

The Two **Disciplines** of **Youth Ministry**: **Outside-In** or **Inside-Out**?

Christian youthwork can be divided into two quite different traditions or disciplines.¹ The first tradition is characterized by work that starts with young people who have been brought up in the church, while the second has concentrated on ministry among those who are outside the church. From the pioneer days of youthwork in the 19th century these two basic approaches to Christian youthwork have been in evidence. Each generation of youthworkers has developed significant initiatives that broadly fall within these two areas. Some have focused their work on groups of Christian young people and others have concentrated on work with those who are outside the church. The methods of youthwork developed by Christians are divided by whether the work starts outside or inside the church. Similarly Christian youthwork organizations generally fall into one of these two traditions.

The first tradition can be called “Inside-Out” because it starts with young people who are inside the church. But one of the main aims of Christian groups formed from young people who are already believers is to attract new non-Christian members and introduce them to the faith. Thus Inside-Out starts with those inside who then reach out. The second tradition can

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through recognized “secular” youth and community courses. The new developments in Christian work among young people, however, were not connected with “youthwork” in the secular professional sense, being more firmly rooted in Christian perspectives and in many cases directly funded by the church. The term youth ministry reflects the feeling that much of what passes for “youthwork” in a secular setting is of a different genus than the new kinds of work being funded by the church.

“Youth ministry” in this sense is an attempt to express that there is an approach to youthwork which operates within a code different from that developed within “secular youthwork” but which is also professional. This method of work should be called “ministry” because its closest partner remains the clergy who also refer to their practice as “ministry.” Some have expressed this relationship more explicitly by adopting the title “Youth Pastor.” It would be possible to speak of those who work Inside-Out as youth ministers and those who work Outside-In as Christian youthworkers. Alongside these patterns of work there may also be Christians who work within projects which follow the “secular” philosophy generally associated with “youth and community work.”

These distinctions, while containing some sense of these two terms, remain a little unsatisfactory. In the first instance, “youthwork” has never been solely applied to work in secular settings. Christians have also used the term for both work within the church and work outside. For Christians, youthwork has historically been a broad term covering evangelism and Christian nurture as well as the principles and values advocated by youth and community work courses. A Christian youthworker therefore might be engaged in either of these areas. In terms of the two traditions discussed in this book, therefore, it would be misleading to speak of the church-based work as youth ministry and work outside the church as “youthwork.”

A further factor in the use of these terms is that many Christians feel that their work, while “outside the church,” has a deep spiritual significance. The ministry of the church is seen as being to both those inside and those outside the church. Youth ministry therefore is a term that could express this fact. It is also the case that many Christians who have been trained in “secular” youthwork courses and are employed

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Tradition in this sense is well understood by those within organizations such as Youth for Christ, Young Life, Campus Crusade, or Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship.⁴ Tradition, however, can also be used to describe the similarities which exist across organizational boundaries. The analysis of Christian youthwork in this chapter is based on dividing the majority of work into two different groups. These are hypothetical models created to give a broad understanding of what is a fairly diverse scene. Sociologists would speak of these models as ideal types. An ideal type is a theoretical construct or generalization. The generalization is used to make a clear picture from a number of complicated and seemingly different situations. An ideal type summarizes in a simplified form the basic characteristics of a way of working or behaving.⁵ Each of the “traditions” of Christian youthwork, Outside-In and Inside-Out, is therefore an ideal type. The generalization attempts to describe how a number of separate and varied youthwork practices developed by Christians in different places and in different times might be categorized and therefore more clearly understood.

The use of generalizations or “ideal types” has a number of drawbacks. In the first instance the way we do youth ministry is extremely diverse, and the distinctions which we understand between one way of working and another can be very subtle. To generalize about only two basic traditions may therefore be seen as reductive and inaccurate. Individual youthworkers may feel that their work moves between and beyond the descriptions offered. This may well be the case, and I recognize that this sensitivity has some validity. Ideal types are not, however, designed to be a complete description of everything that is happening in youth ministry. The idea of two traditions is a useful tool because it offers a clarity of thought in what can at times be a fairly complex and confusing situation. The validity of the insights offered, by what I freely admit is a theoretical construct, depends upon the extent to which it sheds light on our practice as Christian youthworkers.

