

NATIONAL NETWORK OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

BUILDING 21ST CENTURY NETWORKS

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

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—Doug Clark
Director of Field Ministries

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INTRODUCTION

It could have happened in your city. Mark Dorn was a youth pastor with a burden to reach students for Christ. He planned an outreach event to accomplish his vision, sponsored by his church. Forty-seven teenagers came, and several came to Christ.

Later, he was talking with Dan Buschow, a nearby Network Coordinator, who challenged him to consider cooperating with other youth pastors and their youth groups to reach the schools. Mark took it to heart, and began building relationships with some nearby youth workers, meeting to pray for the growth of God's kingdom in Elk River, Minnesota. Over time, trust grew.

BETTER TOGETHER

The next year, they decided to do the outreach event again—but *together* this time. Students led the event from the stage. Every part of the high school's student body was represented. The event drew 647 students, with 67 indicating decisions for Christ—20 more than the *total attendance* of the first outreach!

Cooperation . . . networking . . . trust . . . strategic partnerships. . . kingdom building. These are the buzzwords of youth ministry at the dawn of a new century. Walls are being torn down, students are being empowered to reach their schools, and ministries are coming together in unprecedented strategic partnerships as they discover they are *better together*. Consider some of the forces at work in youth ministry nationwide:

- ◆ There is a paradigm shift in how ministry is being done. A new attitude of cooperation is replacing partisanship and isolationism. More than five dozen denominations and national youth ministries have joined the Campus Alliance. Their ambitious goal is to *pray for and share Christ with every student between 7-12 grades, and establish a student-led ministry to every school in the United States*.
- ◆ There is a heightened sense of urgency concerning the hour, with a conviction that in this generation, God wants to bring moral and spiritual awakening to our land. Many believe He wants to finish the work of the Great Commission through this generation of Busters and Millennials. A national movement has been building, and threatens to erupt into renewal and revival at any time.

- ◆ Author Henry Blackaby articulated a principle that is echoing in the hearts of believers all through the Church: “Watch to see where God is working and join Him.”¹ New on-campus ministries spring up every day, led by students who are crying out for support and coaching. There is abundant evidence that God has chosen to work in supernatural ways in this generation through *student-led campus ministry*. Responsive youth workers are coming alongside campus leaders—together—to help them. They are seeing incredibly exciting results in their cities when they do—since they are joining God in *His* work.

This paradigm shift is causing youth workers to make adjustments in the way they *do* youth ministry—or possibly risk getting left on the sidelines. Why work together? Doesn’t that take more time? Yes—but cooperating to reach your city reflects three facets of the Great Commission:

- ◆ **God’s Heart: *Unity in the body*.** In John 17, Jesus prayed three times—more than anything else He prayed for that night—“for all of them (believers) *to become one heart and mind*.”² Unity is indispensable to the Great Commission! Linking with youth workers across denominational, gender, and ethnic lines—modeling unity for the sake of the gospel—sets a powerful example for the youth on the campus.
- ◆ **God’s Plan/Method: *Cooperation and Synergy*.** Solomon wrote, “It’s better to have a partner than go it alone....A three-stranded rope isn’t easily snapped” (Ecclesiastes 4: 9,12). The wisest man who ever lived (except Jesus) knew that “one plus one *is more than two*.” Call it “Bible math.” You get more kingdom work accomplished through strategic cooperation.
- ◆ **God’s Call: *The Great Commission*.** Matthew 28:18-20 gives us clear marching orders: We are to make disciples of all nations (or *people groups*) by going, baptizing and teaching. We must adopt this foundational principle for each of our ministries, for the outreach to each school, and disciple our students to do the same. What better place to train them to have God’s heart for the world than on their campus? There are distinct student groups at every school. Teaching teenagers to reach the “people groups” in their high school or junior high prepares them to think globally and act locally.

¹ *Experiencing God*, page 15, by Henry Blackaby. Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1990.

² All Scripture references are from *The Message* by Eugene H. Peterson, ©1993-1996, 2000-2001, NavPress. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

BIG NEEDS—HUGE GOD

Imagine for a moment the Holy Spirit looking over your city. As He looks down, He sees the incredible needs that are there: broken homes and hearts, addiction to “God-substitutes” of every kind, hopelessness, and rebellion. Even in a small town, the problems are overwhelming! But at the same time, God’s Spirit sees another layer of reality that we often miss. With infinite wisdom, He realizes that *He has already placed the resources to meet those needs in the city, if His people will listen to Him and follow Him together*. No single part of His body has all the resources needed to meet the vast needs: churches must work together, each knowing they are inadequate to meet the challenge without parachurch ministries, parents, Christian teachers, professional and volunteer youth workers. They are all needed.

HERE AM I . . .

So where do we start? God is looking for someone who *reflects His heart, embraces His plan, and accepts His call*. A movement is birthed when **passionate leaders** step into God’s role for them in their community. *Someone* has to rally the students on until they’re “all moving rhythmically and easily with each other” (Ephesians 4:12) to reach their schools! Is it possible that God is prompting *you* to be that “someone?” If your answer to that is “yes,” then this Handbook is for you.

WHY DO YOU NEED THIS BOOK?

This Manual is designed to be a “how-to” guide to help you network strategically with others in your community to fulfill the vision of a ministry to every student in every school. The “QuickStart” section covers the **basics** in five steps. If you want to be recognized as a National Network Coordinator, fill out and send in the application/registration page at the end of the “QuickStart” section. “InDepth” is a **resource section** providing more detailed information, worksheets, and tools to take you deeper into the material covered in “QuickStart.” The “Appendix” provides a place for **reference material, directories**, and other information Network Coordinators receive from the Network office. You can also add your own material. You may reproduce for local non-profit use any pages in this book.

The **last section** of this Manual includes the “Interactive Guide & Notes” which are a companion to the Coordinator Training Video, *Building 21st Century Networks*, which was produced in 2002. The four-part video—a companion resource to the notes—is available in three formats: on **CD-ROM** (included when you purchase this entire

Manual), on **VHS cassette** (additional purchase, from the Network office or order online), or as **streaming video** (free, which you can view at the Network web site). Use these notes as you go section-by-section through the video to sharpen the focus of your Network.

