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AUTHOR   Dean, Kenda Creasy; Yost, Paul R.
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ABSTRACT
        This document combines the findings of two projects
for the purpose of making some overall observations about the state
of religious youth work in the United States. The first project was a
review of the literature on such programs. Research on the topic is
rare, while a vast body of indirectly related research spans many
disciplines and empirical as well as theoretical vantage points. The
second project set out to describe the current landscape of
Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish youth programs in the country.
From the research it became apparent that: (1) religiosity seems to
offer at least a degree of protection to youth against at-risk
behavior; (2) current models of religious work do not reflect
religious educators' concern for adolescents' integration into the
total religious community; (3) religious youth programs now serve the
young in more ways than ever, while fewer youths participate; (4)
Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish youth programs have similar goals,
assumptions, delivery systems, and educational processes; (5) no one
knows how many youths are served by religious youth programs; (6)
four out of five adult leaders of religious youth programs are
volunteers; and (7) religious youth programs tend not to be
accountable to anyone beyond local parent organizations. The groups,
however, tend to share committed leadership, youth empowerment,
cohesive national structures, a relationship intensive process, and
other directedness. A 203-item reference list is attached. (SG)

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A SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH ON, AND A DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW OF PROTESTANT, CATHOLIC, AND JEWISH RELIGIOUS YOUTH PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Kenda Creasy Dean, Director, The Wesley Foundation
University of Maryland at College Park

Research Associate: Paul R. Yost, Department of Psychology
University of Maryland at College Park

February 1991

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, literally hundreds of "religious youth programs" take root every year, some in congregations, some in independent religious movements, some in the bosom of a parent organization, some entirely whole unto themselves. These religious youth programs are often loosely educational in intent, but are primarily designed to per- petuate faith and to ensure safe passage from childhood into the adult world. The term "religious youth program" implies an entity with identifiable boundaries. In reality, religious youth programs are fluid and varied, with few widely agreed upon parameters, little standardization of practice, and no verifiable outcomes. What they have in common is a twofold vision for the youth they serve.   ) a desire to foster in them a specific cultural/faith identity; and 2) a resolve to provide them with the tools and nourishment necessary to make a smooth and healthy transition from childhood into adulthood.

In many ways, this paper is a combination of two projects for the purpose of making some overall observations about the state of reli- gious youth work in the United States. The first project, represented in Part I of this paper, was a review of the literature on religious youth programs in the U.S. The literature on the subject has rightly been described as "untamed"; research specifically pertaining to religious youth programs and adolescents is rare, while a vast body of indirectly-related research spans many disciplines and empirical as well as theoretical vantage points. The second project, described in Part II of this paper, set out to describe the current landscape of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish youth programs across the

country. In the absence of "hard data" on this subject, both the printed literature and key leaders in religious youth work were consulted for this report.

Discoveries

A project as massive in scope as this one generates far more information than can be quickly summarized or easily digested. At the risk of oversimplifying the painstaking contributions of many persons consulted during this project, the following insights seem to offer guidance for those engaged in policy decisions concerning religious youth work:

1)   Religiosity appears to offer at least a degree of protection to youth against at-risk behavior. In particular, participation in a religious institution seems to help compensate for other "developmental deficits" which may confront an adolescent. A limited number of studies also correlate high religiosity with more prosocial behavior in youth.

2)   Literature from within the field of religious education has argued for more than two decades that young people should be integrated into the total religious community, rather than "ghettoized" into discrete religious youth "programs." By and large, current models of religious youth work do not reflect religious educators' concern for adolescents' integration into the total religious community, with the discrete religious youth "program" being the norm for religious youth work. How well this youth "program" is integrated into community life seems to depend largely on ethnicity, history, and cultural identity of the parent religious body.

3)   Religious youth programs today serve youth in more ways than

ever before, but fewer youth are participating in them. The 1990s signal an era of massive cuts in funding, resources, and personnel for religious youth programs. The exceptions to this trend are the conservative evangelical Christian community, where religious youth work has seen moderate growth, and the Jewish community, where religious youth work seems to be relatively stable.

4) Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish youth programs share similar goals, assumptions, delivery systems, and educational processes. All seek to imbue teenagers with a sense of cultural/faith identity and the tools necessary to grow into healthy adulthood. Most assume that participation in a religious youth program helps protect young people from at-risk behavior, and that a caring community and a religious identity are important to healthy and well-rounded adolescent development. Most share delivery systems which develop community through structures like youth groups, formal instruction, worship, service, residential experiences, and leadership development opportunities. The Jewish Community Center figures prominently into Jewish youth movements, and all religious youth programs recognize the significant adult-youth relationship as the primary means of impacting young peoples' lives. Most religious youth programs say that their educational process is highly relationship-oriented and experiential, citing this approach as the most developmentally-appropriate means of communicating identity to young people.

5) No one knows how many youth are served by religious youth programs. Some research has implied that one-third to one-half of American teenagers may be involved in these programs, but these studies are scarce. Young adolescents are more available for religious youth programs than are older teenagers; although current

religious youth programs tend to target older youth, the trend is toward increased young adolescent participation. Despite American society's increasing multiculturalism, religious youth programs remain largely white, middle class, and female in composition. Many religious communities do not perceive at-risk youth as a special category of adolescents, and tend to assume all teenagers are at-risk. Those who do treat at-risk youth as a special category are frustrated by the lack of resources, training, and knowledge of how to serve them.

6) Four out of five adult leaders of religious youth programs are volunteers. Ironically, these are the leaders for whom leadership training is least available. Of youth leader professionals, clergy represent only a small number, but their influence in religious communities makes their knowledge about and interest in religious youth work a critical factor in its very existence, as well as in its potential success. Yet clergy receive virtually no preparation for religious youth work as part of their seminary education, and seminaries do not encourage clergy to develop interests in youth work. The lack of leadership training for adults who work with religious youth programs is widely considered the most serious problem facing religious youth work today.

7) Religious youth programs tend not to be accountable to anyone beyond local parent organizations. While this degree of autonomy helps them respond flexibly to community needs, it inhibits sharing knowledge, resources, or programs with others who may be interested in reaching adolescents, and it often results in poor leadership going unnoticed and uncorrected.

Strengths and Challenges

Religious youth work is not without its strengths, however. Despite the mixed signals religious youth workers receive regarding the importance of their work and their value to the religious community, religious youth leaders cite many areas of their work with pride. To date, these strengths have emerged without much intentional cultivation on the part of the religious community as a whole; their continuation, however, will depend upon religious communities' willingness to invest in them and consciously develop them during the years ahead. Religious youth leaders identify five strengths common to the field:

1) Committed leadership.

The commitment of adults who work with youth is widely admired, and some observers have witnessed a growing number of persons interested in pursuing religious youth leadership professionally. However, cultural dynamics and competing priorities on the part of religious communities themselves will work against the recruitment of volunteer leadership in the 1990s, and the willingness of clergy to commit themselves to youth work as a professional option will remain sluggish.

2) Youth empowerment.

Youth initiatives in co-leadership, peer ministry, and other forms of leadership development will continue in the years ahead, especially where youth leader professionals direct programs.

3) Cohesive national structures

Participation in national religious youth events and policy making bodies results in an intensified sense of ownership in the youth who participate. These activities become training grounds for future religious leaders. However, national religious youth structures have steadily lost budgetary support in recent decades, leading to speculation that their future impact may be questionable.

4)   Relationship-intensive process

The relationship-centered, experiential educational process
characterizing much religious youth work is a strength
likely to expand in influence as more attention is paid to
age-level appropriate programming for young adolescents.

5)   "Other-directedness"

Religious youth leaders value the sense of service which is
part of the identity of many religious youth programs. More
opportunities for hands-on service are likely to be found in
religious youth programs of the 1990s.

Policy Considerations

With these strengths in mind, religious youth leaders are still

gravely concerned about the directions religious youth work is not

likely to pursue without resources and an intentional guiding vision.

Obviously, more money would help meet these challenges. But equally

important to the future of religious youth work are the following:

1)   The challenge of strengthening adult leadership. While

religious youth leader professionals can and do receive excellent

training through a variety of avenues, volunteers and clergy do not.

Training is available, but is often not accessible for--or, in the

case of clergy, valued by--those who stand to influence youth most in

religious settings. Yet most religious communities are led by a sole

clergyperson, often without the benefit of volunteers or professional

staff assigned to youth work. While volunteers need training because

they comprise 80% of the adult leadership in religious youth work,

clergy need training because they are often the only resource a con-

gregation has to initiate work with adolescents.

2)   The challenge of reaching unserved youth. In the case of

religious youth programs, this generally means expanding service to

include young adolescents, at-risk, and ethnic/urban youth, who are

currently overlooked by most religious youth work.

3) The challenge of expanding program boundaries. Not only do religious youth programs stand to benefit by exploring a range of programs that address faith/cultural identity issues and developmental needs, but the ways in which these programs are implemented can be broadened. In particular, religious youth work implies a concern for reaching families as well as individual youth, recognizing that youth flourish best when supported by healthy home as well as community environments. The diversity of religious youth programs available to adolescents should reflect "a cafeteria-style meal, not a sit-down dinner" as religious communities begin to address the multiplicity of youth cultures pouring adolescents into society, and the multidimensional contributions which religious communities can make to these teenagers' well-being.

4) The challenge of improving networks, especially human networks, will help reduce the epidemic "burnout" in the field of religious youth work, and will help connect religious youth workers with other community leaders who serve youth in similar ways.

5) The challenge of institutional collaboration serves the same function on an institutional level. Religious communities are not the sole sources of formation for adolescents, and in fact figure only marginally in their ability to influence teenagers. The impact of any single institution is magnified when it works in concert with other organizations who seek to attain similar goals.

6) The challenge of accountability takes seriously religious youth programs' need to be responsive to the youth they serve, the professional integrity of the field, and the need for objectivity when institutional partnerships begin to be created in the community.

Advantages Religious Communities Offer Policy Makers

Religious communities stand to wield tremendous influence in the shaping of youth and in the forging of community partnerships to serve them. They are the most available public institution in American society: every community, burg, and urban center has a church or a synagogue in its midst as a symbolic, if not an actual, hub of community interaction. Historically, religious communities have played a much larger role in the weaving together of community threads than they do today. However, religious communities can still serve as synthesizers of common agendas for youth work. Clergy, at their best, are trained to become developers of "community," and they can still offer leadership here. If encouraged, this "community developer" model of religious leadership can be intentionally addressed by seminaries. The created community of a religious group can serve as a microcosm community into which young adolescents may safely integrate. While religious communities are more homogenous than the community at large, they provide valuable laboratories in human relationships and intergenerational experience.

Policy makers, too, can bolster religious communities' role in the shaping of young people in society. By offering religious communities incentives for institutional collaboration, by validating religious groups' role in positively influencing the lives of adolescents, by supporting the use of foundation funds for projects which involve religious communities and projects in the religious sector, policy makers help to lay foundations for churches and synagogues to lead the way in what Francis Ianni has called a "community charter" committed to the healthy development of American young people.

Conclusion

Next to family and schools, religious communities are the most pervasive institutions in American society. At present, religious communities, like most other community organizations, function as independent corporations in a world full of competing independent corporations. Yet the common denominator in all of the challenges facing religious youth programs in the twenty-first century is that they demand religious youth programs' entry into the public arena--the very arena in which the religious community first influenced American society as a chief interpreter of community existence. If religious communities are to address young people in the coming century, then they must again do so as participants in a common charter which provides for the welfare of adolescents. If the empirical evidence is correct, then perhaps there is a quantifiable case for encouraging linkages between religious programs and teenagers. Empirical evidence aside, religious organizations remain key actors in the community charter capable of offering young people congruence instead of chaos on their journey to adulthood.

A BRIEF HISTORY AND INTRODUCTION

From the dawn of the Judeo-Christian era, the religious tradi-
tions of Jews and Christians have harbored a special place for the
young. Some of the traditions' most beloved scriptures celebrate
God's choice of youth for divine missions: a boy prophet named
Samuel; a shepherd named David; a prophet "called" from conception
named Jeremiah; and, in Christian circles, an unwed teenage mother
named Mary. Even before Western society gave rise to a developmental
stage called "adolescence," religious tradition pointed to a God who
paid specific attention to the young.

For the better part of two millenia, Western culture's treatment
of youth followed a different pattern. Children were economic neces-
sities for family survival; for the most part religious communities
did not view children as objects of special attention, except for
developing rites of passage at the "age of reason"--bar/bat mitzvahs,
baptism/confirmation--which admitted the child into adult society.
Childhood in the New World was short; the Puritans brought Cal-
vinism's indefatigable work ethic to the colonies and apprenticed
children to the tasks of adulthood (Nordbeck, 1990).

By the late nineteenth century, however, industrialization gave
rise to a new class of people in society by displacing young persons
from the work force. At the same time, immigration patterns rapidly
increased America's religious pluralism, and a gradual shift toward
child-centered family and educational values led to new understandings
of the young. With industrialization and improved health care, fami-
lies needed fewer children to survive, and an unprecedented kind of

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American family emerged: the family in which all the children were teenagers. By the turn of the century, psychologists, educators, parents, boys-workers, and urban reformers stumbled collectively into what historian Joseph Kett has called "the era of the adolescent" (Kett, 1977).

In the midst of this rapidly changing society, the church was the first institution to spawn national activities intentionally designed to involve youth. In 1831, the First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia founded the Juvenile Missionary Society, an idea that quickly spread to churches in New York and surrounding areas. Within five years, the Women's Christian Temperance Union recruited Cold Water Armies to provide wholesome forms of recreation for teenagers, thereby saving them from the perils of alcohol. These Cold Water Armies did more than march in temperance parades; they organized youth choirs, developed social activities, and engaged in service projects to aid the poor and needy (Erickson, 1989).

By 1851, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was established in Boston, followed quickly by the Young Women's Christian Association and The Young Men's and Women's Hebrew Associations. Such religious youth organizations became the prototype for a new era of "youth programs" designed to meet a range of interests, religious and otherwise, of young people in their communities. While "Y's" addressed broad needs of young people, most of whom were single young adults who had left home to find work in the cities, both Protestant and Catholic churches began to develop programs specifically designed to maintain and promote religious identity in their young.

One of the most far-reaching of these efforts was the American

Sunday School movement, a grass roots volunteer initiative which
involved all age groups, including teenagers, in the ownership and
leadership of Christian education. Although the "Sunday School" had
been born in England out of a need to provide poor children with free
schooling, the advent of public education in the U.S. turned "Sunday
Schools" into bastions of religious instruction, social interaction,
and lay leadership development in the church. The "Sunday School
Teachers Institutes" of the early 1860's became the first systematic
leadership training program in religious youth work. Between 1869 and
1914, local, regional, national, and even international "Sunday School
Conventions" appeared; one historian described these gatherings as
"somewhat like the quadrennial meetings of Republicans and Democrats,
except there was more lemonade than liquor consumed and not so much
overt political conflict" (Lynn and Wright, 1971, pp. 94-95). These
conventions modelled the national youth event still popular in reli-
gious youth work today.

Meanwhile, local parishes established juvenile mission societies
and youth sodalities in an effort to meet the social, as well as the
spiritual, needs of young persons. The most successful of these was
the Society of Christian Endeavor, a nondenominational association
founded in 1881 which inspired at least fifty imitations in Protestan-
tism alone, and which still informs much modern Protestant youth
ministry (Erickson, 1989). At the same time, Roman Catholic immigra-
tion during the nineteenth century startled white Protestant cultural
leaders into establishing formal educational vehicles like Horace
Mann's "Common School," which "swept the nation in near-religious
fervor with a goal toward forming the modern American citizen" (Myers,
1991b, p. 7). In response, Catholics embraced their historic mandate

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to educate their young in the traditions of the faith, and American parochial education for Catholic youth was born.

Today, although the fluid and autonomous nature of local congregations makes religious youth programs impossible to count, religious communities are among the largest producers of youth programs in the United States. More than a third of those groups listed in the 1990-1991 Directory of American Youth Organizations are religiously-affiliated; this resource, moreover, omits most local organizations and many denominational programs. Most religious youth programs are the result of a local parish or synagogue's concern for providing identity and guidance to their young, and these efforts manifest themselves in various ways. Christian and Jewish adults alike want their teenagers to own religious identity and to grow into healthy, functioning adults in the community. This vision mobilizes scores of volunteers, dollars, and young people for religious youth organizations every year.

Religious youth programs vary widely in objectives, structure and effectiveness, but together they bear eloquent testimony to the fact that adolescents are valued by religious communities. The question is, what, if anything, do religious communities contribute to the welfare of the adolescent? The purpose of this paper is to explore that question particularly in the context of what Christians call "youth ministry" and what the Jewish community generally refers to as "religious youth movements." To do this we must ask both "What are religious communities doing for youth?" and "How well are they doing it?" We must ascertain where religious communities are meeting the needs of adolescents, and where more needs to happen. We will also need to make certain predictions about what religious youth work may

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look like in the future. Finally, we must ask if, in fact, religious communities <u>can</u> contribute positively to adolescent development, how can they maximize their chances of making a difference? The last section of this paper will identify some strategies for addressing the needs which have been identified.

Method

In many ways, research on religious youth programs defies "hard data." Very little has been written about the relationship between the religious youth program and the adolescent directly; yet substantial information exists which impinges on this relationship indirectly, including non-empirical, theoretical works and the knowledge of practitioners themselves. The following report summarizes findings gleaned from two sources: the printed literature related to religious work with young adolescents in the United States, and extensive interviews with various national leaders in religious youth work.

The printed literature consulted for this project represents a number of vantage points in religious research. In addition to those sources located through the major national indexes, publishers known for their work with religious youth professionals[1] were contacted directly for relevant information which, due to specialized audience appeal or recency has not been indexed nationally. While much of this literature is not scholarly in nature, it contains statistical information, case studies, and philosophical essays valuable to the understanding of religious youth work.[2] Publications drawn from the theoretical literature in religious education were also useful, particularly in establishing philosophical contexts for religious communities' responses to young people. Where possible, denominations' and organi-

zations' internal youth-related publications were requested, and re-
search groups known for work in religion and adolescents were con-
tacted for assistance in locating relevant studies.[3]   Finally, re-
sources catalogued at the United Jewish Association/Federation library
in New York City were perused for studies specifically pertaining to
Jewish youth.[4]

Equally important to this project, however, were the many phone
interviews conducted with national leaders in religious youth work.
Denominational youth staff from all major branches of Protestantism,
Catholicism, and Judaism were contacted for this report, including the
national youth ministry and/or Christian education staff persons for
the ten largest Protestant denominations in the United States that
report membership figures.[5]   Their contributions were augmented by
interviews with other denominational leaders solicited for the purpose
of inclusiveness.[6]   Staff persons for several national independent
religious youth movements also contributed to this project. Included
in this category were non-denominational Jewish youth movements,
Zionist youth organizations, and a number of "parachurch" groups,
nondenominational national Christian youth organizations which are
independent of a single denomination or a local church, and which tend
to operate on high school campuses.[7]

Youth research organizations and support agency staff were also
interviewed by phone.[8]   Represented among these were entrepreneurial
youth ministry organizations, an influential group of for-profit and
not-for-profit private enterprises that develop and make available
age-level appropriate resources for Christian youth ministry, and
training for religious youth leaders.[9]   Finally, the unpublished re-
search of a corps of theological educators committed to religious

youth work provided insight into religious youth work generally, and especially into the nature and extent of the theological schools' work to prepare leadership for religious youth work in the 1990s. [10] Some organizations were deemed beyond the scope of this paper since they have rehabilitative, civic, and academic purposes as well as religious dimensions. These include religious-oriented community social services (e.g., Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services); religious-affiliated civic organizations (e.g., Boy Scouts, "Y" programs); and religious schools which provide academic instruction as well as confessional teachings (e.g., parochial schools, yeshivas).

A SYNTHESIS OF THE PRINTED LITERATURE ON
RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND AMERICAN YOUTH 11

Research on religion and adolescence is plentiful and diverse--so diverse, in fact, that religion has been linked to almost every aspect of adolescent development except physical growth. [12] The high value which young people place on belief in God is well-documented (Benson, Williams & Johnson, 1987; Coles, 1989; Gallup, 1987 cited in Roehlke-partain, 1988b; Girl Scouts, 1989), as is at least the moderate value ascribed to institutional religion and the role religion plays in teenagers' own lives (Girl Scouts, 1989; Benson, 1990; Benson et al., 1987; Bachman, Johnston, & O'Malley, 1987). Research has also probed the nature of religious experience and religious identity among youth (Elkind & Elkind, 1962; Elkind, 1961; Elkind, 1962; Elkind, 1963; Goldman, 1968; London & Frank, 1987; London & Hirschfeld, 1989). Since the publication of James W. Fowler's work on the stages of faith development, substantial attention has been given to theories of faith development and character formation, including among youth (Dykstra, 1981; Fowler, 1981; Miller, 1982).

Although literature of this nature abounds, the category sugges-ted by the heading above, "printed literature on religious institu-tions and American youth," requires explanation. Research expressly devoted to religious institutions and youth is scarce, and studies concerning religious-affiliated programs for youth are even more so. To complicate matters, the research that indirectly impinges on reli-gious communities' work with youth is pursued from two very different philosophical perspectives which rarely intersect.

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On the one hand is a body of literature originating in theories of religious education. These theories are intended to provide the foundation on which practitioners in religious communities may base their practice of religious youth leadership. Influential as some of this literature is to the practice of religious youth work, it is rarely quantifiable and does not provide much assistance in evaluating the effectiveness of such programs.

On the other hand is a body of empirical literature originating, for the most part, in the social and behavioral sciences. This literature focuses on adolescent "religiosity"--religious beliefs and/or behaviors that are measurable in some way--and its relationship to behavioral outcomes. Although this literature supports the existence of various relationships between "religiosity" and teenage behavior, it is usually too far removed from institutional religious contexts to be useful to practitioners who actually work with these teenagers in religious settings.

These two trajectories--literature grounded in religious education, its method, and its theories and literature grounded in empirical studies in the social and behavioral sciences--intersect in the religious youth program which endeavors to create a sound educational environment, conducive to religious experience, which inspires (or prevents) certain beliefs and behaviors in adolescents. Currently, however, little dialogue exists to bridge these two points of view, and few efforts have been made to blend or re-shape them into digestible matter for youth-serving programs in American religious communities.

For this reason, this paper addresses these two fields of literature separately. The next few pages will summarize, first, some of

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For this reason, this paper addresses these two fields of literature separately. The next few pages will summarize, first, some of

the theories of religious education that have been applied to reli-
gious youth programs. Second, the scant information which, in some
way, addresses both the needs of adolescents and the religious youth
programs will be discussed. Finally, the available literature on
youth "religiosity" and its relationship to adolescent behaviors will
be summarized. This section will conclude with a discussion of gaps
in the literature itself.

Religious Education and Youth Programs

Research analyzing religious communities' programmatic responses
to adolescents is scarce. The material that does exist on religious
youth programs usually appears in popular manuals and magazines which
address the concerns of program leaders seeking practical wisdom;
this literature is often quite credible but it suffers from an over-
reliance on first-person narratives and case studies and, while
helpful, is often only marginally reliable as research. Other rele-
vant literature, originating in the religious community itself, has
been generated by the field of religious education, either in the form
of religious educational theory adapted for youth programs, or in the
form of apologetics defending the need to include religious youth work
in religious communities and advocating ways to make it more viable.

Theoretical literature

Much of the theoretical literature relevant to religious youth
work is tucked within larger documents on religious education or is
slipped into the introductory chapters of manuals intended primarily
as practical guides (Rice, 1987; Shaheen 1986). A few religious
educators have made religious youth work an area of special interest,

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and their work provides the bulk of literature examining religious
communities' responses to teenagers. These educators are more inves-
ted in the religious life of adolescents and their relationship with
religious communities than they are in any particular model of youth
work. They tend to emphasize teenage faith development over total
personal development, although none would deny the importance of the
latter. When it comes to religious youth work itself, they invariably
describe it as it should be rather than as it is. However, their work
provides important foundations for religious communities' work with
teenagers, and therefore is included in this report.