Linked to the idea of tradition is that of “discipline.” It is understood that public high school teachers operate within a quite different discipline from that of youthworkers. Teaching is a separate profession from youthwork and it therefore operates within a quite different discipline. This means that it is

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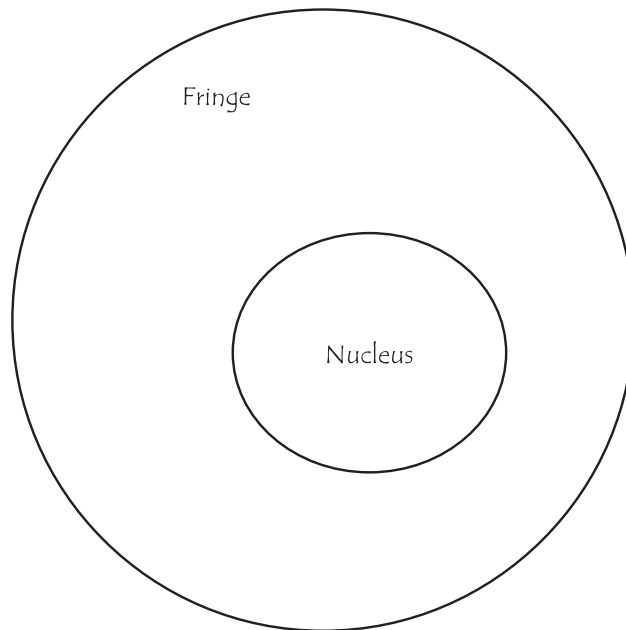
possible to work with the same group of young people both as youthworker and as a teacher, but to do so successfully involves the ability to switch between the two disciplines. If a teacher working in a youth club fails to change the style of relating to young people and tries to act as a teacher in this new setting, then problems begin to emerge. Young people become unresponsive, or even resentful of what they feel is an inappropriate discipline (I mean this in both senses of the word). For the youthworker who enters a classroom setting but who fails to adopt the discipline of teaching, different problems come to the surface. Young people in my experience tend to riot! Teachers often acknowledge that youthwork represents a different approach to working with young people by saying that they would not want to try to be a youthworker with young people they also teach. In other words, while they might be able to switch disciplines, such a move is more problematic when dealing with the same young people. The reason these problems arise is that teaching and youthwork are two quite different disciplines.

The recognition that teaching and youthwork represent distinctive and separate ways of working with young people is widespread. Indeed while it was once the case that trained teachers were also seen as being qualified as social workers for youth, this is no longer the case in England. It is my argument that a similar kind of distinction needs to be brought into play between those youthworkers who work from inside the church out to the unchurched and those who start by ministering solely among the unchurched and hope to see them embrace the faith. Whether such a distinction should also be institutionalized in training for youth ministry I am as yet undecided. The main purpose at this stage of arguing for such a division is to gain clarity within the present youthwork scene.

The discipline of youth ministry expressed as a set of rules can be seen in a set of commonly experienced and understood social relationships. The ways youthworkers and young people relate to each other and behave within a practical youthwork setting is linked to these rules. The problems which youthworkers experience on a regular basis can be explained by a lack of clarity concerning the nature of the two disciplines. An example of this would be the trouble youthworkers experience when they try to connect a group of un-

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to form the basis of the group.⁶ Sometimes the group will have graduated from the Sunday school classes in the church or from a confirmation group. The group may well have a title such as the “Youth Group” or “Youth Fellowship.” Through a combination of social activities and a program of teaching, prayer, and worship, the group is encouraged and built up in the faith. In this way they form a “nucleus” of lively Christians. The core group, however, are also encouraged to invite other young people to join the group. Evangelism is a major priority in the group’s life together.



Outreach, therefore, happens most effectively when these young people are in ongoing relationships with non-Christians at school or in other social activities. The network of social contact which these young people sustain is vital to the evangelistic capabilities of the youthwork. The friends of group members can be seen as another group spread around the nucleus, often referred to as the fringe of the group. A fringe member might also be someone with church connections who attends occasionally. The social activities of the group may

well be organized to facilitate the natural process whereby fringe members might become part of the group.

