THE INDIGENOUS CONTEXTUALIZATION MODEL:

UKRAINIAN YOUTH MINISTERS’ ADAPTATION

OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

THE INDIGENOUS CONTEXTUALIZATION MODEL: UKRAINIAN YOUTH MINISTERS’ ADAPTATION OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Michael Andrew Manna

Youth Ministry training within theological education in seminaries outside of the United States, Great Britain, Australia, and South Africa is rare. In 2003, under the direction of Youth Ministry International (YMI), I began a bachelors degree and later a masters degree of youth ministry in Ukraine. By 2014, Ukrainian teachers were teaching seventy-five percent of the college courses. The Ukrainian youth ministry graduates of Kyiv Theological Seminary (KTS), some of whom are now teaching their own students through theological education, have adapted the original training they received from their American youth ministry professors. This dissertation discusses the changes they made to content and methodology, and the process by which they made those changes.

Through analysis of field data, which included 45 interviews of Ukrainian youth ministry teachers and their students, the contextualization process was discovered. The adaptation process that was observed in Ukraine is similar to other contextualization processes around the world. Youth ministry theological education is a branch of practical theology. Thus, this process relates to practical theology. It also stands to reason that the
applied theological education contextualization process in Ukraine can serve as a model of contextualization in other countries when they receive foreign content.

Based on the observed process and data, a theoretical model for the *Indigenous Contextualization Process* was developed which states: For long-term knowledge acquisition and application from a foreign context, practical theological education needs indigenous group collaboration to organize the content into a relational methodical group-learning system.

This study seeks to help foreign missionaries construct better bicultural bridges for cross-cultural theological education. The bicultural bridge would be closer to the host context if similar adaptations are made which are shown in this study, or if the host culture is engaged sooner in the contextualization process.
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Then, I must thank my wife, Judy, for all of her support. She is much more than a great wife and mother, which would be enough, but Judy is an extremely gifted woman. She has transparently ministered and shared the gospel of Christ in the USA and Ukraine. She has opened our home to so many college students and youth over the years. She wrote about our ministry in Ukraine in Tom Steffen’s book The Facilitator Era. She has done an amazing job of raising our children and managing our household. Judy spent hours and hours and several sleepless nights editing this dissertation to make the deadline. Thank you for your help, my dear wife. Judy has been much more than my supporter; she has been my ministry partner in every way possible.

I must also mention a young boy in my wife’s fourth grade Sunday School class. One Sunday, when I was assisting my wife with her class, we asked for prayer requests. I was asked to share a request as well. I asked for prayer, as I was writing a 240-page dissertation to become a doctor. I explained that I would not become a medical doctor.
Kevin could not understand how a doctor could not be a medical doctor. I tried to explain what a PhD in Intercultural Studies is. I said that it is kind of like getting a degree as a missionary doctor. Kevin said, “Oh, so you will be a pediatrician and a missionary?”

“No,” I chuckled. “I will not have anything to do with medicine. I won’t even be able to help a person who has a cold.”

Kevin then replied, “Well, that’s pretty sad. You’ll be a doctor, but you can’t even help anyone.” Hmmm … I hope that’s not the case.

Next, I must thank my children for their support in our ministry. As my son, Luke, said, when he shared his testimony in our supporting churches, “God not only called my parents to be missionaries; He called us kids to live overseas as well.” I want to say a huge thank you to Mandie, Luke, Samantha, and Katya for their patience with me as I studied. I know that getting my masters and doctoral degrees occupied chunks of time that I could have been spending with you, yet you almost always encouraged me to keep moving forward. You supported me with your patient and understanding hearts.

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Thank you, professors and mentors from Biola University, who were willing to travel to Lithuania and Ukraine to teach me and the other missionaries in Eastern Europe. These professors include Dr. Tom Steffen and Dr. Richard Starcher, who also agreed to be on my doctoral committee. Special thanks goes to the head of my doctoral research committee, Dr. Doug Hayward. You have influenced me in more ways than you will ever know. Thank you for being willing to come to Kiev every January, when no other professor wanted to come! I will never forget you playing the “Just Dance” video game with my then-12-year-old daughter, Katya, in the living room of our apartment. You certainly had the moves! More thanks must go to my classmates who greatly contributed to my education through our lively discussions in class.

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Finally, my heart is filled with thanks, love, and deep respect for my Ukrainian youth ministry students, who over the years taught me much more than I taught them. Heaven will be a great place of reunion. Bring lots of Ukrainian youth with you!
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My family moved to Ukraine in the summer of 2002 to become career missionaries and assist local churches by training youth pastors at Kyiv Theological Seminary (KTS). I had been a youth pastor for 15 years in the States, and God was now calling me to train up youth pastors in another country. My desire was to fulfill 2 Timothy 2:1-2 with the Ukrainian youth pastors: “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (English Standard Version). It became my goal to train Ukrainian youth pastors who would eventually train other youth leaders in Ukraine. My exit strategy was to train up Ukrainian youth ministry teachers and professors who would continue the job when I left.

When our family arrived at the Borispol International Airport in Kyiv on that rainy day in June, I wondered if I would learn the language and culture sufficiently to be able to adapt our American curriculum for Ukrainian youth ministry.

During my first year in Ukraine, I learned of a poor example of youth ministry contextualization. YMI, my mission, was retranslating into Russian the best-known youth ministry book at the time, Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry by Doug Fields. The original Russian translator incorrectly translated the phrase Super Bowl party in a section of the book on youth ministry programming as, “a party with a large bowl for the group to eat
from.” Without proper contextualization or finding a dynamic equivalent, the meaning was lost to the youth leaders who were reading the book. I realized that I would make similar mistakes.

Over 90 percent of the world’s formally trained youth leaders live in the United States, ministering to only 3 percent of the world’s youth population, according to YMI’s president, Randy Smith (personal communication, July 30, 2000). This was one of the greatest motivating factors for us to move to Ukraine. We began a formal Bachelor’s Degree of Youth Ministry in 2003 at KTS. As far as we knew, this was the first Bachelor of Youth Ministry ever taught in the former Soviet Union. YMI, an American-based faith mission, developed the partnership with the seminary in Ukraine. Between 2003-2012, the KTS program produced 34 youth ministry graduates. The bachelor’s degree had 108 total credits including 40 credit hours of youth ministry courses. The original 12 youth ministry courses originated from Boyce College, the undergraduate school at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky

American professors, including myself, adapted these courses for Ukraine. I supervised the translation of the courses into the Russian language. The youth ministry courses originated from the context of American youth ministry. We did our best to contextualize the material and education to the culture of this region. Did we make enough changes to the curriculum in the adaptation process? The extent of our contextualization would greatly affect the outcome.

The concept of a global village sharing a global culture is a cozy one, and the twenty-first century, with its galloping information facilities and trade links would seem a suitable time frame for its realization. However, cultural barriers, though frequently permeable, are formidable. (Lewis, 2003, p. xxiv)
Contextualization is key to good theological education in a cross-cultural setting. “Contextualization is the process whereby God's self revelation regarding who He is and His eternal purposes are communicated to, understood, and lived out in meaningful ways by culture bound and culturally diverse groups of humanity” (Hayward, 2006, p. 1).

Vasya Ostriy is of our youth ministry graduates and the first Ukrainian director of our youth ministry degree program in Kyiv. He does not have to teach youth leaders with a translator, as I was obliged to teach him. He teaches in his own native tongue. He and the other new Ukrainian teachers have made several adaptations to the content and methods of our courses. For an example in content adaptation, Vasya has changed some of the terms in the notes. The English words to distinguish between middle school students, high school students, and college students, have been replaced with the words teenager and youth in Russian. These terms better fit the Ukrainian culture. For an example of a method adaptation, he has changed some of the post-class assignments. Instead of assigning a large research paper to be done at home after a modular class, he assigns two pages of writing per day over the two-week period they are in lectures, which he corrects and returns promptly. In the end, the paper is the same length as the original assignment that I assigned him when he was a student. Vasya has made further adaptations in his teaching strategies to increase the learning of his students. Since the time that Vasya began to teach, seven additional Ukrainian youth pastors who graduated from our program are teaching as well. The process of their adjustments is pedagogical contextualization. They are using teaching and learning strategies from their context to communicate the meaning of the content more appropriately. These are just two
examples of ways in which the first-generation of students who have become teachers are improving the training for future generations of youth ministry students.

Our goal was to train Ukrainian youth ministry teachers, who would in turn train their own youth leaders. As American teachers, we attempted to contextualize the youth ministry training for the first-generation of students who would then become the first indigenous youth ministry teachers in Ukraine. Our desire was to create what Paul Hiebert (1994) calls a bicultural bridge to teach the future youth ministry leaders, and the Ukrainian graduates of our program have now gone on to train other youth leaders. So what have they done to adapt the training for the next generation of Ukrainian youth leaders?

**Problem Statement**

It is unknown how the Ukrainian youth ministry graduates of KTS, who are now teaching other youth leaders through theological education, have adapted the original training they received from their American youth ministry professors. We need to discover what changes the Ukrainian teachers made to content and methodology when they taught their students, in order to understand the adaptation process that took place.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to better understand and explain the process and product of curricular adaptation conducted by the Ukrainian youth ministry teachers that was originally transmitted by the American professors. For the purposes of this study, adaptation will be examined by studying the first generation of indigenous Ukrainian youth ministry teachers and their students in comparison to the original
American teachers and their students at KTS. The results of the research also will also show the students' perceptions of the relevance of the training transmitted from the American professors.

**Research Questions**

Central question: How do Ukrainian youth ministry teachers explain the adaptation of the youth ministry training they received at the hands of American professors?

Subquestions:

1. What were the motivations for adaptations made by the Ukrainian teachers?
2. How did the participants change the curriculum content to enhance their effectiveness in the youth ministry education?
3. How did the participants change the methodologies transmitted from the American professors?
4. How did the participants change the teaching styles transmitted from the American professors?
5. What was the process the Ukrainian teachers used in making the adaptations?

**Definitions**

For the sake of this study, the following terms and phrases will be defined as such:

1. Youth ministry refers to organized church or para-church ministry towards young people between the ages of 12 and 25 years old.
2. Ukrainian teacher refers to graduates who have received a bachelor’s degree diploma in youth ministry and have taught youth ministry courses or seminars to other youth leaders.

3. Contextualization has many different meanings. In this dissertation, contextualization will refer primarily to adaptation of an American curriculum to a Ukrainian context. The contextualization process studied in this research related to pedagogical issues from one culture to a different culture.

4. First-generation students refers to the Ukrainian students who were taught youth ministry courses by the American professors; and

5. Second-generation students refer to the Ukrainian students taught by the Ukrainian teachers.

Scope of This Study

The scope of this study was the Ukrainian youth ministry teachers who graduated from KTS and their respective students who have been taught in formal and non-formal settings. The teachers graduated from KTS between the years of 2007 and 2013.

Limitations

I have personally taught each of the graduates/instructors in this study. My personal relationships with the participants in this study helped me to obtain data, but they could have been skewed if I did not use the appropriate methods of data collection. I had four Masters of Youth Ministry students assist me in some of the data collection in order to avoid some personal contact. I also used triangulation in the analysis, which reduced some of these limitations.
Significance Statement

This study helps international youth ministry trainers better understand the needs related to training youth ministers overseas in Ukraine. It assists teachers in identifying issues that will relate to adaptation and contextualization in Eastern Europe. Further, it reveals principles to use for adapting and contextualizing theological youth ministry education for use in other areas around the world. The findings add to the body of knowledge related to global youth culture and cross-cultural theological education. There is a general lack of scholarly literature on the topic of youth ministry education outside the United States, Great Britain and Australia. Although this study will primarily assist theological training in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union countries, universal principles were discovered in the area of youth ministry curriculum adaptation and contextualization, which can assist those serving in other countries as well.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to fully understand the nature of this study, three main subjects of literature must be reviewed. The first subject is American youth ministry. The second subject is American interdenominational missions engagement in international youth ministry training, and the third subject is the contextualization of theological education in foreign countries. An overview of American youth ministry is also included in this chapter. The following literature review is not as critical as most literature reviews in order to focus on the positive input of the authors.

Literature Background Review on American Youth Ministry Training

My research question for this study asks what adaptation process was utilized by Ukrainian youth ministry teachers when they contextualized the training they received at the hands of American professors. In order to fully comprehend the adaption process, it is important to understand the source from which the adaptation is taking place. The source is American youth ministry. What does the literature and recent history say about youth ministry based in the United States?

The Writers on the Subject

Several youth pastors over the last 40 years have written concerning the philosophy, theology and methodologies of youth ministry. Some of the key authors have
been Chap Clark (who wrote *The Youth Workers Handbook to Family Ministry*), Doug Fields (who wrote *Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry*), Mark Senter (who wrote *When God Shows Up*, and *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry*), Dean Borgman (who wrote *Foundations for Youth Ministry*), Duffy Robbins (who wrote *Youth Ministry Nuts and Bolts*), Tony Campolo (who wrote *Growing Up in America*), David Livermore (who wrote *Global Youth Ministry*), Mark DeVries (who wrote *Family-based Youth Ministry*) and Jim Burns (who wrote *The Youth Builder*). In order to make certain I have exhausted the academic literature available on the subject of youth ministry, I spent a great deal of time scouring online databases as well as the library at the International Center for Youth Ministry on the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary campus in Louisville, KY.

There have been a few dissertations and unpublished works that have been written on this subject that were helpful. Dr. David Adams wrote a thesis project entitled, *The Development of Youth Ministry as a Professional Career and the Distinctives of Liberty University Youth Ministry Training in Preparing Students for Youth Work*. This work led to the development of the International Center for Youth Ministry’s establishment in Louisville, KY. Another important dissertation written by Dr. Randy Smith, which relates to my research topic is entitled, *An Evaluation of Contextualization and Application of YMI’s Training of Cuban Youth Workers*.

There were many great youth ministry leaders who never took the time to write books. Mark Senter (2010) feels that the reason for the lack of written resources in this field is due to the pragmatic nature of youth ministry.

The frustrating part about such a study was that people who did work with adolescents seldom took the time to record or carefully document what they were doing. Most just did the work of helping form the spiritual lives of the rising
generation. Then, without fanfare, these dedicated people went on with their Christian lives, never dreaming that someone would be interested in what they had done to disciple youth. (p. 96)

One great blessing is that every writer is not simply a theorist, but a practitioner.

In the early years of the development of youth ministry in America, most books were not of an academic nature, but were books on practical tools for youth work. I would like to elaborate on the literature concerning youth ministry in the following categories: the theology of American youth ministry, the history of American youth ministry, the methodologies of American youth ministry, the education of American youth ministers, and the uniqueness of American youth ministry in a global context.

The Theology of American Youth Ministry

In the preface to Senter’s book on the history of American youth ministry, Chap Clark wrote that youth ministry training is a subset of practical theological education.

As a branch of practical theology, academic youth ministry must move beyond a primarily skills-based focus to a theologically driven expression of a contextualized commitment of the local church to a targeted population. James Fowler defines practical theology as “theological reflection and construction arising out of and giving guidance to a community of faith in the praxis of its mission. Practical theology is critical and constructive reflection leading to ongoing modification and development of the ways the church shapes its life to be in partnership with God’s work in the world. (Senter, 2010, preface, para. 3)

In this way, youth ministry is uniquely set up for cross-cultural transfer. Since practical theology is ready for “ongoing modification and development,” it seems to reason that youth ministry would also be ready for cross-cultural contextualization. If the principles of practical theology are adhered to, then the principles of youth ministry in theory should be transferable to other contexts and cultures.