A SUMMARY: “HOW TO NETWORK”

A concise summary of many of the principles in this Handbook is contained in the Challenge 2000/Campus Alliance resource book, *1x1x56k: The Starter Kit for Campus Ministry* (in the back inside pouch of this notebook). See pages 34-37 in *1x1x56k* for “How to Network” and “Networking Worksheet.”

QUICKSTART

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QUICKSTART

Are you anxious to get out there and *just do it*? Are you one of those who flips right to the “QuickStart” section of a software manual (if you even *open* the manual!) because you like to get up and running as soon as possible?

Just for you, we’ve provided a QuickStart section in this manual, boiling down the basics of youth worker networking. First is the outline, on two pages. Then, five short steps that cover one general principle each.

STEP 1: PRAY—GET GOD’S HEARTBEAT FOR YOUR CITY

The Network that God uses is guided by leaders with callused knees. You cannot know *how* God wants you to fulfill the Great Commission in your community until you *ask Him*. You won’t know *who* He wants on your team until He shows you. You can’t experience His *power* for the task without receiving it in prayer. **Start by praying,** alone and corporately.

STEP 2: PURPOSE—FOCUS ON THE TARGET

The **Target** your Network is aiming for should be clear: Your goal is nothing less than the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). God wants to prepare an army of students to be His “arrows” to hit that target globally. For now, the campus is their main mission field, or “Jerusalem.” Your Local Network must unite and equip the body of Christ on each campus to reach their school. Prayerfully seek out and pursue other youth leaders who are passionate about this target, and make it the primary reason for your Network. This is the **Team** that will lead your Network. Write a *mission statement* that clearly describes your target, so others will know why your Network exists.

STEP 3: PEOPLE—BUILD A TEAM ON RELATIONSHIPS

With the Target established, build your Network on two rails: first **Relationships**, then **Strategies** (events). Ministry flows through and from relationships. Develop trust by spending time together, especially praying for your community. A Network that puts

prayer first finds God's unique purpose and plan. As trust grows between you, allow God to reveal the particular **Events** or strategies He wants you to utilize to hit your Target. Keep your Network on **Track** by maintaining a balance between the two rails—*relationship* (who you are becoming) and *strategy* (what God leads you to *do* cooperatively). A train cannot travel on only one rail!

STEP 4: PLANS—MOBILIZE TO REACH EVERY SCHOOL

Decide what the Network will do—and what it *won't do*. Most successful Networks **meet regularly** (at least monthly), have well-planned meetings, and stick to their agenda. They strike a **balance** between resourcing, personal sharing/prayer, campus updates, vision casting, planning events, and group-building activities. They try to include volunteers *and* paid youth workers.

STEP 5: PERSEVERE—BE READY FOR A BATTLE

A Network's momentum ebbs and flows—don't be surprised when it happens to you! Networks that last usually have a **leadership team or steering committee** instead of just one “Lone Ranger” Coordinator. Mature Networks realize they are in a **spiritual battle**, keep their **focus on the Target**, work through **obstacles**, and are able to **adapt to change**. They reinvent themselves as necessary until they reach “every student in every school” in their target area.

STEP 1: PRAY—GET GOD’S HEARTBEAT FOR YOUR CITY

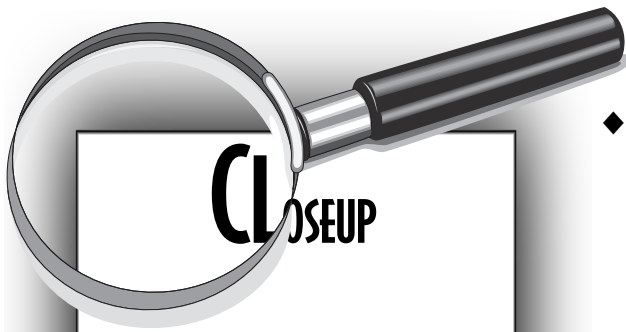
“I’ll climb to the lookout tower and scan the horizon. I’ll wait to see what God says, how he’ll answer my complaint. . .”—Habakkuk 2:1

It is not our purpose here to teach *about* prayer. But we want to encourage you to station yourself—like Habakkuk did—to “see what God has to say.” The Lord knows the end from the beginning! Since this is true, He already knows how He wants to mobilize a movement in your area to reach every student in every school. So it makes sense to allow *Him* to orchestrate the movement.

AS YOU PRAY:

- ◆ **Ask God to *give you His vision*.** It is no doubt much bigger than yours, since He “can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! ” (Ephesians 3:20).
- ◆ **Ask God to *give you His heart for the youth in your community*—all kinds of kids—the ones who are easy to love *and* the ones who are rebelling.**
- ◆ **Ask God to *break your heart over the needs of youth in your community*.** Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision, cried “God, break my heart with the things that break *Your* heart.” The founder of the Presbyterian Church, John Knox, was quoted as saying, “O God, give me Scotland *or I die*.”
- ◆ **Ask God to *link you with others of like mind and heart*.** Expect Him to connect you with others whom He is also speaking to about reaching teenagers. In 1858, Jeremiah Lanphier started a prayer meeting for revival in New York City in an upstairs room at a church. He asked God to bring like-minded people to pray with him. Though it started small, it sparked a spiritual prairie fire that swept across the nation within five years!

**God may
show you a
strategy that
is unique
from any
other city.**



CLOSEUP

PUTTING PRAYER FIRST

It's not like they don't *do* anything. The Youth Alliance of **Portland, Oregon** has seven Local Networks, a newsletter, training, and See You at the Pole on almost every campus. But their simple approach makes their Network refreshingly unique: *They pray. A lot.*

Mike Higgs, the Portland Coordinator, put it this way:

"We are pretty much united in the belief that, like Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:12, 'we do not know what to do' to reach all the kids in the city." They describe the movement in Portland as "primarily prayer-driven." In annual Prayer Summit retreats, Local Networks, metro planning, prayer is the centerpiece, the first item of business, and the main agenda.

