

**Motivation to Participate:
Understanding Students' Reasons for
Participating as a Help in Growing a Youth Group**

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Statement of the Problem

Why do high school students participate in church activities? The question has been asked and answered abstractly and anecdotally for years. Still, no one working in church ministry with high school students really understands what motivates those who participate regularly in church youth group activities to do so. It seems that understanding these motivations would be a rather high priority considering what seems to be increasing disinterest in church among contemporary high schoolers.

Surveys conducted by curriculum publishing houses in the mid-1980's indicated that many churches were finding it difficult to keep high school students interested in the activities developed for them. Students surveyed responded that they found the programming and teaching in church youth groups to be boring. Nearly twenty-five percent of those surveyed said that they attended church youth activities only when there was nothing else to do. Conversely, seventy-five percent of those surveyed found more meaningful reasons to participate in activities planned for them and participated in them regularly. An understanding of the factors motivating these students would be helpful to local church youth pastors who want to meet the needs of high school

students.

The experiences of twenty church youth ministers who participated in a May, 1988 symposium in Southern California indicated that each had problems keeping high school students interested in the various ministries in their churches. Asked to list their major concerns in youth ministry, the participants, all from large churches in California, Oregon, Wyoming, Arizona, and Texas, listed among their highest three concerns the issue of keeping students active once they have been introduced to the high school ministry of the church. When asked what percentage of the high school group were drop-outs, the responses ranged from a low of about twenty percent to a high of over forty percent. The average percentage of dropouts reported was twenty-eight percent, or more than one fourth of the total group.

Background of the Study

Boshier (1971), through a factor analysis, developed an Educational Participation Scale (EPS) which identified six factors contributing to levels of motivation to participate in adult learning. Morstain and Smart (1974) successfully replicated Boshier's work in the United States. An adaptation of Boshier's EPS was used in this study because no other instrument dealing with motivation to participate was located which had previously been tested on an adolescent population.

In attempting to assess the levels of motivation of students who are participating in various local church youth ministry programs, it is believed that an adaptation of the EPS would serve as a valuable instrument for gathering data from a sample of high school students for two reasons. First, the EPS offers a proven instrument used in many studies. Admittedly, these studies were with adults, but it offers assistance for this study of adolescents because it dealt with adults who were voluntarily involved in continuing educational programs. Since most high school young people who are involved in local church youth ministries do so voluntarily, this instrument would appear to be applicable. Second, the six factors identified by the EPS studies appear to be pertinent to high school students' participation in

church youth programs, with the possible exception of the factor of professional advancement.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors which motivate high school students to participate in Sunday school and weekly youth group meetings in their church youth ministry?
2. Are there any significant differences or relationships among the factors and various demographic variables tested?

Population

The population for this study was the high school students who were involved in Sunday school and the high school youth groups of the Conservative Baptist Association (CBA) of Southern California. All of the churches in the Southern California region of the CBA were asked to allow the instrument to be administered to their high school students with care given to the inclusion of churches of various sizes to insure that the findings are not limited to churches of any one size. Anonymity was safeguarded for subjects and their churches, in order to protect the privacy of the population and insure honest and frank responses on the part of each participant.

Procedures

The instrument to be used for gathering data contained two major areas of concern. The first is basic demographic data which asked for the following data from each participant: sex, grade in school, current age, years as a Christian, years of attendance at present church, family religious background, family living situation, and attendance patterns in the programs in question.

Then, the students responded to items adapted from the Education Participation Scale of Boshier (1971) in terms of their motivation to participate in the two major areas of local church youth programming; Sunday school and weekly youth group meetings. Adaptations in language were made to increase the instrument's acceptability by a high school audience. Changes

were also made in the EPS to include the five religious motivational items taken from Utendorf's research on religious development. Utendorf (1985) studied motivation to participate factors among participants in Roman Catholic lay ministry training programs. The five religious/spiritual items added by Utendorf are: (a) to help me grow spiritually, (b) to become more knowledgeable about my faith, (c) to enable me to help the church change and develop, (d) to enable me to help others grow spiritually, and (e) to help deepen my faith. These items made up the religious/spiritual variables for comparison.

The EPS section of the survey contained 50 discreet items seeking to identify the motivations to participate on the part of the respondents. Respondents answered each item by circling a number on a 1-6 Likert scale, with 1 identifying the item as one which was least likely to be a motivation to participate and 6 identifying the item as one which was most likely to be a motivation to participate.