Dean Borgman (1995) wrote in his classic book, When Kumbaya is Not Enough, that a practical theology for youth ministry must include contextualization and
translation. He believes that the Bible must enter into the world of young people in order for the meaning to be conveyed. He said that “theology is a work of translation: the wisdom of God must be translated into a given culture in a particular time and place” (p. 19). He goes on to say:

Theology for youth ministers combines deep insights from the world and the Word, from the streets and the sanctuary, from the behavioral sciences and the teaching of the faith. The challenge of relating to human beings in dynamic transition makes one want to understand their changes and to discover with them principles that are appropriate for their world and anchored in eternal truth. (p. 19)

Borgman shows that a theology of youth ministry adds an incarnational model to a branch of practical theology, which focuses on a certain subculture.

Wesley Black (1991), in An Introduction to Youth Ministry, attempts to systematically order the theology of youth ministry into 10 building blocks. These theological blocks are supposed to be the foundation for youth ministry methodologies. They include:

1. A Biblical focus
2. Grounded in God
3. People need a right relationship with God
4. The church is the basic unit of ministry
5. Recognize developmental processes
6. Parents are responsible for religious training
7. Youth leaders are called to minister
8. God calls some to specific ministry with youth
9. Youth are to be involved in ministry
10. The purpose of youth ministry is to point youth toward God and help them become involved in the Great Commission (pp. 14-19).

Most of the authors agree that a theology of youth ministry is practical, applied, incarnational, and contextualized for this special subculture. These truths are cross-culturally transferable.

A theology of youth ministry must ultimately include the belief that young people have the ability to be discipled and disciple others at their present age. Wayne Rice (2010), founder of Youth Specialties, sees this understanding originating from Paul’s challenge to Timothy.

As Paul wrote to young Timothy, "Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young" (1 Timothy 4:12). We have a treasure trove of biblical heroes to inspire teenagers who want to do something significant with their lives for God: Moses, Joseph, Samuel, Esther, David, even Jesus himself, who at age twelve declared, "I must be about my father's business." King Josiah began his successful thirty-one-year reign in Jerusalem when he was eight years old. Joan of Arc was only nineteen when she was martyred for her faith. There are many examples in history of teenagers who showed remarkable competence and courage as they assumed roles that today are reserved more or less exclusively for adults. And young people today are just as capable, if not more so. (chap. 2, para. 34)

**The History of American Youth Ministry**

In the late 1800s, the appearance of a youth subculture in America began to emerge. The first ministries to youth were the Sunday School movement, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), and the Christian Endeavor.

The YMCA was very influential in reaching this developing subculture. It is important to remember that before 1900, these groups were made up of college-students, since high schools were not common at this time. The YMCA was founded on evangelistic purposes and its focus was to reach young men with the gospel of Christ and
help them to walk in Christ. The American beginnings of the YMCA had international roots, from England specifically (Hopkins 1951, p. 4).

D. L. Moody is known today for being one of the premier evangelists in American history and the founder of the Moody Bible Institute. Yet Moody was also one of the most famous leaders in the early years of the YMCA. He loved the YMCA’s focus on youth and was heavily involved in its ministry.

Moody's career was a typical American success. Dissatisfied with opportunities in Boston, where he had gone from his New England village home at the age of seventeen to seek his fortune, he left after two years for Chicago where he was soon earning $5,000 a year. Having experienced conversion in Boston, he found the Y.M.C.A. an outlet for his tremendous energy. … Moody extended facilities of the Chicago Association in the direction of mission and Sunday school work, and as president obtained its first building. … During the next six years Moody's skill as an evangelist grew, but he won no particular recognition outside the Movement. A regular attendant at Conventions from 1866 to 1870, he was twice a vice-president. (Hopkins, 1951, p. 187)

Moody started with youth in his ministry, and then expanded to all age groups as his ministry progressed. Eventually, others in the YMCA would decide to work exclusively with youth and college students by establishing associations on the college campuses.

Christian Endeavor began in 1881 and reached out to thousands of youth in conventions throughout the country.

It is difficult to overstate how popular the Christian Endeavor approach made youth work. During the 1890s national conventions were held in Boston, Cleveland, Chattanooga, Toronto, and Indianapolis. The largest Christian Endeavor convention was held in Boston in 1895, when 56,000 people attended. These conventions became the model for ones held later by denominational youth organizations….

Southern Baptists, for example, were unsatisfied with the Christian Endeavor approach, citing its failure to link young people with the church. They feared a loss of loyalty among their own youth and a lack of affiliation with the denomination. So they organized and sponsored their own youth groups. The first to be formed in 1884 was called the “Baptist Young People’s Union,” a youth
organization that was officially recognized and established as a denominational organization in 1893. (Strommen, Jones, & Rahn, 2011, p. 29)

As the church was struggling to define this new subculture at the beginning of the 20th century, society was doing the same thing. In Borgman’s (2013) recently updated *Foundations for Youth Ministry: Theological Engagement with Life and Culture*, he gives us a good summary of the origin of adolescence.

We know sociologically that adolescence emerged in the Western industrial age, took on clear form with compulsory education in the 1920s, and that the term *teenager* was first used soon after, during World War II. It’s true that Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* in the sixteenth century foreshadowed adolescent struggles and emotions. Rousseau romanticized emotional and mental changes at puberty in his 1762 scandalous tract, *Emile*. But it was G. Stanley Hall’s *Adolescence* in 1904 (with emphasis on “storm and stress”) and Erik Erikson’s *Childhood and Society* in 1950, and later *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (emphasizing adolescents’ identity crises) that solidified our naming and thinking about a life stage called adolescence. In this sense adolescence is a social construct. But by nature and culture, puberty and the transition from childhood to adulthood have always existed. (Chapter 8, para. 34)

It is helpful to think of the advent of adolescence beginning in 1905 and the advent of teenagers in 1945. There is a definite distinction between adolescence and teenagers, and this distinction carried itself into the church. Senter (2010) wrote the most comprehensive book on youth ministry’s history entitled, *When God Shows up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America (Youth, Family, and Culture)*. He explains this terminology distinction that ends up directing the focus of American youth ministry.

One of the great difficulties in tracing the history of youth ministry in America is the manner in which the concept of youth is understood. While much of the world still thought of “youth” as starting sometime after infancy and concluding in a person’s late twenties, youth ministry people came to use the term first to refer to boys and girls in their teenage years and then focused primarily on high school students—grades nine through twelve. Social commentators, especially in the first part of the twentieth century, focused on students residing at colleges and universities. (p. 18)
After World War II, Protestant churches and para-church organizations took this distinction further. They made a distinction between youth ministry and college ministry. Youth ministry focused on the middle and high school years, where college ministries focused on those 18 to 25 years old. As the culture made the age distinction, so did the church.

With the rise of the high school, the definition of youth changed to focus on adolescence. Initially adolescence indicated young people ages twelve to twenty-four, but during the Great Depression and the Second World War it came to signify those in their teenage years, that is, those still living at home and not employed. The word teenager took center stage and youth ministries invested their energies in helping young people survive high school as Christians. (Senter, 2010, p. 42)

Senter (2010) organizes the history of youth ministry into four separate periods. These period divisions were often influenced by the times when different para-church organizations were founded. The following periods have been defined:

1. The Period of Youth Associations (1824-1875).
2. The Period of Youth Societies (1881-1925).
3. The Period of Relational Outreach (1933-1989).
4. The Period of Fusion (1990 and beyond). (Contents page)

It is during the first period where we see two ideas from England take root in America; that is Sunday School and the YMCA (Adams, 1993, p. 18). As discussed earlier, the focus of the YMCA was to the youth of the time period, which were college-aged students, since high schools had not yet been developed. During the second period, we see Christian Endeavor taking a lead in youth ministry. Public education was also born during this time period. It is during the third period in which we see the birthing of today’s modern youth ministry. During this period Young Life with Jim Rayburn, YFC
with Billy Graham, and Word of Life with Jack Wyrtzen began. Youth rallies and
campus clubs also began (p. 18).

In the 1960s, YFC took the high school club format of Young Life and expanded
it to a larger audience. Mike Yaconelli and Wayne Rice were instrumental in developing
the Campus Life model at their YFC San Diego club. This model had a huge impact on
youth ministry as a whole for the next couple of decades. Rice (2010) said this about the
formation of the new Campus Life:

> Our greatest concern [about the poorly run YFC clubs] came with the realization
that we were not really reaching very many non-churched teenagers on the high
school campus, nor were we effectively motivating our Christian kids through
teen-to-teen philosophy - but we had a club, and we had meetings! Some of these
meetings were the finest club meetings possible, but most were merely meetings.
However many of us strongly felt that we were not in this ministry simply to
organize meetings. We had a job to do, a ministry to perform-that of reaching the
high school student where he was! (chap. 4, para. 27)

The new high school clubs became more director-centered programs and focused
on helping teens invite their non-churched friends to the club. Following their years with
YFC, Yaconelli and Rice later created Youth Specialties. Youth Specialties was
instrumental in training thousands of youth pastors in a nonformal setting. The founders
began the organization with a simple manifesto:

> First, we wanted to help churches do better youth ministry. Second, we believed
that better programs lead to better youth ministry. Third, we believed that
everyone should have access to good ideas. Fourth, we believed that the goal of
youth ministry was to reach "unreachable" kids-those who found the church
boring and irrelevant. That was what we did in Campus Life and that was what we
thought church youth ministry should be doing, as well. (Rice, 2010, chap. 4,
para. 45)
In the 1970s, the churches and seminaries formulate strategies that match what the para-church ministries had been doing. Ministries needed more than simply volunteers; they needed full-time youth workers. The professionalization of youth ministry begins.

The formation of the National Network of Youth Ministries at a mountain retreat in Colorado in 1979 was symbolic of the transition from the youth fellowship era to a new stage of youth ministry. Though youth ministers (called by various names) existed as early as the beginning of the youth fellowship era and had mushroomed in the 1960s and 1970s, the focus of professionalized youth ministry activity began to tip back toward the local church as the 1980s began. (Senter, 2010, p. 65)

This is the era in which I personally entered full-time ministry. In 1987, I received a Bachelors of Arts degree in Christian Camping from Grace College of the Bible in Omaha, NE. I was influenced by several youth ministry organizations, which were training youth ministers non-formally during this time period including Youth Specialties (1968), Sonlife Ministries (1979), and Purpose-Driven Youth Ministries (1995).

In the last 30 years, youth ministry has continued to mature as it reinvents itself. Some authors argue that youth ministry has shaped the Protestant church of our current century (Senter, 2010, p. 307). The youth ministry movement with its strengths and its flaws is now being exported to other countries through American missionaries, so the history of youth ministry continues to be written.

The Methodologies of American Youth Ministry

Many authors have written books and articles concerning the best methods to be used in youth ministry. As an author shares his passion for his “Biblical” model of youth ministry, he inadvertently infers that other models are not Biblical. It is also been common for a youth ministry organization to require that each of its staff members follow and espouse to their model exclusively. In fact, some organizations; for example, Sonlife
Ministries, do not allow other people to use their training materials without having become credentialed by their own leaders. Wayne Rice shares an interesting story when this happened to him and Yaconelli when they were with YFC. They had been instrumental in writing the first Campus Life manual, but shortly after quit their positions with YFC. They were still both anxious to see this manual after it was printed.

So we were anxious for the "Impact" manual to get published. Even though we knew what was in it, we wanted the convenience of having all those good ideas in one place where they could be easily accessed. We knew they were going to be shipped out to YFC programs at the end of the summer, and we were expecting to get copies as well.

Around the first week of September I got a call from Mike, who had gone by the YFC office to see if the manuals had arrived. "Well, I've got some good news and some bad news."

"Uh ... what's the good news?"

"They're in. I saw one in Ken's office."

“And the bad news?"

"We can't have one. Only 'credentialed' Youth for Christ staff can have a copy of the new manual. We don't work for YFC anymore. We're not credentialed."

Needless to say, we were both pretty ticked off. Not only did we want to see the fruit of our labor, we also wanted the ideas that were printed in that book. While we had contributed much of the material that was in it, we knew it also included ideas that had come from other sources as well. We wanted to use those ideas with our church youth groups.

Despite our protests, we never did get a copy of that first "Impact" manual. I remember being tempted to break into the YFC office and "borrow" a copy long enough to make copies but finally decided against that. (Rice, 2010, chap. 4, para. 37-44)

In my own youth ministry experience, I was greatly impacted by the methodologies espoused by Doug Fields in his book *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*. Fields (1998) followed the principles of his lead pastor, Rick Warren, at Saddleback Church in Southern California while adding the ideas of a funnel in regards to discipleship. He also suggested that each program be designed for a specific audience with the goal to help them attain a greater level of spiritual maturity. I also found his five
concentric circles helpful as he talked about the audiences, which we would program to reach (starting from the outside circle): the community, the crowd, the congregation, the committed, and the core youth. He wrote that it was possible “to design programs to reach the five potential audiences and express the five purposes (from Rick Warren: evangelism, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry)” (Fields, 1998, p. 96).

Even though many of Fields’ strategies were helpful in our cross-cultural ministry, they need to be adapted for every context. Fields wrote from a Southern California context, thus, his programs were more effective in that place and at that time. If a reader takes his programming examples and use them in a rural American setting or a cross-cultural setting, they would probably not be appropriate. This is a true of any American youth ministry book which gives programming examples.

Two other ministry models that impacted my life were from Dan Spader (from Sonlife Ministries) and Dave Adams (from the International Center for Youth Ministry based in Louisville, KY). Spader’s model focused on Christology and discipleship multiplication. As Spader (2009) was founding his new ministry, Global Youth Initiative (GYI), he outlined his shared ministry philosophy with his global partners.

A biblical philosophy with transferable principles is cross-cultural … whereas programs and curriculum are wrapped up in too many cultural and contextual issues.

With this framework, let me humbly try to capture some of those critical principles and values that frame up the ministry philosophy of GYI. For discussion sake I have wrapped them in twelve statements. They are:

- Jesus is our model
- Disciple-making is our mission
- Love is our motive
- The organic process is our method
- The Holy Spirit is our means
- Fruit is our measure
- The gospel remains our message
• The church is the movement
• Youth are our mandate
• Relationships are our momentum
• Leading servants is our motto
• Kingdom Obedience is our distinctive mark (p. 3)

Adam’s model used a five-tier pyramid visual of programming in which each level grew in spiritual maturity. The bottom level was relationship building, the second level was evangelism, the third level was growth, the fourth level was ministry, and the fifth level was reproduction (Adams, 1993, appendix 1).

Today there have been so many models of youth ministries used in the American context, that it is hard to navigate all the methodologies. Thankfully, a few books have been written comparing these models to each other. The most comprehensive of these books is the 2001 work entitled the *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church: Inclusive Congregational, Preparatory, Missional, & Strategic*. In this book, the four expert writers write about their models and then critique each other’s models. I believe that this kind of work exposes one of the uniquenesses of American youth ministry; that is, self-evaluation. I will briefly summarize each view of youth ministry below:

1. The Inclusive Congregational Approach to Youth Ministry – Malan Nel, from South Africa, espouses an approach to youth ministry which is reactionary towards the traditional age-based youth ministries that American churches have seen for the past 40+ years. The inclusive congregation model says that “youth ministry is a comprehensive congregational ministry in which God comes, through all forms of ministry and with especial regard to parents (or their substitutes), with a differentiated focus to youths (as an integral part of the congregation), and also with and through the youths in the congregation to the
21

world” (Senter, Black, Clark, & Nel, 2010, chap. 1, Modes of youth ministry, para. 18). This model suggests that youth are not to be separated out from any program of the church, but the church should change every program in such a way to include and reach youth. This ministry model is family or group based, and not individualistic.

2. The Preparatory Approach to Youth Ministry – Wesley Black gives us the following definition of this model:

The Preparatory approach to youth ministry can be defined as a specialized ministry to adolescents that prepares them to participate in the life of existing churches as leaders, disciples, or evangelists. Students are viewed as disciples-in-training, with opportunities for service both in the present and the future. Developmental dynamics suggest that youth ministry be viewed as a laboratory in which disciples can grow in a culture guided by spiritual coaches. (Senter et al., 2010, chap. 2, para. 9)

This model attempts to make a distinction between an activity-based approach to a ministry-based approach. The author says that they might look the same, but they will have distinctively different results. Black is advocating for a family-oriented discipleship model.

