

The late, great theologian, Francis Schaeffer, in his brief, but sweeping volume, *How Shall We Then Live: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*, traces the rise of Christianity and its influence on this developing western civilization. From the rise of Jesus' church from the roman empire to the dramatic Reformation of the 16th century, Schaeffer examines the church's impact on cities, culture and people where the gospel is pure and where Biblical orthodoxy is boldly proclaimed. He also examines the effects of post-renaissance and enlightenment philosophies and their impact on modern society. Toward the end of the book, commenting on contemporary society (*this volume was published in 1976*), Schaeffer makes these telling remarks,

Gradually, that which had become the basic thought form of modern people became the almost totally accepted viewpoint, an almost monolithic consensus. And as it came to the majority of people through art, music, drama, theology, and the mass media, values died. As the more Christian-dominated consensus weakened, the majority of people adopted two impoverished values: personal peace and affluence.^{1&2}

Thirty years removed from these words, we find ourselves in this very context, only heightened by time. Reaching students and families through the gospel is a major challenge, particularly in our western culture. The church's influence, statistics tell, has all but vanished in mainline Protestantism. A post-Christian, postmodern culture is forcing the church to necessarily check itself- to seek a re-alignment with God's program, call, mission and the core of historic Christianity. Pockets of new and old faith communities are answering the call to reach into a less kind, but no less needy world with the hope of the gospel.³ Because of our current ministry context, churches are forced to respond by adapting and seeking new ways to engage the world with the good news of the Kingdom. God is refining and pruning his church for greater service and effective witness. Churches that fail to respond are essentially given over to the maintenance of what remains and find themselves on a slow ride toward extinction. Caught in the crossfire of this necessary "reformission"⁴ is the relatively new phenomena known as youth ministry⁵. In many ways, youth ministry leaders have been on the leading edge of recognizing the church's need for revitalizing its mission in reaching the lost and making disciples. Youth ministry leaders cycle through ministry paradigms and seek new ways of conveying timeless truth in a rapidly changing world. In her recent book, *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*, author Kenda Dean issues a clarion call for a church that is passionate about its mission as the only hope in reaching and discipling students. She remarks,

The adolescent quest for passion reveals a theological aneurysm in mainline Protestantism: we are facing a crisis of passion, a crisis that guts Christian theology of its very core, not to mention its lifeblood for adolescents. Teenagers are quick to point out the oxymoron in passionless Christianity, quick to smell danger in suppressing their emotional range, quick to question faith that fails to register on the Richter scale, and quick to abandon a church that accommodates such paltry piety. Not only does a

a church without passion deform Christian theology, it inevitably extinguishes the fire behind Christian practice as well. In short, without passion, Christian faith collapses. And young people know it- which may be why most of them are not spending much time in church⁶.

I believe that Schaeffer's diagnosis of the widespread adoption of personal peace and affluence in our western culture has been crippling to the western church and has challenged greatly our resolve to stay passionate about being salt and light and on to the Kingdom mission. Missional churches⁷ necessarily practice a biblically faithful, passionate Christianity. They also value ministry to family, youth and children. I recently met with a young pastor of a reformed congregation in Orlando⁸, whose congregation, in three years time, has grown to nearly a thousand members and has just raised over one million dollars toward the renovation of an old movie theatre complex that is to be their new church facility. The very first phase of construction was not the main auditorium or fellowship hall- it was the children's ministry space. The adult classrooms and main sanctuary will be renovated last. Churches on Jesus' mission are the best environments in which to do youth ministry. The reality for many youth ministry practitioners, however, particularly in the mainline churches, is the struggle of trying to lead passionate, biblically focused ministries to students in churches that are focused on maintenance and status quo. In many churches, youth ministry represents the leading missional edge of the congregation; in some, youth ministry is the only missional edge of the congregation. A recent article, interviewing a young leader/churchplanter⁹ was asked what advice he had for youth ministers- his reply? He advised quitting our jobs and planting churches. While certainly not a call for all, could there be some merit to such a bold statement? That is a discussion for another time. Whatever our ministry context or call, the reality is that there is a youthful world looking for some person, cause or ideal big enough to captivate their passionate pursuit toward meaning and purpose. In their mammoth examination of the "Millennial" Generation, Neil Howe and William Strauss make this culminating observation and challenge:

