The Effectiveness of Short-Term Intensive Youth Ministry Internships

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Short-Term Youth Ministry Internships have been utilized in undergraduate institutions for academic credit, skill development, and vocational discernment. While internships address these many requirements, what impact does the short-term internship have on relationships created and fostered during the summer with youth? Due to the limited time spent with youth in these short-term scenarios, the current undergraduate summer internship practice offers little time for authentic relationships to develop between the intern and the youth group. The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of short-term intensive internships and provide a pragmatic understanding of how academic intensive ministry internships can be better used in churches. Utilizing phenomenological methods, semi-structured interviews were conducted with those who have completed intensive internships and with internship supervisors who have supervised multiple internship experiences. From those interviews, many important themes emerged that have implications in the administration of future internship practice.
INTRODUCTION

Youth ministry internships at our institution exist to address many specific issues: to build relationships, develop broader skill sets, implement educational theories and processes, and expose students to the realities of congregational ministry, to name a few. Each church is unique in the way in which they facilitate their internship(s) and how they utilize their intern(s). A few churches have begun utilizing year-round models, but the summer short-term intensive internship model is still the primary way churches utilize their interns in our fellowship.

Anecdotal evidence gathered from personal internship experience and informal conversations with former interns led us to believe that the current internship practices offered little time for the development of authentic relationships and, further, did not permit the intern substantive exposure to the full realities of youth ministry. The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of short-term intensive internships and provide a pragmatic understanding of how academic intensive ministry internships can be better utilized in churches. The effectiveness of short-term intensive youth ministry internships play a vital role in the success of the intern, the youth in the church, and the church itself. While short-term intensive internships can be very helpful for interns, the university, and churches, many issues if left unaddressed, can potentially cause problems.

Research Questions

The research asks the following questions: Does the current short-term intensive internship model accomplish its stated goals? What are the consequences, if any, of using this model? If the current model proves to be ineffective, what internship model(s) might be available to replace
the short-term intensive model? Would changing the model provide additional or unforeseen benefits for the university, churches, and interns?

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Current Internship Models**

In order to more fully understand internships within a church and how they function it is important to have a broader understanding of what types of internships are currently available. While there are many different forms and types of internships available, they may be identified in three broad categories: Intensive internships, Yearlong internships, and Concurrent internships. Intensive internships refer to a fixed amount of time where the intern is focused specifically on his or her current position. This placement allows the student [intern] to focus entirely on the ministry and work 30-40 hours per week.¹ Yearlong internships require the intern to dedicate a full twelve months to a church and vary widely in design. Some are intensive in nature and could be compared to a full time job; others are part-time and require less focus from the intern. Concurrent internships might be considered mid-range internship in both responsibility and time commitment. In this type of placement, the students [interns] take academic work while they are engaged in the field experience. Such programs might last as little as three months or as long as three years.²

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² Ibid.
General Understanding of Ministry Internships

Broadly speaking, internships have been used in almost every study of life ranging from architecture to student teaching. In ministry, internships have long served the purpose of developing a solid middle ground between education and a future in full-time ministry. As a student the primary responsibility is to learn all there is about the chosen field of ministry.\(^3\) Ministry is a field where practical experience and on the job training are foundational for growth. Through internships the intern is able to work, grow, and practice ministry in a setting where they will be encouraged and challenged to grow ministerial skills, theological knowledge and application, and skills relative to pastoral care. Regardless of how much classroom preparation, reading, philosophy and theory a student might have, there is no substitute for experience.\(^4\) Internships offer an experience that is unlike any other and the reality of real life ministry in a church can never be taught in a classroom setting.

Ministry internships are different from one church to the next, but, generally speaking, the same results and expectations are desired. Interns have opportunities to teach, lead, and organize programs during their internships. Interns are expected to grow spiritually and develop a fuller understanding of what ministry looks like while discerning their own call to ministry. “Internships give students, many of whom who aspire to work in ministry but have limited ministry experience, the opportunity to explore ministry and gain a clearer sense of their


\(^4\) Ibid., 6.
vocational direction.” The hope of any ministry internship is for the intern to grow and the church to help facilitate this process.