Upon completion of the instrument, it was submitted to several professional measurement experts for review. Then the instrument was submitted for review to a panel of professional youth workers taken from the CBA of Southern California. It was then revised according to the recommendations of both review groups to insure face validity. A pilot study involving forty high school students was conducted for the purpose of determining the reliability of the instrument. Revisions were also made in the instrument in light of these findings.

Once a reliable and valid instrument was obtained, the steps involved in circulating the instrument and collecting the data for analysis were as follows. The Executive Director of the Conservative Baptist Association of Southern California was contacted to obtain permission to invite churches to participate. A mailing list of churches was obtained from his office.

A letter was mailed to the churches inviting them to participate in the study. Included with the letter was a document outlining the purpose and significance of the study and a form for the church youth leader to return indicating his/her willingness to participate.

A packet was mailed to each youth leader who responded. The packet included enough instruments for all of his/her high school students, an instructional document explaining how the instrument should be administered and collected, and a postage paid envelope for the purpose of returning the completed instruments.

The collected instruments were then categorized according to the size of the youth groups. Churches with fifty-one or more high school students were classified as large youth groups; churches with twenty-one to fifty students were classified as medium sized youth groups and churches with twenty or fewer students were classified as small youth groups.

Data from all the usable instruments returned were used in the statistical analysis.

The administrator of the instruments was instructed to guide the students through the completion of the instrument in the best attended weekly function of the high school group to insure the largest possible level of participation on the part of students. For most Southern California churches, this was Sunday school or the weekly youth group meeting.

Analysis of Data

Several statistical procedures were used to obtain the needed results from the data collected. A factor analysis was used to determine how the 50 items loaded to form motivation factors. A repeated measures ANOVA procedure was used to test levels of difference between groups of three or more with regard to the factors. T-test procedures were used to test levels of difference between two groups with regard to the factors. Finally the Pearson product-moment correlation was used to obtain levels of correlation where needed. All data were tested at the .05 level of significance.

Findings

Data was obtained on the following demographic variables to discern which, if any of them would render differences in the motivation factors: gender, grade in school, number of years as a Christian, number of years attending current church youth group,

youth group size, and whether or not the respondent was living in a Christian home.

The factors which emerged from the factor analysis proved to be quite reliable statistically. Table 1 below lists the seven factors motivating Sunday school attendance and the seven factors motivating youth group attendance with the Kuder-Richardson reliability alpha statistic for each.

Table 1

Reliability of Motivation Factors of EPS

Factor	Alpha Coefficient
<u>Sunday School</u>	
Spiritual Growth	.869
External Expectations	.836
Social Contact	.810
Pleasing God	.788
Escape	.785
Identity Formation	.761
Service to Others	.755
<u>Youth Group</u>	
Spiritual Growth	.892
External Expectations	.882
Identity Formation	.877
Social Stimulation	.859
Escape	.823
Integration of Faith and Life	.792
Cognitive Interest	.784

Tables 2-8 contain each of the seven factors motivating Sunday school attendance, the specific items from the EPS which loaded into that factor and the factor loading value for that item.

Table 2

Factor I: Sunday School Spiritual Growth

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to help me grow spiritually	.730
to help change my life	.542
to become more knowledgeable of my faith	.804

to get a sense of purpose for my life	.659
to use my spiritual gifts	.633
to learn more about the Bible	.736
to increase my faith	.714
to give/receive encouragement in Christian. life	.574

Table 3

Factor II: Sunday School Honor to God

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to please God	.698
to show my respect for God	.736
to receive God's blessing and reward	.687

Table 4

Factor III: Sunday School Service to Others

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to help me understand and relate to people	.419
to improve my ability to serve others	.463
to help my church change and grow	.511

Table 5

Factor IV: Sunday School Social Contact

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to make new friends	.591
to become acquainted with friendly people	.567
to spend time with my friends	.751
to share my life with other people	.546
to participate in group activities	.670

Table 6

Factor V: Sunday School Identity Formation

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to broaden my perspective on life	.543
to provide contrast to other things I learn	.694
to provide contrast to the rest of my life	.674

to satisfy my curiosity about who God is	.648
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Table 7

Factor VI: Sunday School Escape

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to get away from problems & stresses	.652
to get a break in routine of school & chores	.707
to have a few hours from responsibility	.642
to get relief from boredom	.454

Table 8

Factor VII: Sunday School External Expectations

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to keep up with others who go	.565
to earn a prize or award for attendance	.651
to fulfill expectations of youth pastor	.748
to help me be more accepted by my peers	.660
to keep up with the competition	.769
to be more popular	.720
to satisfy my friends who go	.696

Similarly, Tables 9-15 contain each of the seven factors motivating participation in weekly youth group meetings, the items which loaded into each of those factors and the loading value of each item.

