Human Error in Christian Youth Work: A Cross-National Study of Youth Worker Mistakes

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Abstract

To err is certainly to be human. It is part of the human experience, spoken of by ancient Greek philosophers as well as the writers of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scriptures. Nearly every field of human endeavor has literature (anecdotal and/or scholarly) about human error...be it engineering, education, medicine, or computer science. There is significant literature on the subject of human error as it applies to young people. (Google "Juvenile Delinquency" and it will take a year to read all there is to be read on the topic.) But what about youth-*workers*?

This paper looks at human error as it applies to church based youth ministry. Over 500 youth workers in ten countries filled out our survey instrument, in which respondents were asked to name three mistakes they themselves have made. They were also asked to place each mistakes into one of five categories, and reflect on what it was that caused them to see it as a mistake. Here we explore the quantitative outcomes of the survey, as well as the qualitative themes stemming from the narrative responses. We also explorer any differences emerging from cross-national comparisons as well. For example, do Finnish youth workers name errors proportionately similar as those in the Philippines or Nigeria? Do they use similar cognitive framing in understanding their own mistakes?

The heuristic value of our research especially for youth ministry educators is that if we can have a research based understanding of human error in youth work we can, in our curriculum and pedagogy, both preemptively and redemptively address key issues in the classroom. Who wouldn't want to see his or her graduates make fewer errors as they engage in the high calling of Christian youth ministry?

Introduction

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literature on the subject of human error as it applies to young people. Google "Juvenile Delinquency" and it will take a year to read all there is to be read on the topic. But what about youth-*workers*?

This paper seeks to look at human error as it applies to church based youth workers. If there are discernible categories that comprise large percentages of youth worker errors, then training and resources can be developed which address these issue.

Certainly some youth work errors are humorous in retrospect, such as the youth worker who advertised a multi-church youth group roller skating event, but forgot to make arrangements with the rink itself.[1]

Unfortunately, not all youth worker mistakes are humorous, even in retrospect. The case of a youth worker cancelling a long planned and scheduled romantic bed-and-breakfast getaway with a spouse in favor of leading an important retreat to "be there" for a youth group certainly qualifies. Similarly unfortunate is the youth worker who was so exhausted on a backpacking trip he didn't lift a finger to stop youth cliff jumping 50' into the lake. The boys who did it urged the girls on to also jump. Of the two girls who did, one required medical evacuation.[2]

Human error in youth work can physically or emotionally hurt young people. It can damage or even destroy marriages. It can harm the reputation of Christ and His church. This paper seeks to address the following questions: 1) What kinds of mistakes do youth workers actually make? 2) Are there any statistically significant differences based on demographic data such as education, age, or personality-home-base. 3) Are mistakes made by youth workers in different countries, or even by different denominations, significantly different? If so, what may account for these differences? 4) What causes a youth worker to eventually realize at a cognitive or emotional level that he or she has indeed made an error? and 5) do youth workers from different countries employ different cognitive framing as they narrate their mistakes?

Literature Review and Sociological Theory Connections

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[1] Yes, that was me (Len). When I got to the rink and introduced myself, they looked at me blankly, checked the schedule, and said, I'm sorry, we have no record of your contacting us about tonight and the rink has been rented by St. Ann's Church for a family skate. In desperation I managed to reach Father Bennett on the phone, explained my error, and begged him to allow our (large) group to also skate. Full of grace and mercy, he agreed to do so. I (Amy) have a funny (in retrospect) one as well. I was newly on the job and was in charge of a spaghetti dinner event…parents and adults come, eat wonderful food, and enjoy a program of youth talent, also raising money for a upcoming mission trip. I assumed making spaghetti for 200 wouldn't be much more difficult than making dinner for the youth group. Turns out it is a lot harder and takes a lot longer. Others had offered advice and also help in the kitchen, but no, "I've got this." Did you know it takes a LONG TIME for a huge pot of water to boil! It took two hours after the event began before people received at least something to eat. Everyone was surprisingly gracious in this situation, and I learned many lessons.
[2] For more examples of mistakes and lessons learned see Len Kageler and Jonathan Hobbs, *Don't Do This: learning from the screw ups of youth ministry leaders* (The Youth Cartel, 2016).

Nearly every major field of human endeavor also has literature which seeks to bring clarity is to what goes wrong and why. Human error research, by its very nature, is not only heuristic, but offers the possibility than occurrences of human error can be reduced. That is, mistakes are *preventable.* While some mistakes are seen as unpreventable due to varying factors the majority of mistakes relating to human error are preventable through applicable methods. This literature review is akin to a conceptual funnel…considering broad fields of human error in a well-known fields, such as aviation, then narrowing to endeavors which seek to deal with and or help people directly such as health care and criminal justice, then narrowing further to education, which deals with children and youth directly, and finally, with human error in Christian ministry and youth ministry.

Human Error in Aviation

"The road must be run safe first, and fast afterward."[3]

Aviation like many other fields is constantly evolving with the development of new technologies and as Westhuizen and Stanz claim is seen as a field in which the expected error rate is zero.[4] The method used in their study was Hycner's thirteen-step approach of social analysis.[5] In the context of modern technology and the implementation of fly-by-wire technology the margin for error in aviation continues to decrease with factors such as the ability of a pilot to steer the plane to safety becoming secondary to the ability of a computer system to power and relay commands from the cockpit to the corresponding parts and controls on the aircraft. This evolution of modern flying continues to place further stress on the integrity of computer systems over the ability and demands of the pilot and their control. "According to a survey of 1,843 aircraft accidents from 1950 to 2006 to determine their causes, pilot errors were the main causes, comprising 53% of the accidents…But currently, with technical improvements, it is reported that approximately 80% of all aircraft accidents are results of human error."[6]

Human Error in Health Care

''I will apply dietetic measures for the benefit of the sick according to my ability and judgment; I will keep them from harm and injustice"(Hippocrates).

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[3] Daniel McCallum, "New York and Erie Railroad," *American Railroad Journal* 27 no. 925 (1854): 399.

[4] Vander Westhuizen and Karel Stanz, "Critical Incident Reporting Systems: Perceived Competing Social Consequences Considered by Reporters," *Ergonomics SA: Journal of the Ergonomics Society of South Africa* 26 no. 1 (2012): 19-25.

[5] ibid.

[6] Lee Yeong Heok, Jeon Jeong-Dae, and Choi Youn-Chul, "Air Traffic Controllers' Situation Awareness and Workload under Dynamic Air Traffic Situations." *Transportation Journal* 51 no. 3 (2012): 338.

Human error within the field of health care greatly varies from handwritten lab test requests,[7] to general communication[8] and various other failures in the healthcare system.[9] The liability of these errors ranges from the healthcare institutions in which individuals are treated, to doctors and pharmacists along with other healthcare apparatuses that ensure a functional system.[10] In the context of human error in terms of communication in the healthcare a miss step of any type can easily bring about the death of an individual in this high critical-risk environment.