Higgs reports a "special spiritual synergy and empowerment" in keeping prayer paramount in their networking. Participants in the Prayer Summits have reported intense and long-lasting ministry in their lives and relationships. Walls of every kind have been dismantled.

Higgs says, "In the environment of prayer, we are learning what love and unity truly mean."

◆ **Ask God to *show you His strategy* or *plan*** to fulfill the Great Commission in your city. He may do it in a way that is unique from what He has done in any other community. From the beginning, make your Network purpose-driven.

◆ **Purpose that you will *weave prayer into all that you do*,** continually seeking God's direction as you go. You can find the right path—but then lose it—unless you keep consulting the map! In Acts 8, the Holy Spirit led Philip *away* from a revival in Samaria to talk to *one man* in Gaza. How easy it would have been to miss hearing God's voice in a situation like that, unless Philip had kept his spirit "tuned in!" And the result was that the Ethiopian eunuch took the gospel to a new continent!

PRAY: GO INDEPTH

FOR MORE RESOURCES ON "PRAY":

- ❑ Read the article, "First Things First" (pp. 14-15 in *1x1x56k: The Starter Kit for Campus Ministry*). Should you commit to form a Prayer Triplet with other adults to pray for the youth in your community?
- ❑ Browse the 300 resources—including many on prayer—in the "Resource Guide" of *1x1x56k* (pp. 42-59)
- ❑ "How to Start a Prayer Fellowship" (*InDepth*, page 45)
- ❑ "Youth Prayer Resources" (*InDepth*, page 47)
- ❑ "See You at the Pole" (*Appendix*, page 95)

STEP 2: PURPOSE— FOCUS ON THE TARGET

DEFINE THE TARGET

There are some things you *don't* need to pray about.

When the will of God has already been revealed, it's time to go to the next level. For example, God's Word is clear about stealing. Or adultery. Or gossip. There's no need for debate: once you know His will, you don't pray for *discernment*, but for a *will to obey*.

God has made it clear that His desire—and therefore our purpose—is *to make disciples of all nations*. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) describes our **Target**: every “nation” or *ethnos* (the Greek word). **The ultimate objective of our youth ministries should be to prepare and send out laborers for the global harvest.** Everything we do should somehow relate to that. Building the kingdom is serious business, and many believe that this generation of youth will be the ones to finish the job of the Great Commission in their lifetime!

Acts 1:8 reveals the order: “in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world.” The ends of the world are what we usually think of as “missions.” But for a student, their school is their “Jerusalem.” Their neighborhoods are made up of people groups characterized by ethnic diversity, various backgrounds, and distinct interests: athletes and actors, anarchists and academics. Each group must be penetrated if the whole student body is to be reached.

VISION CHECK



As God reveals Himself to you, *record it* like Habakkuk did: “*And then God answered: ‘Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run.’*”
—Habakkuk 2:2

TRY THIS PROCESS:

- *Sight* your vision—get it in focus.
- *Write* your vision—put it on paper.
- *Right* your vision—check it against God's Word.
- *Excite* others with your vision—so they can run with it.
- *Unite* for your vision—as God brings others who share it.
- *Fight* for your vision—persevere through the tough times.



CLOSEUP

CAMPUS MINISTRY THAT LASTS

God is raising up campus missionaries to fulfill His purpose of saturating every campus with the gospel of Jesus Christ. When adults cooperate with student leaders, their ministry lasts—often long after the original student leaders have graduated.

Kempner High School near **Houston** was nicknamed “Suicide High” in 1992 after four students took their own lives in a short period of time. **George Cardenas**, a junior at another school, believed God told him to *transfer* to Kempner in 1993, praying “that God would bring a revival to the school.” He was actively involved in the school’s Bible club and his vibrant youth group through his high school graduation. Christian teachers, local churches and parachurch ministries all supported students’ ministry on the campus.

Six years later, the Christian club meets at 7:00 a.m. three times a week, actively pursuing worship, prayer, and outreach. See You at the Pole, Campus Life and Fellowship of Christian Athletes are strong among the students, along with local church youth groups.

SO WHO DO YOU PUT ON THE FRONT LINES?

Who is in the best position to reach so many? Other students! One task of the Church is revealed in Ephesians 4:11-12. God gave us spiritual gifts of teaching, pastoring, etc. “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” Our job is to train *them* to reach their school!

As the Holy Spirit looks over your city, He sees that He has already placed—perhaps on *every* campus—Christian students and faculty representing the body of Christ. They have been sent to establish a strategic beachhead so that they can penetrate and saturate the entire school with the good news of Jesus Christ. *If* they function as a body, with all the support needed from those of us who are off campus, they can multiply and penetrate every student group, fulfilling the Great Commission in their Jerusalem.

“JOB ONE” OF THE NETWORK

So one assignment of the Local Network is to team up to equip the saints. The first step as you pray is to ask God to help you identify other adults who are passionate—as you are—about helping students move from the beachhead to *fully* occupy the territory.

We can learn something from God’s conversation with Habakkuk: “Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run” (Hab. 2:2). It’s important to *write down your vision* in the form of a clear, concise **mission statement** that keeps the target of your Network always before you. You will use that mission statement to help recruit others who resonate with that vision when they see or hear it. Believe that God is talking to others, just as He is speaking to you.

