

Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

FOUNDATIONS FOR A POSTGRADUATE LEVEL YOUTH MINISTRY COURSE
IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

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FOUNDATIONS FOR A POSTGRADUATE LEVEL YOUTH MINISTRY COURSE
IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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ABSTRACT

Foundations for a Postgraduate Level Youth Ministry Course in São Paulo, Brazil

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According to the last census in Brazil in 2010, there is an overwhelming Christian population (86.8 percent). There are many seminaries, religious institutions, churches and great Christian theologians, both Catholic and Evangelical, however, youth ministry is not considered to be an area of study for any of them. For that reason, the aim of this final project is to create and develop a postgraduate level youth ministry course in São Paulo, Brazil.

Part One of this project describes the context of church and youth ministry in São Paulo, the history of youth ministry in Brazil and the context of adolescents living in São Paulo. This part aims to point out the challenges of youth ministry today and the ecclesiological, academic, social and cultural factors influencing the development of this ministry.

Part Two of this project explores all of the subjects to be studied in this course. Starting from a theological reflection on youth ministry, the discussion further examines a practical theology for youth ministry and for adoptive youth ministry. The next section of Part Two focuses on the development of adolescents and those factors influencing them such as a culture of abandonment, adolescent culture, family and peers. It then studies the practices of youth ministry, such as discipleship, teaching, pastoral care and programming. Finally it concentrates on all of the people involved in youth ministry like youth leaders, volunteers, parents, youth and the whole congregation.

The final part focuses on the development of a comprehensive syllabus for each of the four modules of the course and a teaching guide to the lectures of a course in *Seminário Teológico Servo de Cristo* (Servants of Christ Theological Seminary).

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INTRODUCTION

Brazil is a great country, internationally known for its natural beauties, soccer, Carnival and natural resources. According to the last census realized in Brazil by IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) in 2010, although it is a secular state there is an overwhelming Christian population (86.8 percent).¹ Still according to the same census, Brazil is home to the world's largest number of Catholics (64.6 percent) and Evangelicals are 22.2 percent of the population.

It is not difficult to imagine that in a predominantly Christian country, like Brazil, there are many seminaries, religious institutions, churches and great Christian theologians. It is important to mention that most are Catholic and youth ministry is not an object of study of Catholics or Evangelicals. This is one of the main reasons I am writing about the creation and development of a postgraduate level youth ministry course in Brazil for my final project.

In Brazil youth ministry is not about Christian education or discipleship but more about youth entertainment. There is an urgent need to change this erroneous view and present the main objective of youth ministry. The real mission of youth ministry is to “prepare the heart, ready the mind, still the soul”² of adolescents so ministers can take part in God's work in their lives. God works in their lives by leading them to grow in

¹ IBGE, “Censo 2000: Número de Católicos cai e Aumenta o de Evangélicos, Espíritas e Sem Religião,” IBGE.gov, <http://cod.ibge.gov.br/234jg> (accessed March 25, 2015).

² Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christians: What the Faith of our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15.

their faith in order to be disciples of Jesus Christ.³ One action to change this mindset is providing education to youth pastors or youth workers with good courses and training.

There are also very few resources such as books, magazines and even websites available in Portuguese, the official idiom in Brazil. Language is another obstacle to be overcome because Brazil is the only country in South America that speaks Portuguese, while all the other countries speak Spanish. Unfortunately, there is a common misunderstanding about this and most people outside Brazil believe we speak Spanish. There are already a lot of resources and even conferences in Spanish but in fact, Spanish is very different from Portuguese. Conferences and any other type of training are rare, outdated and usually superficial or focused on entertainment in Brazil.

Brazilian churches generally believe that youth ministry can be lead by people with little theological instruction or no theological instruction at all, no specific training and preferably volunteers. In better situations, some churches hire young people that are still in their first years in seminary to work as interns only on weekends as part of their academic activities. Usually youth leaders are volunteers with some passion for adolescents; very few have free time and no theological or specific age skills. The most common general belief of Brazilian churches is that every adult or young adult that volunteers to take care of the adolescents in the Church and has no records against his reputation is suitable for the position.

However, there is a common sense among Evangelical churches in Brazil that adolescence is a critical period in the religious life of believers. There has been no official

³ Kenda Creasy Dean, "Fessing Up: Owning our Theological Commitments" in *Starting Right* edited by Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark and Dave Rahn (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 33.

research, so no data supports this, but churches can observe an evasion of adolescents from faith today. What is happening in Brazil is similar to the US, shown in the research and conclusions found in many North American sources mentioned in the book *Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids*.⁴

The purpose of this project is to develop a curriculum based on the actual context of Brazilian youth ministry for a postgraduate course to equip and enable youth leaders and youth ministers of Evangelical churches in São Paulo to teach and disciple adolescents. These leaders need to learn how to face the challenges of a postmodern society, the fragmentation of church community and of family in order to understand and attract a new generation of adolescents.

Part One will describe the context of church in São Paulo, the context of youth ministry in São Paulo, the history of youth ministry in the last fifty years in Brazil and the context of adolescents living in São Paulo. It will describe the challenges of youth ministry today and the ecclesiological, academic, social and cultural factors influencing the development of this ministry.

Chapter 1 will describe the situation of Evangelical and Protestant churches in the state of São Paulo, the largest and most populous state in Brazil, and in São Paulo city, the largest city in Brazil, as a starting point for the study. There is very little data about this subject. One goal is to try to estimate the population of Evangelical Christian adolescents and Evangelical churches in the state and the city.

⁴ Kara Powell and Chap Clark, *Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Kindle location 101-118.

This chapter will also examine the context of adolescence in a metropolis like São Paulo and in the state of São Paulo. It will show the demographics of adolescents especially in São Paulo city, examining how adolescents are divided in very different socio-economic classes and the importance of education among them, considering the vast difference between private and public schools in São Paulo and the tremendous differences among a great variety of neighborhoods in the city. As parents, families and the new and different types of families have a great influence over adolescents and their development, they will be studied in this chapter. It will also discuss culture, including the globalization of adolescent culture, the influence of the Internet, social medias and over connection in the digital era. Finally, the chapter will talk about the self-centeredness of today, especially among adolescents.

Chapter 2 will consider youth ministry in the state of São Paulo. There are a few parachurch youth organizations working in this area and I will study the impact they have on adolescents in São Paulo. Most of these organizations came from the US between 1950 and 1970 and tried to adapt their work to Brazilian culture. The existence or absence of courses and training about youth ministry in seminaries and colleges will also be considered. This chapter will discuss the lack of youth ministry resources in Portuguese—books, magazines, curriculum and conferences.

The second section will consider a theological reflection on youth ministry and how it is related to the community of faith, the Church. It will exam and discuss Bible texts that are fundamental for defining the responsibility of older generations to younger generations in the context of the local church. These ideas concerning generations and families are founded in the practical theology of adoption.

Chapter 3 addresses the basic structure and philosophy of the course as well as admission requirements, evaluation system, course goals, course objectives and learning outcomes. Key literature resources for this project also will be studied in this chapter. Although none of these literature resources are translated into Portuguese and most Brazilians over thirty years old cannot read in English, they are basic, important literature to be considered for this project. Therefore, the translations of these books will be part of the implementation of the course in Brazil.

Chapter 4 will develop a practical theology for youth ministry based on three important elements and through exegesis of the Old and New Testaments. First, focus will be on the responsibility of the Church as the community of faith—parents, families and social capital—to the next generations, specifically adolescents. Then, it focuses on parents and families of adolescents because of the great influence they have on their children; as written earlier in this paper, family ministry is strictly related to youth ministry. Finally, the focus shifts to the entire youth ministry team, from the youth pastor to volunteers and the theological importance of each. It will talk about adoptive youth ministry and how the theology of adoption can be put into practice in the local church and in youth ministry.

When considering the Church as the family of God, there is an assumption that as brothers and sisters of Jesus in his resurrection, the community of the Church adopts all, and the members of this family have an adoptive attitude towards every new member, including children and adolescents. The implications of the theology of adoption for youth ministry are adolescents being adopted by the great congregation, intergenerational ministry and fewer adolescents leaving the Church after their high school graduation.

This should also result in an adoptive community of adolescents that will have an adoptive attitude towards new adolescents coming into the group. In this chapter the main goals of youth ministry are addressed after considering aspects of the previous chapters.

Chapter 5 will be about adolescents and the fast-changing world they live in today with focus on the challenges they face. In order to better understand and communicate with adolescents, it is essential to study the psychosocial and spiritual development of adolescents and the different stages of their development. Students in this course must learn about the cultural influences on adolescents in São Paulo, like the Internet, social media, music, movies and peers. Central to this discussion is the globalization of adolescent culture, peer pressure, school and overwhelming connection in the digital era. It is also important to discuss the different learning styles of adolescents. Students in this course must be aware of the importance of understanding adolescent's behaviors and feelings, faith development during adolescence and maintaining a desire to continually learn about youth culture.

Chapter 6 will focus on the practices of youth ministry, such as discipleship, teaching, pastoral care and programming. A brief study on models of youth ministry will also be part of this chapter. As mentioned before, there is a lack of resources for youth in Brazil. There are very few, and worse, outdated resources about teaching, discipleship and programming for youth in Brazil. Therefore, students must be skilled to produce and use their own material for Bible lessons, youth main topics and discipleship.

Chapter 7 concerns all of the people involved in youth ministry. Youth leaders must learn to be more adoptive towards adolescents, instead of just being their teachers or chaperones. Volunteers in youth ministry must understand how they can be a great

influence in the lives of adolescents, especially in the development of their Christian lives. This chapter also will focus on the matter of family ministry and the parent's influence. Youth leaders and volunteers will learn about the importance of working together with parents in their mission to teach and disciple their children.

The last part will focus on the development of a comprehensive syllabus and a teaching guide to the lectures of a course in *Seminário Teológico Servo de Cristo* (Servants of Christ Theological Seminary). I have been teaching one-week intensive courses about youth ministry in this seminary since 2012. There will be a study and analysis of the elements necessary for a basic curriculum for a pilot project. I believe that the great challenge will be the lack of books and resources in Portuguese and the lack of teachers in Brazil, because there are no courses or programs training teachers to teach about youth ministry. Consideration on the production of specific material for students and translations of selected books considered fundamental for a youth ministry course in São Paulo and training teachers for the course is quite important here. This course will be divided into four curriculum units of twenty hours each throughout the year. This means that each unit will happen during a week, with two weeks in the first semester and two weeks in the second semester. This chapter will also define the evaluation methods for the course. Students will be evaluated by their attendance, reading reports before the units, research papers after the units and a final project.

The conclusion will be a pilot project to be implanted in 2019 with a one-week unit in the first semester and another one-week unit in the second semester. I have been planning this with the seminary to begin the course in 2020.

PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

CHURCH AND ADOLESCENCE CONTEXT IN SÃO PAULO

Church Context in São Paulo

Brazil was colonized by Portugal and Catholicism was the first religion to arrive in the new land of Brazil. Evangelicals or Protestants only really arrived in Brazil after 1810, when Portugal opened Brazilian ports to England and allowed the foreigners freedom of religious expression.¹ However, there was no peaceful coexistence between Catholics and Protestants and in 1903 Protestants formed the Evangelical Alliance against Catholics because of persecution. Around 1916 persecution decreased.

Brazilian Catholicism is very peculiar because it is permeated by syncretism and superstition.² Other divergences with Protestantism are Liberation Theology, “which means they side with the worries, needs, and rights of the poor,”³ extreme devotion and

¹ Alderi Souza Matos, “Breve História do Protestantismo no Brasil,” *Revista de Ciências Humanas e Letras das Faculdades Integradas da Fama* 3:1 (2011): 13-14.

² C. S. Maria and A.M. Greeley, “Catholics and Protestants in Brazil,” *America* 189 (August 2003): 13, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/209680362?accountid=11008> (accessed March 25, 2015).

³ Martin Baumann, and J. Gordon Melton, *Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 390.

idolatry to Our Lady (the Virgin Mary) and loyalty and devotion to the Pope.⁴ These divergences can explain the reason why Catholicism and Protestantism are so far away in Brazil, although both of them are considered Christian religions.

In the last forty years Protestantism has expanded fast in Brazil. I was raised as a Catholic, studied in a Catholic school and converted to Protestantism twenty years ago. The last IBGE census showed a decrease in the Catholic population from 73.6 percent in 2000 to 64.6 percent, and an increase in the Protestant population from 15.4 percent to 22.2 percent (42.3 million).⁵ Despite this decrease, Brazil continues to have the world's largest Catholic population, with over 160,000,000 adherents—more than Italy, France and Spain combined.⁶

Among Protestant churches, the Pentecostal or neo-Pentecostal churches are the fastest growing. Although Pentecostal churches arrived in Brazil only at the beginning of the twentieth century they have spread very fast, particularly in poor and urban areas. The majority of Protestants in Brazil are Pentecostal.⁷

Many Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches in Brazil are not connected to a denomination and were founded in Brazil by people with less formal education; they

⁴ Ibid., 391.

⁵ Juliana Castro Alessandra Duarte, "Igreja Católica tem Queda Recorde no Percentual de Fieis," (June 29, 2012), Globo90.com, <http://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/censo-igreja-catolica-tem-queda-recorde-no-percentual-de-fieis-5344997> (accessed October 5, 2015).

⁶ Sherron George, "Report on Pope Francis and the 2013 World Youth Day," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 38:2 (2014): 74, Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2015).

⁷ Joseph E. Amaral, Ernesto F.L. Potter, and Robert D. Woodberry, "The Growth of Protestantism in Brazil and its Impact on Male Earnings, 1970–2000," *Social Forces* 93:1 (2014): 126, *Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2015).

usually recruit their leaders among the local community.⁸ Members of these churches are usually from poorer classes and from slums with very few or no middle-class people at all. The great majority of members are women, children and adolescents, usually Black, Mixed race or Native people with very few White people.⁹ These people may be attracted to neo-Pentecostal churches because their theology emphasizes that God materially blesses those who have faith, serve him well and give money to the Church.¹⁰

Adolescence Context in São Paulo

It is crucial to know the adolescents in Brazil with focus on São Paulo. Ministers must know who they are, what they think, how they relate to family, peers and community, how they live and what influences them. The great obstacle in São Paulo and in Brazil is the absence of research and numbers by the government or reliable research organizations. The most interesting fact in doing this research was to find out that business marketing is very interested in adolescents and studies their profiles in their different social classes. Therefore this data will be used to know the adolescents of São Paulo and in Brazil.

Demographics of Adolescence in São Paulo

IBGE is responsible for the census. The last census was realized in 2010 and presents information about the age of the population in São Paulo (Table 1.1). Although

⁸ Ibid., 127.

⁹ Ricardo Mariano, “Crescimento Pentecostal no Brasil: Fatores Internos,” *Revista de Estudos da Religião* (December 2008): 71, http://www.pucsp.br/rever/rv4_2008/t_mariano.pdf (accessed October 5, 2015).

¹⁰ Amaral, Potter and Woodberry, “The Growth of Protestantism in Brazil and its Impact on Male Earnings, 1970–2000,” 127.

the ages in this research are not aligned with the ages for adolescence length (from 11 years old to early 20s), it can be inferred that the adolescent population in São Paulo state is approximately 6,628,115 from 10 to 19 years old and 10,265,274 from 10 to the early 20s. The percentage of adolescent population in the state of São Paulo is between 16.06 percent and 24.87 percent.¹¹

Socio-economic Classes

There is no available research that can show how adolescents in São Paulo and in Brazil are divided into social classes. This paper will try to define the profile of adolescents from different social economic classes. The first step is to define social classes in Brazil as seen in Table 1.1

Table 1.1. Income Groups in Brazilian Population

	Income per capita	Average monthly family income
Extremely Poor	Maximum U\$ 25,31	U\$ 266,87
Poor	Maximum U\$ 50,62	U\$ 347,81
Vulnerable	Maximum U\$ 90,93	U\$ 463,65
Lower Class	Maximum U\$ 137,81	U\$ 835,62
Middle Class	Maximum U\$ 200,31	U\$ 1462,81
Upper Middle Class	Maximum U\$ 318,43	U\$ 3092,81
Lower Upper Class	Maximum U\$ 775	U\$ 5448,12
Upper Class	Above U\$ 775	Above U\$ 5448,12

Source: SAE.gov, “*Veja Diferenças Entre Conceitos que Definem Classes Sociais no Brasil*,” SAE.gov, <http://www.sae.gov.br/site/?p=17821#ixzz3W4L33hFH>.

¹¹ IBGE.gov, “Censo Demográfico 2010: Características da população - Amostra,” IBGE.gov, http://www.ibge.gov.br/estadosat/temas.php?sigla=sp&tema=censodemog2010_amostra (accessed March 27, 2015).

Extremely Poor, Poor and Vulnerable Adolescents

Youth in these categories generally live in suburbs around big cities, in slums or even in the streets. As there is a great appeal for consumerism, there is a great risk for these adolescents to get into illegal activities like stealing, but more likely drug dealing. Usually they also become addicted to drugs and there is increased involvement with illegal activities. The Educational Public System has not been able to serve an increasing number of students because there are not enough facilities, materials or even teachers. As a result there is a high level of evasion from schools or the graduation of what are called functional illiterates. They can read and write but cannot understand what they read, so they are excluded from literate society and limited from continued study or getting good jobs.¹² When they live with their families, these families are usually one-parent households headed by women, with many children, grandchildren and grandparents living in very small hovels.¹³

Many usually must start working very early because their parents are unemployed or cannot support the family. But as they have no qualifications they get very bad jobs and are exploited. They work as bootblacks, parking attendants in the streets or they sell sweets and other merchandises at traffic lights or they just beg for life.¹⁴ Another

¹² Marina Minussi Franco and Patrícia Leme de Oliveira Borba, “As Influências Advindas do Contexto Social na Relação do Educador Social e a Criança/Adolescente Popular Urbano,” in: *I Congresso Internacional de Pedagogia Social* (São Paulo: Faculdade de Educação, Universidade de São Paulo, 2006), 1, http://www.proceedings.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=MSC0000000092006000100039&lng=en&nrm=abn (accessed April 1, 2015).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Mary Garcia Castro and Miriam Abramovay, “Jovens em Situação de Pobreza, Vulnerabilidades Sociais e Violências” *Cadernos de Pesquisa* 116 (2002): 143-176, from http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0100-15742002000200007&lng=en&tIng=pt.10.1590/S0100-15742002000200007 (accessed April 1, 2015).

important issue is the domestic violence they suffer in physical aspects, sexual aspects and psychological aspects. This violence will influence multiple areas of their lives.¹⁵

Lower Class Adolescents

Lower class adolescents in Brazil have very particular characteristics, especially concerning high levels of consumerism. The norms for what they want and will consume are the norms of the groups they belong to. They want to belong to this group as a regular member or they want to be a special member of the group, so they need to consume more than the average. What they consume is directly related to their self-esteem.¹⁶ Their main interests are brand clothes, shoes, purses and caps as well as cell phones. Forty-seven percent of lower-class adolescents use their cell phones to navigate the Internet, although only 32 percent of them access the Internet every day.¹⁷

They attend public schools and they do not need to start working early, so they have a lot of free time. This factor exposes them to the risks of pregnancy and obesity. Research shows that they spend their free time watching TV (91 percent), practicing sports (96.1 percent) and 77.6 percent stay on the streets.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Sergio Siva Dantas et al, “A Auto-imagem dos Adolescentes de Baixa Renda como Fator de Influência do seu Consumo e Uso de Produtos e Marcas de Vestuário” *Business Seminary* (2011), <http://www.ead.fea.usp.br/semead/14semead/resultado/trabalhosPDF/605.pdf> (accessed April 1, 2015).

¹⁷ Alexandre F. Barbosa, *TIC Kids Online Brasil 2013: Pesquisa sobre o uso da Internet por Crianças e Adolescentes no Brasil* (São Paulo: Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2014), 118-119.