**Purpose of an Intensive Internship**

An intensive internship is a time period in which the intern focuses specifically on the ministry that is placed in front of him or her. This allows the intern the ability immerse themselves fully into the ministry without worrying about course work or other extracurricular activities. In many cases the short-term intensive internship takes place during the summer months when more interns are available and church demand is high. A unique aspect of an intensive summer internship is the opportunity for an intern to serve in and experience a different context from their home or university contexts. Interns often experience immediate benefits from the intensive nature of the internship. Interns grow spiritually, develop leadership skills, hone teaching ability, foster relationships, and have the opportunity to satisfy their institution’s practicum requirements. Harley Atkinson explains the purpose of ministry internships in this way, “Interns [are] doing ministry and receiving ministry training in the context of relationships. The intern will forge relationships with a supervisor, mentor, to those he/she ministers to and the other people in the church”

**Problems with Short-Term Intensive Internships**

Short-term intensive internships offer the intern the ability to devote a significant amount of time to the youth ministry but their exposure to the *behind the scenes* realities of ministry in

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6 Summer internship demand is driven, most often, by intensive summer programming.

the church are severely limited. The short duration of the experience may limit the student’s opportunity to gain a realistic picture of a particular ministry made possible only with a longer-term involvement. The intense summer experience may not accurately reflect the realities of a full-time staff position at the church.\textsuperscript{8} Necessary components such as administration, interactions with leadership, long-term planning, pastoral care, inter-staff dynamics, to name a few, are all missing. Additionally, the short duration of the summer limits exposure to the different seasons of the youth ministry’s year. Finally, short-term intensive internships hinder the ability of the intern to develop deeper relationships, which is a significant component of healthy ministry to youth. Effective ministry comes as the result of building trusting relationships. Developing relationships in this model is obviously very difficult.\textsuperscript{9}

\textbf{METHODOLGY}

\textbf{Procedure}

In order to complete this research it was submitted to and approved by the Lubbock Christian University Institutional Review Board. This research utilized semi-structured interviews in which a predetermined set of questions was asked to those who had completed internships ranging from three month to year-long \textit{and} internship supervisors who had overseen as few as one or as many as fifteen internships in order to draw themes from as many varied perspectives as possible.\textsuperscript{10} The questions dealt with different aspects of ministry and specifically with the time the intern was working with a particular group. Each question allowed for the individual to open


\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 27.

\textsuperscript{10} See Appendix A
up and reflect on their experience and provided vital information into a more holistic picture of internships. Interviews were conducted in one-on-one settings in coffee shops, offices, and the library. When the interviews were completed the responses were transcribed from audio and then analyzed to identify potential themes. A review of relevant and current literature was also conducted.

Sample

A sample of seventeen interns (8 female & 9 male) and twelve intern supervisors (1 female & 11 male) took part in this research. All participants were from or served in the Churches of Christ. The sample was asked to participate in the interview process and encouraged to respond to all questions they felt comfortable addressing.

DATA ANALYSIS

After analysis of the interviews was complete, several significant themes surfaced. These themes were consistent with interns and intern supervisors. The themes were: Shared workload, Desire for a longer internship, Discipleship Opportunity, Relationship Importance, and Role Model vs. Mentor.

Themes and Results

Theme 1: Shared Workload

During the interviews a shared workload was a theme that consistently showed up. For the youth minister, having an intern with whom to share the summer work was definitely a positive. In the interviews both the interns and the supervisors mentioned how busy the summer
months were for the church and the youth group. In many cases this is the timeframe where the most intentional ministry takes place because the youth aren’t necessarily in a position where they have to choose church over school or sports. For most youth groups about half of the summer is spent with the youth minister gone in some capacity whether it be on a mission trip, gone to a summer camp, Inner City work, or something else. Summer also provides additional time time for bible studies, evening hangouts, vacation bible school, and other various activities in which the youth minister is often in high demand.