**You've established the Target: the Great Commission.
You've identified the best people to go for the goal: those on
the campus and others who are burdened to equip them.
Now it's time to *build your team*.**

PURPOSE: GO INDEPTH

FOR MORE RESOURCES ON "PURPOSE":

- ☐ Read the articles, "Challenge 2000 Sunday," "Campus Missionaries," and "Can We Do It?" (pp. 16, 17, & 18 in *1x1x56k*). Is your youth ministry—and your church body—challenging your students with a purpose and vision that are equal to the need? Are there other ways the church could regularly train and support them as campus missionaries? What more can you do? Who in your church leadership do you need to talk to about this?
- ☐ Prayerfully consider the "Mission Statement" and the "Long-Range Objectives" of the National Network of Youth Ministries in "The Purpose of the Network" (see Appendix, pages 89-90). How do you think you might flesh out these priorities in your Network?
- ☐ Why reinvent the wheel? Many existing Local Networks have already written and adopted excellent Mission Statements. Contact the **Network office** for free samples!
- ☐ Check out the **InDepth** and **Appendix** sections for more resources!

STEP 3: PEOPLE— BUILD A TEAM ON RELATIONSHIPS

God's *timing* is perfect. So is His "teaming."

As you prayerfully clarify your vision, be on the lookout for others who resonate with you as you share your Great Commission dream with them. And expect God to bring you together! Remember what He told Habakkuk:

"This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time." (Hab. 2:3).

LAYING YOUR TRACK—ONE RAIL AT A TIME

A Network—like a train—runs on two rails: **Relationship** (who you are) and **Strategy** (what you do). Like an electric train, one of those two rails is the "power rail" which drives the engine. In a Network, that rail takes the form of relationships: spending time together, praying for each other, interceding for the schools, listening, sharing ideas, and visiting a campus together. You are forming a "nucleus" that will set the tone for the Network as it develops, united by your desire to hit the Target.

Don't get discouraged! Someone has observed that a locomotive uses over 90% of its energy to get the train moving the *first foot* of the journey.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

At some point, your "core" needs to expand. It's time for your **first Network meeting!** You and the others who have been building a relationship can invite others to meet with you. The agenda needs to be guided by:

- ◆ Your mission statement
- ◆ Building relationships based on your common vision
- ◆ Prayer
- ◆ But not planning any events—yet.

Specific elements of a Network meeting are in "Step Four: Plan" and the InDepth section worksheets.

**A Network
runs on two
"rails:"
Relationship
and
Strategy.**

LAY YOUR TRACK CAREFULLY!

The late Christian speaker Dave Busby was part of the core group of national youth leaders who helped launch the National Network of Youth Ministries in the early 1980s. He referred to the Network meeting as “a safe place” where authenticity, transparency, and prayer for one another are essential components.

A Key Principle: *Ministry flows out of relationship.* But what about the second rail—Strategy (translated into cooperative events)? Most Networks have found that if the relationships are real, then cooperative, strategic events naturally flow from them—just like Mark Dorn of Elk River, Minnesota discovered in the story on page five.

The essential elements for Networking must be in place:

- ◆ The **Target** is clearly identified,
- ◆ A **Team** is being formed, and
- ◆ **Tracks** (Relationships and Strategy) aimed at the Target are being laid down.

Now you are creating a biblical example for the youth in your ministries to follow at their schools! As they observe your cooperation, it encourages them to unite to build the kingdom of God on every campus.

PEOPLE: GO INDEPTH

FOR MORE RESOURCES ON “PEOPLE”:

- ☐ “Making Tracks” ([InDepth](#), page 62)
- ☐ “To Plan and Set Goals” ([InDepth](#), page 69)
- ☐ “The National Picture” ([Appendix](#), page 97)
- ☐ “How to Build a Network” ([Appendix](#), page 99)
- ☐ “Helping Your Network Grow” ([Appendix](#), page 101)

"POTENTIAL ALLIES"

IN THE UNITED STATES, THERE ARE:



⇒ 500,000 church-based youth workers,



⇒ 375,000 local churches,



⇒ 650,000 Christian public school teachers,



⇒ More than 34,000 groups of praying Christian moms, and
⇒ More than 3 million students at See You at the Pole



⇒ To help you reach 56,000 public and private schools with students in grades 7-12 in them.

IMAGINE THE POTENTIAL OF JOINING FORCES!

(Sources: Barna Research, CitiReach, Christian Educators Association International, Moms In Touch International, U.S. Department of Education)

STEP 4: PLANS—MOBILIZE TO REACH EVERY SCHOOL

THE OTHER RAIL

As outlined in step three, a successful Network runs on two rails. *Relationships* supply the power. A *Strategy* defines the Network's direction.

Most mature Networks have a *mission statement*. They have *identified their target schools* and agreed upon a *campus ministry strategy* to reach them. There might be several strategies being implemented—that's healthy—but every campus should be targeted by *somebody*.

The plan doesn't have to be perfect for you to get started. It should adapt to the ongoing direction of the Holy Spirit. But if it's going to work, it must be *owned* by your Network, *reachable*, and *measurable*. The Network office can help you with some guidelines.

It's important to stay connected to what you have sensed God saying to your core group as you pray together. What did God tell you? How can you translate your mission statement into measurable goals for the next one to three years?

Here are some ideas, based on the “job description” the Network created for Coordinators:

PLAN A STRATEGY TO REACH AND DISCIPLE STUDENTS AT EVERY MIDDLE SCHOOL, JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL.

Start where you are. Make a chart of all the target schools, indicating:

- ◆ The **progress at each campus**. What ministries are committed to reach each one? What, if any, student-led ministry is operating there? Who are the key Christian faculty? Download school data for your area at www.everyschool.com.
- ◆ **Some goal dates for penetrating each school**. This *comes out of* and *gives focus* to your prayers.

**The plan
doesn't
have to be
perfect for
you to get
started.**

- ◆ **Potential strategy(s) which might be used to reach each campus.** There are a number of national ministries to help you. Call the Network office for suggestions.
- ◆ **The Network structure that will support your chosen strategies to reach every school** (e.g., weekly prayer, recruiting new churches as partners, bringing in outside resource ministries for training, etc.).

PLAN OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING YOUTH WORKERS IN EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP.

Students involved on the campus need to be nurtured by *healthy ministries*.