¹⁸ Ricardo Barro et al, “O Uso do Tempo Livre por Adolescentes em uma Comunidade Metropolitana no Brasil,” *Adolesc Latinoam* 3:2 (November 2002), http://ral-adolesc.bvs.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1414-71302002000200008&lng=es&nrm=iso (accessed April 1, 2015).

Middle Class and Upper Middle Class Adolescents

The Brazilian middle class has gone through a lot of changes in the last years. They had a better buying power five to six years ago and started to have access to a lot of consumer goods, international travel and better education. But in the last two years these conditions have changed and are much worse now. Middle-class adolescents used to be at private schools but now many of them are moving to public schools. Although education is still valuable for the middle class, some families cannot afford to pay for good private schools.¹⁹

These adolescents usually live with their parents. They have access to the Internet, music, movies and books are their favorite activities in their leisure time. Because of violence, especially in great cities they live in apartments or houses in private condominiums with a variety of options for their leisure time.

Lower Upper Class and Upper Class

Very little of the Brazilian population is in these classes. These adolescents are extreme consumerists with clothes, technology and entertainment. As housemaids take care of them, they usually have problems obeying authorities and this has been a problem at schools and churches. There is not much difference from these adolescents to the adolescents described in the book *The Price of Privilege*.²⁰ In fact there are more

¹⁹ Rede Brasil Atual, “Investimento em Educação é Fundamental para Nova Classe Média, Aponta Pesquisa,” educação.org, <http://www.contee.org.br/noticias/educacao/nedu2350.asp> (accessed April 01, 2015).

²⁰ Madeline Levine, *The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006).

similarities with Brazilian adolescents and their parents at least in the Southeast of Brazil, than differences.

One of these similarities is related to parents' behavior. Many parents do not know how parenting is supposed to be. The book shows three parenting styles and in Brazil the most common styles are the extreme ones. Parents are either authoritarian or permissive. They seldom educate their children for autonomy. Instead they educate their children for dependency or they just let them grow up by themselves without any control or supervision.

Educational Level and Work

The Brazilian educational system is similar to the American system but there are some minor differences. Early adolescents, from 11 to 13 years old, usually attend “*Ensino Fundamental*.” There is no translation for this term but the equivalent for this in the American system would be Elementary School. In Brazil, *Ensino Fundamental* goes from first to ninth grades and from around 6 to 14 years old. There is nothing like junior high school or middle school in Brazil. After children graduate from *Ensino Fundamental* they go to *Ensino Médio* that would be equivalent to high school in the American system. But *Ensino Médio* lasts only three years.

When adolescents graduate from high school they must take exams and tests (*Vestibular* in Portuguese) for colleges and universities. Each university or college has its own exam or test, which means adolescents have to take a lot of tests and exams a few months before graduation. And the most important, unfair issue about this system is that the only thing that matters is the *Vestibular* for each institution. Universities and colleges

do not look to the students' records from high school or middle school. It is important to mention this as high school graduation and *Vestibulares* are a tremendous source of stress for adolescents. Their future depends on a single test and they have to take multiple tests in order to have a good chance of going to college.

In order to show how many adolescents are attending school in São Paulo state, I have adapted a table from IBGE. Table 1.2 shows how many adolescents are attending school and what is the percentage, from the whole population of those ages that they represent. The numbers show that there is a high school evasion in what would be the periods for high school and university or college. The reasons for this could be explored in another study.

Table 1.2. Population of adolescents attending day care centers or schools

Population attending day care centers or schools	Total	Percentage
10 up to 14 years of age	3,214,344	96.6%
15 up to 19 years of age	2,227,546	67.45%
20 up to 24 years of age	914,017	25.13%

Source: IBGE, "*Censo Demográfico 2010: Educação – Amostra.*"

In Brazil, and especially in São Paulo, it is not very usual for adolescents to take part-time jobs during the year or temporary jobs during vacations. Most parents would set up an allowance for their children, so they can have their own money. This is why it was a great surprise to find out that São Paulo is the Brazilian state with the largest number of

children and adolescents working on a regular basis.²¹ *Fundação Abrinq*²² has worked on this research to collect data about children and adolescent labor in Brazil. Labor of any kind is forbidden in Brazil for children less than sixteen years old, although children can work as an apprentice when they are older than fourteen years old. They found out that there are about 3,517,540 children and adolescents from 5 to 17 years old working in Brazil. And 15.16 percent of these children and adolescents (533,567) live and work in São Paulo. This could be one of the causes of school evasion and also for high levels of juvenile criminality. According to *Conselho Nacional de Justiça* (National Justice Council),²³ in 2011 the great majority of inmate adolescents in Brazil were older than 15 and younger than 17 years old and 47.5 percent of them have committed their first infraction at this same age.

Families and Parents

Parents and families are still very important to adolescents. Recent studies have shown that peers have more influence over adolescents than parents do, and may give a wrong idea that parents are not important to their children as they reach adolescence. Adolescents need and desire a family system to support, understand and love them.²⁴

²¹ Redação, “São Paulo é o Estado com o Maior Número de Crianças e Adolescentes em Situação de Trabalho no País,” *The São Paulo Times*, <http://www.saopaulotimes.com.br/sp/sao-paulo-e-o-estado-com-o-maior-numero-de-criancas-e-adolescentes-em-situacao-de-trabalho-no-pais/> (accessed April 1, 2015).

²² *Fundação Abrinq* is a social organization that, since 1990, works for the rights of children and adolescents be respected in Brazil and in the whole world.

²³ National Justice Council is an organ of the Brazilian Judicial System created in 2004 by a Constitutional Amendment, as a part of the Judicial Reform.

²⁴ Chap Clark, *Hurt 2.0: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), Kindle location, 2351.

Problems, lack of communication and conflict in the relationship between parents and adolescents will always be in youth ministry and churches must be prepared to help them reconcile, communicate, forgive, understand each other and work on this relationship because it is very important for adolescents and parents. Youth ministries and children's ministries must work along with family ministries, although it is not normal in Brazil, yet.

Nuclear Family

According to the last census, the traditional model of nuclear family represents only 49.9 percent of families in Brazil, while other models of families represent 50.1 percent of the total number of families.²⁵ Although it is a minor difference, it is important to remember that in 1980 nuclear families represented 75 percent of the total number of families. And even among nuclear families it was detected that in some families the child or the children are children of only one of the spouses. This new kind of family is called a reconstructed family and represents 16 percent of the total number of families.²⁶

The new composition of families will have implications on the lives, thoughts and feelings of adolescents, giving a completely different scenario about Brazilian adolescents' families. The Church's job is to understand this new family environment

²⁵ The Bunge Foundation was established in 1955 as the social arm of Bunge Brazil S.A. Bunge Foundation, "As Novas Famílias e os Desafios da Educação," http://www.fundacaobunge.org.br/jornal-cidadania/materia.php?id=11988&/as_novas_familias_e_os_desafios_da_educacao (accessed April 1, 2015).

²⁶ Akemi Nitrahara, "IBGE Identifica 16% das Famílias com Formação Não Tradicional," <http://www.ebc.com.br/2012/10/ibge-identifica-16-das-familias-com-formacao-nao-tradicional> (accessed April 1, 2015).

adolescents face and help them deal with it. The Church must learn how to work, help and love all of these new family types.

Single-parent Families

Single-parent families are not new in Brazil but have highly increased in the last few years. In 2000, women were responsible for 24.9 percent of families and in 2010 this percentage grew to 38.7 percent of families.²⁷ This growth was the result of the changing whole of Brazilian women in society. Large numbers of women are entering the labor market with higher qualifications and are able to be the person responsible for the family.

Adolescents from single-parent families may have a higher chance to receive less attention from this single parent. This is because they may be overwhelmed with professional and family responsibilities. This may be also the opposite, when this single parent tries to do the job of two parents and dedicates more time and care for his children.

Alternative Family Models

Although already mentioned the reconstructed family as a new kind of family in Brazil is not necessarily new, but is now mentioned in the statistics for the first time. There are also families in which both spouses have children of their own and they all live together as a family. There is no data in Brazil for this type of blended family.

The new kind of family that likely will increase in the next years is the family formed by same-sex couples. For the first time they were in the IBGE census that registered 60,000 couples living a “*homoafetiva*” union (what Brazilians call same-sex

²⁷ Cida Alves, “Mais Mulheres São Chefes de Família, e Jovens Optam por ser mãe Mais Tarde,” *globo.com*, <http://g1.globo.com/economia/noticia/2014/10/mais-mulheres-sao-chefes-de-familia-e-jovens-optam-por-ser-mae-mais-tarde.html> (accessed April 1, 2015).

marriages). Women formed 53 percent of these unions, and 47.4 percent are formed by Catholics. It will be a challenge for the Church to work with children of same-sex couples and it is still not known how Brazilian Evangelical churches will act.

Cultural Context

It is essential to know and try to follow the trends and constant changes in adolescent culture. In fact, it is more difficult to follow and be updated with their culture than understand it. In some hours a video goes viral on the Internet with millions of views and sometimes on the following day it is over. But if ministers want to communicate with them they must know and study their culture as a missionary in a new world.

Global Adolescence Culture

Media such as Internet, movies, music, games and TV shows contribute to a global adolescent culture and global consumerism.²⁸ There is a global adolescent culture that can be noticed by the way they dress across the Western world, the brands they love and consume, the music and artists they listen to everywhere they go because of mobile technology and even American TV shows they watch on their tablets, computers or cable TV. Because of technology the world is becoming smaller every day. Live stream does not even have a translation into Portuguese as so many global terms: games, smart phones, jeans, gadgets, download, notebooks, tablets and so many others.

Theaters all over the world are having movies premiers almost at the same time or sometimes with one or two day's difference. And tickets for these premiers are all sold

²⁸ Jeffrey J. Arnett and Lane A. Jensen, "Going Global: New Pathways for Adolescents and Emerging Adults in a Changing World," in *Journal of Social Issues* 68:3 (2012): 475.

out weeks before the event. Popular books for adolescents in English are translated into Portuguese in record time. Because of Instagram, Skype, WhatsApp, Facetime and many other apps distances disappear and adolescents do not know the meaning of the word “wait.” This year in Brazil, National TV live broadcasted the Super Bowl from the US and football was not as popular in Brazil some years ago as it is now.

Internet, Social Media and the Digital Era

New research in Brazil with the suggestive name “Likers - *A Nova Geração de Consumidores*”²⁹ (Likers – A New Generation of Consumers) shows the profile of the Z-Generation in Brazil, that is the same as in the US. “Z” comes from zap and was translated into Portuguese to “zapear.”³⁰ Adolescents in the US and in Brazil, zap TV channels and Wii Remotes as fast as they can. Research showed that this is the cell phone generation as this device looks like an extension of their bodies. The device is also a demonstration of their parents’ love and care for them, because giving them a cell phone proves that they care about them and can “be with them” anywhere and at all times. They were born in a digital era and sometimes they do not even see the difference between the online world and the offline world. They are always connected but at the same time they disconnect from real relationships.

Email is a very old thing for them and to communicate with them older generations must learn how to use social media and learn how to text. They have moved away from

²⁹ Globo.com, “Pesquisa Traça Perfil da Geração Z e Mostra Prioridades de Jovens no RS,” <http://g1.globo.com/rs/rio-grande-do-sul/noticia/2014/12/pesquisa-traca-perfil-da-geracao-z-e-mostra-prioridades-de-jovens-no-rs.html> (accessed March 30, 2015).

³⁰ Wandressa Puga Santos and Wellington Teixeira Lisboa, “*Tendências Psicossociais e de Consumo da Geração Z e as Influências dos ‘nativos digitais’ na Comunicação Organizacional*,” Presented on Work Group 10: Communication, Consume, Power and Organizational Speeches, at the 3^o GTs Meeting- Comunicon at ESPM, São Paulo October 10-11, 2013, http://www.espm.br/download/Anais_Comunicon_2013/comunicon_2013/gts/gtdez/GT10_SANTOS_LISBOA.pdf (accessed March 30, 2015).

Facebook because their parents and grandparents are there. They are now on other online social networking like Instagram and Twitter.

Self-centeredness

This is the selfie generation and the main goal is to get as many “likes” as possible. They measure their success and popularity by the number of “likes” they get, especially girls. Girls are trying to take sensual selfies, which can be a dangerous behavior.³¹ They take infinite pictures of every moment in their lives and they record every moment and post all these images as if they were pop stars. Mirrors are everywhere for them, from the cell phone dark screen to the wing mirror in the car.

They live in a virtual world and have virtual relationships that do not demand as much of them as a real relationship and there is a danger of isolation from the real world. This can cause a lack of interest, absence of commitment and even devaluation of the other. In the virtual world they have established, they have everything they need and everything is the way they just imagined. However, reality is that no thing and nobody are the way people imagine or want them to be in the real world. This can lead to self-centered behavior and difficulties in cultivating relationships and learning how to deal with people that are different from them. They can be over connected to the virtual world and disconnect from the real and imperfect world.³²

³¹ Globo.com, “Pesquisa Traça Perfil da Geração Z e Mostra Prioridades de Jovens no RS.”

³² Gustavo Medeiros Oliveira, *Geração Z, Uma Nova Forma the Sociedade*, <http://br.monografias.com/trabalhos3/geracao-z-nova-forma-sociedade/geracao-z-nova-forma-sociedade.shtml> (accessed March 30, 2015).

CHAPTER 2

YOUTH MINISTRY IN SÃO PAULO

Demographics of Youth Ministry in São Paulo

It is difficult to write about the demographics of youth ministry in Brazil because there is very little research or data about it. The most reliable research organization in Brazil is IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) that is responsible for the census. The last census was realized in 2010 and presents information about the age of the population in São Paulo (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. São Paulo State Population

Population	Total
Resident Population	41,262,199
Resident Population, 0 to 4 years old	2,678,908
Resident Population, 5 to 9 years old	2,860,037
Resident Population, 10 to 14 years old	3,325,558
Resident Population, 15 to 19 years old	3,302,557
Resident Population, 20 to 24 years old	3,637,159
Resident Population, 25 to 29 years old	3,788,849
Resident Population, 30 to 39 years old	6,740,291
Resident Population, 40 to 49 years old	5,732,230
Resident Population, 50 to 59 years old	4,424,787
Resident Population, 60 to 69 years old	2,650,110
Resident Population, 70 years old or older	2,121,712

Source: IBGE, “São Paulo,” Estados@.com, http://www.ibge.gov.br/estadosat/temas.php?sigla=sp&tema=censodemog2010_amostra (accessed March 27, 2015).

Although the ages in this research are not aligned with the ages for adolescence (from 11 years old to early 20s), it can be inferred that the adolescent population in São Paulo is approximately 6,628,115, or 10,26,274 considering the early twenties. Therefore the percentage of adolescent population in the state of São Paulo is between 16.06 percent and 24.87 percent.

There is research about religion affiliation in the state of São Paulo, but unfortunately it does not define age groups. This research was done in the census of 2010 and is used by SEPAL¹ (*Servindo Pastores e Líderes/Serving Pastors and Leaders*) to estimate the number of Evangelicals and the number of churches. SEPAL estimates that there are about 9,937,864 Evangelicals in the state of São Paulo and 56,788 churches spread over 645 cities. The results of the religion research in the 2010 census can be observed in Table 2.2.

Evangelical Christian Adolescents

In fact, it is known only that there are 56,788 Evangelical churches spread over 645 cities in São Paulo State, but there is no research showing how many of these churches have youth ministry or even the percentage of adolescents in each church. It is possible to know how many adolescents there are in São Paulo State but as the population is predominantly Catholic it is very difficult to cross reference the data obtained in this research to get a reliable result.

Actually, it is very difficult to find studies or research about the behavior, faith or characteristics of Evangelical adolescents in Brazil. One of these rare studies explores the

¹ SEPAL is an international mission affiliated with One Challenge International to support Brazilian Evangelical Churches and pastors. See: <http://sepal.org.br> (accessed March 3, 2015).

influence of religious affiliation on the reproductive behavior of unmarried female adolescents (ages 15–19).² They concluded that religious affiliation diminishes the likelihood of premarital childbearing among Brazilian adolescents and this positive effect is much higher for Pentecostals than for Catholics. The results were slightly less among non-Pentecostal Evangelicals than Pentecostals.³ However, care must be taken when analyzing this research because there is not much research to compare to and it cannot be said that this positive effect is related to a true conversion and spirituality or if it is related to religious traditions and the fear of being exposed in the religious community. It must also be considered that the reduction of premarital childbearing is positive, but it does not necessarily mean that religious adolescents are not having sex.

Table 2.2. Religions and Percentages in São Paulo State

Religions	%	Religions	%
Catholic	60.34	Pentecostal	14.75
Evangelical*	24.08	Pentecostal – Assembly of God	5.24
Historical Evangelical	2.58	Pentecostal –Brazil Christian Congregation	2.87
Historical Evangelical – Lutheran	0.10	Pentecostal – Brazil for Christ	0.19
Historical Evangelical – Presbyterian	0.51	Pentecostal – Four Square	1.08
Historical Evangelical – Methodist	0.14	Pentecostal – IURD**	1.06
Historical Evangelical – Baptist	1.18	Pentecostal – others	4.32
Historical Evangelical – Adventist	0.64	Evangelical – Nondenominational	6.75
Historical Evangelical – others	0.02	Other Christian Religions	1.07

Source: IBGE, “São Paulo,” Estados@.com, http://www.ibge.gov.br/estadosat/temas.php?sigla=sp&tema=censodemog2010_amostra (accessed March 27, 2015).

*Scholars of Latin American religion and demographers have utilized the term evangélicos (evangelicals) to refer broadly to a wide range of Protestant groups. In Latin America the term is frequently used to include Classic Pentecostals, neo-Pentecostals, Historical (or Mainstream) Protestants, nondenominational Protestants, and, in this case, Seventh-Day Adventists.

² Curtis P. Bartkowski et al, “Religious Influences on Teenage Childbearing among Brazilian Female Adolescents: A Research Note,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49:4 (2014): 754-760, *Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 30, 2015).

³ Ibid., 759.

There is also a research realized in Pernambuco State (Northeast of Brazil) to study the influence of religion on alcohol and tobacco use during adolescence.⁴ This may be the first research of its type realized in Brazil as the authors mention. They concluded that religious affiliation and attendance are associated with a lower exposure to alcohol and tobacco. They also observed that religious males were more exposed to alcohol and tobacco than religious females.⁵ When compared to adolescents with no religious affiliation, Evangelical adolescents were less exposed to alcohol and tobacco than others.⁶ Again, care must be given when analyzing this research as the religious adolescents may have lied about their exposure to these substances for fear of the judgment of their leaders, parents or even the researchers. As this paper makes a clear distinction between Evangelical adolescents and Catholic adolescents, it is important to talk about the context of Evangelicals and Catholics in Brazil.

Evangelical Churches

According to the last census in Brazil, the proportion of youth has decreased while the elderly population has increased.⁷ The groups less than twenty years of age have presented an absolute decrease in their amount, especially in the Southeast and South regions of Brazil. São Paulo is the main state of the Southeast region. Therefore it

⁴ Jorge Bezerra et al, "Religiosidade, Consumo de Bebidas Alcoólicas e Tabagismo em Adolescentes," *Revista Panamericana de Salud Publica* 26:5 (2009): 440-446, Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed March 30, 2015).

⁵ Ibid., 443, 444.

⁶ Ibid., 444, 445.

⁷ IBGE, "*Censo 2000*."

can be concluded that the absolute growth of the population of Brazil in the last ten years was mainly attributable to the growth in the adult population, especially the elderly.

This important data could shed light on why Brazilian Evangelical Churches are not paying attention to children, adolescents and young adults. However, this is not likely the main reason for this kind of abandonment. Ecclesiological culture in Brazil considers children's ministry as a good investment because they can attract parents to church, and as a matter of fact most parents look for a church with a good children's program. But this same culture, sadly, considers youth ministry as a problem to be solved and forgets they must be adopted into the Body of Christ. This is one of the reasons churches address the issues of youth ministry in a very different way. Often, youth ministry is perceived more as a problem to be gotten rid of, or at best something that needs to be solved instead of a need that requires the entire church's best.

