

Reclaiming Missing Youth

Dr. Barry Gane



Introduction

- "The Church is languishing for the help of young men (and young women) who will bear a courageous testimony, who will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God's people, and so increase the power of the Church in the world." Ellen G.

White, Messages to Young People (Nashville: Southern, 1930), p. 25.

“ Preachers, or layman advanced in years, can not have one half the influence upon the young that the youth, devoted to God, can have upon their associates.” “With such an army of workers, as our youth, properly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon coming Savior might be carried to the whole world.”

Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People (Nashville: Southern, 1930), p. 204, 196

Longitudinal Study (USA)

- Dr. Roger Dudley of the Institute of Church Ministries at Andrews University has conducted a ten year study of 1523 young Adventists. In the tenth year the best estimate is that 49% had left the church. These were baptized, committed youth at the start of the study. Of those who remained in the church only 55% attend regularly!
- The Valuegenesis study has shown that 28% are not planning to be in the church when they are 40.

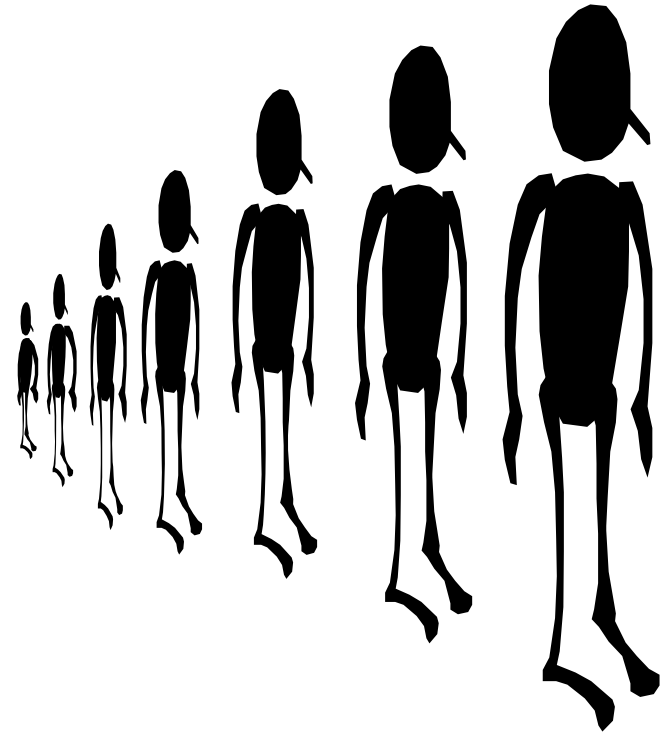
Reasons Youth Give for Leaving the Church

- **Church membership without personal conversion**
- **Impersonal, uncaring attitude on the part of older members**
- **Phony-appearing lives of adult members**
- **No sense of relevance to needs**
- **Religion didn't make a difference in own life and didn't want to be a hypocrite**
- **Absence of thinking for oneself**

Reasons Youth Give for Leaving the Church . . .

- **Misplaced emphasis with non-essentials too important**
- **Academy (church school) disciplinary methods**
- **Preoccupation with organization on the part of leaders**
- **Quality of sermons**

• Ila Zbaraschuk 1973

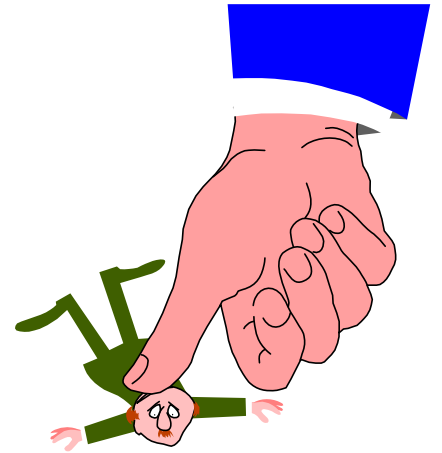


Valuegenesis Results (Aust/NZ)

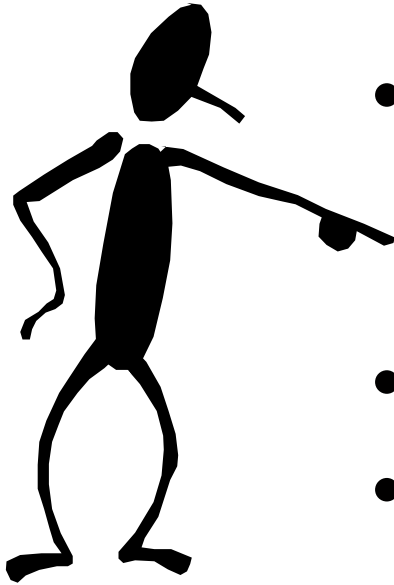
- Adult members are living phony lives
- The church places too much emphasis on non-essentials
- Attitudes of older members are critical and uncaring
- Church leaders are preoccupied with organization and not concerned with people

Valuegenesis Results cont.