For the sake of Millennials- and, through them, the future Of America- the most urgent task is to elevate their expectations. Rather than dwell on all the negatives, on problems such as youth violence or substance abuse that are clearly ebbing, America should set goals big enough to engage the imagination of this generation of achievers.¹⁰

Perhaps one of the questions we need to ask is whether our vision of Christianity is big enough, passionate enough, alive enough to engage students. In the exhaustive, recent study by social scientist Christian Smith, entitled: *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, we learn that for the vast majority of students, religion, while a certain reality in their lives, plays only a very distant, background role. The author summarizes the average theology of God for the American teenager by describing God as a "moral, therapeutic deity."¹¹

Most U.S. youth tend to assume an instrumental view¹² of religion. Most instinctively suppose that religion exists to help individuals be and do what they want, and not as an external tradition or authority or divinity that makes compelling claims and demands on their lives, especially to change

or grow in ways they may not immediately want to. For most U.S. teenagers, religion is something to personally believe in that makes one feel good and resolve's ones problems. For most, it is not an entire way of life or a disciplined practice that makes hard demands of or changes people. Stated differently, for many U.S. teenagers, God is treated like a cosmic therapist or counselor, a ready and competent helper who responds in times of trouble but who does not particularly ask for devotion or obedience.¹³

Despite our efforts in employing ever changing strategies to reach and disciple students, we seem as desperate as ever to influence this generation, much less engage their imagination!¹⁴ Smith also notes, not surprisingly, that a vast majority of Christian students are unable to articulate the basic tenets of Christianity's meaning. In fact, many articulated ideas and beliefs that were fundamentally opposed to the Christian faith!¹⁵ Years ago, it is reported, the leader of Young Life said that it would be sinful to bore students with the gospel. Perhaps it's time to say the same about leading ministries that fail to demonstrate a full understanding of the Christian life and vision through a knowledge of the Kingdom of God and its life-giving King!

This redemptive art form and architecture called student ministry is a challenge of no small proportions. Recent studies and books¹⁶ seem to highlight the general impotence of the Church in cultivating authentic disciples for Christ. In fact, I would characterize our ready confessions of widespread ineffectiveness as a cause for serious alarm and evaluation. The latest issue of *The Youthworker Journal*(May/June 2006) is dedicated to the idea of "Re-Imagining Youth Ministry." In it are numerous articles that tackle the challenges facing current youth ministry paradigms and structures. There is certainly a strong wave pushing a new methodology for youth ministry practice that places a high value on contemplation, silence, solitude, spiritual disciplines and other practices in an effort to help students draw near to Christ and hear his voice. This movement, called "Contemplative" youth ministry, employs a departure from an entertainment (or "edu-tainment") driven ministry methodology to one rooted in spiritual disciplines and practices¹⁷. These and other ministry methodologies being implemented comprise what many would call a more holistic discipleship practice because it engages students on many different levels and pursues a healthy identity and dependence on Christ alone. There are many values inherent with these practices, to be sure. But holistic discipleship should be broader than worship, meditation and prayer practices. Holistic discipleship suggests a more well-rounded ministry form that breaks down a compartmentalized faith and permeates the life of a student believer on every level of being. Holistic Discipleship has an organic quality that demands the enmeshment of orthodoxy and "orthopraxy."¹⁸ Holistic youth ministry must involve more than new (or ancient) methodologies, it must include a theology that is big enough to undergird and inform the methodologies. When it comes to youth ministry discipleship, I believe it is this undergirding theology that needs to be rediscovered.¹⁹ Theological formation will always inform our methodology in ministry practice. Most youth ministry discussion and philosophical debate centers around methodology, not developing a theology that will empower the student believers' understanding of the Christian life. The pursuit of holistic discipleship will eventually collapse without the foundation of a meta-theology that outlines more than meanings and thematic applications from scripture. A meta-theology will frame the meaning of scripture itself.