Table 9

Factor I: Youth Group Spiritual Growth Factor

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to help me grow spiritually	.822
to increase my faith	.638
to be obedient to God and His word	.883
to give/receive encouragement in Christian. life	.628

Table 10

Factor II: Youth Group Identity Formation Factor

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to help change my life	.735
to get a sense of purpose for my life	.675
to use my spiritual gifts	.714
to understand my personal problems	.531

Table 11

Factor III: Youth Group Cognitive Interest Factor

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to become more knowledgeable about my faith	.724
to learn more about the Bible	.667
to seek knowledge of Bible for its own sake	.601
to acquire knowledge to better understand other things I learn	.583

Table 12

Factor IV: Youth Group Social Stimulation Factor

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to make new friends	.626
to get acquainted with friendly people	.692
to fulfill a personal need for associations and friendships	.558
to share my life with other people	.545
to participate in group activities	.642

Table 13

Factor V: Youth Group Integration with Life Factor

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to broaden my perspective on life	.633
to provide a contrast to other things learned	.737
to help me understand and relate to people	.516
to provide a contrast to the rest of my life	.578

Table 14

Factor VI: Youth Group Escape

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to keep myself from becoming a couch potato	.575
to get relief from boredom	.610
to find an alternative to TV	.558
to escape an unhappy relationship	.592

Table 15

Factor VII: Youth Group External Expectations

Items Included In The Factor	Factor Loading
to satisfy the demands of my parents	.665
to keep up with others who go	.640
to earn a prize or award for attending	.713
to fulfill expectations of youth pastor	.649
to become more accepted by my peers	.675
to keep up with competition from others	.762
to be more popular	.735
to satisfy my friends who go	.759

Seven factors which obtained an eigenvalue of 1.0 or higher emerged as a motivation to participate in each program area. However an examination of the mean scores of each of these factors as a motivator is interesting. Two Sunday school factors (spiritual growth and Pleasing God) obtained a mean score of 5.25 on a 1-6 scale, two Sunday school factors (Service to Others and Social Contact) obtained a mean score of 4.25-4.50, one Sunday school factor (Identity Formation) obtained a mean score of 4.00 and two Sunday school factors (Escape and External Expectations) obtained mean scores of less than 2.50.

Of the youth group factors, two (Spiritual Growth and Identity Formation) obtained a mean score of 4.75 on a 1-6 scale, one (Cognitive Interest) obtained a mean score of 4.50, two (Social Contact and Integration with Life) obtained a mean score of 4.00-4.25 and two (Escape and External Expectations) obtained mean scores of less than 2.50.

With regard to the differences in motivation related to demo-

graphic variables there were some interesting findings.

1. Males obtained significantly higher mean scores than females in the Sunday school External Expectations and the youth group External Expectations factors. Females, on the other hand obtained significantly higher mean scores than males in the Sunday School Spiritual Growth, Social Contact, Pleasing God and Service to Others factors as well as in the youth group Spiritual Growth, Identity Formation, and Cognitive Interest factors. The specific findings are outlined in Tables 16 and 17 below.

Table 16

Differences Between Males and Females in the EPS
Sunday School Factors

Factor	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	2-tail probab.
External Expectations	Male	200	2.40	1.08	3.48	.0006
	Female	223	2.05	.99		
Spiritual Growth	Male	202	4.95	.87	4.74	.0001
	Female	225	5.30	.66		
Social Contact	Male	201	4.18	1.06	2.13	.03
	Female	225	4.40	1.05		
Honor to God	Male	207	4.99	1.06	2.63	.009
	Female	226	5.24	.91		
Service to Others	Male	204	4.18	1.08	4.18	.0001
	Female	225	4.59	9.95		

Table 17
Differences Between Males and Females in the EPS
Youth Group Factors

Factor	Gen-der	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	2-tail probab.
Spiritual Growth	Male	184	4.57	1.05	3.11	.002
	Fe-male	216	4.87	.93		
Identity Formation	Male	192	4.54	.99	3.46	.0006
	Fe-male	220	4.86	.88		
External Expectations	Male	189	2.66	1.25	4.97	.0001
	Fe-male	221	2.11	.98		
Cognitive Interest	Male	193	4.51	1.05	2.15	.03
	Fe-male	221	4.73	1.01		

2. With regard to Sunday school participation, significant differences in mean scores were found which were related to how long the respondent had been a Christian. Those respondents who had become a Christian during their adolescent years had higher mean scores on the Identity Formation Factor than respondents who had become a Christian during childhood or early childhood.

