood.

³ John Neufeld, director of the Hearing the Call project has written a book for congregations to assist them with discernment of leaders. Called *Finding Leaders for Tomorrow's Churches*, this booklet can be downloaded from <http://www.mbconf.ca/training/index.en.html>

In addition to the natural connection, the staff works hard at programming intentional community-building activities that include a wide variety of opportunities to get to know one another. These activities include instruction on how to shape and deliver their own personal story as well as having each young person share this 'call' story with the group. During these sessions the other participants offer affirmation, reflections and feedback to these stories, culminating in a time of prayer for the person. These sessions are powerful in the lives of the participants, many who are thinking through for the first time the implication that God has actually been at work in their life, and then sharing their story for the very first time. In a culture where true, reflective listening is a lost art, these sessions also provide a safe space for young people to truly be heard by their peers. This part of the weekend alone is very powerful.

Other community-building components are not so classroom oriented. These include time spent eating meals together, sharing in small and larger groups, and leadership activities and games. The challenge ropes course created community by providing an opportunity for the group to encourage individuals as they stretched themselves on the course. It also provided a bonding experience since this was an event that they did together.

Ministry Quest also hosts a discussion forum on the website which has turned into a place for participants to share stories from their lives and also prayer requests and concerns. An unintended joy has been the way that individuals from previous groups have made comments and encouragements to people on the site that they have never met. There is a bond that is established amongst the group so that even those who are from different cohorts feel a sense of the Ministry Quest community.

Students are also faced with the idea of a larger global community. For many students, because Ministry Quest draws from across the US and Canada, this becomes the first cross cultural encounter they have had. The two retreats are intentionally located with one in the US and one in Canada, which allows students from both countries to be the ‘guest’ and the ‘host’ on one of the retreats. This adds to the sense of community as students travel together across borders and share different cultural differences.

Unique learning opportunities

Ministry Quest is an opportunity to explore a wide variety of ministries. Therefore, the entire program is set up to provide a wide variety of learning opportunities. Students are challenged to ‘raise the bar’ and push themselves intellectually and spiritually by fully participating in the program. From the moment students apply, there is an expectation of excellence and higher learning from this journey.

There are many ways in which these unique learning opportunities are played out. From an academic standpoint students are given the opportunity to sit in a seminary class, they are given seminars from seminary faculty, and they are given opportunities to explore a topic like ‘call’ from a wide variety of theological and scriptural vantage points. They also get the opportunity to have meals in the homes of MB Biblical Seminary faculty and administrators. This gives students the chance to see a different side of the professors whom they would have had academic sessions with earlier that day.

From a practical standpoint, they are given opportunities to learn about ancient spiritual practices by participating in Lectio Divina, the Ignatian Examen, a time of silence and solitude amongst the giant Sequoia trees, prayer, and Bible study. After the retreat, they participate in six ministry observation events- times where they shadow someone in ministry to observe a variety of pastoral practices.

From a personal standpoint, they are given a professional career assessment that combines personality, values, spiritual gifts, and skills into one tool that gives valuable feedback to a young person's individuation. They are challenged to learn new things about themselves by engaging in a high-ropes course that stretches body, mind, and spirit. They learn about other cultures by visiting a Spanish-speaking Mennonite Brethren congregation, eating a lot of different ethnic foods, and visiting ministries in downtown Vancouver.

Finally, the personal relationship with a Mentor, which was so common in years past, is today a unique learning opportunity for a student. This relationship provides an adult to disciple and to hang out with, and provides a mature person who is concerned about the young person's growth other than his or her parent.

Overview of MQ Program

The MB Biblical Seminary's Ministry Quest program is designed to help churches discern, develop and call high school students into leadership. Our program is broken into two independent stages:

Charting Your Course

Charting Your Course consists of a 6-day retreat, a mentoring relationship with a leader from their church, and three ministry observations.

The first stage of the program is geared towards helping teenagers understand that the most important part of ministry is loving Jesus. The goal of this stage is to help students understand what it means to be 'called' to ministry. Participants will discover language and questions that help them process being a leader and choosing vocational ministry. Time will be spent becoming more attentive to the voice of God.