Several years ago I was chatting with a youth pastor friend of mine²⁰, who is an astute theological mind. We were discussing what we felt were the critical needs of students as

far as developing disciples was concerned. I spoke of worship and evangelism and intimacy with Christ, etc. He shared with me that his goal was to help students develop a clear understanding of four major theological and doctrinal realities. His entire ministry, he shared, in teaching and practice, focused on four Biblical doctrines that frame a Christian view of life and the world: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Heaven. I walked away a bit skeptical, but nonetheless intrigued. What I now see is that his four words comprise the basic building blocks of the explosive theology of the Kingdom of God, from its inception in Genesis 1:1 to its fulfillment in Revelation 22:21.

Perhaps then, a critical piece to more fruitful ministry to students is lurking beneath the dazzle of the newest methodologies and practices. This “piece” is a robust theology of the Kingdom of God as the “unifying centerpiece” of the Christian world-view. The theology of the Kingdom obliterates the small confines of seeing Christian faith as a mere personal faith transaction with Jesus. Understanding the major biblical doctrines of creation, fall, redemption and heaven through the lens of God’s Kingdom opens students up to a more complete understanding of the Christian life and world-view and of their role as citizens of his Kingdom.²¹ Because holistic discipleship seeks a total integration of faith and practice, it needs a theology that pursues the whole of the Christian world-view and hope. In reality, holistic discipleship is a renewal of Biblical, Christian orthodoxy and a return to Jesus’ rightful Lordship over all. In the words of the Dutch Theologian Abraham Kuyper, “*There is not a square inch on the whole plain of human existence over which Christ, who is Lord of all, does not proclaim: ‘This is Mine!’*”²² Holistic discipleship embraces the whole view of the Christian life where seeking justice for the oppressed, caring for widows and orphans, evangelizing the nations, listening to others, being kind to the grocery store cashier and working honestly at our jobs is just as telling as our Sunday morning church attendance. Holistic discipleship in youth ministry has many methodological approaches, but I believe our understanding of God’s will and purpose to bring His Kingdom in fullness to this world is a foundational key to shaping students for Christ. A Kingdom theology affirms that Jesus is not only a savior, but a King whose Kingdom has come and is coming. A Kingdom theology affirms that “our world belongs to God”²³ and that salvation is more than a spiritual reality, but physical, natural and cultural. Our theological emphases with students tends to re-enforce the idea that Christianity serves merely as the holy-escape route from a world going to hell. In the words of Leonard Sweet, we present Jesus primarily as “a savior from the world, not of the world.”²⁴ It is a burden to see so many students’ (and adults, too) with an understanding of Christianity that includes salvation as a finish line instead of starting line, a notion that the God of the Old Testament is different than the God of the New Testament, a view that God dislikes the world or somehow remains indifferent regarding his creation and a view that the Christian life is somehow primarily about routine spiritual practices and occasional works that prepare or qualify us for a place in heaven. These faulty notions (*along with many others*) can be destructive understandings and can keep us from seeing the full-blown picture of the Kingdom and working toward its fullness. A Theology of the Kingdom is so utterly necessary for youth ministry that seeks holistic discipleship through its methodologies. Otherwise, we are engaging students in spiritual disciplines and exercises, in a sense, isolated from proper biblical context. Jesus did not die on the cross solely so I could have fantastic quiet times- no! His vision was much larger than that- he was making a new world through his redeeming blood. Jesus died that the total effect of sin on creation (which includes humanity) may be reversed completely and forever wiped away. The Christian gospel is bursting with hope! The atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ has greater implications than the salvation of just souls- He is restoring the cosmos to its proper state!²⁵ I ask you, is our gospel ministry and

practice with students this big? I believe if our ministries begin to reflect a more robust Kingdom theology and less of an “exclusively personal” theology, that students will catch the mammoth vision toward which Christ has called his people. A Kingdom theology holds in balance both the cosmic reach of the gospel and the humbling reality that God is working his plan through his people: In the words of theologian Richard Pratt:²⁶