Little (1968) was one of the first to adapt educational princi-
ples to religious youth work specifically, arguing that the integra-
tion of adolescents into the entire community and mission of a congre-
gation is both a developmentally and theologically appropriate program
response for youth. Little believes that youth are not only reci-
pients of Christian education, but are educators themselves, guided by
adult leaders who act as role models. Youth both receive and partici-
pate in the religious institution's response to its youth. Holderness
(1976b) and Martinson (1988) have articulated similar congregational
perspectives in ensuing decades, suggesting that religious institu-
tions should provide structures that assist youth in building rela-
tionships with adults in the congregation who become significant to
them, acting as guarantors for the life of faith.

One of the most prolific and radical proponents of this philoso-
phy of religious education is Westerhoff (1980, 1985), who believes
that religious institutions best serve the needs of youth by
abolishing many programmatic structures generally imposed during
adolescence, such as Sunday School. Westerhoff views many such struc-

tures as developmentally inappropriate, arguing instead for community
support of teenagers' inevitable religious questioning. To Wester-
hoff, the religious institution responds to the needs of adolescents
when it enables them to experience community wholly by participation
in the congregation's rituals, mission, and interpersonal relation-
ships, and then helps them reflect on that experience. This process,
in Westerhoff's thinking, leads naturally to behavior appropriate to
the religious life. As a whole, religious educators like Little and
Westerhoff emphasize the importance of teenagers' relationships in
religious communities which value them as significant, contributing
members. It is through participation in these communities that reli-
gious identity is imparted as a teenager experiences belonging to the
community and to God.

Echoing adolescents' need for total integration into community
religious life, Harris (1981) suggests that the religious development
of young people is the responsibility of the entire religious communi-
ty. However, Harris believes that the starting point for religious
youth work is not the religious community, but the "environment of
youth, with its political, social and cultural dynamic. We shall
never understand young people apart from their own time and place"
(Harris, 1981, p. 51). Underscoring the need for recognizing cultural
context, Warren argues that faith identity in youth begins when they
are empowered to liberate themselves from cultural manipulation (1982,
1987a, 1987b). Spiritual development, believes Warren, is not just a
psychological phenomenon; it is social and political as well. Educa-
tors like Harris and Warren submit that religious education's greatest
contribution to youth is empowering them to become "culture critics"

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who call into question oppressive elements of the larger culture, such as the media, that obstruct teenagers' appreciation of God, themselves and the world.

Apologetic literature

Other religious educators have committed themselves to advocacy on behalf of youth in Christian religious communities, and offer critiques of current pr tices as well as admonish churches to make religious youth work a .: gh priority even when denominational priorities lie elsewhere. The landmark document in American Catholic communities was the 1980 Hope for the Decade, a compilation of symposia reports which evaluated religious youth work in the Catholic church. The report identified avenues for growth and renewal and then issued explicit charges to the church to develop youth ministry around eight priority issues: parish renewal, sexuality, family, youth leadership, faith and justice, youth culture, religious identity, and collaboration with the institutional church (Murphy, Guerin, Roberto & Brown, 1980, p. 120). These issues comprised an "agenda for action" in the 1980s, a period in which Catholic youth ministry experienced unprecedented growth (Roberto, 1991).

Protestant advocates for religious youth work lack a parallel document. Evangelical Protestants find ready audiences in their denominations which prioritize youth ministry, thereby reducing their need for apologetic literature. By contrast, mainline Protestants exhibit very low levels of commitment to youth ministry, so youth ministry apologetics abound but often target deaf ears. One significant attempt to change this phenomenon was the Lilly Endowment's extensive project on "Youth Ministry and Theological Education" in the

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late 1980s; this project gathered the insights of leading Christian educators across the U.S. who, after three years, came to this frustrating conclusion:

> It is time to take a hard look at the mainline churches' ministry with youth. . . . How are the mainline churches faring? Statistics tell the tale: Not only are they failing to hold on to their own youth and young adults, but they are increasingly losing them, not to other churches, but to no religion at all! . . . . Seminaries, denominations, and congregations are not investing sufficient energy and resources in this area. A large percentage of seminary graduates do not see work with youth as an integral part of their ministries. Denominations have cut back in curriculum resources and staff in this area in the face of shrinking budgets. Many congregations are perfectly willing to keep youth in a marginalized position; they want the church to meet teens' social needs and keep them out of trouble, but they are not really interested in involving them in the larger congregation's struggle to discern what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in the contemporary world (Osmer, 1989, pp. 1-2).

Whether these words describe the situation facing mainline Protestant youth work alone, or whether they simply underscore the fact that mainline Protestant youth ministry is bound to reflect the lukewarm temperature of mainline Protestant health as a whole, was not at issue in the Lilly project. What these religious educators believe to be at stake is a generation of adolescents whom religious communities are losing, not to other churches, but to the values of secular culture (Osmer, 1989). Those theological educators on the Lilly-funded project team viewed religious youth programs as more than tools for institutional maintenance; they viewed them as keys of survival for adolescents threatened by a world whose values inevitably place them at-risk.

Adolescent Needs and Religious Youth Programs

In the early research on the dynamics of young adolescence, religion was only a marginal concern. Similarly, many religious youth organizations failed to keep pace programmatically with existing re-

search on the principles of adolescent development (Little, 1982). By
the 1980s, however, a shift gradually began to occur. Researchers in
early adolescence were noticed by religious communities primarily
because some of this research specifically examined the beliefs and
practices of young teenagers from major religious traditions.[13] Reli-
gious youth leaders took notice, and a small but important body of
literature began to argue that the needs of adolescents--rather than
the needs of the religious community--should be the starting point for
religious youth programming.

The premiere essay in this category is Anita M. Farel's summary
of the Center for Early Adolescence's 1982 study <u>Early Adolescence and
Religion: A Status Study</u>. Farel lists eight characteristics of
"responsive" religious youth programs; that is, programs that take
seriously both the needs of the young adolescent <u>and</u> the religious
community (Farel, 1982). According to Farel, such programs:

  o   Provide a comfortable setting in which young people can
       explore the bases of their religious faith.

  o   Connect religious traditions with varied opportunities for
       self-discovery and self-definition.

  o   Involve both young people and their parents, to foster
       mutual understanding.

  o   Have clearly articulated rules that youth group members
       appreciate and accept.

  o   Are guided by mature adults who are comfortable with young
       people and are willing to explore sensitive issues with
       them.

  o   Provide opportunities for young people to gain a sense of
       competence by performing meaningful tasks in their commu-
       nities and their congregations.

  o   Include time for laughter, high spirits, and physical
       activity as well as time for contemplation and opportuni-
       ties to be alone.

o   Encourage mutual acceptance and friendship among the young
       people.

Drawing liberally from Farel's work and from the Carnegie Council
on Adolescent Development's 1989 study Turning Points, Brian Reynolds,
co-founder of the Center for Youth Ministry Development, developed a
"Ministry With Young Adolescents," a concise document in which Rey-
nolds instructs Christian youth ministers to develop age-level appro-
priate ministry for young teenagers (Reynolds, 1990). Designed for
Roman Catholics but broadly applicable to any religious community,
Reynolds' essay deals more with young adolescents than with ministry,
but it is helpful for guiding practitioners on the art of blending
young adolescents' needs and the concerns of a local parish in a
religious youth program. A similar approach, written from a Protes-
tant's perspective but also pertinent to Catholics; is Wayne Rice's
Junior High Ministry, a slightly bulkier interpretation of needs-based
religious programming, but appealing to practitioners for its section
on age-level appropriate program suggestions for young adolescents
(Rice, 1987).

Benson and Williams' Determining Needs in Your Youth Ministry
examines needs-based youth programming on an individual basis. Their
handbook offers step-by-step instruction for those hoping to identify
the specific concerns of the microcosm of young people involved in a
given religious youth program (Benson & Williams, 1987). At the
opposite end of the spectrum is Search's The Troubled Journey: A
Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth, a macroscopic v   of developmental
"deficits" and "assets" contributing to the growth and behavior of
more than 46,000 teenagers (Benson, 1990). The study concludes that
"the ability to nourish healthy children and adolescents requires the

support, involvement, and cooperation of multiple youth-serving sectors," including religious institutions. The study found that even among teenagers with multiple developmental deficits those reporting church or synagogue involvement also tended to report fewer at-risk behaviors (Benson, 1990). Studies such as these underscore a trend in current research which seeks to establish a relationship between the developmental needs of adolescents and subsequent religious programming.

Religiosity as a Factor in the Behavior of Youth

Many scholars, whose concerns include but are not limited to adolescents involved in religious communities, have examined the impact of religiosity on adolescent behavior independent of the religious community. The term "religiosity" refers to a scale which assesses religious belief and/or practice (Spilka, Hood & Gorsuch, 1985). Research on adolescent religiosity, which spans many disciplines and perspectives, points to the potential "preventative" power of religion, since it appears to provide a kind of "innoculation" for youth against antisocial behavior. One study of sixth through twelfth grade youth found that children who grow up in families where sexual abuse, physical abuse, parental addiction, or a single parent is present are more likely to engage in at-risk behavior than peers who grow up without these family difficulties; however, the few youth in the study living in such troubled environments, but reporting no at-risk behaviors, were about twice as likely to be involved in a church or a synagogue than their peers from troubled environments who reported at-risk behavior (Benson, 1990). In general, the research leading to these conclusions falls into four categories:

dimensions of religiosity, demographic variables and religiosity, relationships between religiosity and at risk adolescent behavior, and relationships between religiosity and prosocial adolescent behavior.

Dimensions of religiosity

Common religiosity scales in adolescent research include religious participation, (e.g., "How many times do you attend church/synagogue?") (Forliti & Benson, 1986; Sloane & Potvin, 1983); religious saliency (e.g., "How important are your religious beliefs in the conduct of your everyday activities?") (Hadaway, Elifson & Petersen, 1984; Sloane & Potvin, 1983); and religious belief (e.g., "God answers prayer"; "God really exists") (Sloane & Potvin, 1983; Hadaway et al., 1984). Only one study measured religiosity in terms of "faith maturity," that is, the congruence of professed beliefs and a lifestyle consistent with those beliefs (Search Institute, 1990). This latter definition is significant because it most nearly resembles the understanding of religious identity espoused by the churches it studied.

Regardless of how it is measured, religiosity appears to be at least moderately important to adolescents (Farel, 1982; Girl Scouts, 1989). A 1986 study asked young adolescents who said they belonged to a religious community to rank order twenty-four values: "To have God at the center of my life" ranked ninth and "To be a part of a church or synagogue" ranked fifteenth (Forliti & Benson, 1986). In Search Institute's 1990 study of more than 46,000 Midwest teenagers, 57 percent claimed involvement in a church or synagogue (Benson, 1990). The Girl Scouts Survey conducted in 1989 on "The Beliefs and Values of America's Children," which included a more geographically and racially

mixed sample than the Search study, found that 82 percent of the youth surveyed reported belief in God, and a large majority (71 percent) said they prayed once a week or more (Girl Scouts, 1990).

Variables and Adolescent Religiosity

Levels of religiosity differ according to gender, age, and geographic region and according to parental and peer religiosity. For instance, gender differences in adolescent religiosity have been reported in several studies. Adolescent girls consistently report greater religiosity both in terms of participation and belief (Forliti & Benson, 1986; Nelson & Potvin, 1981; Savin-Williams, 1977; Sloane & Potvin, 1983, 1986). Although more girls than boys professed religious belief, the orthodoxy of these beliefs does not vary significantly between males and females (Sloane & Potvin, 1983). Personality type does not seem to contribute significantly to adolescent religiosity, but high extraversion seems to be positively related to intrinsic religion, religious belief, and religious participation for girls but not for boys (Suziedelis & Potvin, 1981). In fact, the higher the degree of male sex role identification in a teenage boy, the less likely he is to demonstrate religiosity. For girls, sex role identification has no impact on religiosity (Suziedelis & Potvin, 1981).

Both religious participation and religious belief decrease with age (Forliti & Benson, 1986; Savin-Williams, 1977; Sloane & Potvin, 1983). Teenage boys' religiosity decreases faster than teenage girls' (Benson, Wood & Johnson, 1984). Even though religiosity decreases with age, adolescent religious participation is predictive of adult religious participation in those same persons (Thornton & Camburn,

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1989; Willits & Crider, 1988, 1989).

In addition to gender and age, one's geographic region and de-
nomination tend to affect religiosity. Not surprisingly, American
teenagers in the south, the traditional "Bible Belt" of the U.S.,
report greater "personal faith," greater religious participation, and
a higher degree of religious fundamentalism than adolescents in other
parts of the United States (Nelsen & Potvin, 1981). All dimensions of
religiosity, including "faith maturity," are less pronounced among
teenagers affiliated with "mainline" churches than teenagers affilia-
ted with more fundamentalist churches (Sloane & Potvin, 1983).

There is some evidence that peer religiosity may also influence
adolescent religiosity (Hoge & Petrillo, 1979; Ozorak, 1989). The
positive correlation between parents' religious participation and
beliefs and the participation and beliefs of their adolescent children
has been a consistent finding (Clark, Worthington, & Danser, 1988;
Forliti & Benson, 1986; Hoge & Petrillo, 1979; Kieran & Munro, 1987;
Nelson, 1980; Ozorak, 1989; Thornton & Camburn, 1989; Weigert &
Thomas, 1972; Willits & Crider, 1988, 1989). Parents' general ability
to affirm their teenager, in addition to whether or not they them-
selves are religious, may also be a significant positive indicator of
adolescent religiosity (Dudley, 1978; Nelson, 1980; Nelson, 1981;
Weigert & Thomas, 1978). Parental religious participation, however,
only weakly predicts the future religious participation of their
children once they become adults (Thornton & Camburn, 1989; Willits &
Crider, 1988, 1989).

Religiosity and At-Risk Adolescent Behavior

Most of the research on religiosity and adolescence conducted in

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the past decade has been devoted to the relationship between a teena-
ger's religiosity and antisocial and/or high-risk behaviors, notably
drug/alcohol use, sexual activity, and delinquency.[14]   Although sui-
cide attempts and dropping out of school are commonly studied at-risk
behaviors (Dryfoos, 1990), they do not figure prominently in the
research probing links between religiosity and behavior.

Relationships between religiosity and teenage drug and alcohol
use have received much attention in the research of the past decade.
This research consistently points to negative correlations between
religiosity and adolescent drug/alcohol use; that is, the more reli-
giosity a teenager reports, the less likely he or she is to take drugs
or drink (Amoateng & Bahr, 1986; Cochran, 1986; Forliti & Benson,
1986; Hadaway, et al., 1984; Lorch & Hughes, 1985). With regard to
alcohol, junior high and high school students reporting high religious
salience and frequent church attendance say they are significantly
more likely to refuse alcohol at a party where their friends were
drinking than their counterparts reporting low religiosity (Girl
Scouts, 198990). Among teenagers affiliated with fundamentalist chur-
ches, there is even less likelihood of alcohol use (Amoateng & Bahr,
1986; Hadaway et al., 1984; Lorch & Hughes, 1985). Still, teenagers
who report religious affiliation are not immune from substance abuse.
A recent study reported widespread drinking among adolescents from
mainline denominations, beginning in the seventh grade; almost one-
fourth (23 percent) of ninth and tenth graders in the study said that
they drank alcohol six or more times in the last year, and more than
one in ten (12 percent) reported binge drinking ("had five or more
drinks in a row") three or more times in the last twelve months
(Search Institute, 1990).

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These findings generally parallel findings that associate adolescent religiosity with drug use. Religiosity consistently negatively correlates with "soft" drug use (Amoateng & Bahr, 1986; Cochran, 1988; Lorch & Hughes, 1985; McIntosh, et al., 1981), although religiosity is a relatively weak predictor of "hard" drug use (Hadaway et al., 1984; Lorch & Hughes, 1985; McIntosh et al., 1981). One study, however, found religiosity strongly related to non-use of "hard" drugs (Cochran, 1988). Because of the multiple variables affecting both religiosity and substance abuse, the degree to which religiosity alone predicts drug use is difficult to determine. Religiosity, family and peers may all interact to influence drug use, although there is some evidence that religiosity is still negatively related to drug use when other variables, such as environment and peer influence, are statistically controlled (Hadaway et al., 1984).

Sexual activity and religiosity is another relationship which concerns scholars, with a variety of studies demonstrating a negative correlation between religiosity and sexually permissive attitudes and behavior. Adolescents who attend church frequently and/or who value religion highly have the least permissive attitudes about sex (Girl Scouts, 1989; Miller & Olson, 1988; Thornton & Camburn, 1989; Studer & Thornton, 1987) and are the least sexually active (Forliti & Benson, 1986; Jessor, Costa, Jessor & Donovan, 1983; Miller & Bingham, 1989; Miller & Olson, 1988; Thornton & Camburn, 1989; Woodroof, 1985). Religious affiliation, however, while moderately predictive of low levels of sexual activity, does not provide "insurance" for a young person's chastity. In Search Institute's study of Christian education in six major Protestant denominations, 15% of ninth and

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tenth graders reported having sexual intercourse once or more in their lifetime (Search Institute, 1990). According to one longitudinal study, there seems to be a reciprocal relationship between religiosity and permissive sexual attitudes and behaviors; that is, greater religiosity is likely to lead to less sexual permissiveness, while more sexual permissiveness leads to lower religiosity (Thornton & Camburn, 1989). Even though religious adolescents are less likely than their counterparts to be sexually active, when they are sexually active, one study found religious teenagers to be less likely to use contraceptives than their non-religious friends (Studer & Thornton, 1987), although evidence for this behavior is mixed (McCormick, Izzo & Folcik, 1985).

A third behavioral relationship receiving substantial attention in the literature is the relationship between religiosity and delinquency. Early studies failed to find religiosity related to adolescent antisocial behavior (Hirschi & Stark, 1969). Criticized for their methods (Burkett & White, 1974, Sloane & Potvin, 1986), these studies gave rise to recent research efforts designed to improve the methods of earlier findings. In the process, researchers found frequent religious participation and high religious salience to result in less frequent antisocial behavior such as truancy, drug use, major and minor theft, trespassing, property damage, fights, and weapon use.[15]

Religiosity does not appear to be related to lower delinquent behavior in studies that control for peer and family influence (Elifson, Peterson & Hadaway, 1983). However, the relationship between adolescent religiosity and delinquency, as it may be affected by family and peers, has not been investigated. As Elifson, et al. suggest, religiosity might not have shown a unique effect on delin-

quency because "religion may be acting as an antecedent influence that
helps create a family and peer environment not conducive to delinquent
behavior" (Elifson, Peterson & Hadaway, 1983, p. 524).

Research has not specifically addressed the relationship between
suicide and religiosity among adolescents. Of the research that has
been done with the adult population, religiosity appears to be in-
versely related to national suicide rates even when other factors are
controlled (Stacks, 1983). However, one study found that church-going
youth still show some suicidal tendencies. Nearly half of all adoles-
cents surveyed, 47 percent of ninth and tenth graders and 44 percent
of youth in grades eleven and twelve, said that they had thought about
committing suicide at least once in the last year (Search Institute,
1990).

Religiosity and Prosocial Behavior

The role of religion as an impetus toward prosocial behavior has
more often been an assumption than a finding of the research itself.
Where prosocial behavior is expressly mentioned, it is assigned an
active dimension, such as "altruism," or attitudes and behaviors which
help others. Although the research reviewed here did not directly
address the relationship between adolescent religiosity and altruism,
it does suggest that the more religious participation, salience,
and orthodoxy is professed by an adolescent, the more likely he or she
is to participate in helping behaviors.

The published literature is cautious about claiming a causal
relationship between religiosity and prosocial behaviors. Arguing
that prosocial behavior may actually reduce the tendency to make risky
choices, a recent Search Institute study found that students who

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engage in altruistic behavior on a weekly basis are less likely than non-helpers to report frequent or binge drinking, tobacco use, drug use, sexual activity, depression/suicide attempts, antisocial behavior, desire to quit school, reckless driving, or eating disorders (Benson, 1990).

The Girl Scout survey, unique in that it claims that youth are governed by various "moral compasses," or sources of authority for moral decisions, found that adolescents basing moral decisions upon religious authority were more willing to engage in altruistic behavior than youth of most other moral orientations. Black and Hispanic youth, growing up in ethnic communities where the church is a pronounced part of the culture, reported more altruism than white youth. However, the study concluded that the determining factor in the relationship between religiosity and an adolescent's worldview is not the religion itself but the intensity of religious faith (Girl Scouts, 1989).

Jewish youth exhibit similar tendencies toward altruism; as one Jewish author observed, "Where there is no bread, there is no Torah" (Huberman, 1988, p. 307). While a recent survey of Jewish teenagers found their highest priorities to be inner-directed (e.g., "concern about looks and appearance"), interest in the welfare of others also ranked in their top ten priorities (Haas & Newlon, 1990) a pattern analogous to a similar study of Christian adolescents (Benson, et al., 1987). These patterns of altruism, if not caused by religious communities, are at least consistent with their teachings.

The significance of the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior is well summarized in Search Institute's portrait of adolescents in grades six through twelve (Benson, 1990). Noting

that involvement in a church or synagogue is one of many possible "assets" to adolescent development because it assists in the structured use of time and positive value development, the study concludes that adolescents who ultimately "thrive" are much more likely to be connected to adult-led, structured youth programs such as those offered by a church or school, and to be connected to a variety of systems of support, e.g. a community organization, church, or synagogue, in addition to a strong family. These connections apparently help compensate for developmental deficits, such as social isolation, negative peer pressure, and/or physical or sexual abuse, which the adolescent may experience. "The point is this," concludes the study. "Deficits are not destiny. With the right configuration of external and internal assets, the potential negative effects of adversity can be neutralized" (Benson, 1990, p. 78).

Gaps in the Printed Literature

The diverse literature concerning religious communities' programmatic responses to youth provides, if not a solid foundation for religious youth programs, at least some evidence of the potential value of practices and beliefs which religious youth programs promote. The research also contains some gaps which must be filled if religious youth programs' service to adolescents is to improve.

First, there is little cross-fertilization between the disciplines of religious education and the social/behavioral sciences. Both of these fields are vastly interested in the well-being of the adolescent, and both spend substantial energy trying to understand the relationship between adolescence and religion. The application of "religiosity" to the religious community is unclear, and its useful-

ness to practitioners is limited. At the same time, the usefulness of
religious educational theory is restricted to religious institutions
unless it can address the religiosity of adolescents outside the
religious community as well. While dozens of manuals and magazines
are available to the practitioner looking for program ideas, manage-
ment tips, and philosophical ballast, collaboration between those
generating theory in religious education and those conducting research
on religiosity is rare.

Second, very little has been written on the relig ous development
of young adolescents, despite the increasing recognition that young
adolescence requires specific attention from religious communities
(Farel, 1982). Program responses tend to treat young adolescents as
"total" people, but do they address those needs which may be specifi-
cally "religious?" For example, is religious experience a developmen-
tal need of young adolescents, or is it merely a component of identity
formation? In addition, most philosophical as well as empirical re-
search fails to dis.inguish between young and older adolescents. Even
studies that analyze adolescent needs and program responses tend to
view all adolescents as "youth." The philosophical contexts of reli-
gious education offer no frameworks for the religious education of
young adolescents per se; the appropriate response of religious
communities during the developmental changes in religious belief and
behavior between young and older adolescence has not yet been systema-
tically explored.

