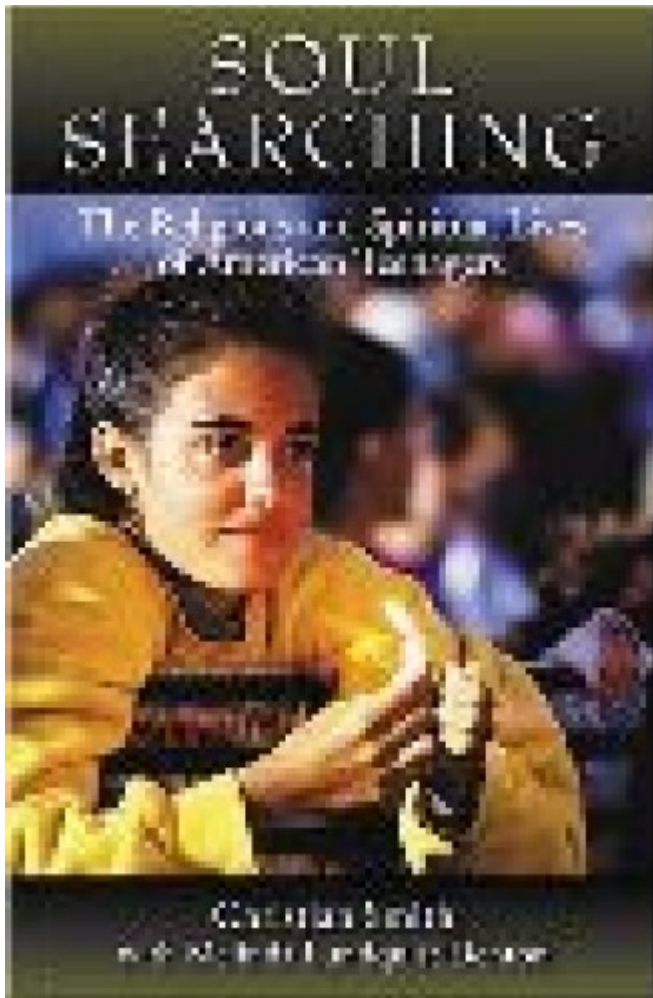


Youth ministry

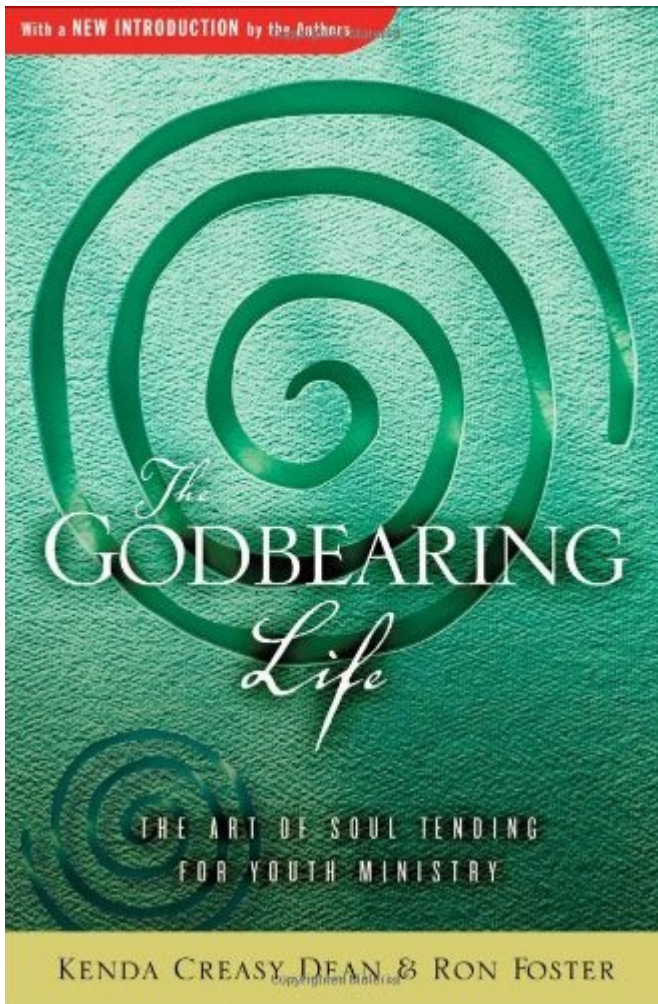
selected by [Fred Edie](#) in the [May 3, 2011](#) issue