- Worship services are dull and meaningless
- Do not want to be a hypocrite
- Church is too restrictive
- Attracted to a different lifestyle
- Do not have any real friends at church
- Church does not allow me to think for myself



Five Main Factors



- Control - *not allowed to think for self, problem with the doctrines, emphasis on non-essentials*
- Lack of Caring
- Lack of meaning and purpose
- Personal integrity
- Control - *discipline, family problems, too restrictive*

Roger Dudley's Ten Year Study

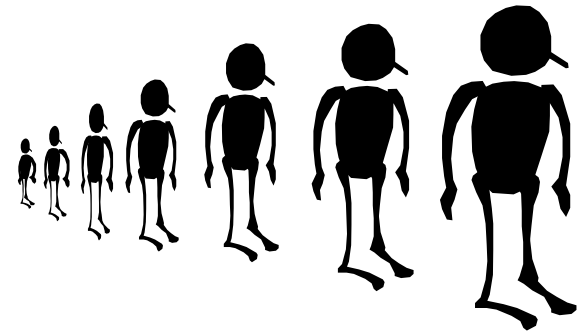
Four Main Reasons for Severing Connection

- 1. Alienation**
Feelings of not being accepted, needed, or valued
- 2. Irrelevance**
See the church as not making a difference in their lives
- 3. Intolerance**
See the church as lacking love in action and displaying extreme legalism
- 4. Inconvenience**
Would rather rest at home or could not fit church into their program

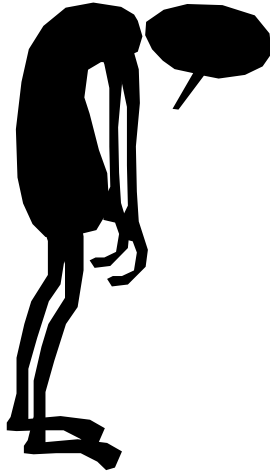
Valuegenesis Results (Aust/NZ)

	SDP		NAD	
	12	18	12	18
It challenges my thinking	50%	22%	55%	25%
It encourages me to ask questions	46%	23%	50%	24%
It is open to new ideas	61%	28%		
It feels warm	61%	38%	65%	44%
It is friendly	77%	52%	85%	55%