For the great majority of churches, youth ministry is considered an appendage of the Body, while it should be considered an expression of the whole body caring for a specific group, as Chap Clark wrote.⁸ This erroneous view has serious consequences for youth ministry and adolescents. For instance, most churches believe that this ministry can be lead by people with little theological instruction or no theological instruction at all, no specific age training and preferably volunteers. Some churches with a better view of youth ministry employ young people that are still in their first years in seminary to work as interns only on weekends as part of their academic activities. But usually youth leaders

⁸ Chap Clark, "The Changing Face of Adolescence: A Theological View of Human Development," in *Starting Right*, edited by Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark and Dave Rahn (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 61.

are volunteers with some passion for adolescents, very little free time and no theological or specific age skills.

As a result of low or no investment in adolescents' lives, churches "will get back what they invest."⁹ However, when talking to senior pastors or boards of elders, the blame usually goes to adolescents for the poor outcomes. They believe that adolescents are unconcerned about church and faith, are self-centered, disengaged with the whole church or sometimes are going through a stage of life when they cannot be reached and they will come back to church when they get to adulthood. Churches' leadership and sometimes the adult congregation do not understand that youth ministry is part of the body and is their job.¹⁰

Parachurch Youth Organizations

There are quite a few parachurch youth organizations in Brazil and most of them were originally American. Nevertheless they do not have a great impact in Brazil or in São Paulo. Some of them are more focused in specific regions of Brazil and as Brazil is a very large country with very different cultures and contexts they do not reach the whole country. This section will explain who they are and how they are working now.

⁹ Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), Kindle location 5684.

¹⁰ Clark, "The Changing Face of Adolescence," 61.

Alvo da Mocidade (Young Life)

Jim Rayburn started Young Life in the US in 1941 and in 1963, Harry and Hope MacDonald headed for Brazil¹¹ to set up in the city of Campinas, in São Paulo State. In 1965, Stanley Torsin, Hillas Mariante, Arsênio Firminio de Novaes Netto, John Lane and Harry MacDonald founded *Alvo da Mocidade – Associação Brasileira de Orientação Cristã para a Juventude* (Youth Purpose–Brazilian Association of Christian Orientation for Youth) in Campinas. It is interesting to mention that the translation of the name Young Life into Portuguese would be literarily “*Vida Jovem*.”

After fifty years in Brazil, they established their main office in Belo Horizonte and have a team of thirty-five staff members and about 200 volunteers spread around Brazil. In São Paulo state they have offices in Campinas, Ribeirão Preto, Rio Preto and São Paulo city. In Minas Gerais state, they have the main office in Belo Horizonte and another in Uberaba. They also have an office in the capital city of Brasilia.¹²

The main strategy of *Alvo da Mocidade* in Brazil is meeting adolescents in schools, malls, parks and everywhere they go. They also organize Bible studies at the adolescent’s homes, school and parks, reaching about 1,300 adolescents per year, which is not a significant number when considering the adolescent population in Brazil. The organization owns a farm in Furnas (Minas Gerais state) that they use for camps reaching about 600 adolescents every year, which, again, is not a significant number for Brazil.

¹¹ Danny Rydberg, “Kids Around the World,” [younglife.org](http://www.younglife.org/Relationships/Pages/2006/01/KidsAroundtheWorld.aspx), <http://www.younglife.org/Relationships/Pages/2006/01/KidsAroundtheWorld.aspx> (accessed March 30, 2015).

¹² Young Life, “Brazil,” Young Life Latin America Region, <http://latinamerica.younglife.org/Pages/Brazil.aspx> (accessed March 20, 2015).

Alvo da Mocidade was established in São Paulo in 1963 and ceased the work here for eight years, starting again in January 1994.¹³ Through email contact with the leader of *Alvo da Mocidade* in the state of São Paulo, Iberê Meirelles, I was able to ask about the main goal for 2015. Their goal is to have at least one hundred adolescents or young adults accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior in the state of São Paulo. Meirelles said that their main obstacle is the lack of support of Evangelical churches. The churches do not consider this ministry as a partner but as a contender that tries to attract adolescents to their ministry and causes them to leave the local church. Despite this mistaken view from local churches they have a good relationship with the families of the adolescents and most parents get involved in Bible studies, camps and other activities to gather adolescents just to have fun or to listen about Jesus.

They work only with volunteers that are mature Christian adults from various careers. These volunteers are trained by more experienced volunteers to disciple and shepherd adolescents. Now they are working with fifteen volunteers in the state of São Paulo. It is a very small number considering an average population of 8,000,000 adolescents in the state. Unfortunately, Young Life in Brazil does not have the same expressive action as they have in the US.

Mocidade para Cristo (Youth for Christ)

Youth for Christ was founded in the US in the 1940s, and in 1945 Torrey Johnson founded Youth for Christ International. This ministry arrived in Brazil in 1952 in the city of Campinas and the pioneers here were Donald Phillips, and Paul and Jane Overholt

¹³ Alvo da Mocidade São Paulo, "História," Alvo da Mocidade.org, <http://www.alvo.org/sp/historia.php> (accessed March 20, 2015).

later.¹⁴ After sixty-three years in Brazil, MPC has over thirty ministry centers throughout the country reaching Brazil's youth with focus on adolescents and young adults from 13 years old to 25 years old. The outreach strategy includes Bible clubs, school assemblies, camps, Youth Guidance, rallies and using all media possible, mainly the Internet.¹⁵

The main programs realized by MPC in São Paulo and throughout Brazil are: *Escola da Vida* (School of Life), summer camps for adolescents and young adults, training for youth leaders in Minas Gerais once a year (summer time) during ten days and “*Desperta Débora*” (Arise Deborah). *Escola da Vida* in São Paulo started in 2009 and has reached around 2,850 adolescents students in public schools. The program is a one-week program in a public school developing lectures, teachers' meetings, writing contests, cultural event and parents' meetings. The lectures for students are based on the principles of the teachings of Jesus. The lectures approach themes like: drugs, violence and gangs, sexuality, self-esteem, beauty imposed by Brazilian culture, character and relationships, vocation, environment and political education.¹⁶

Teachers' meetings happen one time during the week of the programs and the main goal is to create an opportunity to talk and listen to these teachers because they have a great influence over the lives of the students. The writing contests are usually announced a week before the program and the theme is usually “A Letter to God.” The theme of the cultural event is love and is a one-and-a-half-hour presentation with music,

¹⁴ Jocum Brasil, “MPC Lança Site Nacional e conta sua História,” <http://www.jocum.org.br/arquivo/mpc-lanca-site-nacional-e-conta-sua-historia-saiba-mais> (accessed March 20, 2015).

¹⁵ Youth for Christ Brazil, “Home Page,” YouthforChrist.org, <http://br.yfci.org/> (accessed March 20, 2015).

¹⁶ Escola da Vida, “Home Page,” [Escoladavida.com, http://www.portalescoladavida.com.br/#!about/cjg9](http://www.portalescoladavida.com.br/#!about/cjg9) (accessed March 20, 2015).

drama, videos and any other creative resource MPC team can use in that location.

Parents' meeting usually happen the Saturday after the program is over and the goal is to challenge and encourage parents in their task of educating and raising their children.¹⁷

Summer camps for adolescents and young adults are realized every year during six days in a location close to Belo Horizonte and the main goals are the evangelization and spiritual growth of these adolescents and young adults from all over the country.¹⁸

The training for youth leaders in Minas Gerais happens once a year in summer time over ten days.¹⁹ Although it does have two units of teaching that are not mandatory, it looks more like a boot camp for youth. This likely happens because a great part of the attendants are over 15 years old and less than 20. The prayer movement "*Desperta Débora*" started in 1995 in Belo Horizonte and I attended the first meeting in São Paulo in 1998. Today it is one of the most important programs in Youth for Christ with over 50,000 mothers across Brazil signing up to pray for their children and the youth in their areas for fifteen minutes every day.²⁰

Although MPC central office is located in Minas Gerais state, this ministry has a great impact all around Brazil and in São Paulo, especially with *Escola da Vida* and *Desperta Débora*. This ministry is not affiliated with any particular church or

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ MPC Brasil, "Temporada de Verão para Jovens e Adolescentes," MPCBrasil.org, <http://www.mpc.org.br/jovens-e-adolescentes/> (accessed March 20, 2015).

¹⁹ MPC Brasil, "Treinamento para Líderes de Jovens e Adolescentes," MPRBrasil.org, <http://www.mpc.org.br/treinamento2/> (accessed March 20, 2015).

²⁰ Desperta Debora, "Home Page," DespertaDebora.com, <http://despertadebora.com.br/> (accessed March 31, 2015).

denomination but they have built a good relationship with many churches and organizations across Brazil.

Aliança Bíblica Universitária do Brasil (ABUB)

Aliança Bíblica Universitária do Brasil, ABUB²¹ (Biblical Alliance of Undergraduate Students of Brazil) is affiliated with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES). It was founded in Brazil in the 1950s by two pioneers—Robert Young and Ruth Siemens. Although their main target is the population of undergraduate students, they are concerned with the evangelization of high school students. In 1972 they started the first ABS²² (*Aliança Bíblica de Secundaristas/Biblical Alliance of High School Students*) groups. The goal of ABUB and ABS is to have students reaching and evangelizing students without the direct help of adult leaders.

ABUB is a very important parachurch ministry in Brazil, but ABS is still unknown after more than forty-two years. This is difficult to understand, because ABUB Members founded ABS, as there were so many high school students attending ABUB meetings. There was a clear need for this ministry, but it was never as successful as ABUB, mainly in the Southeast of Brazil and in São Paulo.

I was able to contact the leader of ABS in São Paulo, Nathan Falcucci, and ask him some questions about this organization in São Paulo. He said that the main goals of ABS are: to teach and support high school students to evangelize other high school students; to promote community and spiritual edification of Christian high school

²¹ ABUB, “Home Page,” ABUB.org, <http://www.abub.org.br/> (accessed March 20, 2015).

²² ABUB, “Início,” ABUB.org, <http://www.abub.org.br/compartilhe/informativos/entre-nos/item-materias/2011/12/abs-ontem-e-hoje> (accessed March 20, 2015).

students and encourage them to actively make a difference in their families, school and church; to lead students in finding their place in the Body of Christ and their professional vocation; and to prepare students for the challenges they will face at college.

Their main strategies to reach their goals are school groups that meet during breaks for Bible studies, worship and prayer. There are also base groups that are formed by some school groups in the city. They meet regularly for Bible studies, integration among the groups and planning and developing programs for the growth of the organization. The main obstacles they face are the difficulty high school students have to evangelize their peers and so few volunteers for too many schools. Some schools do not permit the meetings of school groups at the school facilities. Actually they are developing groups in thirty-three schools in the state: six in Ribeirão Preto, one in São José do Rio Preto, one in Marília, one in Campinas, two in the great ABC,²³ five in São Paulo, one in Sorocaba, one in Araraquara and fifteen in Bauru. The average number of students in these groups is thirty.

Although they do not have any specific activity involving the parents of these adolescents, they feel families support them by offering their own homes for meetings and by encouraging their children to take part in the meetings. They are working with sixty-six adolescents that are volunteers at their schools and there are fifteen people on the São Paulo leadership team; all of them are volunteers. Most of these volunteers have gone to seminary or at least have some kind of theological training.

²³ ABC is formed by three cities nearby São Paulo city. The cities are Santo André, São Bernardo and São Caetano.

Although there is no research or study about parachurch ministries there are a couple of reasons for their weaknesses in São Paulo. São Paulo is a metropolis with barriers for urban mobility because it does not have a good public transportation system; riding bicycles is very dangerous and one can only have a driver's license when she is eighteen years old, not to mention violence in this big city. Therefore, it is difficult for high school students to move from one school to another to start new groups to evangelize other students. Another important issue is that high schools in Brazil are part-time schools, and this means they do not have lunch at school or other activities that would give them the opportunity to reach other students.

In the North and Northeast of Brazil ABS is growing faster because cities are smaller, the traffic is better, although public transportations is not good. However, the weather is better and students can walk or even ride bicycles. Schools are the base for this ministry and when students cannot spend much time at school or have difficulties moving to and from school or to move from one school to another, it will not work as planned.²⁴

Jovens da Verdade - JV (Youth of Truth)

*Jovens da Verdade (JV)*²⁵ is a parachurch Brazilian ministry founded in 1968 by Jasiel Josafá Botelho and a group of Christian young men from Institute “*José Manuel da Conceição*” (JMC), in Jandira, São Paulo state. This Institute of Christian education was founded in 1928 and closed in 1969. Jasiel is alive but his son, Marcos Botelho, is now

²⁴ ABUB, Segunda edição do Manual da ABS, <http://www.abub.org.br/regiao/minas-gerais/2012/05/manual-da-abs-2%C2%AA-edicao> (accessed March 20, 2015).

²⁵ Jovens da Verdade, “Home Page,” [Jovensdaverdade.com, http://www.jovensdaverdade.com.br/index.php](http://www.jovensdaverdade.com.br/index.php) (accessed March 31, 2015).

the director of the mission. The goal of this ministry is to evangelize, uplift and multiply groups of adolescents and young adults engaged in the mission of the Kingdom of God in Brazil and in the world. JV Ministry is located in Arujá, a small city near São Paulo city.

During almost fifty years JV has added different ministries to its main ministry: summer camps for kids and adolescents, Conference for Pastors and Leaders of Adolescents and Young Adults and *JV na Estrada* (JV on the Road). Their summer camp facilities are very good and their staff is well trained and equipped. They offer a one-week camp for children and a one-week camp for adolescents.²⁶ They organize a three-day Conference for Pastors and Leaders of Adolescents and Young Adults every year during wintertime.²⁷ It should be great to bring together youth leaders for community, learning and exchange of experiences and challenges. But the JV bias to Theology of Integral Mission cannot be ignored as the great majority of speakers invited for their conferences are involved with this kind of theology. The Theology of Integral Mission in Latin America would be the Evangelical equivalent to the Catholic theology of liberation.

There is *JV na Estrada*,²⁸ an itinerant ministry with a very young team that works on weekends presenting dramas, preaching and good entertainment for camps, conferences and churches around Brazil. JV is linked to FLAM (*Faculdade Latino-Americana de Teologia Integral*/Latin American College of Integral Theology) that offers,

²⁶ Jovens da Verdade, “Temporadas Kids e Teens,” Jovensdaverdade.com, <http://www.jovensdaverdade.com.br/eventos/temporadas.php> (accessed March 31, 2015).

²⁷ Jovens da Verdade, “XVI – Encontro NACIONAL para Pastores e Líderes de Jovens e Adolescentes,” Jovensdaverdade.com http://www.jovensdaverdade.com.br/eventos/encontro_lideres_atual.php (accessed March 31, 2015).

²⁸ JV na Estrada, “Quem Somos,” JVnaEstrada.com, <http://jvnaestrada.com/quem-somos/> (accessed March 31, 2015).

among other courses, a one-year course of *Liderança Cristã e Ministério com a Juventude*²⁹ (Christian Leadership and Young Adults Ministry). Many youth leaders attend this course as the only alternative for education in the youth ministry area although the focus of the course is young adults. It is important to remember that JV ministries have the same tendency toward Theology of Integral Mission. Despite this theological bias there is an undeniable contribution of JV Ministries to youth and young adults ministries in São Paulo.

Youth Ministry Courses

This will unfortunately be one of the shortest sections of this entire paper. After a lot of research with seminaries, colleges and Christian institutions, it appears there are no undergraduate or postgraduate courses about youth ministry in the state of São Paulo. First, it is important to explain how theological courses are regulated in Brazil. MEC (*Ministério da Educação*) is equivalent to the Department of Education in the US, but is not the best institution in Brazil to evaluate theological courses. Actually, the best institution for this is AETAL (*Associação Evangélica de Educação Teológica na América Latina/Association for Evangelical Theological Education in Latin America*).³⁰

AETAL was founded in São Paulo in 1975 and is constituted by Evangelical Institutions of Theological Education from all Latin America from Mexico to Argentina, except Caribe. AETAL is affiliated to ICETE (International Council of Evangelical

²⁹ FLAM, “Presenciais,” FLAM.org, <http://www.flam.org.br/site/cursos/presenciais/> (accessed March 31, 2015).

³⁰ AETAL, “Home Page,” AETAL.com, <http://aetal.com> (accessed March 21, 2015).

Theological Education – www.icete-edu.org),³¹ founded in 1980 and functions as a Global Partner within the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

Today there are 113 Evangelical theological education institutions affiliated to AETAL in Brazil and forty-eight are in São Paulo state. The majority is in São Paulo city or in nearby cities like Campinas. Among these institutions there are two that offer courses on young adults ministry: *Faculdade de Teologia Methodist Livre* offers a one-year DMin in Young Adults Ministry³² and FLAM (*Faculdade Latino-Americana de Teologia Integral*) that offers a one-year course of *Liderança Cristã e Ministério com a Juventude* (Christian Leadership and Young Adults Ministry), as mentioned before. The only institution that offers a course on youth ministry on a regular basis is *Seminário Teológico Servo de Cristo*.³³ STSC offers a week training ministry course on youth ministry every year and I am the teacher in this course. There are also some parachurch ministries that offer training ministry courses on youth ministry like *Mocidade para Cristo* two times per year and PAVI (*Preparando o Adolescente para a Vida*),³⁴ that offers some courses around the country.

³¹ ICETE is a global community, sponsored by nine regional associations of theological schools, to enable international interaction and collaboration among all those concerned for the enhancement of evangelical theological education worldwide.

³² Faculdade de Teologia Methodist Livre, “Cursos de Pós-Graduação – Doutorado em Ministério,” FTML.com, <http://www.ftml.com.br/noticias.asp?id=22&nivel=2&cat=3&subcat=20> (accessed March 21, 2015).

³³ Servo de Cristo, “Home Page,” <http://servodecristo.org.br/> (accessed March 21, 2015).

³⁴ Ministério Adolescentes, “Home Page,” <http://ministerio-c-adolescentes.blogspot.com.br/p/ela.html> (accessed March 20, 2015).

Youth Ministry Resources

To summarize all that has been said about the context of youth ministry in São Paulo and in Brazil, it is not difficult to imagine that there are few resources such as books, magazines and even websites about youth ministry available in Portuguese, the official idiom in Brazil. As has been mentioned already conferences and other types of training are rare, outdated and usually superficial or focused on entertainment.

The latest, most significant book about youth ministry published in Brazil in Portuguese was a translation of *Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry* by Doug Fields and Rick Warren. It was first published in 1999 and is still one of the main resource books for youth ministry even though there are a lot of problems with the translation into Portuguese. The main and first problem was translation of the title. It was translated to “*Um Ministério de Jovens com Propósito*,” that actually means “Purpose-Driven Young Adults Ministry.” There are quite a few old curriculums for adolescents that were published in the US in the 1980s or in the 1990s and were translated into Portuguese. There are many books and articles in Portuguese about adolescents in at-risk situations, pregnancy during adolescence, drugs and alcohol use by adolescents because these are some of the greatest challenges poor and street children face in Brazil.³⁵

³⁵ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009), 207.

PART TWO
COURSE STRUCTURE

CHAPTER 3

BASIC STRUCTURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE COURSE

Chapter 3 addresses the basic structure and philosophy of the course as well as admission requirements, evaluation system, course goals, course objectives and learning outcomes. Key literature resources for this project also will be considered in this chapter even though there are very few resources in youth ministry literature written or translated into Portuguese. To make matters worse, most of the literature is out of date or cannot be applied to the context in Brazil.