In Review



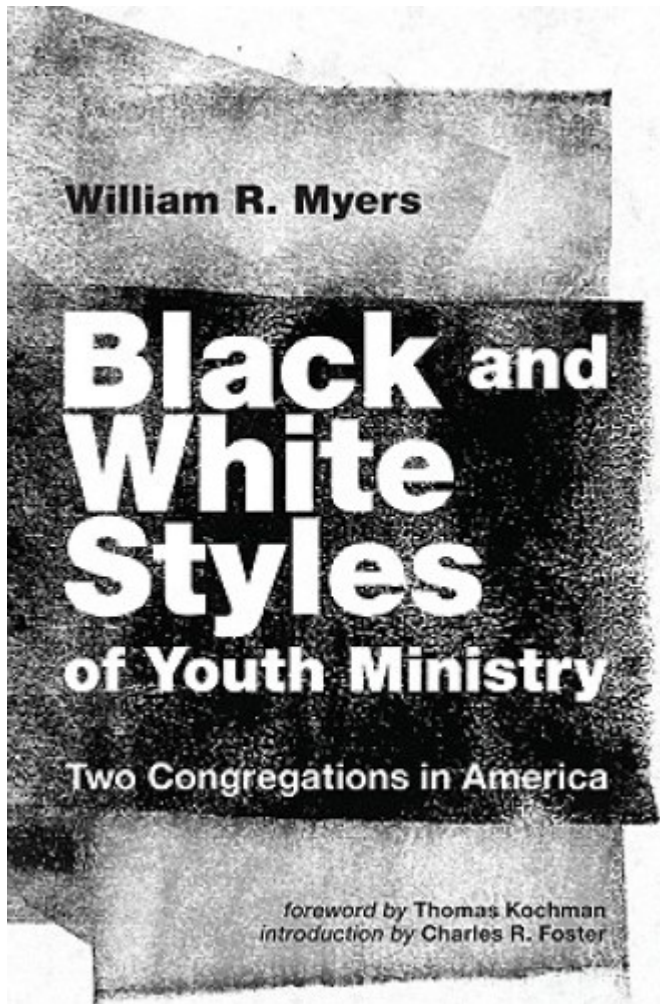
Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers

Christian Smith, with Melinda Lundquist Denton
Oxford University Press



The Godbearing Life

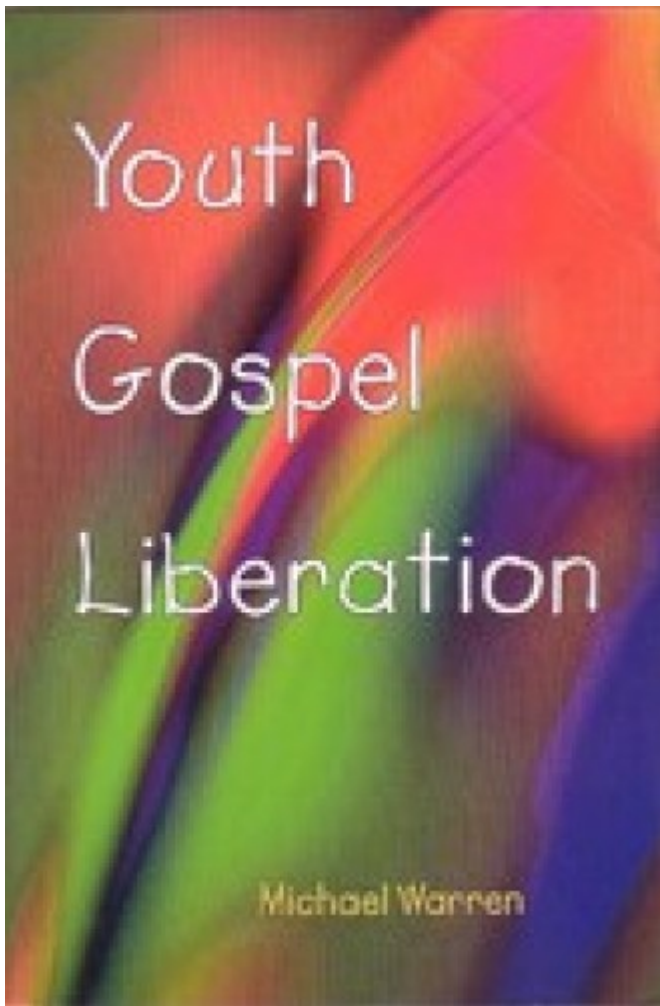
By Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster
Upper Room



