



*Building Sustainable Ministries . . . One Church at a Time*

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## **Youth Ministry Studies (2009-2011)**

### Ecumenical Study of Lifelong Faith Formation, 2009

#### **Center for Ministry Development, Louisville Institute**

**The Study:** A qualitative study of congregations across seven denominations.

**Focus:** What are the key factors in exemplary congregations for lifelong faith formation?

#### **The Results:**

A shared, and compelling vision for lifelong faith formation is essential.

It takes the right leadership; diverse ages and gifts, passionate, committed, over the long haul, ongoing nurturing and training.

Community is essential; and experience of belonging, being relational.

Faith formation is strongly connected to worship that is cross-generational, identity forming, anchored to Jesus Christ.

Cross-generational life together is effective in lifelong faith formation. Formation opportunities offered to young adults The role of the home is critical to lifelong faith formation.

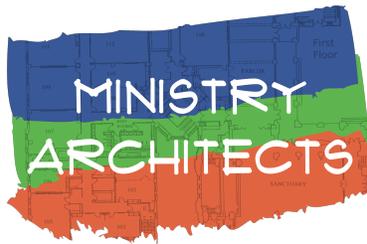
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#### **MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:**

**DESIGN** sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time

**BUILD** the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals

**CONSTRUCT** bridges to the best ministry resources available today



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## Center for Spiritual Development - Search Institute 2009

<http://www.search-institute.org/spiritual-development>

**The Study:** A quantitative international multi-religious study.

**Focus:** Are human beings fundamentally spiritual beings? What are the factors that "nurture that spark"?

### **The Results:**

"What makes Spiritual Development easier?"

- Spending time outside or in nature, 87%
- Listening to or playing Music, 82%
- Spending time helping other people or the community, 67%
- Being alone in a quiet place, 74%
- The influence of parents, 76%
- The influence of friends, 71%
- The influence of other family members, 66%
- Being guided by a spiritual mentor, guide, teacher or guru, 61%
- Participating in worship services, classes or other religious rituals, 60%
- The influence of school, 59%
- Watching TV, Videos, or spending time on the Internet, 57%
- Reading or studying sacred texts, 55%
- Experiencing disappointment, grief, pain or loss, 38%

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“Who helps you most in your Spiritual Development?”

- Family, 44%
- Friends, 15%
- School, 6%
- Religious Organization 4%
- Youth Organization, 4%
- No one, 18%

## College Transition Project: Sticky Faith, 2009

**Fuller Seminary, Chap Clark and Kara Powell**

[www.stickyfaith.org](http://www.stickyfaith.org)

### **The Study:**

Interviews with college students to discover the factors that helped young adults transition faithfully into college.

**Key Challenges:** 40-50% of young Christians walk away from faith in college.

### **Sticky Faith is defined as:**

- Both Internal and External
- Both Individual and Communal
- Both Mature and Maturing

### **The Results:**

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- The sticky Gospel
- Sticky Identity
- Sticky faith conversation
- A sticky web of relationships
- Sticky Justice

“It’s no wonder students have a hard time finding a church. Those who have been sitting at the youth ministry “kid’s table” don’t know church. They know youth group, not church. (Sticky Faith, p.100)

Parent’s Central Role in Sticky Faith: our research shows a relationship between parental support and Sticky faith...In fact, it’s challenging to point to a Sticky Faith factor that is more significant than you. How you express and live out your faith may have a greater impact on your son or daughter than anything else.

We need to reverse the adult to kid ratio: many children’s and youth ministries say they want to have a 1:5 ratio of adults to kids (meaning they want one adult for every five kids) for their Sunday school class or small groups. What if it were reversed? What if we said we want a 5:1 adult-to-kid ratio – five adults caring for each kid?

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## You Lost Me, 2011

**Dave Kinnaman, The Barna Group**

[www.youlostme.org](http://www.youlostme.org)

**The Study:** Interviews and stories of young adults who grew up attending church.

### **The Results:**

We are at a critical point in the life of the North American church; the Christian community must rethink our efforts to make disciples.

Many of the assumptions on which we have built our work with young people are rooted in modern, mechanistic, and mass production paradigms.

Some (though not all) ministries have taken cues from the assembly line, doing everything possible to streamline the manufacture of shiny new Jesus-followers, fresh from the factory floor. But disciples cannot be mass-produced.

Disciples are handmade, one relationship at a time.

We need new architects to design interconnected approaches to faith transference. We need new ecosystems of spiritual and vocational apprenticeship that can support deeper relationships and more vibrant faith formation. We need to recognize the generational shifts from left-brain skills like logic, analysis, and structure to the right-brain aptitudes of creativity, synthesis, and

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empathy. We need to renew our catechisms and confirmations—not because we need new theology, **but because their current forms too rarely produce young people of deep, abiding faith.** We need to rethink our assumptions and we need the creativity, honesty and vitality of the next generation to help us.

Ministry Architects would like to thank Dr. Nancy S. Going at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. She gathered valuable data from almost 30 years of youth ministry statistical studies. Thank you Dr. Going for making this available to youth workers.

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