With the integration of computer systems into healthcare, while the ability for miscommunication of information is not present in terms of one's ability to read; the problem of data accuracy has arisen with errors present in approximately 10% of records in a select study [11]. In this select study the subject matter was serology in which identification of infections and regulation and management of immunity is done involving over 3,400 tests[12]. The classification of these errors was separated into five sections involving, Missed Tests 16%, Wrong Test Data-Entry 59%, Wrong Test Computer Algorithm 1%, Not Signed 22%, and Mislabeled Specimen 1% and while some of these errors are correctable it was determined that the estimated rate of completion currently in context of real world work is 97.8%[13]. While this rate is much lower than the approximately 10% of errors presented at the introduction of the text, in the facility in which this study was done, currently serve approximately 66,000 individuals per year, this figure represents 1,452 individuals with errors in their medical work that will not be recognized every year in this single medical facility.[14]

Human Error in the Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice System
"Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error."[15]

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[7] Elia Vecellio, Michael Maley, George Toouli, Andrew Georgiou, and Johanna Westbrook, "Data Quality Associated with Handwritten Laboratory Test Requests: Classification and Frequency of Data-Entry Errors for Outpatient Serology Tests," *Health Information Management Journal 44 no. 3 (2015): 7-12.*

[8] Lynette Fryer, "Human Factors in Nursing: The Time is Now," *Journal Of Advanced Nursing* 30, no.2 (2012): 56-65.

[9] Carl Macrae, " Learning from Patient Safety Incidents: Creating Participative Risk Regulation in Healthcare," *Health, Risk & Society* 10 no.10 (2008): 53-67.

[10] Denham Phipps, Peter Noyce, Kieran Walshe, Dianne Parker, and Darren Ashcroft, "Risk-Based Regulation of Healthcare Professionals: What are the Implications for Pharmacists?" *Health, Risk & Society* 100 no. 3 (2011): 277-292

[11] Elia Vecellio op.cit.

[12] ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] ibid.

[15] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, (Philadelphia : H.C. Carey & I. Lea. E. Bliss & E. White 1825), 217.

Doyle presents well what some recognize as one of the most troubling factors in the Criminal Justice System; error reporting, the apparent lack of willingness of departments, agencies and organizations of the type reporting for the purpose of error tracking.[16] Doyle noted the story of Boston Police Commissioner Edward F. Davis, when Davis was a detective in a case that wrongfully convicted a man, and then asked if he was sorry, replied, "No, because I didn't do anything wrong". Incidents such as this exemplify the one of facets that complicates error reporting, the criminal justice system in place is not perfect but seeks to do its best. The development of error reporting in many cases would be hindered by the traditions of silence within the law enforcement system, though agencies that have implemented plans of error reporting such as the department of Commissioner William Bratton, have brought forth effective plans and methods.[17] Doyle advocates for a system in which all members of the Criminal Justice System are accountable to each other and have the ability to establish forums and study groups to evaluate errors in the system that would be developed through group consensus in which no member would have veto power. The establishment of the system described though proving to be difficult, can be developed with the proof being, the systems currently in place in the context of aviation and the medical field.

Greenstone identifies well twenty-five errors made by Police Hostage and Crisis Negotiators in his presentation of twenty-four factors and a twenty-fifth in place as a redundancy of logic.[18] The twenty-four factors other than the redundancy of twenty-five present themselves as either a psychological process error or a communication error except for error ten which is an external factor. This exemplifies the need for clear communication and detailed training.

Human Error in Education
"To err is Human; to Forgive, Divine."[19]

In the field of education, the opportunity for human error is rampant with factors relating to the instructor, the material development and the student. Factors relating to these three facets are all in the context of communication. The following seeks to explore various methods in which errors develop in communication in education. The cause for these errors is often lack of training.[20]

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[16] James Doyle, "Learning From Error in American Criminal Justice," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 100 no 1 (2010): 109.
[17] ibid.
[18] James Greenstone, "The Twenty-Five Most Serious Errors Made by Police Hostage and Crisis Negotiators," *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations* 7 no. 2 (2007): 107-116.
[19] Alexander Pope. *An Essay on Criticism*. London: Printed for W. Lewis, 1711.
[20] Tina Herzberg, "Error Analysis of Brailled Instructional Materials Produced by Public School Personnel in Texas," *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness* 104 no. 12 (2010): 765.

Dixon, et al presents well factors relating to one's ability to understand and therefore proceed without error in relation to the method in which information is explained. This research delineates differences in mathematical word problem structures and its influence on the both the abilities of the student and of the instructor.[21] "The improvement of mathematics education for all students requires effective mathematics teaching in all classrooms" This research seeks to understand and explain the outlook of the instructor as they teach the students. Fricke's research is noted in terms of the perception of the student and her lack of understanding in the context of the multiple meanings in which the word problems she developed meant to students.[22] In this context, Dixon, et al, seeks to use a similar methodology in the context of the understanding of pre-service teachers, and their ability to recognize the meaning of word problems. The degree of proficiency of a student is developed through the method in which an instructor presents tasks.[23]

Human Error in Christian Ministry

We are now at the narrow end of our conceptual funnel. We note in our description of human error in the field of education that lack of teacher training is often the cause of error. To our knowledge there is no existing scholarly literature on the specific topic of human error in Christian youth work. Having said that, one can infer from a number of published sources that error can arise in Christian ministry, and thus, by extension, youth ministry. For example, Friedrich Schweitzer piece last year in *The International Journal of Practical Theology* discusses the intersection of theology and praxis, and if one get's this intersection wrong (we infer) that mistakes of some kind will be made no matter what ministry is considered.[24] In an earlier discourse in the same journal Hey and Roux explorer Wesley's four step "Praxis Cycle" of insertion, context analysis, theological reflection, and planning for action. It is easy to see that if one skips a step, or somehow does a particular step in a sloppy manner, what comes after will be flawed, and thus, error ridden.[25] This "praxis cycle" is was intended to be relevant no matter what aspects of Christian ministry were under consideration. Though there was no professional youth work industry (so to speak) in Wesley's day, we assume Wesley would consider it applicable to this form of ministry as well. A more contemporary at least tangential

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[21] Juli Dixon, Janet Andreasen, Cheryl Avila, Zyad Bawatneh, Deana Deichert, Tashana Howse, and Mercedes Turner " Redefining the Whole: Common Errors in Elementary Preservice Teachers' Self-Authored Word Problems for Fraction Subtraction," *Investigations In Mathematics Learning* 7 no. 1 (2014): 1-22.

[22] Monica Friske, "Influence of Using Context Supportive of the Area Model on Sixth Grade Students' Performance When Writing Word Problems for Fraction Subtraction and Multiplication," (Unpublished masters thesis), (Orlando: University of Central Florida), (2011)

[23] Dixon, op.cit.

[24] Friedrich Schweitzer, "Professional Praxis in Practical Theology: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18 (1) (2014), 139-149.

[25] Sam Hey and Johan Roux, "Integrating the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and Praxis Cycle to Support Tertiary Student Theological Engagement," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 9.1 (2012) 192-209.

consideration of ministry mistakes is J.R. Birgg's "*Fail…Putting Hope and Grace in the Midst of Ministry Failure.*"[26] Briggs does not seek to enumerate or categorize examples of failure, but rather uses specific examples of situations (his own or told to him) that cause (within a pastor) the collateral damage of *shame*, *loneliness*, and *wounds*.

His book, then, is not so much about ministry mistakes and the other travails of vocational ministry, but rather one's internal experience of and reaction to the less than positive aspects ministry life and work.

When it comes to youth worker training and youth ministry praxis, we see two frameworks (other than the one we have used, described below) that may have been a conceptual fit with human error research.