Another gap in the literature is a lack of consensus in defini-
tions of religion, faith, and religiosity. For example, "religiosity"
is measured by religious participation, importance, and belief. This
does not typically describe the dynamic religious communities un-

derstand as faith. Furthermore, terms like "religious education" have
varying connotations even among experts; for some it is a formal
process independent of more "informal" methods of community ex-
perience. In the Jewish community, even the term "informal" education
is variously received, with some using the terms "supplementary" or
"alternative" education to avoid a stigma often attached to the word
"informal" in Jewish educational efforts (Kilstein, 1991).

Yet another significant gap is the underrepresentation of ethnic
youth, both in the samples used for empirical research and in the
concerns of philosophical literature. Most empirical studies to date
have used primarily white, Protestant, middle-class samples. Cul-
turally-specific religious education literature is rare; [16] where it
does exist, it is usually written only in English and presented from
an Anglo-American perspective (Elizondo, 1990). As the cultural
pluralism of the United States continues to grow, this resource vacuum
is widening rapidly.

Omitted, also, from religious education theory is the at-risk
adolescent, a reflection of this teenager's omission from religious
youth work as a whole. Although periodic articles arise in popular
resources on subjects such as "drinking and your youth group" and
"crisis intervention," virtually nothing is known from research about
the relationship between at-risk youth and religious communities, or
about why at-risk behavior persists in some religious adolescents but
not in others. Since much of the research on at-risk behavior points
to its prevalence--or at least its potential prevalence--in all youth,
learning how and why religious institutions seem to "innoculate" youth
against such choices is a matter of some urgency. What, specifically,

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do religious communities inculcate that results in more self-control? Guilt? Obedience? Conformity? Wholesome ways to spend discretionary time? Do religious communities instill a deeper sense of self respect than other affiliations? And, if youth affiliated with religious youth programs do tend towards healthier choices, are they happier than their at-risk friends? While positive correlations between reli- giosity and prosocial behavior do exist, researchers do not understand the causalities involved. What differences would longitudinal studies find in the at-risk behavior of religious versus non-religious popula- tions?

Finally, subtle relationships between factors which influence religiosity often go unnoticed. For instance, is it the family's identity as a religious family, or the religion's influence on family identity, which defines a sexually permissive attitude? Does religio- sity indirectly affect drug use because church involvement may result in a peer group of non-users, thereby reducing members' chances of using drugs, or is it the other way around? The issues are complex and intermingled; future research can productively examine the inter- relationships of variables affecting religiosity in teenagers.

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A DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW OF RELIGIOUS YOUTH PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

If a review of the relevant printed research on religious youth programs and American young adolescents reveals a scattered body of literature, information about the programs themselves is even more untamed. The field of religious youth work is largely without boundaries; any effort to synthesize information is likely to omit aspects of this work which properly could be included. The following pages, however, represent one effort to trace consistent themes in the work of many different religious communities in terms of their status, basic goals and assumptions, methods of delivery, leadership, funding, and strengths and challenges.

The Status of Religious Youth Programs

Religious youth work is at a crossroads in American Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities. On the one hand, these communities are serving adolescents in more ways than ever before; on the other hand, fewer adolescents are actively involved in the corporate life of the religious community than a generation ago (Barna, 1990). For many religious communities, the 1990s signal an era of massive cuts in the money, time, and personnel allocated to religious youth work. Mainline Protestant churches, the originators of the religious youth program, have experienced a steady decline in the past three decades; young people in particular have left the mainline Protestant fold (Osmer, 1989). During this same period, conservative evangelical youth ministry has experienced moderate growth which has begun to stabilize (Carotta, 1990). In the 1980s, American Catholics--relative

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newcomers to youth ministry per se despite the Roman Catholic Church's historic commitment to religious education and Catholic charities-- caught up with and in many places surpassed Protestants in their commitment to, and investment in, youth ministry, although presently Catholics are also experiencing major reductions in funding and personnel for youth work. Funding, support, and participation in Jewish youth work has remained relatively stable during the past decade although "low participation levels" are still considered a problem (Plutzer, 1991).

Explanations for these divergent patterns vary. In mainline Protestant churches, rhetorical support of religious youth work is strong, but budget allocations have not kept pace with rising costs. In the Episcopal Church, for example, a churchwide endorsement of the importance of Christian education was adopted in 1988, and a successful national youth event garnered publicity for the Episcopalian leadership's commitment to young people. But, points out Sheryl Kujawa, denominational staff person for youth ministry in the Episcopal Church, the national budget for youth ministry has remained the same for ten years. "In a certain sense," says Kujawa, "to be mainline Protestant is a death wish. All elected officials [in the church] say they like children, but the money, time, and support is not there. Resources have not kept pace with demand. We have good participation, but our budgets insure mediocrity" (Kujawa, 1991).

Evangelical Protestants, on the other hand, experienced a growth in membership in the past two decades, and budgets and staff commitments to youth work remained stable or increased slightly during that period. For instance, funding for Southern Baptist Sunday Schools,

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which comprise the basic delivery system for Southern Baptist youth work, as well as the number of staff persons available to youth per capita have increased in recent years (Roberto, 1991; Ross, 1990; Day, 1990). Richard Ross of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board believes that part of this stability may be attributed to the fact that Southern Baptists, "unlike mainline churches in the 1960s and 1970s, did not move in the direction of viewing teenagers as fully functioning adults in the church. We respect teenagers profoundly," says Ross. "But they need a different type of program than adults. That [age-level appropriate] programming helped us a lot in the past twenty years" (Ross, 1990). John Roberto, director of the Catholic-based Center for Youth Ministry Development which conducts training seminars for youth ministers, adds that the high quality of training expected of--and provided for-- Catholic youth ministers and volunteers helps account for Catholics' strong youth ministry performance in the past decade (Roberto, 1991).

While the general pattern of evangelical Protestant youth minis-try in the past decade has been one of expansion, evangelical para-church groups have struggled to maintain levels of funding and parti-cipation primarily because they do not benefit from congregational budgets or membership bases which place a second-generation of church members' tithes and children at their disposal (Carotta, 1990). Youth for Christ's Rodger Cross observed that "we have more churches parti-cipating, but we have to work harder for every dollar" (Cross, 1990). Fellowship of Christian Athletes director Roy Moran noted that since independent religious youth organizations do their own fundraising, their financial stability tends to mirror the national economy. Pointing to recent budgetary constraints facing the Fellowship of

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Christian Athletes, Moran said: "Our funding was increasing until we put troops in Iraq; since then it has decreased. Fortunately, funding is not an issue in starting a local [Fellowship of Christian Athletes] chapter" (Moran, 1990).

Recent cuts in staff and budgets have alarmed Catholic youth ministers, but Roman Catholic youth work is still experiencing the benefits of explosive growth during the 1980s. Many factors contributed to this growth, not the least of which was "a sense of urgency and desperation" from Catholic adults who saw decreasing numbers of youth attending Catholic churches and youth groups (Roberto, 1991). This desperation spurred a grass roots initiative to unify Roman Catholic youth work, a vision articulated officially in the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' 1976 "Vision Statement" for youth ministry. By the 1980's, observes Roberto, standardized training in youth ministry became valued and youth work began to "decentralize" as its emphasis shifted from the diocesan to the parish level. "Today," says Roberto, "we are having lots of cutbacks in money and personnel. But still the Roman Catholic Church is spending more money on youth than ever before. The difference is that most of it is now being spent on the parish level, where there is an increased level of professionalism and length of tenure among youth ministers" (Roberto, 1991).

While leaders in Jewish religious youth movements tend to describe the condition of these organizations as "stable," they are guarded as they do so. On the one hand, more resources are being allocated for religious youth programs in the Jewish community than ever before. While Jewish supplementary schools (mid-week, afternoon,

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once-a-week) dropped by 52 percent between 1962 and 1986, Jewish day schools doubled in size (Huberman, 1988). Yet membership in synagogue-based youth movements, whose membership is larger than the independent youth movements, has declined in the past decade for reasons that are not altogether clear (Plutzer, 1991). Still, funding for informal Jewish education is at low ebb and qualified youth workers are difficult to recruit due to low salaries in all areas of Jewish youth leadership (Rosenzwieg, 1991). Most of the time, what these leaders mean by the "stable" situation of Jewish youth movements is that funding and personnel are inadequate, but they do not appear to be decreasing further at this time (Elad, 1991).

In particular, the American Jewish community's efforts to settle Soviet Jewish immigrants in Israel and the U.S. have strained financial resources normally available to youth movements and other program agencies, although Jewish youth leaders are quick to point out the ways in which American Jewish youth programs share in the commitment to integrate Soviet teenagers into American Jewish life (Melzer, 1991; Shanky, 1991). New trends in informal education and outreach are increasing the amount of training available to, and the degree of commitment from, volunteer religious youth workers (Kilstein, 1991); but in general, staff persons in Jewish youth movements are cautious when they describe the status of Jewish religious youth work. While the programs are plentiful, funding and personnel problems severely limit their ability to address the needs of many Jewish young people.

Goals and Assumptions of Religious Youth Work

Despite the diversity of theologies, polities, histories, and programs which inform the religious youth work of the 1990s, religious

youth programs share remarkably similar goals and assumptions which, while often unspoken, direct their work with adolescents. On the one hand, these programs set out to instill in adolescents a clear cultural and faith identity, an identity which will lead them to become contributing members to the religious community itself. On the other hand, these programs assume the need to envelop young people, usually their own, in a caring community that will facilitate adolescent development and see them safely into adulthood as mature, productive members of society. Religious youth programs exist in the tension between these two goals.

The Goal of Cultural/Faith Identity

The degree to which a program leans more toward cultural or faith identity is a matter of theology and ethnicity, but all religious youth work, to some extent, affirms both of these objectives. Anglo-Protestant youth work, for example, tends to articulate ownership of faith as part of its mission, but seldom mentions a need for cultural affirmation; in practice, except for extremely conservative, sect-like groups, white Protestant youth programs seek to help youth live within the dominant culture more than they seek to create a counter-cultural identity for youth (Rasmussen, 1990; Warren, 1990). A faith community is viewed as a voluntary association, and much religious youth work is aimed at eliciting a teenager's commitment to "join" such a community. In general, the more conservative and evangelical the organization, the more its goals are focused on joining as a means to faith identity; the more mainline the group, the more its goals stress lifestyle within the dominant culture as evidence of faith identity.

In Roman Catholic youth work, lines between faith and cultural

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identity are somewhat more blurred. Catholics, more so than Protes-
tants, have historically understood themselves to be distinct subcul-
ture within the dominant American culture. It is this self-
understanding, in fact, which gave rise to Catholic parochial educa-
tion in the nineteenth century when public education became institu-
tionalized as the bearer of Protestant as well as American values.
Catholic theology views religious identity as more than a voluntary
association; mass, for instance, is considered an obligation, not a
choice. A great deal of emphasis is placed on community practices
which make one "Catholic"; one is admitted at confirmation, not only
to the Catholic church, but to "Catholic life." Catholic youth minis-
try self-consciously strives to communicate, not only how to be Chris-
tian, but how to be a Catholic, a faith identity with definite cul-
tural implications which impinge upon marriage, family, and lifestyle
decisions.

Ethnic Christian communities are even more explicit about the
connection between cultural and faith identity as a goal of youth
ministry. In most ethnic communities, inherent in one's cultural
ethos is a self-conscious spirituality. In interviews conducted for
this project, ethnic religious youth leaders stressed the relation-
ship between ethnic identity and spirituality: "African Americans by
nature are spiritual people" (Crawford, 1991); "Asian/Pacific Ameri-
can youth have a different history; they were not pilgrims or Puri-
tans, they have a different theological point of view, and different
sets of values based on this" (Ng. 1991); "The Hispanic people place
a strong emphasis on the spiritual side [of issues]" (Elizondo, 1990).
Perspectives like these lead most ethnic Christian communities to

recognize religious identity as central to their cultural fabric. Consequently, ethnic Christian youth programs intentionally teach religiosity as a part of being ethnic (Soaries, 1990).

The greatest fusion between cultural and faith identity is found in Jewish youth work, which readily identifies cultural affirmation and survival as the primary goals of youth work. Sandra Kilstein of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York makes the point directly: "The goal [of Jewish youth work] is to keep Jewish youth Jewish" (Kilstein, 1991). Making a connection between a Jewish youth and a local synagogue is far less important to most Jewish youth movements than it is for Christian youth ministries which consciously connect teenagers with local churches. The reason is simple: a teenager's Jewishness does not depend upon synagogue-affiliation. The fact that the Jewish community regards Jews as a people, not as a religion, has profound implications on what is construed as "reli- gious" youth work in the Jewish community (Elad, 1991). The fusion of the goals of cultural/faith identity constitutes "a real ambiguity in what constitutes a religious youth program," says David Frank, denomi- national staff for the North American Federation of Temple Youth. "That ambiguity is an authentic and essential component of American Jewish life; it is very difficult to separate religious from cultural phenomena. It really comes down to a very difficult discussion that is at the heart of the difference between Jewish communities and other kinds of religious communities" (Frank, 1991). For this reason, Zionist youth movements, community-based youth movements, synagogue- based youth movements, and youth work in Jewish Community Centers are all understood to be religious youth work even though relatively little emphasis may be placed on religious practice. While a few

Jewish youth organizations do identify themselves as "secular," the vast majority make no attempt to distinguish Jewish faith from Jewish culture (Kastner, 1991).

The need to pass on cultural and faith identity in all of these religious communities is at least partly motivated by their conviction that survival depends upon creating new leaders who will carry this identity into each succeeding generation. This expectation is typical of all entities which function as "communities"; as John Gardner has written, "Any community that seeks to ensure its continued vitality will not only enable [its] young people to develop to the full, but will prepare them for their future roles, instilling the shared values, fostering commitment to shared purposes, and teaching them to preserve and renew the common heritage" (Gardner, 1991, p. 29). Without religious youth work, the religious community's future is jeopardized. Although leaders in religious youth work struggle to persuade congregations that teenagers are the "church/synagogue of today" as well as the "church/synagogue of tomorrow," the religious community as a whole is far more concerned about the "church/synagogue of tomorrow" which they themselves cannot ensure. Consequently, religious youth work is often viewed as a means of institutional security, an assurance that, a generation hence, someone will be there to carry on the religious tradition.

The Goal of Healthy Adolescent Development

The goal of healthy adolescent development, as well as cultural/faith identity, is also highly esteemed by religious youth leaders. Admittedly, this objective is not uniquely sought by religious communities. Yet concern for an adolescent's total well-being

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is often what religious youth leaders cite first when discussing the "unique" contributions of religious youth work to a teenager's development. Judeo-Christian tradition teaches that the entire person is created "in God's image," and that the religious community affirms the sanctity of God's creation. Those interviewed for this project were universally agreed that there is intrinsic merit in a youth program which is self-consciously "religious." Yet when asked what unique contributions religious youth programs made to an adolescent's well-being, respondents frequently reported "positive self-esteem," "a sense of community," and "fostering an other-centered worldview." Clearly, the goals of cultural/faith identity and the goals of healthy adolescent development are extremely interconnected in the mind of the religious community.

The goal of healthy adolescent development is linked to several underlying assumptions that religious communities share about religious youth work. One of these assumptions is that spiritual identity, if not insurance for "the good life," is at least some measure of protection against a "bad life." Most religious communities do not interpret religious teaching as a shield against hardship; but the values communicated through the consensus and care of a community are believed to "innoculate" teenagers against the odds in terms of at-risk behavior. Research on religiosity supports this assumption to some degree. The religious community interprets this to mean that it is not only the teenager's soul that is at stake; it is his or her health and well-being emotionally, socially, and physically as well.

A second assumption underlying the religious communities' concern for adolescent development is a tacit belief that "religious

experience" is, in itself, a fundamental developmental need of adoles-
cents (Carotta, 1990). So far, this assumption is unsubstantiated by
research: "It's not that we're saying religious experience isn't a
developmental need of adolescence," points out Peter Scales of the
Center for Early Adolescence. "It may be. It's just that, as far as
we know, the research to date has not demonstrated this. More re-
search should be done in this area" (Scales, 1990). Non-religious
organizations interested in adolescent development tend to understand
religious experience to be significant to the extent that it contri-
butes to identity formation, perhaps the fundamental adolescent need,
which has been well-established by research since Erik Erikson's
treatment of the subject (Erikson, 1968).

Religious communities are apt to view the situation differently.
Whereas developmental psychology suggests that the major arenas of
identity formation include selecting and preparing for a future ca-
reer, working out a political ideology, adopting a set of social
roles, and reevaluating religious and moral beliefs (Harter, 1990),
Jewish and Christian theology suggest that this last arena is preemi-
nent. The religious community sees more at stake in religious ex-
perience than merely helping an adolescent claim part of her identity;
religious experience, says the religious youth worker, is the crucial
piece of an adolescent's identity. When a person goes off to "find
herself," according to religious teaching, what she is really looking
for is her spiritual being, the essence of her existence, which is
rooted in her relationship with God. Focusing one's identity on
anything or anyone else is simply a temporary, unsatisfactory substi-
tute for one's real need to understand oneself as a child of God. The
justification for religious youth work follows naturally, then. If,

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in fact, adolescence is the most critical period for identity forma-
tion, and if identity formation is primarily a matter of spiritual
self-definition, then religious work with youth is important to the
healthy development of human beings.

A third underlying assumption is the religious community's belief
that the support of a caring community is crucial to one's health and
well-being, an assumption which has also received some support from
the literature (Benson, 1990). Indeed, the mission of religious
communities is to care for the world, including young persons. Reli-
gious youth programs offer the gift of a religious community, a "be-
longing place" which is uniquely powerful because, unlike most adoles-
cent associations, one does not outgrow belonging there, nor does one
stop belonging when one moves to another part of the country. Both
Christians and Jews understand themselves to belong to a universal
community that transcends specific local congregations. The ex-
perience of "connectedness" is not merely a spiritual phenomenon; it
translates into caring for the entire community with which one is
connected. The experience of this caring, and of being cared for, is
not only essential to Jewish and Christian life; it is crucial to the
experience of personhood (Martinson, 1991).

Delivery Systems in Religious Youth Work

Structures in Religious Youth Programs

What nearly all religious youth programs have in common, then, is
a structure which facilitates the formation of a significant community
for adolescents. These structures have identifiable, if permeable,
boundaries and functions, and they assist the overall structure of the

religious community in providing youth with "a set of believable and attainable expectations and standards from the community to guide the movement from child to adult status" (Ianni, 1989). The structures which can contribute to community among adolescents are limitless, but consistent patterns surface in Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish youth programs.

Youth groups

By far the most common structure is the "youth group," a club-like gathering of young people who typically meet for socializing, study, community service, and worship experiences together. While this form is the basic unit of almost all denominational youth programs among both Christians and Jews, it also describes the basic unit of parachurch organizations and community-based independent Jewish youth organizations like B'nai B'rith.

Formal instruction

Sometimes the youth group is adapted to more formal settings for the purposes of instruction. In these contexts the relationship-centered process is still primary but it is altered in order to accomplish a task such as learning music for a youth choir, mastering Biblical knowledge in Sunday School, learning Hebrew in Hebrew school. Sometimes formal instruction is the primary vehicle for reaching adolescents as is true for Southern Baptists who rely on Sunday school as the primary form of adolescent community. Most religious traditions utilize this form to prepare youth for official "membership" rites of passage into the adult religious community (e.g., Hebrew school, confirmation). An unintended problem accompanies this form for religious communities. Among both Christian and Jewish youth,

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participation in religious youth programs drops significantly immedi-
ately following the age of confirmation or bar/bat mitzvah (Kilstein,
1991; Martinson, 1991). Perhaps because this structure mimics adoles-
cents' school experience, or perhaps because subsequent programs into
which youth can be funneled after the rite of passage are lacking,
youth often view participation in formal instruction as a path to
"graduation" from church or synagogue, instead of using the rite of
passage as a beginning of an intensified commitment to the religious
community.

Worship

Sometimes the basic structure for forming a significant community
for adolescents is the intergenerational context of worship. This
structure is highly visible in ethnic religious youth programs, and
sometimes is productively used by small congregations who, by virtue
of their size, are able to relate to adolescents as individuals in-
stead of as a group. In places where this is a conscious strategy,
adolescents tend to be integrally involved in all aspects of corporate
worship, including leadership roles.

Ironically, many religious youth programs tend to exclude worship
from what they consider youth work; when asked how many hours young
people in their denomination devoted to religious youth programs, most
denominational leaders excluded the worship hour from their calcula-
tions. The exceptions were Baptist denominational leaders and leaders
of ethnic religious communities; in these settings, worship nearly
always "counted" as part of a young person's time in religious youth
work (Blackwell, 1991; Day, 1990; Mack, 1991; Ng, 1991). Christian
educators stress the importance of worship as a structure in religious

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youth work and argue for its preeminence in youth programming (Little, 1968; Maas, 1990; Myers, 1987); Jewish religious youth leaders, while valuing adolescent involvement in the synagogue, place far less emphasis on worship as a structure for youth programming.

Residential experiences

One of the most powerful community structures in religious youth programs is widely believed to be the residential experience, a religious camp, conference, or retreat which places youth in a supervised residential setting with other teenagers for a weekend or longer. Residential religious youth programs offer a particularly intensive community experience; the relationship potential is so high that these programs often productively involve teenagers who do not normally affiliate with the sponsoring religious body. Virtually all religious communities sponsor some version of residential programming, and many offer them at local, regional, and national levels. In fact, the most commonly cited structure for youth work through national agencies is the "youth event," mass gatherings of adolescents who come together for fun and celebration of their religious tradition.

It is the intensive sense of community which makes residential youth activities so formative, says Asher Melzer, director of camping for the United Jewish Association/Federation. "The Jewish camp is the most potent expression of Jewishness most teenagers ever experience," he observes (Melzer, 1991). Indeed, the experience of community is so powerful that merely sharing it with other Christians or Jews implicitly makes it a "Christian" or a "Jewish" experience, even if the camp is not explicitly devoted to religious concerns.

Many camps and retreats are devoted to addressing special needs--

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mentally-retarded teenagers, AIDS awareness, "fresh air" camps for low income urban youth—and make worship part of the week's schedule but do not explicitly advocate an adolescent's relationship with God. Nonetheless, participants in these settings often report positive spiritual experiences similar to, albeit less intense than, Catholic teenagers attending a "Teenagers Encounter Christ" weekend, a Catholic retreat ministry which encourages Catholic teenagers to intentionally explore their relationship with Jesus Christ. For Jewish youth, an even more provocative residential experience is emphasized as the pinnacle of all religious youth work: the trip to Israel, sponsored in some form by virtually every Jewish-affiliated youth organization in the U.S. and available to youth from age thirteen through young adulthood. "Nothing is more crucial to Jewish identity than spending time in Israel," affirms Sandra Kilstein of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York. "It is a very emotional experience for a Jewish teenager to walk on Biblical soil, to feel the continuity of his people" (Kilstein, 1991).

Youth leadership development

Yet another form of adolescent community engendered by religious youth programs may be described as "leadership development," intentional efforts by the parent organization to develop a strong corps of youth leaders not only for the purpose of leading the religious youth program, but also to serve as future leaders within the religious community itself. These forms may consist of local parish youth councils, regional/national bodies of elected youth representatives, or any number of forms which draw student leaders together. Although parachurch groups tend to rely on adult leadership on behalf of youth,

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most religious communities believe the ideal is "co-leadership" be-
tween youth and adults at all levels in the religious youth program.
This structure is especially appealing to national denominational
offices. The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., for instance, is in the
process of establishing a denominational representative council for
youth leadership, both because it helps effectively implement youth
programming, and because it will train future leaders in the struc-
tures of the church. Sometimes these youth councils serve as coordi-
nating bodies for youth leadership from several related religious
youth agencies; such is the case with the American Zionist Youth
Foundation youth council and various youth projects sponsored by the
National Council of Churches. While adolescents in religious youth
groups devote between two and four hours weekly to the program (inclu-
ding the worship hour), teenagers involved in leadership structures of
religious youth programs may spend more than ten hours a week on
religious youth-related activities.