The Withdrawal Track

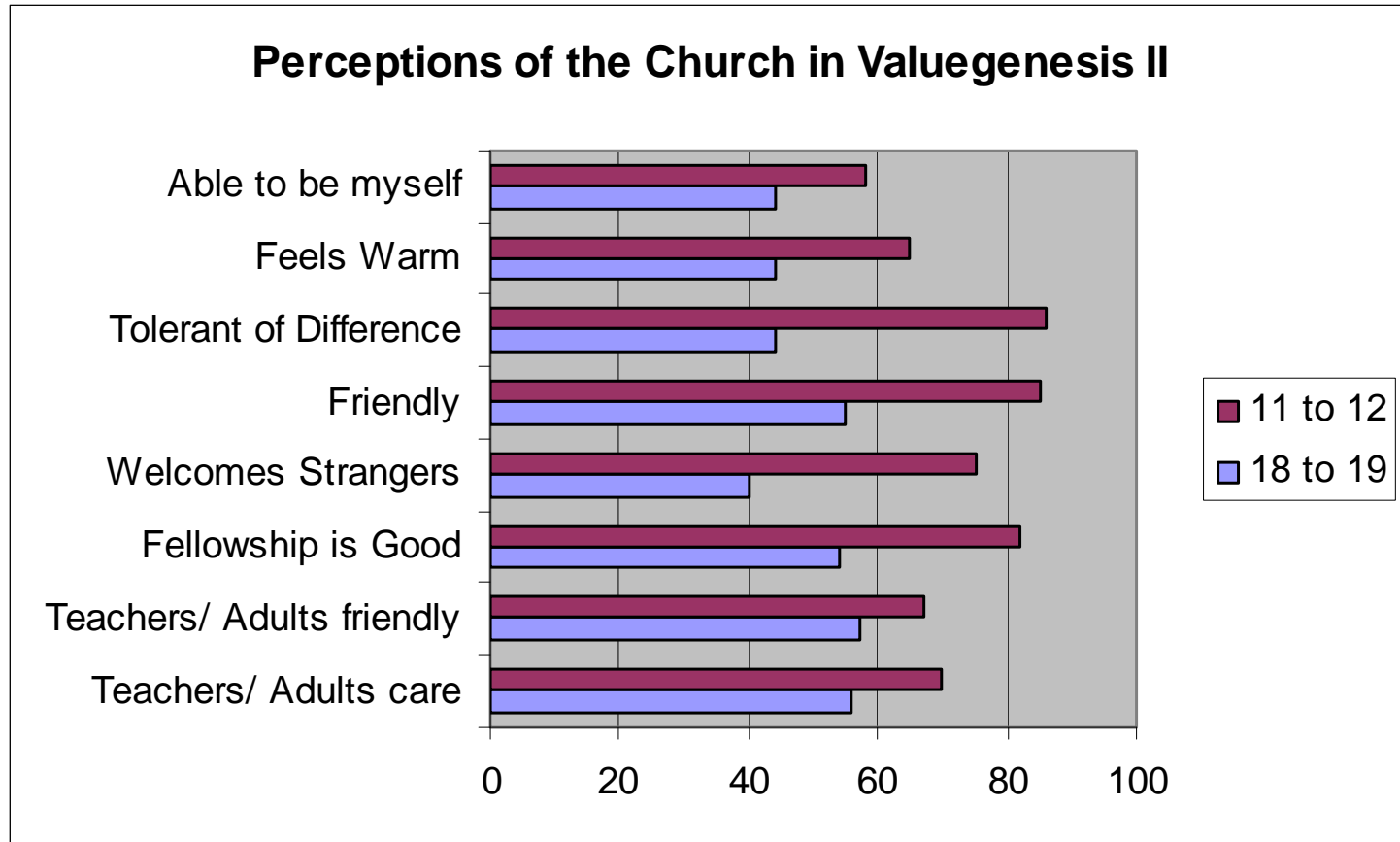


A Cry For
Help



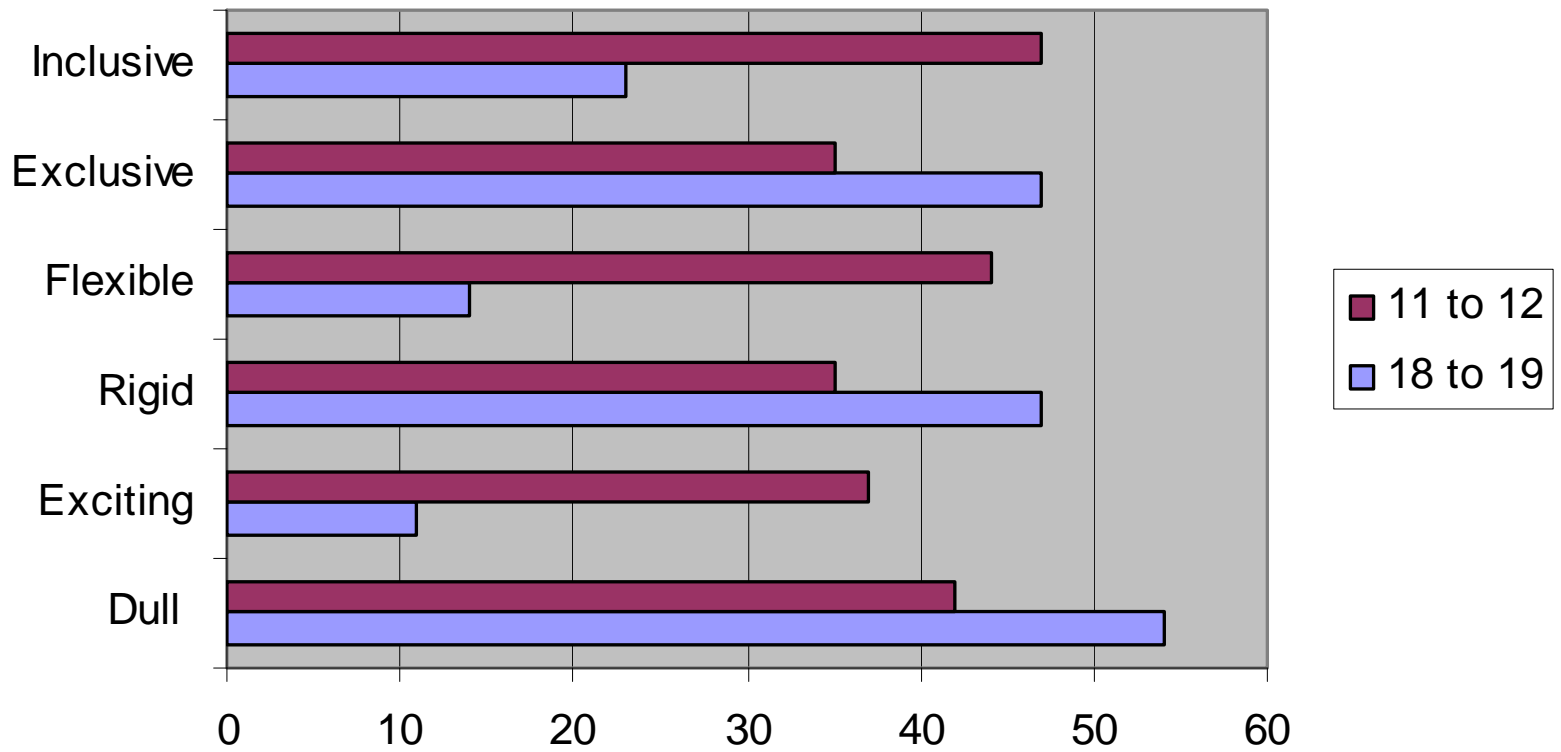
• Valuegenesis II Results

