YOUTH CULTURE

GOAL
To have the ability to work in the youth culture through an understanding of current youth issues and environment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
After completing this module participants will be able to:

a.
- i. Name the current social and economic climate in which adolescents are living in Aotearoa/NZ today
- ii. Identify issues facing youth in this context.
- iii. Identify external influences that shape the youth culture

b.
- i. Give an example of how two of these issues are affecting youth as a result of the current socio/political/economic environment
- ii. Explain how the youth culture has been shaped by external influences in the last 20 years

c. Illustrate how they would enable young people to identify the factors of their environment that influence their present and future culture

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What to Do

1.   Before you read any further write a paragraph each about what you think
      youth is
      culture is
      subculture is
      youth culture is

2.   Read resource material pages 6 to 18. Write 400 words about youth culture in light of
      this material. What is youth culture? Is there one youth culture or many subcultures?
      Where does youth culture come from? What new things did you learn about youth
      culture? The media and youth culture.

3.   Complete **one** of the two options below.

      a.   Collect together four magazines targeted at young people. What are the stories
            and ads saying about young people? Why did you select these particular
            magazines? (Tip try your library for magazines)

      OR

      b.   Talk to four young people who have different music tastes. Find out what their
            favourite song is. Get lyrics to the songs and think about what impact the
            lyrics and music styles might have for young people. What is it about the
            different kinds of music that appeals to different kinds of young people?

4.

      a.   Find a way to creatively express what your chosen media says about youth
            culture. This could take the form of a collage or tape. Make sure to include an
            evaluation and interpretation of the information you collected.

      b.   Reflect on how youth cultures are created for example do businesses create
            youth culture or do young people selectively use manufactured culture to
            express who they are? Do young people generate their own culture? Give
            reasons for the conclusions you make. Refer to the material you have
            collected. Write about 400 words.

| Step two | Growing up in Aotearoa/New Zealand | 6 hours |

4.   Investigate local and regional newspapers for a week to collect information that
      highlights current social and economic issues that might effect young people in
      Aotearoa/NZ

5.   Youth Survey
      a.   Use the survey form on page 4 to find out what the key issues are for young
            people. Aim for ten completed responses
      b.   Compile your survey results and identify what young people think the key
            issues are for them.

6.   Select one issue for more detailed exploration in a 500-700 word magazine article
      style piece. Your article needs to be well researched and interesting. Look at the cause
      and effect of the issues. Your research could involve talking to young people, writing
      to relevant organisations for material, interviewing a person in your community
      working in or effected by your topic and/or looking at published material.

Step Three	Life Experience	3 1/2 Hours

7. Gather together two over forty year olds and two teenagers. Get them to talk about their experiences as young people. Use these steps:

    Prepare a list of questions you want to use and talk about them with another person as a way to check the questions suitability. You need to be able to assess whether or not the nature and activities of young people have changed and why or why not.

    Find two over forty year olds and two teenagers. Make sure they are not all from the same family. Invite them to a discussion about their youth.

    During the discussion take notes or record the conversation. Make sure people feel safe to share e.g. talk about confidentiality.

8.
    a. Write a 500-word piece or find a creative way that compares and contrasts the four people's experiences. Consider whether or not the nature and activities of young people have changed and why or why not. Assess whether the people you talked with have had experiences that are unique or experiences that happen to most people?
    b. Talk with your mentor about your experiences as a young person. How do they impact on your youth ministry?

Step four	Youth Culture Awareness	4 hours

9. Prepare and use a 45min to 1 hr process to get young people to think about their culture and the influences around them.
    a. Prepare the process and send in an outline.
    b. Use the process
    c. Write a reflection on how you felt the session went. What were the highlights. What would you do differently?

Step Five	Youth Culture and Youth Ministry	1 1/2 hours

10. In light of your work in this module and the reading in pages 19 to 22 share how you think the variety of youth subcultures impacts on youth ministry and your youth ministry in particular. Do this in any way you choose. This might include a story, song, poem, painting drawing, writing ...... As a guide write 1-2 pages or record a 5 minute tape.

What's Up?? A Youth Survey

Age___
Gender: (circle one) male   female
Ethnicity (circle one) Pakeha   Maori   Pacific Island: _____ (details)
          Asian: _____ (details)   Other: _____

I spend my leisure time doing:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(List three major activities)

The three most important issues facing me in the next year are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Complete these sentences

Being a young person is _____ because
_____
_____

I worry about _____
_____
_____
_____

Growing up in New Zealand is enjoyable because _____
_____
_____
_____

Growing up in New Zealand is a worry because _____
_____
_____
_____

From the list below circle five issues that concern you most.

Nuclear testing	Ozone hole	Unemployment	Student loans
Drugs	Gambling	Drink Driving	Poverty
Youth facilities	Driving	Aids	Sex
Pornography	Sexual abuse	Child slavery	Maori land claims
New clothes	Friends	Family	Pollution
Faith	Passing exams	Homework	Violence

Why did you choose these issues?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Youth Is

Adolescence: the period of growth from childhood to maturity

Maturity: the time in life when one becomes an adult physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually.

Puberty: that whole period during which the person reaches sexual maturity and becomes capable of reproduction.

Pubescence: that whole period during which the physical changes related to sexual maturity take place.

Teenager: in a strict sense, a person in the teen years: 13-19

Juvenile: in the legal sense, one who is not yet considered an adult in the eyes of the law.

What is adolescence?

What is adolescence? Let's define adolescence and related concepts such as maturity, puberty, pubescence, teenager, juvenile, and youth.

The word *adolescence* comes from the Latin verb *adolescere*, which means "to grow" or "to grow to maturity". It is defined as a period of growth between childhood and adulthood. People disagree about where it begins and ends, especially because the period has been prolonged in Western culture. Adolescence is generally considered an intermediate stage between childhood and adulthood. The transition from one stage to the other is gradual and uncertain, and the time span is not the same for every person, but most adolescents eventually become mature adults. In this sense, adolescence is likened to a bridge between childhood and adulthood over which individuals must pass before they take their places as mature, responsible, creative adults.

The word *teenager* is of fairly recent origin. It first appeared in the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* in the 1943-1945 issue. Subsequently, the term has become popular in the lay vocabulary

From Rice F. The Adolescent: Development, Relationship and Culture
8th Edition Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 1996

Historical Perceptions of Youth

Negative perceptions of adolescents have been prevalent throughout history. During the eighth century B.C., Hesiod provided the following description of youth:

> I see no hope for the future of your people if the/ are dependent on the frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words. . . . When I was a boy, we were taught to be discreet and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly wise and impatient of restraint.

Complaints about youth were echoed by Loring in the eighteenth century:

> When children and young people are suffered to haunt the taverns, get into vile company, rabble up and down in the evening, when they should be at home to attend family worship: in the dark and silent night, when they should be in their beds, when they are left alone to take other sinful courses without check or restraint, they are then on the high road to ruin.

Literature from the nineteenth century repeatedly referred to youth as "disorderly" and

"disobedient." Burton wrote:

> It must be confessed that an irreverent, unruly spirit has come to be a prevalent, an outrageous evil among the young people of our land. . . . Some of the good old people make facetious complaint on this. . . . "There is as much family government now as there used to be in our young days," they said, "only it has changed hands."

The images of adolescence in English literature from the Middle Ages to the modern period depict adolescence as a time of turbulence, excess, and passion (Violate and Wiley, 1990). Chaucer (1963) portrayed youth as frivolous, devoted to love and silly pleasure, possessed with lust and sensuality, but also agile and full of strength. In Shakespeare's work (1974), the period of youth was characterized by passion and sensuality—a stage of excess and exuberance. Milton viewed adolescence more positively as a stage of intellectual development and of joy. Dickens depicted adolescent children as helpless and abused pawns who were exploited for economic advantage in the cruel and uncaring world of industrial England. In the midst of the vile evil, Dickens showed, however, that the social character of the Oliver Twists of the world can allow them to rise above the most unfavorable circumstances. Dickens stated: "In this spirit... I wish to show in little Oliver, the principle of God surviving through every adverse circumstance" (Dickens, I9S9).