Those who work within this tradition of youth ministry emphasize that young people are by definition in touch with youth culture. As Tricia Williams puts it, “Teenagers may not have the maturity or depth of teaching of older Christians, but they are still the ones who are best equipped to communicate with their peers at school. They speak the language, they understand the trends in fashion and music; they share the same concerns and interests.”⁷ The feeling that young people are fully involved in the teenage world has led some people to suggest, “The best people to reach out to young people are young people themselves.”⁸

The vast majority of Christian youthwork adopts a nucleus-fringe or Inside-Out approach. Most church youth groups operate within this tradition. Most Christian outreach relies upon the basic dynamic of a Christian young person inviting someone they already know along to a meeting or an event. The pattern for town, school, and university missions bears this out. Success of a mission does not really depend on the abilities of the evangelist or the team of helpers. Success invariably depends upon the active participation of young people. If they do not invite fringe people, one of two things happens: either the mission goes ahead with only Christians attending or it attracts large numbers of unchurched young people but they generally do not stay with the faith because they are not relationally linked to any of the church-based groups.

Friendship between Christian young people and non-Christians forms the basis for the majority of Christian youthwork, including most in-school outreach, Alpha Groups, Christian concerts, coffeehouses, and alternative worship services. Some of the more recent initiatives involving worship or outreach in night clubs may well attract large numbers of unchurched young people, but long term evangelistic success will almost certainly rely upon a committed group of Christian young people inviting unchurched young people to get more involved in the activities of their group. Having said this, adult youth ministers and volunteer youthworkers remain key in any nucleus-based work, although their role tends to be one of support, encouragement, and backup to the friendship

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In the 19th century Christians talked about work that seeks out the “poor” or the “ragged.” In more recent times we have recognized that there are particular needs among those fringe young people.

In every generation some Christian youthworkers have felt called to develop initiatives which are aimed at those communities and groups perceived, for whatever reason, to be distant from the make-up of the church. Organizations such as the YMCA bear witness to this calling. These organizations are part of the youthwork heritage of the Christian community, but they do not represent what we should see as the mainstream of Christian work among young people. The present day Christian youthwork scene is characterized by the nucleus-fringe tradition of work, and when churches talk about youthwork they almost always are talking about this tradition. The reason for this, as far as I see, is not a lack of social concern. As I have said, each generation during the last 150 years has sought to share the gospel with those seen as falling outside the predominantly middle class nature of the church. The problem has been that in most cases these particular initiatives have seen only partial success.¹² Working Outside-In is very challenging and is prone to failure. In contrast the nucleus-fringe approach goes from strength to strength when it typically targets privileged social groups. While the nucleus-fringe approach may well be the main approach adopted by Christians it is important to recognize that Christians working Outside-In have been the pioneers who have in many cases developed approaches and methods of working that have been taken up by the wider youthwork world. Work that is funded by government agencies is often based upon values and methods of work that were originally pioneered by the church seeking to share the Christian faith and show social concern with those outside the church. Over the last forty years this work has been secularized by the non-church youthwork profession.¹³

To work Outside-In is to step outside predominantly Christian groups. It is to move youthwork beyond a church setting into the local community. Outside-In means that youthworkers aim to work with individuals, groups, or communities who are socially and culturally distant from the existing church. The youthworker moves outside the Christian group

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to “be with” those who are outside the life of the church. “Being with” is adopted as a means of sharing the gospel. It is for this reason that many people who have explored this tradition have seen their work as being “incarnational” in nature. By using the term “incarnational” in this way, I do not mean to imply that only those who work Outside-In are following the example of Jesus. The ministry of adults and young people in a nucleus group is equally an imitation of Christ. I use the term therefore in a technical way as it is commonly used in missiology to denote the crossing of barriers to share the faith by being with a group of people.