The Bible’s focus on the Kingdom of God is so overwhelming that it may appear at first to draw all attention toward God and away from us. To be sure, the honor of God is our highest goal, but Christians often miss a crucial aspect of God’s plan for the arrival of his Kingdom on earth. One of the most remarkable things taught in the Bible is that God has determined to bring about his Kingdom on earth in a particular way. He has chosen to work out the plan for his ultimate glory through a special instrument. What is that instrument? What is that created means by which the Kingdom of God will come on earth as it is in heaven? The answer of the Bible is straightforward. That instrument is the human race.

Though Jesus’ ministry in the training of the twelve represented a very organic architectural²⁷ model, we need to observe that Jesus had a powerful, central theology that provided the foundation to build his ministry upon. Jesus unified vision and mission was to train the Disciples and establish them in an understanding of God’s program through his Kingdom. In Luke 4 Jesus reads the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah and makes a clear declaration of nearness of the Kingdom of God through his ministry and mission. His first recorded sermon in Mark’s gospel, was an announcement of the Kingdom’s arrival- it was the inauguration of the Old Testament prophetic longing, the ushering in of a new age- the promised New Covenant²⁸, the beginnings of worldwide redemption and restoration. Perhaps one of the more curiously profound clues to the nature of the Kingdom dwells within the words of the “Lord’s Prayer”, in Matthew: “Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”²⁹ For Jesus, the reality of the heavenly throne room is to become the reality of the whole of creation- unceasing glory and God’s unalterable shalom!³⁰ Matthew’s Gospel (4.23) reports of Jesus telling people about the good news of the Kingdom. Luke writes in Acts (28.31) that Paul the Apostle preached about the Kingdom. John, in Revelation (11.15) records this prophetic vision, stating that the kingdom of this world will become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ! Everywhere we look in scripture we see as God’s primary agenda the growing reign of His Kingdom over all the earth.

Holistic discipleship that operates through the theological matrix of the Divine Kingship of Jesus and citizenship in his kingdom can have an explosive impact on students’ understanding of the Christian life and worldview. These “understandings” (or revelation) can be the catalyst that ignites a passionate expression of Christian faith and living. The helpful applications, potentially, are legion. It would be impossible to flesh out, in this paper, an entire meta-theology of scripture through the Kingdom of God, but I would like to focus the final thoughts of this article by exploring some of the reasons that I believe this theological emphasis must take place. Let me close by, briefly, mentioning some of these implications.

A Kingdom emphasis places a student in connection with God and his vision from Genesis through Revelation. A Christian world-view whose lens is anything less than a Kingdom framework will be limited and obscures our view to God’s grand design. This

limited view causes our gospel to be smaller than it really is. A small gospel is like watching TV on a 12 inch black and white version as opposed to a widescreen digital “HD” experience. Author Nathan Bierma warns of the dangers of a “small gospel.” In his book, *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth*, Bierma writes:

In a small gospel, God’s main job is to be a missionary coordinator, and salvation is an insurance policy for hell avoidance. In a big gospel, God is the maker and manager of the entire creation and the commissioner of all the culture making of humans, and he is working toward the restoration of all of it.