It is clear that sociocultural, political, economic and ideological factors, as well as mass media stereotypes, influence perceptions of youth.

From: Manning. M. L (1983. Winter). "Three Myths Concerning Adolescence," Adolescence 18:824*; Loring, I. (1718).* Duff and Interests of Young Persons *(Boston), p. 18: Burton. W. (1863).* He/ps to Education *(Crosby and Nichols). pp. 38-39; and Violato, C. and Wiley, A. J. (1990). "Images of Adolescence in English Literature: The Middle Ages to the Modern Period."* Adolescence. 2S, 253-264.

Culture Is

DEFINING FEATURES OF CULTURE

In everyday usage, the word *culture* refers to a desirable quality we can acquire by attending a sufficient number of plays and concerts and trudging through several miles of art galleries. The anthropologist, however, has a different definition, as Ralph Linton explains:

> [Culture] refers to the total way of life of any society, not simply to those parts of this way which the society regards as higher or more desirable. Thus culture, when applied to our own way of life, has nothing to do with playing the piano or reading Browning. For the social scientist such activities are simply elements within the totality of our culture. This totality also includes such mundane activities as washing dishes or driving an automobile, and for the purposes of cultural studies these stand quite on a par with "the finer things of life." It follows that for the social scientist there are no uncultured societies or even individuals. Every society has a culture, no matter how simple this culture may be, and every human being is cultured, in the sense of participating in some culture or other.

Culture, then, refers to innumerable aspects of life. To most anthropologists, culture encompasses the learned behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideals that are characteristic of a particular society or population. We are each born into a complex culture that will strongly influence how we live and behave tor the remainder of our lives.

Culture Is Shared

If only one person thinks or does a certain thing, that thought or action represents a personal habit, not a pattern of culture. For a thought or action to be considered cultural, it must be commonly shared by some population or group of individuals; even if an idea or behavior is not commonly shared, it is cultural if most people think it is appropriate. The idea that marriage should involve only one man and only one woman is cultural in our society. Most

Americans share this idea and act accordingly when they marry. The role of president of the United States is not widely shared— after all, there is only one such person at a time— but the role is cultural because most Americans agree that it should exist, and its occupant is generally expected to exhibit certain behaviors. We share certain values, beliefs, and behaviors with our families and friends (although anthropologists are not particularly concerned with this type of cultural group). We share cultural characteristics with segments of our population whose ethnic or regional origins, religious affiliations, and occupations are the same as our own. We have certain practices in common with all Americans. And we share certain characteristics with people beyond our national borders who have similar interests (such as rules for international sporting events) or similar roots (as do the various English-speaking nations).

When we talk about the shared customs of a society, which constitute the central concern or cultural anthropology, we are referring to a *culture.* When we talk about the shared customs of a group within a society, which are a central concern of sociology, we are referring to a subculture. And when we study the shared customs of some group that transcends national boundaries, we are talking about a phenomenon for which we do not have a single word (only compound phrases including the word *culture).* So, for example, we refer to Western *culture* (the cultural characteristics of societies in or derived from western Europe) and the *culture of poverty* (the presumed cultural characteristics of poor people the world over).

Culture Is Learned
Not all things shared generally by a population are cultural. The typical hair color of a population is not cultural. Nor is eating. For something to be considered cultural, it must be learned as well as shared. A typical hair color (unless dyed) is not cultural because it is genetically determined. Humans eat because they must, but what and when and how they eat is learned and varies from culture to culture. Americans do not think dogs are edible, and indeed the idea of eating dogs horrifies us. But in China, as in some other societies, dog meat is considered delicious. In our society, many people consider a baked ham to be a holiday dish. However, in several societies of the Middle East, including those of Egypt and Israel, eating the meat of a pig is forbidden by sacred writings.

Ember C. and Ember M. Anthropology *5*[th] *edition New Jersey: Prentice Hall. 1988*

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

The culture concept was first developed by anthropologists toward the end of the nineteenth century. The first really clear and comprehensive definition was that of the British anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor. Writing in 1871, Tylor defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Since Tylor's time, definitions of culture have proliferated. In the 1950's, the late A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn combed the literature and collected over a hundred definitions of culture. Recent definitions tend to distinguish more clearly between actual behaviour on the one hand and the abstract values, beliefs and perceptions of the world that lie behind that behaviour on the other. To put it another way, culture is not observable behaviour but rather the values and beliefs that people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour, and which that behaviour reflects. An acceptable modern definition of culture, then, runs as follows: culture is a set of rules or standards that, when acted upon by the members of a society, produce behaviour that falls within a range of variance the members consider proper and acceptable.

CULTURE IS SHARED

Culture is a set of shared ideals, values, and standards of behaviour; it is the common denominator that makes the actions of individuals intelligible to the group. Because they share a common culture, people can predict each other's actions in a given circumstance and react accordingly.

Youth culture and subculture

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

As we have seen, adolescent society is not one single, comprehensive, monolithic structure that includes all young people. There are usually numerous adolescent societies with wide variations among various age groups, socioeconomic levels, and ethnic or national backgrounds. Furthermore, adolescent societies are only vaguely structured. They exist without any formal, written codification and without traditions of organizational patterns. Individuals move into and out of each system within a few short years, contributing to structural instability. Each local group of adolescents is provincial, with few ties beyond school membership and the local gang and clique. Although there are nationwide youth organizations, fan clubs, or competitive athletic events, most adolescent societies are primarily local, variably replicated in community after community.

The same cautions should be applied to adolescent culture. We cannot speak of U.S. adolescent culture as though it were a body of beliefs, values, and practices uniformly espoused by all youths throughout the country. Just as there are regional, ethnic, and class versions of the national adult culture, so are there variations in expression of adolescent culture among differing segments of the population. Adolescent culture is not homogeneous; the popular image of adolescent culture usually refers to urban, middle-class youth. Actually, there may be important deviations from this pattern. A more accurate description would convey that there are numerous versions of teenage culture expressed by various segments of American youth who share some common elements of a general middle-class youth culture, but who participate selectively and in varying degrees in the activities of the organized adolescent society.

But before we can analyze adolescent society or culture, an important question needs to be answered: Are adolescent society and culture unique and different from those of the adult world?

THE ADOLESCENT SUBCULTURE

According to one point of view, *adolescent subculture* emphasizes conformity in the peer group and values chat are contrary to adult values. This subculture exists primarily in the high school, where it constitutes a small society, one that has most of its important interactions within itself, and which maintains only a few threads of connection with the outside adult society. This happens because children are set apart in schools, where they take on more and more extracurricular activities for longer periods of training. Segregated from the adult world, they develop subcultures with their own language, styles, and, most important, value systems that may differ from those of adults. As a result, the adolescent lives in a segregated society and establishes a subculture that meets with peer, but not adult, approval.

An opposite point of view is that adolescents reflect adult values, beliefs, and practices—the theory of an adolescent subculture, segregated and different from adult culture, is a myth. This view is substantiated by a number of studies. One study of 6,000 adolescents from ten different nations revealed that for the most part adolescents were not alienated from their parents. Today's youth had great respect for their parents (Atkinson, 1988). Two other researchers compared parent versus adolescent political views over an eight-year period and found that the generations were moving closer together rather than apart (Jennings and Niemi. 1978). Where there was conflict between generations. it usually centered in mundane, day-to-day issues such as noisiness, tidiness, punctuality, and living under the same roof, rather than on fundamental values such as honesty, perseverance, and concern for others.

One study examined the extent of agreement of adolescents' educational expectations with perceived maternal and paternal educational goals. This study found that adolescents were more inclined to adopt the orientation if held by both parents than if it were supported by one parent, but denied by the other Smith, 1991). Consistency of parental expectations is an important factor in the socialization of adolescents and in their inclination to adopt the point of view of their parents.