Community service

One structure for religious youth work gaining momentum in the
1990s is teen community service. Today's religious youth leaders are
adamant that religious identity among youth emphasize the value of
service to others. The 1980s saw a surge in the number of youth
service projects, social justice opportunities, and "work camps"
available to high school students; community service structures tend
to be less available to young adolescents. Service opportunities are
extremely popular among youth; despite the work involved, they offer
adolescents real challenges, as well as the crucial experience of a
community based on teamwork and a common mission. Participants in

these activities are enthusiastic about the benefits of hands-on
service and cultural confrontation, especially for white middle class
youth, the largest demographic category tapped by religious youth
programs.

Jewish Community Centers

One structure uniquely available to Jewish teenagers is the
Jewish Community Center. Jewish Community Centers are aptly named:
they stand at the center of the Jewish community to bring together
Jews, regardless of synagogue-affiliation, for the purpose of promo-
ting Jewish culture and interaction with other Jews. In terms of
youth work, their goal is to bring Jewish teenagers into contact with
other Jewish teenagers. Jewish youth work makes any activity Jewish
by sharing them with other Jews; as one denominational leader put it,
"If two Jews are playing ping pong, then ping pong is a Jewish game"
(Frank, 1990). This understanding makes Jewish Community Centers,
unlike YMCAs and YWCAs, key players in Jewish religious work with
teenagers.

Jewish Community Centers view their role in the Jewish community
as assisting in the "Jewish mission of the transmission of values,
education, and culture" (Rosenzwieg, 1991). Trained teen workers are
employed to develop relationships with, and programs for, adolescents
who visit the Center. The Jewish Community Center also serves as a
significant tool for maintaining contact with Jewish youth following
their bar/bat mitzvahs, when many Jewish youth drop out of synagogue
life (Plutzer, 1991). "The Jewish Community Center can be a relief
for kids after their bar mitzvah because there is less religiosity
associated with it" (Rosenzwieg, 1991). Levels of religiosity not-

withstanding, providing youth with a context in which they can asso-
ciate with other Jews promotes and strengthens their identification
with corporate "Jewishness," an important aspect of Jewish life.

Adult-youth relationships

The one structure for religious youth work which overpowers all
others in its ability to impact teenagers, however, is the significant
adult-youth relationship (Yaconelli, 1990; Borman, 1990). Sometimes
these relationships result from assistance sought through formal
structures. For example, a church may sponsor a Family Life Center
which makes counselors available to troubled youth (Gregory, 1984).
More often, however, these bonds are formed in the day-to-day interac-
tions between adult youth leaders and teenagers, and this relationship
precedes special interventions on behalf of the adolescent such as
suicide intervention, vocational guidance, and spiritual direction.
Often the bond between the adult leader and a teenager is formed
without any formal intervention taking place. The time spent in one-
on-one conversation with a teenager, even in the midst of a larger
group, is significant. Nearly all religious youth leaders share
experiences with adolescents whose presence is hardly noticed at the
youth group or the retreat; yet years later that teenager will testi-
fy that the bond he perceived between himself and the adult counselor
has had a tremendous influence on his life. Religious youth leaders
view all other forms of religious youth communities as vehicles to
this primary form, the relationship between youth and the adults who
work with them.

Educational Content and Process

Religious youth programs tend to reside in the context of "reli-
gious education," which is generally understood to encompass two
kinds of settings. Formal settings, such as Sunday school and Hebrew
school, emphasize content mastery; informal settings, such as youth
groups, camps, and recreational programs, stress relationships and
group exprience over content mastery. All religious youth programs
focus in some manner on content intended to instill both spiritual and
social awareness; a teenager imbued with a cultural/faith identity
inevitably works for a more just society. Religious youth programs
find that when teenagers are engaged in relationships with people
whose lives bear witness to this awareness, they are more likely to
adopt it for themselves than when it is communicated to them didac-
tically. A truism of religious youth work is that "programs do not
teach--people do."

In particular, the relationship between youth and a trusted adult
is considered formative (Borman, 1990; Yaconelli, 1990). Sometimes
these relationships evolve out of formal contexts such as liturgy or
confirmation class, but more often youth-adult connections are forged
spontaneously in the fluid, informal contexts designed to facilitate
adult "presence" with youth. Religious youth programming, then, suc-
ceeds to the extent that it fosters "positive connections" between
adolescents and significant adults, peers, the religious community,
and God. Governing this relationship-centered process is the as-
sumption that relationships can change people, and that positive
adolescent development can be nourished by incubation in a caring
community. Religious youth programs serve as such incubators, provi-
ding youth with an environment which maximizes the possibility of

healthy development not only spiritually, but socially, emotionally, and morally as well.

Models of Religious Youth Programs

The model of the program's delivery system is based on the configurations that these various forms of community and educational processes take on in a given context. Models are often subconsciously selected packages of program options which may or may not cohere into an effective strategy for achieving the goals of religious youth work. In practitioners' literature, models are often presented as discrete forms of youth work; for example, "models of confirmation" and "retreat models" are popular exemplars of religious youth work described in popular literature for the benefit of youth workers.

For the purposes of this discussion, however, the term "model" is used to describe a broader phenomenon: the overarching shape of the delivery system for youth services in a given religious community. This understanding views the model as the umbrella under which discrete forms of youth work operate. Such models are often subconsciously adopted, growing out of religious communities' self-understandings, and for this reason they are difficult to alter: change would threaten the identity of the parent organization, as well as the religious youth program itself. As William Myers of Chicago Theological Seminary points out, "The historic reasons for a certain tradition's use of a particular model [of youth work] are deeply imbedded within our cultural psyche and are not always readily available for a congregation's (or a denomination's) critical reflection" (Myers, 1991b, p. 3).

White mainline Protestant religious communities are especially

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vulnerable to cultural collusion, since they tend to assume that their religious youth programs will imbue adolescents with the values and benefits of the "dominant" white and Protestant American culture. But Myers articulates the concern of many religious youth leaders when he observes:

> Given the pluralism of our country . . . [these youth ministry programs] no longer have the luxury of assuming a dominant posture within our culture. The normative model therefore falls flat on its face, and older youth leave the church in droves. But most churches haven't recognized or connected this fact to their model (Myers, 1991b, p. 4).

As a result, Myers explains, traditionally religious rites like confirmaion, which once conferred one's legal as well as religious identity in society, are today relatively meaningless to both culture and religious community. These communities cannot critique their own youth programs' role in this irrelevance simply because they too have been co-opted by culture. "In many respects," concludes Myers, "the problem of youth ministry in the mainline denominational church is that it cannot articulate a convincing identity in relationship to culture" (Myers, 1991b., p. 5). Multicultural models of religious youth work, on the other hand, and those designed to imbue a distinctly "religious" identity, have more success critiquing their relationship with the surrounding culture, and operating as an alternative to it.

In the interviews conducted for this report, effective religious youth programs tended to take one of four shapes which overlap at points, but which nonetheless represent distinct understandings of the ways in which religious youth work accomplishes its goals: midwifery/adoption models, team models, kinship models, and corporate/consumer models.

Midwifery/adoption models

The midwifery/adoption model has been articulated by Dr. Jack
Nelson of Fordham University and finds ready adherents in Catholic
communities (Carotta, 1990), although it aptly describes many reli-
gious youth programs elsewhere. This model views faith as a dormant
gift in each young person, who needs to give birth to that faith and
foster its development to maturity. In the midwifery/adoption model,
the church is the family adopting both the young person and her faith
during this process. In these communities, youth are all "pregnant"
with faith and the objective of religious youth work is to provide the
appropriate care to teenagers both before and after this faith emer-
ges. In Roman Catholic communities, for example, where this model is
prevalent, parochial schools are available to steep the young person
in the religious communities' care. Adult youth leaders are impli-
citly identified in the community as "midwives" for these young per-
sons' faith; the pastor is engaged, if not directly with youth, with
their birthing process. In practice, the midwifery/adoption model
lends itself to very broad interpretations of religious youth work,
since it overtly directs some of its efforts toward teenagers who have
claimed neither faith nor a "faith family." For example, the interest
in caring for teenagers before they claim faith has helped motivate a
huge network of Catholic charities available to young people who are
not necessarily Catholic themselves. The nature of such a community's
care tends towards the wholistic health of the teenager rather than
proselytizing; if the "pregnant" youth is well-cared for, the "new-
born" faith is likely to be healthy as well, and will emerge when the
time is right.

Team models

The team model resembles the process of sending a chain letter:
a caring charismatic adult, perhaps a pastor, usually starts the
process by working with other caring adults, who in turn work with
youth who learn to become envoys of caring to their own spheres. This
model views faith as "contagious": a teenager "catches" faith when
she is around others who "have" it, and the goal is to give every
youth ample opportunity to become "infected." Culturally, this model
reflects the influence of team management strategies in the corporate
world, especially in its emphasis on shared leadership and widespread
ownership by participants. Theologically, this model finds its roots
in the history of Christian reform movements in which small groups
("little churches") within the larger congregation ("big church")
effected change by sheer force of example. Understandably, then, this
model finds a home in many Protestant communities. In this "congrega-
tional approach," as one advocate has called it (Martinson, 1988),
every adult in the congregation helps pass on faith to teenagers,
while certain adult leaders are identified as role models in this
process who monitor the level of the congregation's hospitality toward
youth. The team model is also the primary expression of parachurch
groups and some conservative, evangelical churches founded on the
charisma of a strong pastor (Smith, 1991). Although every adult in
the congregation is a youth leader in the sense that they are role
models for faith, specific activities engage youth in helping their
peers "catch" faith from one another. The team model lends itself to
youth empowerment, since youth themselves serve on the team which
guides the religious youth program and function as full participating

members in every aspect of congregational life, from worship to com-
mittees, alongside adult guarantors.

The family model—actually a blend of the team and midwifery/
adoption models—extends the assumptions underlying team models even
further. In family models of religious youth work, the primary locus
for the transimission of cultural/faith identity is in the family
unit. The home becomes, in itself, a sanctuary for religious reflec-
tion. Not surprisingly, this model appears often in religious commu-
nities whose history has included persecution that forced the
worshipping community to scatter, and whose values self-
consciously contrast the values of the dominant culture.

As expected, despite the fact that all religious youth programs
emphasize the role of the family in religious formation, in the inter-
views conducted for this project the family model surfaced only in
Jewish communities. Unlike team models, in the family model
cultural/faith identity is not "caught"; children born to Jewish
parents are Jewish. However, this identity must be nurtured in an
environment which frees it to grow. In this respect the family model
mimics the midwifery/adoption model: at circumcision a child is
recognized as one of God's chosen race of Israel, and now enters a
period in which cultural/faith identity must be nourished. In Jewish
life, the most important religious youth workers are family members.
Guarantors of young persons' Jewishness are not members of a synagogue
or adult leaders of a religious youth movement; they are the young
person's parents. While attending synagogue may be important, and
while interaction with other Jews is critical to keep a young person
aware of his cultural/faith identity, according to the teachings of

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Torah it is his parents who are responsible for his faith development. They work towards this end as a team who model "Jewishness" for him; this way he, in turn, will be able to model "Jewishness" for his own children (Huberman, 1988; Schlesinger, 1974).

Kinship models

William Myers' recent work on culturally-based models of youth ministry has brought into clearer focus differences between religious youth work in some African- American religious communities and white religious communities (Myers, 1991a). His painstaking ethnographic research over the past four years has identified the kinship model as an expression of African-American religious youth work. While this model may be present in a variety of settings, of the interviews conducted for this paper, kinship models surfaced only in African-American contexts. Rooted in the history of pre-Civil War America, when African-American blood kinships were radically broken by slavery, the black church became a crucible for "fictive kinship," a type of surrogate family which informs the African-American community's approach to youth ministry even today (Myers, 1991).

In this model, the centerpiece of the religious youth program is worship with the congregation; faith is something which can only be owned in the context of a worshipping community. The pastor is frequently both the "adult" pastor and the "youth" pastor; he or she is actively engaged in some dimension of religious youth work. Instead of distancing young people programmatically or physically from the adult congregation, the kinship model assumes that everyone in the congregation is a youth minister, including the youth themselves, who take active leadership roles in all aspects of liturgy and program-

ming. In fact, the traditional structures of youth work mentioned earlier may be absent in the kinship model, except for the significant adult-youth relationship; young people are so thoroughly integrated into the congregation's daily life that discrete youth activities may be deemed superfluous. Although no research has viewed Jewish corporate life as a type of kinship model of religious youth work, an argument could be made for its usefulness in describing the community-centered ethos of Jewish youth work as well.

Corporate/consumer models

Myers' work also elucidated the most common model for religious youth work which appears in some form in nearly every religious community: the corporate/consumer model. Emerging from post-war America's corporate consciousness, especially in white congregations whose membership included corporate executives and managers, the corporate/consumer model approaches faith as something youth will choose if it meets their perceived needs. Whereas kinship models actively involve adolescents in worship, corporate/consumer models often separate teenagers from the worship process, sometimes by not requesting their participation, other times by physically removing the youth from the sanctuary during the·worship hour so they can participate in their own programs away from the rest of the congregation. The youth minister is hired as a middle manager in charge of a discrete department; when he "wears out in two and a half years, he will be replaced" (Myers, 1991). Each participant in this model is important to its functioning; each part is also replaceable. The pastor of the congregation is intellectually involved in, and supportive of, the youth program; he or she does not become involved in it personally. Bor-

rowing largely from the models offered to youth at school, the corpo-
rate/consumer model provides a wide array of options for youth parti-
cipation to increase the odds of a teenager "buying into" some part of
the youth program.   The power of the white community in American
society has helped market this model as normative for religious youth
work; the vast majority of resources produced for religious youth
work are intended for use in corporate/consumer models (Myers, 1991).

The Extent of Service

No one knows how many youth are served by religious youth pro-
grams.   One study of teenage time use found that 34% of youth surveyed
said they were involved in religious youth groups (National Education
Longitudinal Study of 1988, 1990).   Other estimates indicate, with
some consistency, that approximately one-half of American teenagers
say that they are involved in a church or a synagogue (Benson, 1990),
but this figure does not assess their involvement in religious youth
programs per se.   One poll estimated that approximately half of
church-affiliated youth report involvement in church-related youth
programs, while one in four say they are involved in Sunday School
(Stone, 1988).   In a recent study of Protestant denominations, only
three out of ten teenagers reported involvement in any form of Chris-
tian education, including youth ministry (Search Institute, 1990).
Many denominational leaders consulted for this paper confessed that
they "simply have no idea" how many youth are served by their denomi-
nations' youth programs.

Participation in religious youth programs is difficult to measure
empirically for two reasons.   First, with the exception of national
"events," youth councils, and policy making bodies which determine

general program structure and emphasis, religious youth work is in-
tensely "local." Since most of the funding for youth work comes from
a local congregation or fundraising efforts by the youth organization
itself, religious youth programs' membership statistics are not close-
ly scrutinized beyond the local level. In the absence of local sta-
tistics, participation in religious youth programs is sometimes esti-
mated according to the number of parishes existing in a given denomi-
nation, rather than according to the number of youth actually served.
For example, there are approximately 20,000 Roman Catholic parishes in
the U.S.; according to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops,
"about one-third" of these parishes have youth programs (Henderson,
1990). United Methodists are responsible for 35,000 American congre-
gations; the United Methodist Discipline recommends that each of
these have an active youth fellowship program. But how many actually
do, and how many youth are actually served, according to the denomina-
tional youth staff person, is "impossible to tell" (Salsgiver, 1990).

A secor; factor contributing to the difficulty assessing the
extent of service in religious youth programs is the fluid nature of
religious youth work. In most congregations, the number of youth
served by a youth program exceed the number of youth who are actually
reported by a congregation's membership records, which commonly list
only baptized or confirmed persons; or, in synagogues, families who
pay dues. A few groups do offer specific numerical pictures; Youth
for Christ, an evangelical parachurch group with an active ministry in
juvenile detention institutions, reports that 22,000 youth made "com-
mitments to Christ" in fiscal year 1989-90, and 551,000 youth heard
the message of Christ "presented to them in one way or the other"
through Youth for Christ activities. This specificity is far more

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likely in independent organizations who conduct their own fundraising and who therefore must communicate the breadth of their outreach to potential contributors tnan in denominational programs relying on local church budgets for support.

Most religious youth programs, however, are more cautious; counting the number and nature of religious conversions is muddy water. Not only is there disagreement about the priority of the goals of religious youth work, but there is uncertainty over which youth "count" among the "converted." Outreach, for example, extends a program's service to adolescents; who can tell how many youth in a given community were touched by a local parish youth group's clean-up efforts after Hurricane Hugo? And even where statistical data is reasonably reliable (as it is, for example, among Lutherans and Southern Baptists, who despite their congregational polity have unusual success in tracking their national youth statistics), these statistics reflect youth "whose names appear on a Sunday School roster, even if they only showed up once" (Day, 1990). Many religious youth programs, such as one-on-one, informal mentoring programs do not chart attendance at all. Some youth, who are not officially involved in a religious program, nonetheless are affected by attending worship with their friends or by forming a bond with a youth pastor interested in them. These "marginally involved" youth do not fit neatly into statistical categories, and yet they figure into the ministry and outreach of many religious communities.

Service to Young Adolescents

Almost universally, religious communities address their youth work to high school students (grades nine through twelve), although

the 1980s saw a steady increase in the number of programs designed for young adolescents, especially for youth in grades seven and eight, and occasionally six. While many religious communities express interest in expanding their service to upper elementary grades, programs for this age group still qualify as children's ministry,[16] and there is debate about whether the needs of ten-year-olds are similar enough to the needs of twelve-year-olds to merit the appellation "adolescent" (Asher, 1991; Borman, 1990; Rosenzwieg, 1991).

Still, the trend toward serving younger adolescents is gaining momentum; religious youth leaders interviewed for this paper report noticeably higher involvement among ten- to fifteen-year-olds than among older teenagers, estimating between 50 and 75 percent of youth involved in the church to be "under fifteen." The widely accepted reason is availability. Younger adolescents are less likely to have competing activities, such as extracurricular organizations, part-time jobs, or a "significant other," than older teenagers. Even if they have other interests, without a driver's license they are often captive to their parents' transportational whims. Since parents are often simultaneously involved in the religious community, the potential for young adolescent participation in the religious youth program is great. While a few organizations surveyed report greater participation in the upper grades, especially parachurch groups who have historically operated on high school campuses but who are currently developing middle high ministries, these groups are quick to point out the vibrance of their new junior high programs and the pressure they feel to expand them further.

The large numbers of young adolescents participating in religious

youth programming is misleading, however. While the growth of young
adolescent religious youth programming is a widely accepted phenome-
non, most of the denominational leaders consulted for this report
qualified their estimates of participation; while there are large
numbers of fifth and sixth graders involved in children's programs,
around the age of twelve or thirteen, the age when most religious
communities begin their youth groups, participation drops off sharply
in both churches and synagogues. Age thirteen--the traditional age
for bar/bat mitzvahs and confirmation--is a source of concern in
religious communities. Formal programs for teenagers, such as Hebrew
school and confirmation classes, are stressed during young adoles-
cence; upon completion of the formal program, however, there is
either nothing for the teenager to "graduate into," or the young teen
does not make a successful transition into the new type of program
offered (Plutzer, 1991; Kilstein, 1991). Most religious communities
experience yet another sharp decline in adolescent participation
around age fifteen, when drivers' licenses, part-time jobs, and wider
social circles compete for teenagers' time.

Consequently, most religious youth leaders agree that religious
youth work's most effective programming remains with older youth;
while more young adolescents may be involved in formal instruction
than older adolescents, much more informal youth programming is
available to older teenagers. Both Christian and Jewish youth leaders
report that, while fewer adolescents remain in religious groups after
age fifteen, those who do remain exhibit higher levels of commitment
to both the religion and the youth program than do their younger
counterparts. Adolescents who "stick it out" in a religious youth
program through age fifteen are suddenly eligible for a vast array of

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program options and peer leadership development. The irony is that the availability of these options for older adolescents coincide with the time they are most likely to be siphoned away from the religious community by other demands on their time (Kilstein, 1991; Blackwell, 1991). Many of the religious youth programs for older adolescents were developed at a time when fifteen to eighteen year olds had fewer social or economic options. A century and a half of program development for high school and even college-aged youth make religious youth programs more responsive to, and more practiced with, older adolescents. This is especially true of opportunities beyond the local religious community itself: work camps, leadership development events, trips to Israel, and the like have all been established with older teenagers in mind.

While no one wants to abandon these older adolescent programs, religious communities loudly voice their desire, indeed their desperation, for more age-level appropriate programs for young teenagers. The clamor for young adolescent religious youth programs is especially loud in urban areas where, as one denominational youth staff person put it, "kids are very sophisticated very young" (Svoboda, 1991). Yet the urban poor adolescent is most likely not to benefit from middle high religious youth programming. Young adolescent religious youth programs, despite their increasing prominence, are primarily the province of large, monied churches. A 1988 survey of junior high youth groups in Christian churches found that 55 percent of these programs were located in suburbs, in congregations averaging 2,060 members. Sixty percent of these churches considered themselves "wealthy" (Roehlkepartain, 1988b).

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Service to Ethnic and Low Income Youth

The number of ethnic youth served by religious youth work is elusive, since many African-American religious communities, and perhaps others, rely on the integrated kinship model of religious youth work, without discrete structures which quantify youth involvement in the congregation. While the lack of these structures makes the numbers of youth served difficult to count, it does not mean they are unserved by religious youth work. In fact, some have argued that this thorough integration into the religious community is extraordinarily effective in achieving the goals of religious youth work, even though this work does not take place primarily through discrete structures for youth alone (Crawford, 1991; Myers, 1991; Roberts, 1980).

That said, however, the vast majority of religious youth programs which are distinct from the worshipping community are most utilized by white middle class youth. This may reflect the fact that parent congregations are strongly identified with single ethnic groups--Martin Luther King once called 11:00 on Sunday morning "the most segregated hour in America"--and religious youth organizations are disproportionately white and affluent because so are American churches and synaogues. Or, the "whiteness" of religious youth work may reflect the disproportional "w'. ..eness" of religious youth leadership, although ethnic communities are making great strides in developing youth leadership who can reflect their cultural concerns (Crawford, 1991; Henderson, 1990; Elizondo, 1990; Schultz, 1990b).

Although many ethnic religious communities are situated in low-income, urban environments, youth ministry leaders perceive only marginal differences between low-income and affluent religious communi-

ties' ability to fund their youth work. As one expert on the African-American church put it: "You fund the perceived need" (Crawford, 1991). While ethnic religious communities tend to fund more preventative and rehabilitative adolescent services than do Anglo-American churches, both ethnic and Anglo religious communities appear to be equally committed to religious youth work in their communities. The community economic level is a critical factor; most ethnic religious communities are much smaller and poorer than their white counterparts. This makes hiring persons devoted to youth work a rarity in ethnic parishes. "The only reason youth ministry is easier to fund in middle and upper income areas," observed Rod Boriak of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "is that they can afford to hire staff; and they can afford to care for them better so they stay longer" (Boriak, 1990).

For the most part, the content and process of religious youth programs in ethnic communities echoes the content and process of white, middle class communities. Sometimes this is by default; denominational leaders in ethnic ministries bemoan the lack of culturally-adapted resources available for religious youth work (Elizondo, 1990; Frank, 1991). Both ethnic and low-income religious youth programs report more time spent instructing youth about social problems than do Anglo programs; AIDS awareness, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, and education were commonly cited program topics in ethnic youth work. This may reflect community-specific needs, cultural orientation, or both. The Girl Scout study found that African-American and Hispanic adolescents, regardless of their source of moral authority, consistently reported greater likelihood of altruistic behavior than white youth (Girl Scouts, 1990).