The incarnation of Jesus is interpreted as an example of the way that those working Outside-In should minister. In the life of Jesus we see God becoming a human being to build relationship with humanity. In the same way the youthworker goes to a particular group of young people to share the gospel. While the nucleus group is based upon unchurched young people joining in with the activities of the group, working Outside-In requires the youthworker to participate in the life of unchurched young people. The nucleus tradition invites people in, the incarnational tradition goes out with the aim that young people may eventually join in the life of the church.

“Being with” gives the relational basis from which evangelism might develop. Those working Outside-In often speak of “meeting young people where they are at.” This often involves focusing upon particular needs, thus the emphasis of the work may well include attention to issues such as drugs, homelessness, teenage pregnancy, and alcohol. It might be that in a particular town or area young people are seen as a “problem” by members of the church or by the wider community. Working Outside-In may well come about because of the needs of adults to feel that something is being done for or about “the kids.”

A common response of the church to the challenge of working Outside-In has been to develop informal halfway houses where young people and youthworkers are able to meet. The open youth club has been the primary example of this. In the open club young people are invited to take part in activities or just to sit around. Workers will seek to build relationships with them in the context of the activities.¹⁴ A similar plan can be seen in groups which run a Drop in Center or Alcohol Free

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Bar or Advice Center. In all of these the young people remain within their own friendship groups. They are not expected to abandon their shared behaviors or values. The youth minister is seeking to meet them on their own turf. Of course the need to maintain rules and basic standards of behavior within a club or other activity will mean that the youth minister will have to come to some agreement with the groups of young people attending.

Alongside the provision of places where encounters between youthworkers and young people can take place, this tradition of youthwork has tended in more recent times to move toward a more detached approach. In detached youth ministry a youthworker or workers will attempt to build contact with young people on the streets, in a school, or wherever groups gather together. Detached work in some Christian circles has been referred to as relational youthwork with its emphasis upon relationships rather than on programs or the provision of open clubs in buildings.

The Limitations of the Incarnational Approach◆◆

Working Outside-In is extremely demanding and difficult. To journey outside the boundaries of the Christian community to share the gospel is a tough assignment. While youthwork within the church offers a safe and well-defined context for ministry, this may well not be the case for those working Outside-In. Workers need to be those able to combine a pioneer spirit with a commitment to remain faithful to a Christian perspective. Such youthwork not only means that Christians need to go through special training, it also requires the right kind of people. To be involved and perhaps more importantly to remain involved over the long haul is essential. This is a matter of discernment and balance. Journeying “outside” in order that young people might eventually find a place “inside” not only asks a good deal of the youth minister, it also requires understanding and flexibility from those churches and Christians who support the work.

There is no doubt that young people can be very needy. Working Outside-In will often involve a particular focus on

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young people who are in crisis or facing particular challenges. Tough problems are rarely solved overnight. Needy young people need adults who are able to offer long-term care and support. All of these issues mean that the church may well not be able to work Incarnationally/Outside-In without employing the right kind of people with the right kind of skills and training.

The particular challenges which face any youth minister working Outside-In mean that effective evangelism may well be a bridge too far. Faced with the considerable problems, first of building a trusting relationship with young people outside the church and second of the challenge of the particular crises or issues with which these young people are wrestling, the worker may well feel swamped. The pain and suffering of young people can leave a youthworker feeling at a loss as to how Christ might become real in their lives.¹⁵ This might be because problems such as homelessness or drug abuse make the direct preaching of the gospel feel inappropriate. Young people need to be free to choose Christ for themselves, not be manipulated or coerced into commitment when they are off balance and vulnerable. Evangelism among young people who are culturally outside the church must be contextual as well as sensitive. Many youthworkers find the challenge of expressing the faith in relevant ways to be extremely demanding. There is a tendency for proclamation of the gospel to be downplayed or ignored entirely because it is seen as being so difficult to do well. A further factor may be that Christian groups seeking money from government agencies may experience pressure to adopt a less evangelistic style of work in order to receive funding. In addition to this there is the realization that even when young people do come to faith it is felt to be very unlikely that they will be welcomed into the life of the church.

The Dynamics of the Traditions ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

The distinction drawn between working Inside-Out and working Outside-In is primarily based upon the starting point of each of the traditions. The argument that these are in fact

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two different disciplines is justified by a consideration of the internal dynamics of each of the approaches. These dynamics create fundamental differences in the two approaches. They are extremely powerful in the way that the different kinds of youthwork are operated and develop, and they mean that the two approaches are distinct.