Admission Requirements

Admission requirements for students are a certificate of bachelor's degree earned from an accredited institution in Brazil and to be 25 years old or older. Students can be ordained clergy, professional youth directors, lay youth leaders and they must be engaged in ministry with youth in a church, parachurch youth ministry or other religious institution. Male and female students from every Christian denomination can apply for this course. The seminary requires that students applying for any course must go through a personal interview with the academic director and submit two recommendation letters

from pastors or other ecclesiastic authorities. One letter must be on personal character and the other one on work experience in youth ministry whether paid or as a volunteer.

Basic Structure of the Course

The course will be a Postgraduate Studies on Youth Ministry in Seminário Teológico Servo de Cristo in São Paulo, Brazil. This is a well-known, non-denominational seminary founded by Chinese Churches in Brazil in 1990. The seminary offers the following programs: Postgraduate Studies on Missiology; Postgraduate in Oriental Studies; Master of Arts in Biblical Leadership; Master of Intercultural Studies; Master of Divinity in Biblical Studies; Doctor of Ministry and some intensive courses. The course is designed for the context of Brazilian youth ministry and the its main goal is to equip and enable youth leaders and youth ministers in São Paulo State, or even from other Brazilian states, to fulfill the calling God has for them. The students will be instructed to think critically and theologically about what it means to be a missionary who walks side-by-side with teenagers with the purpose of translating the Christian faith to them.¹

The basic structure of the program consists of four compulsory modules that provide a theoretical and theological basis for the practice of youth ministry.² These

¹ Andrew Root and Kenda Creasy Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Books, 2011), Kindle location 119.

² Mark H. Senter, III, "History of Youth Ministry Education," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 12:2 (2014): 85. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed January 6, 2017).

modules will show a balanced interaction of theology, social sciences and practices.³ The modules will happen during an academic year of the seminary through four intensive part-time weeks. Students must complete a minimum of 160 hours or 8 credits according to the seminary policies and Brazilian legislation for this degree. Each module will be 40 hours or 2 credits. The minimum time to complete the course will be one year and the maximum time to complete it will be two years. Students will have the choice to attend four elective courses offered by the seminary such as: Biblical Theology of the Old Testament, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, Homiletics, Hermeneutics, Christian Education and Biblical Counseling. The seminary regularly offers these disciplines.

Modules

The first module will look into Theology and Practical Theology of Youth Ministry. Chap Clark affirms that, “Practical theology begins with who and where we are, is faithful to the Scriptures and the history of God's people, and provides a discernible and pragmatic course of faithful action.”⁴ As youth ministers serve in a constant changing environment and culture, practical theology helps them to consider context and reflect theologically about it towards faithful action. A good youth ministry practice originates from integrative approaches on theology and social sciences.

³ Pamela Erwin, “Youth Ministry Education: Where Practice, Theology, and Social Science Intersect,” *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 4:2 (2006): 16. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed November 21, 2016).

⁴ Chap Clark, “Youth Ministry as Practical Theology,” *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 7:1 (September 2008): 13. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed December 28, 2016).

One of the reasons to have Practical Theology for the first module in a youth ministry course in Brazil goes beyond the fact that it is essential for the interaction of theology and social sciences, as will be seen in Chapter 4. As a matter of fact, most students might have a distorted concept of Practical Theology as it has been considered merely a sub discipline of Theology,⁵ and the goal is to help them in developing a correct vision. Another issue that has been raised by Brazilian theologians is the absence of a common nomenclature for Practical Theology, also known as pastoral theology and applied theology. This is not just a matter of synonyms, but it evinces the lack of clarity regarding Practical Theology⁶ in Brazil. Furthermore, a literature on Practical Theology whether published or translated into Portuguese is virtually non-existent. Practical Theology is not a discipline in Seminário Teológico Servo de Cristo or among the best colleges and seminaries in Brazil.

The key literature for this mode includes three text books: *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, by Andrew Root and Kenda Creasy Dean; *Adoptive Youth Ministry* edited by Chap Clark and written by twenty-three authors (especially Chapters 1 to 12) and *Fundamentos da Teologia Prática (Fundamentals of Practical Theology)* by Júlio Zabatiero. As the great majority of students are not able to read in English, the translations of all of the books into English for the four modules must be part of the implementation of the course in Brazil.

⁵ Julio Zabatiero, *Fundamentos da Teologia Prática* (São Paulo, SP: Mundo Cristão, 2005), 33.

⁶ Lothar Carlos Hoch, "O Lugar da Teologia Prática como Disciplina Teológica," in *Estudos Teológicos* 32:2 (1992), 101. http://periodicos.est.edu.br/index.php/estudos_teologicos/article/view/963/932 (accessed September, 18, 2018).

The second module will focus on adolescence and social sciences related to it. It is very important for students to learn about the psychosocial and spiritual development of adolescents as well as adolescent culture. The subjects studied here are crucial for youth ministry because they help students to know and reflect on the adolescents they want to reach with the Gospel. They will be prepared as missionaries sent to a different culture; therefore they must know adolescents and their emotional, intellectual and developmental aspects. It is also necessary to know and understand what are influencing adolescents in their context as well as the main challenges they are facing.

There are few updated resources in Portuguese about these topics, but there are four books in Portuguese released recently that can be very relevant for the course. One of them is an academic book called *Trabalhando com Adolescentes – Teoria e Intervenção Psicológica (Working with Adolescents – Psychological Theory and Intervention)* by Luísa Fernanda Habigzang, Eva Diniz and Silvia H. Koller. Although the main focus is on the care of marginalized and at-risk youth, some chapters are very relevant regarding Brazilian youth in general. There is another book written in Portuguese by two Brazilian psychiatrists called *Adolescentes - o Desafio de Entender e Conviver (Adolescents: The Challenge of Understanding and Living with Them)*. This book presents a more scientific approach and focus on pathologies of adolescents, but it also addresses topics related to adolescents considered as normal in their social, cultural and family environment in an accessible language for laymen.

Two other books are not exactly academic sources, but they might be very helpful to understand brain development during adolescence. The first book, *The Teenage Brain -*

A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults by Frances E. Jensen and Amy Ellis Nutt was originally written and published in English and its Portuguese version is *O Cérebro Adolescente - Guia de sobrevivência para criar adolescentes e jovens adultos*. The second book, *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain* by Daniel J. Siegel was originally written and published in English and its Portuguese version is *Cérebro Adolescente: O grande potencial, a coragem e a criatividade da mente dos 12 aos 24 anos*. There are also three important resources in English: *Hurt 2.0: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers* by Chap Clark; *Understanding Youth: Adolescent Development for Educators* by Michael J. Nakkula and Eric Toshalis and *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of the American Teenager* by Christian Smith and Melina L. Denton.

This module helps students understand the interdisciplinary of practical theology in youth ministry by showing how social sciences interact with theology in order to know the human conditions of the adolescents in a given context.⁷ Although youth ministers have been intuitively searching for better comprehension of their adolescents and their context, this module is designed to make this search more intentional. Youth ministers must be aware of the importance of social sciences and have the right tools to constantly search to know their adolescents and the culture around them.

The third module will be about Practices of Youth Ministry. Practices come from theological reflection on how youth ministry may act to join the mission of God with

⁷ Clark, "Youth Ministry as Practical Theology."

youth.⁸ This unit examines the topic of communication to adolescents, “as the youth workers trains, teaches, preaches, writes, and encourages”⁹ through discipleship, teaching, pastoral care and programming. Another issue to be studied in this module concerns models of youth ministry.

In this module, students will be prompted to think about their practices in youth ministry by integrating a theological reflection and the social sciences.¹⁰ For that reason, these disciplines are strategically positioned in the third module. Experience in teaching intensive courses in the seminary has shown that students are looking for practical expertise on youth ministry and are aware of the importance of a good theological framework and the knowledge in social sciences. There is an assumption that most students have been developing some or all of these practices propelled by the necessity and urgent tasks before them, which affects their theological thinking and their interaction with social sciences. Consequently, the task is to help them integrate practices, theology and social sciences.

The books selected for this module are: *Sticky Faith – Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in your Kids* by Kara E. Powell and Chap Clark, *Youth Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Youth Ministry* by Houston Heflin and *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century: Five Views* by Chap Clark as editor. Chapters 13 to 18 of the book *Adoptive Youth Ministry* will be very helpful in this module. Once again, the lack of

⁸ Erwin, “Youth Ministry Education,” 14.

⁹ James W. Mohler, “Youth Ministry Education and the Liberal Arts: The Need for Integration,” *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 2:2 (2004): 57. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed January 6, 2017).

¹⁰ Erwin, “Youth Ministry Education,” 16.

books and articles written in Portuguese or even translated into Portuguese is an important obstacle to be overcome by producing material in Portuguese or by translating relevant material into Portuguese.

The fourth and final module will address topics related to all people involved in youth ministry. Although they may have different jobs within the ministry, they all must commit to receive and recognize youth as siblings in the family of God. Everyone in youth ministry must be aware that they are not merely preparing youth to be part of the community of faith in a distant future, but to be adopted by the community of faith now. As members of the Body of Christ adolescents have gifts, talents and much energy to fully participate in the family of God. The integration of adolescents in the community of faith has two implications for people in youth ministry: one is related to adolescents and the other is related to the whole church. Adolescents must be prepared to be adopted and the church must also be prepared to adopt them in the family of God.

The books selected for this module are: *Sticky Faith, Youth Worker Edition: Practical Ideas to Nurture Long-term Faith in Teenagers* by Kara E. Powell, Brad M. Griffin and Cheryl A. Crawford; *Deep Ministry in a Shallow World: Not-So-Secret Findings about Youth Ministry* by Chap Clark and Kara E. Powell and Chapters 19 to 23 of the book *Adoptive Youth Ministry*.

Evaluation System

An evaluation is required by the seminary and Brazilian legislation, but as years of experience have shown an evaluation system is an important tool for learning and teaching. For this course, evaluation must be a process, a means to an end, rather than an

end in itself.¹¹ Assignments will be created to help students develop their learning experience by integrating knowledge and practices.¹² Consequently, evaluation processes for each module will consist of two different assignments, one prior and one subsequent to the module.

As a pre-assignment, students are required to read a minimum of 500 pages from the selected literature, books or articles, for the module. For each book or article read, students must write a 1- or 2-page reflection paper highlighting the main concepts or ideas presented and how they can be applied in their ministry. Those assignments will represent 30 percent of the total grade.

After each section students are required to write a seven-to-ten page research paper related to the content and parameters of the course on a specific topic chosen by them or the teacher. Although these assignments constitute the evaluation system of the course, their main focus must not be just the student's assessment, but rather a part of the learning process. These assignments will represent 70 percent of the total grade.

A conclusion paper for the course is also required for graduation by the seminary, although it is no longer required by Brazilian legislation as of April 2018.¹³ The Course Conclusion Paper or Monography must be a 20-to-30-page paper focusing a theological

¹¹ Roberto Cezar Datrino, Iraci Ferro Datrino and Pedro Henrique Meireles, "Avaliação como processo de ensino-aprendizagem," *Revista de Educação, Valinhos* 13:15 (July 2010): 40, pgsskroton.com.br/seer/index.php/educ/article/download/1864/1769 (accessed September 19, 2018).

¹² Mark Battersby, *So, What's a Learning Outcome Anyway?* (Vancouver: Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology, British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 1999), 2-3. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED430611.pdf> (accessed September 19, 2018).

¹³ Resolução do Conselho Nacional de Educação, http://portal.mec.gov.br/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&alias=85591-rces001-18&category_slug=abril-2018-pdf&Itemid=30192 (accessed September 21, 2018).

reflection on youth ministry and its practices considering each student context. The writing standards for this paper can be found in the Student's Manual of the seminary.

Course Goals and Objectives

Defining goals, objectives and learning outcomes might be a difficult task as there is much confusion on the use of those terms. For the purpose of this paper and the requirements from Seminário Teológico Servo de Cristo each term will be defined. Goals are broad statements that describe the main intended achievement of the course. Course objectives are generally less broad than goals and describe an intended state or what it is students should learn. Each module has its goals and objectives that will be defined in the specific syllabus presented in the conclusion chapter of this paper. This chapter will define the goal and objectives for the entire course.

The goal of this course is to educate and equip students to effectively work with youth in the local church and other religious institutions. In a constantly changing world, no course in youth ministry can exhaustively cover all the subjects; therefore students must be aware of the need to continue to learn about it.

There are five primary course objectives. The first is that students will understand the fundamental principles of Youth Ministry Practical Theology. Also, students will have insights into the psychosocial development of adolescents. Third, students will understand the changing youth culture, the context and the challenges adolescents face. Students also will know the main youth ministry practices like teaching, discipleship, pastoring and programing. Finally, students will think about the engagement of adults and youth in youth ministry.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes describe or list measurable and essential mastered content-knowledge—reflecting skills, competencies and knowledge that students have achieved and can demonstrate upon successfully completing a course.¹⁴ They must contain detailed descriptions of what students must be able to do at the conclusion. Each module has its learning outcomes that will be defined in the specific syllabus presented in the conclusion of this paper. The learning outcomes of the entire course include: students being able to develop theological reflections and faithful actions in ministry programs and activities based on the knowledge and understanding of fundamental principles of Youth Ministry Practical Theology. Also, students will be able to apply the principles of psychosocial development of adolescents to assist them in their spiritual development. Students will be able to identify the main trends in the changing youth culture in order to determine which ones are affecting the lives of adolescents and their spiritual journeys. In addition, students will be able to develop skills in teaching, discipleship, pastoring and programing based on their knowledge about youth ministry practices and their ability to identify their ministry context. Students will be able to apply the knowledge acquired during the course to improve their skills in leading and equipping paid staff and volunteers in youth ministry team. Students will be able to identify the better approach to invite, welcome and embrace adolescents in youth ministry. Finally, Students will be able to build plans and strategies to engage the adults of community of faith in the commitment of receiving and embracing adolescents in the family of God.

¹⁴ Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, <http://provost.rpi.edu/learning-assessment/learning-outcomes/objectives-vs-outcomes> (accessed September 15, 2018).

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGY AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Chapter 4 will examine a biblical and theological view of youth ministry for the content of the first module of the course. This will enable students to build their knowledge about youth ministry on biblical and theological foundations. The main considerations in this module will be a theological foundation for youth ministry and a practical theology of youth ministry. A theological foundation is essential to the concept of youth ministry as part of the community of faith and of the family of God.¹ Theology of youth ministry also will help students understand that youth ministry is not merely a secondary or optional division in the community of faith. Youth are part of the family of God, so it is a holy vocation and divine call to translate Christian faith for them.² The last section of this chapter will explain how practical theology leads to the concept of adoptive youth ministry.

¹ Anita L. Cloete, "Creative Tensions in Youth Ministry in a Congregational Context," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 71:2 (2015): 1, retrieved from <http://proxy.fuller.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1677318290?accountid=11008> (accessed January 6, 2017).

² Root and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, Kindle location 119.

Theology of Youth Ministry

One of the objections to a biblical and theological understanding of youth ministry might be the fact that it is never mentioned in the Bible and there are no historical records of it until the mid-nineteenth century.³ It is interesting to remember that no other age or gender focused ministry is mentioned in the Bible either, and that the field of adolescence as an area of scholarly and scientific research was first mentioned by Andy Hall in his book *Adolescence* only in 1904. Unfortunately, there is no historical record or research on the beginning youth ministry in Brazil.

Nevertheless, the Bible mentioned new generations and instructions for older generations on how they should take care of younger generations in many passages. The psalmist in Psalm 71 asks God not to forsake him until he declares God's power to the next generation and God's mighty acts to all who are to come (Psalm 71:18).⁴ This psalm is a prayer of a man at an old age asking for the help of God as he faces his enemies. Scholars believe the psalmist was probably King David, which makes this declaration even more impressive. The importance of passing on a corporate faith to the next generations was so important that a king declared that he must do so even when he is old.

The next sections will highlight some passages in the Old Testament and in the New Testament that will help students in the development of a theological framework for youth ministry.

³ Philippa Strong, "Effective Youth Ministry: Theology-driven in a Cultural Context," In *Die Skriflig/in Luce Verbi* 49:3 (2015): 3.

⁴ Clark, "The Changing Face of Adolescence," 42.

Old Testament

Moses' speech in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (the *Shema*) can be a starting point to a biblical and theological understanding of the importance of youth to God. Although this passage is largely used in today's context as a commandment addressed specifically for parents, a careful exegesis shows that it is addressed to Israel,⁵ the community of faith, the people of God. God's covenant was made with the nation as a whole, so God's instructions are for the nation.⁶ The speech starts with the imperative "hear" and by listening Israel is called to love God. To love God cannot be misunderstood as a romanticized feeling. To love God is related to obeying God; Moses will detail the acts of obedience in the following verses.

Israel is called to love God and to teach the younger generations to love God in the same way. An important requirement noted in God's covenant with Israel was that it should be perpetuated to the immediate younger generation and to the generations to come.⁷ When God covenanted with his people, he had a plan for younger generations.

Education in ancient Israel consisted in telling and listening to stories of God and his people. The older generation should intentionally communicate these stories to the

⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries: Deuteronomy* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001) 68, *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2016).

⁶ Eugene H. Merrill, *The New American Commentary Volume 4 - Deuteronomy* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1994), 166; available from <http://fuller.ebib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=680803>; Internet (accessed 29 June 2015).

⁷ Brueggemann, *Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries*, 69.

younger generations, so they would love, respect and obey God.⁸ Throughout the Old Testament Israel faces difficulties whenever the Israelites did not obey what God taught them in the *Shema*. Sometimes younger generations did not listen to older generations as with Samson in Judges 14-16. He did not listen to his parents and lost his life because of this. Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, did not listen to their father and lost their lives in 1 Samuel 2:12-34. There were occasions when both, older and younger generations, would not obey God's commandments. David and his son Absalom were an unfortunate example of this in 2 Samuel 13-18. The tragic family saga ended with the death of Absalom and David's profound grief and pain.

As noted, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is clearly an instruction for how older generations should teach and guide younger generations in their relationship and obedience to God. The stories in Judges 14-16, 1 Samuel 2:12-34 and 2 Samuel 13-18 are examples of the consequences a specific household suffered when the instructions of the *Shema* were ignored by older or younger generations. From this biblical perspective, students might reflect on how their communities of faith and even youth ministries are obeying or not this commandment of God. Whenever considering this commandment, it is also necessary to consider how youth ministries are teaching youth to love and obey God or are simply gatherings of adolescents.

The book of Judges is another important text to be studied in this course as it tells the serious consequences of the disobedience of an entire older generation to the

⁸ Walter Brueggemann, "Passion and Perspective: Two Dimensions of Education in the Bible," *Theology Today* 42:2 (July 1985): 172-175, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2016).

instructions given in Deuteronomy 6:4-9.⁹ Judges 2:6-9 tells how Joshua and his generation took possession of the Promised Land and how they served God during their entire lives. Even after the death of Joshua, the elders that had experienced what God had done for His people continued to serve the Lord. The narrative continues, and it is told that, “After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel” (Jgs 2:10). “To know the Lord” in this passage means that the new generation has not had relationship with God as was established in the covenant God made with Israel.¹⁰ A whole community had to talk about God, his works, laws and promises to a younger generation and failed to do so.¹¹

Some authors, such as Barry G. Webb, comment that “to know” involves more than information. It can be also a refusal to obey what God has established in the covenant he made with Israel. In Exodus 5:2 the Pharaoh refused to obey God by claiming he did not know him.¹² The verb “to know” is the same verb in these two passages יָדָע (ya-da’). The new generation could have followed the example of Joshua’s generation even if they claimed they did not know God. As the narrative continues, the new generation chooses to live among the Canaanites, rather than to conquer them. They

⁹ Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, “Framework and Discourse in the Book of Judges,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128:4 (2009): 688, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2016).

¹⁰ Robert G. Boling. *Judges* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 72.

¹¹ Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, “Framework and Discourse in the Book of Judges,” 688.

