

# THE LOTT CAREY Herald

Published by the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention 2009 Annual Session Edition

## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



*Helping to Nurture New Generations  
of Leaders for the World*

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David Emmanuel Goatley, Editor

The photos by Gabriel B. Tait are from the  
55th Annual Lott Carey Youth Seminar, June 2009

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The Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention helps churches to extend their Christian witness to the ends of the earth. We serve churches in this way because we are convinced that since God is a missionary God, since Jesus is a missionary Lord, and since the Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit, the church has to be a missionary church or it is not a church at all. However, no church can do everything that God wants them to do in isolation. We need to work together to help one another live into the vision that God is revealing to us.

One of the greatest investments in the Reign of God on earth that the church can make is in the spiritual development of the young. A church that ignores its young is like a cut flower. It may have color and fragrance for a while, but because it has no roots, it will soon wilt. A church that fails to invest in youth is a wilting church regardless of its apparent vitality.

This issue of the *Lott Carey Herald* highlights two major efforts of Lott Carey to help churches nurture new generations of leaders for the world. Our Youth Seminar is an ongoing program of Lott Carey. It is featured with an article that was published in *Ethicsdaily.com*, an online journal, in July. Photographs in this edition are also from the 55th Annual Youth Seminar that was held in June 2009. Second, you will find information about our Calling Congregations Program where we are working with a cluster of five Washington DC are churches to explore how we can better notice, name, and nurture young people who may be open to exploring ministry as vocation.

With hope for the future,

David Emmanuel Goatley



DR. DAVID EMMANUEL GOATLEY,  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER



*Touching Lives with Transforming Love*





# 55th Annual Lott Carey Youth Seminar

## Down on Today's Youth? Try Spending a Week with 500 of Them

BY DAVID EMMANUEL GOATLEY

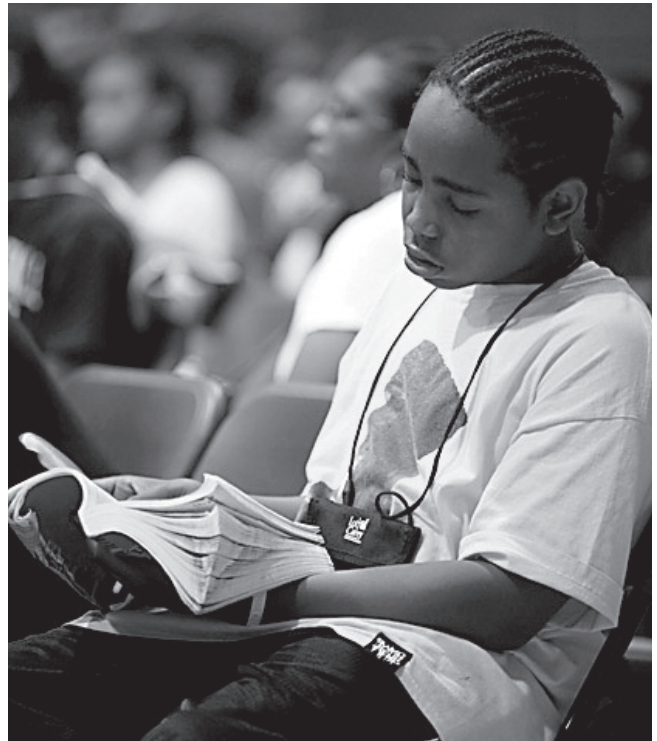
*Reprinted article originally posted on  
www.ethicsdaily.com, 2, July 2009.*

People who believe that young people are hopeless should have been with me June 20–26 at the 55th annual Lott Carey Youth Seminar on the campus of Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C.

Nearly 500 youth and their advisors spent a week for missional learning, serving, worship and fellowship. One of the most beautiful sights in the world to me is coming across a bridge on campus in the evenings, seeing hundreds of young people who have gathered for this missional impact week in the quadrangle courtyard talking, playing and building relationships that sometimes last a lifetime. Each year I share with our youth seminar, I come away feeling that the world can be OK.

I remember feeling that way six or seven years ago when I was in Guyana with my then 10-year-old son. He accompanied my wife and me on one of my international mission assignments. He and two or three Guyanese youth went with me everywhere I went. They visited churches with me. They visited an Amerindian community that we had to reach via boat with me. They visited a Christian campground with me. They visited a hospital with me. They visited a rainforest with me. They worshipped God with me.