When asked “Would the church reap any benefits from having an intern for a longer period of time?” one youth minister answered by saying “I would be more refreshed. During the summer having an intern takes some of the weight off my shoulders, but having an intern for a longer time would be a huge refreshing to someone who has taught class for nine years without a solid break.” What this youth minister says makes sense. The idea of having an intern come on and even take some of the work load allows the youth minister to be less stressed as well as giving them more time to focus on the youth and their family. Many interns expressed this same idea and one intern in particular phrased it this way, “I think my time as an intern was beneficial to the point of assisting the youth minister and taking stress off of him. This helped him to perform better and freed up some of his time.” The phrase that comes to mind when thinking about all of this is “You cannot water your flock from an empty well.” Youth ministry is draining and in many cases the youth minister will run themselves into the ground trying to provide everything that is demanded of them from the church while trying to maintain their own spiritual health. An internship in any capacity assists in this area and directly benefits the youth group by providing both the intern and the supervisor more time to plug into the group as a whole.

**Theme 2: Desire for a longer internship**

Out of the interviews there seemed to be a desire from both the intern and the supervisor to have a longer internship. Many factors pointed to this but the two that were most noticeable stemmed from the ability to develop deeper and more fulfilling relationships with the teens and
the desire to participate in different ministry experiences that exist outside of the typical three month intensive summer schedule.

One female intern was in a unique position because she had interned in both a short-term setting and a long-term setting. From her personal experience she had this to say, “Being with the students during the school year allows you to see more of the struggles they are going through.” Another female interviewee when asked about the possibility of a longer internship and what would develop from the added length said, “All you get now is the summer hype and you miss the rest of the year with the teens. You really miss seeing what the rest of ministry looks like.” Many other interns also agreed that they were missing out on a more holistic ministry experience because of the shortness of the current internship structure. When asked very directly, “If given the opportunity to participate in an internship for a longer period of time, maybe 6-8 months would you be interested in this?” while a bit leading, every intern said they would in some capacity want to participate in this depending on what it would look like.

From the intern supervisor’s perspective there was definitely interest in considering ways in which an intern could be employed for a longer period of time. When asked, “If given the opportunity to have an intern for a longer period of time, maybe 6-8 months would you be interested in this?” every youth minister who was currently facilitating a short-term internship said they would prefer longer internships. There was an overwhelming agreement that having intern for a longer term would be beneficial in almost every area. Intern supervisors who have had interns serve in longer internships definitely supported the idea that internships should be longer and, from their own experience, have witnessed results which went much deeper than what could take place in the summer.
One question, which really pushed the positive nature of a longer internship, was, “Would the church reap any benefits from having an intern for a longer period of time?” One supervisor said it this way “Relationships with the youth would become deeper and more ministry could take place.” Another said it this way “The longer the intern is there the longer the teens have to develop a relationship with the intern and trust them more. The longer internship would also develop more skills for the intern.” The longer the intern serves in a church, the more they will naturally develop and become more comfortable. This means the church and the intern would have the potential to produce more fruit. No matter the background of the intern supervisor, each agreed there would be immediate and direct benefits from having an intern serve for a longer period of time. There seems to be an agreement from both perspectives that a longer internship would be far more beneficial.

With that being said all supervisors agreed this would also be dependent upon the intern and their abilities. One youth minister when talking about having an intern for a longer period of time was a little hesitant. He said, “I had wished for a longer internship when I was interning, but now I would be hesitant. I would want to see more churches facilitate a longer internship before I took one in for a longer period of time.” This of course makes sense because there are plenty of unknowns. Below we will consider more in depth the positive and negative issues a longer internship poses and what a longer internship could possibly look like and accomplish.

Theme 3: Discipleship Opportunity

This theme stemmed from one question that was asked in particular. “What impact, if any, do you feel the brevity of the typical internship can/will have on relationships between the intern and students?” This question was asked of intern supervisors. Answers varied widely. The responses seemed a bit uncertain. A few of the responses were:
“Opening up to the intern really depends on the teen.”