Building a movement means building up people. A Network can't reach the Target of the Great Commission unless the people in it are individually and personally committed to that goal. Part of a Network's focus should be on personal growth. A chunk of your Network meetings should be dedicated to building spiritual vitality, accountability, and prayer for key relationships (like youth workers' marriages).

Students involved on their campus need to be nurtured by *healthy ministries*. What training options can help the churches in your city build more solid youth groups? Your Network can schedule and promote these, maybe traveling together to attend an event in a distant city. Or, you might secure a video series and study it together.

ESTABLISH A PRAYER FELLOWSHIP FOR YOUTH WORKERS.

As soon as a Local Network stops listening to God, it is destined to fail. How is your local movement intentionally taking time to pray? Some groups meet monthly for a Network meeting, but gather weekly in smaller prayer groups. Youth workers in Portland, Oregon and elsewhere meet in two-or-three day Prayer Summits. Other areas gather for a day of prayer.

PLAN AREA-WIDE EVENTS TO INVOLVE YOUTH FROM MANY MINISTRIES AND CHURCHES.

It makes sense to unite to sponsor *cooperative events* that win and train students to follow Christ. Evangelistic concerts, crusades, or conferences "catch more fish using a net than by fishing with a pole." Student campus club leaders in the Long Beach, California area gather once a week for prayer, encouragement and training. Common sense says that several youth workers concentrating on the elements of a Fifth Quarter Party will do a better job than one youth pastor trying to do it as a "Lone Ranger."

RECRUIT AS MANY MEMBERS AS POSSIBLE, ENCOURAGING THEIR DEVELOPMENT AS MODELS AND RESOURCES TO OTHER MINISTRIES.

There's no point in being small! Use *e-mail and regular mailings* to invite all youth workers to your Network. Create a simple *newsletter* to reinforce your mission statement. Until your movement involves every part of the body of Christ—ethnically, by gender, denominationally—you are incomplete.² Work to diversify your relationships.

Your *Local Network itself* needs to be working steadily at enlisting other human resources in the area to participate in fulfilling the Great Commission in area schools. Examples might include local Christian media, the ministerial alliance, Christian businesses, or others.

WE REALLY DO NEED EACH OTHER.

It is important to affirm the importance of both “church” and “parachurch” ministries in reaching the goal. Where would campus ministry be today if not for the specialists who have led the way, sent out by Youth for Christ, Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Student Venture, and others? Now, in a new millennium, church-based ministries appear to be “waking up.” New ministries like Youth Alive and First Priority of America are helping to mobilize churches for the harvest where others have been so diligently plowing for decades. Each part of the body should be affirmed—and all are still needed to work together until the task is finished. We're better together!

A Network Coordinator is more effective when he or she is interacting with other Network leaders. That is one way the National Network of Youth Ministries can serve you. We can only do that if each Local Coordinator is registered with the Network office. Network membership will help your Local Network by providing valuable resources and strategy—not only for individual youth workers, but to help you build a stronger Local Network! A strong national movement gives more momentum to your local efforts, the same way a large wave carries more sand with it down the beach.

² Please note: The National Network of Youth Ministries has a doctrinal statement, and Network members adhere to common Values and Principles and sign a Covenant. These are included in the “NetDocs” in the Appendix section. While conservative in nature, there is still considerable room for doctrinal distinctives. We believe that legitimate denominational distinctives should not keep us from uniting to reach and disciple young people. For example, nearly 100 ministries have agreed to support *See You at the Pole*, and dozens of denominations have become strategic partners to work together as the Campus Alliance.

Student campus club leaders in the Long Beach, California area gather once a week for prayer, encouragement and training.



FIELD TESTED IDEAS

Local Networks are consistent about their priority activities. Some common principles:

- ◆ Most networks **meet monthly**. Many **pray** weekly.
- ◆ Mature Networks are clear about what they *do*, and what they *don't do*. The best ones stay **focused on their mission** and are not side-tracked by doctrinal issues or a lot of announcements. Suggestion: set up a table in the back for flyers.
- ◆ As a Network grows, it will be able to **offer more services**.
- ◆ As a Network matures, it **"gets more local,"** breaking down into smaller platoons that focus on a reachable number of target schools.
- ◆ Smaller Networks limit their activity to **focus on the essentials** of networking.
- ◆ In mature Networks, paid youth workers recognize, embrace, and **help volunteer youth leaders**. The body of Christ needs *all* its parts to fulfill its mission.

KEEP YOUR BALANCE

As your Network grows, it's crucial for it to maintain balance:

- ◆ If it's *too relational*, it may lose direction, become ingrown, and stall.
- ◆ If it's *too event-driven*, unity deteriorates.
- ◆ If it's *too busy*, key members may stop coming, torn by the demands of their own ministries.

PLANS: GO INDEPTH FOR MORE RESOURCES ON "PLANS":

- Read the section, "The Challenge 2000 Every School Plan" (pp. 8-13 in *1x1x56k*). Can you see how *every part* of the body of Christ is necessary to complete the task of the Great Commission? What parts of the body in your community do you have the least connection with? How can you expand your circle of cooperation (Team) to more effectively reach every student (Strategy)?
- Consider these other sections in *1x1x56k* that list resources and ministries that are working together to reach teenagers:
 - ◆ Challenge 2000/Campus Alliance members are on page 2. Find up-to-date information about resources on the Alliance web site, www.everyschool.com;
 - ◆ Legal resource organizations are on page 41 of *1x1x56k*.
 - ◆ More than 300 resources to help you reach students are in a catalog that begins on page 42 of *1x1x56k*.

- ☐ Coordinator Job Description (QuickStart, page 38)
- ☐ Planning sheets for your Network meetings, including:
 - ◆ “Themes and Guests to Consider” (InDepth, page 73)
 - ◆ A planning chart for a year of meetings (InDepth, page 75)
- ☐ “Eleven Good Meetings” (InDepth, page 77)
- ☐ Coordinator Annual Survey (Appendix, page 105)
- ☐ “Making Your Net Work” (Appendix, page 109)
- ☐ “Raising Money for Your Network” (Appendix, page 116)
- ☐ Network membership flyer (back insert in notebook,
or online at the Network’s web site)

STEP 5: PERSEVERE— BE READY FOR A BATTLE!