At the end of the assignment, I asked my son what was the difference between Guyanese and United States children. His response: "They play cricket, and we play baseball." I remember thinking, "Let's turn the world over to the kids who have not yet been corrupted by the grown-ups."



Our annual youth seminar is the major event in our International Youth Development work, where we help churches to nurture new generations of Christian leaders for the world. We believe that helping youth to learn through service is important to becoming a disciple of Jesus.

This year we included helping our young people to learn about advocacy—what it is, why it matters, why Christians must do advocacy along with ministries of mercy, and how they can make a difference. We included presentations from ONE, Genocide Intervention Network and NAACP College and Youth Division. We believe that connecting serving, learning, worship and fellowship is worth investing in for young people. It is hard work, but it is good work.



When my last youth director left to pursue other opportunities, we did not hire a replacement. The economy was rapidly turning downward, and we could not afford to pay someone fairly. Therefore, we divided the responsibilities, with me assuming my share of leadership.

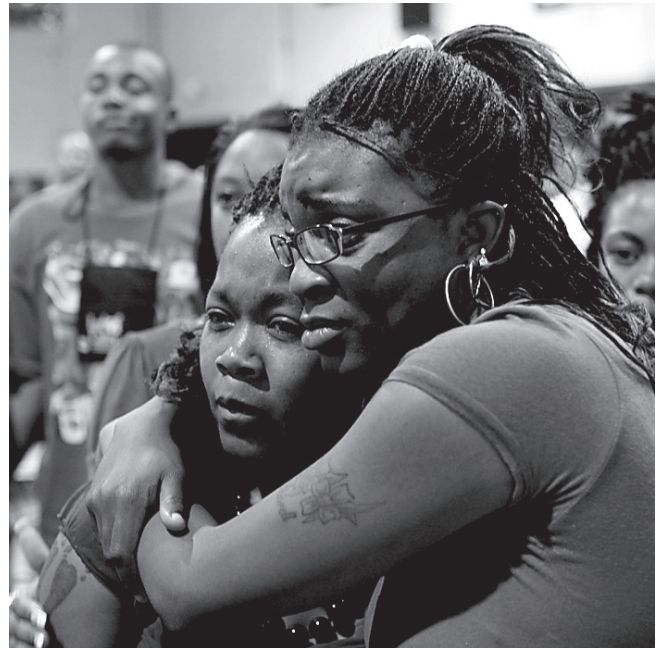
I have had some of my colleagues look at me peculiarly because I am playing such an involved leadership role in our International Youth Development work. You see, I am the CEO. While I understand the arguments about good stewardship of time, why is it more important for the CEO to spend time with the adult leaders than with the youth leaders and youth leaders-in-the-making? Why should I spend time with potential donors and not with potential leaders?

Furthermore, I learn a lot from youth. How else can we learn to serve the present age unless adults take the time to listen and to seek understanding from youth? How else can we anticipate where the church needs to focus energy and invest resources unless we listen and learn from young people?

Last year, we arranged for many at our seminar to do some future planning for our organization. Wow! I had never heard adults dream how we can actually make a difference in any similar way. These young visionaries believe in the God who can do exceedingly abundantly beyond what we can ask or imagine.

Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention helps churches extend their Christian witness to the ends of the earth. Our youth seminar is a principle event in this area. It is worth serious personal investment of the CEO.

If we really believe that some of us plant, some of us water, and God gives the increase, perhaps more of our important leaders should invest more of our personal time and talent with the next generation of Christian leaders for the world. I do not know what the young people will get out of your time, but you will be better for it. ■





## LOTT CAREY CALLING CONGREGATIONS INITIATIVE

### Helping Churches to Notice, Name, and Nurture Young People Who May Be Open to Ministry as Vocation

**W**e are grateful for a grant from the Fund for Theological Education that helped us to imagine how we could explore the concept of noticing, naming, and nurturing young people who may have an inclination toward ministry as vocation.

#### **What are Lott Carey Calling Congregations?**

The Lott Carey Calling Congregations Project is enabling five congregations to develop practices that both welcome and encourage adolescents to consider the call to ministry as a viable vocational possibility for their lives. The call to vocational

ministry is a noble call, and churches should be safe and inviting places for youth to “try on the mantle of ministry.” Further churches should seek intentionally to develop the capacity to discern when youth may have “an inclination toward ministry” and to nurture that inclination.