Charting Your Course Retreat

Once a nomination and application has been accepted, the participant will attend a retreat. The 6-day retreat includes spiritual formation, exploration of "calling" as a personal theological journey, and ministry awareness. Participants will:

- hear stories of how God has called leaders
- spend time in theological reflection
- attend a seminary class
- spend time in worship
- hang out with youth from other churches

Ministry Quest will provide the program, transportation, food and lodging for the retreat.

The Mentoring Component

The student will meet with a mentor, provided by their church, for 13 sessions during Charting Your Course. We will provide curriculum and core materials. The goal of this mentoring relationship is to facilitate spiritual formation and provide accountability and support to the student.

Ministry Observation

The student will engage in three ministry observation experiences with a pastor from their church. The purpose of the observation is for the participant to be able to see an aspect of ministry as it happens in real life.

Setting Your Sail

Setting Your Sail is the second stage in the Ministry Quest journey. In this stage, participants will build a personal profile that integrates spiritual gifts, aptitudes and abilities, character and personality, leadership styling, passions, and interests. The mentoring relationship will continue to focus on spiritual practices begun during Charting Your Course. Students will shadow a pastor or leader from their church for three more ministry observations. A short-term or summer service assignment of the student's choice will provide opportunity to test their growing leadership capacity in a ministry environment.

Setting Your Sail requires the church to reaffirm continued program participation by the student. In January, the student, their mentor and their pastor will spend time together discerning how this program has contributed to the student's personal development and will decide on their continued participation in Ministry Quest.

Setting Your Sail Retreat

While the Charting Your Course retreat was a smaller intimate group, the Setting Your Sail retreat will gather several Charting Your Course cohorts together for the retreat. The program will include:

- spending time in worship
- participating in seminars that develop your leadership skills
- developing a personal profile
- engaging in self-discovery through storytelling
- spending lots of time in scripture
- hanging out with other youth from different regions in Canada and the United States

The Mentoring Component

Students will continue meeting with their mentor another 13 times. The emphasis in this stage is to further challenge the student through testing of gifts and abilities, and provide accountability and support.

Ministry Observation

The student will continue with three more ministry observation experiences with a church leader. The purpose of the observation is for the student to see ministry as it happens in real life.

The Service Assignment

Students will participate in a short term ministry assignment of their choosing. Recommended assignments include Youth Mission International programs, summer camp and local church mission trips.

Goals of Ministry Quest

There are three distinct goals for Ministry Quest. The first is to help young people discern a call to ministry. The second is to create a culture of mentoring in our churches. The third is to raise up a culture of call in our constituency. The MB Biblical

Seminary wants to work with congregations and other agencies of the MB church and Central Valley to create a climate in which potential leaders can thrive and develop.

Our Anabaptist ecclesiology embeds the call to ministry within congregational life. As we have put together this program, we understood that MB Biblical Seminary cannot, and should not, seek to work with youth without the support of their home congregations. As we reach out to high school students, the Seminary is participating in a discernment process that rightfully begins within the context of a local, specific church setting.

Retreats

Retreat Themes

Fall. The fall retreat, called Charting Your Course, is described on page 19.

Spring. The spring retreat, Setting Your Sail, is described on page 21.

Roles Needed

Speakers

Involving a wide variety of speakers is an important part of Ministry Quest.

The majority of speakers come from within the MB Biblical Seminary's faculty, staff, or Ministry Quest team. Outside speakers tend to come from local churches.

All speakers need to share Ministry Quest values, and be open to helping young people explore issues of calling and vocation, not simply tell students what they should or shouldn't believe.

Worship

The job of the worship leader is to ensure a holistic worship experience throughout the retreat. He or she is a vital part of the team and participates in program planning meetings to get a feel for the entire retreat. Based on these planning meetings, the leader will choose 3-5 pieces of music that would fit the worship times, and or themes. As a guideline, for the first session in the morning, the leader prepares upbeat music to get the group moving, while helping to get everyone's focus on God for the day.