Black and White Styles of Youth Ministry

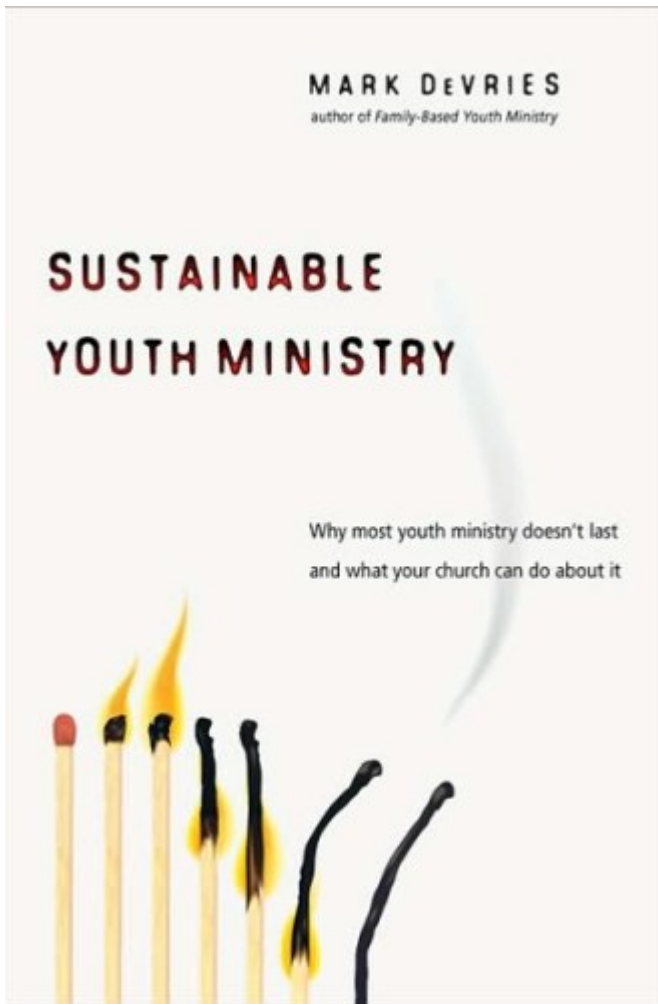
By William R. Myers

Wipf and Stock



Youth, Gospel, Liberation

By Michael Warren
ACTA Publications



Sustainable Youth Ministry

By Mark DeVries
IVP Books

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers, by Christian Smith and Melina Lundquist Denton. Nearly every new youth ministry effort is attempting to respond to the sociological research presented in this volume. Not only does it reveal the "incredible inarticulacy" of most churchgoing teens with respect to their faith, it also shows that they do not engage with Christian practices or frame their lives by the blessings and demands of the gospel. The authors' famous coinage "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism" captures their concern that Christianity is devolving into a syrupy distortion of itself through the inadequate formation of youth and their parents.

The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry, by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster. After decades of game playing and pizza parties, this work signaled the return of thoughtful and passionate engagement with youth ministry within mainline Protestantism. The authors call for an ecclesially grounded ministry that invites youth to practice the Christian life alongside adults.

Black and White Styles of Youth Ministry: Two Congregations in America, by William R. Myers. Myers dons his ethnographer's cap and beautifully describes the youth ministries in two congregations—one a wealthy, suburban Anglo community and the other a working-class urban African-American church. The African-American congregation is forming its young members to be active participants in and even leaders of congregational life, while the Anglo congregation is forming its youth to be consumers of religious activities that can be appended to their competitive, upwardly mobile trajectories.

Youth, Gospel, Liberation, by Michael Warren. Warren brings Paulo Freire's commitment to critical consciousness and liberative practice to youth ministry. He notes that youth are silenced by their captivity to an adolescence that distracts them from legitimate concerns, and he advocates pedagogies that empower youth to reclaim their agency for the sake of the gospel.

Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last and What Your Church Can Do About It, by Mark DeVries. DeVries offers a treasure of practical wisdom on the cultural and institutional prerequisites for youth ministry. This book should be required reading for any search committee that thinks it can solve all youth ministry problems with the next great hire. DeVries reveals how hard work, curiosity and hope make it possible to learn from inevitable failures.