Our cluster of churches is helping each another to develop practices to help them “notice, name, and nurture” young people who may have an inclination toward vocational ministry and to create a community of youth from the cluster churches who can collaborate in ministry learning and leadership activities. We are not imposing practices, but exploring the development of







practices appropriate each congregation's contexts.

Additionally, the participating youth will exercise ministry leadership planning and implementation in their congregations and in Lott Carey's International Youth Development Department. This will give them experience at congregational levels and beyond.

### **What might a Calling Congregation look like?**

The group of pastors who serve the churches in this project have imagined some of helpful characteristics that Calling Congregations might have. While these characteristics are not exhaustive, we think they are helpful to consider.

Lott Carey Calling Congregations are seeking to strengthen their work in up to six of the following 12 characteristics. We believe our Calling Congregations should:

- (1) Have adults who can discern God's call on the lives of young people;
- (2) Have pastoral leadership that invests time and energy in mentoring prospective protégés;
- (3) Facilitate finding mentors for their charges when others can better nurture their gifts in particular areas or due to relocation on the part of the pastor or the protégé;
- (4) Make opportunities for youth to practice leadership in various aspects of ministry;
- (5) Enable intentional invitation to, and sometimes recruitment for, the exercising and developing of gifts;
- (6) Do not shrink before competing voices for vocations that call for the energy and engagement of young minds, hearts, and bodies;

- (7) Find creative ways to enable young people who may feel inclinations toward ministry to "test the waters";
- (8) Enable young people to explore vocational ministry options;
- (9) Encourage people to seek fulfillment in vocational choices rather than prioritizing high income generating careers;
- (10) Affirm the mystery of call;
- (11) Affirm the dignity of call—to the Christian life generally and to vocational ministry particularly; and
- (12) Invest resources in the cultivation of youth in service, learning, and leadership development.

### **Questions that Calling Congregations May Want to Ask**

Additionally, the cluster leaders have identified some important questions. Churches that work to develop practices that welcome and encourage adolescents to consider the call to ministry as a viable vocational possibility for their lives may do well to consider the following questions.

- How do we know when a young person has an inclination toward ministry? What does that inclination look like? Churches may need a word of caution about privileging a "celebrity" style inclination toward ministry. Viable vocational ministry is not always public, performance, or center-staged. Essential ministry gifts also include gifts of encouragement, administration, etc. Churches need to avoid recognizing only the best and brightest and the most outgoing and outstanding as people who may have an inclination toward ministry.



- What roles can families of origins or households in which adolescents live play in “noticing, naming, and nurturing” young people who may have an inclination toward ministry?
- How can churches affirm adolescents who may have an inclination toward vocational ministry when they do not live in families that can affirm this call—either because of the lack of capacity or of visions of different vocational options?
- What kinds of leaders are best suited to advance the foci of Calling Congregations? What kinds of leaders are most useful to facilitate noticing, naming, and nurturing in trying on the mantle of ministry?
- How might Calling Congregations enrich their language when talking about “ministry”? The term has different connotations in different contexts. Sometimes “ministry” means preaching or music.

Some have sought to level the language of ministry by saying “every disciple is called to ministry.” If this is so, how do Calling Congregations construct meaningful language about ministry as vocation?

- What kind of activities can churches use to give opportunities for adolescents to demonstrate authentically gifts that are observable to Calling Congregations rather than mere imitations of traditional roles modeled by adults?
- How might we secure congregational ownership to become Calling Congregations as opposed to congregational permission for a youth department to do this work compartmentally?
- How do we help adults adjust to, affirm, and welcome the creativity and originality of youth as we give more opportunities for leadership and participation (e.g., clothing styles, worship styles, youth oriented language, etc.)?





## Lessons That We Are Learning

Thinking intentionally about practices that help churches notice, name, and nurture young people who may have an inclination toward vocational ministry is both challenging and exciting for the Lott Carey Calling Congregation Cluster. Our Cluster is comprised of five African American Baptist churches the Metropolitan Washington, DC area who are trying to explore habits and practices that can improve our capacities in this area. Three are in urban areas of Washington and Northern Virginia. One is just outside Washington. One is in the Northern Virginia suburbs.