“It can. Some teens will open up easier than others. I think it also depends on the intern.”

“There needs to be an understanding from the teens that they will only be there for a short time which means they also needs to be introduced to others who will be there longer.”

“It some cases I would say yes, but not all of the time”

It really was fascinating that there was not any definitive yes or no to this answer, which makes one wonder what factors could play into this? The most obvious fact is that no one will ever be able to determine objectively how a teen will react to someone coming in to his or her life. However, there are many reasons to assume the teens would be hesitant to open up to the intern especially knowing the intern will only be in his or her lives for a short period of time. Whether teens are more extroverted or introverted in nature might influence their ability or desire to open up to the intern. The same, of course, could be said of an incoming intern. This theme was included in part, because while ambiguous, it showed up in the majority of responses. As it turns out, this question was difficult to answer. To conclude that the brevity of the internship might cause teens to be more reserved and less willing to invest in the life of the intern cannot be asserted from the interviews, however, the interviews don’t provide enough conclusive evidence to claim they don’t. Further study involving teenagers is needed in order to really gauge this question.

**Theme 4: Relationship Importance**

A significant concern entering into this research was the disconnect that developed between the intern and the youth after the intern completed the internship.\footnote{This was a bias we attempted to control throughout the research, but we would be remiss if we did not admit that this concern is what drove us to the research in the first place.} From this research and more specifically from the interviews with the supervisors, we realized, in most cases, that
the teens grasped the fact that the intern would only be there for a short period of time and the next summer there would be, more than likely, a new intern. Both the interns and internship supervisors agreed relationships were one of the most important aspects of the internship. In every interview whether it fell under the job description or under expectations, relationship building was central to the purpose of the internship, according to the intern supervisors. One youth minister when asked, “What are some major goals and expectations you have had for your interns?” responded by saying “Relationship building is key to the success of the summer.” Relationship building during the internship was significant. When interns were asked: “What were some of the goals and expectations the church had for you?” The answer most referenced was the desire for the interns to build relationships with and invest in the lives of teens. Female interns were primarily brought in to build and develop relationships with the girls in the group while the males were principally responsible for relationships with the guys. Both female and male interns felt this was one of the main focuses during their internships.

It is agreed that relationships are a huge part of the summer, but what those relationships should look like was ambiguous. Of all the interviews conducted there was only one who specified what those relationships should look like and this response still wasn’t extremely descriptive. “The youth minister told me to build relationships that expanded outside of the church and the activities they did together as a youth group.” Taking the relationships to the next level from the youth intern’s viewpoint was desirable, but outside of the term “relationship,” it was never specified whether the relationships were to be on a friendship level solely, spiritual and deeper than ‘surface’, or a good mixture of both. We draw attention to this ambiguity because we feel this is an area where an internship could really make a difference. If going into the internship the intern and intern supervisor were on the same page about what the
relationships were to look like and accomplish there would be a greater sense of peace from the intern when they left after their time. Of course the intern also knows going into the internship they will be there for a set amount of time, but in every case accept one, this didn’t stop the intern from pursuing relationships with the teens that were deeper and more meaningful.

McKinney and Drovdahl point out in their research that, “Whether they [interns] brought a relational ministry philosophy to the internship or were taught it in their internship, their internship only strengthened the sense that relationships were what mattered most.” Developing relationships with teens in the youth group may be one of the most fundamental aspects of the summer, but from an intern, and more specifically an intern who is coming into the internship to fulfill academic requirement, the internship is about more than the ability to build relationships. Interns naturally want to serve and encourage the teens toward Christ, through teaching, leading, and discipleship. For this reason alone we feel when using the term “relationship” in a job description, the intern supervisor needs to be much clearer in their expectations. The question raised, however, is how should someone define relationship, in the context of short-term internships? Perhaps the next theme that surfaced in the interviews can shed a little more light on this question.