Secondly, those who had adolescent conversions had higher mean scores on the Escape Factor than those who had become Christians during their elementary school years with regard to Sunday school participation. The significant results are in Tables 18.

Table 18
Differences Between Tenure as a Christian and Significant
Sunday School Factors

Identity Formation

	df	SS	MSquare	F-test	P
Between groups	2	7.57	3.78	3.11	.05
Within groups	389	472.64	1.22		
Total	391	480.21			

Tenure	N	Mean	SD
Adolescent	121	4.25	1.07
Elementary	182	3.97	1.10
Early Childhood	89	3.92	1.16

Escape

	df	SS	MSquare	F-test	P
Between groups	2	20.09	10.04	7	.001
Within groups	402	577.11	1.44		
Total	404	597.20			

Tenure	N	Mean	SD
Adolescent	124	2.98	1.25
Elementary	186	2.45	1.15
Early Childhood	95	2.75	1.22

The Sunday school factors were studied in relation to size of the respondent's youth group. With regard to Sunday school participation, it was found that students from large youth groups (51 or more students) had significantly higher mean scores than students from small youth groups (fewer than 20 students) on the Spiritual Growth Factor. Large group students also obtained significantly higher mean scores than small group students on the Escape Factor with regard to motivation to participate in Sunday school. Finally, students from medium sized groups (21-50 students) obtained significantly higher mean scores than small group students on the Service to Others Factor with regard to motivation to participate in Sunday school. Table 19 records the findings

Table 19

Differences Between Significant Sunday School Factors
and Youth Group Size

Spiritual Growth

	df	SS	MSquare	F-test	P
Between groups	2	4.09	2.05	3.34	.04
Within groups	424	259.32	.61		
Total	426	263.41			

Size	N	Mean	SD
Small	107	4.98	.82
Medium	92	5.12	.97
Large	228	5.22	.67

Escape

	df	SS	MSquare	F-test	P
Between groups	2	9.41	4.71	3.17	.04
Within groups	430	638.92	1.49		
Total	432	648.33			

Size	N	Mean	SD
Small	110	2.48	1.22
Medium	92	2.73	1.17
Large	231	2.83	1.24

Service to Others

	df	SS	MSquare	F-test	P
Between groups	2	9.57	4.79	4.57	.01
Within groups	426	445.76	1.05		
Total	428	455.33			

Size	N	Mean	SD
Small	109	4.17	1.08
Medium	92	4.61	1.05
Large	228	4.41	.98

A study of motivation to participate in weekly youth group meetings was conducted using the same size limitations. Significant differences were found in the Spiritual Growth Factor. Students from both large and medium sized groups had significantly higher mean scores than students from small groups on the Spiritual Growth Factor. Significant differences were also found in the Cognitive Interest Factor. Students from both large and medium sized groups had significantly higher mean scores than students from small groups on the Cognitive Interest Factor. The findings are charted in Table 20 below.

Table 20
Differences Between Significant YG Factors and Youth Group Size

Spiritual Growth

	df	SS	MSquare	F-test	P
Between groups	2	11.96	5.98	6.23	.002
Within groups	397	381.30	.96		
Total	399	393.26			

Size	N	Mean	SD
Small	101	4.44	1.08
Medium	90	4.83	1.07
Large	209	4.84	.88

Cognitive Interest

	df	SS	MSquare	F-test	P
Between groups	2	6.29	3.15	2.99	.05
Within groups	411	433.05	1.05		
Total	413	439.34			

Size	N	Mean	SD
Small	104	4.41	1.15
Medium	93	4.70	1.07
Large	217	4.70	.94

Conclusions

This study of the high school students of the CBA of Southern California identified seven factors which motivated high school students to participate in Sunday school and seven factors which motivated them to participate in weekly youth group meetings. The Sunday school factors were Spiritual Growth, Honor to God, Service to Others, Social Contact, Identity Formation, Escape, and External Expectations. The weekly youth group factors were Spiritual Growth, Identity Formation, Cognitive Interest, Social Stimulation, Integration with Life, Escape, and External Expectations.

