

Working to Build an “Aweful” Youth Ministry

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“The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country. Luke 7:15-17

I just finished reading a profound chapter from a book called *Dangerous Wonder* by Mike Yaconelli. The following is quote from that chapter that is worth our attention: “We are at war between dullness and astonishment.’ The most critical issues facing Christians are not abortion, pornography, the disintegration of the family, moral absolutes, MTV, drugs, racism, sexuality, or school prayer. *The critical issue today is dullness. We have lost our astonishment. The good news is no longer good news, it is okay news. Christianity is no longer life changing, it is life enhancing. Jesus doesn’t change people into wild-eyed radicals anymore, He changes them into “nice people.”.... Jesus came to rescue us from listlessness as well as lostness; He came to save us from dullness. Our culture is awash in immorality and drowning in dullness. We have forgotten how to dance, how to sing, and how to laugh. We have allowed technology to beat our imaginations into submission and have become tourist rather than travelers. Television dominates our time, alters our values, numbs us to life in all of its wildness. We have been stunted by mediocrity.”*

In no other segment of society will you find dullness to have a tighter grip than on youth. Through technology and media youth have “been there and done that” and the thought of more extreme sports, reality TV and Techno thrills brings an unenthusiastic yawn. Thrown in this mix is a misunderstood Jesus and His church, which are seen as the capstone of boring. Unfortunately for many, there exists no other option than to long for new technology and worldly crowns to feed their hunger for depth, significance, and lasting excitement.

It is our challenge in youth ministry to confront sin-induced dullness and shatter through it with the awe of Jesus’ love and the exciting life He offers. This life is different than mimicking culture and competing with the world’s desire for bigger & better entertainment that attempts to drown out the scream of emptiness. Our Student Ministry is striving to instill the awe of God in the hearts of His Children and the lost. To this end, I personally invite the body of Christ to participate in the sharing of God’s awe to students in our ministry and watch their eyes light up with wonder as they see Jesus as they never imagined Him.