Theme 5: Role Model vs. Mentor

Throughout the interviews there were two terms that were thrown around quite a bit from the intern supervisor when talking about the intern. The terms role model and mentor were both used to describe the intern. This then led to the question; what is the main difference between someone who functions as a role model and someone who is a mentor? The definition will be

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different depending on their background and where they come from, but for our purposes a
dictionary definition will suffice. From the Oxford dictionary the term role model can be defined
as “a person looked to by others as an example to imitated” The definition for mentor is “an
experienced or trusted adviser.”\(^\text{13}\) From these two definitions the difference is apparent, but in
short-term ministry internships, sometimes the difference isn’t so clear.

First let us consider the term, mentor. Mentoring involves being present in an individual’s
life on a regular basis, leading and teaching them. Mentoring has been associated with
discipleship, peer mentoring, coaching, sponsorship, and role modeling.\(^\text{14}\) Mentoring has been
influential in the way young people have been taught and raised for thousands of years.
Mentoring is an ancient concept. Over two thousand years ago, Homer referred to the notion of
mentoring in *The Iliad*. When Odysseus was faced with a long Journey away from home he left
his son Telemachus under the care of his old friend and mentor.\(^\text{15}\) Even Scripture provides
different examples, which include Moses and Joshua, Jesus and His disciples, and Paul and
Timothy. In Matthew 4:18-20 Jesus calls his first disciples and tells them “Follow me and I will
make you fishers of men.”\(^\text{16}\) These brief *snapshots* from our common spiritual and literary
heritage give us some insight into the current practices of mentoring. Time, dedication, and
commitment are significant aspects assumed in mentoring.

Within the context of short-term intensive internships mentoring students according to
the definition established above is something that cannot be accomplished. Interns are provided

\(^{13}\) Oxford Dictionary


\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) English Standard Version
great tools and building relationships with the teens comes naturally, but proper mentorship requires trust, time, commitment, and long-term dedication. The positive influence of mentoring is contingent on the mentor fostering feelings of trust, empathy, and mutuality in the mentoring relationship. While a short-term internship most certainly has the potential to impact youth in a group, the idea of them becoming an effective mentor in such a short period of time really is unrealistic.

Now let’s consider the concept of the role model. A role model generally is someone who is looked up to and one others aspire to be like. Whether it be a celebrity, a family member, a teacher, or youth minister; a role model has the ability to impact the life of a teen in a shorter amount of time. When considering this concept through the lens of youth ministry, one can definitely see the youth minister as a role model. The intern who serves in a church also has the potential to be someone the youth look up to and aspire to be, which easily throws him or her into the category of role modeling. As a representative of Christ, this is an expectation an intern can certainly fulfill.

So what are the implications? Internships in a short-term intensive setting are already filled with expectations set by the intern supervisors and the interns. When using a short-term internship model, a distinction needs to be made about the responsibility of the intern when it comes to role modeling and mentoring. In fact, we suggest that, in its truest sense, a youth intern cannot functionally serve as a mentor in a short-term intensive internship. Setting these boundaries at the beginning of the internship allows the intern to work at a more successful level; understanding that their actions are a living representation of discipleship. Mentoring should

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take place from members in the church who have been around for a while and can be there for the youth when the intern leaves the church. While someone who functions in the mentor role can definitely be a role model, someone who operates as role model should never be expected to take on the role of a mentor. An intern who starts the short-term internship with the understanding they are to lead from their actions, first and foremost, is given the opportunity to develop relationships focused more on being a positive influence in a teenager’s life, and less on the way they are to teach and build up these teens. Pointing to the cross should be the single most important task of the intern during the course of their work in such a short period of time. More important than developing deeper relationships with teens is the ability to point every situation to Christ and the goodness that is found in him. Whether this be through word or action the very nature of pointing one to the cross, will build God-honoring relationships.