Pacific-Asian American teenagers are in a unique situation among ethnic religious youth programs due to a particular cultural pressure to assimilate into dominant American culture thereby combatting "foreigner" stereotypes commonly ascribed to persons of Pacific or Asian descent (Ng, 1991). Even were Pacific-Asian American adolescents are second-generation Americans, youth ministry in these churches tends to replicate white, middle class delivery systems, and utilizes resources designed for white, middle class youth as a means of learning dominant American culture (Ng, 1991; Schultz, 1990). Still, like all ethnic religious youth programs, when Pacific-Asian American religious youth programs study themes common to most religious youth groups, they do so through the lenses of a culture they hope to preserve. Pacific-Asian American youth, for example, spring from a cultural heritage which values extraordinarily high commitments to family and academic success; which stresses loyalty to all family pursuits, including working in the family business, over extra-curricular participation at school; which encourages silence on human sexuality; and which is trapped by society's "model minority" stereotype which often tracks Pacific-Asian American youth into certain careers regardless of individual gifts and interests (Ng, 1991). These values cast a specific light on the Christian way of life as interpreted by Pacific-Asian American religious youth programs.

Service to At-Risk Adolescents

The at-risk adolescent is a mounting concern for religious communities. Religious youth programs are increasingly aware of their "self-selectivity"; teenagers who choose to participate in such programs are, in some ways, already more sheltered from at-risk behavior

than their peers by virtue of their decision to associate with a
community structure (Benson, 1990; Ianni, 1989). Religious communi-
ties tend to perceive at-risk youth to be <u>outside</u> their membership,
and while they recognize the enormous need for services for at-risk
adolescents, they are sincerely frustrated at their lack of access, or
perceived lack of access, to these teenagers. Except for religious
charities, which allocate millions of dollars to services for troubled
youth, religious youth programming is nearly always geared towards the
healthy adolescent. Although religious youth leaders recognize a need
to address at-risk behavior, most programs are designed to keep the
presumably healthy adolescent healthy, rather than to address the
teenager already at-risk. Of the organizations consulted for this
project, only the parachurch group Youth for Christ named service to
at-risk teenagers as a signature feature of its work.

One reason for low levels of at-risk involvement in religious
youth programs is religious communities' reluctance to classify at-
risk youth as a separate "target" for religious youth work. Concern
for <u>all</u> youth is a persistent theme throughout religious youth work.
When asked how they defined at-risk youth, nearly half of the reli-
gious youth leaders interviewed for this paper replied: "All youth
are at risk." Singling out any one sector of the population for
"special" attention is interpreted as slighting others. Perhaps reli-
gious communities stigmatize at-risk behavior to the point of denial;
or perhaps they recognize that youth in religious communities face the
same cultural pressures as non-religious youth, and are therefore "at-
risk" throughout adolescence, even in the absence of at-risk beha-
viors. Religiosity has been demonstrated to mitigate the likelihood

of behaviors such as drug use, sexual activity, and delinquency, but at-risk behaviors are also common among religious youth. [17] Some religious communities may consider all youth at risk due to certain theological postures of the community which stipulate that since all humans are sinners at-risk of damnation, then all teenagers are at-risk. What is clear is this: even teenagers "innoculated" with religiosity can succumb to at-risk behavior, and the church must respond.

To date, religious responses to adolescent at-risk behavior have been almost entirely local initiatives. As one Lutheran youth leader said, "So far, [the at-risk youth] is r ig addressed more at the grass roots level than at the national level" (Boriak, 1990). Although denominational leaders criticized the lack of national strategies to address these youth, many are "thinking about developing something" in this area. Most denominations and all entrepreneurial groups, sensing a need and a market, have begun to develop resources designed to preempt at-risk behavior, and several religious youth leader training events have developed optional leadership workshops to promote understanding of at-risk adolescents.

However, nowhere is the religious community's local autonomy more pronounced than in religious youth programs which address at-risk youth. Hundreds of churches and synagogues each year target at-risk teenagers in their neighborhoods who may or may not be affiliated with a religious community. Some of these programs are designed to address personal needs of youth in the immediate environment; an inner-city United Methodist church in Minnesota bought a vacant house next door to the church, filled it with computers donated by a local corporation, and opened its doors as a computer laboratory for street youth

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who want to learn basic skills necessary for getting a job (Martinson, 1991). Other at-risk programs have distinctly religious overtones, such as Youth for Christ's conversion-oriented outreach to juvenile delinquents in institutions. When asked why it makes a difference that such services exist in a religious community, even if there is no outwardly religious purpose, the director of camping for the United Jewish Association/Federation in New York spoke for many when he said: "Because it is our tradition. We are taught to help the widow and the orphan, to reach others who are in need" (Melzer, 1991). Still, religious youth leaders seem unanimous in their concern that more needs to be done to address the at-risk adolescent in religious youth programs.

Service to Girls and Boys

After a generation of responding to changes which have significantly altered the role of women in society, religious communities are strongly committed to the coeducational nature of most religious youth programs. More girls than boys participate in religious youth programs except among young adolescents; middle high youth programs seem to involve equal numbers of girls and boys. Girls tend to remain in religious youth programs longer than boys, which may help corroborate research showing that, although adolescent religiosity decreases with age, boys' religiosity decreases at a faster rate than girls'. Religious youth leaders resist separating girls' and boys' programs for fear of returning to male power dominance. Religious youth leaders see the coeducational communities of religious youth work as a significant vehicle for reducing sexist attitudes among youth and perhaps even in the religious community as a whole (Day, 1990).

In only a few communities is single-sex programming important to religious youth work. Among Latter Day Saints, the fundamental form of religious youth work occurs in single-sex classes arranged according to age, although classes do plan coeducational activities as

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well. One mainline Protestant denominational youth director expressed
concern that society's zeal for inclusiveness desensitized the
church's appreciation for the different needs of adolescent boys and
girls (Riley, 1990). African-American denominations have witnessed the
inauguration of programs specifically designed for black males and
their role/needs in the African-American community. Yet even this is
viewed with caution. Vanella Crawford of the Congress of National
Black Churches warns: "I'm concerned with our emphasis on the vul-
nerability of the black male. There are certain needs which must be
addressed; but it would be a mistake to separate boys from girls--
they face basically the same needs" (Crawford, 1991). Several denomi-
nations who affirmed the coeducational nature of their youth programs
found it appropriate on certain issues--notably, sexuality--to divide
into single-sex groups for discussion.

Accountability

One characteristic most religious youth programs share is a
relatively low level of accountability. No formal criteria exist in
the professional field of religious youth work by which one can mea-
sure the effectiveness of either a religious youth program or a reli-
gious youth worker; evaluation, when it occurs, is highly subjective
(Borman, 1990; Elizondo, 1990; Schultz, 1990). Although many organi-
zations cite general objectives for their work with teenagers, the
extent to which these objectives filter through the rank and file
membership varies widely; where the organizational vision was part of
the local youth program's vocabulary, it was the result of an inten-
tional denominational strategy to obtain a coherent youth program at
all levels of the denominational structure. Those with the most
specific denominational objectives for youth work tended to have the
highest levels of accountability in their overall youth programs, with
these objectives serving as the unifying structure out of which local,

regional, and national programs and leadership training evolves.

Three denominations who have made particularly concerted efforts to relate denominationally-stated objectives to local program strategy and leadership development are the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Jesus Christ-Latter Day Saints, and the North American Federation of Temple Youth. The 1976 National Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Vision Statement" identified seven specific objectives for Catholic youth ministry: evangelism, worship, community, justice and peace, healing and reconciliation, leadership development, and advocacy for youth. Ideally, these standards not only became the governing vision of Catholic youth programs at all levels of the denomination for the next fifteen years. Even though this strategy met with mixed success due to the "vision's" uneven application in local parishes and dioceses (Harvey, 1991), it did provide informal evaluation criteria which could be used for any Catholic youth ministry unit, and which still serve as the unifying framework for Catholic youth leadership training (Henderson, 1990).

The Church of Jesus Christ-Latter Day Saints interprets youth ministry development as leadership training in the church for youth of all ages. While this single purpose is unique among religious youth programs, Latter Day Saints view leadership in the community as the vehicle to all other aspects of Christian life. Motivated by "servant-as-leader" models of ministry, age-level classes are youth-led, with weekly meetings required of adolescent class leaders to. learn the skills of servant leadership. This is not only the model for Latter Day Saint youth work; it is the pervasive model for ministry to all age-levels in every Latter Day Saints ward, where children, youth and adults all meet in similar peer-led class structures.

One of the most innovative approaches to intentional accountability is the North American Federation of Temple Youth's "Tikkun Olam"

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program, which means "repair of the world." If a local youth group of the North American Federation of Temple Youth elects to be in the "Tikkun Olam" program, it is invited to write its own contract stipulating agreement to engage in certain programs, spanning denominationally-approved goals, throughout the year; these goals include including religious action, social action, service to the community, and service to the local congregation. If the youth group fulfills its contract within the year, it is recognized nationally. According to denominational youth director David Frank, most N.F.T.Y. (pronounced "nifty") related youth groups opt to be part of "Tikkun Olam," and most complete their contracts, resulting in rather widespread program consistency and accountability that is still completely voluntary (Frank, 1991). Since each group writes its own contract with its own resources in mind, the process has great flexibility; "Tikkun Olam" occasionally even accepts contracts from individual Jewish youth, who live far away from a Reform congregation but who want to experience an intentionally Jewish way of life (Frank, 1991).

In most situations, however, even when broad objectives are articulated for a religious youth program, no mechanism exists for holding either programs or leadership accountable to these objectives. Consequently, religious youth work tends to be vulnerable to disjointed programming and leadership development without intentional efforts to unify all aspects of youth work around specific, widely agreed-upon goals for the religious community's involvement with youth.

Adult Leaders in Religious Youth Programs: Who Are They?

Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of religious youth programs. Some 80% of those working with teenagers in religious settings work without pay, often in addition to other full-time jobs, offering anywhere from two to twenty hours a week to adolescents in a religious youth program. In ethnic churches the percentage of volunteers rises to more than 90%, primarily because most ethnic churches lack the resources for multiple staff (Blackwell, 1991; Crawford, 1991; Elizondo, 1990; Mack, 1991). Some predominantly white denominations face similar staff constraints; fewer than 35% of Presbyterian congregations have a second staff person for church programming, and out of 1,200 Unitarian Universalist congregations in the United States, only two have full-time staff persons in youth ministry (Nishioka, 1990; Riley, 1990). In some denominations and ethnic support organizations, even the national directors for youth work are volunteers (Blackwell, 1991; Ng, 1991).

Professionals

An estimated 5% of Protestant and Catholic youth workers are considered "paid part-time" staff; another 15% of religious youth leaders are full-time church staff persons, although this number includes clergy who are full-time church employees but whose portfolios include many duties besides youth ministry (Carotta, 1990). Some denominations have long designated a "youth pastor" on church staffs, especially in evangelical traditions (Ross, 1990). Whether clergy or lay, full-time youth ministers are often charismatic but overworked paragons of dedication ripe for burnout, giving in excess of sixty

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hours a week to their vocation and leaving their posts after an average tenure of two and one-half years (Myers, 1991); for Jewish professional youth workers, the average stay is eighteen months or less (Shanky, 1991). Among Christians and Jews alike, professional youth leadership is more often a matter of default than vocational choice; the most common way to select a youth minister is to assign oversight of teenagers to the youngest and/or newest clergyperson on staff or to a lay director of education. No theological or educational training is required for the vast majority of religious youth work; indeed, a common problem is that persons with these backgrounds quickly are promoted away from hands-on contact with teenagers, leaving actual work with teenagers perpetually in the hands of the least prepared and least experienced (Boriak, 1990; Shanky, 1991; Stone, 1991).

Religious Youth Leader Development: How Are They Trained?

Every religious youth leader consulted for this project identified youth worker training as a serious problem confronting American religious youth programs. Training opportunities are too few and too far removed from the persons who stand to have the most impact on adolescents in a religious community: volunteer youth workers and clergy. The issue is not whether training is technically available to religious youth workers; it is. Full-time youth workers have at their disposal denominational training programs, ecumenical training institutes, and a variety of two-hour to two-week workshops at local, regional, and national levels. Some denominations and entrepreneurial groups have inaugurated youth ministry certification programs, some-

times in conjunction with theological seminaries, in a quest for quality and consistency across a growing professional field. But while leaders in religious youth work agree that youth leader training has vastly improved in the past decade, especially insofar as it is suited to the developmental needs of adolescents (Carotta, 1990; Schultz, 1990; Yaconelli, 1990), there simply is not enough of it. Even more problematic is the inaccessibility of these training events to volunteers, and a severe shortage of training which addresses religious youth workers in ethnic or at-risk situations or who work with young adolescents (Carotta, 1990; Elizondo, 1990; Ng, 1990; Roberto, 1991; Schultz, 1990).

Reaching Volunteers

Some organizations have made serious efforts to address the vacuum in religious youth leader development; most have not, due to limited resources, interest, or both. Given the financial pressure facing religious youth organizations, religious communities recognize that they must continue to rely on volunteers to shape the faith of their young. Most also admit that this important educational goal is usually handled by the untrained--although some of these individuals may be highly educated in other avenues of religious life. Training expectations for religious youth leadership ranges from masters' degrees in youth ministry, social work, or education, on the one hand, to "breathing" on the the other--the only criterion required for religious youth workers, according to two different Protestant denominational youth directors. Generally speaking, training is not required for adults who work with teenagers in religious settings; the vast majority of youth workers' training is a talk with their

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predecessor and a few weeks on-the-job.

Independent religious youth organizations who are unaffiliated with a denomination or a synagogue also depend on volunteers for most "hands-on" time with teenagers, but these volunteers are usually augmented by a corps of superbly trained professionals in youth work and, sometimes, theology. The parachurch group Young Life, for example, requires staff to complete a master's degree in youth ministry; the recommended degree program is offered in conjunction with accredited Protestant theological seminaries. Youth for Christ staff must complete a year-long supervised internship year "on-the-job," followed by mandatory training "updates" every two years. Although not required, leaders in independent Jewish religious youth movements are expected to have some academic background in social work, education, or a related field, as are teen workers in Jewish Community Centers. One Jewish Community Center executive in New York City observed that, due to low salaries which make recruiting good leadership difficult, these standards have been relaxed somewhat in recent years, to the detriment of the quality of teen workers in Jewish Community Centers (Rosenzwieg, 1991).

The real issue, then, is hwo to make training available and accessible to non-professionals who do most religious youth leadership, and how to adapt this training to address the teenagers whom volunteers actually see in their work. Consensus among religious youth leaders involved in training others is that the best training programs are a week long (or longer) with some opportunity for networking and follow-up with other youth leaders. The least effective model of religious youth leader training is the half-a-day (or shorter) workshop. Yet the short workshop is the only form of

training truly realistic for most volunteers who work full time, or cannot afford the high expense of tuition and travel for more presti-cious training events.

A few denominations, Roman Catholics and Southern Baptists among them, offer leadership development programs for persons in youth ministry at every level in the denominational structure. The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has developed a copious multi-level training system that not only develops leadership skills in youth pastors, but teaches them to train other youth leaders in their local jurisdictions--a strategy which ultimately provides training for both professional youth ministers and their volunteers. Some Lutheran and Jewish youth leadership benefit from the careful training of college-aged camp counselors, who go on to other forms of religious youth work with their camp training as their primary education in the field (Boriak, 1990; Kilstein, 1991).

More often, however, local training oversight is assigned to one regional denominational youth leader, often a volunteer or a full-time clergy person with multiple professional roles, who cannot invest the necessary time to develop on-going leadership training for volunteers in his region. As a result, volunteers resort to occasional workshops and printed materials offered by denominational staff or entrepreneurial groups, which may or may not apply directly to the volunteer's situation. The vacuum of available resources for Jewish youth work, for example, led the national office of the North American Federation of Temple Youth to subscribe to the orthodox Christian Group magazine for program ideas. "We have to produce all program resources through our denominational offices," explains N.F.T.Y.'s

director, David Frank. "Resources are gobbled up faster than we can produce them. We have no publication house; there are not enough of us [Reform Jews] to make such publications profitable. We adapt what we have to" (Frank, 1991).

Reaching Clergy

An obvious missing link in the professional preparation of reli-gious youth workers is the seminary, an omission from theological education that rankles religious youth leadership. "The greatest handicap to youth ministry," says Dean Borman, an Episcopal priest who directs the Center for Youth Studies at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, "is that church and society have not given it a professional status at all. Social perqs and professional momentum pull would-be youth leaders away from youth ministry" (Borman, 1990). A Lilly foundation study in the 1970s found that 95% of theological seminaries called youth ministry a critical problem of the church; only 5% of these same institutions said they were doing anything about it (Bor-man, 1990). Two decades later, little has changed; a recent survey of more than 500 Protestant and Catholic youth ministers produced scathing indictments of seminaries for failing to prepare them for ministry with adolescents (Schultz, 1990). And yet, points out Leroy Wilke, youth staff person for The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the majority of American churches are small congregations served by a single pastor who, in absence of volunteers or professional assis-tance, must "develop an understanding and willingness to work with youth" (Wilke, 1991). Developing this understanding among pastors in single-staff person churches, in fact, was identified as the top youth ministry priority for The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in the

1990's, with the assumption that clergy involved in youth ministry at local levels are the keys to fostering adolescents outreach.

Clergy interest and involvement in religious youth work varies according to the religious tradition and ethnic community represented. By and large, African-American clergy exhibit more interest and involvement in religious youth work than their white counterparts, in part because of cultural factors in the black community. Historically, these churches have viewed the well-being of young people as the corporate responsibility of the entire community, rather than the province of a few congregational leaders (Myers, 1991c).

In white evangelical Christian communities, clergy interest and involvement in youth ministry also tends to be high, although these communities often hire a theologically-trained, often ordained "youth minister" whose responsibility is to "minister to" young people, with or without the help of the rest of the congregation. Mainline white religious communities often de facto "exempt" clergy from religious youth work. The assumption is that the formation of youth is a "task" which is assigned to others so that the clergy may have time for higher priority items in the life of the congregation (Myers, 1991). Given the fact that these clergy, in all likelihood, received little or no seminary preparation for working with adolescents, there is little incentive for these clergy to consider youth an intentional part of their job description, although all would give youth ministry their rhetorical support. A few seminaries are beginning to look seriously at this curricular omission; but in the face of severe clergy shortages facing many mainline denominations, seminaries are reluctant to adapt educational process or content to encompass religious youth work, or to deploy theologically-trained personnel for

what they perceive to be "specialized" ministry.

Seminary coursework related to youth is valuable precisely be-
cause it targets the leaders who help set priorities in congregational
and denominational life. Yet youth-related coursework is infrequently
offered in seminaries; few attempts are made to integrate the con-
cerns of youth with regularly offered seminary curricula. Faculty
seldom develop a research interest in religious youth work, fearing
credibility problems at publication time (Maas, 1990). Unintentional-
ly, theological education has developed a religious leadership with
little interest in, or knowledge of, the young. A hierarchy has been
established in Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities in which
didactic education is taken more seriously by the community than that
which has been dubbed "informal," or alternative, education which
adapts to the age-level needs of adolescents (Kilstein, 1991).

Leadership Training for Special Needs

To complicate this already uneven landscape, the territory im-
plied by "religious youth work" is changing. In particular, the need
for adults who are trained for work with young adolescents and at-risk
teenagers has reached crisis proportions. No longer are such young
people believed to be "outside" the parameters of religious youth work
by most denominations. Dwindling teenage participation in most reli-
gious settings has led churches and synagogues to redefine who they
serve and how they serve them. In particular, young adolescents and
at-risk youth stand to benefit from this redefinition as the
boundaries of religious youth work begin to encompass them. So far,
however, religious communities have barely touched on these sub-
populations in current leadership training efforts.

Young Adolescent Leadership

As young adolescents increasingly dominate the market share of youth available to religious youth programs, the thirst for training in this area has intensified. Perhaps this eagerness for training arises out of desperation; typically when several youth workers are involved in a religious youth program, the least experienced volunteer is assigned to the youngest adolescents (Stone, 1991, Martinson, 1991). Although Unitarian Universalists are in the process of developing a fifteen-hour training course on early adolescence, only two comprehensive programs specifically designed to train persons for religious work with young adolescents surfaced in this survey. Both of these require sustained commitments on the part of the youth worker to complete, but both offer superb training to participants:

The Center for Youth Ministry Development's "Early Adolescent Ministry Institute" is intended for full or part-time religious youth leaders. Currently a long-weekend program, organizers are considering expanding it to a more extended program that would meet over the course of several weekends for several years at various locations--a strategy which would increase its availability to volunteers. Though designed for Catholics, it is easily adapted to any religious community. A second approach to young adolescent leadership training is Group Publishing's "Youth Ministry Consultant" certification program for junior high ministry. Group's training is ecumenical, and is geared toward professional youth leaders or volunteers who can afford to spend a week in annual seminars over a period of three to four years. The process is expensive and location-specific; for youth leaders who can attend the required annual training convocation, it

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affords quality instruction and the benefit of networking with hun-
dreds of other religious youth workers in an ecumenical setting.
Although readings and resources are weighted towards Group's own
publications, the program has the added benefit of teaching religious
youth workers to be trainers in their own right who become available
to "consult" with interested congregations desiring to serve younger
teens.

At-Risk Adolescent Leadership

The sparse training available to adults who work with young
adolescents in religious settings is lush compared to training oppor-
tunities for leaders working with at-risk youth. Despite many reli-
gious youth organizations' own belief that "all youth are at-risk,"
all organizations contacted for this paper admitted to a paucity of
training in this area. Several are developing resources and "special
emphases" on certain at-risk behaviors such as suicide, teen pregnan-
cy, drug awareness; most offer these topics as "workshop options" at
large youth ministry training events. But comprehensive training for
addressing at-risk adolescents through religious groups is simply
nonexistent. Mike Carotta of Boys' Town is widely viewed as the
groundbreaker in this area, adapting research on at-risk behavior for
leadership training in the religious community; a training curriculum
is forthcoming based on Carotta's work in this area with the Lilly
Endowment.

Financial Concerns in Religious Youth Programs:
How Well Are They Funded?

Low priority items in any organization result in a lack of

resources: financial, personnel, time allocations. All of these
resources are in short supply in religious youth work, leading to the
widely shared opinion that religious youth programs are low priority
items in most religious communities. Except in conservative evangeli-
cal Christian traditions, where support for youth work is high, reli-
gious communities are more apt to pay lip service than bills for those
who work with adolescents. The funding shortage is most keenly felt
in the lack of salary support for local youth leadership, and the lack
of denominational support for personnel who can assist in the develop-
ment of youth-serving resources.

Funding for religious youth programs, including salary support,
is generated from three sources: 1) The local church/synagogue bud-
get, derived from the gifts and dues of constituents in the congrega-
tion; 2) Participant fees, especially for camps, conferences, and
denominational events; and 3) Independent fundraising conducted by
the group itself, including grant proposals, direct mail appeals,
door-to-door evangelization/solicitation, and the usual gamut of bake
sales and car washes. Funds for religious youth work from each of
these sources are decreasing at this time. While economic uncertainty
affects program budgets, the real crisis of insufficient monies is the
inability to develop leadership. This is especially true in urban
ethnic religious communities; while these religious communities may
raise money for a youth programs about as easily as their Anglo,
suburban counterparts (Blackwell, 1991; Borman, 1990; Mack, 1991), the
single staff person situation of most of these churches already places
their religious youth work at a disadvantage.