Sunday School Participation

With regard to Sunday school participation, students in this study participate in Sunday school because they have a desire to grow spiritually coupled with a desire to honor God in their lives. They see participating in Sunday school as a means to accomplish both of those motives. The fact that three separate religious factors emerged indicated that no one religious or spiritual motive was sufficient to explain why these students participated in Sunday school. The study identified perceived differences between spiritual growth, giving honor to God and performing service for their church relating to three possible biblical motives for participation.

The three EPS Sunday school factors of Service to Church, Social Contact, and Identity Formation obtained mean scores between 3.50-4.49 indicating that these, too, are relatively strong motivational factors with regard to Sunday school participation. The mean scores of the EPS Sunday school factors taken as a whole, indicated that the students in this study were motivated to participate in Sunday school more by desires related to their own personal relationships with God and other people around them than by any expectations from outside themselves or by desires related to escaping some unpleasantness in their lives.

With regard to Sunday school participation there were some findings which were unexpected. First of all, the Cognitive Interest Factor was not present as a motivator to participate in Sun-

day school. The traditional view of Sunday school among churches like those of the CBA is that it is the agency of Christian education which exists primarily for teaching the Bible (Westing, 1984; Willis, 1979). It has been generally assumed that students who participate in Sunday school would do so, at least in part, because they enjoy learning the Bible and want to learn it more. This motivation was not present as a factor regarding Sunday school participation. This by no way meant that students participating in Sunday school were not learning. It did indicate, however, that students were not necessarily motivated to participate in Sunday school for the sake of learning.

Second, the strength of the Social Contact Factor as the fourth highest motivator to participate in Sunday school was somewhat unexpected. Because developing meaningful human relationships is such an important part of the development of identity in adolescents (Erikson, 1959; Havighurst, 1951; Shelton, 1983), it was believed that socialization would be a motivating factor. However it was originally thought that socialization as a motivator would be less prominent with regard to participation in Sunday school. Generally, most church youth programs put less emphasis on socialization among students in Sunday school than in other programs (Gadd, 1987). Further, it was believed that the attitude of high school students toward the early Sunday morning time frame usually occupied by Sunday school served to inhibit high levels of socialization among the students (Richards, 1985). However, the respondents indicated that desires related to forming social contacts were strongly motivational to participation in Sunday school and shared little of the concerns expressed about either the emphasis of the program nor the time of day the program took place. This would suggest that the Social Contact Factor was such a strong motivator to participate that the students were willing to take advantage of any opportunity to satisfy the desires related to that motivation regardless of when it occurred or whether the program was structured for that purpose by the leaders or not.

Third, it was thought that the External Expectations Factor, particularly the items related to satisfying the demands of par-

ents, would be a stronger motivator to participation in Sunday school than it was. Right or wrong, the perception among youth work professionals for some time has been that students are less motivated to participate in Sunday school than in other ministries to the youth group (Veerman, 1988). Reasons for this are often related to the feeling that Sunday school meets at an inopportune hour, is not as much fun, and, maybe, is not as relevant to real life in the minds of the students as other program options. Therefore, it was believed that at least a significant number of students participating in Sunday school were doing so because of parental, youth leader, or peer expectations. Even though the expectations of others did emerge as a factor motivating Sunday school participation, the mean scores were so low that this factor must be seen as quite weak in comparison to the others. It ranked last in the list of seven factors with only 15.11% of the respondents indicating that it was a significant factor motivating them to participate in Sunday school.

Fourth, if one thought of Service to Others in terms of missions opportunities, then this factor would be less likely to be a motivator to participate in Sunday school than it would be with regard to youth group participation. Most church youth groups offer service opportunities to students more as a function of youth group meetings than Sunday school. However, if one takes a broader view of the issue of service, seeing it in terms of any form of ministry to another person, the Service to Others Factor would be more likely to increase as a motivator to participate in Sunday school. This research shows that many churches, especially smaller ones, often use high school students as volunteers in ministry with smaller children in their programs. This volunteer ministry may have represented service to others by respondents who identified it with Sunday school participation because it took place at the same time.