**PROPOSED INTERNSHIP DESIGN**

The short-term intensive internship facilitates many needs of both the intern supervisor and the church while providing many positive benefits to the intern, but better models exist. At the beginning of this paper we looked at the three most commonly used internships. They were: intensive internships, yearlong internships, and concurrent internships. Universities around the nation have already started to facilitate longer internships and internships that are better suited to students and their current position in life. Listed below are some universities and their current offering different ministry internship models:

- Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary gives the students the option for immersion during one semester for a full 12 hours of credit.
Educational Ministry majors at Huntington University participate in an 8-month immersion away from campus covering the summer and preceding fall semester of their senior year.

- Trinity International University and Talbot School of Theology are examples of schools currently using the concurrent model for fieldwork programs.
- Wheaton College offers the undergraduate ministry student the option of using the intensive model during the summer and the concurrent model during the semester.\(^\text{18}\)

Given the results of the interviews, we would argue for an internship model that would be no less than six months in length and take place during the summer and one semester while students are in school. This model would look more like the concurrent model but would allow the full-time student the opportunity to take course work during the internship. During the summer the student would be working in an intensive setting where ministry is the main focus and during the school semester the intern would work a reduced number of hours in order to spend time on school work. What this would look like exactly, is hard to say, however, Lubbock Christian University is currently offering an internship program where students are able to work in Washington DC and complete course work at the same time. The program uses the student’s tuition plus an extra $2000 to cover the cost of the program and housing. Finances were one of the main concerns when talking to churches because they operate under tight budgets and they are unable to afford an intern for a longer period of time. If churches were able to supply housing and some compensation for the work the students were doing this would be an ideal situation. The supplied housing and compensation would free the student to participate in this internship model without needing to use the additional funds.

**Reasons for a shift in the internship model**

The point of this research was to take a look at short-term intensive internships and determine their effectiveness. Through the interviews with the interns and the supervisors there

were several positive outcomes from the current model as well as some outcomes that may be negative, depending on the situation of the church and what they are looking for. We believe there is a need for a different type of internship in model and length. While the current short-term model facilitates the needs of the intern and university course requirement, in many cases, the interviews and the data collected suggested underlying issues that are often not addressed.

**More time behind scenes**

The model presented in the previous section would benefit the student intern by allowing them to directly apply internship experience to coursework and coursework directly to the internships. The longer internship would present opportunities for fuller ministry not only with the youth but with the church as a whole. The interns would be immersed in the behind the scenes work longer which would help them see more clearly the reality of church work. In a study looking at interns who had participated in yearlong internships after they graduated college, the following comment was made, “Beyond learning that a backstage life exists, interns learn something of how backstage life works. Interns learn the complexity of backstage life and tasks.”19 This quote nails it exactly. Interns would be able to leave college with a clearer understanding of the messiness of church work rather then being protected from it in a shorter internship. This study also noted the following from the longer internship experience, “Interns find that going backstage changes their experience of church life.”20 If churches allowed an intern to see more of the backside of the church, a couple things would occur: 1) the intern would leave the internship knowing whether or not working in a church would be for them and, 2) they would leave with a more realistic view of what the church does and is.

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20 Ibid., 62.
Taking ownership

A longer internship would also allow more room for the intern to take ownership of certain aspects of the youth group. Anecdotally, one of the most beneficial parts of my (James Masterson) own internship experience was the ability to take complete ownership of a middle school mission trip. The opportunity to plan and implement my own mission trip forced me to grow and develop confidence, which I took with me when the internship was complete. For most interns the summer is already planned. An internship that is completely safe leaves little room for the intern to grow and short-term internships leave little room for the intern to fail. Teaching, developing curriculum, facilitating devotionals, and building relationships were the four main parts of the job description with very few allowing the intern to do more than that. Of the seventeen interns who were interviewed only two were given the ability to plan and orchestrate a major event during their time. The rest of the interns were able to assist the intern supervisor in planning specific parts of an event or major trip but for the most part, the bigger decisions were taken care of well in advance.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Limitations

A few limitations of this research need to be pointed out. The first limitation lies in the inability to interview teens from different youth groups. This third perspective would have allowed for even deeper and clearer themes to immerge providing a fuller understanding of areas where interns and intern supervisors were unable to speak. Second, this research was conducted in a span of about four months, which really cut down the number of interviews conducted.
Trying to match schedules and find people willing to participate in the study was more difficult than anticipated and because of this limited time frame, different perspectives could be underrepresented at best, or missing at worst. Third, a factor not accounted for when the research began was the difference in the size of the churches and how that affected the internship. Larger churches in most cases allowed for multiple ministers and the internship at that point looked a lot different. On the opposite side of the spectrum there were interns who served as the youth minister during their time as an intern, which also resulted in a different internship experience.