While affirming the quality of the volunteers responsible for
most religious youth work, religious youth leaders overwhelmingly

believe that more professional staff devoted to religious youth work at every level will help stabilize it (Myers, 1991). As one Jewish denominational leader stated, "[Religious youth work] just doesn't pay enough to be considered a career option for most people, so we will always have to scramble for people with the eclectic skills needed to work with youth" (Frank, 1991). Not only does this factor result in an over-reliance on untrained volunteers, but it virtually guarantees that even trained professionals cannot sustain a career in the field if he or she chooses to marry, move, or "upgrade" his or her position in the religious community with a theological degree or ordination--a move which, in denominations facing clergy shortages, suddenly makes the person "too valuable" to be devoted to youth work alone.

In the one in five cases where a youth minister does receive compensation, the salary is likely to be lower than those in education or social services. A recent study of lay and ordained full-time professional youth ministers in Christian churches placed the average compensation package in 1990 at $28,740 for males (a 23% increase from 1986) and $21,138 for females (a 6% increase from 1986). The average starting salary for a religious youth worker in 1990 was $17,187 (Group, 1990). Donald Ng, youth ministry staff director for the American Baptist Churches, points out that these low salaries are a "major factor" in youth ministry burnout:

> The financial package that goes along with a person's call to ministry is, in some ways, the confirmation of that call. If youth ministers are paid with great disparity compared to the "preaching ministers" or the "pastoral ministers," then they only have perhaps two or three years before they receive the signal that youth ministry is second-rate. And that's why we get burnout and that's why we never get people staying in youth ministry long enough to make a difference (Ng, 1990, p. 31).

While no one becomes a professional religious youth worker for the

financial benefits, low salaries do contribute to high turnover and difficulty in recruiting quality, long-term leadership. The decision to marry, move, or have a family frequently creates needs that a religious youth worker's salary cannot cover. Ironically, as Ng points out, low salaries also contribute to the stigma of the profession as a "second class" ministry by colleagues and congregations alike. Religious youth work is generally viewed as a "stepping stone" position until one gets a "real" ministerial appointment (Jones, 1989).

Funding difficulties for religious youth leadership is most obvious locally, but the reduction of denominational staff also jeopardizes religious youth organizations' ability to attract professionals to the field. At their best, denominational staff persons serve as advocates for better working conditions, including higher salaries, and help youth workers network with one another to reduce the isolationism that frequently accompanies the perception of second-rate professional status. But denominational youth staff are easy targets for budget cuts: "Denominational staff are being slashed everywhere, across the board," according to the 1990 Lilly foundation study on North American youth ministry (Carotta, 1990). In the face of scarce resources, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish staff positions in youth work are vulnerable from the local level all the way up to the national agencies. Only Latter-Day Saints, who consciously devote the biggest proportion of each congregational budget to youth work (Rasmus, 1990), and Presbyterians, whose youth ministry office currently benefits from a budgetary cushion leftover from a recent denominational merger, said they felt comfortable with the financial

commitment their denomination made to religious youth work (Nishioka, 1990; Rasmus, 1990). Among all other denominations surveyed for this report, reaction to the financial support of youth ministry ranged from anxiety to panic.

Consensus among youth workers is that funds for religious youth work are better spent developing leadership than programs, especially when that leadership can beget other leadership. While all national staff persons are not equally effective in this capacity, their position in the denomination or youth organization gives them unique access to other potential leaders. Typically, however, financial pressure results in staff rather than program reductions. Currently, most of the major Protestant denominations have two or fewer full-time staff persons devoted to religious youth programming, the result of a recent wave of budget cuts which disproportionately affected youth-related staff positions. In effect, the decision to reduce national staff positions is potentially a decision to disadvantage the lifeline in religious youth work: well-trained local leadership.

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STRENGTHS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Religious youth workers, like most youth workers, are simultaneously among the world's greatest optimists and most self-flagellating penitents. They are convinced that small amounts of significant youth-adult contact make great differences; at the same time, they agonize that not enough of this contact is initiated by religious communities--not nearly enough. When asked how well they thought religious youth work is accomplishing its goals, youth leaders chorused: "Above average." The overwhelmingly consistent qualifying remark given was this: "What we are doing, we are doing well. We just need to do more." The rallying cry for the future of religious youth programs is "more"--with qualifications. The handful of denominations satisfied with the priority religious youth work receives in their communities would like to see more of what they are already doing continue. The vast majority, however, are saying, "More would be great--but we're struggling just to hang on to the status quo." A few, particularly mainline Protestant denominations, believe that "more" is out of the question; they are losing ground fast to other priorities in their denominations.

Except for the role of national denominational youth structures, whose strength is marred by the reality of far fewer real dollars devoted to their cause than a generation ago (Kujawa, 1991; Myers, 1991b), the following assets characterizing today's religious youth programs are likely to continue in the near future. Like all institutional strengths, however, their longevity will depend on a kind of intentional support from the parent organization not evident in to-

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day's religious communities.

Committed leadership

The factor cited most often--and without hesitation--in the success of religious youth work is the commitment of the adults who lead it. Denominational youth staff cite scores of miracles wrought by religious youth programs equipped with good adult leaders and very little else. One researcher, after completing his own study of North American youth ministry, described religious youth leadership as "extraordinary, people of passion who care deeply for kids, and who have the ability to live with the tensions inherent in ministry." Calling youth ministry "the most vibrant ministry in [the Christian] church," he pointed to the dwindling membership of mainline churches whose ministries may be "too dead to struggle. But youth ministry is struggling, and that is a sign of an enormous desire to live" (Carotta, 1990). Another denominational youth director was more direct: "The church loves young people" (Nishioka, 1990). While voicing concern over declining expectations that Jewish teen workers obtain training in social work and group process (Rosenzwieg, 1991), directors of Jewish youth organizations praise the overall expertise of adults working in non-synagogue-based Jewish youth movements (Kastner, 1991; Gidon, 1991) and the commitment of synagogue volunteers, camp staff, as well as alternative education teachers (Kilstein, 1991; Melzer, 1991).

Future directions:

There will always be adults in religious youth work with a zealous commitment to the adolescents they serve. There is disagreement, however, over whether the numbers of persons committed to reli-

gious youth work is likely to increase, or if religious communities
are in fact dissuading their professional leadership away from youth
work. Some observers say they are witnessing a growing number of
persons in Christian communities who desire to enter youth ministry
professionally (Schultz, 1989). At the same time, white mainline
Protestant churches are in a state of serious decline, and in this
institutional deathwatch religious youth leadership development is not
perceived as a high priority. As one student of this phenomenon
observed: "The seminary and the local church have never regarded
youth ministry as 'real' ministry and this perspective tends to ob-
viate against adults entering youth ministry" (Myers, 1991b, p. 6).
Myers articulates an uneasiness shared by mainline Protestant youth
workers but not felt by most mainline Protestant church leadership.
He contends that the church has not taken seriously an historical,
socio-economic, cultural "shift" that has caught the church "asleep on
its feet":

> Adult volunteers caught in the cultural crunch of dual-income
> necessities are fading from the scene. Both wage-earners are
> exhausted. Link dual-income folk with the new-constellation
> families and you inevitably must recognize that there are few
> resources left for adults in such circumstances. Not many will
> "volunteer" for youth ministry (Myers, 1991b, p. 6).

In short, even if the interest in professional religious youth leader-
ship would increase in the future--an opinion not universally shared--
the role of the religious youth leader volunteer looks precarious at
best. This tentativeness is a dangerous sign since four out of five
of today's committed religious youth workers are volunteers.

Youth empowerment

The leadership modelled by caring adults is encouraged among the
teenagers who work with them. Many youth workers consider religious

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organizations' greatest contribution to adolescent development to be
the empowerment it affords teenagers by increasing their self-esteem.
"The qualifications for belonging to a church youth group are unique,"
observed Group Publishing's Thom Schultz. "There are no prerequisites
to belong to the club; it's a more open community. That's why the
[religious] youth group can attract kids and help kids whom nobody
else will" (Schultz, 1990). While social dynamics are at work in
religious youth groups just as they are in any gathering of adoles-
cents, the principle of "inclusiveness"--that anyone is welcome and
valued in God's eyes--is, at least unofficially, a "by-law" understood
to be at the root of most religious youth communities.

Most religious youth programs offer opportunities which equip
teenagers in the specific tasks of leadership as well. For the most
part, religious youth groups strive to make youth partners in mission
rather than "targets" for ministry. National denominational bodies
tend to be more successful at executing this strategy than local
congregations, if only because elected youth representatives to
national bodies are self-selective in their desire to lead; planning
groups comprised of representative teenagers interested in various
youth events are common in both Christian and Jewish denominational
programs, as well as in independent Jewish youth movements. Most of
these programs involve youth in the denomination's policy-making
structure, although the degree of this involvement varies widely. No
youth program consulted for this paper relied exclusively on peer
leadership; youth empowerment is understood to be best accomplished
by a team of youth and adults working together.

Nowhere is the theme of youth empowerment taken more seriously

than in the Church of Jesus Christ-Latter Day Saints, where the term "youth ministry" is replaced by "youth leadership," on the premise that ministry _is_ leadership development. In this tithe-paying denomination, the fifth largest religious body in the United States, budget allocations for youth leadership are larger than any other denominational program. Since each bishop's (pastor's) highest priority is youth leadership, "in any congregation's budget, the amount of money allocated for youth will be higher than any other designation" (Rasmus, 1990). The model for youth empowerment is simple: girls and boys are divided into single-sex classes according to age, with one class per gender per age. Each class is governed by a rotating "presidency," a team of four student leaders whose job is to minister to the others in the age group. This presidency rotates several times a year, so that every young person in a ward--at least once between the ages of ten and eighteen--has been designated a leader of his or her peers. Carolyn Rasmus, national director of the Latter Day Saints' young women's organization, explains: "We have a strong belief that youth need to feel valued, significant, and then they can contribute. These are keys to wholesome well-being. Helping young people develop leadership skills and discover talents is crucial to their development as adolescents." She goes on to describe the pervasiveness of youth leadership among Latter Day Saints: "Of the 400,000 young women in the denomination [between ages twelve and eighteen], for example, every single one of them is in a class, and at least 60% are actively involved" (Rasmus, 1990).

As in other denominations, however, Latter Day Saint youth empowerment serves a second purpose. The most important outcome of youth leadership, points out Rasmus, is that it enables a future

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generation to "carry on the work of our church" (Rasmus, 1990).
Denominational leaders readily admit that religious youth work serves
as a laboratory to groom future, as well as present, leaders in the
religious community (e.g., Boriak, 1991; Blackwell, 1991; Nishioka,
1990).

Future directions:

Co-leadership is prized by adolescents who feel a sense of
"ownership" in denominational youth programs--and, consequently, the
denomination--and symbolizes the impact youth can have on the church
as a whole. Youth empowerment will continue as a theme in regional
and national religious youth programming, and will receive increased
attention in local youth programs as well. For instance, peer ministry
programs are expanding as the concept of shared leadership encourages
youth, in addition to adult program leaders, to become "missionaries"
in their own spheres of influence (Dean, 1991).

Cohesive national structures

Given the fact that the sample surveyed for this paper relied
heavily on denominational leadership, national structures for reli-
gious youth programming naturally received high marks. "It is crucial
that youth can feel connected as a church," said one official. "It
shows that they're part of a larger thing; it runs against a
narrowing worldview. It is extraordinary for youth to discover other
youth like them around the world, sharing their struggles" (Nishioka,
1990). Others value national structure because it helps youth connect
to their denominational tradition, identity being defined in part
organizationally (Blackwell, 1991; Rasmus, 1990). Still others, such

as the American Zionist Youth Organization, which among other things
sponsors an annual parade in New York City to celebrate the founding
of Israel, appreciate the momentum created by national events, made
possible by organizational structures which unite youth from many
different perspectives to plan and celebrate a common goal (Kastner,
1991).

In general, national religious youth structures received praise
for the quality and scope of denominationally-sponsored national youth
events, and for the sense of "connectedness" they convey to the youth
who participate beyond the local level. It should be noted, however,
that hundreds of Protestant religious bodies, which do not have
national coordinating structures and/or which do not collect member-
ship data, were excluded from this report for reasons described in the
"Method" section. It should not be assumed that autonomous local
religious youth programs are in any way inferior to or less successful
than those affiliated with national denominational structures.

Future directions:

The future of national structures for religious youth work is
uncertain, despite optimism on the part of denominational staff per-
sons. These leaders believe their national structures to be defininte
assets in their religious youth programs' delivery systems, and expect
them to continue to serve as vehicles for implementing large youth
events and as avenues for youth leadership development. Denominations
are pleased to see the degree of ownership teenagers have in national
structures of their organizations. United Church of Christ and Presby-
terian denominational leaders are moving towards further institu-
tionalizing that ownership by establishing youth-directed advocacy

councils within their denominations, akin to United Methodist's National Youth Ministry Organization, an independent voice for youth established outside of the age-level ministries of the denomination.

Yet denominational "clout" in religious youth work on the whole appears to be fading. While Jewish youth work on a national level looks relatively stable in that it is not experiencing cutbacks, Christian youth ministry may be in real jeopardy in light of the steady stream of staff and budget reductions in this area experienced recently by all but conservative evangelical denominations. "Most mainline national youth ministry structures will progressively grow weaker. . . unless a new and radically different vision occurs" (Myers, 1991b, p. 2). Citing the dismantling of many mainline denomi-national youth ministry structures of the 1960s, Myers notes that youth ministry budgets of these denominations today do not compare favorably in terms of "real dollars" with pre- or early-1960s levels of spending for national youth ministry structures. Myers and others believe that while national youth ministry structures may remain in place for several years, they either already have or will soon face budgetary reductions which could render them impotent (Myers, 1991a; Kujawa, 1991; Maas, 1990).

Relationship-intensive process

Religious youth leaders believe the relationship-centered educa-tional methods of religious youth programs are healthy and develop-mentally-appropriate alternatives to didactic educational methods com-mon in middle and senior high schools. Because much religious youth work occurs in the context of relatively small groups (even large groups tend to break into smaller sub-groups in the course of any

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given youth gathering), religious youth programs offer a context in which each adolescent is, ideally anyway, noticed and active. Teaching based on "relational theology," as this strategy is sometimes called, is experiential and relies heavily on interpersonal dynamics as the medium for the message. It is applied unevenly in religious youth work, but is nonetheless a common theme articulated by religious youth workers. Group Publications has dubbed this method "active learning" and has made it the hallmark of their program and curriculum materials. Group's training events focus on teaching religious youth workers how to convert didactic material into relationship-centered teaching units. While not unique in their approach to relationship-centered programming, Group claims the widest audience for religious youth materials of any similar organization, with over 57,000 subscribers to their monthly resource magazine and more than 15,000 participants annually in Group-sponsored events (Sparks, 1989, p. 66); their success with this teaching strategy has resulted in consultant relationships with public school systems as well (Schultz, 1990).

Future directions:

The relationship-centered, experiential educational process will continue to distinguish most religious youth work from traditional academic settings. This process is likely to increase in popularity among professional youth leadership, who are most likely to be exposed to relational/experiential education at training events, and through the publications and networks of youth leadership professionals themselves. In fact, these leaders are likely to extend "active learning" to more formal, content-centered settings such as confirmation and Sunday School simply because it suits many of the developmental needs

of students in these settings. Resources which employ this educa-
tional philosophy will multiply, especially in entrepreneurial set-
tings, but denominations may re-direct their materials to highlight
these processes in order to compete with the growing popularity of
entrepreneurial literature.

On the other hand, relational/experiential learning is seldom
taken seriously by academic institutions preparing professional
leadership for synagogues and churches, preferring more traditional
passive educational methods with the objective of communicating con-
tent first. This often leads clergy and seminary instructors to view
relational/experiential teaching as vaguely inferior to the more di-
dactic teaching methods they experienced in their own schooling--an
attitude which tends to result in infrequent usage of non-traditional
educational methods in the religious community. Often clergy sense
shortcomings in their passive teaching strategies once they apply them
to teenagers; but, lacking modelling in alternative strategies which
would better suit adolescent needs, many clergy simply conclude that
"youth are difficult" and leave their tutelage to others.

"Other-directedness"

Leaders in religious youth work cite the "other-directed" ethos
created by religious youth programs as another strength of today's
youth work. In the absence of formal evaluation techniques, the
mechanism commonly used to assess how "other-directed" participants in
religious youth programs really are is the amount of teenage parti-
cipation in group service projects. Recognizing the unwieldiness of
this measurement, it is still worth noting that youth participation in
religiously-sponsored service projects has increased dramatically in
the past decade. Better-known work camps, for example, in which

teenagers spend a week or two repairing homes for someone in a disad-
vantaged community, fill up more than a year in advance; recently
efforts have been made to adapt national and regional models of these
work camps for local initiatives.[18]

Future directions:

Renewed societal interest in community service, as well as the
outbreak of war in the Persian Gulf, have heightened religious youth
programs' concern for outreach and social justice. The popularity of
religious-affiliated organizations like Habitat for Humanity, service
projects, work camps, and other service-oriented residential
experiences will continue to grow in the next generation (Martinson,
1990; Schultz, 1990), although concerns so far appear to be more local
than global in scope, except among Jewish youth for whom the recent
war in the Gulf heightened interest in Israel and relationships in the
Middle East (Gidon, 1991).

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Despite historian Joseph Kett's label for the American twentieth century as "the era of the adolescent," today's teenagers face a world full of risk, without the networks of support and accountability of a century ago. Although religious youth work can survive briefly on its current strengths, religious youth leaders are gravely concerned about the directions religious youth work is <u>not</u> likely to pursue without resources and an intentional guiding vision. These new directions are considered vital to the survival and relevance of religious youth work into the twenty-first century. What are the gaps which must be filled for religious youth programs to flourish in the next generation? What strategies are available to religious institutions to provide teenagers with the necessary chrysalis for their complete transformation into adulthood? Obviously, more money would help tremendously. But that is not the entire picture. How more money would be invested, or more likely, how shrinking resources will be spent are matters of enormous concern. The challenges in religious youth work figure prominently in the thinking, and planning, of religious youth leadership preparing for a new century of adolescent outreach.

I. The Challenge of Strengthening Adult Leadership

Many experts believe that the most important factor in religious youth work is the role of the significant adult (Borman, 1990; Yaconelli, 1990). Unfortunately, of all the gaps in Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religious youth programs, the most threatening is the lack of accessible adult leadership training. This is ironic, for reli-

gious youth leaders agree that most of the available adult leadership training is excellent; there simply is not enough of it. Notes Donald Ng of the American Baptist Churches: "Youth leader training is a great need. Denominations have been cutting back on staff, both nationally and in the local churches, and we've been damaged at great cost. We have lost our ability to work in cooperation with specialized organizations, such as the Center for Early Adolescence, while at the same time denominations are doing very little to develop their own programs" (Ng, 1991).

Strategies for Improvement

● **New models of leadership.** New models of leadership training are needed which address the accessibility needs of volunteers while maintaining the integrity of longer, more rigorous training events. Among other things, these models need to address a shift in the role of the adult professional in religious youth work. In the 1970s and 1980s, the religious youth leader was a do-er: she designed programs, provided counseling, made logistical arrangements, developed rapport with the program's supporting parent bodies. In the 1990s, however, the religious youth leader will become a "trainer" for youth ministry both for other adults and for the youth who serve alongside them (Schultz, 1990). Even if the Lone Ranger model of religious youth work could be persuaded to ride off into the sunset--an unlikely proposition in many denominations where the favored path is still to hire "a" person to get religious youth work "done" (Myers, 1991b)-- multiple-leadership and congregational models need to be prepared to step in (Holderness, 1976b; Myers, 1991). Religious communities, not just program directors, must be re-educated to include youth leader-

ship as part of their corporate responsibility. Even where religious youth work is relationship-intensive, the needs of youth are so broad that several adults are required to reach the array of different teenagers available to any religious community, not to mention to stave off burnout in youth workers--a key factor in the high turnover rate of religious youth leaders. In short, the religious youth leader of the 1990s must learn to become a manager of other volunteers. She must not only learn the skills of youth leadership herself; she must be able to teach these skills to others and to educate the religious community on their corporate role in the process of shaping the lives and faith of the young.

• Collaborative training ventures. In light of decreasing funds for training in religious youth work, a common plea from professional youth leaders is interdenominational and interfaith collaboration on training endeavors. At present, many religious youth leaders agree that entrepreneurial groups offer the best training for practitioners. Denominational staff, however, are often hesitant to encourage atten-dance; "turf" turns out to be important to denominational efforts at training their leadership. Still, there is no reason why most sub-jects commonly covered in training programs of all denominations and youth movements--adolescent development, program management, how to handle volunteers--cannot be covered in tandem with another agency interested in similar issues. Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish youth are far more alike than different, and eliminating training redundancy will liberate resources which can be used to develop tradition-speci-fic youth leadership events, or training programs that address other neglected areas, such as leadership with at-risk adolescents.

• Relational/experiential teaching. It has been said that

people love children; they just dislike youth (Smith, 1991). Semina-
rians, in particular, have grown to view youth work as a "second
class" form of ministry which offers some valuable experience, but from
which one escapes as soon as a "better" job is offered (Jones, 1989).
One reason clergy are uncomfortable working with teenagers is the
inadequacy with which seminaries prepare clergy to address this popu-
lation (Stone, 1991).

Seminaries can reduce the stigma attached to youth work by intro-
ducing seminarians to developmentally-appropriate strategies of
religious education with youth while they are in school. Teaching
methods rooted in experiential learning and group process are adapted
to the existential nature of teenagers, as well as to their strong
need for interpersonal relationships. In religious settings,
experiential/relational educational strategies are doubly appropriate
since the stage of faith development common to adolescents is highly
experiential and relationship-oriented (Fowler, 1981). Furthermore,
experiential and relational learning have theological as well as
educational significance. Jewish theology is predicated on the
transformative experience of being saved by God at the Red Sea;
Christian theology focuses on the transformative experience of
Christ's resurrection and the subsequent new birth available to
humanity. Vanella Crawford of the Congress of National Black Churches
points out that, since the goal of much religious teaching is trans-
formation, "Educational events need to be occasions where people are
themselves transformed, as well as places to learn how to help
transform the lives of adolescents" (Crawford, 1991).

● **Professional standards in religious youth work.** One "quality

control" available to religious youth work, which also helps
validate religious youth work as a professional option, is the
development of minimum professional standards to ensure some measure
of excellence and consistency across various religious youth programs.
Leadership certification programs are one effort in this direction,
although denominational certification programs lack continuity and
consistency across ecumenical lines. While one religious community
need not impose its training standards on another, a _degree_ of consis-
tency can help communicate credibility and clarify the goals of reli-
gious youth work, especially to those outside of religious institu-
tions.

● **Prioritizng leadership training financially.** Religious youth
leadership training cannot wait for religious communities to generate
funds for this purpose; in the face of the restricted budgets facing
most non-profit organizations in this decade, increased real dollars
available for religious youth leadership development are unlikely.
Rather, what is at issue is the willingness of the religious community
to view leadership development for adult youth workers as a priority
worthy of substantial investment--not only for the generation hence,
but for the near and present life of the struggling religious communi-
ty. Church growth studies have established links between a congrega-
tion's visible commitment to young people and its likelihood to grow
(Roehlkepartain, 1989). In light of the exodus of younth people from
religious communities in the past twenty years (Osmer, 1989),
developing leadership which can help stem this tide appears to address
the institional needs for self-preservation. Some studies have indi-
cated that a teenager's participation in a religious institution tends
to compensate for certain developmental "deficits" and reduce that

teenager's likelihood to participate in at-risk behaviors (Benson,
1990)--behaviors which have costly consequences for society. Reli-
gious organizations, however, are less likely to persuade their
adherents with investment rhetoric than with moral suasion: addres-
sing the needs of teenagers is a good and right thing. In communities
self-consciously devoted to promoting that which is considered morally
good, denominational dollars can assist in encouraging congregations
to emphasize developing religious leadership which responds to the
moral call of the community.