> From this point of view, the cultural norms shared by teenagers in the United States are not very different from those shared by adult Americans. (Were it otherwise, the indoctrination-al efforts of parents, teachers, preachers, and others would constitute a pretty sorry record; and the theory of learning by imitation would be totally— instead of only partially—discredited.)

From Rice F. The Adolescent: Development, Relationships and Culture. *8th Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 1996*

The Adolescent Subculture

Culture may be defined as the concepts, habits, skills, arts, instruments, and institutions of a given people in a given period. *Subculture* refers to the concepts and mores of a smaller group within that culture. Certain features must be shared by the members of a community for it to be considered a subculture: (1) A set of standards and values; (2) a common mode of behavior accompanied by a shared language (3) a certain life style expressed through selection of clothes, makeup, music, and so forth; (4) a concept of belonging to a group that confers "we" status, while anyone outside has "they" status; (5) a hierarchy of some sort, whether rigid or fluid, that governs relations; and (6) goals and desires that help the group achieve what the outside culture might not (Goffman, 1963).

When we examine these factors, we find that specific adolescent peer groups and the more general adolescent community do in fact frequently fulfill these functions for many adolescents. There are common and shared standards and values which are different from parental mores. While the content of these values may vary from group to group, peer group members share values, life styles, and language, and the peer group may owe its existence to some extent to the psychological needs that are satisfied by the adolescent subculture (Elder.1972; Rosenmayr, 1972).

Clothing

The appearance o| group members is important in defining the group, both to the members themselves and to the outside world. Thus clothing becomes a very significant symbol for teenagers showing who is an insider and who is "out of it." In many communities in the late 1960s the length of their sons' hair was a major area of conflict in parent—child arguments. In other towns, parents felt they could tolerate their childrens' long hair and tattered bluejeans if only other aspects of the counterculture, like drugs,. sexual promiscuity, and political radicalism could be ruled out. With the passage of time, most people have become used to the relaxed code of youthful dress. Indeed, for a time the adult fashion world adopted and adapted many aspects ol it. What did the bizarre costumes of the Woodstock generation represent? What, if anything, does the drift away from that style signify?

One study (Thomas, 1973) sought correlations between fashion and ideology on a large Eastern) university campus. It was found that maong70 randomly selected males living in two dormitories there were three rather distinct fashion modes. One group favored what some would call a fifities look: short hair (even crew cuts), dress slacks, tailored shirts with neckties, or conventional open-necked sport shirts. At the other extreme were those who sported the unisex hippie style: long hair and beards, flamboyantly colorful shirrs and trousers, beads, and accessories. Between the two extremes were those who wore either jeans or slacks, no neckties, button-down shirts or sport shirrs, and had hair of moderate length, rarely longer than to their ears.

Thomas found the expected correlations between the style of dress these men adopted and their social and political attitudes. "The more radically dressed group was more likely to have politically liberal views, to be aware of their age group as a distinct entity within society, to be sensitive to sex-role stereotyping, and to be tolerant of sexual activity between unmarried people. The more conservatively dressed and groomed men were correspondingly conservative in their views.

If clothes and grooming reflect ideology, then it may be reasonable to choose one's friends by the way they dress. Some of the girls in another interesting study might not support that view, however. Allen and Eicher (1975) studied 154 ninth-grade girls, and later tested 138 of them again when they were in twelfth grade. In a series of interviews, the researchers found that 47 percent of the most popular and best-dressed girls would in fact reject a girl who wore mismatched outfits, 55 percent would reject a girl whose hair was messy, and 22 percent would reject a girl who wore an unfashionable kind of socks. Girls with somewhat lower prestige were a bit less likely to choose friends on the basis of their taste in clothes, while girls who were distinctly intellectual were even less likely to do so (18 percent for mismatching, 16 percent for messy hair, and 7 percent for wrong socks). Only the girls from working-class homes consistently .refused to rule out friendship with girls described as out of fashion or poorly groomed. Perhaps they realized that the clothes their classmates wore were more likely to reflect the parents' tastes and incomes than the girls' own personalities.

Language

Another feature of a subculture is the language shared by its members with a vocabulary not understood by outsiders. A good example-is the language of plantation slaves who could thereby communicate with each other without revealing the message to their masters. In their study of youth culture. Gary Schwartz and Don Merten (1967) discuss the way language indicates status within the youth system. The group uses certain slang terms to define its members and other terms for those whom they feel threatened by or need to exclude.

The language of the subculture is as revealing as its clothing. In a study of language patterns within the subculture (Nelson and Rosenbaum, 1972). it was found that frequency of slang responses increased among all adolescents with age. The; use of slang was also found to

correlate with topics that are highly charged for the adolescent, such as alcohol and drinking, drugs, and the opposite sex

Music

For many adolescents, music is more than just a background for social activities; it is the medium through which the mores, the concerns, and the problems of the subculture are communicated. Contemporary teenagers seem to listen to music the way older generations read books: to find out who they are, what the world is like, and how they should behave. The songs of the 1960s and the performers who sang them raised political consciousness, ushered in more liberal attitudes towards drugs and sex, and did much to consolidate the concepts of the subculture. Thus the music of the adolescent subculture has had the effect of drawing together many who might not have shared interests otherwise. One need only think of such films as *Saturday Night Fever* to appreciate the impact that rock music can make on a whole generation.

Social Settings

Social settings are important elements of the subculture. They must be accessible to the members, private, and more or less permanent. Without them, the group would disperse and lack a central meeting ground. It is usually important for the young people themselves to designate their social setting. For adults to intervene or establish such centers as church socials or recreation centers is often all it takes to discourage participation.

In some communities the place for teenagers to hang out is the local drive-in, fast-food outlet, or pizzeria. Adolescents feel they cannot stay home, and they cannot loiter on street corners for fear of police harassment. The pizzeria or drive-in, with its central location, minimum of adult supervision, juke box, and soda is an ideal place to gather. R. J. Kelly (1974) believes that the prime motive for adolescent gatherings at hangouts is to avoid being alone ("a real calamity potentially afflicting or threatening to demoralize teenagers"). In an informal study, he described the comings and goings at a typical neighborhood pizzeria. He found that young people generally arrive in one-sex groups of three or four, mix and mingle with members of other groups for a while, and then often take off in combined heterosexual crowds. He concludes that the hangout serves as a communications center, a forum for discussion on what to do next, an arena for showing off, and a mobilization area for future action.

From Rogers D. Adolescents and Youth. *New Jersey: Prentice Hall*

Where Does Youth Culture Come From?

INTRODUCTION

Youth culture is a hot potato in Christian circles at the moment. Some people say that youth culture is leading young people astray, whilst others see youth culture as an exciting and new source of energy to renew the church. As a youthworker you need to decide what your attitude is going to be to youth culture. Is youth culture a bad influence on young people or is it a force which can he used for good? To answer this question I believe you first need to wrestle with where youth culture comes from. What I mean by this is: Who creates youth culture? Is youth culture the invention of adults who are primarily concerned with selling things to the teenage market or is youth culture created hy young people themselves?

EXERCISE

What do you think? Is youth culture just the creation of adults who want to exploit young people or do you think that young people create their own cultures using the media as building blocks? Give your opinion in a short written piece not more than 300 words long. You should take about one hour to complete this exercise.

FEEDBACK

Here are two different answers to this question. The first answer is taken from the American book *Dancing in the Dark.* This book is written by a group of Christian college lecturers who got together for a year to study youth culture. In *Dancing in the Dark* the authors argue that young people today are being manipulated by massive powerful multi-media businesses which market music, fashion and images to young people.