## Challenging Work

The challenging aspect of this project relates to the newness of the concept for churches. Most churches with whom we are familiar respond to a young person who expresses that she may be, or that she has been, “called” to ministry. This call to ministry is usually interpreted to mean pursuing a preaching ministry in the life of the church. Precisely how churches respond differs, but they generally begin a journey toward preparing the “called one” for preaching an initial sermon. This journey can last a few weeks to several months. Essentially, however, churches wait for a young person to take the initiative.

Beyond beginning a journey toward preparing for a preaching ministry, the church tries to find an area for the new minister to exercise and develop leadership gifts. This practice of ministry arena might be among youth, in visitation, in teaching, and the like. What develops is something akin to an informal on-the-job training program or apprenticeship. Little attention, however, is given to formal assessments of spiritual gifts, skill sets, etc. The placement process generally is more intuitive or reliant upon the self-selection of the minister-in-training.

Consequently, since our churches did not have formulated strategies or programs to implement, they had to build this work anew. Not having models to follow that had been developed in contexts similar to our Cluster’s contexts make the work challenging. Building from scratch can be hard work.

## Exciting Work

The same thing that makes this project challenging, however, is also what makes it exciting. Thinking creatively and imaginatively about how churches can better create space that is inviting and safe for young people to explore ministry as possible vocation is exciting. Being intentional about this project has invited pastors, adult leaders, and youth to engage together in ways that they have not normally done. Some of our pastors have grown in unexpected ways through the tutelage of their youth congregants. Sometimes that get laughed at, but mostly they are enjoying growing bonds of community, insight, and rapport.

Pastors in our cluster who are investing in time and conversation with their youth are learning a lot. They are seeking to listen and ask questions so that they can learn more about the lives and insights of their youth. In this sense, the roles of mentoring are reversing. Youth are mentoring their pastors and enabling their pastors to view life from different perspectives and through different lenses. The pastors, although sometimes made uncomfortable, are learning and enjoying and growing. The youth who are enjoying quality and quantity time with their pastors are taking seriously their role as mentors and teachers, and the relationships are maturing in ways that are important today and that will become more important in days to come.



## Push-Back

One unanticipated area of push-back came from some parents who were concerned that the church's intentionality was an effort to their children into preaching or to a path that was leading to pastoral ministry. While the program is designed to help young people to begin a process of vocational discernment that MAY lead toward ministry as vocation, this is not a recruiting program. Still, some parents were uneasy about the idea of their children taking a path toward ministry vocation.

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If congregations implemented programs  
to advance Competence, Confidence,  
Connection, Character, and Caring  
in adolescents, they may discover  
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for the church and the world.

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This uneasiness invites interesting questions. Why, for example, would parents not want their children to pursue ministry as vocation? One of the bizarre habits of some congregants is that we encourage our best and brightest young people to pursue careers in everything except vocational ministry. Be a lawyer. Be a doctor. Be an engineer. Be an entrepreneur. Be an actor. Be an athlete. Why do Christian parental dreams for their children's future usually ignore a life of full-time vocational ministry? Why do Christians so often encourage our most promising young people to explore careers outside the church rather than inside the church? This habit risks "dumbing down" the pool of gifted future leaders for the church. Who else does that but the church?

Another push-back moment we experience is that the time it takes to engage intentionally around conversations and activities that help young people have experiences that can lead them to begin to think about ministry as vocation relates to competition for time. Negotiating time in the calendars of adolescents is a formidable task. School, drama, dance, music, athletics, computer games, and "chillin'" with friends does not give much time for young people to participate in activities imagined for this project. Consequently, we found some parents interpreting the Calling Congregations Project as being competitive rather than complimentary. This competition is further seen when commuting is part of the equation. None of the churches in our cluster are "neighborhood churches" in the sense that the majority of their congregants live within a three to five mile radius. Metropolitan Washington, DC is a commuter culture. It is not uncommon for people to have significant parts of their lives occur in DC and Maryland, and Virginia. Many urban congregants now live in suburbia. Juggling work and school and activities and travel create major tensions for time together. We are not convinced that technology can displace physical time together, but we are convinced that personal and technological interactions can be complimentary. Negotiating balance is an ongoing practice.