Youth Group Participation

The pattern of motivations to participate in weekly youth group meetings was similar in some respects and quite different in others when compared to Sunday school motivation to partici-

pate. Three factors; Spiritual Growth, Identity Formation, and Cognitive Interest, emerged with significantly higher mean scores than the other four factors. This seemed to be a clear indication that students are motivated to participate in youth group meetings more by desires related to building good relationships with God and other people. The exceptions to that rule would seem to be the Cognitive Interest and the Identity Formation Factors. However, upon closer examination, the Cognitive Interest Factor contains items related to learning more about the Bible and about one's faith, not for the purpose of being able to answer questions on an examination, but simply for the sake of knowing those things. The fact that students rated this factor as third highest and the Spiritual Growth Factor highest might indicate that they see the two factors as contributing to each other.

Identity formation, likewise, seemed an exception to the rule. However, the items in that factor related to life change, life purpose, and understanding self. All of these can readily be seen as aspects of developing better relationships both with God and with other people. Therefore, this factor also seems strongly connected to the relationship theme which seemed to emerge.

There were some unexpected findings related to motivation to participate in weekly youth group meetings. As has already been stated, it was expected that the Cognitive Interest Factor would be prominent with regard to motivation to participate in Sunday school. However, the respondents indicated that learning was one of the more effective factors motivating them to participate in youth group meetings rather than Sunday school. How could this be explained? Several factors might have been important at this point. In most of the churches surveyed, youth group meetings were more casual and less rigid in format and function than Sunday school classes. This flexibility has often been very attractive to adolescent students and could have been a contributor to a feeling that learning was more fun and more relevant in youth group meetings than in Sunday school classes.

A second factor which was suggested as an explanation was that often students had a better opportunity to get acquainted

with the youth group leaders than they did with the Sunday school teachers. In situations where that was true, it was reasonable to believe that students were more interested in learning for the sake of learning.

Second, it was initially believed that weekly youth group meetings were programs and activities which contribute to higher levels of socialization. Thus, it was hypothesized that the Social Stimulation Factor would be the strongest motivator to participation in youth group meetings. A look at the relative mean scores of the strongest factors motivating youth group participation indicated that Social Stimulation, with a mean score of 4.30, was the fourth highest motivator as measured by mean scores. The three strongest youth group motivational factors and their mean scores were Spiritual Growth at 4.73, Identity Formation at 4.71, and Cognitive Interest at 4.63. In evaluating these mean scores in light of the real lower and upper limits, Social Stimulation was clearly not as important as a motivator to participate as Spiritual Growth, Identity Formation, and Cognitive Interest, all of which obtained mean scores within the 4.50-5.49 mean score range.

Third, the emergence of the Integration with Life Factor was unexpected. While developmental considerations were seen as important by several of the researchers on adult and adolescent motivation (Boshier, 1977; Hoge & Petrillo, 1978; Utendorf, 1985), none indicated that students would ever see the integration function as a separate motivational factor. While it was the fifth highest factor of seven according to mean scores, it obtained a mean score of 4.07 indicating overall a slight agreement on the part of the respondents that this factor motivated them to participate in youth group meetings. In light of the developmental task of identity formation as described by various studies on adolescent development (Erikson, 1959; Havighurst, 1951; Shelton, 1983; Smart, 1978), it was not surprising that an integration factor emerged with regard to motivating high school students to participate in religious activity. The items which grouped to form this factor included things like; to broaden my perspective on life, to provide a contrast to other things I have learned, and to provide a contrast to the rest of my life. It could be argued that part

of the identity formation task involves this task of integration. If that is true, this factor becomes a more expected function of adolescent motivation to participate in religious activities. If participation in religious activities is motivated, in part, by desires related to life integration, it would seem probable that weekly youth group meetings would be the likely program where this motivational factor would emerge. When given a description of integration, most of the youth leaders who participated in this study indicated that the function of integration was an intentional part of the programming of their weekly youth group meetings. To the degree that this is true, they have done well in anticipating a portion of the results of this study.

Implications for Ministry and Youth Group Growth

There are several practical recommendations from this study which could be made to adults who work with high school students in local church or para-church ministries. Seven are suggested in the following paragraphs.

1. High school youth workers need to know as much as they can learn about the various motivations represented in their high school youth groups. It would not be wise to assume that students are all oriented a certain way with regard to participation in youth group activities. However, this study presented evidence that these factors are there and are more complex than previously believed.