> Contemporary society merely exacerbates the patterns of generational conflict begun long ago. To put it more strongly and more critically, more and more adults are very much in tin: business of giving youth the means to show how different they are from older people. In the past, youth typically had to 'generate' their own values, beliefs, and practices. Now, however, corporate North America has found that encouraging relatively distinct generational groups helps the proverbial bottom line. Since youth like to be different, these corporations have decided to heighten that sense of distinctiveness. Why not sell them their 'own' music, clothing, films, TV shows, radio stations— whatever subgroup product the youth market will buy?

Dancing in the Dark, page 3

A contrasting view to this comes from the sociologist Paul Willis who argues that young people use the media to create meaning for themselves. They do this by using the symbols offered by the media-— for example, hairstyles, items of clothing, or ways of speaking—to create their own particular style. Youth sub-cultures come about because of young people making choices about what they wear or what they listen to or how they spend their leisure time. The media is important to these choices, but this docs not mean that the young people are not being creative in choosing between the different images being offered to them.

> *Most young people's lives are not involved with the arts and yet are actually full of expressions, signs and symbols through which individuals and groups seek creatively to establish their presence, identity and meaning.*
>
> *We are thinking of the extraordinary symbolic creativity of the multitude of ways in which young people use, humanize, decorate and invest with meanings their common immediate life spaces and social practices—personal styles and choices of clothes; selective and active use of music, TV, magazines; decoration of bedrooms; the rituals of romance and subcultural styles; the style, banter and drama of friendship groups; music making and dance. Nor are these pursuits and activities trivial or inconsequential. In conditions of late modernization and the widespread crisis of cultural values they can be crucial to the creation and sustenance of individual and group identities, even to cultural survival of identity itself.*

CommonCulture, pages 1-2

My own feeling is that both of these books have a point. Of course we are all affected by the media and we all use the media in constructing our own style. If the papers hadn't told us about Pavarotti then most people probably wouldn't have bought the CD. This seems obvious. But not many of us would want to argue that we are all manipulated into liking Pavarotti by the advertising in the papers. This would be to insult our intelligence. The papers have shown us a product which we have decided to buy. It is the fact that we have made a free choice in this matter, based on the obvious merits of Pavarotti, which makes us feel that we are not being manipulated. The argument of *Dancing in the Dark* relies on essentially devaluing this process of decision making. Adults who get upset about the media and young people tend to say that young people are in some way more susceptible to being manipulated. This seems to me to be a bit naive.

My own feeling is that many Christians are attacking the media because the media offers to young people a different set of choices than those currently operating in the church. In other words the Christians recognize in the media a competitor. The media opens up the world to young people but the Christians want to keep the young people attached to the church. The problem therefore to my mind is not so much the media, it is the closed horizons of the church.

The question of where youth culture comes from is also very important when it comes to alternative worship for young people. If we think that youth culture is essentially a corrupting influence on young people then we will want to create a safe Christian alternative which can be used in worship. If however we recognize that young people are in part involved in the creation of youth culture then it will be natural for us to want to include some aspects of youth culture in worship.

THEORY 1: YOUTH CULTURE IS ONLY NATURAL

You are probably familiar with the saying, 'It's just a stage he's going through.' One of the most important approaches to youth culture could be summed up with this common saying.

From Generation to Generation by S.N. Eisenstadt published in 1956 made the point that young people had to go through a process before they were considered to be adult. This process is most commonly labelled 'socialization'. To be adult in our society means that we know certain ways of behaving, values and moral rules. Young people therefore need to successfully learn how to be adults.

Eisenstadt pointed out that in modern industrial societies there was a growing gap between the world of the child and that of the adult. This gap was a kind of limbo period where the necessary skills and abilities needed for adult life in a modern technological society were acquired. Thus the period young people spend in education has slowly expanded as the demands of industry for more qualified workers have steadily increased. Adolescence therefore is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood.

Eisenstadt points out that whilst making this transition from childhood to adolescence young people band together for support. These teenage groups are a half way house between the world of being a child and the world of being an adult. In these groups young people can help each other by providing a place where advice and knowledge is shared, or just being someone who listens and understands. One example of this is the way that young girls may spend hours discussing boys. The point of many of these discussions is that they give a chance for the young people to test out what is acceptable behaviour in the complex world of sexual relationships.

The groups can also be used as a way of taking risks with other people. An example of this is the way that young people often show up at events in a gang. This can feel threatening to

adults but it is much more understandable when we realize that the peer group is one way of approaching situations with the safely of numbers. Often the first question young people ask you when you suggest going somewhere is, 'Who's going?'.

So according to this view, youth culture serves un important function for modern society because it is the means that young people themselves have developed to help them pass from childhood to adolescence.

THEORY 2: SUBCULTURE - A QUESTION OF CLASS

From your own study so far you will have realized that there is really no such thing as 'youth culture'. What actually exists in any one area or city is a large number of different youth 'sub-cultures'. The idea of 'sub-culture' amongst young people was explored in some depth by a group of sociologists based at Birmingham University in the 1970s. In 1976 they published a collection of essays under the title *Resistance Through Rituals.* The basic argument of this book is that British society is divided by class. The various youth cultures need to be seen in this light. In a series of studies of Mods, Rastas, Skinheads and Teds the link between these groups and working-class communities was established.

The book argues that sub-cultures act as places where young people can create 'cultural' space for themselves over and against the dominant middle-class culture. Thus the origin of skinhead culture was the response of working-class young people to the dual threats of new immigrant populations (thus the racism of skinheads) and the problems of unemployment in the inner cities (thus the adoption of traditional working-class clothes, for example the Dr Marten boot). From this perspective youth sub-cultures can be seen as a set of rituals which are designed to show in a symbolic way the stresses experienced by working-class young people in modern society.

In present-day Oxford the practice of 'hotting' or 'joyriding' can be, to some extent, explained in this way. Over the last four or five years 'joyriding' has attracted to it a number of ritual elements. One of these is the practice of the display, where the stolen car is paraded on the local estate and crowds have come out to see the young people put the car through its paces. There is however a symbolic element to this practice. The main place in Oxford where this kind of behaviour grew up was an estate right next to the Rover car works. The fact that the works have been taking on fewer and fewer people has meant that young people in that area can no longer be sure of a job. Unemployment does not excuse such wanton destruction of other people's property but we should recognize that there is more to this kind of behaviour than just vandalism.

The authors of *Resistance Through Rituals* point us to the fact that the different behaviours, musical tastes and styles of dress which make up youth subcultures are essentially class related. Young people, in creating these sub-cultures, are making symbolic statements about modern-day life. It is extremely important to realize that a young person growing up on a working-class estate will experience life very differently from an Asian young person living over a corner shop or a middle-class young person whose parents both went to university. The diversity of youth sub-cultures find their variety in the basic differences in lifestyle which these situations represent.

THEORY 3: SHOCK TACTICS

One of the authors of *Resistance Through Rituals* was Dick Hebdige. In 1979 he published his own book called *Subculture: the Meaning of Style.* Central to this book is the idea that young people, in creating subcultures, are setting out to shock. One of the chief means that they use to do this is by the choice of the things that they wear.

When the punks first appeared on our streets they were a very disturbing sight indeed. It was not just the haircuts. The choice of 'bondage trousers'—until now only associated with sexual deviance—the safety pin through the nose and the bin liner were a symbolic assault on the senses. The message that we are 'trash' was echoed in lyrics like 'No future for you and me' sung by groups like the Sex Pistols.

One of the main ways that young people have created new styles is to take fashion items from different ages and places and combine them to make something new. The Teddy boy owes his name to the 'Edwardian suit' originally all the rage with upper-class young bucks in the 1950s. Teddy boys, however were generally working-class young people. The appropriation of the Edwardian suit and combination with the lace tie which was reminiscent of the bad guy in American cowboy movies created a new style. In the mid 1980s, upper-class young people commonly wore waxed jackets of the country outdoor-sport type. I noticed that within a short period the roughest and toughest working-class young people in my local school had started to adopt these jackets for themselves.