Fourth, future research would necessarily include a larger denominational sample. These interviews were all conducted within a particular fellowship. This homogeneity certainly skewed potential insight. Finally, a significant limitation is the lack of current research being conducted on ministry internships. More research needs to be conducted in order to better understand this significant ministerial developmental tool.

**Strengths**

While a limitation above, this research does add to the current body of research on internships. Currently there are three academic articles that deal with ministry internships in any setting and none ask the initial question this research was asking. It is our hope that this research will contribute something worthy to the available literature. This research opened the door for questions to be asked about short-term intensive youth ministry internships, which will only enhance the quality of internships in the future.
CONCLUSION

Summers are vital for the church because more teens seem to participate due to the freedom they have in their schedule and because of this the youth minister has every right to want the summer to go smoothly, but the internship is also vital for the success of the intern. Longer internships would provide more time to prepare and take ownership of more than just teaching and building relationships. From their observations on yearlong internships McKinney and Drovdahl pointed out that, “Interns seemed to experience when “ownership” holds a real possibility for success or failure…Interns could acknowledge their successes but seemed keenly aware of failures and shortcomings and were quick to translate failure into deeper questions.”

The ability to fail in an internship - in a supportive church environment and under a supervisor who is there to guide the intern when they are struggling is a crucial aspect of an internship, which is missing, right now in short-term intensives. Having the opportunity to participate more in the planning and the ability to take some ownership only strengthens the youth minister in training.

After taking a deeper look into short-term internships, through interviews and reading articles, we have concluded that while the typical short-term internship model has many shortcomings, they, in and of themselves, are not detrimental to the development of youth in a youth group. A longer internship, however, would significantly address the shortcomings that are illustrated in the five themes, would better expose the intern to the realities of church work, and, in the end, provide a better relational experiences all around.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

1. ) would this be something you or your church would be interested in?

Questions for Intern:

1. What was the length of your internship?
2. In brief, summarize your job description?
3. What were some of the goals and expectations the church had for you?
4. What did your internship entail? (ex. programming, devotionals, mission trips, etc.)
5. What would you describe as the best part of your internship?
6. What was the biggest struggle during your internship?
7. Tell me about the relationships developed during this internship?
8. Have any relationships formed during the internship continued when the internship came to an end?
9. During your time as an intern were teens willing/able to open up to you? If yes, how did you handle this and how did you bring in the youth minister/supervisor?
10. When you finished your internship were there relationships you wished you had had more time to establish?
11. We know that internships generally are more for the intern than the church, but do you feel like your time as an intern was beneficial to the church?
12. If you were still interning at this church what do you think the internship would look like?

Questions for Intern Supervisors:

2. What is a typical job description for your interns?
3. What are some major goals and expectations you have had for your interns?
4. What impact do you expect the intern to have on the church as a whole? On the teens?
5. How do the interns affect the youth group in such a short period?
6. How well have you seen your interns create relationships?
7. What happens to those relationships after the intern leaves?
8. What impact, if any, do you feel the brevity of the typical intensive internship can/will have on relationships between the intern and students?
9. When teens/children open up to the intern how is the intern expected to handle this?
10. If the intern were to continue for a longer period of time do you feel that would affect outcomes?
11. Would the church reap any benefits from having an intern for a longer period of time?
12. Respond to this statement: The church should gain just as much from the intern’s internship as the intern gains from the internship?
   If it were possible for an intern to serve a longer period of time (6-8 Months)