However, discernment requires conversation and relationship building, and both of these take time to do. Leaders in this project have sought to explain to parents that our vision of discipleship is holistic. We do not believe that some of life should be sacred and other parts should be secular. We understand discipleship to be an organizing principle for all of life. This area of resistance had given opportunity for us to emphasize the place of discernment in seeking to explore life vocation for young people and adults. Here we can emphasize the equal importance of journey and destination.



## Institutional Challenges

Irrespective of how much we talk about church as community and church as organism, church is also institution. Church cannot only be a cloud moving wherever the Spirit blows. Church is also a box with form and structure. Consequently, the ways that many churches organize their lives together often create departments and segmentation that can be tough to navigate. When we separate youth ministry activities from adult ministry activities, how does the church enable young people to exercise leadership outside of the youth department or youth church or youth ministry? How to we enable young leaders who may have an inclination toward ministry as vocation to practice in both/and contexts rather than either/or communities? Dealing effectively with this question demands confronting (although not contentiously or violently) cultures that develop in church life, and cultural practices have deep and tangled roots. Handling creatively cultural tensions are especially challenging in congregations that are old or congregations that have many older members.

The rhythms of church can also challenge effectively engaging youth for exploring vocational ministry as an option. Some churches have rather fixed calendars and routines and habits. Some of these deeply rooted practices may have good logic for their origination, but how do people determine the rationale for their continuation? The variety of programs and activities that place demands of people's time and energy and resources can unintentionally resist congregational efforts to create time and space and resource to invest in helping young people discern vocation. The business and crowdedness of church calendars and commitments may choke out investments in facilitating journeys of discernment for young people who normally do not have voice and vote and volume of financial contribution to be heard. Do the rhythms of a church's life together give time for young people

to breathe, to inhale the breadth of the Spirit? Do our church rhythms make room for young people to hear from God?

## Some Emerging Theological Ideas

- **Faithful living is an organizing principle for life.** Living faithfully as a disciple of Jesus requires holistic integration in the multiple communities, activities, relationships, and time commitments in the lives of youth (and adults).
- **Faith development is a journey of discernment.** Journeys require time and commitment. Journeys bring celebration and frustration. Encouraging and facilitating discernment should be a priority ministry of the church.
- **Journey is equally as important as destination.** Discovering what God may be calling one to as well as what God is not calling one to are equally important aspects of the journey. The journey gives the destination meaning, and the journey gives the destination meaning.
- **Noticing, naming, and nurturing young people who may pursue ministry as vocation is a spiritual discipline for a church.** Just as worship and service and study of scripture are integral to the life of the church, so is intentionally seeking to discover and develop young people who may have an inclination toward ministry as vocation. If for those who are not called to vocational ministry, the journey will enable a growing maturity in the life of believers.

## Youth Leadership Enrichment Activities

While each church in our Calling Congregation Cluster is custom-designing their opportunities for youth to experience ministry leadership opportunities, there are some shared experiences for all. One shared opportunity was the 55th Annual Lott Carey Youth Seminar that was held





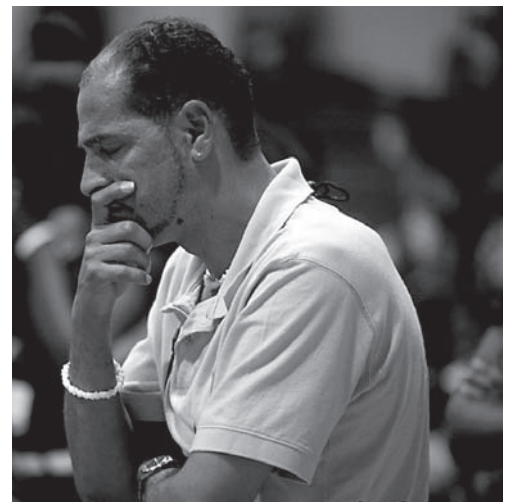
on the campus of Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina 20–26 June, 2009. The other shared opportunity was participating in the 8th Caribbean Youth Festival held 22–26 July, 2009 in Nassau, Bahamas.