One of those frameworks comes from Finland, and youth workers turned youth-work Ph.D. candidates, Poropudas and Huhanantti. In training confirmation camp workers (which is a very huge deal in Finland) the trainees are seen to need competencies in these essential skill domains: 1) spiritual and ethical know how, 2) organization and development know how, 3) Communal and societal know-how, and lastly, 4) pedagogical know-how.[27] Had our mistakes survey offered these as four categories of human error possibilities, the Finns would have instantly recognized the provenience of this framework.

As the Finns would have had affinity for their four-fold competency rubric, many American (as well as beyond the USA) would have recognized the ministry framework described in Doug Fields' *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry.* Fields teaches that a balanced youth ministry needs to concurrently possess the five-fold aspects of ministry commanded by Jesus in the Gospels and borne out in the early church found in the book of Acts. These are: evangelism, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry.[28] The inadequacy of using Field's "5 Purposes" framework for youth work human error research is that Field's five purposes are first and foremost about what the youth worker facilitates for/with the student. Our framework is much more encompassing.

When it comes to connecting our research to sociological theory, the study of human error rests comfortably with both a Durkheimian framework as well as a Weberian.

French sociologist Emil Durkheim (1858-1917) coined the term "social fact" as a descriptor of an observable phenomenon in human behavior. If Durkheim were alive today, he would be compelled to affirm that what we are studying when we study human error or "mistakes" are what he calls "social facts." For Durkheim something is a social fact if meets three criteria. First, it is external to the individual. That is, it is a behavioral norm governed by something beyond just one individual. Secondly, it is *constraining* in character. That is it actually

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[26] J.R. Briggs, *Fail: Finding Hope and Grace in the Midst of Ministry Failure* (Downers Grove, IL, IVP, 2014),

[27] Salla Poropudas and Saara Huhanantti, "There I Am in the Midst of Them: Qualitative Research of Christian Youth Work Leaders Students' Professional Relationship to Confirmation Work," *Journal of Youth and Theology* 11.1 (2012), pp. 23-39.

[2828] Doug Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1998), p.17

impacts the decisions a person makes in a certain area. Thirdly, the particular behavior, belief, or notion is *universal* within the collective.[29] Here the collective is first the constellation of stakeholders whose interests intersect church based youth ministry…the youth themselves, the parents, the pastor(s), and the governing structure of the church.

Said another way, a social fact is something that when one acts antithetically to something, it is like there has been a *violation.* Consider youth worker mistakes: Your spouse leaves you because you are so focused on ministry that he/she feels like a single person, though married, or you lose track of a young person on a trip and leave them stranded at a highway rest-stop and don't realize they are missing until you are 100 miles away, or one of your volunteers forgets to bring the Mountain Dew or Red Bull to the all-nighter and you criticize them loudly in front of other staff *and* the youth themselves. We will see illustrations of social fact awareness (or lack thereof) when we consider the narrative responses regarding what caused youth workers to understand their mistake as a mistake.

This research also rests comfortably within the conceptualizations articulated from the standpoint of *Phenomenology.*

Stemming from Max Weber's interest in the individual expressed in his *Economy and Society,[30]* Alfred Schutz advanced the notion that it is most productive to consider the moment-to-moment, day-to-day experiences of individuals.[31] Phenomenological sociology has given us the descriptor "life world." Here the concern is what is self-evident to an individual or what is seen as a given. "What am I experiencing now?" "What is actually happening?"[32] Our survey and research is very much in this stream, as we are asking youth workers to reflect on what is actually happening around them. In phenomenological sociology, micro-analysis is the starting point, not macro-analysis. Harold Garfinkel's "Studies in Ethnomethodology" and the sub-field known as Symbolic Interactionsim are both not just iterations of phenomenological sociology, but also a deepening and extension of this line of sociological inquiry.[33] Our survey gave ample opportunity for youth workers to narrate their own feelings and experiences. Our presentation and discussion of these narratives is given in the spirit of qualitative research given vocabulary by phenomenological theorists just described. It further advances our understanding of youth workers in a way that quantitative analysis cannot.

Methods and Data
Mistakes Framework

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[29] Richard Munch, *Sociological The*ory, Volume One: *From the 1850 to the 1920s.* (Chicago, Nelson Hall, 1994), p.125.

[30] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*. (London: Royal Economic Society, 1924)

[31] Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*. (Evanston, IL: North Western University (1967)

[32] Peter Berger and T. Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Penguin, 1971)

[33] Harold Garfunkle, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969).

Central to this research is the conceptualization of youth ministry developed by Len Kageler and used as curricular basis for youth ministry instruction in the Youth & Family Studies program of Nyack College, as well as written about in several of his books.[34] This conceptualization understands that a youth worker needs to knowledge, dispositions, and skills at four different levels:

Category 1 Foundation Level: Our own soul-care, and the maintaining of our primarily relationships

(Mistake example: spouse leaves citing youth worker loves ministry more than spouse)

Category 2: Working With Youth Directly

(Mistake examples: youth don't listen to or follow youth worker; personal disorganization so that events fail; incompetence in teaching or counseling)

Category 3: Working With Adults Who Work With Youth, as Well as Parents

(Mistake example: unable to recruit or retain volunteers; parental distrust of youth worker)

Category 4: Working With "Those Above" (e.g. the Pastor, the Board)[35][36]

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[34] Len Kageler,

The Youth Minister's Survival Guide   (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1992).

The Youth Ministry Survival Guide (Grand Rapids, Zondervan/Harper Collins, 2008).

The Volunteers Field Guide to Youth Ministry   (Loveland, CO, Group, 2011.

[35] This framework was explained to Len by the CEO of a billion dollar a year company, who had taken him to lunch. He explained to Len that the Board of the church saw him as very competent in working with youth directly, he was, unfortunately terrible at working with adults who work with kids, as well as those above, like himself. We explained that he and the Board thought Len was *salvageable.* In the coming months Len was required to go to three management seminars, as well as study some books on management & delegation. The framework explained to Len then and used in this research now, stems from the concepts explained in the business/management book *The Peter Principle: Why Things Always Go Wrong.* (Lawrence Peter and Raymond Hull, NYC: Harper Business, Reprint Edition, 2011). *The Peter Principle is an observation that in an organizational hierarchy, every employee will rise or get promoted to his or her level of incompetence. The Peter Principle is based on the notion that employees will get promoted as long as they are competent, but at some point will fail to get promoted beyond a certain job because it has become too challenging for them. Employees rise to their level of incompetence and stay there. Over time, every position in the hierarchy will be filled by someone who is not competent enough to carry out his or her new duties.* (Investopedia, "What is the Peter Principle" | *Investopedia* http://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/peter-principle.asp#ixzz42QilHBLl. *Accessed March 9, 2016.*

[36] The in-survey category description stated:

Categories of mistakes:

1. Mistakes made in regard to your own spiritual, relational, or maturity foundations and fitness to engage in youth work yourself.

(Example: so focused on youth work my spouse threatened to leave me. OR: Ignored my own spiritual life until I was totally burned out.

2.Mistakes working with youth directly

(Example: I lost my temper with a student OR Three kids were injured in a game I led.)

3. Mistakes working with volunteers or parents.

(Example: I thrust a volunteer into a big responsibility with insufficient training. OR

I lost a kid (temporarily) on a trip, a parent was angry as a result and I dismissed their concern.)

