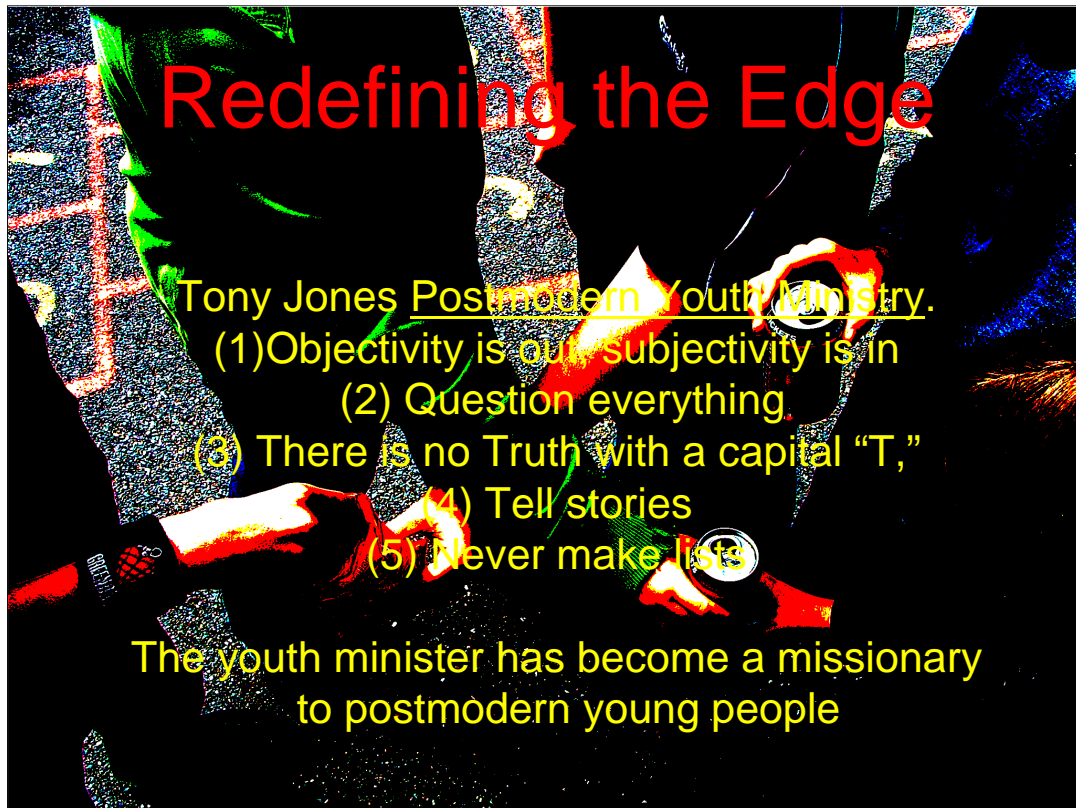




Working with Young People on the Edge



Tony Jones in his seminal book, Postmodern Youth Ministry.^[1] Jones somewhat ironically summarizes the postmodern credos: (1) Objectivity is out, subjectivity is in, (2) Question everything, (3) There is no Truth with a capital "T," (4) Tell stories, and (5) Never make lists!^[2] In his book, Jones articulates something akin to a postliberal approach, in which Christian faith exists in a subculture, not holding or seeking a dominant role in culture. In this status, the youth minister is missionary to postmodern young people, who, according to Jones, hold somewhat different sensibilities than boomers--including hunger for God/transcendence, desire for experiences and a need to question everything. In this postmodern context, community, story, language, confirmation, ancient practices, Biblical literacy and webs of belief are important for evangelism and discipleship of youth.

^[1] Prior to Jones there were many who, without identifying their work as postmodern, were nevertheless responding to key themes in postmodern theology, such as consumerism, ecclesiology, liturgy, community, theological orthodoxy, media, multiple ways of knowing, etc.

^[2] Tony Jones, Postmodern Youth Ministry: Exploring Cultural Shift, Creating Holistic Connections, Cultivating Authentic Community (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 26-27.



75
72
69
66

JESUS OF NAZARETH
1865A45736C

God is a
Missionary God.
Our Primary
revelation of God
is Jesus.
This revelation
needs to be our
model for
ministry.

How you see Jesus will, affect how you do mission which will effect how you do church.



inside out – Outside in

Inside Out

Starting with the young people in your church, for example a church youth group and working with their friendship circles to draw young people into the group and church.

Please Tick

Outside in

Working with the young people in your local community for example through an open youth club to draw them into church.

Please Tick

In a post Christendom and post modern culture where there is a distrust of institutions and church no longer holds a central position, inside out and outside in models are increasingly obsolete. As mentioned in this post modern culture we have become or need to become missionaries with young people.

Do we need to return to the model that sees church happening as the result of mission rather than the other way around? Developed from our revelation of God as missionary God and follow this through in our approach.