When we live in the hope of a big gospel, we see Jesus Christ not just as a serial intruder on people’s souls but the one in whom “all things hold together,” in the words of Colossians 1. All things- not just people’s hearts but the infrastructure of nature, culture and relationships. So the hope of a big gospel is not just going to heaven to be with God, but a vision of the new earth and the heavenly city as the place where God’s authority over all of life is made complete. Living in the hope of heaven means seeing glimpses of such a place already, and wanting more.³¹

Seeing the original garden design in Eden and the yet to be consummated Kingdom in Revelation offers student disciples the opportunity to see their connection to the God of creation and history. It demonstrates the stages of development through the Old Testament and builds toward the beginnings of fulfillment with the Advent of the Incarnation. In a students’ fragmented world, where stability is a rare commodity and where everything screams, “there is no story of humanity- there are only preferences.” The Kingdom provides a compelling picture of continuity- of a faithful Father working to restore and heal and redeem the world he created. It also provides a staging ground for the reality of their lives. The story of God becomes their own as they identify with the realities of creation, of sin, of the beauty of redemption through the passion of Christ and the hope of the New Heavens and the New Earth by embodying the Kingdom here and now. The gospel gets big and exciting when students can see that their faith claims more than just a space for Jesus in their heart and a place in heaven someday. The gospel gets huge when students understand Jesus’ Kingdom will consume every square in of universal existence.

Secondly, a Kingdom priority in understanding the Christian life will take away from an unhealthy fixation with ourselves and call us toward God’s greater purpose. In all honesty, so much of current youth ministry’s program and practice centers on personal salvation as the primary emphasis and program of scripture. To be sure, Christ came to save sinners (and individual sinners, at that),³² but we have so fixated on the personal aspect of salvation (*a trait of western enlightenment and the autonomous self: aren’t we all self made?*) that we sometimes forget that salvation empowers us to serve the King in his Kingdom.

Several years ago, while waiting for my wife at the mall, I did a most un-postmodern thing – I shared my faith with a group of people with whom I had not developed a credible relationship. In fact, they were absolute strangers. To be exact, it was a group of teenage girls busily primping for unsuspecting male adolescents just outside the food court. As you can imagine, the effort on my part was met by some resistance. I cannot remember my exact words- I can only now remember the response from one of the young ladies- a response that has played back in my mind over and

over. She said, “oh yeah, that Jesus thing, I already did that...” Somehow we have managed, as the quote earlier allude, to market Jesus as some sort of eternal insurance policy. Somehow many church students understand Christianity in the way of a transaction not unlike a cell phone plan. By emphasizing personal salvation as the center piece of the Christian life, perhaps we feed into the notion of that moral, therapeutic deity- serving us with a voucher to heaven since we were confirmed or said a sinner’s prayer at a retreat, etc. Here, the words of Francis Shaeffer haunt us again with his warning against the impoverished ideals of personal peace and affluence and being entangled with them. It is no wonder that personal peace and affluence fits right into the notion of God as a “moral, therapeutic deity.” When, as the church, we make salvation something of a path to personal empowerment (*toward personal peace and affluence*), we dilute the gospel and blur the vision of the Kingdom. Again, salvation must be received on an individual level, but it is a secondary application to the greater work of the coming Kingdom. Think of Narnia for a moment. The fact that Edmond was saved from the bondage of the White Witch’s deception and hell was a powerful picture of personal redemption, but the greater movement happening was the advance of Aslan’s glory to push back the darkness of winter from Narnia- a restoration of Narnia through the triumph of Aslan’s reign. This was the sweeping agenda- this was the centerpiece, Edmund’s redemption was secondary. A theology of the Kingdom refuses to establish personal salvation as the finish line; it establishes redemption as the beginning of citizenship in God’s Kingdom. And it is the exercise of this citizenship that is altogether unsafe- but good.

Lastly, I believe that we have often, perhaps, unwittingly, given students the impression that their spiritual acts of piety are valued by God, but the rest of their existence is unimportant, or of no value in the scheme of eternity. Perhaps the reason students find it easy to live compartmentalized lives is because this is what we have handed to them. A theology of the Kingdom says, “everything counts!” In the words of theologian Michael Wittmer:

The God who is more important than anything in the world sends
Us into the world to transform it for him. God’s preeminence
Also means that nothing can be dismissed. Nothing is as valuable
As God, but because of God, everything is now valuable.³³

A Kingdom theology pursues engagement in this world for at least three reasons. First, our world belongs to God. Secondly, our mandate from God is to multiply and subdue the earth (that means fill the earth and make culture that glorifies our creator). Thirdly, as citizens of the Kingdom, we work to spread the Shalom of God wherever we go. We work as Christians toward the coming of the Kingdom- to be a reality on earth as it is in heaven. Our call is not to escape this world, but to engage this world- to be a Kingdom presence.