The relationship between upper-class dress and working-class youth cultures in Britain is mirrored by the influence that black culture has had on white youth sub-cultures in Britian. I have already mentioned how the skinheads in my home town used to dance to Tamla Motown music. Middle-class young people in Britian have also been influenced by the music and dress of black people. One example of this is the growing of hair into dreadlocks. At first this was a style adopted by young black people who were into Rastafarian religion and reggae music. In recent times white young people who have become known as 'travellers' have also started to grow their hair in this way. Hebdige argues that youth culture has always been characterized by white young people adopting black style. One of the effects of this is that white middle-class people are shocked by the way young people look.

Ward P et al. Youthwork and how to do it *Oxford: Lynx. 1994*

Coming of Age

- First, the prolonged period we call adolescence and youth resulted from industrialization and the legislation developed to stabilize industrial societies, such as child labor laws and compulsory education.

- Second, we propose that as we moved into the most recent phase of industrial capitalism, which began in the 1950s, the coming-of-age process has become even longer, primarily because the labor of adolescents and youth is no longer needed, except in service industries. Consequently, young people have lost a "franchise." Now they participate less in the labor force, and when they do, it is in a more subservient manner. Accordingly, fewer young people have the full rights and privileges of citizenship, and they must wait longer before they are fully recognized as adults. In addition to not being able to make a meaningful contribution to the economy, young people have been forced to remain in school longer, where they are under the watchful eye of massive educational bureaucracies.

- Third, young people have been targeted as consumers rather than as producers by the service, leisure, information, and high-technology sectors of the advanced industrial economy. In other words, young people have increasingly been targeted as consumers

of "leisure industries" (e.g., media and music) and "identity industries" (e.g., fashion and education).

- Fourth, we submit that these leisure and identity industries have merged to create a culture in which coming of age involves allying oneself with one of these forces — for example, adopting one of die images manufactured by the leisure industries, or predicating an identity on the credentials conferred by the educational system.

- Fifth, we contend that many young people today face a situation where conflict, chaos, and confusion underlie a superficial harmony. Developing a viable adult identity has become an increasingly tenuous process for those coming of age because many of the identities they are sold by adult profiteers are illusory and fleeting. Consequently, we believe that there is an epidemic of socially produced identity crises in advanced industrial societies.

- Finally, the above forces have combined to create a paradoxical situation. Numerous influences are directed at the disenfranchised young to "manufacture their consent" as consumers of adult-produced identities and self-images. Although these consent-manufacturing forces have been successful, there are signs that they are becoming ineffective, and the overall result is a manufacture of dissent. The latter phenomenon is behind the collective outbursts and the epidemic of identity crises to which we have alluded, as well as many or the liabilities of youth we go on to discuss.

Cote J. and Allahar A. Generation on Hold: Coming of Age in the Twentieth Century.
New York: New York University Press. 1994

Pop Culture

ç   *An adolescent does not automatically have a culture. They have to go out and find one for themselves.*

ç   *It is interesting to note that adolescent white people tend to follow music produced by white bands, and young blacks follow 'black music'.*

ç   *Compared to my daughter, my adolescent idealism had none of the realism hers has.*

ç   *Why is it that when adolescents develop their own identity which may clash with the values of adults and teachers, they are always labelled rebellious?*

ç   *When I was a teenager, I somehow never thought that I was conforming in my behaviours, but in fact I can see now that I was!*

ç   *I went to my first rock concert a few weeks ago and was thoroughly frightened. The close crushing of the crowds was awful and I couldn't relax enough to hear the music.*

Before the middle of this century, almost all the activities, organisations or institutions of which young people were part clearly belonged to the wider culture. Indeed, most of them were run by adults for adolescents. The Girl Guide or Boy Scout leader, the Sunday School or Bible Class teacher, the YMCA or YWCA organiser could hardly be termed the peers of those they led. And notice too, in that short list, how frequently a religious or quasi-religious glue held all these things together.

Such organisations continue to exist and through the post-war period of population growth seemed to nourish. But at the same time another culture was emerging. Everyone was more or less aware of this, for its signs were strong and inescapable. In Britain the teddy boys with their Edwardian coats and velvet lapels, their stove-pipe trousers and winkle-picker shoes were, at the time, considered some youthful aberration, a young response to war-time austerity. But then they were followed by the bodgies and their female counterparts, the widgies, and it seemed that endless trends were here to stay.

The mods came next with their androgynous clothing and hair-styles directly deemphasising the adult sex-stereotypes of macho male and voluptuous female.

The first was the art school and upper-class high camp (which led to the glitter styles of the 1970s and had quite a lot to do with the dissemination of hippy styles). The mainstream mods went for smooth and sharp dressing styles, dead-pan expressions and nihilistic assertions that nothing around them had any value (except for themselves). Their descendants are the robot punks who depersonalise themselves almost to the point of seeming to be machines. The scooter cult, which itself descended from the bodgie-widgie bikies of the late 1950s, never achieved in New Zealand the degree of working-class popularity of Britain, France and Italy, which was related to tribal displays at football matches, beach resorts and on public occasions. Finally, there were the hard mods who dressed ugly and affected a hard working-class, steel-toes, boot-stomping image. These were the rough ones, epitomised in the movie *Clockwork Orange,* and though they never really raged through derelict neighbourhoods burning and looting or fulfilling the fears that adults held about them, the menace was there, and it was important. These were the hard-hats, the boot-boys.

Rockers, at about the same time, were the macho counterpart of the androgynous mods, whom they clearly regarded as effeminate. Tie rockers were the real descendants of the bikies. adopting a studied scruffiness and considerable amounts of black leather and metal studs. Motorbikes featured largely in the rocker way of life, tinged with adulation of the sexually violent and ultra-masculine values of brotherhood, mutual protection and male display. As Brake says. 'Rockers were a kind of motorised cowboy, loners and outsiders, contemptuous of authority'. They relegated women to traditional bondage to men. not in terms of home and family, but of servitude (sexual and otherwise).

New Zealand youth culture, rock culture, or pop culture, however you wish to term it. picked up at various times and in various ways on all these styles, as well as those that followed. However, the homogenising affluence of the 1950s and 1960s, and the control over young people which is at the core of the New Zealand tradition, meant that these cults or movements were less florid here. Nevertheless, small groups of young people, especially in the larger cities, used these styles as conscious models and still do.

In the late 1960s, these styles were transformed on the British scene into new forms of adolescent protest, most of which adults were likely to find unpalatable, incomprehensible and unacceptable, as indeed they were intended to. In Britain the emergence of skinheads, narrow, nasty little puritans in some ways, was clearly tied to the first real crisis of race relations in post-war Britain. Skinheads were territorial, and though they drew their behaviour patterns from strong British working-class conservatism, protecting their world against all they considered outsiders - the immigrants, blacks. Pakistanis, the Jews, the hippies, the homosexuals, the police, the aristocracy - they in no way sought adult working-class support. An earlier generation of adults would have called them hooligans. But their studied inelegance, 'aggro' vocabulary and positive hostility to anything gentle, noble or beautiful simply wore itself out: the style was too extreme. Their music -ska, reggae and blues beat - generalised out from the narrowness of their image and was quickly taken over by glitter and punk culture which in turn became homogenised into new wave.

The basis of punk is the intention to outrage. Punks thus pick up and incorporate anything in the traditions of this extraordinary progression of youth styles that will outrage their 'olds'. Shaved heads, Mohican crests or pudding-basin rounded styles, hair dyed in vivid colours, clothes based on bondage and sexual fetishism, a wardrobe carefully built up from other people's dustbins, patches and badges with anarchist slogans, or outrageous graffiti more appropriate to toilet walls, dangling ear decorations and safety pins through earlobes, cheek or nose, all these are designed to encourage a sharp reaction from the adult and the prejudiced

and to emphasise a social line of demarcation or status that might otherwise be blurred.