¹² Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 138, *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 2, 2016).

abandoned the God of their ancestors to worship the Canaanite gods, Baal and Ashtoreths. They did evil in the eyes of God.

Although there might be different thoughts among scholars about the responsibility of older generations for new generations, intentionality in teaching new generations about God must be considered. Sometimes, even today, the lack of intentionality in teaching the Word of God to new generations can interfere in the passing on of the faith to them. As students examine this passage, they must think about the responsibility of older generations toward younger generations and on how the Church's actions must be intentional when teaching, loving and caring for them.

Those are just two passages among many in the Old Testament that highlight the importance of new generations to God and how older generations must be aware of their responsibilities to younger generations. During this module, students will be asked to deepen their biblical and theological studies on those issues.

New Testament

The New Testament is rich in texts on youth and community. The relationship Jesus had with children in Matthew 18:1-8 and in the Synoptic Gospels will be examined, as there are similar passages about Jesus and children in Matthew 18:1-8, Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-17. The context of the community as family of God in John 1:12-13 and as the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 will also be examined. Finally, the concept of the family of God and adoption into this family also will be considered.

Matthew 18:1-8 begins with the disciples asking Jesus who was the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Before Jesus answers, he calls a little child and places the child among them. How surprised the disciples must have been when they saw that child. Maybe they were waiting for the name of a hero of ancient times, someone of success and courage.¹³ Instead, Jesus tells them that, “Whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:4). The disciples surely had to consider how someone could be as lowly as the weakest, most vulnerable, least significant human being. In the ancient world, children were sometimes not considered human beings. N.T. Wright explains that, “In some languages, including the Greek in which the New Testament is written, the words for ‘child’ are mostly neither masculine nor feminine, but neuter: the child wasn’t a ‘he’ or a ‘she’, but simply an ‘it’.”¹⁴

Jesus continued to talk and went further. He said that whoever welcomes a child is welcoming him. He showed his disciples how the order of importance of the world was totally different from the order of his Kingdom by valuing children that were not valued at all in that time. Jesus values children so much that he says that it would be better to die in a violent and terrible way than to cause a child to sin. The point is that the humble, little ones are under the care of Jesus and whatever people do to them; they are really doing to Jesus.

The texts of Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-17 tell the story about Jesus’ love for children. Despite the fact that the main concern in this passage is

¹³ N.T. Wright, *Matthew for Everyone, Part 2, Chapters 16-28* (London: SPCK, 2014), 26, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed December 5, 2016).

¹⁴ Ibid.

not children as an age group, but the characteristics children possess that are necessary for anyone to enter the Kingdom of God,¹⁵ the passage shows how children were insignificant, weak and helpless¹⁶ in the ancient society. Their future was uncertain, as the mortality rate was very high. The Greek word used here for children is παιδία (paidía) and refers to ages between infancy and twelve years old.

Children were so devalued that the disciples assumed they were not important enough to meet Jesus.¹⁷ Unfortunately, most churches in Brazil behave as the disciples of Jesus, concerning children and youth. They suppose children do not matter and only adults are considered part of the local church.¹⁸ Jesus commands the disciples to let children come to him. He goes further and embraces those children. This was a public demonstration of how Jesus cared and valued children in a world where children were not valued at all. Students must reflect on how children and youth are valued in today's world and in their communities of faith today.

The New Testament brings forward two important analogies for a biblical view of youth ministry in the Church. The first analogy is the family of God and how all can be his children. In John 1:12-13 the idea of the family of God is similar to the idea found in the Pauline letters: Romans 8:15; Galatians 3:26-29, 4:4-5 and Ephesians 1:5; 2:19-21. John writes that people must know and accept the *Logos* (Jn 1:1) that came to the Earth to

¹⁵ James A. Brooks, *The New American Commentary Volume 23 - Mark* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1991) 266, (accessed July 15, 2015).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹⁷ Craig A. Evans, "Mark 8:27-16:20," in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 93.

¹⁸ N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone* (London: SPCK, 2001), 92, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed December 5, 2016).

live among humanity.¹⁹ To be his follower, one must believe in his name, Jesus, the only Son of God. Those are the conditions to become children of God. God is the Creator of everything and is the universal Father of all that receive and believe in Jesus.

Anyone born in any family, place or nation on earth can be accepted in the family of God. Through Jesus people are born again in the family of God.²⁰ John says that believers are not born as a result of human relationship, of a parental decision or desire. The Church is the family of families because all are brothers and sisters of Jesus. The New Testament writers use the terms brothers and sisters in a real way because of Jesus Christ.²¹ This passage and the other passages are very incisive about the conditions to belong to the family of God and age is not a condition. Consequentially, adolescents who know, accept and believe in the name of Jesus can be part of the family of God. Youth ministry is about looking at adolescents and young adults as brothers and sisters in Jesus.

The word “adoption” is not in this passage as it is in some of the Pauline letters, however the concept is here. Christians are born again spiritually by the grace and love of God through Jesus. They become brothers and sisters as they are adopted into the family of God.²² The Church has a call to live as a family of siblings with one Father.²³ This concept will be explored further in the next chapters, as it is a central idea related to

¹⁹ Gerald L. Borchert, “John 1-11: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture,” in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1996), <http://fuller.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=680794> (accessed December 9, 2016).

²⁰ N.T. Wright, *John for Everyone - Part 1* (London: SPCK, 2002).

²¹ Ray S. Anderson and Dennis B. Guernsey, *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 159.

²² *Ibid.*, 147.

²³ Clark, “The Adoption View of Youth Ministry,” 81.

Church. It is a strong argument for a more thoughtful view of youth ministry as part of the community of faith.

The second analogy for a biblical view of youth ministry in the New Testament is related to the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:12–27. Some people misunderstand Paul to only be addressing the spiritual gifts that every Christian receives. Those separated gifts work together to the benefit of the entire Church and there is no superior spiritual gift. Paul was a Jewish thinker that considered the human body as a whole creation to worship and reflect the image of God into the world.²⁴ Verse 13’s main idea is unity as can be read: “For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body.” He affirms that in this new body there are no differences between Jews, Gentiles, slaves or free men. This concept is also present in Galatians 3:28, where Paul says, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Clark suggests, “We could safely include ‘neither child nor adult’” to this verse.²⁵ Youth ministry is part of the Church and is an interdependent part, just like the many parts of the human body.

This analogy of the Church and the human body is fantastic. In the human body, created by God, all parts were designed to function together in an interdependent way.²⁶ When one part of the human body is unhealthy, the entire body suffers and is unhealthy. As interdependent parts of the Body of Christ, every Christian should care for one

²⁴ N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 2003), <http://fuller.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=868570> (accessed December 10, 2016).

²⁵ Clark, “The Adoption View of Youth Ministry,” 80.

²⁶ F.F. Bruce, “1 and 2 Corinthians,” in *The New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 121-122.

another. Paul writes about this for the Christians in Rome (Rom 12:15-18). Every Christian in every church must carefully read the words of Paul to the Corinthians and to the Christians in Rome. This is not only about youth ministry, but concerns every ministry despite age, gender, ethnic group and status in churches and in the Church of Christ spread around the world.

Practical Theology of Youth Ministry

Practical theology can teach youth ministers to think critically about what they need to do to be aligned with God's plans for youth ministry in their context. Youth ministry in Brazil has been erroneously considered a utilitarian ministry to evangelize and promote relationships and events.²⁷ Thinking as practical theologians is the first step in a journey to change this. In most Christian denominations, seminaries and churches in the Brazilian context it is seen, at best, as a subset of Christian education led by lay people or seminary students.

The main task of practical theology for future youth pastors and ministers is to teach understanding the context and culture of adolescents, in order to think theologically about and to discern why and what the Kingdom of God will require them to do. This is not a simplistic view of practical theology, but summarizes the reflections and actions involved in the process. Although thoughtful youth ministries might have been doing theological reflection to make decisions about ministry, their end goals can be shaped by unspoken expectations and traditions and not by Kingdom trajectory.²⁸ There is a great

²⁷ Root and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, 175.

²⁸ Michael McEntyre, "Thinking (Practical) Theology," in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, 100.

danger for youth leaders to focus on what they are doing and are expected to do instead of focusing on the Kingdom of God because of constant demands on their days.

A practical theological framework is important to keep the focus on the Kingdom of God. Youth workers are pressured by churches to constantly create many activities and discipleship opportunities for adolescents. Also, parents pressure them to keep their children in the church and away from the “world” and from bad choices the “world” offers them.²⁹ Practical theology teaches youth ministry students how it is important to examine the context, theologically reflect on their current actions and practices and create actions faithful to a Kingdom-oriented trajectory.³⁰

Clark, in his essay “A New Practical Theology for Youth Ministry,” writes that, “The goal of practical theology is for God’s people, prompted and led by the work of the Holy Spirit, to carefully discern and align with God’s activity in the world.”³¹ Youth ministry’s starting point is to discover how God, through the Holy Spirit, is active in the lives of adolescents so as to join his mission to youth.³² Local churches and even youth ministries forget that God loves adolescents first and the Church must love them in order to join God’s mission. God’s love for youth aims to redeem and invite them to join the Kingdom of God now. Practical theology is organic and very sensitive to the action of God in the world.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 103.

³¹ Chap Clark and Michael McEntyre, “A New Practical Theology for Youth Ministry,” (Research paper presented at The Association of Youth Ministry Educators Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, October 22-24, 2011) (accessed December 31, 2016), 9.

³² Root and Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*, Kindle location, 406.

Practical theology begins in a context, while other branches of theology begin in theory. Actually, it begins and ends in context. Practical theologians observe a context to understand the factors involved in a situation. They first understand what is happening, so they can theologically reflect and interpret the facts to discern what would be the faithful action applied in the situation. It is better described as a praxis-theory-praxis never-ending process, as it will continually cause reflection and evaluation for faithful action to be theologically evaluated.³³ Cormode describes this process to construct faithful action as circular process that has neither beginning nor end.³⁴ Although Cormode's model describes a cycle with four defined steps, the main idea is that one must reflect after each step and before the next faithful step. Practical theology is essential to train students in the habits of theological reflection to construct faithful actions as an ongoing process.

Observing context is the starting point in practical theology. All factors involved in a context must be examined. Before thinking theologically about youth ministry, stories from adolescents in the group must be heard. Leaders must know where they live, their families, schools, neighborhoods, churches and culture. Context is everything that surrounds their lives and it is constantly changing. As missionaries in a different culture, they must study and understand the changing youth culture. It is also important to remember that God is already acting in the context and the goal is to join God's work in the stories of youth. Youth leaders are to examine context with the final goal in mind—the in breaking of the Kingdom of God in the lives of adolescents.

³³ Clark, "Youth Ministry as Practical Theology:" 20, 21.

³⁴ Scott Cormode, "Constructing Faithful Action: Inculcating a Method for Reflective Ministry," *Journal Of Religious Leadership* 3:1-2 (September 2004): 228-229, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed December 28, 2016).

Practical theology makes use of interdisciplinary dialogue between theology and secular disciplines to interpret how the context is affected by internal and external factors.³⁵ Disciplines such as sociology, psychology, psychiatry and education act as lenses that explain why a particular situation is happening.³⁶ Some practical theology models call these secular disciplines lenses because they bring into focus how the context affects story and influences practice. It also helps ministers to notice how their lives have been affected by context.³⁷

The practical theology model proposed by Clark and Michael McEntyre considers it useful to divide the areas examined by secular disciplines into internal and external factors. Internal factors are relational and generally related to familial circumstances, family narratives and psychosocial development. External factors “include anything outside of the individual and their familial history that influences how a community and even a collection of individuals will think about a given issue.”³⁸ These factors are related to the environment and include media, culture, narratives, ecology, ethnicity, race and class. Therefore, it is important to teach disciplines like family ministry, psychosocial development of adolescents and adolescence culture to youth ministry students. Nevertheless, theology must be the most important discipline in practical theology as the

³⁵ McEntyre, “Thinking (Practical) Theology,” 106.

³⁶ Andrew Root, “Practical Theology: What is it and how Does it Work?” *The Journal Of Youth Ministry* 7:2 (2009): 67, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 21, 2016).

³⁷ Clark and McEntyre, “A New Practical Theology for Youth Ministry,” 19.

³⁸ Clark, “Youth Ministry as Practical Theology:” 28.

main goal is to have a solid biblical theological understanding of an issue that will lead to faithful action towards the Kingdom trajectory.

After examining one's practices, she comes to theological reflection in order to understand a determined issue and discern God's call to a faithful action.³⁹ It is very important to teach youth ministers how to reflect theologically about situations they face in their day-to-day ministries. It is very common for youth ministers to become overwhelmed by all of the activities and demands from parents and churches; they can feel compelled to act without reflecting theologically.

The Clark-McEntyre model offers a very didactic explanation of how to develop a theological reflection based on four elements: theology, tradition, experience and Scripture.⁴⁰ The first three elements are essential for theological reflection as they balance and interact with each other. Theology embraces "all the ways in which we think about God."⁴¹ Tradition is about history of historical and local churches. Tradition can influence context and must be considered. Experience considers God's revelation in one's life or in the life of the community of faith. These three elements must be guided and interpreted by Scripture to reveal the work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The first three elements can change with a context that is always changing, but Scripture is the solid element where one can stand. The main goal of theological reflection is to help focus one's praxis in aligning it with the work of God in the world. Faithful action must be aligned with Kingdom trajectory.

³⁹ McEntyre, "Thinking (Practical) Theology," 107.

⁴⁰ Clark and McEntyre, "A New Practical Theology for Youth Ministry," 24.

⁴¹ Ibid.

In his article about faithful action, Cormode affirms that, “The goal of theological education is to teach our graduates to construct faithful action.”⁴² Practical theology as a discipline will help students develop a theological reflection on practical tasks. They must be aware that faithful action is faithful, effective, contextual and communal. It is faithful as its goal is to join the purpose of God and not one’s own goals. Effectiveness is not only concerned about a good performance to achieve one’s own goals, but must achieve God’s goals as well. It is contextual because it is the result of a theological reflection upon a specific context. And it is communal “in that it takes into account the needs of the whole people of God.”⁴³ Youth ministry involves listening to the needs of young people God entrusted to one’s care. Youth ministers must know and understand youth culture and the daily lives of adolescents.

Practical Theology of Adoptive Youth Ministry

Practical theology helps in the observation of a context with focus on work that is of the Kingdom of God. Practical theology teaches to exam one’s story and God’s story, so he can faithfully join the ongoing work of God. Some students have been doing this in their ministry, they must be taught to do this intentionally. Therefore, when observing the context of youth ministry in local churches in Brazil, even without official data or research, there is a common sense that youth are leaving the Church by the time they graduate from high school. Adults in local churches blame youth for their evasion but

⁴² Cormode, “Constructing Faithful Action,” 228.

⁴³ Ibid., 239.

theological reflection shows that we, as the Church, fail to become God's family for them. This is also a consequence of the loss of social capital in society and churches.

Like churches in North America, Brazilian churches fail to provide adolescents with a welcoming community of faith.⁴⁴ Despite a lack of research in Brazil, empirical observations and personal conversation with youth leaders have shown a critical situation in churches, similar to that described by Clark in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, concerning North American churches in the beginning of the twentieth century. Clark points out that by that time, the systemic abandonment and loss of social capital in churches were more related to efforts to shape adolescents into adult images than to ignoring the young.⁴⁵ Brazilian youth ministry may be a century behind the North American context.

Practical theologians must also observe the work of God within the Church and youth ministry. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ's ministry of revelation and reconciliation is not only in the Church, but also in the world. The community of the Church is called to take part in Christ's ministry,⁴⁶ which Anderson calls Christopraxis. Paul teaches about it in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. Verse 20 says, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." Paul says Christians should be Christ's ministers not only to youth, but also to the whole world. Church should work as a bridge between God and humanity. Because Christians have a relationship with God through Christ, they

⁴⁴ Clark, *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century*, 75.

⁴⁵ Clark, "Adoptive Youth Ministry:" 19.

⁴⁶ Ray S. Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 54.

align themselves with the work of Christ to youth, children, seniors and everyone who joins the community of faith.

Paul also gives a key metaphor for the status believers obtain after being justified by God. He says they are adopted into the family of God four times in his letters. Justification is to be declared righteous before God and adoption concerns relationship to God.⁴⁷ In Galatians 4:4-6, Paul describes the process of adoption for humanity. Because of the work of God through Jesus Christ his followers became children of God, siblings of Jesus, co-heirs with Christ. They were reconciled in relationship with God and with one another.⁴⁸ Christians can now live as siblings in the family of God. This is a very important concept whenever talking about adoptive ministry, as the erroneous notion that the Church is the ones that adopt youth in the family of God might be inferred. God is the one that adopts youth in his family. The Church's work in the context of church and ministry is to embrace and live in community with younger brothers and sisters.⁴⁹

Paul says, "Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father'" (Gal 4:6). All are adopted into the warmth and security of God's family and can call him Father. There is no hierarchy among siblings even in the context of Church. This might be a very difficult teaching for communities that still live in the "assimilation mode," in which not only youth, but also other age or ministry groups are assimilated in church. Assimilation is opposed to the

⁴⁷ Trevor J. Burke, *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor* (Nottingham, UK: Apollos, 2006), 25.

⁴⁸ McEntyre, "Thinking (Practical) Theology," 114.

⁴⁹ Clark, "Adoptive Youth Ministry," 21-22.

concept of adoption in the New Testament because it is conditional, due to the fact that the one who is being assimilated must become like the ones in the community welcoming him.⁵⁰ The community of faith is the family of families as it is the family of God on earth and everyone adopted by God through Jesus is part of it. The faithful action of youth ministry is to welcome young people, adopted by God into His family, into the community of faith in order to care for them as brothers and sisters.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 22.

CHAPTER 5

ADOLESCENCE

This chapter focuses on adolescence, psychosocial and spiritual development of adolescents, search for identity, abandonment culture, cultural contexts influencing adolescents and family. The cultural context is very important, as adolescence is a developmental stage highly influenced by culture.¹ The globalization of adolescent culture, peer pressure, school and overwhelming connection in the digital era with social media, influence adolescents' behaviors, feelings and faith development. Recent research has shown that adolescent development is influenced by the surrounding contexts. Family and other adults in school, sports and churches are needed to support them through this stage of their lives.² Youth leaders and their teams must learn how to understand this context, to reach and influence adolescents in a positive way.

Although studies and knowledge about adolescence have improved in recent years, adults working with adolescents in the church context still do not know how to

¹ David Leo Levisky. *Adolescência - Reflexões Psicanalíticas* (São Paulo: Zagodoni Editora, 2013), 21.

² Kelly Dean Schwartz, "Adolescent Brain Development: An Oxymoron No Longer," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 6:2 (2008): 90, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed June 19, 2017).

deal with them. Youth workers must be equipped with theological and biblical skills as well as biology, psychology and sociology concerning adolescence. This multi-disciplinary education is essential to educate youth leaders to constructively help faith development during adolescence. Despite this, seminaries and colleges in São Paulo do not provide appropriate training in adolescence development, family and cultural issues.

Psychosocial Development of the Adolescent

Students looking for academic and practical training in youth ministry must learn about the psychosocial development of adolescents. It is crucial to understand how the behavior of adolescents is changing in order to better communicate with adolescents. Communication implies that adolescents can listen to adults and can be heard by adults.

At the beginning of twentieth century, G. Stanley Hall described adolescence as a period of “storm and stress” associated mainly in the development of sexuality. Almost a century later some authors reaffirm the idea that adolescence is a distressing, critical and violent stage of human development. In Brazil, Samuel Pfromm Netto and Dinah Martins S. Campos shared the same concept in traditional psychology.³ Brazilian society still considers this misconception as natural for adolescence. A great number of youth workers in São Paulo also consider this erroneous idea as true. Therefore, teaching about the psychosocial development of adolescents is a way to demystify this concept.