- Attitudes to Church

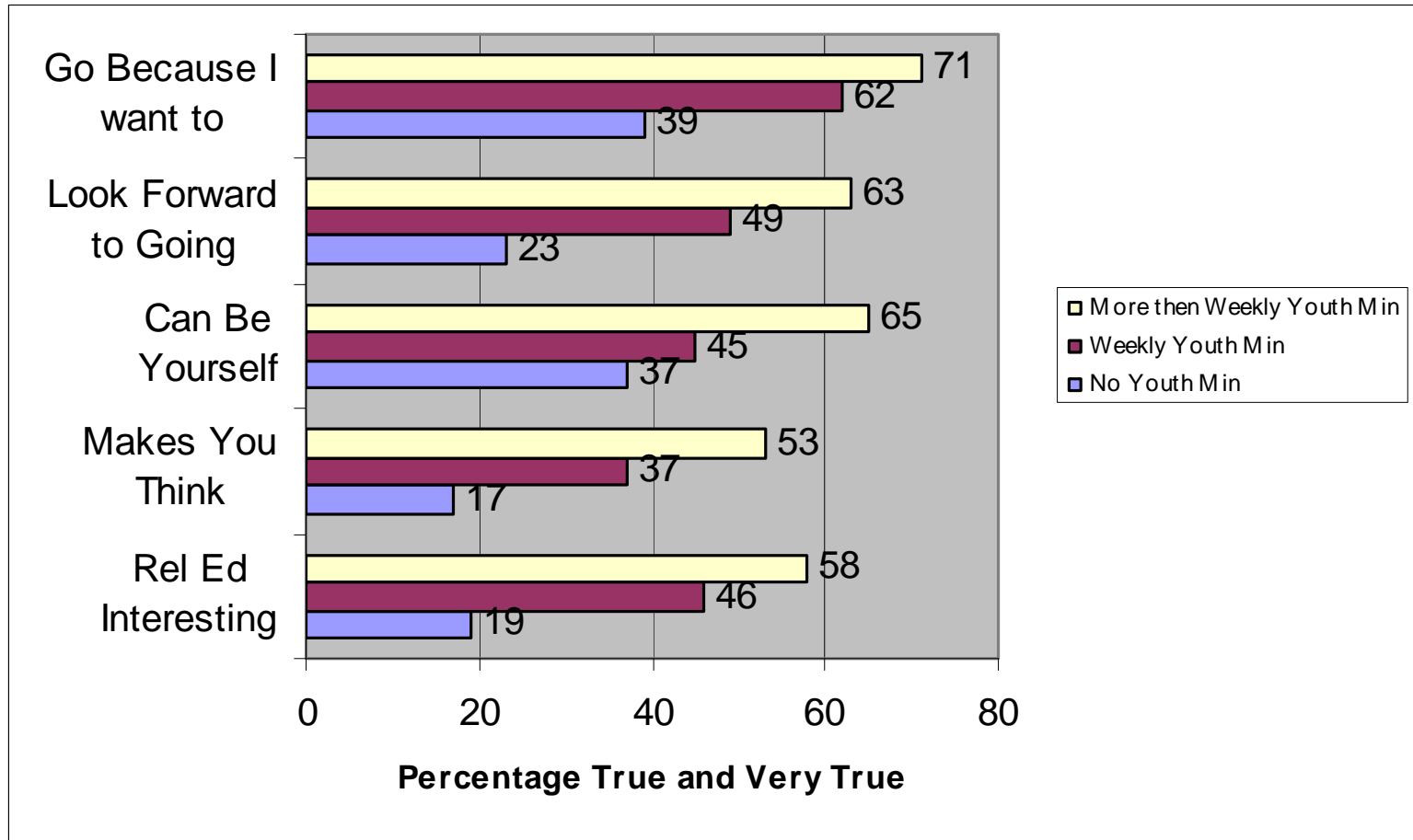


Valuegenesis II

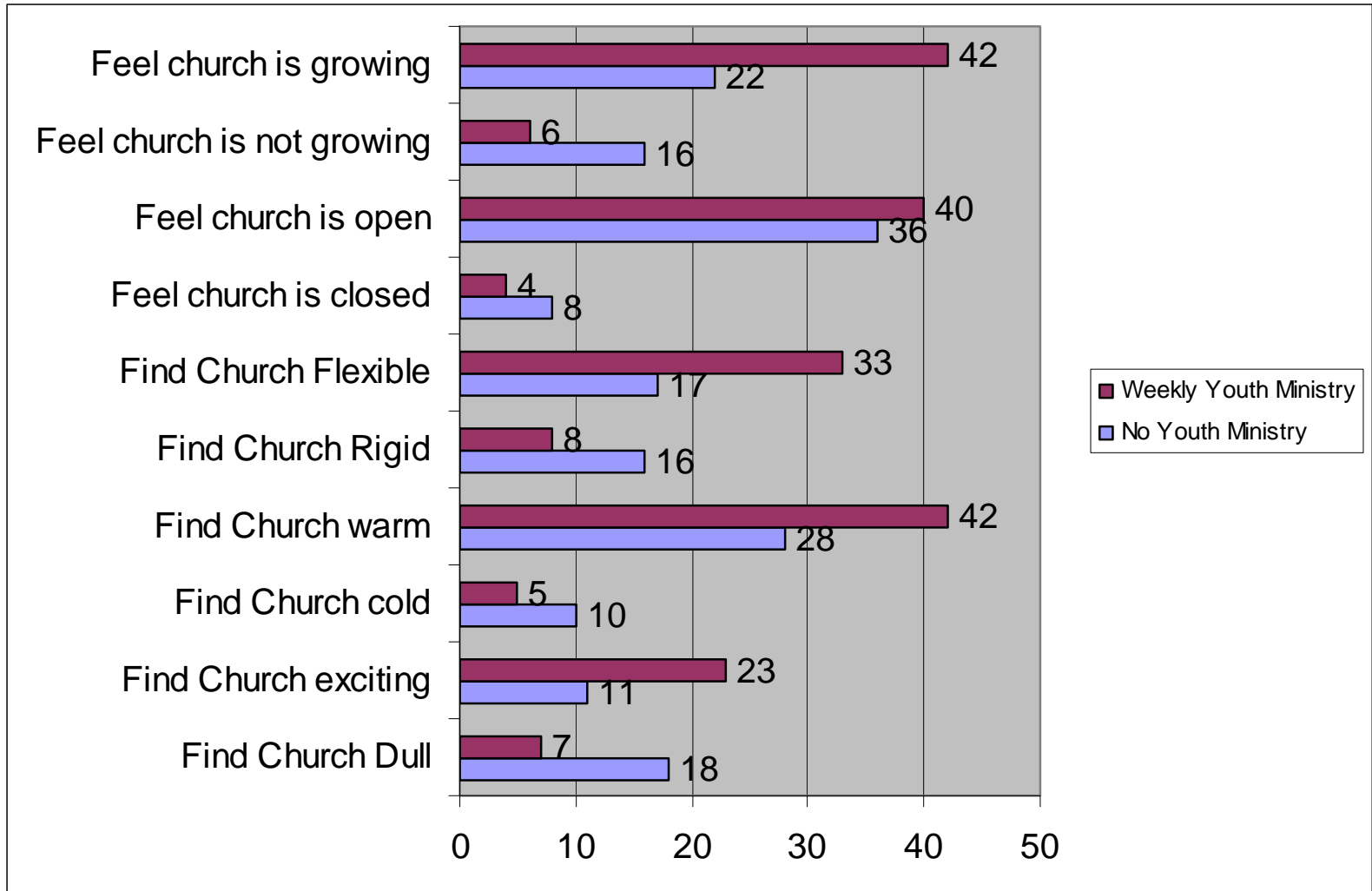