Once the music has been chosen, the leader ensures that all the music and words are accessible to the group. It is his or her responsibility to put together the media shout or power point slides that will accompany those songs, understanding that in some

places photocopies may need to be made because the location of the session may not accommodate a projector.

He or she is flexible and has other music at hand in case the Spirit moves and more worship is called for. Great care is given to try to choose music that everyone knows...a great way of getting a feel for this is by posting a question on the web where students can respond. This allows their feedback to provide an idea for what type of music should be used. Spontaneity is also a helpful attribute for a worship leader.

The worship leader understands that worship is more than singing. There is also preparation needed for including scripture reading, prayer, participation or response.

Program Director

The program director's role is a crucial one. This person works before the event to prepare the schedule, arrange for the speakers, coordinate the retreat logistics with the logistics specialist, and pull the program together. During the event, this person acts as the 'camp director' making sure the entire weekend runs smoothly.

The program director meets with the director a couple of months before the event to put together the schedule and theme for the event. As well, it is important for the program director to keep the values and the goals for the weekend in mind while planning and facilitating the retreat.

The Program Director's jobs include:

- *Plan the schedule for the retreat.* Revise schedule, re-plan the schedule, revise re-planned schedule, study schedule, and revise the revised version of the schedule. It's important that team members, hosts, speakers, etc are aware of the schedule so that they can provide input and feedback on it.
- *Plan the themes for the retreat* – (ex. Knowing Yourself, Knowing God, Knowing Ministry), ensure that the sessions and seminars and activities and game times and singing and sharing, head towards these themes wherever possible.

- *Contact* the other team members to ensure they understand and are aware of their roles for the retreat. (leading small groups, leading particular seminars and sessions)
- *Organize* the SOAP groups (small groups).
- *Call* speakers and facility hosts ahead of time to arrange for presentations and seminars. Make sure that the equipment that is needed is provided (overheads, whiteboard, VPU). Meet and greet the speakers and special guests as they join us.
- *Facilitate and host the retreat* – make sure that events get going on time, and that we stay on schedule, that other team members are aware of their role for upcoming responsibilities. (Includes welcoming and introducing speakers and session leaders)
- *Be flexible with the schedule* – in listening to the staff team and being aware of the needs and desires of the group while keeping in mind the values and goals for the team, make appropriate changes and adjustments to the schedule. Team communication and understanding is a key to this flexibility.
- *Guide and assist* the students in respecting each other, as well as challenging them to get the most out of their weekend that they can.
- *Announcements* – important to inform people as to what is coming up and giving them the appropriate information so that they can be prepared.

Logistics Coordinator

The logistics coordinator is responsible for a lot of the detail before, during and after the weekend. Here is a list of items this person is responsible for:

2-4 Months before the Retreat

- Receive nominations and applications and process them, following up when parts of the application are incomplete or missing.
- Confirm the acceptance or rejection of participants into Ministry Quest
- Collect registration confirmations and fees from students and churches.
- Contact parents and pastors regarding program content and expectations.
- Book and coordinate flights for students (and speakers if required).

Right before and During the Retreat

- Hosts
 - Collect list of willing hosts in the area and the number of students they are able to host. Explain retreat needs (bed and breakfast)
 - Write host letter (see attached sample). Contact hosts about specific weekend and get confirmation. Contact hosts with student's names and send letter to hosts.
 - Match students with hosts separating those students who know each other to encourage new relationships.
 - Purchase a thank you gift and write card from staff – send to hosts last night with the drivers to deliver.
- Small Groups (done alongside Program Director)