◆The Community Context

The nucleus approach is intimately connected to the need for Christian parents to feel that their young people are “safe.” In “Growing Up Evangelical” I have argued at some length that the function of evangelical youthwork is to provide a safe place where Christian young people can socialize.¹⁶ This relationship between the youthwork and the needs and desires of Christian parents forms a strong undercurrent to all of the activities, values, and Christian teaching delivered within a church-related group. In all negotiations with the clergy or with a local church, the youthworker is working within the basic emotional dynamic which is created by the parental duties, needs, and concerns of church members. This dynamic is extremely powerful, and its influence cannot be underestimated. How evangelism takes place, how young people are nurtured within the faith, and how the group relates to church, will be determined by consultation among the clergy, the youthworker, young people, and Christian parents. In the majority of cases the parents supported by the clergy will form the most influential lobby pressuring the youthworker and the young people. This pressure is commonly felt when working Inside-Out.

When we move into the wider community and work Outside-In we find that not only the method of working has to change. More importantly the pressure which comes from the quite justified concerns of Christian parents does not form any part of the atmosphere within which the work progresses. Clergy and parents are not on the sidelines approving or disapproving of what is going on. The youth minister is therefore not subject to influence and lobbying which can very often form part of the church scene. When we work incarnationally among a group of young people the key dynamic which oper-

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ates will be the relationship between the gospel commitments of the worker and the already existing values of the local community. Parents of young people and the wider community will judge the appropriateness of the work according to their own moral framework. The task of the youth minister is to work contextually, to start by respecting the already existing morality and values of the community within which they are working. In any community there will be ways of behaving and relating which not only are seen as “right” but might also be regarded by the Christian as a vestige or reflection of the kingdom of God. To work Outside-In is to start by affirming the positive in a particular community. To fail to do so will mean that the wider community of parents and neighbors and community leaders will see the work as a disruptive intrusion.

◆*Assuming a Subculture*

The nucleus approach assumes the subculture of the church to be the appropriate medium for evangelism and Christian worship. To join a nucleus group is to participate in a process of socialization into an already existing church subculture. This subculture is characterized by a common set of behaviors, language, values, and perspectives. Within the subculture of the church it may well be the case that the youth ministry will be innovative or even seen as on the edge in one way or another. This does not, however, mean that the youth ministry has moved from one subculture to another. In most cases youth ministry which is pioneering will be the means by which the church subculture renews itself. Church young people grow up to become key members of local churches. The youth leaders of today will often be the church leaders of tomorrow. These leaders take with them the insights and methods of working which they adopted in their youth ministry. In this way the youth ministry of fifteen years ago became the mainstream of church life today. One of the places where this is most obvious is the change in music used in church services. Most evangelical churches now have some kind of guitar-based music group leading worship. This practice has its roots in the youthwork of the 1960s and 1970s.

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The nucleus discipline therefore works within an already contextualized expression of the faith. The church subculture is a cultural construction which connects the values of the gospel with a particular social context. To argue that church subculture is one possible expression of the Christian faith in our context is not the same as saying that this subculture is “wrong.” It is simply to say that outside the subcultural context of the church this expression of the faith needs to be re-evaluated. Working incarnationally as opposed to the nucleus approach does not assume the subculture of the church to be normative. To work Outside-In is to seek to see the gospel contextualized among a group of people who were not previously part of the church. The hope is that Jesus can become real within the subculture which these people share. To say this is not to baptize a particular subculture uncritically. The gospel will act redemptively to bring about the values and behaviors which are characteristic of the kingdom of God. Redemption will involve an affirmation of some aspects of subcultural life and a critique of others. The priority will however be that the youth ministry will not seek to impose an expression of the faith which has evolved in one particular social context. The aim throughout will be to see people begin to live out the Christian faith with integrity and faithfulness within their own community context.