1. The Missional Approach to Youth Ministry – Chap Clark says that the missional approach to youth ministry recognizes the cultural barriers that separate adolescents from adults. These barriers are not only found in the secular adolescent world, but also the world of churched young people. Therefore, youth ministry as mission is defined as the community of faith corporately committed to caring for and reaching out into the adolescent world (both churched and unchurched young people) in order to meaningfully assimilate them into their fellowship. (Senter et al., 2010, chap. 3, para. 19)

Clark says that Young Life and YFC’s clubs in the 1960s and 1970s perfected this approach. The focus of their ministries was missional; that is, to reach the non-
Christian where they were at, and it was not program-based. But the church got it wrong when they copied this movement. “Thus the last 20 to 30 years have seen youth ministry move from a mission-driven, outreach-oriented, culturally sensitive expression of God’s incarnational care for all people to an entertainment-based series of events, programs, options, and classes” (chap. 3, para. 37). Clark is advocating for a church-wide focus in adjusting their programming to spill out of the church doors to reach a secular world through a missional approach to youth ministry.

2. The Strategic Approach to Youth Ministry – Mark Senter writes:

The Strategic approach creates a community of leaders and youthful Christians that enables a parachurch or church-based youth ministry to establish a new church to maintain a theological continuity while expressing faith in a community relevant to both Christ and culture. Why do we call this the Strategic approach to youth ministry? Primarily because it calls upon the youth ministry to be and become a holistic intergenerational church that is relevant to the world in which it lives. (Senter et al., 2010, chap. 4, para. 28)

This approach reminds me of the youth church plants that I participated with in Ukraine. Senter says that this approach incorporates (a) solid youth ministry, (b) vision for continuity, (c) leadership team, (d) a critical mass, (e) relevant ministry style, (f) time and support, and (g) location (Senter et al., 2010). This model includes youth ministry and church planting strategies into one.

Each of these models has advantages and disadvantages in certain contexts. Continual evaluation is the key. Another excellent book, which evaluates models of youth ministry, is Richard Dunn and Mark H. Senter’s (1997) book entitled Reaching a Generation for Christ.
The Education of American Youth Ministers

Currently in the United States, according to The College Board (2013), there are 113 colleges that offer a Youth Ministry major. (para. 1) Most churches require a bachelor’s degree with some theological education, but a specific degree in youth ministry is not generally required. Study.com (2015) says that

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), church ministry leaders and directors, including youth ministers, usually have a bachelor’s degree (www.bls.gov). Though a specific major isn’t typically required, several Bible colleges and private schools offer leadership programs with concentrations in youth ministry. Common coursework includes religious studies, child psychology, family studies and communication. (para. 5)

Additionally several colleges offer graduate degrees in youth ministry as well. Masters of Arts in Youth Ministry (MAYM) are offered in several colleges in traditional educational formats, online or hybrid formats. A typical MAYM degree such as is offered at Azusa Pacific University requires a total of 48 credits with a minimum of 20 credits in the youth ministry concentration (Azusa Pacific University, 2015, para. 1-2). There are also a few schools that offer doctoral degrees with youth ministry concentrations. For example, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, offers a DMin with a youth ministry emphasis.

The Uniqueness of American Youth Ministry

As I have traveled the world, I have encountered youth ministry in every church and culture I have visited. So what is unique about American youth ministry that American missionaries wish to help people in developing countries enhance their own youth ministries? One of the uniqueness’s the authors purport is the rise of professionalism in American youth ministry. This rise started in the 1980s.
The formation of the National Network of Youth Ministries at a mountain retreat in Colorado in 1979 was symbolic of the transition from the youth fellowship era to a new stage of youth ministry. Though youth ministers (called by various names) existed as early as the beginning of the youth fellowship era and had mushroomed in the 1960s and 1970s, the focus of professionalized youth ministry activity began to tip back toward the local church as the 1980s began. (Senter, 2010, p. 65)

This professionalism is somewhat unique to the United States in comparison to most countries around the world. Western Europe, Canada, Australia, and South Africa would be exceptions to this rule.

Professionalism infers another uniqueness of American youth ministry; that is a large amount of higher education opportunities within the field. As stated above, over 100 colleges offer bachelors, masters and even doctoral degrees with youth ministry concentrations.

An additional uniqueness can be found in the classrooms on the Christian college campuses. Professors and students have been able to evaluate and reflect on philosophies and methods of youth ministry through the years. Kenda Creasy Dean talks about the evaluation process that goes on within youth ministry by comparing it to Osmer’s *Practical Theology*. Dean says that there are four tasks and questions within practical theological reflection:

1. Understand – What’s going on?
2. Reflect – What are we doing?
3. Detect and evaluate – How well are we doing it by God’s standards?
4. Project – How can we do it better? (Dean, 2001)
The American culture is known to be a self-evaluating culture; even at times self-effacing. Taking the evaluative approach in regard to practical theology is valuable since human knowledge is ultimately increased through the process.

Another uniqueness of American youth ministry relates to reflection; that is, the amount of surveys and studies that have been done by professionals in their field. Since 1980, research and studies have been conducted to determine the effectiveness of church-based and para-church youth ministries. One landmark study was completed in 1996, when 7,500 youth ministers gathered at Atlanta’s Georgia Dome. A sample of 2,130 full-time youth pastors was secured for the study and the conclusions were published in the book *Youth Ministry that Transforms*.

These uniquenesses of American youth ministry, if used with an attitude of humility and good missiological principles, could be valuable in training youth ministers in developing countries.

**Issues Identified by the Writers**

The following issues were identified by the writers concerning American youth ministry:

1. Youth ministry must be intergenerational or it may produce spiritual foster children (Senter et al., 2001)

2. Methodologies must come from theology or it will not have reproducible fruit (Dean, Clark, & Rahn, 2001). The authors appear to be speaking mono-culturally. I do not agree with the authors on this point, because I believe that methodologies are culturally based communication tools, and are not based on revelation.
3. Youth ministry must be outreach oriented and not a social club (Rice, 2010; Senter, 2010)

4. Current youth ministry programming in many churches has not changed since the 1980s (Rice, 2010; Senter, 2010)

**Insights from the Writers**

A few writers offered insights about the direction they thought youth ministry should go in the coming years. These included:

1. Include parents in every part of the youth ministry (Rice, 2010; DeVries, 2008)
2. Combine church planting strategies with youth ministry strategies (Senter, 2010)
3. Simplify your ministry as you produce leaders (Spader, 2009)
4. Always include adults as you train up student leaders (Dean et al., 2001)
5. Be willing to change methods as the society changes again (Senter, 2010)

It is clear from the literature that American youth ministry has been blessed with an abundance of educational opportunities, evaluations of methodologies, and research from thousands of experienced youth ministers. What remains to be seen is if the theology and principles from this source can be cross-culturally transferred without contamination from Western-based methodologies. In my experience, I have seen that Western-based youth ministry training has been harmful when it has been taught without adaptation. Contextualization is necessary for proper practical theological education, and thus, the research in this dissertation is vital. Additional literature for practical theological education, which is not from a Western worldview, is needed. Understanding the source of youth ministry education is the first step for the evaluation phase.
Literature Background Review on American Interdenominational Missions

Engagement in International Youth Ministry Training

The focus of my life’s work has been youth ministry. After ministering in three different youth ministries in the United States between 1987 and 2002, I saw the need to serve the youth outside the States. Thus, I chose to move to Ukraine and train youth ministers between 2002 and 2012. My personal pattern of youth ministry has also been a pattern with U.S. churches and para-church ministries. After serving the needs of American youth, several youth ministry organizations chose to begin cross-cultural youth ministry training programs. Terry Linhart and David Livermore (2011) wrote about its recent growth:

With the same determination that the Western church displayed in response to the burgeoning youth culture after World War II, a similar international church-led movement has developed with the youth of the world in mind. The growth of global youth ministry stemmed from three worldwide developments: (1) the phenomenal growth of cross-cultural short-term mission trips exposed millions to the world’s needs, particularly those of children and youth; (2) international work became more palatable due to increased comforts and sanitation, affordability of travel, and the emergence of English as a global language; and (3) globalization has brought the children and youth of the world to our television screens, whether in the form of marketed consumerism or news headlines that show the faces of kids in need. (emphasis added; chap. 1, para. 6-7)

When Linhart and Livermore wrote about the “growth of global youth ministry,” I believe they meant to say the recent acceleration of American missions attention to youth ministry in foreign countries. In reality, American youth ministries have been serving overseas for over 100 years, but there has greater involvement recently due to the three reasons Linhart and Livermore listed. This portion of my literature review is more historical in nature rather than simply a review of literature. I will look at what has been written in regards to the history of youth ministry in American missions.
Limitations To This Review

When we talk about youth ministry in missions, we need to make some distinctions and definitions. I have chosen to consider the history of U.S. missions as they engaged in youth ministry in foreign countries. This survey does not include any study of missionaries from other countries (such as England, Korea, etc.) as they conducted their missions work. I have also chosen to narrow this study to include only evangelical, non-Pentecostal work since that is my background. The Pentecostal or Charismatic churches have done extensive youth work overseas, such as Youth With A Mission (YWAM), and the only reason I have not included them in my review is that my own research will focus on work with non-Pentecostal youth ministry training. I will not include mission organizations whose main focus is to give American youth a short-term missions experience such as Teen Missions International (TMI), Teen Mania Ministries, and Adventures in Missions (AIM).

I will not include organizations whose main focus is college-student ministry rather than youth-teen ministry, such as Campus Crusade (CRU), Intervarsity Fellowship (IVF) and Navigators. It is true that the definition of youth in other countries usually includes college-aged young people, but these groups do not usually work to reach teenagers in foreign countries. I will exclude a study of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) in my review since their history began with work of college-aged young men, and not teenagers. I will limit my review to interdenominational groups and not delve into studying denominational missions work, because my research will focus on interdenominational missions work. The groups that I will include for this review are YFC, Young Life (YL), GYI, Josiah Ventures (JV), and YMI.
American Youth Organizations with an International Ministry

As the youth subculture began to develop in the late 1800s, para-church organizations saw the need to reach this age group through evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. Methodology was different for each ministry, based on the culture of the church denomination or organization, but the main purpose of each group was often very similar; that is, to communicate the gospel of Christ, ask for a personal decision to respond and follow Christ’s teaching, and finally, to become part of a local body of Christ for spiritual growth. The methodology may have been different from the mainline churches, but the message was the same. As youth ministries developed in the United States, they sought to spread their ministries to other countries to reach this new sub-culture. The following interdenominational organizations focused on the new youth that would eventually be labeled teenagers.

Youth For Christ (YFC). YFC came on the scene at around the same time as the accepted advent of the teenager in modern society – soon after World War II (circa 1945). “In the public imagination, teenagers first appeared after World War II, complete with distinctive dress, habits, and culture. The period before 1950, however, proved crucial for the formation of teenagers in the United States” (Schrum, 2008, para. 2). It is possible that YFC also helped to fill a void that the religious decline of YMCA had created. “General Douglas MacArthur invited Youth for Christ to Japan to ‘provide the surest foundation for the firm establishment of democracy in the land where the emperor has ceased to be a god’” (Hefley 1970, p. 13).

Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), and the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) followed during the latter half of the
nineteenth century. But their thrust was mainly to college and young working people, not to high schoolers. (Hefley 1970, p. 19)

As the teenage group developed further into a distinct age category in the twentieth century, YFC was also born. From the beginning of YFC, the focus was evangelism, as it had been during the beginning years of YMCA. If YMCA had D. L. Moody, then YFC had Billy Graham as its spokesman. On May 27, 1944, several key men including Graham and Torrey Johnson led a successful youth rally in Chicago, which ultimately launched YFC. Following this meeting (only 10 days before D-day and 1 year after the first YFC rally in Indianapolis), rallies were conducted around the world. Christian servicemen held youth events in the Pacific and Europe. “Often the very first thing they did after occupying a town, was to hang out a banner on a main street announcing where the YFC rally would meet the next Saturday night” (p. 23). The international, missional flavor of YFC was present from the birth of the organization.

In 1946, Billy Graham, Torrey Johnson, and a team of men conducted a European tour that included over 100 youth meetings and talks with pastor about theology and methods of ministry. They brought reports back to the United States of their international work and spoke about the opportunities that YFC had to make a difference in post-war Europe.

While Billy and Torrey were recounting their European trip, two Italian-American brothers excitedly soaked up every word. Phil and Louis Palermo had already been singing and playing in meetings around the Midwest for ten years. They were born of immigrant parents, and grew up in a Chicago suburb with six other brothers and a sister. Through an uncle, the entire family was converted to “the new religion.” It was because of prayer meetings in their home that Mom Palermo bought an old organ, then a piano. Louie, the older brother, taught himself to play, then taught Phil. Guitar, banjo, mandolin, other instruments followed, and the singing Palermos were on their way to a ministry which, in the next thirty years, would carry them into dozens of countries.
Before the Medicine Lake YFC convention finished, they had found a chance to talk to Torrey and Billy about their dream.

"Go to Italy under the Youth for Christ banner? Great idea," encouraged Torrey. Then, characteristically, he went on. "We have a policy in YFC that whenever a team goes overseas, they must raise their own support and finances."

The Palermos raised it, and by fall they were ready to go. After farewell rallies in Minneapolis, Detroit, and New York, they made one stopover in London, then touched down in the land their parents had left forty years before.

In the next few months they traveled the length of the country — Sicily, Rome, Naples, Florence, Genoa — holding Youth for Christ meetings, singing, preaching, winning people to Jesus Christ and just plain overwhelming hundreds of Italians. In Naples, the city mayor appeared at the meeting and said, "What Naples and all of Italy needs is the program of Youth for Christ." (Hefley 1970, p. 36-37)

This story is only the beginning of the international focus for YFC. The evangelistic rallies and meetings spread around the globe. Some of these meetings were coordinated from North America, but most of the YFC vision was spread without organized support. YFC-sponsored World Evangelism Congresses began to be held biannually. They convened in Brussels, Belgium, in 1950, while rioters swarmed through the streets. In 1952 it was held in Belfast, Ireland, where, after Bob Cook reported YFC activity in seventy-eight countries (meaning a YFC evangelist had stopped at least once during the year), five hundred prayed the night through. (p. 63)

In 1959, the YFC leadership had an idea that would revolutionize international youth ministry. Teenagers themselves would conduct the next wave of overseas work for YFC. There had never been a missions trip for teenagers. This was a new concept for American church workers.

The very idea brought scorn from many quarters. "Send a group of kids overseas?" It couldn't be done. For one thing, what about school? And what could teenagers do that experienced missionaries and evangelists couldn't do better? Besides, there were too many risks in sending half a dozen immature young people into a foreign country…
Wendell Collins was a slightly overweight, extremely popular youth leader who had already helped to pioneer several new YFC programs. As a teenager from Chicago's Southwest Side during the war, he had witnessed the grand beginnings of YFC. He had graduated from Moody Bible Institute, directed rallies in Wisconsin and Wyoming, and captained a gospel team to Scandinavia….

In April, 1960, Collins headed for Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East to try the idea on missionaries and nationals. While some were doubtful, he received enough encouragement to set definite dates for a five-month tour the next year. …

In the States again, he carefully selected two girls and four fellows. All had above average musical talent and had been active in YFC. But Collins was looking for more than that. He wanted stable, mature teens—kids right out of high school who would willingly take a semester out of college and would trust the Lord for the thousand dollars or so it would cost them. …

For four months the "Teen Team" (so called by an elderly lady in Beirut) stumped Lebanon, Greece, Italy and half a dozen more countries, singing, playing, and telling other teenagers about Jesus Christ. They held meetings in schools, churches, public halls, and street corners, aimed the gospel at 74,000 young people, and saw 750 come to Christ. (Hefley 1970, p. 138-139)

Yet this first of many modern youth missions team was not always well received. On this tour, the team was laughed at in Germany. A bystander shoved one of the teen girls to the ground in Berlin. The group found encouragement in their room by singing the last verse of the hymn. “So Send I You” and praying through the tears for the thousands of teenagers they had met on their trip.