COUNTING THE COST

The shooting deaths of students at Heath High School in West Paducah, Kentucky; at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado; and at other schools, powerfully reminded us that *we are in a war*. Wars hurt—and there are casualties.

On December 1, 1997, nine students were shot as they were breaking up from their before-school prayer meeting in Paducah. At least two of the Columbine students were documented as having paid the ultimate price when asked the question, “Do you believe in God?” These are vivid reminders of a spiritual reality: “This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish. . .” (see Ephesians 6:10-20).

Because we battle against an enemy who is constantly probing our areas of weakness, and since we are human, we should acknowledge that Satan will sometimes succeed in creating trouble as you build your Network.

Some problems are natural and inevitable: churches change, and youth workers come and go, resulting in the loss of part of “the team” you were counting on to help carry the load. Another reality is that Networks have a “life cycle” (see [InDepth](#), page 79 for details) that affect the way they pursue their mission.

But the devil plays dirty! He attacks us personally, exploits our weaknesses, and tries to trip us up. When a youth worker falls morally, caves in to discouragement, or starts building his *own* kingdom, it hurts the whole movement. The Great Commission suffers.

That’s why Paul’s promise in Philippians 1:6 is so encouraging: “...the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.” When the “tide seems to be out” in your city as far as visible cooperation is concerned . . .

**Satan will
sometimes
succeed in
creating
trouble as
you build
your
Network.**

FINE TUNING

FORUMS AND SUMMITS

The Network provides periodic opportunities for Coordinators to gather for training, briefings, exchanging ideas, and prayer. These “Summits” are held at the same time as the **Network National Forum** in Colorado.

A **National Training Conference** for Coordinators will also meet once or twice each year.

Regional Summits convene more locally. If you would like to get together with other Coordinators in your Region, call your Regional Coordinator or the Network office.

ON THE INTERNET

A current list of Coordinators is posted at the Network’s web site, www.youthworkers.net. Or, if you want a printed copy of Coordinators in an area, we can provide that. Just contact the Network office!

... when only you and your special guest speaker show up for a Network meeting ...

... when First Church decides at the last minute *not* to bring their gazillion kids to the Outreach—and you’re stuck with 43 cold pepperoni pizzas and a fistful of bills ...

... it’s comforting to remember that “At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don’t give up, or quit” (Galatians 6:9). But there are some things you *can* do to safeguard the movement and minimize the damage.

DO THE FIRST THING—OFTEN

Your #1 defense is to repeat “Step 1”—Pray! One of the lessons from Ephesians 6 is that *we put on our armor so that we can kneel in it*. That makes about as much human sense as trying to capture a city by marching around it seven times and then blowing a bunch of horns so the walls fall down—well, you get the point. God’s ways *are* higher than ours! When He says, “Pray all the time,” it is the *best* plan.

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER—BACK TO BACK

Since the enemy attacks personally, *your Network’s fellowship should seek to be personal*. It’s healthy when the accountability level in a Network gets to the point where youth workers are holding one another accountable for their relationships with their senior pastors, for keeping balance between ministry and their families, or for what web sites they visit on the Internet. But that doesn’t happen quickly—or by accident. Developing that level of trust takes time and diligence.

IN YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION?

Satan can undermine your Network’s momentum when churches withdraw their support or involvement. One practical defense is for *youth workers to write the Local Network into their church job descriptions*. (If you’re asking, “What job description?” you probably should start there!)

MEETINGS: LEAN & MEAN

It's dangerous for us to overcrowd our personal schedules, squeezing out the really important things. It's okay for the Local Network leadership not to push *every* concert or conference. Set up a table in your meeting room for flyers for "events," rather than have your meeting time dominated by long "commercials." Be diplomatic—but help keep the Network on track to reach your goal. Keep the Target in focus.

"BUT WE'VE ALWAYS DONE IT THAT WAY..."

For events that are annual (like a See You at the Pole rally), you may want to ask, "Should we be doing this *differently*?" The natural tendency is to follow the same agenda, without asking God if He has a different plan. He might!

THE LONG VIEW

Keep your focus on the ultimate Target: the Great Commission. Your *Local* Network has not finished its job, even when every campus in your community is saturated with the gospel. The race is won *only* when Matthew 24:14 is fulfilled: "...the good news—the Message of the kingdom—will be preached all over the world, a witness staked out in every country. And then the end will come." *Then* the race will be finished. *Then* there will be a time of celebration triggered by the words, "Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner" (Matthew 25:21).

"His master commended him: 'Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner.'" —Matt. 25:21

PERSEVERE: GO INDEPTH

FOR MORE RESOURCES ON "PERSEVERE":

- ☐ You can't lead your Network if you personally drop out of the race. There are many resources available to help *you* "finish the race." We recommend Steve Farrar's excellent book, *Finishing Strong*, as one (Multnomah Books, 1996). Call a Christian bookstore or online source and ask for it.
- ☐ How do you keep your Network going when the "tide goes out?" Read "Life Cycle of a Network" for the insights of some experienced Coordinators. ([InDepth](#), page 79)

THE NETWORK COVENANT

Relationships are central in effective Networks. We need understanding, friendships, and accountability. At the first official meeting of the National Network of Youth Ministries in 1981, 22 youth workers gathered around a simple written covenant and signed it, feeling somewhat like the signers of the Declaration of Independence!

A printed version of the Network Covenant, suitable for framing, is sent to everyone when they join the Network. Members sign the Covenant, reflecting a mutual commitment to the qualities we ask God to produce in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate success of the Network hinges on every member' living out the commitment to this Covenant.

NETWORK COVENANT

“Constrained by the love of Christ,” motivated by a love for young people, and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit, I hereby enter into a covenant with God and with my co-laborers in youth ministry. I claim by faith that my life will be characterized by:

PERSONAL HOLINESS BEFORE GOD AND OTHERS, WHICH IS ESTABLISHED IN CHRIST AND EXPRESSED IN DAILY LIFE THROUGH PRAYER AND COMMITMENT TO THE WORD OF GOD.