For the youthworker this process involves a journey of discovery. In the first place there is a need to set aside the security which the certainties of church work offer. Within a missiological context Charles Kraft has used the language of paradigm shift to describe the movement of the gospel and of the missionary from one cultural context to another.¹⁷ This shift does not deny the validity of what a church context has taught us, it just recognizes that true engagement with different cultures and subcultures raises different questions of the Christian faith and of the Bible. From these questions emerges an interpretation of the faith which should remain true to the gospel and yet nuanced in a way which is fresh and distinctive.

◆The Rules of the **D**iscipline

The nucleus approach operates within a set of clearly defined rules. How young people are expected to behave in their

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personal lives and in the life of the group is closely defined. Issues to do with sex, drugs, alcohol, swearing, smoking, etc. will be discussed frequently, and expectations will be made very clear. When the rules of the group are breached in some way, the leaders will take steps to try to normalize the situation.

The strict adherence to behavioral codes arises from the well-defined standards expected by Christian parents and the church. When youthworkers allow groups to step beyond these rules, serious problems start to emerge. If, for instance, a youth group is found to be involved with drugs, the youthworker may be relieved of his or her position. Christian young people and parents expect, and most probably need, a fairly well-defined setting within which to explore the Christian faith. When youthworkers allow a freer interpretation of the rules, it is not unusual for Christian young people go a little over the top. The youth group party where young people get drunk would be a good example of this kind of problem. Clear boundaries and rules are essential to the successful working of a nucleus group. They form a part of the package, and while they may be renegotiated a little, they are properly part of the scenery. In contrast, when youthworkers work Outside-In, a much more complicated picture begins to emerge.

To work incarnationally is to start by accepting young people as they are. The worker is first wanting to build a non-judgmental relationship which means understanding before setting down rules. This means that a worker may well be witness to and aware of behavior that is not only inappropriate for the church youth group but also may be illegal. The worker may well conclude that some of what passes for normal behavior in the group (e.g., racist comments) is completely out of step with the gospel. How this perspective may be shared involves a negotiation between worker and young people. The worker will need to make a decision as to the extent to which such things will be allowed to pass because the worker wishes to remain in relationship with the group or individual. Alongside this the workers will need to balance the extent to which their presence, or their silence, compromises their integrity as Christian youth ministers. Such a dilemma does not occur in working in a nucleus group—or at least it should not!—while it is the everyday stuff of working Outside-In.

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The manner of the youth minister who engages with a group incarnationally will need to be primarily that of a learner. While the behavior of the group may well clash with the values of the worker at first, the aim is to move beyond this to find the underlying values of the group. The good which is there in every subculture could take a little time to become evident, and the worker needs to gain understanding. It is only out of a sympathetic knowledge of both the good and the bad that the worker can present Jesus as someone who can meet the group within their own cultural world. The aim is that behavior and values emerge from a transformational encounter between Jesus and the group. The hope is that as this begins to come about, the group become distinctively followers of Jesus within their own subcultural context. To help this to come about, the worker needs to be able to change from someone who is building relationships and understanding to someone who is a leader within that group context. The ability to effect this change in role, from observer to one who is seeking to bring about change and renewal, is fundamental to success in incarnational ministry. This aspect of working incarnationally is qualitatively different from the discipline of work in a church context.

◆Church

The nucleus group is generally rooted in a church setting. The young people who make up the core of the group will often come from church-going committed families. Most groups are formally linked to one particular church. While the church may well see the need for separate activities, and even different worship services, for the young people, the links will, in most cases, remain strong. The young people of the church are rightly seen as a vital part of the whole community of the church body. Theologically and practically this means that young people in a nucleus group really cannot be talked about as if they are a separate church. They form a part of the wider Christian community however their meetings are organized. Having said this, the reality is that young people meeting together are part of the church. When young people from church families and their friends start to experiment with worship, it

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the church, it is probably not the case that every church should engage in working Outside-In. This is partly a matter of resources. To engage incarnationally with communities distant from the church is costly and involves particular skills and resources. It is therefore probably more realistic to expect groups of churches in an area to supplement the nucleus model by joining together to support a more experimental model of incarnational outreach. In some cases this is best done through setting up an independent charitable group dedicated to this kind of work or by forming a partnership with an existing para-church group such as Youth For Christ or Young Life. Churches will always be inclined to look to helping their own young people before they engage in mission among other groups. This I feel is very proper. However, there probably needs to be a decision to tithe to support Outside-In work. One approach might be for churches in an area who are appointing youthworkers to join together and agree that at least one of the posts should focus upon groups of young people who are unlikely to be touched by the nucleus approach.