Each of these cult styles broke in succession upon the shores of a society which scarcely knew how to respond. But the waves themselves seemed to speed up, either because things really were changing very rapidly for young people or because of stimulation by the marketeers. By the 1980s, almost everything in youth style had become assimilated into one progressive movement which young people call new wave. New wave is simply a common name for youth culture, and it may be glossed with glitter or punk or skinhead, or any other elements that provide individuality and difference. So, far from being a set of alternative or successive peer conformities, youth culture emerges as distinct, having its own history and antecedents, with vivacity, vitality, viability and a capacity to assimilate change. It is founded upon the assertion of individuality and personal worth.

New wave has come to New Zealand from both Britain and America. By and large, British groups have provided the innovations, and America the imitators and exploitations. But the big wide world that most young New Zealanders know at first hand is Australia. The two-way Tasman traffic of young people is also a traffic in cultural style. What New Zealand sends to Sydney is substantially Polynesian, to the extent that it has any distinctive stylistic nature, and what Australia sends to New Zealand is really anybody's guess. Ours would be that it is heavily laden with the marijuana end of the drug culture, surfing, a resistive rather than rebellious rather cheeky attitude towards adult influence and authority, lots of mobility, companionable inter-gender attitudes, and a lot of emphasis on personal freedom and a sort of breezy nonchalance - in a phrase, laden with Aussie values.

Ritchie J. and Ritchie J. The dangerous age; surviving adolescence in New Zealand*: Allen and Unwin. 1984*

How to recognise your own kids

Teen subcultures aren't easy for a parent to understand. In her new book *Teenspeak*, Susan Kurosawa tags your offspring for easy identification.

There are at least 10 distinct species of teenagers, plus a myriad of subgroupings. But because of the ease of mass communication - televisions, cinema, hip magazines and the information loaded internet - trends spread incredibly fast and hybrid cults constantly emerge. It's no unknown to come across a punk-skater-surfer, a hippie with heavy Celtic leanings - Gaelic tattoos, a penchant for Clannad ballads, Cranberries pop or ethereal Enya - or even a schizo trekkie-jock.

Subcultures have been formed not so much on tribal rites and breakaway behaviour as on uniform dressing and precise accessorising calculated to the model of Swatch or Guess watch, brand of sunglasses and regulation rips in the jeans. Amusing? Depends which tribe member you greet at the breakfast table each morning. Bank-breaking? Right on. The dollar drain starts from about age 12 when those cute offspring who used to squeal "gross" at any mention of the opposite sex suddenly discover high school.

Enter peer pressure, hair gel, and a swift sorting into the correct pubescent pigeon hole. The music gets louder, the hair becomes longer or spiked or changes colour, your wallet gets increasingly lighter. In the interest of parents across the nation, here is a guide to the various tribes.

GENUS RAVER

Do not waste money on education for raver children. Many are destined to become DJs or drug dealers and make about a trillion times more money than their tertiary educated peers. There's no guessing as to whether you have a raver in the house. You'll know by the constant beat of techno, computer generated music throbbing from the bedroom. Its repetitiveness is designed to drive parents insane.

The challenge of raver music is to dance to it. That's what raving is all about - super fast, whirling dervish, bop until you drop dancing.

This tribe is a diverse one, not easily defined simply by clothing or language. Head-shaving is big with both sexes, as are baggy jeans and oversized T-shirts - often these are yours. Footwear tends to be flat suede shoes or jogger-like appearance, perfect for raver dancing, which basically requires no more skill than pounding on the spot. This, of course, is exhausting, so if your little raver comes home and sleeps for 24 hours, you will know why.

Raving, at the extreme end, has a drug-culture connection: "Dropping E's" - taking Ecstasy - is a part of the big parties. There is a trend however, particularly in Britain, for ravers to eschew drugs. Non-drug users call themselves "clear-heads", preferring the buzz of a natural high and getting off on the music and natural endorphins released during frenetic dancing.

GENUS GOTHIC

Black is beautiful if you are of this tribal group. It's the only colour of choice for this tribe, hence the black fitted clothes, dyed black hair , black boots - especially Doc Martens with steel capped toes - black lipstick, black eyeliner and, for a little relief, blood coloured Vixen nail polish. Sometimes Goths paint patterns on their pallid faces - tears and Celtic designs are popular, with males as well as females.

Goths are intense, usually pretty intelligent and infatuated by things that parents find decidedly strange - vampires and death for instance. To describe a Goth's view of the world as simply bleak is to say Dracula was just a chap who admired girls' necks. When Goths go out for a good time, their appearance can send shivers down a conservative parent's spine -

exactly the intention. In their quest to llok evil, these posturing products festoon themselves with chains, spiked dog collars and wrist spikes. These accessories provide a sinister overlay for often quite beautiful clothes - expensively provided by unsuspecting Mum and Dad. Black velvet is hot and so are exotically embroidered bodices.

A Goth's dance floor is a dangerous place ... you could be stabbed by someone else's jewellery. That's why the dance slowly, in a stylised way resembling street theatre. they like the music of The Cure and the movei the Crow is seminal - Brandon Lee would be gratified, if he hadn't died filming it.

Goths have raised rebellion to an art form. To support their wispy, bloodless image, some have assumed monikers such as Reed, Shade, or Death. They speak to each other in a courtly fashion and have extensive vocabularies. Parents can surmise from this mannered behaviour that even though young Death - alias Damien - may look like a tomb-dweller, he's still brain active. this, though, is of some relief next time you write a cheque for private school fees.

GENUS PUNK

Like varieties of parrots, known for their primary-coloured plumage, punks are most readily assessed by their hair. there's no ignoring green, yellow, blue, pink or purple hair - or a fetching rainbow combination - standing in long spikes at right angles to the skull. And that's only one mode: Others may have coloured dreadlocks or shaved areas interspersed with hair extensions. Punks are creative when it comes to torturing their tresses and spend heaps of time and money to draw attention - stares of amazement, usually.

If the first thing you notice about punks is their hair, a close second is the amount of metal attached to their faces. Piercing is punk. they not only pierce ears, noses, eyebrows, lips and tongues, they like to connect them with chains. Perhaps this prevents body bits, which have been pierced too often, from trying to escape.

Punks listen to their own punk rock, prefer op-shop grunge clothing and some make a career out of their alternativeness - just look at British designer Vivienne Westwood. Punks are not as threatening as they look - besides, escape is easy as you can hear all that metal clanking as they approach. And the beacon-like fluorescent hair is visible from anywhere, even outer space

GENUS SURFER

These peroxided pubescents are the 1990's equivalent of the '60s surfies. It's a grou easily identified - the only one to wear a wetsuit to breakfast, for example; the only one to get out of bed before lunchtime. but the image of the 90s surfer stretches beyond the water. Labels are big on the beach: Hot Tuna, Rip Curl, Billabong. And the tribe favours not just bleaching but dreadlocks and long hair - see Hawaiian heart throb Keanu Reeves in the movie Point Break for the desired look. The surfer's ultimate dream is to live out of his car or van, travelling from beach to beach looking for that ultimate ride.

Surfer guys are likely to be more enchanted by the waves and their mates than by any girl. If he has one in tow, she's a "chick", which is a label for all girls in the mid '90s but evolved from the surfing world. The epitome of surferdom is defying gravity on a 2m wave, pintailing your zipperless wettie, slicing down a glass wall with the sun on your back and not a booger in sight. Stoked, man.

GENUS SKATER

According to one cute T-shirt, a skateboardassaurus is "an acrobatic creature with a constant compulsion to defy gravity while riding a piece of wood on wheels." Also known as waxes on wheels or skateheads, these kids have a fairly visible profile - they skittle pedestrians and commandeer public places with strategically placed poles and handrails to assist their hair-

raising tricks. The standard uniform is casual, the look highly calculated: a pair of 100% Mambo board shorts, oversized sweatshirt, high cuts - shoes to you - one pierced ear, spiked hair. the skateboard can be expensive bust must look battered. don't grumble about the cost of this contradiction - the boards run on fresh air and don't need to be registered, unlike the urban-cowboy 4WDs skaters invariably expect as 21st birthday presents.