How the Church Shapes Up



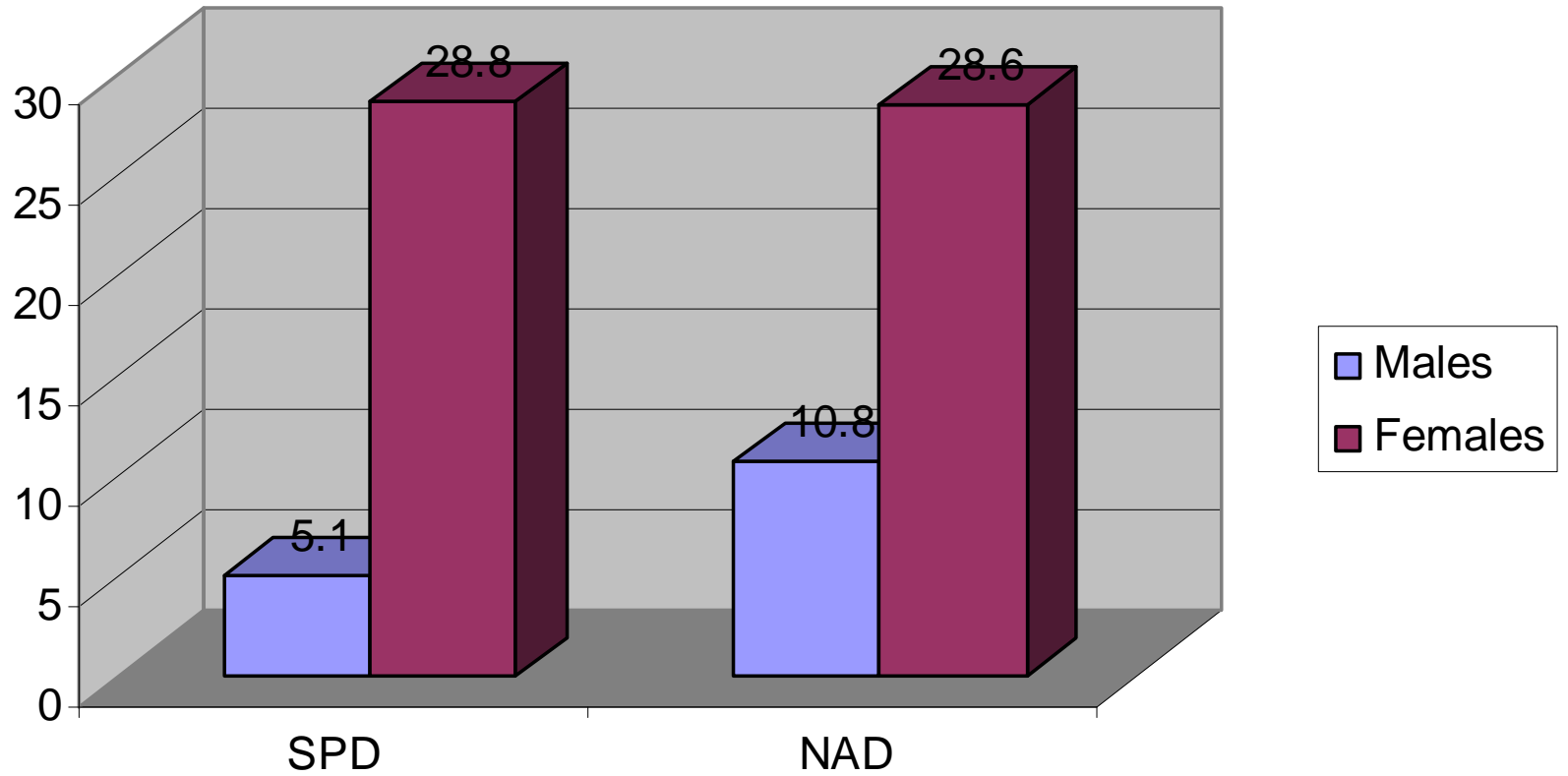
Impact of Youth Ministry on Religious Education Program at Local Church (VG II)