Work that is Outside-In is vulnerable to subversion by the church. Most churches are committed to outreach, but they habitually see this in terms of the Inside-Out model of ministry. When Outside-In work begins to get going, the habitual values and behaviors of the church seem to gently take the power and energy out of the ministry. This will never be a deliberate policy. It simply emerges when the two disciplines are confused or when attempts are made to merge the two approaches, for instance, when involvement in the existing youth group or church is seen as the next step for young people who have come to faith through incarnational outreach in the local community. While occasionally this strategy may work, more often than not enthusiastic and articulate local young people have the energy sapped from them because they are introduced to the more developed and authoritative subculture of the church group. Suddenly the lively and original ways in which they first spoke of their new Christian experience are replaced by the standardized jargon of the church. In some cases these new young people simply fade from the Christian scene. If they remain involved with the church they tend to become disconnected from their home culture and communities by the socializing nature of the

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Christian group. In the church group they become more Christian but they can also become more middle class.

The subversion of Outside-In work can also come about when youthworkers themselves blur the boundaries. One example of this I have heard of involved a group of unchurched young people who came to faith through outreach on the streets. The worker realized that a separate worship service which emerged from their culture would probably be the best next step. Soon a lively worship service got underway using dance music and visuals as well as a commitment to charismatic ministry. Local church groups soon got to hear of this event, and they started to come along. Soon an event which was based on 50 or so unchurched young people had grown to become a mixed group of 400 church and unchurched. The success of the service was amazing and the worker and his team were very excited. The problem was that within a year every one of the unchurched young people had disappeared from the service. None of them made a fuss; they seemed to go very quietly. In fact they went so quietly that the youthworker didn't even notice. The departure of the original group was disguised by the roller coaster success of the service.

Blurring the boundaries often comes about when churches are appointing full-time youthworkers. The job descriptions of church youthworkers are a horror genre all of their own. Chief among these horrors, in my view, is the inability of committees and clergy to resolve the problem of which type of youth ministry they expect to see happening in their church. An idealism sets in which then means that both approaches are expected of the same person. Most of us have a commitment both to work with young people in the church and to outreach to those who will not join our church groups. Unfortunately, in my experience, very few of us are able to sustain active and lively ministry in both of these areas at the same time. The reality is that we favor either one or the other. Over time problems begin. If we favor Outside-In over Inside-Out work, we may end up losing our jobs because Christian parents and clergy perceive us as failing. If we favor Inside-Out work over Outside-In, then we may keep the church happy but we may not achieve all we hope for in our outreach work.

At heart these problems arise from a misunderstanding of the importance of both of the disciplines of youth ministry.

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In many people's minds evangelism to the unchurched inevitably means some kind of Outside-In model of ministry. The church youth group reaching out to a fringe is not valued highly enough as a method of outreach.²⁰ In other situations this confusion is reversed: the nucleus group is seen as the only successful Christian approach to youthwork and incarnational ministry is rejected because it is not based in the church or because it is seen as a watering down of the gospel. The future of youth ministry in the church may well be secured only if we are able to articulate the difference between these two disciplines of youth ministry. Youthworkers themselves need to be clear what they are setting out to do and present their work honestly to the church as being either one or the other kind of approach. Training for youthwork needs also to embrace these distinctions and train people appropriately for their particular calling. In addition to this, those in the church making decisions about the direction of youthwork and the allocation of resources need to adopt this two-discipline framework in order that young people of all kinds have the gospel shared with them in the way which is most appropriate to their particular culture.