What really happened on that trip is best seen by returning to Beirut with Collins the next fall on a follow-up trip. After several days there he attended a rally for teenagers in the same hall where, six months before, they could find no teenagers who could sing together in groups. Now the entire program was run by teenagers. Before the rally ended, five different musical groups had taken part. The impetus, of course, had come from the “Teen Team.” After the rally Collins asked to talk to the young people who were saved under the Teen Team’s ministry. As they talked, many introduced someone else they had led to Christ.

Now there was no doubt about it. Collins went back and reported, "Many, many times teenagers looked at us and said, 'Why didn't someone tell us this before?' We'd respond, that people have often come and preached this. 'Yes,' they answered, 'but teenagers have never told us this before.'" (emphasis in the original; Hefley 1970, p. 140)
YFC has continued to emphasize the international work that was spurred on by its founders. Torrey Johnson said, "Youth for Christ is an instrument of God, formed of the Holy Spirit . . . to work toward the final, complete evangelization of the world" (Hefley, 1970, p. 154). Billy Graham said, "something happened which radically changed the entire course of Youth for Christ International. By the grace of God and under His leadership we leaped the oceans, sped to the islands, and spared no money or men to carry the gospel as far as we could into as many lands as possible" (p. 154).

Today, Youth for Christ International (YFCI) reports having 36,698 staff and volunteers in 133 countries, and I am now one of those staff. I became a YFC staff member in Louisville, KY in August, 2013. As an organization, we believe that we are currently impacting 3.5 million youth by direct ministry. The latest YFC annual report also shows that the organization has 550 local YFC centers worldwide, where 245,330 young people have responded to the gospel and 132,192 youth are in follow-up and discipleship (Youth for Christ International, 2014, para 6). According to YFCI president Geordon Rendle,

>Youth for Christ is celebrating 70 years of history, of ministry, of building legacy and of growing the Kingdom of God through the lives of teenagers around the world. It is astonishing to realize that what has been accomplished thus far has been a response to the women and men of God who prayed forward, believing that the Lord would honor their earnest pleas for a generation. (Youth for Christ International, 2014 para. 1)

YFC continues to be a major leader in international youth ministry in the evangelical world focusing on evangelism and partnering with local church ministries for much of the discipleship.
I had the privilege of being part of YFCI’s Global Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, from September 20-26, 2014. I personally grew spiritually, as well as establishing new friendships with youth ministers from around the world. A total of 550 people were in attendance from 71 different countries. (Not all of the YFC’s 133 countries could be present). This was the most diverse collection of youth ministers that I had ever been part of. I look forward to see the future God has for me, as I serve with this faithful mission organization.

**Young Life (YL).** While I was ministering in Ukraine, I traveled to the city of Chernivtsi in Western Ukraine to meet with a couple of youth leaders. Upon arrival, my Ukrainian host invited me to their city’s weekly meeting for youth leaders. I agreed, and I was pleasantly surprised to find a dozen youth leaders from several different churches praying and planning ministry together. The offices we were meeting in appeared to be shared by the whole group as a ministry center. I asked them, “Where are we?”

“We are in the Young Life ministry center,” they said. There was no American missionary, and there did not appear to be ongoing support. Sometime in the past, Young Life had made an impact in this Ukrainian-Romanian border town that had ongoing results. They had no other ministries in Ukraine, but they had established a cooperation between the youth pastors in Chernivtsi to conduct a weekly youth club focusing on outreach and relationship building.

The history of Young Life is a simple one: In 1938, Jim Rayburn, a young Presbyterian youth leader and seminary student in Gainesville, Texas, was given a challenge. A local minister invited him to consider the neighborhood high school as his parish and develop ways of contacting kids who had no interest in church. Rayburn started a weekly club for kids. There was singing, a skit or two and a simple message about Jesus Christ…. After graduating from seminary, Rayburn
and four other seminarians collaborated, and Young Life was officially born on Oct. 16, 1941, with its own Board of Trustees. They developed the club idea throughout Texas, with an emphasis on showing kids that faith in God can be not only fun, but exhilarating and life changing. … Young Life had directed its ministry almost completely to suburban high school students. (Young Life, 2013, para. 1-2)

Young Life’s international work did not start at the beginning of its formation like YMCA or YFC. It began in 1953 when an American missionary couple took Young Life to France.

Within 10 years of that first overseas outreach, Young Life had extended its reach to British Columbia, home to a camp called Malibu; to Germany, where Military Community Youth Ministries (MCYM) began reaching out to kids on military bases; and to Brazil. In the decades since, Young Life’s international outreach expanded both in scope and types of ministries. A mix of American and national staff and volunteers are reaching kids with the Gospel through more than 700 ministries in more then 70 countries. (Young Life, 2013, para. 3-4)

Young Life’s methodology from its founding had a different flavor than the Moody-Graham evangelistic meetings. Rayburn and those following him have focused more on friendship or relational evangelism through club meetings, rather than on large events. Young Life continues to focus on reaching teenagers that the church has not been able to reach through para-church meetings.

**Global Youth Initiative (GYI), an outgrowth of Sonlife Ministries.** Sonlife Ministries began as a youth ministry training organization working with local church youth pastors. The founder and director, Dann Spader, did not want to start another youth ministry outside the local church, but to help youth pastors get back to the fundamentals of discipleship by studying the life and methods of Christ. Since very little has been written concerning his organization, I interviewed Spader personally for this review on
May 15, 2013. I asked him specifically about the international youth training organization he founded, GYI, which grew out of his first U.S.-based ministry, Sonlife Ministries.

GYI was originally the name given to a set of meetings that began in 1994 between Spader and his closest international partners. As Spader saw the growth of the youth discipleship training they were conducting overseas, he felt the need for a collaboration meeting of his like-minded ministry partners. At the first meeting were his three key partners: Bill Hodgens, Campus Crusade Australia; Dave Patty, Josiah Ventures founder; and Mark Edwards, SonLife Latin America. Hodgens had come to the United States to study youth ministry and heard about Sonlife. He attended a seminar and eventually became an official partner in Australia. At the beginning of his partnership, he and his staff were training 10,000 youth leaders per year in the discipleship principles. Dave Patty met Spader when he was studying at Wheaton College. He began to work on the Sonlife staff. In 1992, he felt God’s calling to launch the youth missions organization, Josiah Ventures, which ministers in Central and Eastern Europe. Mark Edwards was in Spader’s own youth group and eventually worked on the Sonlife staff for 10 years in Chicago. He also sensed God’s leading overseas and launched Sonlife Latin America in 1994, basing himself in Costa Rica (D. Spader, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

At one point in Spader’s ministry they entertained the possibility of becoming a missions sending organization. Dave Patty had asked the board to send him to Europe on behalf of Sonlife. Spader said, “After three agonizing board meetings, we decided that we were not a sending organization, and we released Patty to use the Sonlife materials with quality control assurances. Patty first went with International Teams and later formed his
own mission sending organization, Josiah Ventures” (D. Spader, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

Over the next few years, Spader invited more like-minded partners to join the GYI annual meetings. Key partners included J-Life South Africa, as well as the Intentional Disciple Making Network based in the Philippines. During the early years of GYI, Spader partnered with Reign Ministries of Minneapolis to create First Wave. First Wave took a team of Sonlife trainers to new countries to conduct youth ministry seminars, to find indigenous trainers, and to create a discipleship training movement within the country. Spader said, “We would direct our invitations to conduct Sonlife training overseas to First Wave. It proved to be a catalyst for future training” (D. Spader, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

In 1999, Spader brought Dave Livermore into the Sonlife staff to lead GYI. This was the first time they had a full-time staff member to lead their international work. By this time at least 50 people from around the world were coming to the annual meetings, and Sonlife had partners in 30 different countries who had contracts to use their material. In 2002, Spader gave Sonlife Ministries to Dave Livermore and Steve Argue, but there were disagreements concerning the strategy from all parties. Eventually, Sonlife Ministries collapsed (D. Spader, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

In December 2004, the members of GYI met in Florida. The continent leaders of the ministry asked Spader to lead the group. Spader recalls, “We had no money, no staff, and no office. So I said, ‘I’d love to.’ I began to raise support for the first time in my life. Since Sonlife Ministries was no longer in existence, GYI became truly indigenous. The
mother ship was gone. It was truly an international organization. All the partners were peers at the table now” (D. Spader, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

In 2008, GYI invited 250 partners and like-minded youth ministry trainers to Jerusalem, Israel, for a global youth ministry conference. I was privileged to attend this conference with two of my Ukrainian disciples in youth ministry. This event propelled Spader’s movement forward. “Today we are in 85 countries, and we are planning for our next big conference in Jerusalem in 2015” (D. Spader, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

When Spader was asked what makes GYI special, he said, “Our DNA is unique. A lot of people talk ‘Jesus,’ but we also talk about how Jesus lived; His disciple-making style that comes from the model of His life. Everyone talks the methods, but how did He create a movement?” (D. Spader, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

Those who have critiqued Spader’s paradigm have questioned his emphasis of Christology over other areas of Scripture. Senter (2010) believed that there was also more behind the Sonlife break up than was revealed.

The issue at question appeared to be contextualization. If in fact the Sonlife strategy was the strategy of Jesus, it could not and should not be changed. But if the Sonlife strategy was a modern paradigm supported by Biblical ideas taken from the life of Christ, the training would not fare well as postmodernism increased its influence on teenagers. (p. 298)

**Reach Out Youth Solutions.** Barry St. Clair was also a key player in using the youth ministry tools that he had written about, to minister overseas. St. Clair was involved in organizing the first network of American youth pastors as well.

Though the National Network was initially conceived of as an unstructured meeting place for youth workers to gather and fellowship, leaders such as *Barry*
St. Clair, Dennis Miller, and Paul Fleischmann soon saw a need for structure and focus. Influenced by their concern for world evangelism and continued contacts with Campus Crusade for Christ, Fleischmann and St. Clair attempted to mobilize local networks of church-based youth workers into evangelistic units. For the next three years the networking process begun in Colorado continued. In the fall of 1982, the name National Network of Youth Ministries was invented and eighty-six youth workers joined … (emphasis added; Senter, 2010, p. 253)

St. Clair took his youth ministry training overseas in the 1990s. His books are translated in 10 languages, and his ministry is currently supporting work in over seven countries. Often, international youth ministries share national leaders. For instance, Reach Out Solution’s African director, Charles Juma, is also the African director for YMI (Reach Out Youth Solutions, 2013). This sharing can happen easily if a national youth pastor is seeking training from anywhere he can get it, and when there is little communication between American ministries. Reach Out’s training program is entitled Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry and can sometimes get confused with GYI’s training. The mission focuses on training nationals who will, in turn, mentor other youth leaders through their Eagle Leaders certification program.

Josiah Ventures (JV). Dave Patty, originally involved in youth ministry on American military bases in Germany, is the founder of Josiah Venture. As said in the previous section concerning GYI, Patty was a staff member with Sonlife Ministries when he felt the call to return to Central and Eastern Europe. At first it was summer missions projects and then as freedom expanded to the region, Josiah Venture was born.

It became obvious that more than short-term work was necessary. In 1992, three couples made initial 10-year commitments to help local churches in Central and Eastern Europe reach young people for Christ. By June 1993, the couples entered into strategic partnerships with Sonlife Ministries and International Teams. Sonlife gave permission to adapt their training materials to the needs of Central and Eastern Europeans, and International Teams provided the organizational infrastructure necessary to support the work. The partnership took on the name
“Josiah Venture” in honor of the godly Jewish king in 2 Chronicles whose devotion to the Word of God brought revival to an entire nation while he was still in his teens. In November of that year, the first two Josiah Venture couples moved into Czech and Poland and began learning the language and training youth leaders. By the fall of 2001, the work had outgrown the original structure, and the leadership recognized the need to open the way for expanded growth. In January of 2002, Josiah Venture was launched as its own mission organization, with administrative offices in Wheaton, Illinois. (Josiah Venture, 2010a, para. 2-4)

Josiah Venture is working in 13 European countries today. The mission trains youth leaders through three main methods: a school of leaders which includes weekend training programs; a nine-month internship program; and annual youth leaders’ training conferences (Josiah Venture, 2010b). The organization’s vision is stated clearly on their website:

This is the vision of Josiah Venture, a vision for a movement of God among the youth of Central and Eastern Europe that finds its home in the local church and transforms society. Our mission and calling is to equip young leaders to fulfill Christ’s commission by reaching and making disciples. More than just conversion, we want to see passionate followers of Jesus Christ, with a vision to reach and disciple their generation for Him. (Josiah Venture, 2010c, para. 7)

While I was ministering in Ukraine, I had the privilege of training two Ukrainian youth pastors through our bachelors degree program who became leaders for Josiah Venture teams. I did not work directly with JV, but I felt like I had contributed to their vision by accomplishing our mission’s vision! Which brings me to discuss the mission I worked with from 2001 to 2013, YMI.

Youth Ministry International (YMI). The smallest organization mentioned thus far, yet possessing a clear and effective vision, is YMI. Today, the mission has only 10 missionaries, yet it has made a significant impact in youth ministry seminary education around the world. Dave Livermore gives credit in his book, Global Youth Ministry, for the following statistic to the founder of YMI: “‘Ninety-seven percent of the world’s
formally trained youth workers live and work in the United States, ministering to less than 3% of the world’s youth population.’ That statistic was an informed estimate made back in 1992 by global youth ministry leader Randy Smith of Youth Ministry International” (Linhart & Livermore, 2011, introduction, para. 5). Since very little has been written concerning this mission, I interviewed Smith about the founding and history of YMI.

Smith was the high school pastor at the famous Thomas Road Baptist Church in the 1980s. “I had been going on missions trips, but up until this point, I had never done any youth ministry training overseas. Dave Adams, the student ministries pastor at the church and Youth Ministry Program Director at Liberty University, asked me to go with him to Kenya to conduct a youth ministry training conference” (R. Smith, personal communication, May 2, 2013).

In 1988, Smith, Adams, and a Filipino youth pastor taught a youth ministry training seminar in Nairobi. They were invited to conduct the conference, while the Filipino youth pastor was specifically invited to help with any contextualization issues. The three teachers first taught 35 Western missionaries who were ministering in Kenya, and then they taught 135 Kenyan nationals the exact same curriculum. They divided the participants into three groups. Smith taught the Swahili group with a translator. The course content was similar to a Youth Ministry 101 course on the Biblical principles and strategy of youth ministry. The Filipino teacher spoke more about youth ministry organization and programming, since he was closer to the cultural context.
After the seminar, the missionaries were asked for an evaluation, and only three of the missionaries believed that the material could be contextualized appropriately. Smith said,

The nationals had a completely different response. They were in tears over their youth because they were not reaching them. They let me preach the last message on Saturday night. I preached on David and Goliath. I asked them, ‘If Goliath represented youth ministry in Africa, then which one of them would be a David?’ Twenty-six young men came forward and said that they wanted to reach the youth of Kenya! The problem was, I had set myself up. I didn’t have a plan to help them accomplish what I had challenged them to do. Five of the Kenyans stayed around at the end and kept asking us how we were going to train them. (R. Smith, personal communication, May 2, 2013)

Smith said that the Kenyans continued to beg them to come back and train them. He remembered that his intern, Jon Barr at Thomas Roads Baptist Church, had asked him to be on the lookout for an opportunity to serve while Randy was in Kenya. Barr needed to find a place to do a summer internship that would fulfill his graduation requirements at Liberty University. Randy remembers, “I made a video with the five Kenyans playing soccer. In the video, the five were playing, then they stopped to ask Jon to come and train them to reach the youth of Kenya” (R. Smith, personal communication, May 2, 2013). Smith returned to the United States, where he asked Jon to raise support and go to Kenya. He asked him not to only go for a summer, but for a whole year. Barr had no sending organization, but he agreed to go with Smith’s help. In the fall of 1989, Barr moved in with Charles Juma, one of the young Kenyan youth leaders who had come forward at Smith’s meetings. This is the same Juma that works for both Reach Out Youth Solutions and YMI today. There was no YMI at this point. Barr did a very simple leadership-training program with him.
The results of that training and the discipleship Juma received were evident. He started with 6 in his youth group at the beginning of the year, and he had 126 in his group by the end. Smith said, “That is how fast things can happen when you put the Biblical principles of youth ministry into practice” (R. Smith, personal communication, May 2, 2013). Other missionaries noticed too, and one wrote a letter of apology to Smith and invited him to come back. After Barr's success, Smith went back to Dave Adams. He suggested that they go to Jerry Falwell, founder of Liberty University, and pitch their idea to form an international youth ministry training organization. Falwell rejected it, feeling that they were already doing similar ministries. “But they weren't doing youth ministry training overseas,” says Smith. “They were doing youth evangelism, not youth ministry training” (R. Smith, personal communication, May 2, 2013).