Adolescence begins in puberty with the first universal biological changes such as physical growth and development of primary and secondary sex characteristics. While the physical changes of puberty are universal for boys and girls, the beginning and duration

³ Luísa F. Habigzang, Eva Diniz and Silvia h. Koller, *Trabalhando com Adolescentes: Teoria e Intervenção Psicológica* (Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2014), 18.

of this process varies according to external factors such as nutrition and medical care.⁴ Research also suggests that puberty has been starting earlier, especially for females.⁵ This is important regarding the age of separation from children's ministry and youth ministry.

Whereas the beginning of adolescence is marked by biological changes, the end of adolescence is related to sociocultural factors. Many scholars studying adolescence agree with John Santrock's statement that adolescence begins in biology and ends in culture.⁶ In a megalopolis like São Paulo multicultural influences in different aspects of adolescence can be observed. Adolescence is extended in wealthy areas of the city because adolescents are pressured to study for much longer in order to enter the labor market. Adolescents in poor areas of the city must start working earlier. They cannot study for many years and their adolescence is shortened.⁷ Consequently, in a constantly changing culture it is more difficult to determine when adolescence ends.

Brain Development

Since the first studies on adolescence by Hall, sexual hormones have been regarded as responsible for changes in behavior and mood swings in adolescents. Recent research has pointed out that even though hormones influence behavior and mood, brain

⁴ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 44-45.

⁵ Steven Bonner, "Understanding the Changing Adolescent," in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, 28.

⁶ John Santrock, *Adolescência* (Porto Alegre: AMGH Editora Ltda, 2014), 50.

⁷ Teresa Helena Schoen-Ferreira and Maria Aznar-Farias, "Adolescência através dos Séculos," *Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa* 26:2 (April/June 2010): 232, (accessed May 27, 2017).

development and the neurotransmitters associated to it are responsible for the majority of behavior changes.⁸ This is why our students must have basic skills on this matter.

According to Daniel J. Siegel awareness of the main processes happening in the adolescent brain are in order to help navigate this stage in a positive way.⁹ The brain is remodeled through the carving away of neural connections and neurons and myelin formation that enables neurons to be more coordinated, balanced, faster and efficient. As a result of these changes the brain becomes more integrated.¹⁰

Nevertheless, this brain remodeling is based on genetics, as well as experiences in social and cultural contexts. Adolescents need their families and adults in the community of faith to help them develop in healthy and positive ways and to understand emotional and behavior challenges such as depression, low self-esteem, risk taking and high vulnerability to addictions.

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development during adolescence is about faith. Before reaching adolescence, children develop their faith based on the beliefs and values of their families and communities of faith. However, during adolescence, development of faith becomes more personal and adolescents are concerned about the significance and meaning of

⁸ Frances E. Jensen and Amy Ellis Nutt, *O Cérebro Adolescente: Guia de Sobrevivência para Criar Adolescentes e Jovens Adultos* (Porto Alegre: Editora Intrínscica, 2016), 27-29.

⁹ Daniel J. Siegel, *Cérebro Adolescente: a Coragem e a Criatividade da Mente Dos 12 aos 24 anos* (Porto Alegre: NVersos Editora, 2016), 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 81-83.

religion, beliefs and values.¹¹ Adolescents start to develop their capacity to think abstractly, which leads them to the big questions of humanity like the meaning of life and questions about God. This is an incredible opportunity for adults in the community of faith to engage them in these conversations. Religion and faith provide adolescents with social and moral norms and experiences that can influence the formation of identity.

Even if they are not aware of it, adolescents are on a search for God. The Church must seriously consider the opportunity they have as parents, church leaders and youth ministers to talk to them about God. Adults in the Christian Church erroneously believe that adolescents are not interested in faith, spirituality and God. A recent event in Brazil showed that youth are interested in religion, spirituality and faith. In July 2013, the Roman Catholic Church had the World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro. Over 3 million people attended the final mass¹² and a great percentage of them were adolescents and young adults. Pilgrims came from all over the world, but Brazilians were the majority.

Development scientists have studied about identity development in areas such as emotional, cognitive, physiological and sociological, but there is very little research about the spiritual dimension.¹³ Spirituality is not a separate area of identity development; instead it impacts all other areas. God works in each individual in unique and

¹¹ Anna B. Lopez, Virginia W. Huynh and Andrew J. Fuligni, "A Longitudinal Study of Religious Identity and Participation During Adolescence," in *Child Development* 82:4 (July/August 2011): 1297, Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed July 3, 2017).

¹² Sherron Kay George, "Report on Pope Francis and the 2013 World Youth Day," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 38:2 (2013): 77, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2015).

¹³ Anthony G. James, Mark A Fine and Linda Jo Turner, "An Empirical Examination of Youths' Perceptions of Spirituality as an Internal Developmental Asset During Adolescence," in *Applied Developmental Science* 16:4 (October 2012): 181-194, Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed July 4, 2017).

immeasurable ways. There is no manner to program, plan or predict how and when God will work in one's life.¹⁴ The Church can prepare, take care of, mentor and love adolescents in ways to help them be prepared for the work of God in their lives. Adolescents can experience the transcending of the self and be aware of the self in relationship to others. In a community of faith they have the opportunity to experience a relationship with God and with the community. It provides them a sense of belonging.

In an article by Nancy Going, she affirms: "Faith is a living relationship with Jesus."¹⁵ She interviewed adolescents from churches whose young people scored higher on a measure of Mature Christian Faith. The main point in Going's article is the discussion on how churches usually approach the matter of faith development during adolescence. She says that continuing to discuss this issue only from the perspective of various stage theories will miss the aspects of the work of God in adolescents' lives. There is a need to discuss faith in adolescence from a theological framework that is not considered in stage theories. This would be the only way to explore the various aspects of the nature of God's work in each part of human life.¹⁶

Identity Search

Identity search is central to adolescent's psychosocial development although it is also known as a process that continues in different ways throughout one's adult life. Clark states: "Adolescence, then is a psychosocial independent search for a unique

¹⁴ Powell, Griffin and Crawford, *Sticky Faith Youth Worker Edition*, 52.

¹⁵ Nancy Going, "The Way of Jesus: Adolescent Development as Theological Process," in *Journal of Youth Ministry* 9:2 (Spring 2011): 54, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed July 11, 2017).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

identity or separateness, with the end goals being a certain knowledge of who one is in relation to others, a willingness to take responsibility for who one is becoming, and a realized commitment to live with others in community.”¹⁷ The search for identity happens during adolescence, more specifically during mid-adolescence, when the brain shift occurs. By the ages of 14 or 15 cognitive development begins and the adolescent is able to interpret himself and his world in a new way.¹⁸

Eric Erickson’s model for human development from birth to death is one of the most well-known and first fundamentally psychosocial models. This model presents eight stages of development. The fifth stage is about identity search in adolescence.¹⁹ Erickson’s model is based on specific crises at each stage, which must be resolved in order to progress to the next stage of development. According to this model, adolescents must resolve their identity crisis after experimenting with different roles to finally choose who they want to be. James Marcia proposed a model that could be considered an extension of Erickson’s. Marcia does not work with stages, but with statuses, that in fact are never done or completed.²⁰ Although these two models were very important for the first studies on identity development, research affirms they are outdated models.²¹

Identity development changes according to gender, socioeconomic situation, family, context and culture. Postmodern culture brings up the idea of multiple selves in

¹⁷ Clark, *Hurt 2.0*, Kindle loc 488.

¹⁸ Michael J. Nakkula and Eric Toshalis, *Understanding Youth: Adolescent Development for Educators* (Boston: Harvard Educational Publishing Group, 2006), 205.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18, 19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

²¹ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 163.

relation to identity. Social context and different expectations adults and peers have might force adolescents to perform multiple ways in order to survive in school, in the family and even in the church.²² It must be clear that it is not pathological behavior, but self-protection to be accepted in different environments. Susan Harter affirms that the construction of multiples selves in different roles and relationships is a critical task of adolescence.²³ Although these issues may sound quite theoretical for students, it is important to understand identity and faith formation during adolescence.

All of these psychological and social science theories and models about finding one's own identity gives the false idea that people always choose who they want to be. Finding identities is one's job and responsibility. However, theologically thought about identity and finding where God is and how he acts shapes one's identity as well.

Adolescents ask the question: "Who am I?" and the Church must help them find their identity in Christ. The task is to tell them that, "God loves us not because of what we do or accomplish, but because God has created and redeemed us in love."²⁴ Clark affirms, "Our identity is firmly rooted in the doctrines of creation and redemption."²⁵ Adolescents live in a world that classifies them by their success in school, in sports and even in church. The Church must tell them the truth of God so they can say as the Psalmist says, "For you created my inmost being you knit me together in my mother's

²² Clark, *Hurt 2.0*, Kindle loc 1364.

²³ Susan Harter et al, "The Development of Multiple Role-related Selves During Adolescence," in *Development and Psychopathology* 9 (1997): 836, 837, <http://rcgd.isr.umich.edu/garp/articles/harter97.pdf> (accessed July 14, 2017).

²⁴ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York: The Crossroad, 1989), 30.

²⁵ Clark, *The Changing Face of Adolescence*, 55.

womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Ps 139:13-14).

Adolescents must know that after being created unique and special by God they were redeemed because God loves them. They were created, redeemed and “called to proclaim the Gospel together in community.”²⁶ Adolescents can also find a meaningful purpose for their lives as children of God.

The religious context of the community of faith and youth ministry must offer adolescents the opportunity to learn and experience that they are in relationship to God. They can understand they are sons and daughters of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Adolescents can see themselves as unique and valuable because God loves them. This is a positive influence in their identity formation.²⁷

Abandonment Culture

The idea of systemic abandonment of adolescents presented by Clark in *Hurt 2.0* and shared by other authors in the Anglo-Saxon world is virtually unknown in Brazil. Great parts of Brazilian society including parents, educators and even scholars believe adolescents are to blame regarding abandonment culture. It is common sense that presentism, consumerism and narcissism are the main philosophies characterizing post-

²⁶ Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*, 58.

²⁷ Pamela Ebstyn King, “Religion and Identity: The Role of Ideological, Social, and Spiritual Contexts,” in *Applied Developmental Science* 7:3 (2003): 200, Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed July 3, 2017).

modern adolescence²⁸ and that adolescents have turned their back on adults. Adults, in turn, are afraid, confused and no longer understand youth.

As a matter of fact, churches and even youth workers in Brazil share the same misconception. For those reasons teaching and debating systemic abandonment of adolescents by institutions and adults might be a great challenge in this course. Perhaps one strategic way of initiating that conversation with students is by approaching the issue of the isolation of adolescents to conceptualize it as the consequence of systemic abandonment and not its cause.

Although there are some cultural differences between North American families and Brazilian families, Brazilian adolescents are also experiencing the feeling of abandonment in the family,²⁹ in institutions like schools and churches and in the society as a whole.³⁰ It is worthwhile to explain that systemic abandonment is neither planned nor intentional, rather it is the result of great changes in our societal life, education and technology. Parents, for instance, are overwhelmed with financial concerns, with new technologies, excessive workloads, conflicts with their children and other difficulties of post-modern life. They end up outsourcing their children's education to teachers, coaches, youth workers and counselors. Clearly, those people and institutions are not able to substitute parents in care, attention, love and guidance because, while they can be a support for parents, they cannot take full responsibility for their children and they are

²⁸ Luciano de Carvalho Lirio, "Adolescentes Evangélicos do Século XXI," *Série Teses e Dissertações* 41 (São Leopoldo, RS: Editora Sinodal, 2013): 62-63.

²⁹ Neto and Osório, "Adolescentes - o Desafio de Entender e Conviver:" 941.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 383.

overwhelmed with the excess of responsibilities and duties requested from them. Children experience the worst consequences and youth that are left abandoned.

Even though the loss of social capital by Brazilian adolescents is evident for anyone working with them in schools, churches or other organizations in a metropolis like São Paulo, there is an absence of data or academic studies. The concept of social capital is mostly related to politics and economics concerning the State in Brazil. There is not a common understanding on the translation of “social capital” into Portuguese. Brazilian sociologists built their concept of social capital upon the works of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and of the American sociologist James S. Coleman. There is a common sense that social capital defined by those authors is more suitable to Brazilian context,³¹ than Putnam’s definition that’s main focus is not on the State. This sociologic debate is not one a focus of this paper; nevertheless it is necessary to explain this peculiarity concerning the concept of social capital in Brazil. As an example, there was just one study relating to the influence of social capital on alcohol drinking behavior among adolescents found in researching this paper,³² and some studies relating the influence of social capital on health conditions among adolescents in Brazil.

Adolescence Culture

Like never before in human history, change comes rapidly in culture and youth workers must pay attention to those changes. Students in this course must understand that

³¹ Maria Inez M. T. Walter, *Capital Social e Políticas Sociais no Brasil: Diferenças Regionais em População Beneficiária de Programas Sociais XI* (Campinas: Congresso Brasileiro de Sociologia 2003), 1-23,. http://www.sbsociologia.com.br/portal/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=127&limit=50&limitstart=0&order=name&dir=DESC&Itemid=171 (accessed September 23, 2018).

³² Kelly Oliva Jorge et al, “Alcohol Intake among Adolescent Students and Association with Social Capital and Socioeconomic Status,” *Ciencia & Saude Coletiva* 23:3 (2018): 741–750.

people in youth ministry are missionaries in a different context and in a different culture. As with every other cross-cultural missionary,³³ anyone interested in youth ministry must be a student of youth culture and its influences on adolescents. To be in the know with adolescent culture is essential to understanding their worldview for the purpose of communicating the Gospel to them and adopting them in the family of faith. There is an understanding that as culture is constantly changing, it is not possible to offer students a course able to equip them to be adolescent culture specialists. Consequently, the goal is to raise students' awareness about the importance of adolescent culture for youth ministry. It is not just a sociological issue; it is about understanding the cultural context with the aim of better reaching them with the Gospel.

Historically in Brazil youth ministry has worked in an evangelistic-attractional mode,³⁴ which implies attracting adolescents to the church by introducing some elements of the culture in the youth ministry program. It views culture as just an attraction and not a complex issue involving all areas of human life and society. Notwithstanding its limitations, this practice can be effective in some circumstances and during some times. A theological reflection on this practice shows it is not based on a theology of mission, as mission is not just an activity of the church where youth is considered. Mission is grounded in God's purpose of relationship and redemption of humankind. God invites the

³³ Walt Mueller, "Youth Ministry, Adoption and Culture," in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, 117.

³⁴ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 128.

Church to join him in this mission. God is a missionary Triune God that in order to accomplish his mission sent his Son and the Holy Spirit to the world.³⁵

God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to live among people. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” The Son of God came to live among people, in their culture and when they were still sinners. This is the incarnational ministry of Jesus according to the purposes of a missionary God. The missional and the incarnational movements of the Triune God are what Alan Hirsch calls a missional-incarnation impulse.³⁶

The missional-incarnational concept is fundamental to everyone ministering to adolescents. Students in this course must realize youth ministry is missional whenever they seriously understand adolescents have a distinct cultural system. They must know and understand how culture challenges and influences them. The cultural changes in family, school, peer relationships and the digital world are important to understand adolescents and to reach them with the Gospel message efficiently. Youth ministry is incarnational when it genuinely identifies and creates affinity with the adolescents the Church wants to reach³⁷ by respecting their culture.

³⁵ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 26-27.

³⁶ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 128.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 132-133.

Some of the most important issues concerning adolescent culture are the concept of the world beneath, globalization and the Internet. Clark coined the expression “world beneath”³⁸ in *Hurt* to define a marginalized underground society formed intuitively by adolescents in their effort to survive the challenges of adolescence. The world beneath is their response to systemic abandonment by adults and is an attempt to create a world with its own value system, rules and social norms. Although Clark speaks of North American adolescents, many Brazilian authors describe adolescent tribes in great urban centers like São Paulo. These tribes are described as a network of protection and development by adolescents due to systemic abandonment by adults in Brazilian urban society.³⁹ Peer relationships, their positive and negative influences are important in examining the context of the world beneath as they represent importance in the lives of adolescents.

Globalization is an important mark in adolescent culture today and every adult in youth ministry must consider it. There are some important factors affecting the globalization of culture such as progresses in technology and less personal interactions with parents, extended family and other adults that used to be around them, especially in a metropolis like São Paulo. Even though there are still some Brazilian cultural characteristics influencing adolescents in São Paulo there is not a typical local culture and their culture is much more similar to adolescent cultures in the Western world than to adult culture in São Paulo.

³⁸ Clark, *Hurt*, 44.

³⁹ Maria Cláudia Santos Lopes de Oliveira, Adriana Almeida Camilo and Cristina Valadares Assunção, “Tribos Urbanas como Contexto de Desenvolvimento de Adolescentes: Relação com Pares e Negociação de Diferenças,” in *Temas em Psicologia da SBP* 11:1 (2003): 62 (accessed February 4, 2018).

Internet has literally changed culture with a greater impact on generations that never knew a world without it. Along with advances in information technology it created not only a cyber culture, but also a virtual world that changed the notions of time and space in social life and the relationships. Students working with adolescents must consider this complex scenario brought by the Internet and high technology associated to it whenever they think about adolescent culture. Craig Van Gelder in *The Missional Church in Perspective*: claims “internet represents the dominant cultural metaphor of the twenty-first-century world—decentralized, highly participatory, fluid, self-organizing, geographically dispersed.”⁴⁰

Family

Due to the great influence of peers, culture and the Internet on adolescents today there is an erroneous idea that families and especially parents are not a great influence anymore. Their influence has decreased, but parents can still be considered the main influence on adolescents.⁴¹ Family structures and formats have dramatically changed in recent years and those changes are relevant as the family is responsible for providing a stable foundation for the development of children.⁴² Unfortunately, families are struggling to be the place of support and safety adolescents need and the Church as the family of God must join families in those difficult tasks.

⁴⁰ Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 128.

⁴¹ Neto and Osório, *Adolescentes - o Desafio de Entender e Conviver*, 998.

⁴² Clark, *Hurt 2:0*, 95.

The topic of family is very important for everyone working with adolescents, however youth workers are resistant to the idea of working with the family of the adolescents in youth ministry. Part of this resistance is due to the fragmentation of family and age groups within churches especially in a huge metropolis like São Paulo. Youth workers believe family is an exclusive responsibility of family ministry and this particular view will not contribute to the concept of an adoptive ministry or adoptive community defended here for youth ministry.

The fact that usually youth leaders and youth workers in Brazil are very young and are not properly equipped to work with adults or parents also enhances their resistance. On the other side, families believe youth workers have not the necessary knowledge or experience to deal with family issues. Consequently, this course must equip youth workers to better understand and relate to families and parents and build a network with other ministries in the community of faith like family ministry, women's ministry and children's ministry in a way they can work together.

CHAPTER 6

PRACTICES OF YOUTH MINISTRY

This discipline, albeit having a very practical approach, must be grounded in a robust theological framework and knowledge on different aspects of adolescence. Students will be led to properly integrate theology, psychosocial and spiritual development of adolescents as well as adolescence culture, in order to develop and analyze their own ministry practices as practical theologians and according to their youth group.¹ This multidisciplinary framework to youth ministry practice will be helpful whenever they have to deal with the increasing demands of local churches and parents and within a constantly changing cultural scenario. In brief, students must be able to discern the value of their practices in order to respond to the call of God to minister to youth. Models of youth ministry will also be studied in this module.

In Brazilian churches, especially in São Paulo, youth ministries practices have been considered merely as actions to provide a welcoming environment, programs to entertain and facilitating relationships, eventually with some acceptable degree of Bible

¹ Thomas E. Bergler, "Taming the Juvenilization of American Christianity: Developing Youth Ministry Leaders who can Help the Church Grow Up," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 9:1 (Fall 2010): 7, Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed February 6, 2018).

knowledge. This misleading view of youth ministry practices is far from the ideal for an adoptive youth ministry that is committed to embracing, nurturing and accompanying youth so that they can be part of the family of God through the local church.² This course strongly suggests a paradigm shift in youth ministry practices that will unavoidably lead to a shift in youth ministry roles. The importance of entertainment and fun in youth ministry practices cannot be overlooked, but can never be the primary focus.³

The ultimate goal of youth ministry practices is “to make disciples” as Jay Sedwick states in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*.⁴ In Matthew 28:19 the main command of Jesus is to “make disciples” and the other commands explain how disciples are made. Although some authors argue the verb to go is only used as an introductory circumstantial participle coordinating the main verb “make disciples,”⁵ there is an agreement about the importance of verbs to baptize and to teach. Youth ministry practices must always focus on the commandment to make disciples.

