

THE CONTACT

AFLC Youth Worker's Newsletter

Winter 2016

Honest Assessment



The Value of Assessment

By Matt Swigart

I recently heard the story about how there used to be a crazy S-curve on Lakeshore Drive in Chicago. As construction was taking place on both sides of the river the leaders never double-checked to make sure they were pointed in the right direction. Then when it came time to meet in the middle of the river they realized they were not in alignment! Thus the two 90 degree turns necessary to make the connection. That lack of foresight and assessing the current situation was an embarrassment for many years for Chicago's city planners.

Think about the ministry that you lead. How long has it been since you've carved out some time to sit down to intentionally assess its direction and effectiveness? Have you ever done it? Like really taken significant time?

In my years as a youth pastor in Woodbury, MN and now coaching youth pastors all over the country I have found that a staggering number

do not have systems in place for regular, intentional assessment and the resulting adjustments.

One thing I'll point out here is that there is a difference between processing and assessing. We all as leaders process. As we drive home from a night of youth group, Sunday school lesson, event, retreat or mission trip we are processing. But unfortunately processing doesn't create the environment to do a deeper dive into answering questions like,

- "What was the objective?"
- "Did we hit the target?"
- "What wins do we need to celebrate?"
- "What adjustments (even 1%) do we need to make to see greater fruit in the future?"
- "Who else's feedback do I need to solicit to get the full picture?"

Listen, if you never define a target you will never consistently hit it. If you never take time to see if you hit the target you may be missing it completely. And, if you never assess with the intention to adjust you may end up aiming at the wrong target all together as time moves.

For God's Kingdom's sake, I pray this compels you to build these systems into your ministry.



*Matt Swigart is
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Coffee Shop

YOUTH WORKERS W E E K E N D S JANUARY 6 - 8, 2017

Our annual gathering will be in Minneapolis/St. Paul
in conjunction with RECHARGE from
Youth Leadership

Best rate is \$110 by 12/09/2016
See website for YWW contest eligibility
Regular rate is \$135 after December 9
Online registration opens November 28



AFLC Youth Ministries — Video Cluster information for the month of November

Tuesday, November 15 at 3:00pm (CST;
4pm Eastern; 2pm Mountain; 1pm Pacific)

[Meeting Link](#)

Access Code: 819-515-005

Telephone Call-in: (872) 240-3412

Thursday, November 17 at 8:00pm (CST;
9pm Eastern; 7pm Mountain; 6pm Pacific)

[Meeting Link](#)

Access Code: 140-854-285

Telephone Call-in: (571) 317-3122



Reference Room

By Jason Holt

Alphabet Soup for Honest Assessment

Can we SWOP CANS?

No, I do not mean Mountain Dew...or should I write "Mtn Dew"? What I propose by this question are two tools for honest assessment. For those of you that have had me for a youth ministry class at AFLBS or Seminary, these acronyms may seem familiar. They are not something new.

Before we look at them, it is useful to recall the place of assessment in the life of a believer. As I look at the New Testament church, I find the Lord pointing to the need for assessment. It is useful

to first acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is the One that convicts (John 16:8-11) and the One that guides (John 16:13-15). In addition, we find a tone of evaluation when it comes to teaching to be held to be in line with God's Word (Acts 17:11), when it comes to self-examination for the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:28), and when it comes to our own relationship with Jesus (II Cor. 13:5).

The more that I walk alongside youth leaders and congregations the more I find these two tools very helpful for looking at life and ministry. It does not matter if a person is a volunteer (which I was for 8

years) or a vocational leader (which I was also for another 8 years) these two assessment approaches enable a person to bring a healthy view to an area.

SWOP

The first tool is SWOP. It stands for the following:

- S – Strengths
- W – Weaknesses
- O – Opportunities
- P – Problems

The first two letters ask us to evaluate the way things are. The last two items point us to the potential within this topic. This grid can assess everything from one's own devotional life to a youth group event. Recently, AFLBS students in "Youth Ministry Methods of Jesus" used SWOP to assess a case study of a youth group lock-in. They could see what went well and what was a difficulty. Then they turned the page to project ways to build off this event as well as possible hurdles that could come up next time.

This one I have found primarily useful in taking a look at the calendar year of a youth ministry. How are we doing building a community defined by Jesus and the Gospel through connections with one another? How are we doing praising the Lord through song, through prayer, and through interaction? How are we doing prioritizing God's Word as central to the regular gatherings of the group? How are we doing offering settings to serve others in the name of Christ?

I find youth groups and congregations alike utilize this way to assess a balance of activities in to pursue being the Body and engaging in making disciples. At the same time, it has been of assistance in thinking through my own walk with the Lord and my congregational involvement. Am I spending time with God's people? Am I living a life marked by thanksgiving? Am I taking time daily in the Scriptures? Am I serving others beyond the "official" role that I have?

HONESTY

Early in my years as a pastor, I heard a Christian leader express that accountability and assessment are only worthwhile if a person has what he termed "I-accountability." It is not a Mac product, but rather a self-honesty that will be open with another about what is "really going on." My prayer and pursuit has been that we continue to develop a culture where we can be authentic in our relationships, where we can share mountain tops and valleys, and where we can point one another to the Savior King.

By His grace, may we continue equipped by His Word and empowered by His Spirit!



CANS

The second tool is CANS. This mnemonic device covers four different angles:

- C – Community
- A – Adoration
- N – Nurture
- S – Serving

*Pastor Jason Holt
Is the National Youth Director
for the AFLC*



Convenience Store



“Galatians” - 9 Minute overview by The Bible Project

<http://bit.ly/2g8mtfO>



“Dare 2 Share Live!” - 50+ sites on September 23, 2017

<http://bit.ly/2fO52wZ>



“Churches Growing Young” - Resources by Fuller Youth Institute

<http://bit.ly/2fQnELV>



“The Atheist Delusion” - 62 Minutes by Ray Comfort

<http://bit.ly/2fT1Twv>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan 6-8 Youth Workers Weekends @ Eden Prairie MN
- National youth leader retreat w/ Youth Leadership
- Feb 3-5 ARC Winter Retreats @ The ARC, Osceola WI
-SIDExSIDE (7-12 Grade) & Sno Daze (4-7 Grade)
- Mar 17-19 Spring AFLBS Campus Days @ Plymouth MN
- Visiting Weekend for high school students
- June 13-16 AFLC Annual Conference @ Plymouth MN
- AFLC Schools hosting the national church body
- July 3-8 FLY 2017 "illuminate" @ Estes Park CO
-National youth gathering at the YMCA of the Rockies
- Sept 27 See You At The Pole @ Your School
- International day of prayer for teenagers

The Contact is published twice a year to encourage and engage youth workers of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

The AFLC is a growing fellowship of 275 churches whose members believe that the Bible is true and that everyone needs Jesus.

AFLC Youth Ministries exist for four goals: to win, to build, to equip, and to multiply youth for Jesus Christ. We are here to partner in making disciples who make disciples!



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