(Mistake example: not informing pastor of student injury, or missing money)

Survey Methodology

At the January 2015 IASYM London gathering, the author discussed this research idea with multiple colleagues and received valuable feedback. Additionally, key leaders from different countries were approached to be survey-link distributor for their country or denomination. One positive aspect that proved popular that each country leader would receive, at the end of the project, the entire data set for their country's survey respondents. They could, then, use this specific information as they designed youth work training and resources for their own people.

The Mistakes survey was developed, including standard informed consent protocols. Then followed questions regarding basic demographic information that then led to the opportunity to describe and categorize three youth ministry mistakes. There was also opportunity to narrate various aspects of one or more of the mistakes. Additionally, respondents were asked to narrate how it is they came to understand that what happened was a mistake. Prior to launch, the survey instrument was approved by the IRB of Nyack College that insures human-subject protocols and standards are met. Survey respondents were not asked to identify themselves or "name names" in their stories. They were told their responses would not be traced back to them personally. They were informed, on the other hand, if they wanted to see a summary of the research outcomes when the project was all completed, they could supply their email address. They were assured that their email address would not be sold, shared, or otherwise distributed to others. 41% of the 522 respondents chose to supply their email address.

Country leaders were given the choice of two options: 1) randomly pick 100 of the youth leaders on their list who would receive the survey invitation and link. They would remind these 100 until at least 50% had responded, or 2) send to as many as they could, and remind these folks once or twice. Most leaders chose the latter option.

The survey was launched first in the USA in April 2015, followed by different countries around the globe, and closed in April 2016 so full data analysis could commence in a timely fashion.

Though our first primary target for the survey was full time employed youth workers, we found many country leaders had lists that were not sorted in that manner. We thus opened the survey to "part time" and volunteers.

Comment [EU1]: The respondents who gave error data had a higher rate of receiving project outcome then those who did not give error data (at least in reference to the calculations I previously did rates were 62.6% to 1.1%)

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4. Mistakes made in interaction with (or about) "those above" us in the church structure, such as the pastor or the church governing authority.

(Example: I did not inform my pastor when something big went wrong, he heard about it from others first OR I ignored the church budget and overspent big time.)

5. Mistakes that cannot easily be categorized by any of the above

Data

A great deal of data was collected, of course. Much of the quantitative data was analyzed via the new SPSS feature of SurveyMonkey (premium level). The qualitative data, that is, the narrative responses, were analyzed manually. These two research approaches allows us to gain a nuanced understanding of both the over-all, data as well as the country specific data.

 Results and Discussion

The first thing one notices in examining the data is that a large number of persons dropped out of the survey after the basic demographic data questions were completed. They did not go on and complete the "mistakes" part of the survey. At first we wondered if the volunteers and perhaps even the part time person dropped out, thinking that this part of the survey was not for them (despite the introduction which explained the survey was about mistakes, and that it was very important to complete the entire survey was vital.) Our initial thought, however, was only mildly supported. Of full timers, 48% did the whole, survey. For part timers it was 42% and volunteers came in at 45%. We also explored variation by personality style. "Leader" persons were more likely to complete the survey than the other styles, but not much more likely.

We admit that the notion of "my mistakes" may be uncomfortable territory for some and that the request of assigning mistakes to categories may have been difficult. Those for whom English is not a first language may also have had difficulty. Perhaps some respondents experience a social pressure for perfection, or at least not to be open about their errors. A reluctance to disclose errors was noted by Doyle in his examination of human error in the field of criminal justice.[37]

Having said all that, we are still please that 245 youth workers, from ten different countries, completed the entire survey. For exploratory research such as this, this result is a rich trove information and insight.

Country leaders who distributed the survey link were given a choice as to how to proceed. They could 1) send the link to a random sample of 100 youth workers on their list, or 2) send the link to as many as they wished. Those who chose the former were asked to do repeated reminders as necessary to achieve a 50% (or better) response rate. Three leaders chose the first option. The USA Evangelical Free church had a 66% response rate, the USA Roman Catholics had an 81% response rate, and the youth workers in the Philippines achieved a 62% response rate. Their results, therefore, are *generalizable* to their larger population. For the other countries, the results and interesting and may suggest larger trends, but it must be stated that in these cases the results are definitely true only for those who filled out the survey.[38]

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[37] James Doyle op.cit.
[38] Our cut-off line for a country to be included in the analysis was 15.

Taken as a whole, of those who did at least part of the survey, some interesting facts emerge. The full time persons are clearly more "leader" personality oriented than the part timers or the volunteers. Age-wise the "leaders" were in the middle (early 30's) of the part timers and volunteers, and are majority male.

Table 1, Selected Characteristics by Employment Status
N=522

|	Majority Male or Female?	Modal Age Category	Modal personality	Modal How Long at This Church
Full Time n=300	Male	31-36	Leader	More than 10 years
Part Time n=76	Female	21-25	Tie: Leader/Caring	2-4 years
Volunteer n=146	Tie: M/F	Over 45	Caring	More than 10 years

Youth Ministry Education

Those of us who are in the Youth Ministry Education endeavor are always interested to learn what level students go to seek this education.

Table 2   Formal and Less Formal Education in Youth Ministry
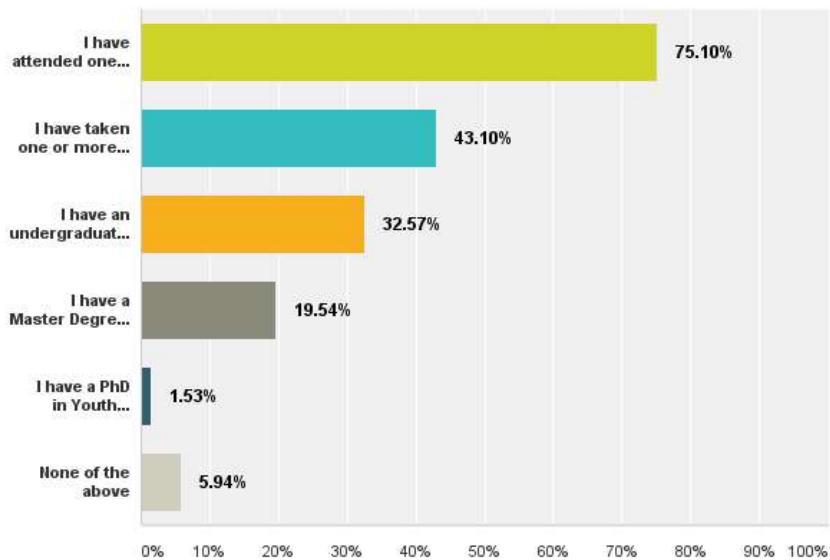
Similarly interesting is a comparison of education by country. What percentage of respondents from each country has at least one degree or academic qualification in youth ministry?