Even though there are some linguistic discussions about the meaning or function of the verb to go in the Great Commission, it is important to discuss its relevance in making disciples in youth ministry. Assuming the missional nature of youth ministry, the command is to go to where adolescents are, instead of simply trying to attract them to a

² Clark, “Adoptive Youth Ministry:” 21.

³ Michael Hryniuk, “Creating Space for God: Toward a Spirituality of Youth Ministry,” *Religious Education* 100:2 (2005): 143, 144.

⁴ Jay Sedwick Mueller, “Teaching for Adoptive Ministry,” in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, 304.

⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, *New American Commentary Volume 22 - Matthew* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1992), 360, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed February 10, 2018).

program or events of the church, as historically youth ministries in Brazil has attempted to do. This means going to the “world beneath,” or sitting on the steps of this world.⁶

Making disciples is a task that is not limited to the length and physical location of a youth ministry as it is actually a lifelong journey. It is not just another program, but rather it is the very core of youth ministry. Students must know that it is not a task for the youth ministry only, but a task of the whole community of faith as it has already been said in the section on the theological foundations for youth ministry.

Every person involved in youth ministry must consider that the first step in disciple making is to break the barriers of distrust, indifference and the emotional gap that has been created by adults in Brazilian churches. The main goal in youth ministry is to bring adolescents into the community of faith to be part of the family of God; the first step is to go into their world to establish trust, care and relationships. Adolescents are not interested in programs, but rather need meaningful relationships with caring adults.

For the purpose of this course four practices are considered essential to making disciples by teaching and taking the Gospel to adolescents: discipleship, teaching, pastoral care and programming. Other practices will derive from those four practices. Communication is key in each of these practices. Knowledge acquired about adolescent development and the changes they go through, as well as the continuous research on culture surrounding them are fundamental to establishing good communication with youth. Due to the cultural and age distances separating adults from adolescents, youth

⁶ Clark and Powell, *Deep Ministry in a Shallow World*, Kindle loc 1068.

workers must be attentive to these barriers whenever communicating with them.⁷ For this reason, the module about Adolescence is a prerequisite for the module about Practices of Youth Ministry.

Discipleship

The main is that students have biblical and practical understandings of discipleship. They must realize discipleship is not a program in youth ministry, rather it is an essential action grounded in the Bible. Discipleship involves relationship, teaching and Christian life practice. As it is deeply related to faith development and spiritual formation,⁸ students shall conclude it takes much time and request the engagement of everyone related to youth in the congregation and in the family as well.

Biblical discipleship for adolescents in the Brazilian context means paradigms must be broken as currently local churches consider discipleship a program indented for adults only. They also consider it incidental for those adolescents that leaders like to be around or are worthy of the investment of time and work. Therefore, it is important that students are reminded about the importance of youth being adopted by the community of faith and that discipleship is a divine call to make disciples of all nations, cultures and ages, and not of only the ones they love or believe are worthy of their efforts. Youth leaders also incorrectly consider discipleship as a higher level of the spiritual journey for Christian adolescents instead of a commandment of Jesus Christ to all Christians.

⁷ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 923-957.

⁸ Tony Jones, "Spiritual Formation: It's a Matter of Time," in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, 215.

The relational aspect of discipleship is as important as the content taught or more important than the content as some authors affirm,⁹ although after research I believe they are equally important. Despite the importance of relationship for discipleship, this might be one of the most complex ideas to students because of the prevalent notion in Brazilian context. Although there are no data or research available about discipleship in Brazilian churches, even among adults, in Brazil discipleship has been considered as a program offered by churches and content is assumed to be the most important issue. A relational environment is a *sine qua non* condition for biblical discipleship in youth ministry. Disciples will be made amongst adolescents only when they are loved, cared for and adopted into the community of faith.

Relationship as part of discipleship is deeply related to the relationships of the disciples to Jesus Christ. Although this might seem like something students easily understand, the risk of making disciples in “my own image, instead of the image of Jesus” cannot be ignored. Youth leaders are disciples commanded to disciple adolescents so that they might also be disciples of Jesus. There must remain awareness that Jesus is the only great teacher and his followers are responding to his call to help adolescents follow him. And finally, youth leaders must know and teach adolescents that this divine process is only made possible by the action of the Holy Spirit in all of their lives. The

⁹ Malan Nel, “Imagine Making Disciples in Youth Ministry . . . That Will Make Disciples,” *HTS Theologiese Studies* 71:3 (August 14, 2015): 8, Browzine Library (accessed July 16, 2017).

contribution of the community of faith must be highlighted when the Holy Spirit is permanently active in it connecting adolescents and adults as the Body of Christ.¹⁰

The course shall also discuss the teaching aspect embedded in discipleship. It is important that youth leaders do not consider discipleship as an alternative way of teaching because the focus is relationship.¹¹ Teaching in discipleship is not about passing on information about God or the Bible, rather it is about teaching others to be disciples of Jesus. Students shall teach adolescents how to follow Jesus in every area of their lives. There is a thin line between teaching adolescents to know and follow Jesus because as they choose to trust Jesus with their whole life, teaching them to have moralistic approach to life can simply serve the purpose of making them feel good and happy. The discussion of what Smith and Denton call Moralistic Therapeutic Deism¹² will be very helpful in this matter, even though it was the result of research and observations on religion and spirituality of adolescents in United States, not in Brazil.

Relationship and teaching work together in discipleship to prepare adolescents to be open to the work of God through the Holy Spirit so that they may have their lives transformed. Discipleship is a process that takes much more time than the time adolescents spend in youth ministry, but youth workers have the privilege of taking part in this divine transformation and cannot fail the call of God to join him in his mission.

¹⁰ Michael D. Langford, "Spirit-driven Discipleship: A Pneumatology of Youth Ministry," *Theology Today* 71:3 (October 2014): 335-336, Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed July 17, 2017).

¹¹ Malan Nel, "Imagine Making Disciples in Youth Ministry," 7.

¹² Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 162-164.

They will help adolescents initiate a Christian life as a result of this transformation to glorify God.

Finally, evangelism must be addressed as a theme of discipleship although there is not agreement among different authors. Evangelism is not a program or special activity of youth ministry, rather it is one of the essences of Christianity and consequently of discipleship. In Brazilian churches and youth ministries, evangelism is only about salvation and attracting adolescents to church programs and events. However, when evangelizing the goal is not only about helping youth to guarantee a place in heaven for eternity, but it is about helping them have a commitment to be Jesus' apprentices for their entire life,¹³ and being adopted in the community of faith. Evangelism and discipleship are different processes that are intrinsically linked. As Nel suggests, the separation between discipleship and evangelism may be the cause of the decline of discipleship and true evangelism in today's churches.¹⁴ The final goal in this matter is that students must be able to cast the biblical vision of discipleship to their entire team, adult community and adolescents as an essential step for the development of faithful followers of Jesus and for the adoption of adolescents by the youth ministry and the church.

Teaching

Teaching is a crucial practice of the Church and of the youth ministry as well. Every area in youth ministry is involved in teaching adolescents the Word of God and how to live as someone who commits her own life to Christ and is adopted into the

¹³ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1998), 332.

¹⁴ Malan Nel, "Imagine Making Disciples in Youth Ministry," 3.

family of God. Students must have that broader concept of teaching adolescents as adopted children of God.

Students of this course are required to have some basic knowledge in Bible literature, biblical theology and systematic theology. They have the choice to attend courses in those areas that are offered by the seminary as elective courses or to attend equivalent courses in other schools or institutions. Although those courses are elective for this post-graduate course, they must be considered as necessary prerequisites to anyone teaching the Bible to youth or any other group.

Preaching is also a discipline offered by the seminary that is essential preparation for anyone learning how to do exegesis of a text and culture in order to deliver the message of God. Obviously, they may learn how to properly communicate the message to adolescents as a specific audience. Adolescents are at a developmental stage where they are questioning everything from their identity to faith. Youth ministry must be a safe place to express their doubts.¹⁵ This means not only that students shall teach adolescents in a different style, but they also should be prepared to carefully handle their questions about God and Christian faith.

My personal experience in teaching youth leaders not only in *Seminario Teologico Servos de Cristo*, but also around Brazil for the last six years, has shown that the content of what should be taught to adolescents is probably the main concern for youth leaders. In spite of this concern this course shall not define what should be taught, rather shall equip students to be critical thinkers, choosing what they should teach to the

¹⁵ Kara Powell and Brad Griffin, "Can I Ask That? Imagine a Church Big Enough for Teenagers' Hard Questions," in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, 223, 224.

specific age group they are working with. Consequently, youth ministers and leaders must have a good knowledge of Bible and theology combined with a good knowledge of psychosocial development of adolescents.¹⁶ Discussions on the pros and cons of textual and topic teachings will be done in order to students choose which one better meets the demands of their ministries and groups.

As mentioned above, communication must be considered as an essential part of this teaching task. The means and methods they might use to better communicate with adolescents are mere tools and can never be more important than the content. Whenever they become more important, good communication in teaching adolescents can be easily misconceived with entertaining adolescents.¹⁷ Youth ministers must always have in mind that the goal of communication in youth ministry is teaching adolescents about God and His Word.

Concluding, the main goal of teaching in youth ministry is more concerned with life transformation than with the amount of information¹⁸ adolescents will receive on theology and Bible. Theological and biblical information are central in teaching, but youth leaders miss the target in ministry if there is no transformation in the lives of adolescents. Teaching is a process that can take time and depends on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the teacher and the student.

¹⁶ Andrew S. Jack and Barrett W. McRay, "Tassel Flipping: A Portrait of the Well-educated Youth Ministry Graduate," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 4:1 (September 2005): 53-73, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed March 27, 2018), 66-68.

¹⁷ Clark and Powell, *Deep Ministry in a Shallow World*, Kindle loc 2180.

¹⁸ Jay Sedwick Mueller, "Teaching for Adoptive Ministry," 312.

Pastoral Care

Despite its importance, pastoral care has been neglected¹⁹ by churches and other religious organizations throughout Brazil. Most of the times, “youth leader” even replaces the title “youth pastor” even if the person leading youth ministry has the role of a pastor. The reasons for this are cultural and from the religious tradition as explained by Howard Andruejol in the chapter about a Latin American perspective on adoptive youth ministry in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*. Andruejol has experience in youth ministry in Guatemala and among the Spanish-speaking countries on the continent. Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking country in Latin America, but despite some minor cultural differences, it is very similar to the Spanish-speaking countries when considering the state of youth ministry.

It was not a surprise to read about the implications of a culture of oppression and power in church for youth ministry in Latin America as youth ministry in Brazil faces an analogous situation, especially in the absence of pastoral care. Gathering information for that chapter and my personal experience in Brazil helped me conclude that teaching Brazilian students about this topic shall be a great challenge. Breaking those paradigms is necessary for a biblical approach of pastoral practice in youth ministry.

The biblical teachings on pastoral care are more evident when Jesus presents himself as the Pastor (Jn 10:11 - “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep”), although it is prevalent theme throughout the Bible. John 10:1-18 espouses the role of the shepherd and the sheep and this passage must be examined with

¹⁹ Howard Andruejol, “Adoptive Youth Ministry: A Latin American Perspective,” in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, 261.

the concept of pastor in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Orient as a real guardian of the people of God. This and many other biblical texts show that the pastoral activity demands attention, time, responsibility, guidance, love, safety, relationships and healing.²⁰ Pastoring is people oriented instead of program oriented.

Understanding activities involved in pastoral care might be simple for students, while understanding the need for pastoral care in youth ministry may be more difficult, as in Brazil youth ministry has been predominantly program-oriented. On the other side, the concept of adoptive youth ministry, which permeates all the disciplines in this course, is related to people and relationships and not to programs. Pastoral care, as any other youth ministry practice, must be grounded on the fundamentals of the adoptive youth ministry.

Pastoral care is necessary, but can also be overwhelming for youth pastors, as it demands time, attention and relationships. Small groups might be a tool for pastoring adolescents, especially in larger ministries. Intentional pastoring in small groups might take planning, recruiting, training and pastoring small group leaders, but the results will benefit everyone involved. Even when small groups are originally created for Bible study or relationships they can be tools for intentional pastoring by trained adult leaders.

Counseling is another pastoral skill; nonetheless this course will not develop this topic due to the specificity and complexity of the subject. It is necessary to point out the importance of counseling for adolescents and their families when needed. The seminary usually offers intensive courses on counseling and though they are not focused on youth, students of youth ministry can benefit from the counseling foundations taught.

²⁰ Ibid., 263.

Programming

Programming or administration is task-oriented and involves planning, organizing and staffing²¹ for the purpose of this course. It does not mean that because it is task-oriented it must be considered less important than practices that are people-oriented, like pastoring. In fact, all of the practices must complement each other for a holistic approach to youth ministry. Programming provides the structure and organization for other practices more people-oriented and must never overpower them.²² It must be used as a means to help people in ministry accomplish the mission of God.

In the Brazilian context, youth ministers are, most times, more required to direct programs, organize and plan than to disciple, teach and pastor. It happens because most churches, organizations and even parents view youth leaders as people that must run programs to keep adolescents busy and out of what they consider secular activities. A successful youth ministry in Brazil is a ministry with successful programs, an increasing number of adolescents, many activities focused on entertainment and a cool young leader who is more a pop star than a minister. Therefore, when youth ministers understand the real function of programming in their ministries, they shall be more prepared to deal with those requests and use programming to support their practices.

Planning and organizing in ministry are helpful whenever they are means to make decisions, to achieve goals and to coordinate time, people and activities. Planning and

²¹ Houston Heflin, *Youth Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Youth Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 56.

²² Houston Heflin, "Walking Ancient Paths: Revisiting Roles for Service in Youth Ministry," *Christian Education Journal* 3:2 (2006): 316-329. <https://fuller.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.fuller.idm.oclc.org/docview/205449868?accountid=11008> (accessed September 22, 2018), 321.

organizing are means to an end and must be submitted to theological reflection. As a matter of fact, practical theology must be at the center of practices in ministry and students will be encouraged to reflect on this. Based on an exercise²³ proposed by Pamela Erwin in her essay “Youth Ministry Education,” the class proposes a similar exercise for students to help them understand that their convictions will reflect on their actions in ministry. They might be requested to decide whether a lock-in aligns or not with the biblical concept of communion as well as with the need adolescents have for deep relationships. For this exercise they will have to intersect biblical knowledge with psychosocial studies on adolescent needs to finally decide if and how a lock-in is a tool for their convictions on healthy relationships.

Programs and activities are definitely necessary in youth ministry and through this discipline students will be equipped to respond to the needs of their communities by planning for time, finances, material and human resources, and priorities from a practical theological perspective. As programming involves too many skills, youth ministers must realize those things they are capable of, and those functions that require looking for help within the community of faith. This leads to an important discussion on staffing.

Staffing has a practical focus, and some could argue that there is no need to address this issue in the course, because there are plenty of books, articles and websites on the most practical aspects of youth ministry available to youth leaders. This might be true in North America, but is not true for Brazil, where the absence of publications in Portuguese concerning those issues justifies the presence of this topic in this module.

²³ Erwin, “Youth Ministry Education,” 14.

Staffing involves two facets - recruiting and identifying persons best gifted for specific roles in ministry. Staffing might be one of the more difficult practices for youth leaders for a variety of reasons, such as the expected stereotype of youth workers in churches,²⁴ the understanding of the lack of responsibilities of older generations over younger generation and the misunderstanding of the concept of the family of God represented by communities of faith. The expected stereotypes of youth workers prevent people that do not fit to even consider joining youth ministry. Due to the understanding of no responsibility for older generations to younger generations, people do not realize youth ministry is everyone's job. When people have an erroneous concept of the Church as the family of God, they will be unwilling to join youth ministry in the task of adopting youth in the family of God.

Models of Youth Ministry

This unit of the module was designed to work as conclusion, in which students will have the opportunity to take part in a conversation on theoretical foundations of youth ministry. It may sound controversial that the conclusion of a course on youth ministry practices is about theoretical foundations, but the entire content of the course will point out the importance of theory for good practice. Definitely, the goal of this unit is not to present a variety of models for youth ministry, so students can choose the one that best fit his context. This unit does not have a pragmatic approach as students can

²⁴ Bill MacPhee, "Adoptive Leadership," in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, 283.

easily find literature on this and as practical theologians they must “examine more deeply what youth ministry is”²⁵ in their context.

Even though this course is highly focused on the model of adoptive youth ministry, a discussion on that model and other models will be an enriching experience for students. By this point of the course they might have good foundations in theology, in psychosocial development of adolescents and culture, which enable them to critically analyze models of youth ministry and their own ministries. Students can bring the diversity of contexts among their ministries to the conversation for the benefit of everyone involved.

Despite the barrier of language and culture, the book *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century: Five Views* could be a starting point for a discussion on models of youth ministry. Considering that there is no perfect model, the content of the five views can be explored and discussed by students. Even though many of the views or models are present in the youth ministry scenario in Brazil, the important issue to be discussed is the interaction of theology and social sciences for the development of a model.

²⁵ Clark, *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century*, xvi.

CHAPTER 7

PEOPLE IN YOUTH MINISTRY

This final module focuses on people in youth ministry and although it might seem a very pragmatic topic, there is a need for theological reflection to better address this issue. First, there must be definitions of which the people involved in youth ministry are based on biblical and theological foundations. Youth ministry is part of the community of faith that is the gathering of people of God. Therefore, based on theological convictions that the community of faith is the family of God it can be concluded that not only youth workers are involved in youth ministry, but also parents, church leadership and staff, youth and the whole congregation.¹

The concept of the community of faith as the family of God is essential to approach the issue of people involved in youth ministry from the adoptive perspective. For the last two decades, churches in North America have tried to create programs strictly age-specific for adolescents in order better reach their needs and very recently churches in Brazil managed to do the same. Although they all had the best intentions, this strategy proved to be wrong when the number of young people leaving the Church increased at

¹ Philippa Strong, “Effective Youth Ministry: Embracing a Family-Orientated Approach: Original Research,” *In Die Skriflig* 48:1 (2014), 3.

alarming rates.² Along with this, recent studies on psychosocial development have proved the positive importance of caring adults in the lives of adolescents, which reinforced that isolation of youth from adults and from the adult congregation in church contexts was a mistake. Although churches in Brazil are still blaming adolescents for their evasion, in North America research and studies have tried to offer churches new and biblical approaches to solve the problem.

One such resource, *Sticky Faith*, was developed at the Fuller Youth Institute and offered many contributions. It demonstrates an important insight about the reverse of the ministry adult-to-kid ratio from 1:5 to 5:1.³ Clark suggests that instead of having one adult to five adolescents in youth ministry, there should be five adults caring for each adolescent. This ratio of 5:1 might seem impossible to achieve in the Brazilian context with many youth ministries still in isolation from the congregation. The idea is not to have five Sunday school teachers or five small group leaders for each adolescent, but rather to have five adults willing to invest in the life of each adolescent in different ways.

This idea might not only be based on sociological or psychosocial fundamentals, but also directly connected to theological fundamentals already explored in this paper. The idea of more adults involved with youth might have foundations in the two analogies of biblical youth ministry. Whether one considers the analogy of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12–27) or the analogy of the family of God (Jn 1:12-13) for the community of faith, the idea of children, youth and adults living in community to join in the mission of

² Clark, “Adoptive Youth Ministry:” 20.