Many believers see the Christian faith as a way to escape
from the world, rather than as a commission to be
involved in it. You don’t have to listen to many preachers
on the radio or TV long before you hear someone say, “Don’t
worry about politics; don’t spend time on social programs. These
things are unimportant. Jesus is coming back soon to rescue
us from these problems.”³⁴

Holistic student discipleship in the matrix of the Kingdom broadens the notion, for students, of being Christian in this world to include every moment- from combing their hair when they wake up to hanging with their friends on Saturday night. We add to God’s glorious reign when we use all he has given to make this world better- in every arena of life. This was God’s charge to humanity’s parents in Genesis 1.26-28 and, by God’s grace, remains ours as his people.

To practice the theology of the Kingdom is to work toward holistic discipleship. We must resist, within our ministries, practices that remain in a vacuum. By this, I mean engaging in events or rituals for the sake of a spiritual experience, irrespective of the Kingdom program. Our ministry events, structures practices and values must reflect the goal of growing citizens for His Kingdom. This Kingdom gives a vivid picture of our selves-past, present and future, of our sin and of the hope of restoration through Jesus Christ. It is also laden with passion because it is the call to life as a citizen and calls students to work toward the fulfillment of the Kingdom to come (*our present future*)- the city of our God. There is no greater vision or pursuit, no greater person or ideal- to which members from any generation may be summoned.

¹ Schaeffer, Francis. *How Should We Then Live: The Rise and decline of Western Thought and Culture*. (Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois). P. 205

² Schaeffer's definitions for these terms are as follows: by personal peace, he means the desire to be left alone, not troubled by the troubles of other people- to live life with the minimal possibility of being disturbed. Affluence is an overwhelming and ever-increasing prosperity- a life made up of things, things and more things- a success judged by an ever-higher level of material abundance.

³ It is impossible to discuss Youth Ministry theology and methodology in the church without considering the umbrella of the church at large. Youth ministry is not an isolated planet. The plain truth is that, statistically, Christianity is waning in the west. Specifically, Mainline Protestantism seems on the forefront of this incredible shrinking trend. More specifically, the Episcopal Church in the US is particularly hemhroeging and lacking a representative passion. Please take the time to read a very insightful and sobering article published recently by the New Yorker magazine. It tells the story of the Episcopal Church's current crisis within and without. I believe it exposes our tradition's struggle for passionate, biblical Christianity. You can access this article here: http://www.newyorker.com/printables/fact/060417fa_fact5

⁴ Mark Driscoll, founding Pastor/Elder of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, WA coined this term and is part of the title of his recent book, *The Radical Reformation*, which is a challenge for churches to seek a faithful mission built on the heart of the gospel and God's program of the Kingdom that inform the church's mission and goal. See the church's website at www.marshillchurch.org

⁵ For some interesting background reading on the historical development of modern youth ministry practice, read Mark Senter's book, entitled *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry: And Its Radical Impact on the Church* Victor Books, 1992 31-138

⁶ Dean, Kenda C. *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church* Eerdmans Publishing; Grand Rapids p 7

⁷ I use this term to mean churches that are zealously on Jesus' mission, the fulfillment of the New Covenant age through the church, via the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

⁸ Visit the web place for Summit Church at www.summit-connect.org

⁹ Mark Driscoll, of Seattle's Mars Hill Church, made this comment. He leads a church planting organization called the Acts 29 Network. You can read an incredible account of how he was lead to plant Mars Hill in his new book, *Confessions of a Reformation Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church*. (Zondervan: Grand rapids) 2006. The church's website is worth the visit: www.marshillchurch.org