- Network members are convinced that we must focus on the quality of our lives, asking God to build Christ-like qualities into us. These spur us on to authenticity and integrity while establishing a hedge around us for the sake of moral purity.

AN EXEMPLARY HOME LIFE THAT IS A SOURCE OF RENEWAL FOR ME AND MY FAMILY, AND A GODLY MODEL FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW.

- As the median age of today's youth worker increases and in light of our fast-paced culture, healthy youth workers must make their family relationships a top priority.

A LIFE OF DISCIPLESHIP WHICH IS REPRODUCING AN ON-GOING CHAIN OF MATURING BELIEVERS.

- Historically, Local Networks typically co-sponsored evangelistic events, but now there is also a significant effort to disciple students in advance of the evangelistic efforts. They are equipping students to take an active role in leadership, counseling and follow-up, and discipleship, preparing them for a strategic role in fulfilling the Great Commission.

INVOLVEMENT IN EVANGELISM WHICH HELPS EXPOSE EVERY TEENAGER TO THE GOSPEL IN A PERSONAL AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT WAY.

- Church youth ministries are more focused on outreach and campus ministry today than in years past. Whether or not there is freedom for youth workers to go on campus themselves, Network members take the initiative to venture into the students' world, instead of waiting for them to "come to church."

A WILLINGNESS TO MINISTER TO YOUTH FOR A LIFETIME, SHOULD GOD SO DIRECT.

- For years, youth ministry was considered a stepping stone to other areas of ministry. Now it is recognized as a legitimate, specialized calling, worthy of a lifetime commitment to reaching the youth culture.

A MINISTRY WHICH BECOMES A RESOURCE TO OTHER CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS, COOPERATING FOR GREATER EFFECTIVENESS IN MINISTERING TO TEENAGERS.

- At the heart of networking is a willingness to serve one another for the sake of the kingdom. Being a resource to others is working *smarter* as opposed to merely working *harder*. There may be apprehensions at first, but the more people team up, the more effective their efforts become.

APPLICATION TO BE A NETWORK COORDINATOR

Introduction: Network Coordinators are individuals who are the recognized leaders by their peers and identified by their National Network of Youth Ministries as the primary contact persons between a Local Network and the rest of the Network at the regional and national level. As described earlier in this Handbook, they are the “passionate leaders” for the Network vision in their sphere of influence. If you believe this describes you, complete this application and send it to the Network office (details below).

1. Describe the area your Network reaches (e.g., “Smith County” or “Urban Denver”)

Do you meet at a regular time? Please specify: _____

Does your Network have a name? Please list: _____

2. Personal information

Name _____

Ministry _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Office Phone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____

Home Phone (_____) _____ Cell (_____) _____

E-mail _____ Pager(_____) _____

Please note: The Network lists all Local Networks—and contact information for each Coordinator—on the Network’s web site, *www.youthworkers.net*, and in the *Youth Ministry Yellow Pages* so that those who want to connect with you can find you. Please contact the Network office concerning information you do not want available to the public. **Home phone numbers, fax, mobile and pager numbers are not published unless they are listed by you as your “office” number.**

3. Status of networking in your area (Please check *all* that apply)

- ☐ There is an existing multi-denominational Youth Worker Network in my area.
- ☐ I am the Coordinator of this Network, and am recognized by the other youth workers in that role.
- ☐ I am involved in a Network that is just getting established in my area.
- ☐ A Network is not functioning in my area, but I want to start one.
- ☐ Other:

4. Criteria

- ☐ I have read and agree to fulfill the Job Description to the best of my ability.
- ☐ I have signed the Network Covenant (see following page).
- ☐ I agree with the Network's Long Range Objectives (see "Long Range Objectives" in the Network Documents at the front of the Appendix in this *Handbook*) and will seek to implement them in my area.
- ☐ I have contacted my Regional Coordinator and have his/her approval to be the Local Coordinator (see list in the Blue Pages of the *Youth Ministry Yellow Pages*).
- ☐ I am not currently a Network member.
 - _____ I am enclosing an application for membership.
 - _____ Please send me an application so I can join immediately.

5. Membership in the National Network of Youth Ministries

As a Network Coordinator, you will be seen as a representative of the National Network of Youth Ministries. We want to be a resource to you, and help you in your cooperative ministry. In order to do that, and encourage continuity with the Network vision, we require that all Network Coordinators maintain active Network membership. Being fully connected *helps us help you* to be a better resource to your community. Network membership is on a "optional donation basis only." In other words, it's free. But you must be willing to sign the Network Covenant.

Member Benefits: We send out publications to you, including the unique bi-monthly newsletter for Coordinators only, nc™. The *Take 5 FastFax* is faxed or e-mailed to members on alternate months. As a member, you also receive the *Youth Ministry Yellow Pages*, *NNYM Magazine*, (4 per year), Action Packs (2 per year, filled with free or highly discounted offers), the Youth Worker Discount Card, and more.

6. Agreement: I agree to the relationship as outlined above. Please accept my application to be recognized as a Network Coordinator.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please complete this application and mail or fax it (858-451-6900) to the Network office. Or, go to www.youthworkers.net and fill out the online application under "Coordinators." To receive an "e-mail form," send your request to coordinators@nnym.org. It will be returned to you promptly.

COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTIONS

*The Job Descriptions below are for Coordinators who serve in a **voluntary role**. Some Coordinators, particularly at the District, Metro and Regional level, may be full time. They may be employed as Field Coordinators with the Network. For a description of these roles, or if you are interested in working for the Network in your area, please contact the Network office.*

PERSONAL CRITERIA FOR ALL NETWORK COORDINATORS

- An individual of personal and spiritual **maturity** (I Timothy 3).
- **Stability** in local ministry.
- Recognized and **affirmed by others** in his/her area as the Coordinator.
- Willingness to fulfill the **job description**.
- **Network member** committed to Network vision and ministry principles.
- **Approved** by Regional Coordinator (Regional Coordinators are approved by the Network Ministry Council).