Naming the Elephant in the Room

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. Eph 5 v 31-32



Images in the New Testament of Church

Kingdom and Temple (Rev 1:6, 5:10), People of God, Household and Family, New exodus (James 1:1, 1 Pet 1:1), A vineyard (Mk 12:1-12), A flock (Lk 12:32), A body, A new humanity (Eph 2:14), Salt, A wedding feast, A fish net, A boat, Wine, A fig tree, A building, A lady, A bride, A city, A new creation, A new race, A light, A tree, A community, A group of slaves, or friends, or servants, or children.

Paul Minear in *Images of Church in the New Testament* (1960) identifies 96 images of church. Can you find the other 66?

Stick with me/ Over to You

- Church is Mystery (Eph 5 v 31 and 32)
 - Described analogically e.g. body, vine, etc
 - Images suggest '*attitude and a course of action*'
 - John 10 v10
- Could really describe what is happening in your youth work?
 - Is what you do about attitudes and action?
 - Have young people or leaders ever described what you do as church?

Part of the problem in helping us move forward is in our thinking about Church. We have a fairly static and fixed idea about what is Church. I would also question the authenticity of our views and concepts of Church based some of the following.

Church is Mystery (Eph 5 v 31 and 32) BUT we can't cope with this kind of uncertainty we need things pinned down we need to know what is and what isn't church. Even Dulles in Models of church starts with this point but goes on to give definition?

Described analogically e.g. body, vine, etc Jesus and in the letters use similes and metaphor the common thing amongst these images is that

Images suggest '*attitude and a course of action*' They often talk about process and outcome but we have this static idea about church Hence Planting rather than growing

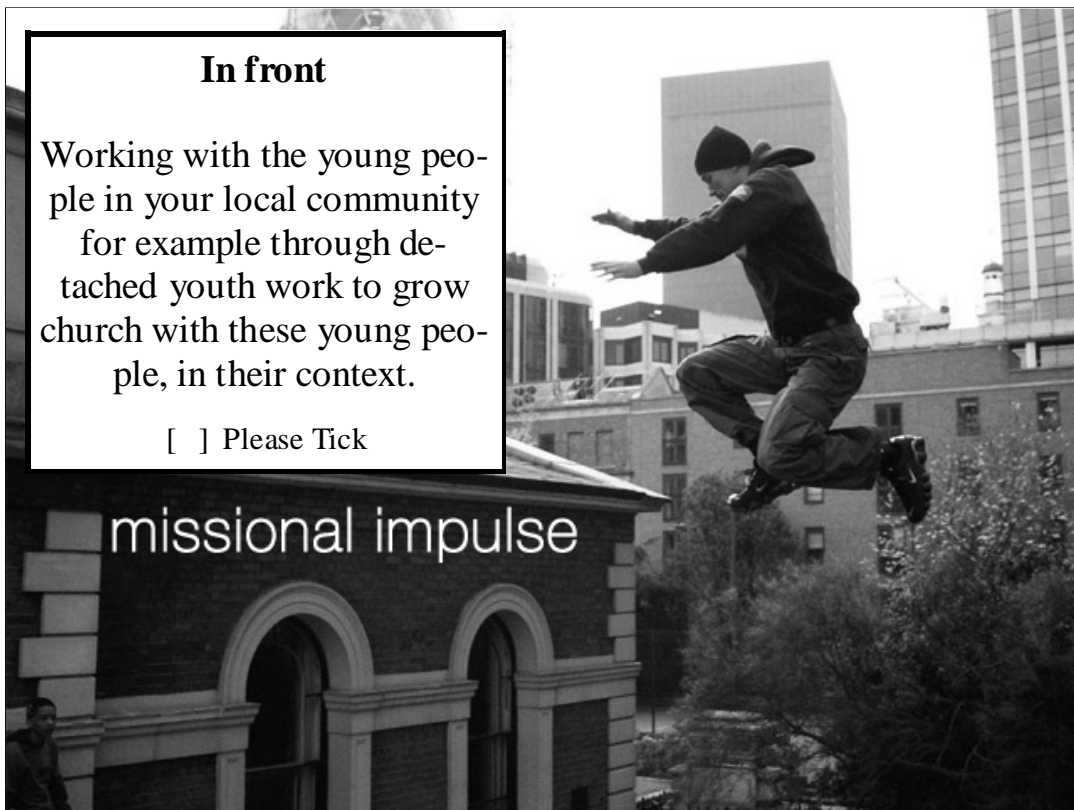
John 10 v10. For me this is the key scripture we need to focus on as we seek to be missionaries to the world around us.

In front

Working with the young people in your local community for example through detached youth work to grow church with these young people, in their context.

[] Please Tick

missional impulse







Links

- www.sundaypapers.org.uk
- www.fyt.org.uk