- Determine who will lead small groups
- Read students files and create groups with personality and interests in mind.
- Type up list of small groups and photocopy for staff and students.
- Food
 - Plan menu for meals and snacks- decide where we are eating including homes and restaurants (include some local ethnic foods). Prepare snacks for off campus excursions.
 - Communicate with meal hosts about menu and reimbursement
 - Purchase food and beverages necessary.
 - Make necessary arrangements with the facility we are using.
 - Prepare food as required.
- Finances
 - Arrange to have petty cash for various needs.
 - Itemize cash use and keep receipts
 - Keep track of all receipts for reimbursement\
- Records
 - Chart students as they turn in payments and assignments.
 - Contact students as information and assignments are needed.
- Miscellaneous Administration
 - Transportation - Determine routes, drivers and vehicles needed for morning and evening pickup of students from hosts homes. Prepare a list of hosts, students and drivers, including maps with addresses and phone numbers of each host.
 - Plan how to thank speakers and dinner hosts (ex. cards for students to write notes of thanks and small gifts)
 - Compile folders for students with: student list, small group list, schedule, pen, notepad or paper, name tags, retreat evaluation, FTE registration forms.
 - Call partner schools and request their program information. Compile packets of this information for students. Some schools will include free giveaways upon request providing opportunities for distribution to interested students.
 - Collect and send in FTE forms.
 - Gather any outstanding paperwork and distribute where needed.

Guidelines for Speakers

Thank you for your willingness to invest in the lives of high school students. We are looking forward to your participation in our program. We hope you will be encouraged by your time with Ministry Quest.

You will have been given instructions specific to your session regarding the topic, time, etc. Below are four additional guidelines that we would like each presenter to remember as they prepare.

1. Be as interactive as possible
2. Wait for the students to respond. Give them time, they will eventually engage with the material
3. Remind them of your desire to hear what they think about the topic. Give permission to ask questions no matter how dumb they may think a question is.
4. Integrate your call story into the session. Why are you interested in this topic? Why do you do what you do? What brought you to consider theological education?

Connecting with Local Congregations

Pre-Program

Recruitment

Congregations are contacted to encourage nomination of youth in three ways: hard-copy mailings of promotional materials, follow-up phone calls, and person to person contact at conventions and other conference gatherings. As registration deadlines approach, these activities are intensified to ensure a full complement of participants.

Constituency

The Mennonite Brethren and Central Valley Constituencies are kept informed about the MQ program through several means: a) brochures and other promotional materials sent directly to the church, b) News releases and articles published in the MB Herald and Christian Leader, c) Presentations and displays at conventions and conferences, d) Promotion through MB Biblical Seminary communications, and e) Church visits by MQ staff.

Registration

Participants are registered in the MQ program through the Nomination and Application process. (See Appendix A, B, and C)

During the MQ Program

Mentoring

Each participating student is assigned a mentor from their congregation. The student and mentor meet for a minimum of 13 – 90 minute sessions during each stage of MQ. Students are required to prepare assigned materials before each mentoring session. The purpose of the mentoring sessions is life-on-life transformation.

Mentoring Curriculum

MQ determines the curriculum to be used by mentors and students for their 26 mentoring meetings. The goal of the mentoring curriculum is spiritual formation for the participant and also the mentor. To ensure that all participants are following the same trajectory, MQ provides a copy of the materials for both the student and mentor. Other resources for mentoring are provided on the web site.

Ministry Observation

The purpose of the ministry observation component of the Ministry Quest program is to provide participants an opportunity to observe a pastor in his or her ministry firsthand. Students benefit from observing the behind-the-scene operation of the church and feeling the heart beat of ministry. Observations should be selected based on the interests of the student. For example, a student with musical ability and interest could shadow a worship pastor in preparing a worship service.

If appropriate, opportunity may be given for the student to participate in the event they are observing. If this happens, participation can help the student assess his or her suitability for ministry. Students are required to do three observations during Charting Your Course and three observations during Setting Your Sail.

The Service Assignment

A student participating in Setting Your Sail (stage 2) is required to participate in a short-term ministry assignment of their choosing. Recommended assignments include Youth Mission International programs, summer camp, and local church mission trips.

Finances

Churches sending a student to either Charting Your Course or Setting Your Sail are asked to pay \$250 per participant per stage to MQ.