METRO OR DISTRICT COORDINATORS

1. Work with Regional Coordinator to **design a strategy** to accomplish national long-range objectives within the District or Metro area.
2. **Identify leadership**, and recruit Area and Local Coordinators for the District and Metro areas in the Region.
3. Identify leadership throughout the District, and **establish a District Council** composed of key Network leaders from throughout the District. District & Metro Coordinators should work in partnership to devise strategy, facilitate communication within the Region, and help plan networking events.
4. **Meet personally with the Regional Coordinator** at least once per quarter.

5. **Attend training events** sponsored by the Network at least once per year.
6. **Establish gatherings** within the area to communicate vision, build relationships, and provide training. These might include Coordinator Summits, etc.
7. **Communicate regularly** with the Regional Coordinator regarding progress and concerns.
8. **Help recruit other Metro Coordinators** for the Region, in order to fulfill Network objectives for the Region.
9. **Provide for a smooth transition** to new leadership, when a new Coordinator is needed, in cooperation with National leadership and ensuring that the new Coordinator understands the Job Descriptions.

LOCAL OR AREA COORDINATORS

1. **Plan a strategy** to establish a ministry to every middle school, junior high, and high school in the area of your Local or Area Network.
2. **Work with other leaders to plan local training events** for youth workers in evangelism and discipleship. Support Regional Network events.
3. **Establish a prayer fellowship** for local youth workers.
4. **Plan citywide events** to involve youth from many ministries and churches.
5. **Recruit as many Network members** as possible, encouraging their involvement and support for National Network Long Range Objectives.
6. **Communicate regularly with the National Office and Regional Coordinator** regarding progress and concerns of the Network, including the annual “Five Minute Survey.”
7. **Provide for a smooth transition** to new leadership, when a new Coordinator is needed, in cooperation with Regional and National leadership and ensuring that the new Coordinator understands the Job Descriptions.

NEXT SECTIONS

INDEPTH

The InDepth section takes you a little deeper than QuickStart, following the same format (the five “Ps”), but giving you more detailed information and resources to help you as you lead your Local Network. Some of the articles are listed already in the QuickStart section. There is a Table of Contents at the beginning of the section.

APPENDIX

The Appendix provides collateral material. Some is for reference, following the same format (the five “Ps”), providing additional resources to help you. Many of these documents and articles are important references for context and information. This section includes:

- A **Table of Contents** for the section
- **Network documents** (NetDocs): History, Purpose, Objectives, Covenant, etc.

There is also space in the binder to file **nc™** (the Coordinator newsletter), other publications, and materials Coordinators receive from the Network office. You may also want to file plans and notes that relate to your Local Network.

COMPANION PUBLICATIONS

There are other resources that, along with *Building 21st Century Networks*, will help you in your role as a Network Coordinator:

- *1x1x56k: The Starter Kit for Campus Ministry* (back pocket)
- Current edition of the *Youth Ministry Yellow Pages*
- *Building 21st Century Networks* video training (see “Training” section of this notebook, or access it online at the Network’s web site)

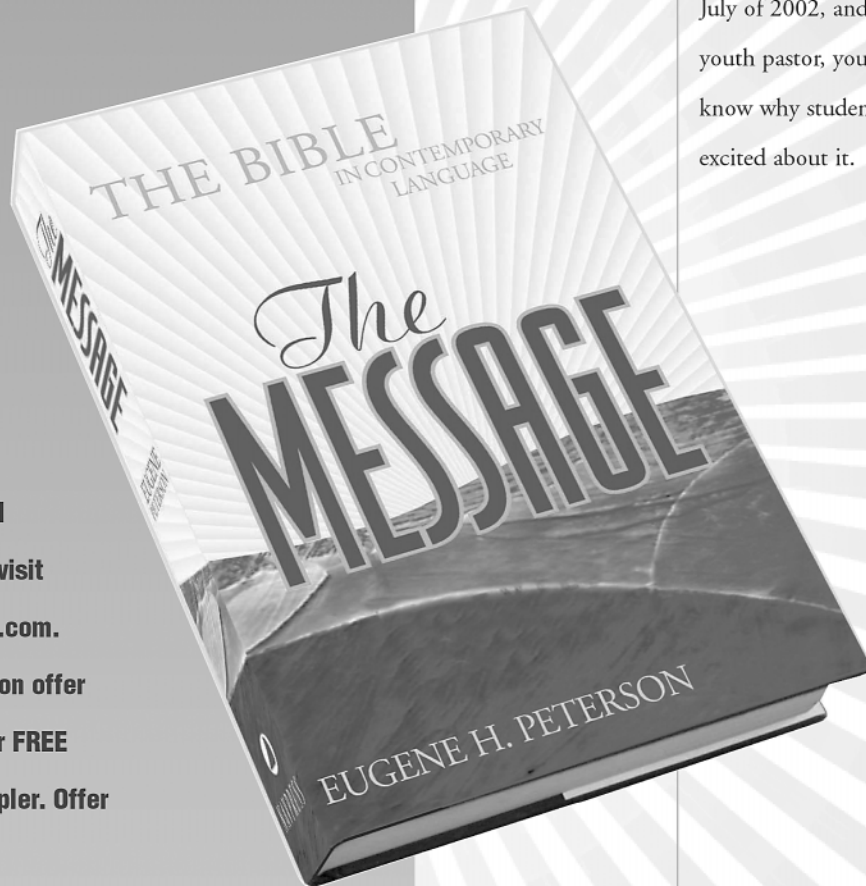
WHY DO YOUR STUDENTS NEED THE MESSAGE?

"Sometimes reading the Bible was just something I hated to do, but now that I can understand what's going on, it is such a cool thing to do. I love reading The Message."

— C.A.H. IN RICHMOND, VA

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