2. High school youth workers should endeavor to maintain distinctiveness in the various program activities of their ministry. It is easy for some program activities to lose their uniqueness and become similar in style and format to other program activities. This study indicated that there are some differences in factors which motivate students to participate in Sunday school and weekly youth group meetings. Those differences suggested that each of these program activities should be different from the other based upon the motivational factors which are involved in each program activity.

3. High school youth workers are encouraged not to assume that a large number of students are participating in either Sunday

school or weekly youth group meetings due to pressure from other people such as parents, peer group, siblings, or youth workers themselves or to escape some kind of unpleasantness in their lives. This study indicates that with a few exceptions, this just isn't the case. The mean scores on these two factors (External Expectations and Escape) were so low that it would be reasonable to assume that almost none of the students were significantly motivated to participate in either of the program activities studied by either of these factors.

4. High school youth workers are encouraged to view learning as a means to an end of spiritual growth; not as an end in itself. High school students like to learn and, in this study, were motivated to participate in weekly youth group meetings in great measure for the sake of learning. However, for the most part, learning to these students is a means to an end. Since the dominant motivational factor for both Sunday school and youth group meeting participation was spiritual growth, it is reasonable to think of learning as a means to that end. For many of the high school students in this study, learning just for the sake of learning will not satisfy completely. Rather, these students indicated that learning was more satisfying when it led to the satisfaction of other desires, such as spiritual growth, identity formation, and serving others.

5. High school youth workers are encouraged to continue to help high school students develop their own personal relationships with God. Further, youth workers should work to enable students to conduct those relationships with God for themselves. As was stated earlier, perhaps one reason why the Cognitive Interest Factor was prominent as a motivator to participation in youth group meetings was the feeling on the part of students that what they learned in that ministry was more relevant to the real issues of their lives than what they learned in Sunday school. Instruction which leads students to feel that they know how to deepen their relationship with God will, in most cases, seem to them to be more relevant than instruction which is more theological or theoretical.

6. It is recommended that high school youth workers find

more opportunities in which high school students can serve others in a significant way as part of the Sunday school ministry of the church. Many of the students in this study were motivated to participate in Sunday school by desires related to serving others. If the opportunities for service are not there for students who are so motivated, it can be expected that some of those students might cease to participate. Furthermore, offering the opportunities for service serves the two-fold function of providing for additional staff in some departments as well as giving students the chance to have this motivation for participation satisfied.

7. Finally, it is recommended that high school youth workers provide increased opportunities for students to work through the process of integrating what they are learning with the rest of life. Students in this study indicated that they looked to the weekly youth group meeting as a ministry where they could do the task of integration. They also indicated that this integration was an important function in their lives. It is through this process students discover life purpose, a sense of personal meaning and value, and some sense of self-understanding. Students in this study were motivated to participate in youth group meetings because they believed that kind of integration would take place there.

Recommendations for Future Study

This study attempted to identify the motivations for participation in Sunday school and weekly youth group meetings among high school students in the CBA of Southern California. This study further attempted to relate those motivations to the issues of spiritual well-being and religiosity. Several questions were answered, at least so far as they apply to the students in the population for this study. Several more questions remain unanswered. It is those unanswered questions which provide the material for possible future study.

1. A study of motivation to participate should also be conducted among other denominations in the Southern California area to find any similarities or differences which might exist. Perhaps different denominations with different philosophies of minis-

try or slight differences in theological approaches would lead to different motivational factors in their high school students than those found in students from the CBA of Southern California.

2. A study of motivation to participate should be conducted among high school students in the CBA in other regions of the country to find any similarities or differences which may exist. Perhaps students in the same denomination, but living in a different part of the country would indicate different motivations for participation than those living in Southern California.

3. Motivational studies have been conducted with adults (Atkinson, 1989; Oladele, 1989) and now with high school students. Perhaps it would be helpful to attempt a study with students of junior high age in an attempt to discover the differences related to passing from junior high, through high school, through college age years, and into adulthood. Further, a longitudinal study, conducted with a group of students beginning with their junior high school years and tracking the changes in motivation to participate as they occur through high school years, college years, and into adulthood would be helpful to the understanding of how motivation to participate is affected by a variety of developmental concerns.

4. What is the effect of having a professional youth pastor on the staff of a church on these motivational factors? Do students under the ministry of a qualified professional youth pastor tend to be differently motivated than those who have no youth pastor? In what ways do students in a church with a professional youth pastor fit the motivational factors identified? In what ways do they differ?

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