¹⁰ Howe, Neil and Strauss, William. *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*(Vintage Publishing, New York). 2000. p.365

¹¹ Smith, Christian. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford Press: New York) 2005 Chapter 4

¹² By “Instrumental”, the author is suggesting that religion is often used primarily as a tool for further development as healthy participants in human society. The “instrument” of religion enhances proper behavior, social etiquette, moral understanding, protection from an evil world, etc. This explains, in part, a parents’ desire to suddenly re-enter the life of the church after child-birth.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 147-148

¹⁴ In addition to the inherent relationship of youth ministry with the local church, so too, we must acknowledge the family unit as the primary vehicle of discipleship, and therefore youth ministry. That is why a church’s ministry to parents and family is critical to faith formation with children. Our efforts in youth ministry decrease in effectiveness when our ministry values are not the distant echoes of what they already hear and see at home.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 136-137

¹⁶ See Josh McDowell’s latest, “The Last Generation of...”

¹⁷ For more background on these ministry practices in Youth ministry, see *Contemplative Youth Ministry* by Mark Yaconelli

¹⁸ In a related article, I examine the concept of Organic Discipleship, comparing the architectural innovations of Frank Lloyd Wright, who sought, in architecture, to more closely unite the ideals of form and function. Known as Organic Architecture, Wright’s principles lead to many groundbreaking innovations that forever changed residential and commercial architecture. In youth ministry, Organic Discipleship seeks to seamlessly integrate the Great Command and the Great Commission as a rhythm for communal life. A study of the life, works and concepts of Wright is highly recommended. You can get started here:

<http://www.franklloydwright.com/02FLLW/theman.html> If you want the article on Organic Discipleship, email me: emoulton@cfdioocese.org

¹⁹ I believe that a renewal of scripture appreciation and study among students is on the horizon- I call it the Josiah Generation! 2 Chronicles 34

²⁰ Thanks to Rev. Danny Wannell, PCA.

²¹ Check out the fine work that Steve Argue and Dave Livermore are doing for a theology of the Gospel that is established on the Biblical vision of the Kingdom of God. Explore their resources and articles at www.intersectcommunity.com

²² Plantinga, Cornelius, jr. *Engaging God’s World: A Christian View of Faith, Learning and Living*. Eerdmans Publishing (Grand Rapids). xiii

²³ I borrowed this phrase from an incredible booklet from CRC Publishing, entitled *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*. This is a dense confession of faith from the Christian Reformed Church that draws heavily from three reformed creeds- the heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort. You can purchase this by looking up Faith Alive Christian Resources.

²⁴ Sweet, Leonard. *Soul Tsunami*(Zondervan: Grand Rapids). P.?

²⁵ Reconsider what Jesus meant in John 3.16-17. Also see Colossians 1 for the cosmic reach of Jesus work on behalf of creation.

²⁶ Pratt, Richard. *Designed for Dignity: What God has Made it Possible for you to be.* (P&R Publishing 1993) p. 6-7

²⁷ Consider the organic quality and structure of Jesus Ministry with the disciples. How would you describe the way Jesus imparted the Kingdom vision to his disciples? Would you say that his ministry had structure? If so, how would you describe the different facets of Jesus ministry in training the twelve?

²⁸ Jeremiah 31.33 and Ezekiel 36.25

²⁹ Matthew 6.10

³⁰ The Hebrew word for peace used by Old Testament prophets means peace. But the idea goes far beyond, say, a peace between two armies that agree to cease fire. It is in the words of

Cornelius Plantinga, a “Universal flourishing, wholeness and delight.” Plantinga’s book, *Engaging God’s World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning and Living*, is excellent.

³¹ Bierma, Nathaniel. *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth* (P&R Publishing: 2005) p. 137

³² 1Timothy 1.15

³³ Wittmer, Michael. *Heaven is a Place on Earth*. (Zondervan: Grand rapids 2004). P. 100

³⁴ Pratt, Richard. *Designed for Dignity*. P. 72