Table 3: Percent of Youth Workers (by employment status) With At Least One Academic Degree in Youth Ministry

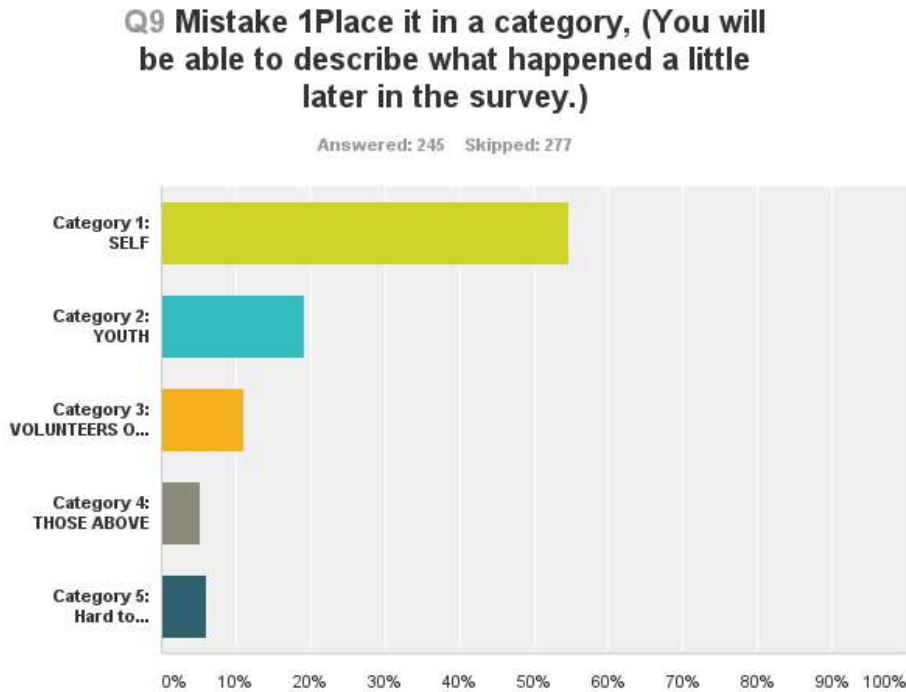|	Full Time	Part Time	Volunteer
Finland n=39	100%*	0%	0%
Germany, RC n=18	88	6	6
East Africa n=37	100	0	0
Australia n=22	63	25	13
Netherlands n=15	29	71	0
Norway n=25	64	19	19
Philippines n=62	43	14	43
South Africa n=15	100	0	0
UK n=129	60*	18*	22*
USA EVFree n=66	97*	3*	0
USA RC n=81	72*	20*	8

With this brief overview of some of the features and nuances of our respondents, we now turn to the five research questions. Each also contains a hypothetical hunch.

Research Question 1: What kinds of mistakes do youth workers make?
Hypothetical Hunch: That all categories would have some respondents, but that Category 3 would be the highest. Why? When we are young it is easy to work with youth, but less natural to work with adults who work with youth.

Table 4: Distribution of " Number One Worst Mistake" Responses:
n=245

Q9 Mistake 1Place it in a category, (You will be able to describe what happened a little later in the survey.)

Answered: 245   Skipped: 277

As can be easily seen in Table 4, our hypothetical hunch was clearly wrong at least when only considering the statistics. We were, at first, very surprised to see Category One as the "winner."   In the survey, "Category One" was described as one's own soul-care or one's own primary relationships, such as spouse and/or family. Having said that, when we considered the narrative responses, we discovered that those who chose "self" actually were *blaming themselves* for issues related to volunteers. They themselves did not feel they had enough training, experience, trust, or authority to work successfully with volunteers. They saw their leader/volunteer related mistakes and stress as *their fault* and thus choose Category 1 "Self" in the survey.

The narrative responses related to this question help us understand what the respondents had in mind as a mistake in this area. They clearly stated it had to do with volunteers but rarely named the volunteer as the issue. In fact, they owned the mistakes with others labeling them as "self" when the mistake had little or nothing to do with their own

spiritual health or primary relationships.[39] It is important to note that this occurred in both males and females, paid and unpaid, full time, part time, and volunteer, and all around the world. There was no single demographic that offered this pattern. It is unclear from this survey if the reason for this is strong self awareness, or struggles with confidence or a Christian culture that is reticent to blame others for mistakes. Regardless, it is a strong trend that cut across every category of respondent. A trained youth worker from East Africa captured this sentiment so many stated "Most of the youth workers we have are volunteers, many who are just through with their high school education. When I first working with them, they would quarrel and disagree among themselves all the time. This would make me very angry and frustrated. After a sit down with one of my colleagues, I realized they needed training…On personality and social skills, the spiritual, emotional, and even mental. Over the years, we have applied this and the results have been overwhelming." Not everyone expresses such a happy ending. In fact many wrote lengthy stories of feeling guilt or shame over not doing better, even when they themselves did not know better. "I give too big responsibility to youth worker leader trainee. She needed to plan some activities to children and make some details to young adults fair. I leave her alone and didn't tell her details how she should to those. Everything went ok, but I felt disappointed to myself that I didn't give all the information," and, "thrusting volunteers into roles without sufficient training. I saw this as a mistake in the course of the year working with them." Others were able to name the impact their lack of training had on volunteers ranging from quitting, to actual spiritual harm. For some this was an immediate revelation often writing "I knew the moment it happened". For many others it came as gradual revelation. In either case, youth workers were blaming themselves for the mistakes of others. "I think when I got into ministry I felt like I could do the ministry on my own. Then the longer I got in youth ministry I felt the need for others but was not sure how to train them well. So I asked them to watch me and then do what I do. The problem was they picked up the good and the bad. I needed a more formal training for all my youth workers." Not only did youth workers blame themselves for not training others well, they blamed themselves for communication issues. "I think I made some decisions without consulting my youth leadership team. They felt devalued, and perhaps dis-empowered. I think in hindsight I treated them as children not as adults." It is clear that youth workers around the world own the deep struggles that are in their ministries even when they name the mistake as being someone else.

There were also the responses that named "self" in the ways described in the survey. As a reminder, the survey described "self" as one's own soul care or mistakes in primary relationships such as spouse or children. The hurt and guilt was palpable in several narratives around the world as responses convey a deep sense of struggle to honor God, personal faith,

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[39] Note that many of the respondents have English as their second language. The content and quality of their response was of primary importance not the exactness of their English. To maintain the integrity of their voices, the grammar and word choices were not altered to fit standard English.

and family with a sense of personal mistakes and outright failure. Youth workers named their own personal struggles often as being a result of unrealistic expectations and the balance of wanting to keep their ministerial position with wanting to keep their faith and family intact. I "thought I was invincible and kept working insane hours, in the first couple of years of ministry. Realized that I couldn't realistically keep doing and stay married, and so had to change. They got REALLY strict with me in work about the hours I was doing. The point though, I wasn't actually doing especially important work-I thought I was_ but I was really just surfacing things; not giving my all or prioritizing". For others the deep seeded struggles formed out of lack of real community or support. They became hurt along the way not knowing where to look for help. "I have not been good at maintaining my own personal spirituality, particularly since moving into a 'ministry job'. Previously I would rely heavily on those around me to provoke me into reflection and development through church, discussion with friends, small group, etc. Since moving onto staff I find it very hard to be 'fed' by others, particularly at my current church when is going through some issues. The result is that I feel disconnected from God." Others stated it succinctly and directly. "Sometimes it's hard to take care my own spiritual life and it could lead to feelings that this what I do doesn't matter and have no purpose. I sometimes make mistakes for myself when I forgot why I'm working in church." For others, the mistakes around self are even more heartbreaking. "I ignored symptoms of burn out and PPD and landed up with wanting to take my own life. I literally didn't have the energy to take care of our child or have energy to minister the youth. I just wanted to close my eyes." The final quote shared here is an excellent summary of what was conveyed so poignantly throughout for youth workers struggling to authentically be people of faith as well as faithful leaders and spouses. This veteran youth worker wrote of "a growing unhappiness with my work, feeling 'the character I am impersonating is not really 'me'." There is a clear struggle around the world of youth workers struggling to maintain personal spiritual, physical, and familial health in the face of ministerial expectations and circumstances.