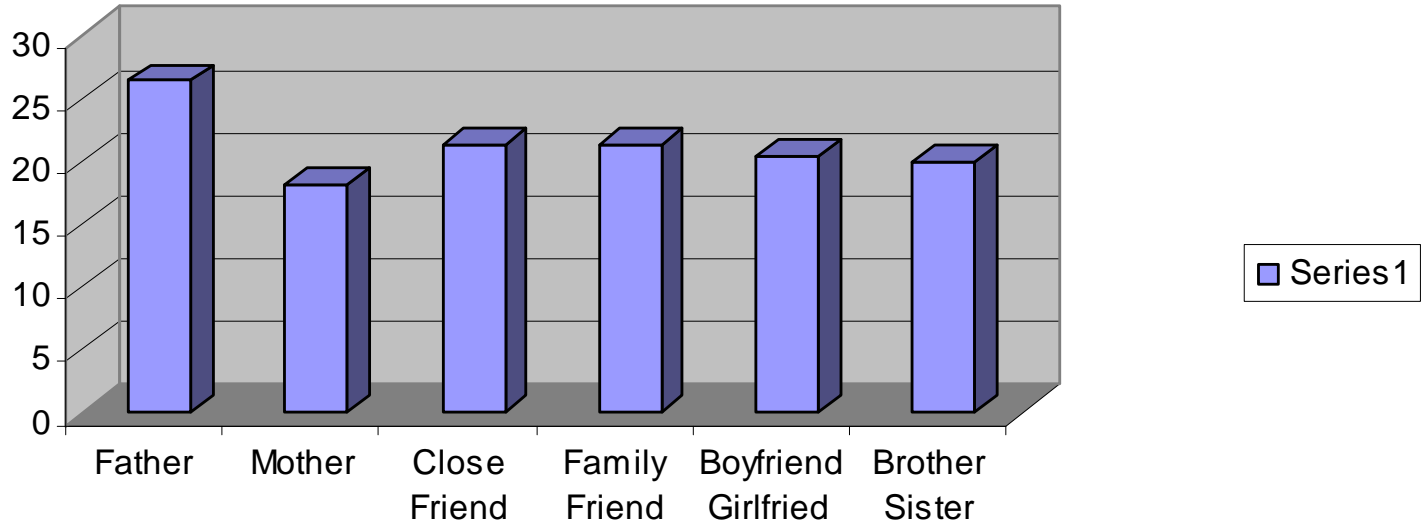
Impact of Youth Ministry on Perceptions of Church