### **8th Caribbean Baptist Fellowship Youth Festival**

More than 20 youth and advisors departed for Nassau, Bahamas to experience an international immersion of worship, work, and witness with youth

and young adults from various Caribbean nations—St. Lucia, Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, Panama, Cuba, Haiti, Turks & Caicos, Cayman, Trinidad & Tobago, Belize, St. Kitts & Nevis, and Guadeloupe. Our hope is that to engage with young Christians in an international context who are also serious about growing in discipleship will help inform the young people in our Calling Congregations Cluster to imagine more global possibilities for ministry vocation as an option to explore. ■









## A Resource for Calling Congregations to Consider

RICHARD M. LERNER, PH.D.

*The Good Teen: Rescuing Adolescence from the Myths of the Storm and Stress Years.* New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007.

Reviewed by DR. DAVID EMMANUEL GOATLEY  
(October 2008).

**T**he *Good Teen* by Richard M. Lerner, Ph.D. encourages parents and other adults to view adolescents through the lens of positive development which sees teens as “assets in the making, rather than problems waiting to happen.” He challenges opinion held by some that teenage years are inevitably tumultuous. He concludes from his research that teens can be nurtured to contribute positively to home, community, nation, and world.

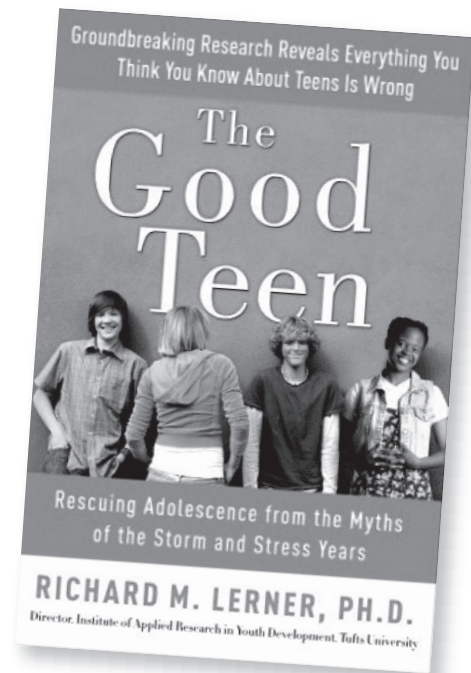
Lerner builds his case on three decades as an applied development scientist where he has used the “strength based theory of human development” of Positive Development. He describes five (5) characteristics of teen behavior proven to advance positive development—Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring. He also gives insightful examples of how parents can foster the 5Cs.

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Lerner makes the case that we do have  
and can have good teens—  
people that make positive contributions  
to their world.

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*The Good Teen* convincingly argues that teens can “become” effectively functioning people who are good for the world. It explains how teens possess “plasticity.” They have the capacity to change, grow, learn, and mature. Lerner’s work grows from Tufts



University’s Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development and the National 4-H Council funded 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development, both which he directs. His findings result in a readable and useful guide that can help parents raise teens to be good people. The real life examples model constructive behavior for parents that initiate positive development or that responds to challenges in ways that can yield positive outcomes. The book concludes with chapters that help parents to deal with teens that exhibit real troubled behavior, and it calls for communities to move toward developing policies and practices that nurture positive development for youth.

Lerner makes the case that we do have and can have good teens—people that make positive contributions to their world. Good teens can be developed when parents provide teens sustained positive interaction with adults, when they enable teens participate in activities that help them develop life skills, and when they give teens opportunities





to become leaders of valued community activities. These he calls the Big 3. When this happens, parents can better achieve the goal “to raise teens who are healthy and self-reliant and who become productive adults who can assume leadership roles in their lives and in their community and the world at large.”

*The Good Teen* is instructive for more than parents. All who work with adolescents can benefit from the insight and encouragement Lerner provides. Growing numbers of teenagers enjoy decreasing time with families. School schedules, extra-curricular activities, parental work loads, technology entertainment, and the desire to socialize with peers precipitate the need for adolescents

to have broad communities of adults who can contribute to their nurture in beneficial ways.

*The Good Teen* has particular application for those who work with youth in churches. Rather than excessive attention to activities that can keep youth busy along with arbitrarily chosen Bible lessons thrown in for good measure, what might be the outcome of youth ministries organizing learning, sharing, and growing activities around the 5Cs? If congregations implemented programs to advance Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring in adolescents, they may discover that they can become places that help call out new generations of leaders for the church and the world. ■

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