When considering Category Two, working with youth directly, the theme of a lack of training was still present but relational issues became more prominent. "It is a mistake I was thrusted into youth ministry out of necessity. The church organization thought I would make a good youth minister since I could relate with them. Yet they did not see that part of where I was coming from stemmed from my own experience as a dysfunctional youth. I have not been helped with my own dilemma yet and I was entrusted to look after young people with their own dilemma…a youth member and I had inappropriate feelings for each other."[40] Youth are at the center of mistakes when training is not a priority. "It is a challenge to follow up on the needs of all our youth, and in the past I have let that be an expectation of me when at times, it is nearly impossible to make events supporting our youth to find quality time with those who

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[40] It is important to note that while this one quote was chosen, there were MANY that noted inappropriate feelings, relationships, emotional and physical between youth and adults.

need it. I have found that training and encouraging my volunteers and parents helps minister to the youth and lighten my load…So I invest in volunteers, they invest in students." When volunteers were not invested in, statements like the following occurred. "I gave a lot of responsibility to young people without really training them properly." The sheer weariness of youth workers comes through in the confessions of failures with youth in a variety of interactions. While the details would differ many related situations that paralleled the following. "Last month (aged 39!) I have 5 youth who are doing a Leadership Development program and are expected to lead youth group. At our first ever combined event all five didn't show and the event was a bomb. Immediately afterwards at 10:30pm on a Friday night I Facebooked them in a group message that opened with, 'Where the bloody hell were you all?...' I was so gutted…I should have allowed some time for me to cool down and address the issues with them face to face." A final way of conceptualizing mistakes with youth comes in the form of youth and parents who are truly problematic. As ministers, we are trained to be peacemakers and offer a Christ like model in all situations. There are however times when the circumstances are such that regardless of our best intentions, the biggest mistake we can make is to lose healthy boundaries. "I was psychologically manipulated by a teenager and his mother…The teen and his mom became very close to me and looking back I can see how boundaries were blurred. When the teen turned on me and others, that's when we saw there was a psychological problem taking place." Interpersonal relationship with youth struggle for many reasons in ministerial settings. It was clear in the narratives that youth workers mistakes with youth are not the result of a desire to harm others, rather a lack of training, maturity, feeling valued, spiritual maturity, rest, and at times, the toxic relations brought by others.

Research Question 2: Are there any *statistically significant* differences of mistakes mitigated by demographic data such as age, sex, education, or personality?
Hypothetical hunch: Yes, that personality would be a salient variable, specifically the "fun, outgoing, spontaneous" style might run afoul of volunteers/parents, or the pastor.

We were wrong on our hunch. Personality had no statistically significant impact on the named Mistake 1 error. Counter-intuitively, education level had no bearing as well.

The other demographic items had some salience.

Age: Those ages 26-30 were more likely than others to name Categrory 1 (self) as their first named mistake, and those ages 31-35 had more trouble with Category 3 (volunteers or parents) than the others.[41]

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[41] The 30-35 range would be reflective of studies done by both the CDC and the British Office for National Statistics showing data trends of average time of first child bearing moving into those who are in their 30s. This rise in conflict in this age group could be representative of a new parent VS old parent disagreement

The reality is that while those aged 26-30 named Category 1 (self) those aged 31-35 revealed in their narratives that regardless of what category they gave to the mistake, they almost always brought the mistake back to themselves. In other words, they chose Category 3 (volunteers or parents) and then wrote of how *they* had made a mistake in their interactions with others. A common sentiment was that I "took for granted parent's good will, and failed to communicate with them" or "I heard from a colleague that the person I had placed in a teaching role was not prepared and was going way off 'script'." I had to admit to myself and my pastor that I had only allowed this person to volunteer out of desperation and I should have found another way." The younger youth workers were able to express burn out when it came to mistakes. "I was tired and burned out. I was losing motivation for ministry. I was no longer passionate about serving and life in general. I found myself bitter inwardly." The younger workers also coupled burn out with insecurity rather than the weariness present in some of the more seasoned workers. For example "being aware to myself I saw that I was inconsiderate when it come to decision making, a little bit close minded and sometimes ignore the feelings of others. I too become perfectionist and legalistic. I value more the 'doing' to impress others rather than my 'being' to be true to self and to God." Age did indeed have an impact but more in how the mistakes were described more than in the substance of the mistake.

Total number of years in youth ministry: Those who had been in youth ministry 2-5 years and 6-10 had more struggle in Category 1 (self) than the others and those who had been in youth ministry 11-15 or 16-20 years had more difficulty in Category 2 (youth) than the others. We would posit that those in ministry under two years are still functioning on adrenalin and have not experienced the soul-drained emptiness or relational stress that ministry can trigger. We wonder as well if the veterans in youth ministry (with 11-20 years' experience) have lost some of their ability to easily relate to and lead the youth themselves. *In hindsight this supposition would have needed to have been asked directly to get at this information. No one named this as a mistake. There are a variety of speculative possibilities as to why this is the case, but the evidence simply shows that this was not a mistake named.*

Sex: Females named Category 2 (youth) as a Mistake #1 significantly more often than males. We wonder if female leaders have difficulty gaining the respect of male students, or at least experience that trouble when discipline or correction needs to be imposed by the youth leader. Another aspect may be in the context of various church denominations, the ability for a female to attain certifications such as ordination is often limited and produce a male dominant church culture. We wonder if this doctrinal belief in some denominations produces a church culture that inadvertently decreases the level of respect individuals (particularly youth) have for females when in leadership positions. *Again, this hypothesis did not bear out in the research. In fact, the sex of the youth worker was not even mentioned in any narrative. We know it only from demographic information. Doctrinal beliefs nor denominational restrictions around gender also were never mentioned in the narratives.*