In 1990, Smith founded YMI underneath the United World Mission (UWM) umbrella. Barr agreed to be the first director and moved to the UWM headquarters in North Carolina. It functioned as the youth division of UWM. They began to send missionaries for short-term assignments and summer youth missions trips. Smith said, “As the ministry grew, we saw the need to incorporate and start our own sending organization. I had moved to become the Student Ministries pastor at Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, MI, so I moved the mission office to Michigan. We completed the incorporation in 1994” (R. Smith, personal communication, May 2, 2013).

In June of 2000, YMI moved its offices to Louisville, Kentucky, where it is located today. In 2003, YMI added a formal training component to its informal training program. Today, the formal training has become the main focus of the mission, as it seeks to train the trainers of youth ministry in other countries, and then leave the
contextualization and future training in the hands of the national youth pastors. YMI has partnered with strategic seminaries and Bible colleges in other countries, to offer some of the first fully accredited youth major degree programs outside the western world. YMI has named each of these overseas locations, Center for Youth Ministry (CYM). I had the privilege of founding and directing the Center for Youth Ministry at KTS in Ukraine. In 2007, along with the CYM in Kenya, our first students in Ukraine graduated with their bachelor’s degree in youth ministry.

My wife, Judy Manna, was asked to write a case study for Tom Steffen’s book, *The Facilitator Era*. In this case study she wrote about the youth ministry program in Kyiv.

In June of 2002, Mike and I moved to Ukraine with our three school-aged children. We studied Russian for two years. During the first year of language school, Mike implemented the youth ministry major at Kyiv Theological Seminary. Two translators began the work of translating into Russian the courses and reading material. The second year, Mike started teaching the courses with a translator.

The first year, the students were residential and remained that way throughout their four years of study at the seminary. They lived at or traveled to the seminary every day for classes. Mike moved to a modular format when he saw the benefits of teaching young men and women who are already involved in various youth ministries. Since they cannot leave their ministries to go to seminary full-time, they come for two weeks of classes, 4 to 6 times a year.

The classes are not just theory to the students. They are highly relevant. The modular students, who come from all over Ukraine as well as a few from Belarus and Russia, soak up the teaching like sponges. They talk openly together, share their struggles, ideas, and victories. Together, they are like iron sharpening iron. The students take their theology, Bible, and other required courses from different professors at the seminary. Mike and an ABWE (Association of Baptists for World Evangelism) missionary, Mike Gustafson, teach only the youth ministry courses. After two weeks of classes, the students return home and are able immediately to put into practice the teaching they have gained. It is a wonderful system of education.

Mike has developed a close relationship with the church planning professor at the seminary, a missionary with the IMB (International Mission Board) named Joel Ragains. Both Mike and Joel see the potential of Joel’s church
planning students pairing up with Mike's youth ministry students to plant churches. Mike and Joel now teach their introductory courses (Youth Ministry 101 and Church Planting 101) to each others’ students to open their students’ eyes to the potential of working together. (as cited in Steffen, 2011, pp. 308-309)

This 42 credit hour degree program at both the undergraduate and masters degree levels are unique in that they not only offer quality academic training, but also require more than 400 clock hours of experiential learning under the supervision of a qualified youth worker (R. Smith, personal communication, May 2, 2013).

In 2013, YMI had 14 national colleges and seminaries offering their degree programs. Students and graduates from over 30 different countries have been trained in these Centers. In May of 2013, 300 students have graduated with a Bachelors or Masters degree and an additional 300 students are studying at the CYMs. YMI believes that 225,925 youth are being impacted weekly in churches, which have youth leaders who have gone through one of YMI’s training programs. It is also estimated that 107,300 students have been led to Christ by one of YMI’s trained leaders as well (R. Smith, personal communication, May 2, 2013).

When I left Ukraine in June of 2012, I handed 10 years of ministry over to my Ukrainian disciple, Vasya Ostriy. He has trained many youth pastors who are, in turn, training other youth leaders. Our Ukrainian office conducted a study of our youth ministry graduates in Ukraine in 2012. The results showed that 33% of the graduates were in full-time youth ministry (more than 30 hours per week spent in youth ministry); 80% of the graduates had taught at least one youth ministry seminar or conference; 60% of the graduates had taught at least one of our college courses in a formal or non-formal setting; 10% of the graduates were fully paid by their ministry or local church (thus, 90% are bi-vocational youth pastors); and five of our graduates had taught a youth ministry
seminar in a foreign country, including Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Netherlands (R. Smith, personal communication, May 2, 2013). We felt that these statistics showed good results for our efforts in international youth ministry training.

**Insights from the Review**

There are additional important players in the development of youth missions, but little or nothing has been written concerning their ministries. This review has given me the background and foundation I need to be able to conduct the research for this study. We all stand on someone else’s shoulders and need to remember that we are not inventing something new. God has used many people to open the doors for international youth ministry. It appears that we are still at the beginning stage of this part of missions history. Books have yet to be written of how globalization will continue to affect youth ministry training.

Many of these ministries started with youth evangelism, added youth discipleship later in their history, and are now focusing on leadership multiplication. Progressive revelation concerning our own methodologies is evident in all of the ministries I studied.

**Literature Review on the Contextualization of Theological Education**

The second part of this literature review gave me a foundation from which to better understand the current knowledge available concerning American youth missions work in foreign countries, but this review has not answered any questions regarding the contextualization of that work. The third part of this review is a short summary of what has been written in regard to those questions.
The Writers on the Subject

Several scholars have written on the need for contextualizing theological education and its importance to contemporary missions, including Charles Kraft (2005), Harvie Conn (1984), Avery Willis (1980), Edward Farley (2001), Max Stackhouse (1988), Vern Poythress (2001), Kevin Vanhoozer (2005), Dean Fleming (2005), Sherwood and Judith Lingenfelter (2003), and Brian Howell (2006). Many of the authors specially referred to the writings of Paul Hiebert. At the 1910 World Missions Conference in Edinburgh, the word contextualization was not used, but they agreed that theological education must find “expression in their native language – the language of their homes,” and that “the education was to be in the vernacular of the people” (Kerr & Ross, 2009, p. 88). In 1972, the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches coined the term contextualization with an emphasis on social responsibility (Watney, 1985). This does not reflect the evangelical view of contextualization, which would include the need to “frame God's self revelation / truth in the language and thought forms that are meaningful to any given people group” (Hayward). The most extensive book written specifically on the subject of contextualization as it relates to theological education was by Max Stackhouse (1988), entitled Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization and Mission in Theological Education. Since Stackhouse’s book, very little has been written exclusively on this theme.

When some authors write about this subject, they are writing about problems in the Unites States. Several articles and books focus on contextualizing the theological education in U.S. seminaries, claiming that the schools have been dominated by a Euro-centric viewpoint. An example would be the book, Contextualizing Theological...
Education, written by Theodore Brelsford and P. Alice Rogers. Black theologians may use the phrase, “contextualization of theological education” in reference to the majority of U.S. seminaries, which have a white western worldview and do not consider the black context.

Contextualization of theological education can also be associated with the ecumenical movement. The focus by certain authors is “to respond to the pressing needs of social contexts” and “to open its agenda to the realities and challenges of different church contexts” (Werner, 2009, p. 162). This is an area I will not be exploring.

The focus of this condensed literature review is on theological education outside America and an evaluation of its contextualization, admittedly from an American evangelical viewpoint. There have been several dissertations and journal articles that have dealt with this topic in specific contexts and specific countries; for example, Contextualization of Theological Education in Indonesia (Willis, 1980), Organization Contextualization as Institution-Building: An Environmental Assessment of an In-service Theological Seminary in Kenya, East Africa (Goodwin, 1998), Contextualization in Costa Rican Theological Education Today: A History of the Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano, San Jose, Costa Rica, 1922-1990 (B. Robbins, 1991), and Theological Education in India: Balancing Doctrinal Soundness and Cultural Relevance (Gaddis, 2002). These dissertations have been the most helpful in my study. Forty-five sources were reviewed for this report.

Issues Identified by the Writers

Several issues were identified by the authors, including the following subjects:

1. Education needs to be in the language of the people (Kerr & Ross, 2009).
2. Dependency on literacy from a western model of theological education is too high (Andronoviene, Jones, & Parushev, 2010).

3. Development of education delivery systems need to be used that are best for the culture (Andronoviene et al., 2010).

4. Contextualization must also consider location, students’ needs, content, methodology, and personnel (Willis, 1980).

5. Seminaries’ methods and theology tend to focus on the text and not the context (Chung-choon, 1984).

6. Theological education must include methods that touch the heart and not just the intellect (Chung-choon, 1984).

7. Second-generation Christians are imitating first-generation Christians without appropriate contextualization (Kraft, 2002).

8. Leadership development is slower than the growth of the church worldwide (McKinney, 1980).

9. There is an overreliance on residential seminaries (McKinney, 1980).

10. Exporting the norms of leadership development from a Western model of seminary education is not positive (McKinney, 1980).

11. Foreign funds are being used to support too many seminaries using the western model of education (Newbigin, 1984).

12. Seminaries without contextualization can create a privileged group in leadership (Newbigin, 1984).

13. Contextualization in theology must not eliminate the text for the benefit of the context (Newbigin, 1984).
14. Problems from Western culture that effect contextualization: (a) Equate learning with schooling – institutionalism; (b) equate professionalism with ministry – elitism; (c) equate teaching missions with Western missions – alienation; (d) equate theorization with knowledge – abstractionism; (e) equate practice with praxis – pragmatism (Conn, 1984).

15. The teacher must present the “changeless gospel in a changing world” by being relevant to the culture, yet not syncretistic (Bridges, 1998).

16. The greatest needs for contextualizing indigenous seminaries is for the development of local resources and better relationships with local churches (Goodwin, 1998).

17. Drastic changes in the culture and society require constant evolution for the seminary (D. Robbins, 2004).

18. The Hebraic model of education versus the Greek model, which is used broadly at seminaries, may be a better medium for schools outside the Western context (Gaddis, 2002).

19. Providing theological education in the language of the recipient versus the trade language enables the student to return to his people with less difficulty (Gaddis, 2002).

20. An apologetic containing both doctrine and praxis is necessary to limit contextualization in a pluralistic environment (Stackhouse, 1988).

There are additional areas related to contextualization of theological education that I will not address in this dissertation, because they are based in the United States and not a focus of missions work. These include:
1. U.S. seminaries that have a white, western worldview focus and do not take into account the context of black theologians and pastors

2. The difference between contextualization in education and universality in theological education

**Contextualization of Methodology**

Andronoviene, Jones, and Parushev (2010) wrote that through a combination of orthodoxy and orthopraxy (discipleship), Baptist churches have sought to develop the spiritual giftedness of those who have been called to lead in ministry. In the 1800s, formal Bible schools and seminaries were founded for theological education. Most schools around the world started by using a 3-4 year residential model of education. As the schools were founded in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, new theories and models of training were implemented. Through contextualization of methodology, seminaries changed the method of delivery for ministerial formation. Today over 50% of the schools use non-traditional, part-time modular methods of training. Baptists have sought innovative ways to train church leaders around the world. Baptist Unions within their individual countries own most of the schools, and students rarely cross borders to study in different Baptist seminaries due to language barriers. Andronoviene, Jones and Parushev all agreed that the greatest need for the future is to develop informal methods of education that will reach a greater church audience; not only those preparing for ministerial positions. This is one of the issues that Ukrainian youth ministry educators are dealing with today.
From Generation One to Generation Two

Charles Kraft (2002) writes that when we talk about contextualization, we usually ignore the time factor; that is, the time that has transpired between the first and second generations’ approaches to contextualization. He writes about issues related to new converts, who are individuals from the second generation, taking into account the church’s age and how many generations of Christians have been living in the host country. He speaks about the transfer of leadership, as well as dependence on literacy from the Western model (p. 149-151). He brings up several important contextualization issues, including forms and meanings, separation from non-believers in the culture, breaking the power of false religious practices, imitating powerful people from the first generation, musical forms and translation, etc. He also says that the problems that are not dealt with in the first two generations will become more entrenched by the third and following generations. Yet it is the subsequent generations that will be able to accomplish true contextualization of Christianity to the culture in the best way (Kraft, 2002). Kraft does not write about completed research of the national’s contextualization of theological education. This is why my research into this area is needed. I am studying the second and third generations of youth ministry seminary students in Ukraine, so the issues that Kraft has written about can be confirmed.

Creating Community Through Contextualization

In Kraft’s (2005) landmark achievement on contextualization, *Appropriate Christianity*, he writes that the first stage of the development of contextualization theory in Euro-American missiology included seminary education. “The missionaries considered Western institutions such as schools, hospitals, and churches as the means to the end of
getting non-Westerners to think like Euro-Americans and, in the process, to become truly Christian” (p. 16). Seminary education is now considered an international method of training, but it did have western roots that we must take into consideration.

Kraft (2005) wrote that today we practice contextualization for three reasons: (a) to communicate the good news of Christ, (b) to critique culture, and an aspect on which my research will focus, (c) to create community. “Through contextualization a wider community of understanding the gospel is created, when we discover the perceptions and practices of the gospel in cultures other than our own” (p. 53). It is through an understanding of the global church community that Ukrainians can contextualize youth ministry education. Kraft focuses on writing about Western missionaries reaching non-Western cultures. He writes, “Contextualization changes the missionaries because they will not be the same once they become part of the body of Christ in a context that is different from their own. This is the personal and communal challenge” (p. 65). In fact, the host culture involved with contextualization also can become part of the global body of Christ in a context that is different from their own, especially when they become part of the contextualization process themselves. Kraft also writes that there will be a time when the Western world realizes

that we are no longer the center of Christianity in the world. This is going to require that we take a humble posture of a learner from the indigenous churches.... It means we must encourage and learn from the self-theologizing that will inevitably occur as the church in the South grows. (p. 61).

My research will focus on issues related to indigenous contextualization, which relates to the goal of self-theologizing Kraft refers to.
Teaching in Third World Countries

Harvie Conn (1984) writes about issues related to teaching missions and evangelism in third world countries. He writes about the effects of western cultural presuppositions and the effects of third world enculturation processes. The problems the West brings into the training environment include: (a) equating learning with schooling – institutionalism, (b) equating professionalism with ministry – elitism, (c) equating teaching missions with Western missions – alienation, (d) equating theorization with knowledge – abstractionism, (e) equating practice with praxis – pragmatism. The West continues to use methods based on Greek models of education, which do not work in many cultures around the world. Third world practices also bring issues to the table that must be evaluated, including elitism from hierarchical leadership, ethnocentrism related to tribalism or regionalism, and anti-learned elevation that leads to pragmatism (Conn, 1984).