³ Clark and Powell, *Deep Ministry in a Shallow World*, 100.

God is present. The need for the whole community to be involved in youth ministry as in other ministries is based on this premise.

Meanwhile, as happens in almost every area of society, the Church cannot be not guilty of segregating age groups.⁴ There must be awareness that this community or family-based principle is biblical, but also counter-cultural and a great challenge for youth ministers, parents and other adults in the church and even for youth. Therefore, one of the goals of this module is to provide youth workers useful information to overcome this cultural obstacle. Psychosocial development of adolescents and how they can benefit in healthy relationships with non-parental adults is an important consideration.⁵ The next paragraphs will develop the main concepts of all the people involved in youth ministry.

Youth Workers

For the purpose of this paper youth workers will be separated in two main categories: youth leader or youth pastor and youth worker for all other people directly involved in youth ministry. This division is not due to hierarchical positions, but to different roles and tasks.

The youth leader or youth pastor works as the main leader of the youth ministry and is responsible for coordinating the ministry tasks as well as pastoring adults and adolescents in ministry.⁶ He must have or develop leadership skills for this position. The youth leader is also responsible for casting the vision of ministry for youth workers,

⁴ Brenda Snailum, "Integrating Intergenerational Ministry Strategies into Existing Youth Ministries: What Can a Hybrid Approach Be Expected to Accomplish?" *Journal of Youth Ministry* 11:2 (Spring 2013): 18-19.

⁵ Neto and Osório, *Adolescentes - o Desafio de Entender e Conviver*, 383.

⁶ Steven Argue, "Rethinking Church Strategies and Structures," in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*, 324.

parents, adolescents and the congregation. Youth leaders should not view this position as a stepping-stone towards a higher position in church, but consider it an important task for supporting parents and the whole community in their mission to embrace youth in the community of faith and take part in their spiritual journey.⁷

Due to the multiple tasks involved in youth ministry, youth pastors must recruit other adults and even young adults that are willing to join the youth ministry community to serve youth and their families. Youth pastors must have in mind that these adults are in their own personal faith journey and need to be pastored and cared for. Youth workers also need to be equipped for the specific tasks in ministry.

Youth pastors constantly face the challenge of pastoring and equipping youth workers while they still pastor youth and support their parents. Instead of being overwhelmed by those challenges, they must realize that investing in the lives of youth workers is the biblical way to multiply their ministry as Moses did in Exodus 18:17-26. Youth leaders are not gifted in all the areas needed in youth ministry, therefore they should be wise to strategically recruit youth workers with gifts that complement their own.⁸ However, youth leaders must have in mind that they must also provide youth workers with a healthy youth ministry community in which they can fully use their gifts for the common good while they continue to grow in their spiritual journey.⁹ In the view of an adoptive youth ministry, youth workers are not recruited only for the good of adolescents and their families, but also for the good of the whole community and

⁷ Strong, "Effective Youth Ministry," 3.

⁸ Heflin, "Walking Ancient Paths," 326.

⁹ Argue, "Rethinking Church Strategies and Structures," 325.

for their own good. All Christians are called to serve in the Kingdom of God; so serving must be part of a Christian life.

Youth workers must be willing to enter the adolescent world and also permit adolescents to get to know them in the adult world in order to establish true relationships. All action in youth ministry must be intentional in diminishing and even finishing the segregation of youth. At this point of the course, students are aware that non-parental adults can support adolescents in their search for identity, autonomy and belonging as well as in their faith formation.

Youth leaders and youth workers are not the primary influence on adolescents and can never substitute parents, but within the youth ministry adoptive view, they must assist parents in the spiritual development of their children. While some biblical texts teach that older generations are responsible to teach younger generations about God, many other texts affirm that parents are primarily responsible for their children's faith formation. These are not contradictory instructions of God but are complementary instructions. Parents have primary responsibility over their children's spiritual lives and the community of faith must support them in this important and complex task.

Unfortunately, some research in North America shows that a large majority of Christian parents believe churches are responsible for the spiritual development of their children.¹⁰ Although there is no research comparable in Brazil, youth leaders are usually overwhelmed by parents that transfer them the responsibility of their children's spiritual life. This is unfair to adolescents and brings some anger and hurt feelings between parents and youth leaders.

¹⁰ Strong, "Effective Youth Ministry," 5.

As parents are under a lot of pressure, whether in their professional or personal lives, they do not have time to dedicate to their children. Some might feel they are not prepared to guide their children in their spiritual journeys because they are facing great challenges in their own spiritual lives. Whatever the reason, adolescents suffer from abandonment in their spirituality as in many other areas of their lives. Parents need the support of the church, and youth ministry can be in a strategic position to help them as both are interested in welcoming and embracing adolescents in the community of faith.

In times of great change in adolescence and consequently in youth ministry, the role of youth pastors must be reimagined,¹¹ as Steven Argue suggests in his chapter in *Adoptive Youth Ministry*. Churches and youth ministries have been dealing with an increasing number of adolescents leaving, especially during times of transition.

Argue points out some causes for this phenomenon. One of these is fragmentation in churches created by what he calls “siloed ministries,” that are ministries so enclosed in themselves that they do not relate to other ministries. Transitions are another cause for this, such as when young people “graduate” from a siloed ministry and need to transition to another ministry, they cannot make it, for obvious reasons, and end up leaving the church. There is also the fact that as adolescents get older attrition increases and leaving the church might seem a solution. Although these observations were based in North American, the same phenomenon can be empirically observed in the Brazilian context.

¹¹ Argue, “Rethinking Church Strategies and Structures,” 329-331.

In order to address these issues, Argue affirms that the role of youth pastors must be to build bridges between the old and the new.¹² This is a fantastic metaphor for the fragmentation faced in churches today with many ministries building silos or high towers. He says, “Bridge builders are advocates who start where young people are and provide intentional ways to walk with young people until they are willing to let go and journey to the other side of the bridge.”¹³ Students must be prepared to be bridge builders willing to meet young people where they are and to walk with them during the many transitions they face during adolescence.

Youth leaders and youth workers must be concerned with the threats and opportunities for ministry and youth and prepared to rethink their roles. The theological fundamentals for youth ministry remain the same. However, adolescents and their context are constantly changing and pastors must be able to continue protecting, guiding and feeding them with the Word of God in the new and challenging contexts.

Parents

Parents and youth ministry must be in constant partnership as both are interested in welcoming adolescents in the community of faith and joining them in their spiritual journeys. Although this partnership has not been properly addressed in many churches and ministries recently, youth leaders must be willing to restore this. Perhaps the reason for this separation is that both parents and youth ministries have thought erroneously about this partnership. Usually when parents approach youth ministry they think about

¹² Ibid., 330.

¹³ Ibid.

what youth ministry can offer them and forget to think about what they can contribute to youth ministry. Youth ministry has the same approach to parents, usually thinking about what parents can offer or how they can be used in youth ministry, forgetting to think about ways they can contribute to parents. Consequently, they build a partnership, but rather a utilitarian relationship. When the community of faith and parents are true partners, they provide better conditions for the spiritual development of adolescents.¹⁴

Once again, the fragmentation of churches might be a factor devaluating this partnership whenever family ministry, youth ministry and children ministry do not work together as if they were completely separate ministries. These ministries can plan programs that fight for the attention of families without thinking of programs for the whole family. They are different ministries, but they must work together for the good of children and families. As mentioned before in this paper, youth ministers can also be bridge builders in this situation.

Congregation

Within the adoptive youth ministry view, the congregation is the family of God (Jn 1:12-13), the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27), and youth ministry is part of the family, part of the body. Congregations must really be the family of God and know their essential role in welcoming and embracing youth into to the community of faith as well as nurturing and walking alongside youth in their spiritual journey.¹⁵ Youth leaders can

¹⁴ Allen Jackson, "Thinking Critically about Families and Youth Ministries," in *Adoptive Youth Ministry* 153.

¹⁵ Strong, "Effective Youth Ministry," 5.

remind the congregation and the youth of the opportunity both have to engage in fruitful relationships.

It is important to emphasize that the adoptive vision is not merely creating a more intergenerational environment inside a congregation or offering an intergenerational program, although these can be positive for youth.¹⁶ It goes beyond this; the entire congregation is reminded that they are family—brothers and sisters—living in community. It is not an intergenerational program, but rather a biblical way of being the family of God on earth.

Different generations living in community as brothers and sisters, though a biblical concept, is also counter-cultural to Brazilian society even in Christian congregations. According to a leading Brazilian gerontologist, José Carlos Ferrigno, in Brazil the total social separation of generations, especially in large urban centers like São Paulo can be seen. Elderly people are not valued in Brazil enhancing the generation gap and making more difficult the interaction of people of different ages in the congregation.

Despite the cultural barriers in this context, isolating youth from the adult congregation also separates them from important non-parental adult relationships that might have a positive influence on adolescent development.¹⁷ Adolescents need adult role models on their journey toward spiritual maturity. On the other hand, the congregation can only experience the contributions of adolescents to the community of faith when they are able to serve alongside adults for a common good.

¹⁶ Clark, “Adoptive Youth Ministry:” 21.

¹⁷ Snailum, “Integrating Intergenerational Ministry Strategies into Existing Youth Ministries:” 13.

Youth

It might seem redundant to say youth are among the people involved in youth ministry, but from an adoptive view of ministry, all siblings have an important role. Although youth are the main target of youth ministry practices, efforts must reach further towards youth empowerment.¹⁸ It will help adolescents develop competences and confidence and even discover their leadership skills. However, it is important to have intentional actions to those objectives, as neither competences and confidence nor leadership will happen casually.

Peer influence is also a very important issue concerning the role of youth in youth ministry. While it is easier to think of negative influences, youth ministers must think about the positive peer influences in youth ministry. Role models are very important to youth and same age role models being a valuable influence for adolescents must not be ignored.¹⁹ Adolescents might be facing the same challenges in their lives in the spiritual journey and can help and support each other when possible.

Youth ministry can be a place where youth might develop same age relationships by providing a safe and warm environment for adolescents. Adolescents need to develop a sense of belonging and peer relationships, together with significant relationships with adults, can play an important role in this process. In the context of youth ministry, adolescents can experience a sense of belonging when they are able to relate to each

¹⁸ Powell, *Sticky Faith Youth Worker Edition*, 156.

¹⁹ Snailum, "Integrating Intergenerational Ministry Strategies into Existing Youth Ministries:" 10.

other, developing meaningful relationships and a shared value system.²⁰ Actually, youth ministries and parents complain that adolescents are engaged in many negative peer relationships in contexts like school, neighborhoods or even in the cyber space. Meanwhile, they are not intentionally offering opportunities for positive peer relationships in the church or at home.

Students will be encouraged to consider all of the people involved in youth ministry with balance and care for the benefit of adolescents.

²⁰ Ibid., 11.

PART THREE

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 8

SYLLABUS AND TEACHING GUIDES

As a conclusion for this paper a syllabus for each module was developed according to the requirements and model provided by *Seminário Teológico Servo de Cristo*, where this course will be fully implemented in 2020. As this seminary does not require a teaching guide or provide a model of a lesson plan for teachers, this chapter will include a model of a teaching guide or lesson plan.

In the essay “The Purposes of a Syllabus,”¹ Parks and Harris propose that a syllabus has three major functions. A syllabus might serve as a contract, as a permanent record and as an aid to student learning. As a contract between the teacher and the student, it serves to set forth what is expected during the term of the contract and to guide the behaviors of both parties. As a permanent record it serves to demonstrate the effectiveness of an instructor or academic unit and to document what is covered in a course - at what level, scope and depth, and for what kinds of credit. And it can serve as effective facilitator of student learning by providing information that assists students in the learning process.

¹ Jay Parkes and Mary B. Harris, “The Purposes of a Syllabus,” *College Teaching* 50:2 (Spring 2002): 1.



SYLLABUS
POSTGRADUATE IN YOUTH MINISTRY STUDIES -
MODULE 1

Course: Theology and Practical Theology of Youth Ministry	Area: Practical Theology and Pastoral Studies
Class: PYMS	Year /Semester: 2020/ 1o. Semester
Instructor: Ana Lucia Bedicks	Hour/Credit: 40 hours/ 2 credits

Course Description

This course is designed for Module 1 students pursuing the Postgraduate degree in Youth Ministry Studies. This course provides foundations of biblical theology and practical theology of youth ministry. The course will help students to apply practical theology to analyze context of youth ministry and reflect theologically about it towards a faithful action. The issues covered are: biblical theology of youth ministry; practical theology models; practical theology of youth ministry and practical theology of adoptive youth ministry.

Course Goal

The course goal is to teach the basic fundamentals of practical theology with an emphasis on youth ministry.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students will be able:

1. To demonstrate knowledge on biblical theology of youth ministry
2. To apply practical theological models in order to analyze the state of youth ministries in their context.
3. To reflect theologically about youth ministry issues.

Course Format

This course is an intensive part-time one-week course that will meet daily, Monday through Friday from 7:00 pm to 10:30 pm.

Evaluation

- Pre-assignment: Read the minimum of 500 pages from the selected literature, books or articles. For each book or article read, students must write a 1 or 2 pages reflection paper highlighting the main concepts or ideas presented and how they can

be applied in their ministry. This assignment will represent 30 percent of the total grade.

- Post-assignment: Write a 7 to 10 pages research paper directly related to the content and parameters of the course on a specific topic to be chosen by them or by the teacher. This assignment will represent 70 percent of the total grade.

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**SYLLABUS
POSTGRADUATE IN YOUTH MINISTRY STUDIES -
MODULE 2**

Course: Adolescence	Area: Practical Theology and Pastoral Studies
Class: PYMS	Year /Semester: 2020/ 1o. Semester
Instructor: Ana Lucia Bedicks	Hour/Credit: 40 hours/ 2 credits

Course Description

This course is designed for Module 2 students pursuing the Postgraduate degree in Youth Ministry Studies. This course will study the psychosocial and spiritual development of adolescents, adolescent culture and family. The course will help students understand the development of adolescents in its varied aspects and how it is influenced by culture and family. These are important contents to understand how we can better approach adolescents with the Word of God. The issues covered are: adolescence; psychosocial and spiritual development of adolescents; brain development; identity search; abandonment culture; adolescent culture; Internet and social media and family.

Course Goal

The course goal is to be a holistic approach on adolescence for youth workers.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students will be able:

1. To demonstrate knowledge in psychosocial development of adolescents and to explain it to their team and parents of adolescents.
2. To identify cultural elements that influence adolescence now and in future situations.
3. To apply the knowledge about the spiritual development of adolescents to teach and disciple them.
4. To understand the interdisciplinarity of practical theology in youth ministry and to explain the interaction of social sciences and theology to know the human conditions of the adolescents in their context.

Course Format

This course is an intensive part-time one-week course that will meet daily, Monday through Friday from 7:00 pm to 10:30 pm.

Evaluation

- Pre-assignment: Read the minimum of 700 pages from the selected literature, books or articles. For each book or article read, students must write a 1 or 2 pages reflection paper highlighting the main concepts or ideas presented and how they can be applied in their ministry. This assignment will represent 30 percent of the total grade.
- Post-assignment: Write a 7 to 10 pages research paper directly related to the content and parameters of the course on a specific topic to be chosen by them or by the teacher. This assignment will represent 70 percent of the total grade.

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**SYLLABUS
POSTGRADUATE IN YOUTH MINISTRY STUDIES –
MODULE 3**

Course: Practices of Youth Ministry	Area: Practical Theology and Pastoral Studies
Class: PYMS	Year /Semester: 2020/ 2o. Semester
Instructor: Ana Lucia Bedicks	Hour/Credit: 40 hours/ 2 credits

Course Description

This course is designed for Module 3 students pursuing the Postgraduate degree in Youth Ministry Studies. This course will exam the main practices of youth ministry: discipleship, teaching, pastoral care and programming and models of youth ministry. In this course, students will be led to properly integrate theology, psychosocial and spiritual development of adolescents as well as adolescence culture, in order to develop and analyze their own ministry practices as practical theologians and according to their youth group. The issues covered are: discipleship; teaching; curriculum; pastoral care; small groups; programming and models of youth ministry.

Course Goal

The course goal is to exam the practices of youth ministry with the lens of practical theology.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students will be able:

1. To apply the knowledge in practical theology and adolescent development to exam their practices of youth ministry.
2. To develop their own practices of youth ministry based on the knowledge acquired in the previous modules.
3. To compare models youth ministry in order to build a model for their ministries.

Course Format

This course is an intensive part-time one-week course that will meet daily, Monday through Friday from 7:00 pm to 10:30 pm.

Evaluation

- Pre-assignment: Read the minimum of 500 pages from the selected literature, books or articles. For each book or article read, students must write a 1 or 2 pages reflection paper highlighting the main concepts or ideas presented and how they can be applied in their ministry. This assignment will represent 30 percent of the total grade.
- Post-assignment: Write a 7 to 10 pages research paper directly related to the content and parameters of the course on a specific topic to be chosen by them or by the teacher. This assignment will represent 70 percent of the total grade.

Bibliography

- Clark, Chap. *Adoptive Youth Ministry: Integrating Emerging Generations into the Family of Faith*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2016. (Chapters 13 to 18)
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**SYLLABUS
POSTGRADUATE IN YOUTH MINISTRY STUDIES –
MODULE 4**

Course: People in Youth Ministry	Area: Practical Theology and Pastoral Studies
Class: PYMS	Year /Semester: 2020/ 2o. Semester
Instructor: Ana Lucia Bedicks	Hour/Credit: 40 hours/ 2 credits

Course Description

This course is designed for Module 4 students pursuing the Postgraduate degree in Youth Ministry Studies. This course will study all the people involved in youth ministry like, youth workers, parents, youth and the whole congregation in their different tasks. In this course, students will learn how to think about all the people in youth ministry from the perspective of the adoptive youth ministry, in which the community of faith is the family of God. The issues covered are: youth leaders; youth workers; volunteers; congregation; youth and adoptive youth ministry.

Course Goal

The course goal is to help students to approach the topic of people in youth ministry from the perspective of the adoptive youth ministry.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students will be able:

1. To identify all the different people involved in youth ministry in order to pastor in lead them.
2. To apply the knowledge acquired to recruit and support people that join youth ministry from the perspective of the adoptive youth ministry.

Course Format

This course is an intensive part-time one-week course that will meet daily, Monday through Friday from 7:00 pm to 10:30 pm.

Evaluation

- Pre-assignment: Read the minimum of 500 pages from the selected literature, books or articles. For each book or article read, students must write a 1 or 2 pages reflection paper highlighting the main concepts or ideas presented and how they can be applied in their ministry. This assignment will represent 30 percent of the total grade.
- Post-assignment: Write a 7 to 10 pages research paper directly related to the content and parameters of the course on a specific topic to be chosen by them or by the teacher. This assignment will represent 70 percent of the total grade.

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Lesson Plan Sample (Teaching Guide)

Module 1 Course: Theology and Practical Theology of Youth Ministry

Title: Biblical Theology of Youth Ministry (Old Testament)

Time: 45 minutes

Learning Outcomes	Content Heading	Key Points to Emphasize	Instructional Techniques	Estimated Time
Students will be able to				
Understand the OT text and the context of the passage	<u>Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (Schema)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ God commandment is not specifically for parents ▪ God's covenant was made with the nation as a whole, so God's instructions are for the nation ▪ God had the better plan for younger generations 	Lecture with power point presentation	18
Understand the OT text and the context of the passage	<u>Judges 2: 6-11</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A whole community had to talk about God, his works, laws and promises to a younger generation and failed to do so ▪ The responsibility of older generations over younger generations 	Lecture with power point presentation	17
Identify the responsibilities of the older generations	How those passages relate to youth ministry today?	What older generations in our churches can learn about those passages?	Small group discussion	10
Instructional resources and equipment needed:				
For Instructor			For Students	
Laptop, data projector, screen, power cord extension, PowerPoint Presentation			Handout	

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