Denominational leaders and executives of parent organizations who
sponsor religious youth work are uniquely situated for undergirding
adult leadership training for religious youth programs. "It is
ironic," said one religious youth worker interviewed for this report,
"that at age two or three, parents are completely involved with their
children. There is no question that day care staff persons are suita-
bly trained, and parents invest huge sums for the day care that seems
best for the child. And yet, by the time that child is fifteen, he
sees less and less of his parents, at a time when he may even need
them more than he did before. His parents don't give a second thought
to the fact that the synagogue youth director has no training; and if
he needs money to go on a retreat, suddenly there's not enough there"
(Shanky, 1991).

Organizational executives and denominational leaders are in a
unique position to initiate some of the collaborative training men-
tioned above. By virtue of their role in the organization they can
advocate livable wages, insurance, and other benefits that attract
long-term commitments from religious youth workers. They influence

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communication channels which heighten the visibility of religious youth work in the denomination or organization. Their overall vantage point makes them natural conduits for ecumenical and interfaith cooperation.

One denomination that has made such a commitment is The Southern Baptist Convention. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention Sunday School Board make a conscious commitment to provide plentiful training opportunities to Sunday School leaders at national, regional, and local levels several times a year; it costs the participant nothing except room and board. All conference expenses are paid for from the sale of Southern Baptist publications, including Sunday School materials; not a penny of youth leader training money comes out of an offering plate. This also means a certain level of commitment and accountability may be expected from religious youth workers, both paid and volunteer; freed from concerns about accessibility and cost, both lay and ordained youth leadership are free to pursue more on-going, in-depth theological training for religious youth workers who, either officially or unofficially, function as part of the religious community's leadership team.

● Developing the personhood of religious youth workers. In the end, most leadership is a matter of the person who leads; it was this observation that caused Joy Dryfoos to recommend "cloning charismatic leaders" as a way to develop leadership who make progress against at-risk behavior in adolescence (Dryfoos, 1990). The presence of a charismatic leader has been identified as a critical factor in the success of many religious youth programs, churches, and other movements which develop large followings (Smith, 1991). Related to this is a growing concern that theological institutions are not developing

charismatic individuals for the leadership of religious institutions, and a body of research suggesting that the development of the entire personhood of the leader may determine, more than his skills, his success in youth leadership, pastoring, parenting, or a number of other "caring" roles (Martinson, 1991).

In ancient Israel, rabbinical students became educated by literally following a learned rabbi everywhere he went, until his ways became their ways. It is a model that bears repeating. Apprentice-ships, leadership biographies, time spent with other admired religious youth leaders, and exploration of the faith role models are ways to harness the power of personal style into religious youth work. A Lilly Endowment grant and a risk-taking faculty are allowing Luther-Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota to experiment with a new curriculum designed to develop persons, not pastors, who will in turn make good pastors because they are secure and spiritually mature individuals. This overall premise filters down into their training of youth leaders, as well. In short, adults involved in religious youth work must, in some way, experience what religious youth work hopes to accomplish with teenagers: spiritual awakening and healthy growth into well-adjusted adulthood.

II. The Challenge of Reaching Unserved and Underserved Populations

In religious youth programs, reaching unserved and underserved populations primarily means addressing the young adolescent, the at-risk adolescent, and the urban low-income adolescent, teenagers who are unlikely to report involvement in today's religious communities. While youth leaders report greater numbers of young adolescents than older youth participating in religious youth activities, far more

teenagers of all ages are not participating in religious youth organi-
zations than are (Search, 1990).

But today's religious youth work is almost exclusively directed
at the teenager who is already a part of a religious community. Some-
times this is an overt strategy; sometimes unserved youth are over-
looked because young people who do not participate in religious commu-
nities tend to be invisible to them. Either way, the research indi-
cates that most at-risk and urban low-income adolescents elude reli-
gious communities; young adolescents either fall into one of the
above categories or are underserved in the communities where they are
present.

While religious youth work has expanded in the direction of young
adolescence, most of those surveyed for this project found young
adolescent religious youth programs inferior to senior high religious
youth work in terms of both program and leadership quality. Youth
leaders expressed frustration at the lack of training events which
focus on young adolescents, and at the inconsistency and uncertainty
plaguing much young adolescent leadership and programming. Debates
over the boundaries of adolescence also keep such programs from fully
servicing youth; religious communities still resist considering fifth
and sixth graders "adolescents."

Those unserved youth whom religious youth programs seem least
prepared to address, however, are at-risk youth, especially those in
urban areas, who often exhibit multiple unmet needs and reflect com-
plex social problems. Religious youth leaders from all vantage points
profess frustration and concern over these populations; they recognize
that special kinds of cultural sensitivity and leadership training are

necessary for working in these arenas, not to mention tremendous energy and vast resources.

Yet, to date, recognition of the at-risk population's needs has been almost entirely rhetorical. Few efforts to expand religious youth work creatively into these communities have been attempted beyond very specifc, local levels. The barrier of familiarity is formidable; but popularized models of religious youth work patterned on middle class white relgiious communities simply do not translate, in most cases, to the inner city, ethnic, or low-income enviroment. Just as apporaches to religious youth worker adapted to urban culture and/or at-risk adclescents are scarce, so training which equips leaders for these contexts is rare. Parachurch groups (notably Youth for Christ, Young Life, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes) have made some inroads into the city; unhampered by competing denominational agendas, and imbued with a "missionary mindset" (i.e., leaders avail themselves of the opportunity of being "sent"), these groups have found their structural flexibility an advantage in reaching unserved urban youth. Furthermore, parachurch groups tend to share an evangelical thirst for proliferation, as well as a need to sustain membership in the absence of local congregations who feed children into their programs. Philosophical and practical concerns have caused these ministries--perhaps more by default than design--to begin to seriously address hard-to-reach youth. Although interest in urban religious life is increasing in denominations as well, the support for reaching at-risk youth in these contexts is still primarily in word more than deed.

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Strategies for Improvement

o Leadership training for adults who work with young adolescents
at at-risk teenagers. Given the fact that, except in some local
settings, religious communities do not make work with at-risk teena-
gers a high priority, religious youth work must begin to specify
resources for low-income areas, young adolescent programming, and at-
risk youth work. This will not happen naturally, and it will not
happen by simply adapting older youth resources for young teens or
translating English resources for Hispanic youth in the inner city.
Reaching these teenagers requires developmental and cultural sensiti-
vity as well as adaptability on the part of a leader who may or may
not naturally identify with the population. These training oppor-
tunities need to be available to all religious youth workers since all
will, to some extent, address one or more of these unserved/under-
served populations. In addition, professional specializations on
unserved populations of religious youth work can develop a cadre of
committed, well-trained, and adequately resourced leaders who lead the
way in addressing the needs of unserved youth.

o Coordinated program development with community organizations
in at-risk geographic regions. At-risk populations are well-served by
coordinated approaches between several organizations working coopera-
tively for the general well-being of the adolescent. Religious insti-
tutions can play a pivotal role in coordinating community services for
adolescents.

o Service opportunities with unserved/underserved youth. Much
of the community service which has benefited religious youth organiza-
tions has been limited to white, middle class teenagers seeking con-
frontation with an economically disadvantaged sector of society, a

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decidedly lopsided vision of community service that borders

precariously on paternalism. In addition, the vast majority of large

service projects bypass young adolescents, who are therefore exempted

from experiences which directly impact the lives of others. A case in

point are the extraordinarily popular "work camps," a form of the

residential community experience in which youth offer physical labor

to construct and repair buildings in low-income areas like Appalachia

or the inner city. These projects are generally reserved for senior

high youth. Conscious efforts to foster mutuality between cultures

involved in service projects, and to focus attention on the benefits

which service opportunities can offer young adolescents, are important

vehicles for including vulnerable populations in the empowering

experience of giving.

● **Multicultural approaches to religious youth work.** Religious

youth work no longer takes place within a single cultural context;

America's unprecedented pluralism in the 1990s requires religious

youth work to respond to youth cultures, not culture. Although

concerted efforts have been made to support ethnic ministries, Protes-

tant and Catholic youth work still err on the side of white middle

class American values and process. This factor works against the

urban, low income, and/or ethnic participation in their programs.

John Roberto, director of the Center for Youth Ministry Development,

notes that one barometer of success in any area of youth work is the

number of printed resources it generates, and observes: "Very few

resources and publications are available for persons working in multi-

cultural settings" (Roberto, 1991). Research that addresses questions

like, "What does multicultural religious youth work look like?"; "What

culture-specific approaches to religious youth work are effective?" is
critically needed if religious youth work is to address large sectors
of unserved adolescents.

III. The Challenge of Expanding Program Boundaries

If spiritual growth is a matter of caring for the total person
as a divine creation, then a religious youth program is inherently a
multifaceted proposition. Yet religious youth programs often f . to
express themselves through the full range of options available to
them; developing spiritual identity often ignores the need to resolve
personal struggles, or vice versa. These poles must stand in tension
if religious youth work is to maximize its potential of instilling
both cultural/faith identity and healthy growth in an adolescent. New
models of religious youth work which hold both of these goals in
balance are needed to integrate religious youth work into the entire
life of the adolescent, and to integrate the adolescent into the
entire life of the congregation (Yaconelli, 1990). Carotta advises
diversity of program as a means to flexibility, adopting the term
youth programs, not program, in the 1990s. "How diverse?" he asks.
"[Religious youth work] ought to be a cafeteria or a buffet, not a
sit-down dinner" (Carotta, 1990).

Strategies for improvement

● The boundaries of religious youth work need to be expanded to
address the full range of needs experienced by the adolescent. These
boundaries are largely determined by the demographic make-up and needs
of the youth in a particular setting. For some populations, notes
Buster Soaries, a well-known inner city youth pastor, "teaching kids
how to dress, how to get a job, how to get by in school" are appro-

priate tasks of youth ministry (Soaries, 1991).

• Religious youth programs must address the family. Adolescence does not exist in a vacuum; it is flanked by childhood and adulthood, both of which require their own age-level appropriate responses in religious communities which cushion them from the "inexact science" of puberty. Religious youth leaders expect to see more of their energy spent developing relationships with, and within, the entire family in the decade ahead than in years past (Martinson, 1991). New models of youth work are needed which join the family and religious community in a joint process of faith/cultural identity and adolescent development of youth, similar to the mutual parent/child involvement advocated by practicing Jews. Despite the religious community's unique access to families, however, the family has been an untapped resource.

Religious youth programs seek to address teenagers' relationships with their families, and increasingly concur that one cannot properly address the needs of youth without also, simultaneously, addressing family needs (Martinson, 1991). While the recent emphasis on "family ministry" has been criticized as "trendy" (Borman, 1990), it nonetheless receives hearty affirmation from virtually everyone in the field. Where religious youth programs consciously include work with families as part of achieving their objectives with youth, their impact on adolescents appears to increase. Consequently, programs that respond to teenagers as members of a larger family unit have experienced great popularity in their relatively brief history as an intentional piece of program design.

With increasingly complex family patterns and large numbers of youth who find it difficult to bond with significant adults in these

complex patterns, religious youth workers will experience greater
pressure to provide adolescents with significant adult-teen relation-
ships (Martinson, 1991). Families in their multiple configurations
will take up more of a religious youth leader's programmatic and
counseling time; this will require a heightened understanding of
family dynamics on the part of religious youth workers as they help
teenagers find productive means of functioning as family members. At
the same time, the religious youth program will experience more pres-
sure to become a surrogate family for those teenagers who lack family
relationships. This means that religious youth programs must find ways
to embody healthy family living in the context of a significant adole-
scent community, where youth find enacted important theological con-
structs like "grace," "forgiveness," and "redemption."

IV. The Challenge of Improving Networks

While denominational offices, to some extent, track the activi-
ties and emphases of programs in their jurisdictions, and while ecume-
nical publications like Group Publishing's Group and Junior High
Ministry magazines, and Youth Specialties' Youthworker and Youthworker
Update help share success stories among various religious youth pro-
grams and leaders throughout the country, by and large religious youth
work is a non-networked field. With the exception of denominational
offices that knew with varying degrees of certainty what local reli-
gious youth programs offered teenagers, this survey identified no on-
going, systematic effort to network religious youth programs or their
leadership. Although a recent National Council of Churches gathering
brought denominational youth leaders together for purposes of
dialogue, this event represents a single attempt at cross-fertili-

zation, not the norm. Even less networking takes place between Chris-

tian and Jewish youth communities; no Christian educator involved in

this study professed knowledge of Jewish religious youth work, and

Jewish leaders--while marginally aware of some Christian youth minis-

try efforts--admitted to only vague impressions of their content,

process, and structure.

Yet the youth programs of all religious communities possess

remarkable similarities. While governing theologies differ, their

youth experience similar needs. In particular, Jewish youth movements

and Christian ethnic youth ministries, owing to their common concern

for heightening the cultural (as well as religious) identity of youth,

have very similar goals--and consequently, similar programmatic re-

sponses. To date, however, no mechanism exists within religious

communities which enables these leaders to interact or dialogue about

their process of outreach to youth. Denominational youth leaders, who

are often those uniquely positioned for interaction with other reli-

gious communities, are so stripped of resources and personnel support

that adding such dialogue to their already-bulging portfolios appears

to be an unrealistic burden. Seminaries, equipped to broaden stu-

dents' academic perspectives on other religious communities besides

their own, simply do not make youth a priority curriculum item; stu-

dents can graduate into full-time ministry with very little under-

standing of their own denomination's religious youth work, much less

anyone else's.

Strategies for Improvement

● **Human networks.** It is true that expanding the printed

resources' networking capabilities across denominational and ecumeni-

cal lines would be helpful. The real strength of networking, however, is in the people one knows, not just in the program ideas shared. The great benefit to human networking is the opportunity to share joys and struggles in the exhilarating, often frustrating experience of youth work. Given the fact that professional isolation is a major contributor to turnover of personnel in religious youth work, human networks—support groups, on-going regional training events, spiritual life gatherings between youth leaders, and so on—can be the lifeline necessary to prevent leaders from early burnout.

● Networking with community leaders dedicated to youth work. Religious youth work must lead religious communities towards the public sector in the coming decades by cooperating in shared approaches to addressing the multiple needs of adolescents. Conducting a project similar to the Center for Early Adolescence's 3:00 to 6:00 P.M. Study, which summarized a variety of youth programs' after-school delivery systems, would be one way to unearth various ways in which religious organizations and community-based youth groups may collaborate. More will be said about institutional cooperation below.

V. The Challenge of Institutional Collaboration

Teenagers who thrive do so in the context of structures adapted to adolescence; if the structures are not provided in the community, the teenager must construct some of his or her own, or growth is very difficult (Ianni, 1989). Yet despite the research which indicates the superiority of multi-institutional approaches in preventing at-risk behaviors (Benson, 1990), religious communities persist in addressing the needs of adolescence more or less "solo." Except for periods of

local crisis (e.g., United Way's mobilization of church groups, school clubs, civic organizations, and businesses involved in the clean-up of Charlotte, NC after Hurricane Hugo), few instances exist in which religious communities work in tandem with other institutions in a coordinated way for the well-being of youth. Occasionally several churches will combine their youth fellowship groups (usually for the purposes of expedience, rather than for the benefit of the adolescent per se). Other than this, religious youth organizations--often excluded by "separation of church and state" from active participation in the dominant teenage institution of society, the school--tend to avoid collaboration with other institutions which impact young people's lives.

Strategies for Improvement

● **Institutional partnerships.** Local congregations do not exist in isolation; nor do the youth who come to them. Given the fact that youth involvement in institutional structures apparently can help compensate for developmental detriments, religious communities must take seriously their potential contribution to healthy adolescent growth, and seek to compound that potential by coordinating efforts with other community institutions (Martinson, 1991). New initiatives which build local partnerships between parishes, schools, scouting organizations, YM/YWCA or YM/YWHA programs, and so on are needed to create a total environment conducive to wholistic adolescent development (Roberto, 1991).

VI. The Challenge of Accountability

Of the denominations consulted for this report, those most successful at program evaluation were also the denominations who could

readily articulate their vision and purpose for religious youth work. These denominations had taken the time to concretely identify the goals and objectives of their work with teenagers; they also took the time to hold subsequent religious youth work accountable to these goals and objectives. While no sanctions were imposed for religious youth programs straying from the denominational vision, this clear articulation of strategy provided a simple grid to place over any program, at any level in the denomination, and assess how well it served youth from that denomination's perspective. In the vast majority of religious youth organizations without such a grid, the entire system was vulnerable to incoherence at the least and chaos at the worst.

Strategy for Improvement

● Establish specific, widely agreed-upon program goals as the unifying structure for all subsequent programming. Most denominations and religious youth organizations do set goals; the question is whether they have any method of holding these goals up as a standard and encouraging religious youth programs to adhere to them. Coordinating training and program goals together, developing incentive programs like the North American Federation of Temple Youth's "Tikkun Olam," or building evaluation into part of leadership training are flexible and yet concrete mechanisms for accountability. Such minimal standardization also paves the way for interaction with secular organizations that want to know, specifically, what religious youth programs hope to accomplish with young people in the community. The 1976 Roman Catholic "Vision Statement," which simply and eloquently identified seven components of Catholic youth ministry, not

only offered local Catholic youth leaders a grid by which they can quickly assess strengths and weaknesses in a given program, but it also provided some measure of content standardization without prescribing form or process. Not every diocese subscribed to the "vision" put forth in the document, and communication problems between the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and local parishes created the usual gaps between national denominational ideals and grass-roots implementation (Harvey, 1991). Despite these barriers, however, the "Vision Statement" was followed by a decade of unprecedented growth and coherence in Catholic youth ministry, and tremendous flexibility in the application of this "vision" to both traditional and non-traditional youth ministry populations.

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CONCLUSIONS

Unless religious communities undertake these challenges--
improving leadership training, increasing the numbers of youth served
to include young and at-risk adolescents, expanding program
boundaries, creating networks, initiating institutional collaboration
and offering accountability--their ability to address the needs of
adolescents, spiritual or otherwise, will be severely inhibited.
While much valuable adult-youth contact is accomplished through reli-
gious youth programs, the low priority assigned to youth in most
religious communities results in resources which are too limited,
salaries which are too low, and training opportunities which are too
inaccessible to attract a strong, consistent core of professionals to
the field. Even those who do take advantage of religious youth leader
training find themselves ill-equipped to reach significant populations
of adolescents through the church or synagogue; young adolescents,
at-risk adolescents, and ethnic/urban adolescents are not adequately
addressed by religious youth programs as they exist currently. The
flexibility required to expand the youth populations served and the
kind of programs available to them, and the commitment necessary to
develop institutional cooperation, networking between professionals,
and a degree of accountability are currently scarce and represent more
hope than reality; their longevity in religious youth work will
require an overarching vision that will cause religious communities to
radically re-think their commitment to adolescents in the years ahead.

The strategies which will ease these concerns require creativity,
cooperation, and funding. Dollars are critically needed to facilitate

religious communities' ability to attract, maintain, and develop adult leaders who work with adolescents. But just as insufficient funds are only part of the problem, an infusion of money alone is not the solution. The bigger challenge is the attitude shift which must prevail, from the upper reaches of denominational hierarchies to the grass roots of local religious youth movements, which reminds the religious community that adolescents are worthy of our resources, time, and personnel. Religious communities must embrace and respond to the conviction that young people's lives are too important to be left to haphazard and uninformed influence; they must be shaped by the best society has. And since adolescents are not being shaped by religious communities alone, religious communities must work in concert with others who influence youth, to till the best possible soil to nourish them.

Francis Ianni has argued that adolescents are engaged in a <u>search for structure</u> to guide their movement from childhood into adulthood, and that community structures have ripe opportunities to combine forces to create a common "youth charter" that can represent, model, and introduce teenagers to the new adult world they must enter. The point is not, as Ianni so rightly observes, to create "new programs" in hopes of finding the magic one that really does address "today's teens." Such a program is fiction; what is required is that existing programs that do exist create linkages between one another and the youth whom they commonly serve in order to provide them with consistent, not competing, systems of support, value structures, and patterns of interaction (Ianni, 1989).

Ianni's analysis does not explicitly mention religious communities as participants in this process; and yet, the one institution

which exists in every county, burg, small town and metropolis in the United States--the one organization with which young people could, if they so desired, come into direct contact--is the church or synagogue. In our quest to integrate society and offer young people congruence instead of confusion, we should not overlook the religious community. At present, religious communities--like most community organizations--function as independent corporations in a world full of competing independent corporations; and yet, this is a very recent self-understanding for church and synagogues, who have historically stood at the center of society as chief weavers of community threads into one unified tapestry of existence.

Those days are gone; the pluralistic culture of the emerging twenty-first century offers a far richer tapestry than any single institution can weave. And yet, religious communities still make good looms, frames on which we try to make sense of multiple strands of existence, coordinating agents for all manner of disaster relief, personal understanding, and service to community needs. The common denominator in all of the challenges which, according to those involved in this report, face religious youth programs today is that they bring the religious community out into the public arena (Martinson, 1991; Roberto, 1991). If religious communities are to address our young, then they cannot do so as privatized corporations; they must do so as participants in a common charter which provides for the welfare of adolescents. In many ways, religious communities are uniquely situated to galvanize this vision. If, as Search Institute and others have surmised, the community structures and values available in a religious community provide a context which eases the

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transition from youth to adulthood; if, as empirical research sug-
gests, religiosity has a certain "innoculative" effect against at-risk
behaviors; and if, as some of literature indicates, involvement in a
religious community increases the likelihood of prosocial behavior in
teenagers, then there may be a quantifiable case for encouraging
linkages between youth and religious programs designed for them. If
the quantifiable case cannot be made, religious youth programs still
remain key actors in that "youth charter" Francis Ianni has argued is
so important in the transition into adulthood, "both the declaration
of independence and the constitution for this new transitional state,
which should provide unhurried migration from childhood to adulthood
as an integral part of the life journey" (Ianni, 1989, p. 268).

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ENDNOTES

1
Group Publications (Loveland, CO); Youth Specialties (El Cajon, CA); Don Bosco Multimedia (New Rochelle, NY).

2
In particular, the "Network" papers published by Don Bosco Multimedia with the Center for Youth Ministry Development, were germane to much of this project, as were selected issues of Group magazine, Junior High Ministry magazine, Youthworker journal, and "Youthworker Update" newsletter.

3
Search Institute, Lilly Endowment.

4Of particular help was the index to the Journal of Jewish Communal Service.

5
Southern Baptist Convention (membership: 14,722,617); The United Methodist Church (membership: 9,124,575); Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (membership: 5,288,230); Church of Jesus Christ- Latter Day Saints (membership: 4,000,000); Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (membership: 2,967,781); Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (membership: 2,614,375); Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. (membership: 2,462,300); African Methodist Episcopal Church (membership: 2,210,000); Assem- blies of God (2,150,667); United Church of Christ (membership: 1,662,568). Source: The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1990 (New York: Pharos Books), pp. 610-611; Jacquet, C.H. (ed.) Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 1989 (Nashville: Abingdon).

6
The national Christian education staff person for the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, the national staff person for Hispanic ministry for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, the Asian-American editor of the only resource in print on Pacific/Asian American religious youth work, the national youth staff person for the Unitarian Universalist denomination. Two denominational staff persons contacted also represented Pacific/Asian American constituencies, as well as their denominational offices. The denominational leadership of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. was unavailable for comment for this report.

7
The National Zionist Youth Foundation, B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, Youth for Christ, Young Life, and Fellowship for Chris- tian Athletes were consulted for this report. Although Youth for Christ, Young Life, and Fellowship for Christian Athletes are among the most well-known national parachurch organizations, membership statistics were unavailable to assess their relative size in compari- son with other national parachurch youth ministries. The term para- church has been criticized as casting these organizations into "second class citizenship" in comparison with churches' ministry. However,

the word parachurch, which means literally "alongside the church," was
preferred by three of the four independent Christian youth movements
contacted for this study who do, in fact, see themselves as parallel
organizations to churches and who desire, and seek, cooperation with
local congregations. The director of Fellowship for Christian
Athletes preferred the term "intrachurch" organization because he
believed it more aptly described the relationship F.C.A. has with
local congregations--a relationship which is, in fact, more inten-
tionally integrated into local church programs than other parachurch
groups reported.