Western Christian Theological Education in a Global Context

John Drane (2008), former head of practical theology in the department of divinity at the University of Aberdeen in England, has specialized in writing about culture and theology. In his book, After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry and Christian Discipleship in an Age of Uncertainty, Drane discusses the need to change our teaching methods in light of globalization. He speaks about the influence cultural creatives, a term Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson coined for the current generation in the West, have had on teaching and learning.

A second mark of cultural creatives is what Ray and Anderson call “engaged action and whole process learning,” something they describe as "intimate, engaged knowledge that is imbued with the rich, visceral, sensory stuff of life.”
Put simply, because linear, analytical thinking no longer works in today's complex world, cultural creatives tend to search for more holistic learning experiences. This is an even bigger challenge, because though pedagogical theorists emphasize the importance of learning that engages all the senses – and in spite of Jesus's recommendation that discipleship should be similarly all encompassing (Mark 12:28–34), we have few models to inform our practice here in relation to theology. (p. 137)

As we consider the contextualization of theological education from the West to the East, I believe that these new models need to be discussed.

Teaching Cross-Culturally

Sherwood and Judith Lingenfelter (2003) wrote a 125-page book to help Western missionaries understand the dynamics of cross-cultural teaching. The authors focus on the social contexts of teaching related to group and role orientation. They wrote, “The incarnational teacher is willing to give up aspects of the teacher role that fits his or her cultural background and to take on the role that fits the social and cultural world of the students” (p. 83). Their conclusions helped me as a Westerner understand the cultural differences I faced when I moved to Ukraine to teach at the seminary. The authors do not specifically use the word contextualization, in preference of using the word incarnational. However contextualization is spoken about, and each of these authors reviewed agree that Western teachers must adapt their styles, content and methodologies. Yet most of the literature remains silent in discussing the adaptations, which the nationals make after receiving the foreign content. My research is needed to discuss the next step in contextualization.

Insight from the Writers

Charles Kraft (2005) brings up issues, which are relevant and important into looking into contextualization problems. He suggests that during the first-generation of
missionaries, the receiving group may choose to imitate the powerful. Thus for theological education, the nationals will simply copy what the Westerners taught using the same material and methods without attempting to contextualize for the next generation (p. 145). I was concerned about this in Ukraine, and this is one of the reasons for this study; that is, to determine whether appropriate changes have been made.

Conn (1984) did not degrade the Western influences completely as he evaluated the problems and issues facing theological education. He also wrote about the problems of enculturation from the host countries as well. Conn gave some great suggestions on how to help the Western methods meld better with methods from the third world. They included: (a) a desire to find holism versus compartmentalization in method and theology, (b) to focus on context as we teach, (c) and to move toward a cultural “internationalization” which will include the best of both worlds for future generations (p. 265-276). Even though Ukraine is not a third world country, I believe that these principles are transferrable and I will consider them in the final analysis.

Through Bruce Robbins’ (1991) study of the theological seminary in Costa Rica, he determined that true contextualization included: “1) the universal and evangelical character of the gospel message; and, 2) a complete involvement in the lives of the people whom it served. The former provides a unity for the institution; the latter grounds the institution in the lives of the persons and communities it serves” (p. 5).

Jason Gaddis’ (2002) thesis about theological education in India encourages Western missionaries to cooperate more with the nationals in training at the schools, and not to be leading the ministries. This will allow greater contextualization and relevance to
the culture. Yet the nationals must also see that a seminary is not only self-governing and self-propagating, but also self-supporting.

**Hiebert’s Critical Contextualization Model**

Even though Hiebert’s (1994) critical contextualization theory dealt more with the gospel and doctrine, it also refers indirectly to theological education. His model says that the Western missionary must consider the old ways in each host culture. Every missionary must choose to deal with the culture’s old beliefs in three possible ways: deny the old ways, deal with the old ways, or uncritically accept the old ways. Hiebert recommends dealing with the old beliefs through critical contextualization. His model has four steps of contextualization: “(1) gather information about the old, (2) study biblical teachings about the event, (3) evaluate the old in the light of biblical knowledge, and (4) create a new contextualized Christian practice” (p. 188).

I believe that Hiebert’s model is key to evaluating the Ukrainian youth leaders’ contextualization process. In my research, I discovered ways that the Ukrainians dealt with their old beliefs while contextualizing the new teachings from the West in light of these beliefs.

**Praxis Model of Contextual Theology**

Stephen Bevans (2013), a Catholic priest who is also a professor of mission and culture, wrote a book comparing six models of contextualization entitled *Models of Contextual Theology*. The six models he describes include: (a) Translation model, (b) Anthropological model, (c) Praxis model, (d) Synthetic model, (e) Transcendental Model, and the (f) Countercultural model. “Of the six models … in this book, the translation
model of contextual theology is probably the most commonly employed and usually the one that most people think of when they think of doing theology in context” (chap. 4, para.1). Hesselgrave is a major spokesperson for this model. When the author speaks of the third model, the Praxis model of contextualization, he gives credit to the youth ministry movements from the 1930s to 1960s for a portion of its development (chap. 6, para. 24).

If the translation model focuses on Christian identity within a particular context and seeks to preserve continuity with the older and wider tradition, and if the anthropological model focuses on the identity of Christians within a particular context and seeks to develop their unique way of articulating faith, the praxis model of contextual theology focuses on the identity of Christians within a context particularly as that context is understood in terms of social change. (chap. 6, para.1)

Unfortunately, liberation theology, feminist theology, and Marxism are also described as being part of the Praxis model. If the inerrancy and authority of scripture is upheld, then this is a sound biblical model. The methodology of this model calls for a cycle of three steps: (a) Committed action, followed by (b) reflection (including analysis of content as well as a rereading of scripture), (c) followed by more committed action (chap. 6, para. 21). I believe that these steps are similar to the methods used by the Ukrainian teachers in this study. Their goal is to contextualize the content to the youth culture of the region. This model is the preferred choice of practical theologians. Youth ministry is a branch of practical theology.

Suggestions for Future Research

Several suggestions were made for future research in order to help with the issues previously discusses. The Baptists have suggested a focus to include context and methodology changes:
The task of doing contextual theology in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and variably resourced communities is one facing many Baptist seminaries…. The need to make more strides from the formal to informal mode of education and to life-long learning for the whole people of God cannot be overemphasized. The challenge also remains in many places to enable the majority groups in congregations – women and young people – to fulfill their potential within the Christian church by being equipped to fully utilize their gifts. (Andronoviene et al., 2010, p. 696)

Lois McKinney (1980) thirty years ago wrote that we need to discover culturally appropriate forms for instruction that fit the culture, develop an indigenous curricula, find and develop appropriate structures for leadership preparation, and change our methods of teaching so that they are attuned to the culture. Each of these areas should be researched globally and within the context of the local culture.

Brian Howell (2006) of Wheaton College is a fresh voice in these issues and brought several issues to the surface. He writes,

These three ideas – greater union between social science concepts and theology, a conceptual development beyond current notions of contextualization and indigenization, and the inclusion of more theoretical and ethnographic complexity into our understanding of church and culture – have the potential to reshape theological curricula, but only if the social science framework is sufficiently theological and rigorous to hold its own (p. 321).

Each of the issues identified by the writers on contextualization of theological education warrants further research, especially in regards to reliance on Western resources, the issue of elitism within the seminary structure, education in the language of the recipient, an exploration of the Hebraic model of education, and relationship between the centers of learning and the local churches.

Through this literature review, I have learned that American youth ministry has a great heritage and that many people have taken the truths, which they have learned and shared them with the church in other countries. Many American Christians have carefully
considered the issues surrounding cross-cultural transmittance of these truths, whether it is through practical theological education or otherwise. The problem is that there is a gap in the literature; research has not been done to see how nationals continue the adaptation and contextualization process. In this dissertation, I explore the questions surrounding the American youth ministry education that was taught in Ukraine. Specifically, what was and is the adaptation process utilized by Ukrainian youth ministry teachers as they contextualized the training they received at the hands of American professor.
In this chapter, I describe the methods and procedures I used in this study. I give special attention to my underlying philosophical assumptions, the qualitative research practices I used, the nature of my research topic, and the factors that lead to my chosen approach, which is a grounded theory case study.

**Underlying Philosophical Assumptions**

As a Christian, I believe that truth is not constructed; it is revealed through special revelation (the Bible) and through creation. I fully believe the Bible is true and without errors. I believe the Bible is accurate when it says about itself, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17, ESV).

I understand that I am fallible as a human, and that I can misinterpret knowledge. I am, however, a creation of God, and I believe that He has given us abilities to interpret the Bible and to discover complex truth in the designs of His creation. I agree with Paul Hiebert (2009) when he says that we must distinguish between revelation and theology.

A critical realist epistemology differentiates between revelation and theology. The former is God-given truth; the latter is human understanding of that truth and cannot be equated fully with it. Human knowledge is always partial and schematic, and does not correspond one-to-one with reality. Our theology is our
understanding of Scripture in our contexts. It may be true, but it is always partial and perspectival. It seeks to answer the questions we raise. (p. 29)

My belief is that I have the ability to discover truth and new knowledge. Since I believe that I can discover new knowledge, my research is valuable and can contribute to the general body of knowledge concerning creation.

Absolute truth is found in the Bible. As a Christian, I believe that God knows, practices and occasionally reveals absolute truth (that is, special revelation). I do, however, believe that my interpretation of knowledge can be fallible, especially when it concerns knowledge outside of special revelation.

As a critical realist, I will do my best to find the truth by using research methods, especially triangulation, to avoid making errors in my findings. My epistemological assumptions say that truth is discoverable, but I can be fallible in my interpretations without careful methodology. I begin with these epistemological and worldview assumptions as a researcher.

Qualitative Research Practices

My intent is to discover how the Ukrainian youth ministry graduates of KTS, who are now teaching other youth leaders through theological education, have adapted the original training they received from their American youth ministry professors. I believe that qualitative research methods are the best choice for this study. Corbin and Strauss (2008) say that qualitative research over quantitative research allows the “researcher to get at the inner experience of the participants” (p. 12). “We conduct qualitative research because … of a need to study a group or population, identify variables that can then be measured, or hear silenced voices” (Creswell, 2007, p. 40). Once these variables are understood, a theory can be formulated to help future youth ministry training.
My experience of living in Ukraine for 10 years (between 2002 and 2012) helped me as a researcher. “In short, the researcher tries to minimize the ‘distance’ or ‘objective separateness’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1988, p. 94) between himself or herself and those being researched” (Creswell, 2007, p. 18). I conducted all of my interviews in Ukraine with my participants.

**Research Topic and Context**

As I conducted my research, I determined how the current Ukrainian youth ministry teachers perceived their original curriculum from an American context. I discovered what changes they made to content and methodology when they taught other Ukrainian youth leaders. The best way to search for these answers was through personal interviews and focus groups in Ukraine with the teachers and their students. I was comfortable in this setting, because I lived in Ukraine for ten years and understand the Russian language, as well as many aspects of the culture. I interviewed like-minded people in youth ministry in appropriate settings. I used the “zig-zag” process discussed by Creswell (2007). “My image for data collection in a grounded theory study is a ‘zig-zag’ process: out to the field to gather information, into the office to analyze the data, back to the field to gather more information, into the office, and so forth” (p. 64).

**Grounded Theory Research Strategy**

“All research is ‘grounded’ in data, but few studies produce a ‘grounded theory.’ Grounded Theory is an inductive methodology” (Grounded Theory Institute, 2008, para. 1). The best research strategy to accomplish my goals is a grounded theory strategy.

Grounded theory is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of
participants. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin and Strauss, 1990, 1998). Two primary characteristics of this design are the constant comparison of data with emerging categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize the similarities and the differences of information. (Creswell, 2009, ch. 1, para. 23)

A grounded study collects data and uses methods of open, axial and selective coding to produce the desired results (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Through the systematic data analysis, new knowledge emerged. My desire has been to develop a theory related to cross-cultural theological education adaptation, which naturally ascends from the data collected.

Since I lived in Ukraine for 10 years, I have an ongoing relationship with several of the participants. These relationships enhanced the data collection through the trust that was already present. I chose this research strategy to help remove some of the limitations that a normal researcher may have, who does not have relationships with the participants in a particular research study. Appropriate data collection, axiom coding, and systematic data analysis helped to extract myself from any bias outcomes.

As I looked at other qualitative studies in the field of theological education, they also used the grounded theory approach. It is reasonable to assume that their research strategy choice was a good example for me to follow.

**Sampling Procedure**

My sampling procedure was purposive or judgment sampling. “You choose those respondents because they offer insight into something that they are best to talk about – their own lives” (Bernard, 2000, p. 192). I started by interviewing Ukrainian teachers who have graduated from the National Center for Youth Ministry in Kyiv. I continued with a snowball sampling procedure. A group of youth ministry Masters students named
additional people, specifically youth ministry students who were taught by Ukrainian youth ministry teachers, to be the next candidates for another set of research interviews. The substance of the study was directed to specific respondents. My respondents had specific experiences and the youth ministry training that was necessary for my study.

The grounded theory approach was beneficial to my qualitative research because I was able to collect my data as I was analyzing it (Charmaz, 2006, p. 5). As I interviewed my participants, I began to see some patterns emerge which helped me form new questions to collect new data. Because I wanted to discover how the Ukrainian teachers adapted the curriculum, I also learned to adapt my questions throughout the research.

**Research Participants**

Research for this study was conducted on-site in the country of Ukraine during the month of May 2014. There are three Bible colleges - Rivne Bible College (RBC), Kremenchyk Bible College (KBC), and Volyn Bible College (VBC), and one seminary - KTS, where formal youth ministry education has been conducted in the past several years. KTS is located in the capital city of Ukraine, Kyiv, whose population is approximately 5 million. RBC is located 4 hours west of Kyiv in the city of Rivne. KBC is located 4 hours South of Kyiv in the city of Kremenchyk, which is in the Poltava region of Ukraine. VBC is located in the city of Lutsk in the Volyn region of Western Ukraine, approximately 1 hour from the Polish border. There are also many locations in Ukraine and Central Asia where Ukrainian youth ministry teachers have conducted non-formal training.

Eight Ukrainian graduates from the National Center of Youth Ministry at KTS have taught as teachers in at least one of the aforementioned Ukrainian Bible colleges. I
“purposefully selected” (Creswell, 2009, p. 178) all of these teachers for my study, plus added an additional 27 students who have been taught by at least one of these teachers. “The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will help the researcher understand the problem or research question” (p. 178). Each of the participants interviewed has acquired an intimate understanding of the youth ministry curriculum, education methodologies, and ministry practical requirements for the theological education. For this study, I chose these eight teachers and 27 of their students for data collection in order to develop a theory regarding the contextualization issues in youth ministry education in Ukraine. I sampled and analyzed the data until I achieved theoretical saturation.

Theoretical saturation is the phase of qualitative data analysis in which the researcher has continued sampling and analyzing data until no new data appear and all concepts in the theory are well-developed. Concepts and linkages between the concepts that form the theory have been verified, and no additional data are needed. (Morse, 2013, para. 1)

**Data Collection**

For the first step in data collection, I conducted an online survey for eight Ukrainian youth ministry teachers. I sent the survey to my professional translator in Ukraine in advance of my trip so the results could be translated into English before my scheduled trip in May. Ten background questions were asked online so that I, as the interviewer, could formulate future questions for the face-to-face interviews. I used the website online service surveymonkey.com as the survey portal. Each of the Ukrainian teachers completed the survey in the month of April, and my translator gave me the results in early May. I entered the questions and answers into my analysis software to assist me in preparing interviews for the second and third steps of my data collection.
For my second step of data collection (first step on location in Ukraine), we conducted phone interviews. On May 17-22, 2014, I taught a youth ministry masters degree course, *Higher Education Administration*, at KTS. I supervised four masters level youth ministry students as they conducted phone interviews with several students of the Ukrainian teachers. A total of 23 students were contacted and asked a series of questions. I did not personally participate in the data collection; thus it helped eliminate some of the bias, which is inherent in this study. Each of the interviewers gave me a transcript of their interviews in Russian. Next, I personally interviewed each of the masters students for their evaluation of the interview data which they had collected, bringing the total to 27 student interviews. I personally entered this data into the analysis software.