Questions to Ponder and Discuss

1. What is the Inside-Out approach? What is the Outside-In approach?
2. Do you agree with this Inside-Out and Outside-In distinction? Can you think of individual examples where each type has worked? Do you think one way is a better way to reach youth? In which of these ways do you personally prefer to minister?
3. How do you compare parachurch youth ministries with church youth ministries? What are the differences among Youth for Christ, Young Life, Campus Crusade, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, etc.? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such ministries outside the church? Can you get these organizations and church youth groups all together in your town or area? What would be the advantages of doing so?
4. To what extent can committed Christian young people reach their uncommitted friends? How can they be helped to do so? Are there young people at school or on the streets that Christian youth may not be able to bring in? Do you think the average high school student has the time, skills, and inclination to reach into subcultures radically different from his or her own? What could be done to make this sort of outreach work better?
5. How different are the subcultures of church kids and non-church kids? Can you think of any young people in your city or town who would not be

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comfortable in your youth group? Might some of these outsiders make your members uncomfortable? What can be done about this?

6. How important is it for youth leaders to understand subcultures? What are the subcultures of young people that need to be reached by adult missionaries using a style of incarnational infiltration?

Notes

CHAPTER 1: The Two Disciplines of Youth Ministry

1. By “traditions” I mean the historic practices of youthwork; “disciplines” are the methodologies that happen within those practices.
2. See the work of Frontier Youth Trust and in particular Terry Dunnell, *Mission and Young People at Risk* (London: Frontier Youth Trust, 1985).
3. Jon Langford, “Let’s Get Spiritual,” *Young People Now* (June 1994): 34, 35, and Martin Shaw “Religious Development,” *Young People Now* (July 1994): 35.
4. Pete Ward, *Growing Up Evangelical* (London: SPCK, 1996).
5. For more on ideal types see David Jary and Julia Jary Collins, “Ideal Type,” *Collins Dictionary of Sociology* (Glasgow: Harper-Collins, 1995).
6. I first saw this illustration in a training leaflet created by Mark Ashton, when he was head of Church Youth Fellowship Association.
7. Tricia Williams, *Christians in School* (Oxford: Scripture Union Press, 1985), 14.
8. Mark Ashton and Phil Moon, *Christian Youthwork* (Eastbourne: Monarch, 1995).
9. *Ibid.*
10. For a historical perspective on this see Ward, *Growing Up Evangelical*, 23ff.
11. Bob Mayo, *Gospel Exploded* (London: Triangle, 1996).
12. Ward, *Growing Up Evangelical*, 63ff.

13. Mark Smith, *Developing Youthwork* (Philadelphia: Open University, 1988), 1ff., and Kathleen Heaseman, *Evangelicals in Action* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962).
14. Roger Sainsbury, *From a Mersey Wall* (Oxford: Scripture Union Press, 1970), and Peter Stow, *Youth in the City* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987).
15. Pip Wilson, *Gutter Feelings* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985).
16. Ward, *Growing Up Evangelical*, 199ff.
17. Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1979), 5.
18. For more on this see Chapter 7.
19. I can't imagine that Clucas has ever written this down, but I am sure that he will be more than happy to explain his ideas at length if you care to contact him at Church Pastoral Aid Society, Tachbrook Park, Warwick, England.
20. I confess I have been guilty of this in the past.

CHAPTER 2: A Theology for Youth Ministry

1. See "A Theology for Youthwork," pages 23–38 in *Youth Apart* (London: Church House, 1996). I am indebted to Graham Cray, who played a large part in developing the theology sections of *Youth Apart*, for many of the insights in this chapter.
2. A rendering of John 20:27.
3. Mark 15:34.
4. Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM, 1974), 243.
5. Mark 8:34–35.
6. Dean Borgman, "Youth, Culture, and Media: Contemporary Youth Ministry," *Transformation* 11 (2, April/June 1994), 13.
7. Frances Young, *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ* (London: SCM, 1975).
8. F. W. Dillistone, "Redemption," pages 487–88 in Alan Richardson and John Bowden, eds., *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1983).
9. Ephesians 1:7.
10. Church of England. *The Alternative Service Book 1980*, (London: Clowes; SPCK: Cambridge University Press, 1980), an additional resource book to the Anglican Church's *Book of Common Prayer* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991).
11. Isaac Watts, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." This hymn and others are used by Young in *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ*.
12. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).
13. *Ibid.*
14. Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), 137ff.