Skaters used to listen to California-generated thrash music but the genus now includes so many ravers that they're collectively into various technology-derived soundscapes.

A skater can also be a hybrid homie, punk, surfer or just a non-aligned kid who's into playing tag with the traffic.

GENUS HIPPIE

These flower pwoer-hangovers are cost-effective to have around the house, particularly if you were once a peace pixie. Just palm off all that old Indian gear, fringed velvet jerkins, Bob Dylan and Ravi Shankar records, paisley headbands and ancient Jesus sandals. Hippie paraphernalia - mostly bought at op-shops and Saturday morning markets - consists of headbands, beads and hessian carrybags. Plus, of course, bongs. Teen hippies forget their parents came of age in the time of pot smoking, patchouli oil and peace rallies - exchanges such as this are not uncommon.

Parent: I found this odd-looking tube in your bag.

Teen: Hey, chill out, I was breathalysed driving home last night. It's the disposable mouthpiece from the RBT unit.

Similarly young hippies fail to realise that their parents can tell the difference between a pot plant and a pot of pot on the windowsill. It's a geranium" they'll tell you. Sometimes it is. It's also pointless to become immediately incensed about sweet smoke wafting from the teen hippie's bedroom. Sometimes, just sometimes, it really is incense.

GENUS JOCK

The wardrobes of these peacocking, linament-fragrance sportsters bulge with insignia tracksuits, Nike and Adidas shorts and sweatshirts and several pairs of what look like small modular lounges bu are actually the latest Reebok or Air Jordan pumpups - the modern equivalent of the elevator shoe. The logo-man jock always carries a sportsbag in case he passes a gym an can call in for a quick pec-flexing workout. Barbers, doctors and dentists figure heavily in a jock's life (aerodynamic haircuts, torn ligaments, chipped front teeth) and he can be one of the most expensive of teens to raise. Genus jockette, the female equivalent, is not as common, but she's also less trouble, usually found setting a dizzying pace on mum's exercise bike, power walking the neighbourhood, or fixing a wheatgerm shake at the pip of dawn.

GENUS HOMIE

Home is short for "homeboy". The tribe originated in the United States, but they're everywhere - all sporting oversized Adidas clothing and Nike shoes. Homie language is peppered with expletives, many of which are directed at one another's mothers. Fellow mums, if your son is a homie, rest assured he's defending your honour daily. Baseball caps and beanies also identify homies; they wear them whatever the weather, indoors and out. Homies hang around in a group - with their "crew" or "posse" - at malls, train stations and public phones.

Homegirls - female homies - favour spiral perms and the same baggy and sexless jeans as their male counterparts. Ethnic kids tend to be homies and for some extraordinary reason they all seem to have mobile phones - even the ones hanging around the phone booth your waiting to use at the train station. Standing about in their voluminous shorts, rolling in their Nikes and

jive-talking into their Nokias, they look like adolescents in hand-me-downs mimicking young tycoons - actually they are just calling their mums to see if it's kebabs or satay stirfry for dinner.

GENUS NERD

If you're the parent of a nerd, there's no reason to read this. Go back to the rumpus room and join your loser kid listening to K-Tel's Smash Hits of Summer volume 17, Whitney Houston or Wham. Nerds are the cheapest tribal members to raise - they're so pathetic, they'll even wear Christmas present clothing chosen by half-blind aunts. This group used to be known as Velcros - after the tab-fastened shoes their mum's bought at chainstores - but once the other tribes had exhausted all the jokes about them being too dumb to tie proper shoelaces, they were left alone to play handball, finish school and become accountants. A rapidly emerging subgenus of this category is the computer nerd: Definition as above, except they spend their lives intefacing with the PCs - whether accessing porno files on the Internet, designing rocketships in their bedroom or hacking into the Kremlin, you'll never know.

GENUS GRUNGE

A tribe born from the phenomenon of the late Kurt Cobain and Nirvana. they listen to Pearl Jam and Soundgarden, dress down dramatically in baggy pants, beanies and flannelette shirts.

Snowboarding grunge is a sub-subgroup - mountains away from the co-ordinated skisuits of the serious ski set.

GENUS CYBERPUNK

So fully online, they're in cyberspace dude.

GENUS CHRISTIAN

A rosycheeked member may knock on your door and attempt to convert you from idle ways. If you're a true heathen, it helps to have homie to put on to them.

Youth Culture

It is tempting to think that the phenomenon of a high-profile teenage culture, with its parading of sexual desire (Take That), alienation (Kurt Cobain and Nirvana) and satanic anger (Slayer), is a relatively recent development. However, although the impact of teenagers on the media and society is a relatively new development, the emotions on parade have been universal throughout history. We do not need to read the Bible for long before we discover the headstrong David, confident in his God and ready to fight the Philistines; or the idealistic and rebellious Absalom, convinced that he knew better than his father the king. Elisha the prophet was mobbed by a gang of young men, who despised his age and insulted his hairstyle. Josiah the king, raised in the ways of God, drove idolatry from the land at the tender age of sixteen. The Bible is by no means blind to teenagers, perhaps reflecting the Jewish understanding that you were an adult from the age of twelve, even if you were not considered mature until you were in your forties! The energy and idealism of the biblical teenager is seen to have had both good and had effects, sparking faith in David and prophetic action in Josiah, but rebellion among Elisha's youthful enemies and in Absalom.

Underlying the emotional intensity of the teenager are the intellectual and sexual developments that come with puberty, and the emotional developments associated with finding work and perhaps leaving home in the late teens. Intellectually, the brain moves beyond concrete, black-and-while thinking and can begin to think abstractly. There is often a strong desire to know how the world works and how it can be improved, sparking both a search for meaning and an uncynical idealism. Sexually, the teenager faces desire which he or she often despised or mocked as a pre-teen (parents will no doubt understand; the average eight-year-old male feigns vomiting if he sees a couple kissing!). The teenager may he unclear about the appropriateness of his or her desires, frustrated at the lack of opportunity to express them and worried that he or she does not fit the cultural pattern in terms of respect or desirability. Emotionally, this all collides with the new demands of the work place or of tertiary education, and with the frequent need to cope alone after years of parental protection. The teenager faces an intense period of character formation in respect of his or her attitudes towards power, sex and meaning. These issues always emerge in youth culture, whether that culture is at the fringes of society or is a dominant force.

Youth culture and the need to address its concerns have been on the Western churches' agenda in recent centuries. The nineteenth-century growth of the YMCA, the Boys Brigade and other youth ministries are cases in point. Given the universal nature of teenage struggle, it is not inappropriate for the church to address teenagers' questions and problems. Most churches would seek to do this by integrating teenagers into mainstream church meetings, and also by holding additional meetings where the teenagers' concerns can be tackled. This brings together two principles. First, the unity of the church and the desire for a body of people to represent a wisdom and a community that transcend divisions of class, race, age and gender. Second, the desirability of speaking to sect ions of society in their 'mother tongue', much as the disciples did in the Book of Acts, chapter 2, which set the precedent of cross-cultural mission. The real issue for the church in the past thirty years, however, has been the emergence of successive waves of youth culture that are more universal, via electronic media; that change faster, because jaded consumers want something that is unique to their generation; and that are less and less intelligible to previous generations. Conveying the gospel in the language forms, parables and metaphors of a previous generation can lead t o a failure of communication. The young person thinks, 'I don't know what they mean and, as a result, I'm not sure they would understand.'To understand how all this has evolved, we need to go back a little further than thirty years. The biblical picture of the family as the primary source of

nurture was not difficult to maintain in agrarian and family- orientated societies. The birth of the Industrial Revolution and the consequently increasing urbanization began to undermine the rural family. The family no longer necessarily worked together. Social interaction outside family and neighbourhood gatherings meant that a regular social life, independent of parents, could develop. This separation increased with the growth of mass education. Although this was no bad thing, it meant that the state school system would eventually become both a passive and an active tool of social engineering. The passive aspect arose out of the five-day-a-week peer-group influence, and the potential tension of loyalties between the family, the young person and the peer group. Nonetheless, the young person still belonged firmly to the family until his or her own marriage. This was rooted in financial realities, and it meant that wide-scale, overt, sexual exploration was not easy. Three factors eventually conspired to place youth culture on the center stage of society, and to spark the youth culture phenomenon and its impact on church life: growing affluence, which slowly gave teenagers greater financial independence; the university education system, which institutionalized a late-teen peer group; and the invention of the phonograph and the radio, which allowed the stirrings of the teenage potential for cultural expression to have a wide impact. At a time when teenage wealth had never been greater, namely the 1950s, the television began to make its mark. Elvis Presley, a gospel/country/ rhythm-and-blues singer, who might only have captured a cult audience in a few states, was able to short-cut the route to fame via regional radio stations, and to rocket into teenage consciousness through television. His implicit questioning (through his dance routines) of the sexual morals of the Christian United States was but a hint of the wider questioning of materialism, sexual morality and religion that would take place in the 1960s.