My third step was to conduct a focus group with the current students who are getting their masters’ degrees in youth ministry. The interview guide for this portion of the data collection focuses on the differences between Ukrainian and American professors that were observed by these students throughout the course of their educational experience. This kind of small group is better “when you’re trying to get really in-depth discussions going about sensitive issues” (Bernard, 2000, p. 210). One possible limitation was that everyone in this focus group knew each other. This could inhibit disclosure, but in Ukrainian culture familiar relationships allow the participants to respond freely, so this was helpful to the study. The purpose of this focus group was to confirm any questions that were now arising from the data that had already been collected.

The fourth step of the data collection was to make the actual appointments with the Ukrainian teachers. These data were probably the most important. These interviews were conducted in Kyiv over a two-week period at the end of May 2014. My original
plan was to also travel to Rivne Bible College and Kremenchyk Bible College, but due to the ongoing crisis and hostilities with Russia, we decided not to travel outside of Kyiv. Thankfully, two of the teachers traveled to Kyiv to personally conduct interviews with me. Through Skype, I did an additional two interviews while I was still in Kyiv with my interpreter translating during the interview. Each of the eight interviews was completed face-to-face. I conducted semi-structured interviews using an interview guide. Everything was recorded digitally for later transcription and was transferred to the data analysis software. Each interview was conducted with a professional translator, since my language level is not sufficient to be certain that I would understand 100% of the dialogue. During the time of the interview, I also typed notes so that I may look over the answers. I reviewed the previous questions and answers before conducting each subsequent interview, and made adjustments to my guide. I continued the zigzag process of the interviews and preliminary data analysis throughout the collection process.

During the interviews, I used several probing techniques. One of the most helpful probes to use when using a translator is the echo probe, to make sure that the meaning was translated appropriately and to encourage the respondent to continue his description. An echo probe is simply repeating what has been said and asking the interviewee to continue with additional commentary. “It shows that you understand what’s been said so far and encourages the informant to continue with the narrative” (Bernard, 2000, p. 197). I believe this was especially helpful in Ukraine. I also used other probing techniques, including probing by leading to help them to open up (p. 199).

All interviews were recorded digitally on an iPhone. I also typed notes and had a backup recording done on my MacBook Air laptop during the interview. The recordings
and transcriptions were stored on external hard drive as well as in the cloud for redundancy.

As I was reading the interviews and making memos, I decided to visit the youth ministry office at the seminary and record my observations of the physical office. I had personally moved out of this office two years earlier. I digitally recorded my observations of the changes I saw in my former office, which was now under the direction of a Ukrainian director. I transcribed my recording later and included the physical observations as field notes into my data analysis software.

For the final step in data collection, I requested documents from the teachers. A few of the teachers submitted class notes and PowerPoint presentations of the classes that they taught. Since these documents were in Russian or Ukrainian, I translated them for analysis. I compared these class notes with the original notes in English, which were used in teaching the teachers themselves when they were students at KTS. As Creswell (2007) writes, this will “enable a researcher to obtain the language and words of the participants” (p. 180).

**Ethical Considerations in Data Collection**

According to Bernard (2000), “The key ethical issue of all social research is whether those being studied are placed at risk by those doing the study” (p. 135). I considered this question carefully, since my study was conducted as cross-cultural field research in Ukraine. As previously discussed, I collected data by gathering documents, conducting interviews, and leading a focus group. I followed all standard practices to ensure that the participants were completely informed of everything involved in the data collection.
This study was done in accordance to the standards at Biola University. The University has setup a committee called the Protection of Human Rights in Research Committee (PHRCC) to protect the rights of all participants who are involved in research similar to mine. “The secondary goal [of the PHRCC] is to assist faculty, staff, administrative personnel, student researchers in avoiding errors or oversights that can result in justifiable actions, including lawsuits, against the university” (Biola University, 2011, para. 1). I submitted a proposal for approval to this committee before conducting any interviews. The proposal outlined the methods I used to ensure the protection of all participants. The proposal was approved.

The data collection was considered a “minimal risk” research. This is defined as research in which there will be “no deception of participants: no sensitive, culturally taboo, or socially controversial material or responses by participants. Also the research procedure is unlikely to impact or change the participants’ physical, social, psychological, or spiritual status” (Biola University, 2014, p. 3. The people chosen for the research were either previous students I had in class, or students of one of these participants. I understood his or her status in all areas, and I was sensitive as I interviewed each person. There was no need to deceive anyone as I conducted the interviews or focus group. There was no physical risk to anyone involved in the research. There was no medical risk. It is possible that there could have been cultural misunderstandings or hurt feelings (minor psychological impact) through the interview process, but it was unlikely. I made every attempt to consider the feelings of the participants as I asked each question.
In order to be perfectly clear of my intent to my participants, I asked each one to sign an informed consent statement before I conducted the interview. These forms were in the Russian language. The statement clearly stated the purpose of the study and the reason for the interviews. If I did not have a relationship with the participants, this could have been problematic in Ukraine due to cultural issues. I did not have any minors interviewed for this study.

For those participating in the study, there were benefits as well. Conducting discussions about youth ministry training stimulated ideas of ways to improve current programs that the participants were actively involved with. The focus group, which was created for the research, may have enhanced network building among the participants. The final paper, when it is completed, may be translated into Russian and given to those who helped in its research. When theories are discovered, these also may be shared for everyone’s benefit. These benefits outweigh the minimal risk involved for the research.

**Data Analysis Strategy**

I analyzed the data using Creswell’s spiral method. “The process consists of moving from the reading and memoing loop into the spiral to the describing, classifying, and interpreting loop” (Creswell, 2007, p. 151).

I used computer software to study the data appropriately and to analyze the relationship between the pieces of data that was collected. I entered all of the data into a program written by Socio-Cultural Research Consultants (SCRC). These consultants, who have PhDs in anthropology and psychology, developed the online software program Dedoose to help researchers collaborate and analyze qualitative and mixed-methods data (Dedoose, 2015).
Dedoose was designed from the ground up—by researchers, for researchers—to meet the needs of today’s social scientists working in academia, marketing, and education—virtually anyone looking for innovative software to facilitate the search for answers to research questions via qualitative or quantitative data. These data may be numbers, scale scores, demographics, stories, field notes, vignettes, interview or focus group transcripts, photos, and the list goes on and they may represent individuals, belief systems, settings, culture, relationships, and this list goes on too—clever research teams looking for rich, reliable, valid, and comprehensive answers to their research questions. (AlternativeTo, 2014, para. 1)

This data analysis software helped me organize the data, and I saw themes exposed and theories come into plain sight. Through the “data analysis spiral” (Creswell, 2007, p. 150), my goal was that the data would present the theories from within.

As I considered my data collection and my analysis strategy, I started the research by inputting the online survey results into the software. I made some preliminary codes based on this data. As I reflected on these notes, I developed questions for the interviews that my Masters degree students would be conducting. I then travelled to Kyiv, Ukraine, to coordinate the student interviews that would be conducted by phone as well as a focus group. This focus group was in a very comfortable setting, the youth ministry office at KTS. Coffee and treats were enjoyed as we discussed the issues surrounding my research topic. I took notes during the discussion and made memos concerning the data. Before continuing data collection, I reflected on the research and discussed my thoughts with other seminary colleagues. I made an attempt to make some beginning categories and comparisons without locking myself into any assumed results. I made adjustments to the questions for my interview template based on data that I had already organized. I conducted the teachers’ interviews over the next week in Kyiv with the help of my translator. I started to track the results in relation to descriptors which I had assigned to the participants, which were related to age, regions in which they lived, teaching
experience, etc. This process continued throughout my research as I attempted to code, classify and interpret the data in my data analysis spiral.

As I came to the end of my research, I came to a point of integration. Corbin and Straus (2008) define integration as “the process of linking categories around a core category and refining and trimming the resulting theoretical construction” (p. 262). I discovered three or four themes from the coding and subsequent axioms. As I integrated these themes, a single, central understanding began to come forth as a result of the analysis process.

**Validation Strategy**

My goal was that my research would be honest and of good quality. As I studied the adaptation of youth ministry conducted in Ukraine, I wanted the theories that came from the research to be credible and reliable. This was possible only if I had a validation strategy in place during the research and at its conclusion. Corbin and Strauss (2008) claim, “In judging the credibility of research, both the ‘doer’ and the ‘reviewer’ of research should be able to make judgments about some of the components of the research process” (p. 307). These components, such as “How was the original sample selected?” and “What major categories emerged?” (p. 307) are communicated in my research. I believe that the reason I had a validation plan is to protect myself from the normal bias that affects my results, and to convince the reader that integrity of theoretical construction has been a goal from the beginning. I used the following three methods to validate my research: triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking.
**Triangulation**

“In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence” (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). I used private interviews in Ukraine, a focus group in Kyiv, phone interviews conducted by Ukrainian youth ministry masters students, as well as written documents to verify the data. Before developing categories and axioms, I made certain that I had multiple sources to corroborate the evidence.

**Member Checking**

“The researcher solicits participants’ views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations. This technique is considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be ‘the most critical technique for establishing credibility’” (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). During the process of research, as well as after some conclusions were drawn from the data, I engaged certain participants to review my work. These members were key participants in the study and are Ukrainian youth ministers who are intimately involved with the subject material. Once I finished my focused coding, I sent the results to three of the key participants to have them review my findings and give me feedback. Their comments are recorded in Chapter 8.

**Peer Debriefing**

“The peer debriefer as a ‘devil’s advocate,’ is an individual who keeps the researcher honest; asks hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations; and provides the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by sympathetically listening to the researcher’s feelings” (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). I have colleagues in youth ministry
who make excellent peer debriefers for this research. They were impartial and were able to challenge me as a researcher. Both of the debriefers have been involved in short-term missions, are graduates from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where the youth ministry curriculum originated, are currently full-time youth ministers, but do not have strong relationships with any of the participants. These American youth pastors were not participants in the study, so they were able to look at the methods and research from an outsider’s perspective. I encouraged the debriefers to challenge me and my findings. I gave them access to my research and personally went over the data and my conclusions with each debriefer. They gave me good advice, which caused me to adjust some of my findings. I recorded a few of their observations in Chapter 8.

I am confident, since I followed these methods and procedures for this study, that I discovered how the Ukrainian youth ministry graduates of KTS, who are now teaching other youth leaders through theological education, have adapted the original training they received from their American youth ministry teachers.
Passing the Baton

Two years before I conducted this research, my wife, Judy, and I were part of a significant ceremony. On the first weekend of February 2012, we were marking the end of our ministry in Ukraine. Our seminary youth ministry program was holding our homecoming event. We invited all 100 of our current youth ministry students and graduates to come back to the seminary for a weekend retreat. We had done this retreat every year for the previous 4 years. Our main purpose was for the different years of youth ministry students to get to know each other. Our students were not residents at the seminary. They came and went for their studies, so many of them did not know each other. If they grew to know each other, then they could network together for ministry. In 2012, the weekend retreat was also a chance for Judy and I to say goodbye. This was not easy, because we honestly feel like a family.

It was very cold in Kyiv that weekend. The temperature plunged to 27 degrees below 0 F, yet that did not deter over forty of our graduates and current students to make the trip from different regions around Ukraine to Kyiv. Judy and I, with our team, which included Natasha Bochko (our translator and assistant), Mike and Rachel Gustafson (ABWE American missionaries and partners), Sam and Melissa Hughes (YMI American missionaries and partners), Vasya and Alona Ostriy (Ukrainian youth ministry teachers
from Rivne), and Radik and Sophia Tsurkan (Ukrainian youth ministry teachers from Poltava) were eagerly awaiting their arrival. Judy and I had no idea that the others on our team had done some planning to make our goodbye very special. Words of gratitude and encouragement were spoken, memories were shared, a song that I guess can only be entitled “Michael Manna” was written and sung a couple different times by the group. I was embarrassed, but extremely touched and grateful.

I shared a final message with my students, and I made a baton that I passed on to Vasya as he was publically installed as YMI’s new director of youth ministry in Ukraine (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The author passing a symbolic baton signifying a transfer of leadership.
I also gave Vasya a Bible and my own coffee mug – the two things that have been my greatest tools in ministry. I chose the coffee cup as a symbol to represent time spent in relationship. Later, Vasya and Sam presented us with a beautiful clock that is in the form of a ship’s helm, representing the time that I was the captain of youth ministry at KTS.

On Saturday morning during the retreat, Judy and I arrived to the seminary to find that a few of the students had trampled the words, “MIKE, WE LOVE YUO” in the freshly fallen snow of the courtyard. The misspelled “YUO” made it all the more fun! Toward the end of our time together, Sam Hughes shared an encouraging message with the group. He planned to stay in Ukraine to be a support and fellow worker with Vasya, but not as the director. Then the group had one more surprise for us. They gave us a beautiful photo album that contained pictures from all of our years at the seminary. Randomly inserted among many pages of pictures, are handwritten notes from our students. This gift truly made us cry. Our students surrounded us and prayed for us, and we honestly felt commissioned by our own students to go back to America. Finally, Radik, Natasha, and one of our newer students, Alina, sang Michael W. Smith’s song, “Friends are Friends Forever” in Russian, then sang the last verse in English.

We arrived home from the weekend exhausted from all the emotions, but with hearts so very filled with love from our students, co-workers, and from God. For God is the One who led us to Ukraine and brought us together with these amazing young men and women who are ministering around the country. They are committed to the truth that they will minister through the love of Christ. They will minister, not just with their programs, but also with their lives. We consistently taught, and we all believed together,
that it is through our relationships with young people that they are introduced to Christ, mentored, and changed. We came home from this special retreat, praising the Lord for our time together with these dear friends.

At one point in a session, Radik Tsurkan, one of the Ukrainian youth ministry teachers that we had trained, was sharing a testimony to the group about how he had started out as a youth pastor who did everything himself, without much assistance. He said,

I organized the programs, did the speaking, set up the chairs, brought the treats, and cleaned up after the program. I was even my own audience at times! In the first youth ministry class, YM101: Principles of Youth Ministry, I began to understand the importance of building a team of adult and student leaders, delegating responsibilities, and thus multiplying leaders in the church. It dawned on me that while I was at the seminary taking classes, no youth ministry was going on at home, because everything was dependent on me. (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, Feb. 6, 2012)

Suddenly, Radik paused in his story, looked at me and said, “Mike, you can go! You have done your job here. We will train the youth leaders in Ukraine. You go on to train others!”

When Radik said that in the presence of the other youth ministry teachers and students, I realized that we truly had passed the baton to our Ukrainian students. Judy described this moment well in an email update to our supporters:

Wow, friends! Something happened in our hearts at that moment! We felt released in such a wonderful way! Our hearts surged with a mixture of joy and genuine trust as we looked around a room filled with grounded, godly youth ministers … several even now sporting a few gray hairs! Our first years of students are seasoned … they have many years of experience in youth ministry.

So, even though a few months still remain until we leave, this was truly “goodbye.” We came home feeling so loved, so “complete”, and so good about looking forward to the next step that God has for us. The ministry here will go on to greater heights under Ukrainian leadership. As for Mike and I, we look forward to training more youth pastors overseas – now in multiple countries. It is also my
prayer to become “Mama Judy and Papa Mike” to some Russian and Ukrainian students in universities around Louisville. We are praying that our new house will have a BIG living room! Thank you, dear friends, for your continued prayer and financial support. We would love for you to meet the ones whose lives you have helped to impact through the youth ministry training. Oh, they are a good bunch! Heaven is coming, and will it ever be fun to make some introductions! (Manna, 2012)

Fast-forward two years after this Passing the Baton event. I returned to Ukraine to conduct this research. I interviewed Vasya, Radik, and other Ukrainians who were now youth ministry teachers. What was the adaptation process utilized by Ukrainian youth ministry teachers as they contextualized the training they received at the hands of American professors like me?