Communications

Students

Program communication with students begins through the local church, although many students hear about MQ through youth events and other gatherings. To begin the nomination process, pastors approach suitable participants and initiate conversation about participation. Ministry Quest asks local pastors to spend at least an hour in an initial discussion with a potential participant to explain the program and the commitment level that MQ requires.

Once a student has applied, MQ begins communication after the application deadline has passed. The student will receive either an acceptance or rejection letter in hard copy. The acceptance package will include any pre-retreat materials and further registration information.

Parents

Upon acceptance into the MQ program, parents of participants receive a letter introducing them to the MQ program and outlining the program and expectations. Further communication with parents occurs on a personal level through phone calls as needed.

Pastors

Upon acceptance of a student into MQ, a pastor receives confirmation of the student's acceptance either through e-mail or a hard copy letter. Further communication with the pastor occurs through phone calls or emails as needed. Since pastors are the contact between MQ and the local church, pastors are contacted at the mid-way point just prior to Christmas to ascertain how the MQ participant is doing. Pastors are also contacted at denominational events.

Mentors

Since mentors are chosen exclusively through the local church the main contact Ministry Quest has with a mentor is through the church. At the same time, mentors are welcomed into the MQ program through a hard-copy letter outlining the MQ program and mentoring expectations. Mentors are resourced from time to time with copies of Discipleship Journal and/or newsletters. Other resources for mentors are made available on the web site. We expect that oversight of mentors will occur in the local church.

Youth Pastors

Youth Pastors are informed through all the above mentioned methods. Additionally, some are selected to participate in Youth Pastor Consultations which are opportunities for youth pastors from across the US and Canada to come to the Fresno Seminary campus and experience a 'mini-Ministry Quest' as well as resourcing on topics such as leadership or mentoring.

Partnerships

Schools

Partnerships have been established with each of our five denominational undergraduate schools: Canadian Mennonite University, Bethany College, Columbia Bible College, Tabor College, Fresno Pacific University and École de théologie évangélique de Montréal.

This partnership has meant giving away materials from the schools by having students hosted by Fresno Pacific University, and also having our Setting Your Sail retreat at Columbia Bible College.

Ministry Quest has also hosted two “College MQ’s”, one at Bethany College and one at Tabor College. Both of these events were well-received and there are plans being made to do this again in the coming months.

MBMS International

Ministry Quest partners with MBMS International through Youth Mission International, particularly the SOAR and Trek short-term mission programs. Ministry Quest and YMI staff are involved in each other’s events and MQ participants are encouraged to participate in YMI for their short-term ministry assignment.

Conference of Canadian and US MB churches

Ministry Quest is represented through the MB Biblical Seminary at all national, provincial, and district events. In addition, MQ staff has served on the executive teams of national youth conventions in both Canada and the US.

Resources

For anyone wanting to know more about what shapes Ministry Quest, the following resources would be useful:

Connecting; the mentoring relationships you need to succeed in life by Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton; NavPress 1992

The Making of a Leader by J. Robert Clinton, NavPress 1988

Spiritual Mentoring by Keith R. Anderson & Randy D. Reese, InterVarsity Press, 1999

Transforming Discipleship by Greg Ogden, InterVarsity Press, 2003

Books recommended to mentors for spiritual formation

Discipleship Essentials by Greg Ogden, InterVarsity Press, 1998

Way To Live edited by Dorothy C. Bass and Don C. Richter, Upper Room Books, 2002

Sacred Pathways by Gary Thomas, Zondervan, 1996

Soul Tending forward by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, Abingdon Press 2002

Summoned to Lead by Leonard Sweet, Zondervan, 2004

Appendix 1

Ministry Quest Standard Operating Procedure Application for Participation

The MQ application process is a two-form procedure. The student must be nominated by a pastor or leader from their home congregation and the student must fill out an application form.