8
    Support agencies consulted include the United Jewish
Association/Federation, the Congress of National Black Churches, the
Center for Early Adolescence, the Center for Youth Studies, Boys'
Town, and Youth Ministries Television Network. Efforts to contact the
Christian Coalition for Youth Initiatives discovered that the agency
had moved, and could not be traced in time for this report. Several
other agencies involved in various aspects of adolescent research were
contacted but were deemed outside the purview of this project.

9
    Three organizations best known in this capacity and included in
this project are two non-denominational organizations, Group Publica-
tions (Loveland, CO) and Youth Specialties (El Cajon, CA), whose
publishing and leadership training departments operate "for profit"
and whose youth events are considered "not-for-profit"; and the
Catholic-based Center for Youth Minsitry Development (Naugatuck, CT),
which does not sponsor youth events and is entirely "not-for-profit."

10
    Besides the members of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent
Development task force for this project, the unpublished work of Dr.
Stuart McLean (Phillips Graduate Seminary), Dr. Sara Little (Pacific
School of Theology), Dr. Roland Martinson (Luther-Northwestern
Theological Seminary), Dr. Elizabeth Nordbeck (Lancaster Theological
Seminary), Dr. Michael Warren (St. John's University), Dr. Larry
Rasmussen (Union Theological Seminary), and Dr. Robin Maas (Wesley
Theological Seminary) provided insight into religious youth work
generally, and especially into what theological education is, and is
not, doing to prepare leadership for religious youth work in the
1990s.

11
    With enormous gratitude to the research associate for this
project, Mr. Paul Yost of the Department of Psychology, University of
Maryland at College Park, whose relentless scrutiny and considered
insight made this paper possible.

12
    See Wilcox's (1979) exploration of cognitive developmental
theory in religious education; on moral development, see Kohlberg
(1963), Dykstra (1981), and Gilligan (1982); on social and emotional
development, see Strommen (1988).

13

Much of this research originated in and was disseminated by the Center for Early Adolescence (Chapel Hill, NC) and Search Institute (Minneapolis, MN).

14

Many types of behavior considered predictors of an adolescent who is at-risk, described by Dryfoos (1990), figure prominently in research on religiosity and at-risk behavior: substance abuse, sexual activity, school failure and dropout, physical/sexual abuse, homeless-ness, and suicide. Religiosity research did not deal with adolescent populations and suicide, and did not directly address relationships between religiosity and school failure/dropout, homelessness, or physical sexual abuse.

15

Religiosity (participation and salience) is related to less likely delinquent behavior, such as truancy, drug use, major and minor theft, trespassing, property damage, fights, weapon use (Albrecht, Chadwick & Alcorn, 1977; Burkett & White, 1977; Cochran, 1988; Forliti & Benson, 1986; Higgins & Albrecht, 1977; Sloane & Potvin, 1986).

16

For example, see Ng (1988); Paris (1985); Roberts (1980).

17

Dryfoos (1990) found at-risk behaviors in between 4-31 percent of the sample; most of these youth exhibited multiple risky behaviors Benson (1990) found 4 or more at-risk characteristics in 31 percent of 6th-12th grade. Search Institute (1990) found 3 or more at-risk behaviors in 15-40 percent of church-affiliated youth.

18

The Society for St. Andrew, for example, developed several gleaning projects which are now adapted for use, along with a curriculum unit on hunger, with teenagers and local farmers from their communities on the day after a harvest. This means that youth groups no longer need to travel to a specific site to participate in one nationally-sponsored event; they can develop similar experiences in their own communities.

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DENOMINATIONAL OFFICES: PHONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

ORGANIZATION:_____   CONTACT:_____

ADDRESS:_____   PHONE:_____

Report overview and purpose:

I.   Primary topics of interest: Early adolescence (ages 10-15), high risk youth (as defined by you), non-school activities, needs of youth that the church/synagogue are meeting, needs you are not meeting.

Questions:

'XTENT OF SERVICE TO YOUNG ADOLESCENTS (AGES 10-15)

1.   How do you define "youth"?
       ___ ages 11-17   ___ ages 14-17   ___ Other:

2.   How do you define "youth ministry"?

3.   What do you consider the goal of youth ministry?

     In your opinion, how well is (DENOMINATION)'s youth ministry realizing that goal?

Very well	Above average	Average	Below average	Poorly
X	X	X	X	X

4.   Excluding religious schools, what are the primary form(s) (DENOMINATION) "youth ministry" takes?
     ___ RYO (type:_____)   ___ Sunday School/CCD
     ___ Confirmation   ___ Youth choir
     ___ Youth worship experiences   ___ Bible studies
     ___ Camps/assemblies/retreats   ___ Service projects
     ___ Group activities   ___ Other:

5. Are you aware of any figures that estimate how many kids are served by (DENOMINATION) youth ministry?

   How many of these youth are between the ages of 10-15?

6. In your opinion, how well is (DENOMINATION) youth ministry meeting the needs of youth between the ages of 10-15?

Very well	Above average	Average	Below average	Poorly
X	X	X	X	X

   What is your role in helping (DENOMINATION) local churches have access to information sharing in youth ministry?

7. For the next 4 questions, choose between the following answers:
       Youth 10-15, Youth over 15, Both, or Neither

   IN YOUR OPINION:
   Is (DENOMINATION) youth ministry more available to:
   ___ Youth 10-15   ___ Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

   Is (DENOMINATION) youth ministry more utilized by:
   ___ Youth 10-15   ___ Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

   Is (DENOMINATION) youth ministry more responsive to the needs of:
   ___Youth 10-15   ___Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

   Is the emphasis in (DENOMINATION) youth ministry in the 1990s likely to be:
   ___Youth 10-15   ___Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

8. Briefly describe your denomination's national approach to youth ministry (we're looking for exemplary approaches/models). What is it like in terms of CONTENT? PROCESS? How do you conduct ACTIVITIES? How UTILIZED is it?

9. On the average, how many contact hours per week do (DENOMINATION) youth spend involved in youth ministry?
   ___ Less than 1   ___ 3-4
   ___ 1-2   ___ 5-10   ___More than 10

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10. Who spends more contact hours involved in (DENOMINATION) youth ministry?
___ Youth 10-15   ___Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

Why?

EXTENT OF SERVICE OF LOW INCOME/MINORITY YOUTH

1. How well does (DENOMINATION) youth ministry serve low income youth?

Very well	Above average	Average	Below average	Poorly
X	X	X	X	X

Can you estimate the percentage of kids served by (DENOMINATION) youth ministry who fall in the following income brackets?

_____% low income   ____% middle income   ____% high income

2. How well does (DENOMINATION) youth ministry serve ethnic youth?

Very well	Above average	Average	Below average	Poorly
X	X	X	X	X

Can you quantify in any way the extent of youth ministry with ethnic youth?

(I AM GOING TO READ YOU SEVERAL SETS OF RESPONSES. PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER IN EACH SET:)

3. Will (DENOMINATION) youth ministry in the 1990s be more likely to address:

a) __Ethnic youth   ___Non-ethnic youth   ___Both   ___Neither?

b) ___Low income youth
   ___Middle income youth
   ___Upper income youth   ___All of the above
   ___None of the above

c) ___"Churched" youth   ___"Unchurched" youth

d) ___Boys and girls together ___Boys and girls separately
   ___Boys   ___Girls

4. How would you define "at risk youth"?

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What is (DENOMINATION) youth ministry doing to address these "at risk youth"?

UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS TO POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

1. What is the desired outcome of (DENOMINATION) youth ministry?
    [OPEN ENDED QUESTION; CATEGORIES ARE FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY]

    A___Youth/future adults who are "saved"
    B___Youth/future adults who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
    C___Youth/future adults who are moral decision-makers
    D___Youth/future adults who are sensitive to the needs of others
    E___Youth/future adults with self-esteem
    F___Future church/synagogue members
    G___Youth/future adults who have a sense of religious/ethnic identity
    H___Productive member of society
    I___Works to serve the community
    J___Lives a live in agreement with teachings of church/synagogue

    If you had to pick one outcome as the most important, which would it be?

2. What unique contributions do religious organizations make to adolescent development?

3. What needs should be met by religious youth organizations/youth ministry that aren't?

4. How are the particular needs of high risk youth addressed by religious youth organizations/youth ministry?

5. How are the needs of early adolescents addressed by religious youth organizations/youth ministry?

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PROGRAM EVALUATION

1. What criteria do you use to judge effective youth ministry?
    ___Number of kids involved   ___Church activity among youth
    ___Spiritual growth of kids   ___Can't judge till they become
    ___Specific outcome measures   adults
    ___No formal criteria   ___Other

    Do you use any formal criteria? If so, what?

    How useful are they?

2. In your judgment, what are the strengths of (DENOMINATION) youth
    ministry?

3. What would you do to improve it?

    What has been the barrier(s) in addressing these needs so far?

    Do you think these needs will be addressed in the 1990s?

YOUTH WORKER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Typically, who are the adult leaders in (DENOMINATION) youth
    ministry?

2. What percentage are:
    ___Paid full-time   ___Paid part-time   ___Volunteers
    .___Ordained   ___Lay

3. How many hours do most youth leaders spend each week engaged in
    youth ministry?
    ___Volunteers   ___Paid part-time   ___Paid full-time

4. How are most (DENOMINATION) youth workers trained?
                ___Seminary   ___Denom'l workshops
                ___Ecumenical workshops
                ___Colleges   ___On-the-job training
                ___Certification program   ___No training

    Is any training required for (DENOMINATION) youth workers?
                ___Yes   ___No

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Please describe this training:

5. Are you aware of any specialized training in (DENOMINATION) youth ministry for early adolescence?
___Yes   ___No

Please describe.

How effective is this training?
How can it be improved?

6. Are you aware of any specialized training for high risk youth through your denomination?
___Yes   ___No

Please describe.

How effective is this training?

How can it be improved?

7. In your opinion, how effective is most (DENOMINATION) youth worker training at this point in time?

Very	Above average	Average	Below average	Lousy
X	X	X	X	X

8. What form of youth worker training is currently most effective?

Why?

9. What form of youth worker training is currently least effective?

Why?

10. How can (DENOMINATION) youth worker training be improved?

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FUNDING

1. What are the major sources of funding for (DENOMINATION) youth ministry?

2. Is funding increasing or decreasing?

3. How easy is it to adequately fund youth ministry in low income areas?

Very easy	Easy	Depends on church	Difficult	Impossible
X	X	X	X	X

How easy is it to adequately fund youth ministry in middle income areas?

Very easy	Easy	Depends on church	Difficult	Impossible
X	X	X	X	X

How easy is it to adequately fund youth ministry in high income areas?

Very easy	Easy	Depends on church	Difficult	Impossible
X	X	X	X	X

4. What portion of (DENOMINATION) resources are devoted to youth ministry?

Is this amount:
___Adequate   ___More than needed   ___Less than needed
___Far less than needed

GENDER ISSUES IN YOUTH MINISTRY

1. Do you know of any gender-specific forms of youth ministry (which specifically target girls or boys) in your denomination?

   Please describe them briefly:

2. For the next 3 questions, please answer: Boys, Girls, Neither, or Both
   Is (DENOMINATION) youth ministry more available to:
   ___Boys   ___Girls   ___Neither   ___Both

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Is (DENOMINATION) youth ministry more utilized by:
___Boys   ___Girls   ___Neither   ___Both

Is (DENOMINATION) youth ministry more responsive to the needs of:
___Boys   ___Girls   ___Neither   ___Both

If more responsive to the needs of girls or boys, how?

___Content:
___Process:
___Leadership:

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1. What needs of youth should religious organizations address in the
    next decade?

2. What new directions in youth ministry do you see being pursued
    in the next decade?

RESEARCH

1. What research are you aware of re:

        Early adolescence and religious development?

        High risk youth and religious development?

        Religious program evaluation?

        Gender differences in religious youth organizations?

2. How do we get this information?

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RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS/SEMINARIES: PHONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

ORGANIZATION:_____   CONTACT:_____

ADDRESS:_____   PHONE:_____

Report overview and purpose:

I.   Primary topics of interest: Early adolescence (ages 10-15),
high risk youth (as defined by you), non-school activities, needs of
youth that the church/synagogue are meeting, needs you are not
meeting.

Questions:

EXTENT OF SERVICE TO YOUNG ADOLESCENTS (AGES 10-15)

1. How do you define "youth"?
    ____ ages 11-17   ____ ages 14-17   ____ Other:

2. How do you define "youth ministry"?

3. What do you consider the goal of youth ministry?

    In your opinion, how well is today's youth ministry realizing
    that goal?

Very well	Above average	Average	Below average	Poorly
X	X	X	X	X

4. Excluding religious schools, what are the primary form(s) intentional "youth ministry" takes?
___ RYO (type:_____)   ____ Sunday School/CCD
___ Confirmation   ____ Youth choir
___ Youth worship experiences   ____ Bible studies
___ Camps/assemblies/retreats   ____ Service projects
___ Group activities   ____ Other:

5. Are you aware of any research that estimates how many American kids are served by youth ministry?

   How many of these youth are between the ages of 10-15?

6. In your opinion, how well is youth ministry meeting the needs of youth between the ages of 10-15?

Very well	Above average	Average	Below average	Poorly
X	X	X	X	X

7. For the next 4 questions, choose between the following answers:
   Youth 10-15, Youth over 15, Both, or Neither

   IN YOUR OPINION:
   Is youth ministry more available to:
   ___ Youth 10-15   ___ Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

   Is youth ministry more utilized by:
   ___ Youth 10-15   ___ Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

   Is youth ministry more responsive to the needs of:
   ___Youth 10-15   ___Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

   Is the emphasis in youth ministry in the 1990s likely to be:
   ___Youth 10-15   ___Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

8. From your observation, out of every 10 kids in the general population ages 10-15, how many are intentionally touched by youth ministry?
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

9. On the average, how many contact hours per week do youth spend involved in youth ministry?
   ___ Less than 1   ___ 3-4
   ___ 1-2   ___ 5-10   ___More than 10

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10.   Who spends more contact hours involved in youth ministry?
      ___ Youth 10-15   ___Youth over 15   ___Both   ___Neither

      Why?

EXTENT OF SERVICE OF LOW INCOME/MINORITY YOUTH

1. How well does youth ministry serve low income youth?

Very well	Above average	Average	Below average	Poorly
X	X	X	X	X

    Can you estimate the percentage of kids served by youth ministry
    who fall in the following income brackets?

    _____% low income   _____% middle income   _____% high income

2. How well does youth ministry serve ethnic youth?

Very well	Above average	Average	Below average	Poorly
X	X	X	X	X

    Can you quantify in any way the extent of youth ministry with
    ethnic youth?

    (I AM GOING TO READ YOU SEVERAL SETS OF RESPONSES. PLEASE
    SELECT ONE ANSWER IN EACH SET:)

3. Will youth ministry in the 1990s be more likely to address:

    a) ___Ethnic youth ___Non-ethnic youth ___Both ___Neither?

    b) ___Low income youth
       ___Middle income youth
       ___Upper income youth   ___All of the above
       ___None of the above

    c) ___"Churched" youth   ___"Unchurched" youth

    d) ___Boys and girls together ___Boys and girls separately
       ___Boys   ___Girls

4. How would you define "at risk youth"?

    What is youth ministry doing to address these "at risk youth"?

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UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS TO POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

1. What is the desired outcome of youth ministry?
    [OPEN ENDED QUESTION; CATEGORIES ARE FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY]

    A___Youth/future adults who are "saved"
    B___Youth/future adults who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
    C___Youth/future adults who are moral decision-makers
    D___Youth/future adults who are sensitive to the needs of others
    E___Youth/future adults with self-esteem
    F___Future church/synagogue members
    G___Youth/future adults who have a sense of religious/ethnic identity
    H___Productive member of society
    I___Works to serve the community
    J___Lives a live in agreement with teachings of church/synagogue

    If you had to pick one outcome as the most important, which would it be?

2. What unique contributions do religious organizations make to adolescent development?

3. What needs should be met by religious youth organizations/youth ministry that aren't?

4. How are the particular needs of high risk youth addressed by religious youth organizations/youth ministry?

5. How are the needs of early adolescents addressed by religious youth organizations/youth ministry?

PROGRAM EVALUATION

1. What criteria do you use to judge effective youth ministry?
    ___Number of kids involved   ___Church activity among youth
    ___Spiritual growth of kids   ___Can't judge till they become
    ___Specific outcome measures   adults
    ___No formal criteria   ___Other

    Do you use any formal criteria? If so, what?

    How useful are they?

2. In your judgment, what are the strengths of today's youth ministry?

3. What would you do to improve youth ministry?

        What has been the barrier(s) in addressing these needs so far?

        Do you think these needs will be addressed in the 1990s?

YOUTH WORKER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Typically, who are the adult leaders in youth ministry?

2. What percentage are:
    ___Paid full-time   ___Paid part-time   ___Volunteers
    ___Ordained   ___Lay

3. How many hours do most youth leaders spend each week engaged in youth ministry?
    ___Volunteers   ___Paid part-time   ___Paid full-time

4. How are most youth workers trained?
                ___Seminary   ___Denom'l workshops
                ___Ecumenical workshops
                ___Colleges   ___On-the-job training
                ___Certification program   ___No training

    Is any training required for most youth workers?
                ___Yes   ___No

    Please describe this training:

5. Are you aware of any specialized training in youth ministry for early adolescence?
    ___Yes   ___No

    Please describe.

    How effective is this training?

How can it be improved?

6. Are you aware of any specialized training for high risk youth?
   ___Yes   ___No

   Please describe.

   How effective is this training?

   How can it be improved?

7. In your opinion, how effective is most youth worker training at
   this point in time?

Very	Above average	Average	Below average	Lousy
X	X	X	X	X

8. What form of youth worker training is currently most effective?

   Why?

9. What form of youth worker training is currently least effective?

   Why?

10. How can youth worker training be improved?

FUNDING

1. What are the major sources of funding for youth ministry?

2. Is funding increasing or decreasing?

3. How easy is it to adequately fund youth ministry in low income
   areas?

Very easy	Easy	Depends on church	Difficult	Impossible
X	X	X	X	X

How easy is it to adequately fund youth ministry in middle income areas?

Very easy	Easy	Depends on church	Difficult	Impossible
X	X	X	X	X

How easy is it to adequately fund youth ministry in high income areas?

Very easy	Easy	Depends on church	Difficult	Impossible
X	X	X	X	X

4. What portion of most denominations' resources are devoted to youth ministry?

    Is this amount:
    ___Adequate   ___More than needed   ___Less than needed
    ___Far less than needed

GENDER ISSUES IN YOUTH MINISTRY

1. Do you know of any gender-specific forms of youth ministry (which specifically target girls or boys)?

    Please describe them briefly:

2. For the next 3 questions, please answer: Boys, Girls, Neither, or Both
    Is youth ministry more available to:
    ___Boys   ___Girls   ___Neither   ___Both

    Is youth ministry more utilized by:
    ___Boys   ___Girls   ___Neither   ___Both

    Is youth ministry more responsive to the needs of:
    ___Boys   ___Girls   ___Neither   ___Both

    If more responsive to the needs of girls or boys, how?

    ___Content:
    ___Process:
    ___Leadership:

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1. What needs of youth should religious organizations address in the next decade?

2. What new directions in youth ministry do you see being pursued in the next decade?

RESEARCH

1. What research are you aware of re:

    Early adolescence and religious development?

    High risk youth and religious development?

    Religious program evaluation?

    Gender differences in religious youth organizations?

2. How do we get this information?

3. What youth ministries do you consider exemplary/model programs or approaches? Describe:

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TOPICS OF INTEREST ON JEWISH YOUTH WORK
for research being conducted by
The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development
"Project on Youth Development and Commun. y Programs"

Interviewer: Kenda Creasy Dean
Topic: "A Synthesis of Research On, and a Descriptive Overview of, Religious Youth Organizations"

Note: These questions are intended to address American Jewish youth, but please feel free to qualify this restriction where you feel necessary.

I.   DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE TO YOUTH

1. Who in the Jewish community is offering services to youth?
2. What ages are encompassed by these programs/services?
3. What is the nature of these programs/services? (excluding elementary, junior high, or high schools)
4. What is the goal of Jewish youth work in these various contexts?
5. How well do you think Jewish youth work is accomplishing these goals?

II.   EXTENT OF SERVICE TO YOUNG ADOLESCENTS (AGES 10-15)

1. Number of youth served by Jewish youth work
2. Percentage of these youth who are between the ages of 10-15
3. How well do you think Jewish youth work meets the needs of young adolescents (ages 10-15)?
4. How many contact hours per week would the average Jewish adolescent spend involved in Jewish youth activities?
5. Do youth under 15 or over 15 tend to spend more time in these activities?
6. Do you see any trends in Jewish youth work which will impact young adolescents in the 1990s?
7. What are the particular needs of young adolescents which are addressed by Jewish youth work?

III. EXTENT OF SERVICE TO LOW INCOME YOUTH

1. How well do you think Jewish youth work addresses low income youth?
2. Percentage of American Jewish youth considered low income.
3. In the 1990s, do you see any trends in Jewish youth work which will impact low income youth?

IV. EXTENT OF SERVICE TO YOUTH OF COLOR

1. How well do you think Jewish youth work addresses youth of color?
2. In the 1990s, do you see any trends in Jewish youth work which will impact youth of color?

V. EXTENT OF SERVICE TO AT-RISK YOUTH

1. What does the Jewish community do to address the needs of at-risk youth?
2. How are these programs meeting the particular needs of at-risk youth?

VI. FOCUS OF JEWISH YOUTH WORK

1. Is the focus of Jewish youth work on the youth who is religiously Jewish, culturally Jewish, Jewish but unaffiliated with a synagogue--or not Jewish at all?
2. How important is it in Jewish youth work to make a connection between the youth and a worshipping congregation?

IV. GENDER ISSUES IN JEWISH YOUTH WORK

1. Are there any gender-specific forms of youth work in the Jewish community?
2. Do you perceive Jewish youth work to be more available to either boys or girls? Does it respond better to one or the other?

V. UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JEWISH YOUTH WORK TO ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

1. What is the desired outcome(s) of intentionally Jewish youth work?
2. What is the unique contribution of a religious/Jewish youth organization to adolescent development?
3. What needs should be addressed by Jewish youth work which are not?

VI. PROGRAM EVALUATION

1. What criteria do you use to evaluate effective Jewish youth work?

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2. In your judgment, what are the strengths of Jewish youth work?
3. What would you do to improve it?

VII. YOUTH WORKER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Typically, who are the adult leaders in Jewish youth work? What do they do?
2. What percentage are paid staff (full-time, part-time) vs. volunteer? What percentage are clergy? How does this vary from context to context?
3. How many hours per week do volunteers spend engaged in Jewish youth leadership?
4. How are most adult workers with Jewish youth trained? Is any training required? What is it like?
5. Is any specialized training available for adults working with early adolescents? How effective is it? How might it be improved?
6. Is any specialized training available for adults working with at-risk youth? How effective is it? How might it be improved?
7. In your opinion, how effective is most Jewish youth worker training at this point in time?
8. What model is most/least effective?
9. What should be done to improve training for Jewish youth workers?

VIII. FUNDING

1. What are the major sources of funding for Jewish youth work?
2. Is this funding increasing or decreasing?
3. Is it harder to fund Jewish youth work in low income areas than in middle or upper income areas?
4. Is the amount of funding available for Jewish youth work adequate?

IX. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1. What are the needs of youth that Jewish youth work ought to address in the 1990s?
2. What new directions do you see being pursued by the Jewish community in terms of youth work in the 1990s?

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