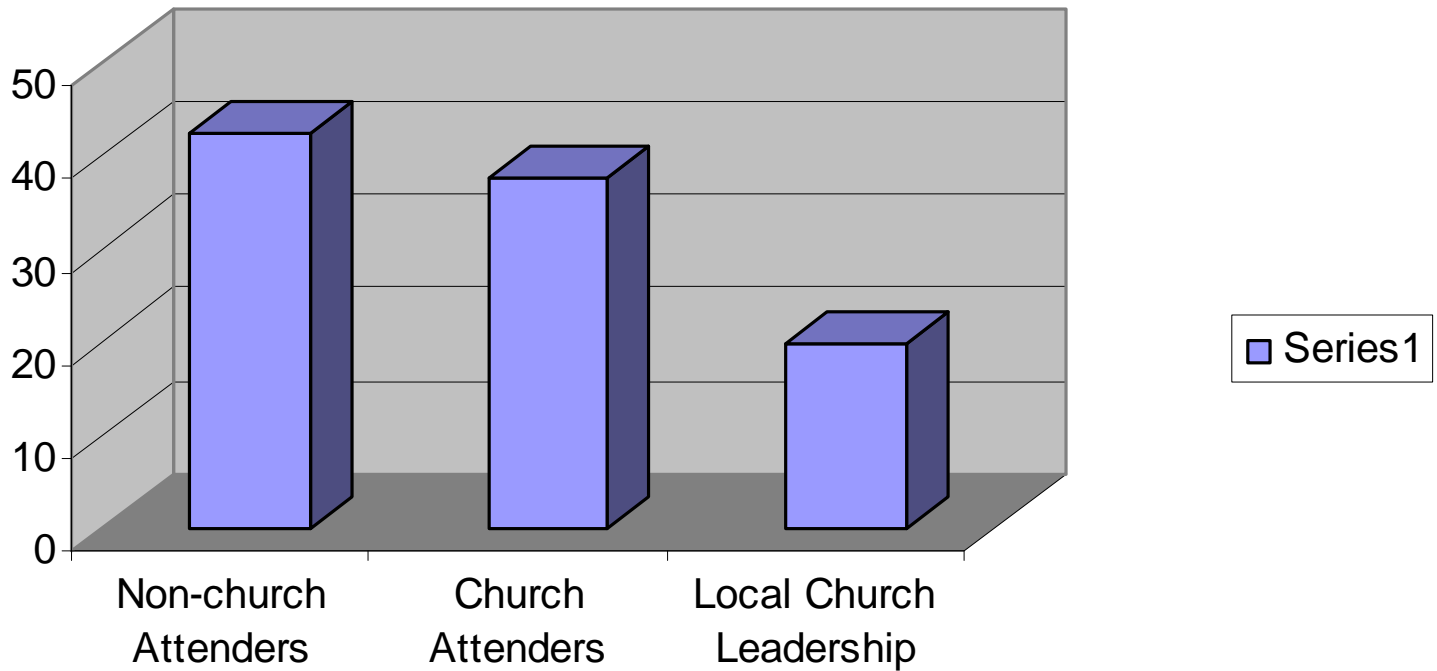
Sexual Abuse Reported by SDA Youth



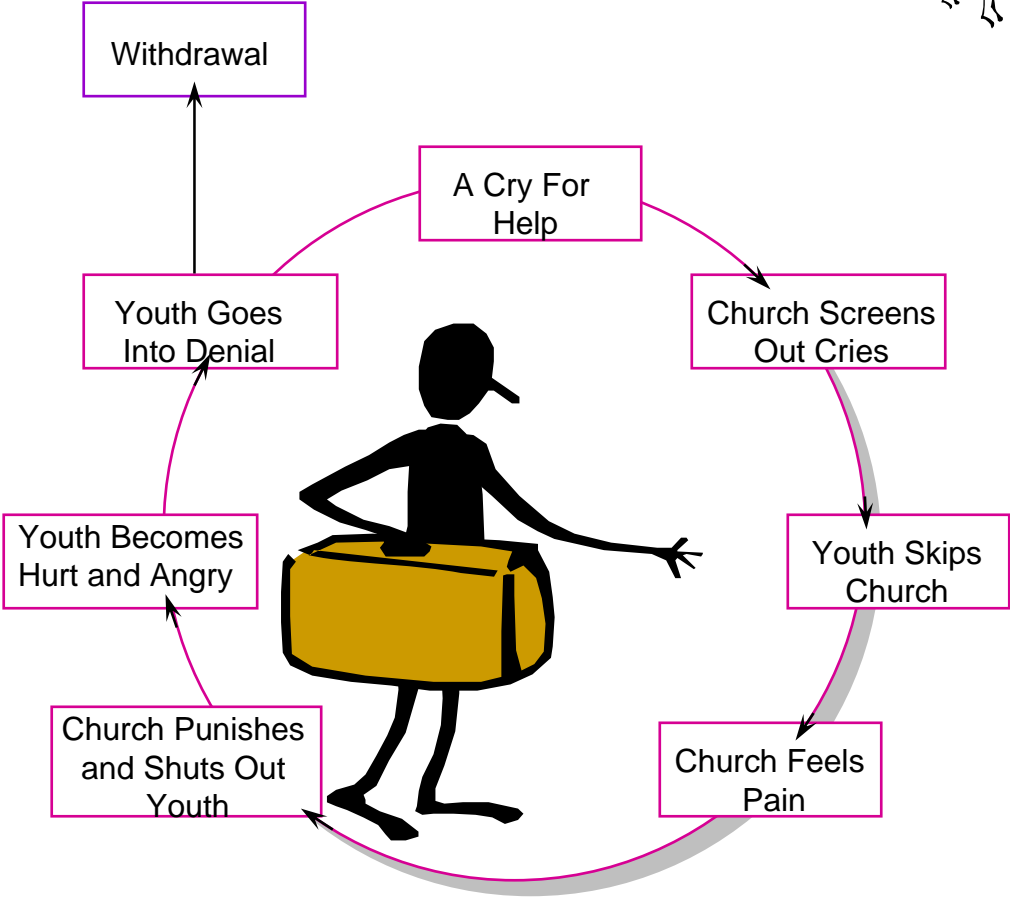
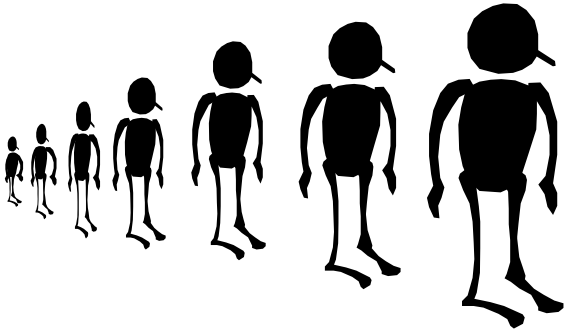
Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church