Research Question 3: Are mistakes made by youth workers in different countries, or even by different denominations with in countries, significantly different?
Hypothetical Hunch: That there would be differences, but Category 3 (volunteers/parents) would be evidently prominent.
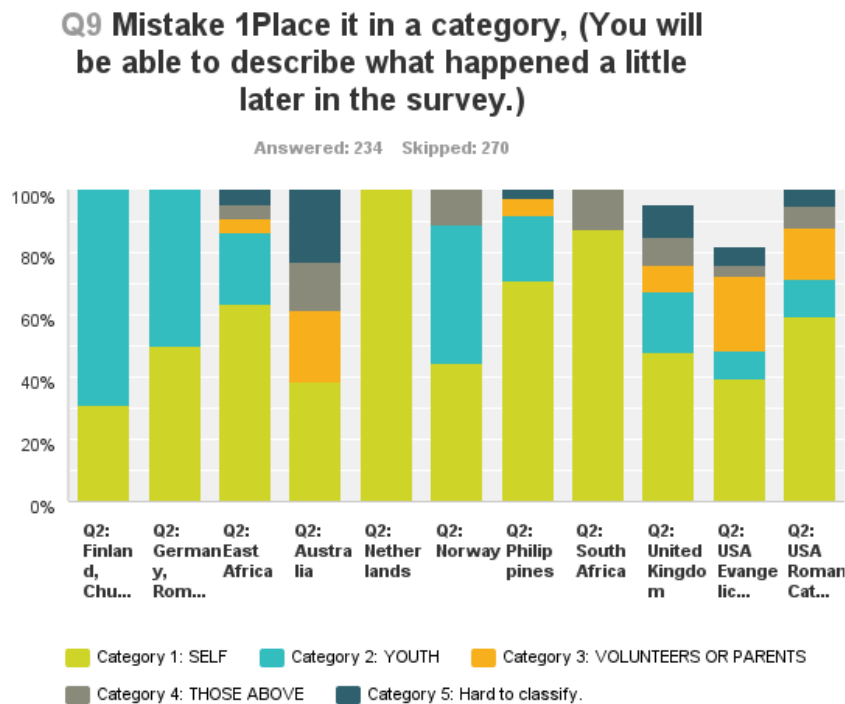
We see in Table 5 that there are differences by country, but that the prominent one is Category 1 (self). Interestingly, in Finland, Germany, and Norway Category 2 (youth) supplanted mistakes related to self as the #1 mistake category. We wonder how our colleagues in these three countries would reflect on possible reasons. Only in the US do we compare in-country differences, in this case between Roman Catholic and a Protestant domination (the Evangelical Free Church.) The percentage of Roman Catholic respondents who named Self as the #1 Mistake was much higher than the Protestants. That difference was also statistically significant at the .05 level.[42]

There is an interesting pattern that emerged in the narratives. The EV Free respondents focused more on internal spirituality and a sense of identity as a minister. One person wrote "I lacked teachability. I began my role with great head knowledge but very little experience when I first began at the church. This caught up to me and affected our ministry negatively." (EV Free) Another offers this account "We had a premature baby right in the midst of Easter and some other big events that we planned ahead of time. Instead of spending all my time at the hospital and letting others pick up the slack I let myself feel guilted into running them and missed being there for my wife." (EV Free) Those from the Roman Catholic tradition focused more on incidents, a focused point in time or specific season such as confirmation or a retreat when the mistake occurred rather than an issue of identity or pervasive sense of a mistake impacting all areas of life. "I came to see this as a mistake with lots of personal reflection time. After analyzing the incident (over, and over, and over again), I realized where I had made the mistake. I also had great feedback from my spouse, as well as my direct boss." (Roman Catholic) On the second night of the confirmation retreat that I was facilitating, I yelled at a girl in the cabin who simply would not shut up and go to sleep. I was exhausted already from the girls talking all night the first night and was at the end of my rope and lost it. She ended up leaving the youth group right after she was confirmed and it was always very awkward any time I ever saw her at mass after that…Worse yet, my apology the next day wasn't as heartfelt as it should have been." (Roman Catholic) It was also a clear pattern in the Roman Catholic Respondents that personal reflection was common jargon which could indicate the naming of "self" over other categories. It is also clear that the theme of others over self was present. Named by a

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[42] We attempted to compare also RC and Protestants in Germany, but, after multiple attempts, were unable to gain the support of any Protestant youth ministry leader to distribute the survey link.

respondent a mistake was learned "from personal reflection I realized that I was concerned with everyone else's spiritual well being while neglecting my own spiritual life." (Roman Catholic) Whether an event or ongoing issues one's person spirituality rises to the top when considering mistakes.

Table 5   First Place Mistake By Category and Country

Q9 Mistake 1Place it in a category, (You will be able to describe what happened a little later in the survey.)

Answered: 234   Skipped: 270

Research Question 4: What causes a youth worker to eventually realize at a cognitive or emotional level that he or she has indeed made an error?

Hypothetical Hunch: We wondered if it would be a ministry supervisor, or a close friend or family member. Or, would it be a close friend/family for Category 1, but a ministry supervisor for the rest?

The narrative responses tell us that it a variety of ways youth workers come to notice a mistake let alone be able to analyze it. "It is the Holy Spirit who has opened my eyes to see the problem in me. I was so discouraged how I see the youth participating in fun and active activities while in prayer and other spiritual discipline strengthening ministries, many of them

disappear. Then, the Lord has given me deep hunger and thirst for Him and I caught myself praying. God exposed to me I was in deep emptiness because I was already far from Him. Even though I am soaked with seminary requirements, I lose my prayer life, I seldom read and soak into His Word. Then, the Holy Spirit has lead me to discipline myself." For some youth workers it was a direct confrontation that brought the mistake to light. "I was disciplined for not doing my job and for having a "deep" relationship with a girl" and "I was visited in my office by an organized delegation of fellow youth leaders in the church…they told me to stop." There were also quite a few who simply named personal reflection, time where they finally slowed down and realized they were off track. "It was a personal reflection. I am too busy doing ministry that I took for granted my intimate time with the Lord." While there are a variety of ways conviction arrived in the lives of youth workers, by far it was family members, particularly spouse and children who got the attention of those struggling. The following two quotes represent a much greater number offered. "My wife threatened to take my newborn baby and leave for her mothers house because I was working too many hours. It was my first youth ministry job and my wife just had a baby. I was never really taught in seminary about management of time between life, & ministry. I quickly learned how to do a little better but in that church, the Pastor was a clock watcher and didn't spend a lot of time with his own family," and, "My wife warned me about it and I could not see it, and when I realized it might be getting out of hand I thought I could handle it. Only when my wife gently persistently cautioned me did I realize how dangerously close it had become." While the revelation of mistakes came through many sources, the narratives showed those revealed through family were the most descriptive and personal.

Research Question 5: Do youth workers in different countries use different cognitive framing, that is, do the express in noticeably different ways, as they narrate their mistakes?

One of the most surprising, heartbreaking, and encouraging findings is that they way mistakes are made, understood, and resolved are remarkably similar around the world. While the details may change, the struggles of a lack of support, time, training, and self-doubt are present across every demographic. The presence of the Holy Spirit, conviction, and redemption likewise were present across every demographic. There were no findings that evidenced noticeable differences.

Summary/Conclusion/Suggestions for Further Research

Mistakes take place all over the world. Mistakes in youth ministry have a particular context we share in common, but worldwide there is greater similarity than difference. Youth workers are particularly hard on themselves worldwide. There is a sense that others would have or could have done better had we only not done our part in training, communicating, leading, confronting, and modeling what it means to be a follower of Christ. There were a few

areas of commonality that were not easily addressed with our initial research questions. The following will address trends from around the world.

Leadership

Across the world, struggles with leadership were common. From Australia we read " [I] struggled to respect my supervisor, who was new to the church, when I was established and confident. Didn't support him as well as I could have because of this." In East Africa a mature volunteer finds similar struggles. "I was up tight and impatient with Pastors/elders who did not understand about Youth ministry. Why they would not freely allow the youth to have their meetings and activities the way they wanted, why they did not allocate finances to them. And in a way , I was becoming angry and rebellions for the cause of young people that I thought should be fought for. At that time the youth population was growing tremendously hence the need to have youth programs and finances to run the Youth activities." A common complaint is that what is taught in trainings is never able to be implemented. This can lead to even deeper frustration when the worker feels he or she knows something good and beautiful and is denied the ability to put into practice that which has been learned. This was expressed by a youth worker from the Philippines saying "it was when I wanted to implement what I learned from training I attended but our pastor did not approve it and I start complaining it with the other church officer without talking it with our pastor or even understand him where he was coming from that he did not want to apply it in the church." Finding respect was another struggle between youth workers and others around the world. A youth worker from East Africa writes "Fresh out of bible school and armed with bible knowledge, I thought it would be obvious that the youth leaders I was assigned to work with would automatically respect and follow, but alas..., a great divide between those 'loyal' to me, and those who were loyal to the other leader." Struggles to find respect and a voice within leadership span across every demographic option in this survey.