1. Student Nomination. The pastor or leader must meet with the student to discuss the nature of the MQ program and determine interest and suitability of the student for the MQ program. A student to be nominated must meet the following requirements:
 - shows interest in exploring a life of ministry
 - demonstrates an aptitude for leadership through Christian ministry
 - desires to live a disciplined spiritual life (evidenced by the practices of prayer, Bible reading, worship and other spiritual disciplines)
 - has a teachable attitude and spirit
 - is available to engage in a significant mentoring relationship (13 - 90 minute sessions plus preparation time)
 - is able to engage significant amounts of written material
 - demonstrate the ability to think critically about self and others
 - understand relationships; have communication skills and ability to settle conflicts
 - have a desire to serve God and others
 - is concerned for other people, locally and around the world

The student is nominated when the pastor or church leader fills out the nomination form on-line or in hard copy and submits it to MQ by fax. (see attached copy)

2. Student application. The student completes the application form on-line or in hard copy and submits it to MQ by fax (see attached copy). The application includes a one page testimony of his or her journey to faith and a description of their current relationship with Jesus.

Upon receipt of both documents, the student is placed on the list for his or her most preferred retreat weekend. After the due date for all applications is past, the MQ director and staff assess the applications and determine which students will be accepted into the program. Assessment is made on the basis of space availability, the student's testimony and the recommendation of the church leader.

Appendix 2

***Ministry Quest* Nomination Form**

This nomination is to be completed by a pastor or church leader.

Application deadline – July 1st

I have discussed the *Ministry Quest* program with the student I am nominating and s/he is aware of the nature and scope of the program.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Your Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Church: _____

Title/Position: _____

Church Address: _____

City

Prov/State

Code/Zip

Email: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Student Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Mentor Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City

Prov/State

Code/Zip

Email: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Description of the Student

Write a one page description of the student you are nominating. How has this student's curiosity about ministry manifested itself? What evidence of leadership potential do you see in this individual? How is this student involved in the life of the church? Does this student have a teachable attitude and spirit? Does this student demonstrate a good level of maturity? What is your relationship and how long have you known him or her?

Application deadline is July 1st. Acceptance notices will be sent out shortly after the due date.
Fax your completed nomination to Ministry Quest @ 204-832-3196.

Appendix 3

Ministry Quest Student Application Application deadline – July 1

Your Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Email Address: _____ Preferred First Name: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Mobile Phone: (____) _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province _____ Zip/Postal code _____
 Birthday ____/____/____ Gender: ☐ male ☐ female t-shirt size ____
 (month) (day) (year)

School Name: _____ Current grade: _____

Family Information

Father/Guardian

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Day Phone: (____) _____ Evening Phone: (____) _____

☐ I live with this person

Mother/Guardian

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Day Phone: (____) _____ Evening Phone: (____) _____

☐ I live with this person

Church nominating you: _____

Fall Retreat Dates: please indicate your first and second preferences.

_____ August 25-30, 2005

_____ September 29 – October 4, 2005

_____ October 20-25, 2005

We will be booking flights for you (if necessary). Please indicate the airport and city from which you wish to travel.

_____ airport _____ city

In applying for *Charting Your Course* I agree to:

- ☐ Participate in a fall retreat
- ☐ Read *The Art of Connecting* by Roy Crowne & Bill Muir in preparation for the retreat
- ☐ Commit to 13 mentoring sessions (90 minutes per session plus preparation) with a leader from my church
- ☐ Complete 8 writing assignments by January.

Ministry Quest Student Application (cont'd)

Page 2 of 2

Health Care/Insurance Information:

Note: Participation in *Ministry Quest* is not permitted without health coverage for the retreats.

Doctor's Name _____

Doctor's Phone: (____) _____

Insurance Provider: _____

Insurance Group Number: _____

Insurance Policy Number: _____

Extra Health Information (i.e. allergies, medications, medical conditions we should know about, etc.)

Testimony

On a separate sheet, please write a one page (250 word) testimony describing how you became a Christian and how your life has been changed as a result. Describe your current relationship with God (e.g. worship, devotions, service).

Send completed application to:

**Mail: Ministry Quest, 500 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2,
Canada**

Or fax to: 204-832-3196. Application must be received by July 1.

Notification of acceptance will be sent shortly after the due date.

This is an appendix page.

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