YOUTH CULTURE

The combination of the new mass media and the coming into adolescence of the huge number of children born in the post-Second World War baby boom brought down the average age of the population in Western society. Business writer Peter Drucker notes that in the United States it fell to seventeen. The media shifted to reflect the interests of these consumers, who were eagerly targeted by the advertisers. As the years passed, and abortion and the use of the pill rose, the average age increased again, to the late-thirties. The feasibility of a vibrant youth culture with its own dress codes and musical styles has remained. However, the idea that young people could change society or rebel against their parents has largely disappeared. Unless someone is a child of religious parents, what is there to rebel against? Non-Christian parents themselves probably experimented with drugs and had premarital sex. The ability of teenagers to consume, and the means to do so with some degree of financial independence, will mean that 'youth culture' will always be with us. Because young people want to be different from the youth of the previous decade—but not from the youth of two decades ago—-they will often evolve new styles. Dance is one example of this. In the 1990s, house music (essentially dance-orientated) is slowly evolving into pure dance and indie dance (similar to that which gave birth to The Who), and into an ambient or psychedelic music similar to the progressive rock genre of the early 1970s. Grunge music is the punk music of the 1990s; although the look is different, the underlying philosophy of nihilistic hopelessness is the same. For the Christian youth worker, an appropriate response to youth culture has two aspects. First, the influence of youth culture must he acknowledged. It expresses itself through television, film, music, books, computing and radical sociopolitical movements .such as New Age travellers. It impacts the life of the churched and the unchurched alike. How it does so is discussed elsewhere m this book. The way in which you respond should be based on the key principles of Christian life and witness, which mighte be summarised as follows

- Old truth, new clothes. The Bible suggests that Jesus, Peter and Paul made their message particularly relevant to the hearer, addressing his or her explicit needs and thoughts. Jesus spoke to the heart about the issues that lay behind the different

questions posed by the rich young ruler, the Pharisees and his own imperfect disciples. Peter and the other disciples, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, spoke in the mother tongue, the day-to-day language, of their hearers (Acts 2). Paul tuned into the concerns, culture and thought patterns of his Greek audience at Mars' Hill.

- New generation, same needs. Although you need to be a ware of the thoughts, symbols ami heroes of contemporary youth culture to help you to cross the bridges of communication, the issues you address will remain the same. Thoughtful, integrated youth ministry will want to take account of the abiding undercurrents in the lives of adolescents. Are you addressing issues of identity, fashion, sexuality, power, materialism, intellectual doubt and socio-political concern?

- Does your youth ministry vision have a deliberateness about it? Youth ministry from the 1960s to the 1980s often seemed to be characterized by pragmatism: 'music is the only way to reach this generation'. Or it was a desperate and superficial attempt to entertain young people in order to stop them slipping a way. Many of the writers in this book will explore a better way, one that embraces good music and entertaining presentation, but one which says that a young person who 'learns by doing' at school and in the workplace should be encouraged out of passivity and into local, church-based Christian service. Outreach must also have a strong relational element, rather than a 'hit-and-run' evangelistic emphasis.

- 'T he positive fruits of adolescence are zeal and energy, idealism and adventurousness. If we can alert our young people to the richness of life in a multi-generational church and also respond positively to their special needs --with Christian apologetics, a positive view of sexuality, opportunities for mission and outlets for concern about social justice- -we will be responding to the siren calls of youth culture without being lured into the minefield of generational conflict.

Being in Relationship with Young People

Mission

Mission is about creating the wholeness and holiness. Mission has its origin in God. God is a missionary God, a God who crosses frontiers toward the world.

Youth Culture

"Youth culture is a hot potato in Christian circles at the moment. Some people say that is   is leading young people astray while others see youth culture as an exciting new source of energy to renew the Church".

<div align="right">

Pete Ward. Youthwork and how to do it. *1994*

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It is our task to learn the culture of the people with whom we minister. The church cannot turn its back on young people. it is a gospel imperative that we reach out to all people including the young. From youth cultures can evolve a pattern of Church life which rests ion the central expression of young people themselves. We need to connect with the hopes and fears of people in a language that can be understood by those outside the existing church structures.

It needs to be remembered that youth cultures are not independent from the wider culture and that is not one youth culture by many.

"Youth feel they neither belong nor are welcome in the adult culture called Church. Whether or not they have a desire to follow Christ, they still do not feel the church has relevance to them. As a result the often reject both adult church culture and Jesus together."

<div align="right">

Borthwick. Transformation. *1995*

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Relational Youth Ministry

It is commonly acknowledged that the key component to youth ministry must be relaionships with young people. Our first task is to be with young people to learn their language, symbols, values, social relationships etc. This is all the more important in an age when there is less and less support for young people in their growth into adulthood. Relationships are the fuel that enable growth and development. It is in relationship with each other and God that we find ourselves to be who we are.

Youth ministry has traditionally relied on gathering young Christians together and encouraging them to reach out to friends on the fringe. In an age when most young people are pre-Christian, (have little knowledge about God, Jesus and the Bible) this approach is not working. The church has contact with less than 10% of young people. For the church to relate to young people it must take seriously:
*   the young people of our communities
*   the need for honest relationships
*   the cultures of young people

When Christians develop relationships with young people it needs to be realised that the relationship is a sharing of our and God's spirit, even if the young person does not develop a relationship with God. Youth ministry is so much more than a youth group on Sunday, though this is a very valuable component.

A Mission Oriented Youth Ministry
*   enables young people to reach their full God created potential
*   focuses on the world rather than the church
*   focuses on serving the needs of young people and building their self-esteem
*   takes seriously all the contexts in which young people live.

The aim of relational youth ministry is to support and equip young people with the skills for

life and the eventual end of youth ministry should bethat young people begin to develop faith within their own cultural world. A key element to this is a growing personal relationship with God, in the context of a faith community.

The Seven Relational laws of life

- Who is more crucial than where

- People are more important than programs

- Organisational structures must be warm

- The touch of a person is more powerful than an idea

- Results take time

- Influence is limited to a few

- Relationships are an end in themselves

When engaging in youth minsitry and in fact any ministry an understanding of what makes relationships work is important. The seven laws presented are one approach to this understanding.

This section of the report is meant to be about the future, but in youth ministry there is no future without grappling with the real issue of youth and faith today. Relational, contextual youth ministry is what youth ministry should be about today and everyday. The goal of the English Speaking National Co-ordinators and the Empower Your Youth Board is is for the Methodist Church to be a "place where young people are nurtured towards wholeness and brought to faith in Jesus Christ".

How does the church as people, resources, structures and faith build effective youth ministry? As the opening words of the report say "more through deeds and relationships than any policy". So the policy needs to support these outcomes.

I would say that it is when we are following our call to build relationships
with young people that we are being most Christian.

English Speaking Tauiwi Youth Report to Methodist Conference 1997