Family and Health

Youth workers around the world are filled with passion and conviction. This is a blessing and a curse and youth ministries thrive but families and personal health often suffer. From East Africa we read "My health constantly got worse, and I kept hearing doctors say my ill health manifesting its self in ulcers was brought on by over working myself and only when I intentionally started pacing my self did I actually begin to see an improvement in my health" and " [I] was thinking I was indispensable and worked to the detriment of my health and family." It wasn't just physical health that was being impacted but immediate and extended family as well. " [I] Spent too much time at work and this hurt spouse at some point, prayer and personal devotion went down and my parents hardly saw me." Family struggles continue to be a theme as we read from the USA that "Everyone wants to be around me except my wife. I am

the last thing on her mind &, I believe, in her heart. We are no close & have nothing in common - especially spiritual things." Another USA worker writes "In a nutshell, I became so involved in ministry I neglected my marriage in the name of "Jesus". I was spending too much time at church. I became attracted to one of my volunteers. Somehow, I recognized things at home were falling apart and that things were about to become unhealthy in my ministry." The struggles were pervasive named succinctly from a youth worker in Germany. "In my early years of paid working I was so focused on youth work my husband was very angry, we almost got divorced and I worked even more and so much, I totally burned out." The personal toll on the lives of youth workers and those who are close with them are significant and worth heeding as a cautionary tale.

Parents

Parents are universally discussed among youth workers. They can be known as the greatest blessings AND the biggest points of contention. A worker in South Africa offered this perspective, "Viewing parents as the enemy coming to stifle the youth ministry and jack up our fun and "true discipleship" instead of viewing them as those with the God-given right and authority to disciple their own children. I usurped their authority and drew the youth to the heart of their pastor instead of to the hearts of their parents as Scripture commands." This sentiment was echoed from a youth worker in Australia saying "I think I never communicated with parents my intentions with the different children's and youth groups in my church. I had no support or buy in from parents, I set up the ministry I was involved in my saying to the parents I will do the job of disciplining their child for them." Still others named parents themselves as the problem. In East Africa we read "Some negligent parents relegated their parenting role to me and youth themselves. I realized I was not able to provide these young people even a quarter of their needs." Even what seems to be a miscommunication can turn serious when an upset parent gets involved. A veteran youth worker from the United Kingdom shared that "A parent didn't tell me her daughter was coming on a trip. I said that she should have. She got annoyed at me but I didn't realize. So a whole big problem escalated which nearly lost me my student post."

Discernment

Discernment of others' faith maturity and beliefs has led to a number of struggles in a several ministries. Again, youth workers often own the blame for not knowing though it is unclear from the responses if it was even possible to have known prior to the difficulties. A leader from the Philippines wrote "I recommended one of the members of my discipleship group for youth leadership because I thought she was ready to serve others. Eventually, she proved to be not very rooted in the faith. Although she is competent with skills, she is not spiritually matured enough to agree with the values of our youth ministry. In the end, the

leaders had to deal with more mess because of leaders like her who tend to cause disunity within the leadership. As her leader/discipler, I felt I should have been more discerning about her spiritual maturity and character. It was indeed a hard lesson learned." The experience of a leader in South Africa could be repeated in almost any corner of the world. "We had a very eager volunteer, but she was unexperienced and naive. She also felt the Youth's material was to boring, so in her group she would always just talk about "fun stuff" or school and at times give her own "sermon". I never engage with her to teach her the system, philosophy and vision of our congregation and youth ministry. Nor did I simple have a pastoral conversation about her frustrations, history or current ideas (positive and negative). Myself, other leaders and youth got frustrated with her and at the end it must of been mutual, because she left our youth and congregation without a word. Youth in her group also left our church. Even worse, the youth felt they had two years where they didn't really have spiritual growth." In East Africa, a youth worker attributed lack of training to an inability to discern well. "I did not understand what really their need is. I simply was serving them based on my feeling. Some times I was pushing the youth to do only I want them to do with out giving them understanding. I then disappointed them and got no success in my ministry. After many times empty vain I came back to my mind and turned to investigate their needs. I understood this one: after getting some training how to serve youth." Doctrine or distinct Christian beliefs were noted in several quotes but none as clearly as this one from East Africa. "I made one of the youth who constantly put me under pressure for him to lead and eventually found out that he had doctrinal issues and that he was misleading some of the youth in the core beliefs of Christianity." Around the globe, trying to discern who should and who should not lead is a struggle and often learned through life experience.

Insecurity

There was a pervasive theme of insecurity on the part of many youth workers around the world. It was both named and unnamed but it was present in comments about not feeling like what they were doing mattered, or that they personally were not chosen or particularly skilled even though they had a passion for adolescents. This sense of insecurity was stated clearly first in a quote from the United Kingdom followed by a quote from Finland. "At the time I didn't see the issue. The event went well and the young people performed as expected. Later on, thinking about empowerment, I realized that I had acted out of safety needs, insecurity about potential embarrassment, and comfort zone. I saw that I had missed a great opportunity, and potentially how I wrongly perceive youth ministry." "Mistake 1. When I started as a youth pastor, I had a picture in mind how I should behave and do the work. I tried to imitate others. Years later I realize I have to be me in order to be real. I have to find my own way of doing things, speaking... Mistake 2. I tried very hard to make young people like me. I tried to make myself feel better, less insecure. Now I know that I need to loosen up and let the young people

get to know me as I am and if they want to." This same sense of not being good enough showed up regardless of country, age or sex. There was some mitigating factors when experience or training were factored in but even then, insecurity was present.

Future research:

Human error is a fact. The literature review earlier in the paper establishes this in a variety of fields. What we do with human error is the interesting conversation to come from this reality. For many youth workers, it is clear that a generalized sense of self doubt, guilt, or insecurity is what settled after a mistake. For others however, there was a sense of hop brought about by the new information and it was far from detrimental. It was viewed rather as a growth edge and learning experience to better what ministry was already taking place. The reasoning for the difference in result would make for a fascinating study and could offer a possibility of training that ushered in the hope of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit for those who are called into ministry.

This research also raised some significant questions regarding mitigating factors. More pointed questions would need to be asked to delve into some of the original hypotheses. These would include focused questions on the mistakes made with youth and specifically the what kind of mistake and why the respondent thinks it was made based on age variables. Specific questions regarding the interactions with volunteers and leadership based on gender would need to be guided to consider ones sex and how that might have impacted the interaction. Training was a frequent topic mentioned but when looking at the narratives, it however did not have a significant impact on the understandings of mistakes. Training seems to be one of those things youth workers think will prevent mistakes but with each new training, a new mistakes finds its way into the experience of the worker. There are but a few of the future research possibilities based on the initial findings from this global survey.

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