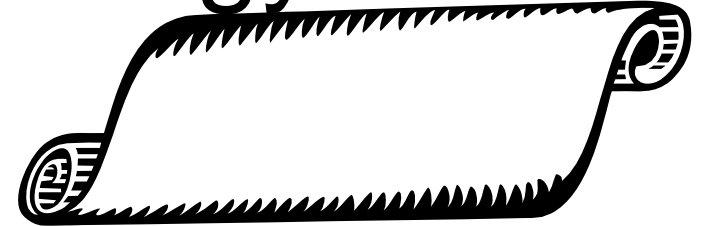
Relationship to the Seventh-day Adventist Church



The Withdrawal Track



Reclaiming Strategy



Step 1

- * You will need to construct a list of the missing youth.
- * Church Clerk's records - these should have the names of all baptized youth
- * Sabbath School record cards - more names of youth who may not have been baptized

Remember that all youth are not the same and must be seen as individuals.

Reclaiming Strategy

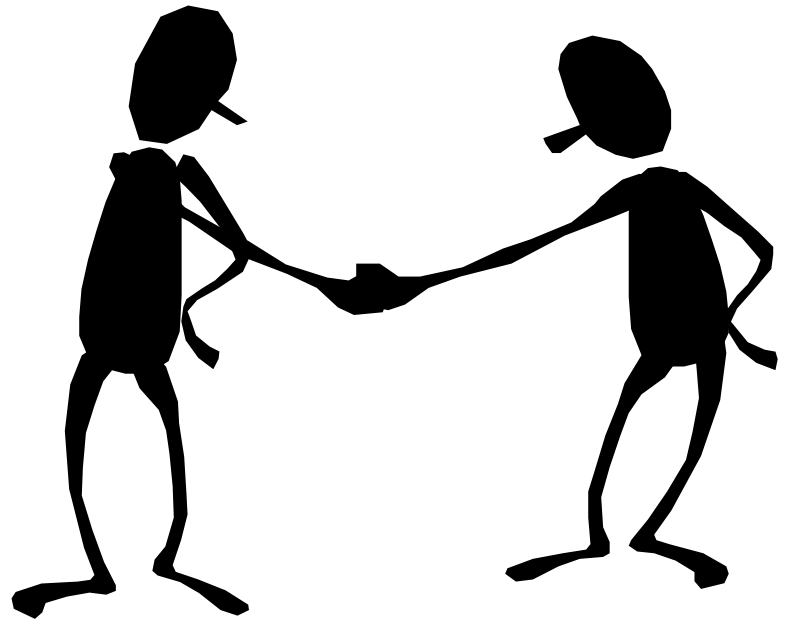
Step 2

- * Alert your elders and Church Board
- * Sell the reclamation concept to your youth team and let them know how many youth have already left
- * Brainstorm to recall other names that may have been missed

Reclaiming Strategy

Step 3

Youth group leadership team - prayer for missing youth and then construct a strategy for contacting them.



Reclaiming Strategy

Step 4

- * Contact - personal contact is best. Let them know you are interested in them
 - invite them to a neutral fellowship activity first so that relationship can be established
 - ensure that their friends at church make contact as well

FRIENDSHIP RECORD BLANK

Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Baptised - YES _____ NO _____

Parents - Married ___ Separated ___ Divorced ___ Single ___ SDA F ___ M ___

Date they last attended _____

Friends still attending _____

What did they enjoy about church _____

Present relationship to church _____

Present relationship to family _____

Work/School _____

Dates of Visits

First Visit _____ Second Visit _____

Third Visit _____ Fourth Visit _____

Fifth Visit _____ Sixth Visit _____

Comments

Some Important Things to Remember . . .

Make the **List**

Pray for them

Visit (make it short)

Invite them to something neutral

Involve them

Closing the Back Door

- Learn their names
- Affirm what they do well
- Let them know they have value
- Occupy their time – spend time with someone who has high values –
- Mentor
- Rehearsal skills – what are they going to say the next time - Communication