**The Location of the Research**

In order to collect data, I had to travel to Ukraine. My original plan was to travel to the Ukrainian teachers homes around the county, but the crisis in Ukraine changed those plans.

**Ukraine in Crisis**

The trip was almost delayed indefinitely due to war that broke out in the eastern part of the country. A people’s revolution had ousted the president in February, Russian military took Crimea in March, and war broke out in the East in April. My plan was to go with my family to teach a master’s level youth ministry class at the seminary, to conduct my research in several locations in the country, and to lead a mission trip to my adopted daughter’s village. Presidential elections were to be held on May 25th, and people were fearful of new violence leading up to the elections. Half of my American colleagues had temporarily evacuated from the country, and the other half had stayed. After evaluating the situation carefully, we decided that we should go forward with the trip, with some
adjustments for data collection. For the sake of safety, I decided not to personally travel outside of Kyiv for the interviews. I asked the participants I needed to interview to travel to Kyiv, and I would conduct the interviews with my interpreter at the seminary.

Everyone agreed except for two teachers who were unable to make the trip. I conducted those two interviews by Skype, with the help of my translator, while I was in Kyiv.

**Kyiv Theological Seminary (KTS)**

The focus of this study is the youth ministry graduates, teachers, and students from KTS. The seminary is located on the eastern side of the city of Kyiv, which has a population of approximately 5 million people. Understanding the history of the seminary is important to understanding the source of the data. In 2006, the following history was written about the seminary:

Kyiv Theological Seminary (KTS) was founded in 1995 through the direction of the All Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and the vision of KTS president, Anatoly Prokopchuk. Their goal, along with other key supporters, was to establish an institution that would provide a strong theological education. KTS was started in an old run-down building without doors, windows or heat, but the hand of God was clearly seen through His provision and triple the number of applicants expected. Classes began in February 1996 with a curriculum that was parallel to a Masters of Theology program. Since then the curriculum has been modified to match Western educational standards at a bachelor’s level, but the same dedication to teaching and learning remains.

In the 10 years since its founding, KTS has graduated over 300 students from its programs. Hundreds of other Christians have also received training at the seminary. KTS graduates are ministering throughout Ukraine and the former Soviet Union as pastors, elders, Sunday school teachers, youth ministers and missionaries.

Because of the standards of KTS’ academic program, students are able to continue their education at accredited theological institutions in Europe and the U.S. Some graduates have continued in ministry at the seminary in the roles of teaching and administration.

Through studies at KTS, the Lord has called many to the work of church planting. God has used these former students to start more than 100 churches.
In the 10 years of KTS’s history, the Lord has blessed the school with a library of 28,000 volumes of Christian literature. The library gives teachers and students opportunity to use these vast resources for studying the Scriptures. Kyiv Theological Seminary continues its commitment to providing theologically sound and culturally relevant education. (Kyiv Theological Seminary, 2006, para. 2-7)

Since this history of the seminary was written over 150 additional students have graduated (A. Prokupchuk, personal communication, May 25, 2014). KTS was the location of most of the interviews in May of 2014 for the data collection. The youth ministry office, conference rooms, and classrooms were secured for each of the interviews. I began to record my data at KTS and discussed some of my findings and thoughts with a few colleagues. These colleagues assisted in the progressive development of my qualitative research.

Ukraine Center for Youth Ministry

Within KTS is the office for the youth ministry degree programs, which is called the Center for Youth Ministry (CYM). As previously discussed, this office is the hub for the teachers and students in three degree programs: a Master of Arts degree in Youth Ministry, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Youth Ministry, and a Certificate in Youth Ministry. Both the masters’ and bachelors’ degree programs have twelve, three-credit courses in youth ministry, which the director and other teachers supervise from this office. All of the other courses in their degree program, the Bible and general education courses, are supervised from the Academic Office of the seminary. When the program started in 2003, the courses were taught only to residential students. In 2004, a modular program was introduced in which students came four times a year for two-week modular classes. In the modular program, the Bible and general education courses were taught in the morning hours, while all of the specialization courses, such as youth ministry or
church planting, were taught in the afternoon hours. In 2008, the residential program for youth ministry was discontinued, and all of the students studied in the modular format. The youth ministry courses taught were:

1. YM 101: Principles of Youth Ministry
2. YM 102: Youth Culture
3. YM 202: Youth Ministry Programming
4. YM 213: Curriculum Development for Small Groups
5. YM 223: Contemporary Communication for Youth
6. YM 331: Ministry to Troubled Youth
7. YM 347: Youth Discipleship
8. YM 402: Camp Programming
9. YM 403: Professional Orientation to Youth Ministry
10. YM 446: Youth and Family Ministry
11. YM 453: Contemporary Youth Missions
12. YM 487: Youth Ministry Practicum

For a full course description, see Appendix A. Between 2003 and 2009, American professors taught all of the listed courses. In 2009, the first Ukrainian teacher, Vasya Ostriy, taught *YM 202: Youth Ministry Programming*. In 2010, Radik Tsurkan, the second Ukrainian teacher, taught *YM 213: Curriculum Development for Small Groups*. Ukrainian teachers also began to teach at Bible colleges in Rivne, Poltava and Lutsk. As Ukrainian youth ministers became qualified to teach, American professors taught fewer courses. In 2014, 80% of the youth ministry courses taught in the Center for Youth Ministry at Kiev Theological Seminary were taught by Ukrainian professors.
Research Participants

The 45 interviews that I analyzed were taken from Ukrainian teachers and their student in multiple methods: 8 online surveys completed by teachers who were first generation students; 27 phone interviews from students who are second generation students (see Appendix B for phone interview questions); 6 face-to-face interviews with teachers (using an interpreter); 2 Skype interviews with teachers (using an interpreter); and one focus group with 4 Masters degree students who are second generation students (using an interpreter).

Seventy percent of the interviews were taken from male participants; 30% were from female. The majority of teachers and students (86%) are associated with KTS. The other 14% are associated with the other 3 regional Bible colleges: Rivne Bible College; Kremenchyk Bible College; and Volyn Bible College. The students live in many different regions around Ukraine (see Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of Ukraine</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyiv</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Ukraine</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Ukraine</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Ukraine</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Ukraine</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results Emerged from the Interviews

As I asked the questions during the interviews in Kyiv, certain patterns started to emerge. This process helped to direct my investigation and follow Creswell’s (2007) data analysis spiral (p. 150). As I entered the 45 interviews into the Dedoose analysis software, the coding produced similar patterns to those I was also discovering through the questioning. My original coding produced nearly 100 codes. Some of the codes did not relate to my questions, so I eliminated those. I combined some codes together as I saw relationships between the codes. I was able to merge the codes to a total of 43 initial codes. I then placed the codes into major categories. The three categories are: motivations for adaptations, adaptation of course content; and adaptation of methodologies and style.

After I organized the codes into 3 major categories, I evaluated the names of the categories. I had actually created these categories from the original sub-questions, and not from the codes themselves. Charmaz (2006) warned about avoiding preconceptions when she says, “Throughout the grounded theory literature, researchers are enjoined to avoid forcing their data into preconceived codes and categories” (p. 66). Thus, I went back to the initial codes to do appropriate axial coding. Corbin and Strauss (2008) write that axial coding builds “a dense texture of relationships around the ‘axis’ of a category” (p. 64). I paid close attention to the frequency that the participants used the codes. I spent time using the software to create analysis charts to see if there were any connections between descriptors and the coding patterns. The correlations were limited and did not really assist me in finding axis for my data. I also printed a packed code cloud to visualize the frequency of the codes (see Figure 2). This graphic gives greater weight and size to codes that are used more frequently than other codes.
My three main categories gave organization to the 43 initial codes, but did not give me clear results from my research. As I analyzed the codes within each of these main categories, focused codes emerged from the research. I carefully used terminology from the actual interviews to describe each focused code. The ten focused codes that were discovered include:

1. Reduce theoretical content to add more practical material
2. Add Ukrainian examples and culture to course content
3. Reduce psychological content to add more Biblical content
4. Create a decentralized training program
5. Increase family style teaching and reduce professionalism
6. Focus on group learning rather than individual study
7. Implement teacher-assisted methodical training
8. Greater relational training versus lectures
9. Focus on current needs versus theoretical
10. Build Ukrainian worldview foundation versus American worldview

**The Indigenous Contextualization Model**

The 10 focused codes describe the adaptations that were made by the Ukrainian teachers. The three categories present a theory that stemmed from the actual contextualization process. As an organizational tool, I placed the focused codes and categories in chronological order to describe the process. The first category, *Adaptation Motivations*, includes: (a) Focus on current needs versus theoretical; and (b) Build Ukrainian worldview foundation versus American worldview. As we think of the cyclical order of the adaptation process, this first step is labeled *Evaluation of the Foreign Content*.

The second category, the *Adaptation of Course Content*, includes: (a) Reduce theoretical content to add more practical material; (b) Add Ukrainian examples and culture to course content; (c) Reduce psychological content to add more Biblical content; and (d) Create a decentralized training program. As we consider the cyclical order of the adaptation process, the second step should be entitled the *Indigenous Group Collaboration to Organize and Contextualize the Content*. 
The final category, *Adaptation of Methodologies and Teaching Style*, includes: (a) Focus on group learning rather than individual study; (b) Implement teacher-assisted methodical training; (c) Greater relational training versus lectures; and (d) Increase family style teaching and reduce professionalism. At the beginning of the data analysis stage, teaching style and methodologies appeared to be separate, but as I came to finally organizing the data chronologically, I have merged this data together. As we consider the cyclical order of the adaptation process, the third step is the implementation of a *Relational Methodical Group-Learning System*.

Placing these categories and their focused codes in order gives us this new model. The process also appears to be cyclical in nature. Through this process, the practical theological education in youth ministry was contextualized in Ukraine.

Based on the observed process of adaptation and the data, I have formulated the following theoretical model. I have named this process the *indigenous contextualization model*. For long-term knowledge acquisition and application from a foreign context, practical theological education needs indigenous group collaboration to organize the content into a relational methodical group-learning system.

This model (see Figure 3) presents a process for this form of contextualization with three major steps:

1. Evaluation of foreign content (Motivations)
2. Indigenous group collaboration to organize and contextualize content (Process)
3. Implement relational methodical group-learning system (Product)

For the sake of organization in this dissertation, I explain the data analysis by looking at each of the three main categories of the process in Chapters 5 through 7. In
The Indigenous Contextualization Model: For long-term knowledge acquisition and application from a foreign context, practical theological education needs indigenous group collaboration to organize the content into a relational, methodical, group-learning system.

![Diagram](image)

Adaptations discovered through research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptation Motivations</th>
<th>Adaptation of Course Content</th>
<th>Adaptation of Methodologies &amp; Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Needs vs. Theory</td>
<td>Reduce Theoretical to add more practical</td>
<td>Group Learning vs. Individual Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian Worldview vs. American Worldview</td>
<td>Add Ukrainian examples and culture to content</td>
<td>Teacher-Assisted, Methodical Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce Psychological content and add Biblical content</td>
<td>Greater Relational Training vs. Lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create Decentralized Training Program</td>
<td>Increase Family Style and Reduce Professionalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.** The indigenous contextualization model.

*Note:* Artwork used by permission from stickfigurepeople.com.

Chapter 8, I discuss the research validation and additional considerations. In Chapter 9, I explain this new theoretical model in more detail; that is, the process of indigenous contextualization which is revealed from the ten focused codes. The initial codes, which are the adaptations by the Ukrainian youth ministry teachers, will be discussed underneath each of the 10 focused codes. Each focused code can be found underneath
each of the three main categories, which describes the central understanding of the contextualization process.

In this dissertation, I share the qualitative research results discovered from the interviews and observations, which began online in March of 2014, continued through my trip to Ukraine in May of 2014, and were completed in November of 2014. Dialogues and stories are included in order to connect the research with the lives of those doing youth ministry theological education in Ukraine. I share the data in a narrative format.
CHAPTER 5

MOTIVATIONS FOR ADAPTATION

On one afternoon at the seminary in May, I conducted a focus group with four Ukrainian Masters of Youth Ministry students. We sat in the KTS Youth Ministry office with my former translator to discuss several questions regarding the adaptations their Ukrainian teachers had made. These were the same students who had helped conduct the phone interviews. It was a comfortable atmosphere with espresso, tea, and cookies.

As we were nearing the close of the interview, I realized that during their four years of study, each of them had been taught by half American teachers and half Ukrainian teachers. Even though this question would not necessarily contribute to my study, I asked the question, “Who did you prefer, the American or Ukrainian professors?”

After talking together, Alina answered for all of them, “We would keep the mix. A mix is best. There are things that each culture cannot provide, which the other culture can provide.”

Volodiya added, “And It depends on the class.”

So then I asked the group, “If that is the case, then which courses would be better with an American teacher and which would be better with a Ukrainian teacher?”

There was more group discussion on this topic, and at times there were disagreements. But eventually they came to a consensus. They decided on the following list:
1. Philosophy of Youth Ministry – American teacher
2. Youth Culture – Ukrainian teacher
3. Youth Ministry Programming – American and Ukrainian teaching together
4. Youth Discipleship – Ukrainian teacher
5. Ministry to Troubled Youth – Ukrainian teacher
6. Contemporary Communication to Youth – American teacher
7. Youth Camping – American and Ukrainian teaching together
8. Curriculum Development for Small Groups – Ukrainian teacher
9. Youth Missions - American teacher with Ukrainian support
10. Family Ministry – Ukrainian teacher
11. Professional Orientation to Youth Ministry – Ukrainian teacher

I was surprised by some of their comments regarding this list. I asked why they thought an American should teach the Contemporary Communication to Youth course, since most Americans struggle with the Russian language.

“Our churches and many of our speakers are not at a very good level of creativity yet,” answered Volodiya. “We still need help in this area for a few more years.”

Everyone realized that the goal of the program is to have 100% Ukrainian teachers at some time in the future. The adaptations are not complete. More contextualization of the content, methodologies and style need to be done. These students were content that the process is still continuing. Through my interviews, the motivations for the adaptation came to the surface. The coding produced two focused codes related to the motivations for adaptation:
1. Focus on current needs versus theoretical

2. Build Ukrainian worldview foundation versus American worldview

**Focus on Current Needs Versus Theoretical**

There were six occurrences of this focused code in the interviews. Three times, teachers and students said that theory must be connected to real life. In three different interviews, participants mentioned that the Ukrainian teachers focused on local needs more than had been previously done.

**Theory Must Be Connected to Real Life**

As I considered Creswell’s data spiral and my line of questioning, I saw that the participants were removing theoretical material and replacing it with practical. I wanted to know the motivation behind this. I asked Radik Tsurkan more pointed questions than I had asked the others.

“Radik, do you believe you should teach theory in the youth ministry training, or not?”

“I want to think about this before I answer.” He paused for a while, then answered carefully, “I think that we cannot teach theory without practice or practice without theory.”

I probed, “On what basis would you say that?”

“I would give attention to Christ. He taught theory after practice. He did something, and then he explained what it was. We should probably do something similar.” Radik gave more thought before he said, “There is an understanding that
education has to have academics. In my opinion, Jesus did not just give words, but gave actions and then explained what He did.”

I agreed. “I believe you are right. How do you think this could work better at the seminary?” Radik answered,

Concerning youth ministry, it would be nice that a person who wanted to do youth ministry would be placed on a church team who knows how to do ministry. He would learn from example how to work in a team and how to preach at an evangelistic event. But from the other hand, at a seminary we must teach some theory. The student comes to class for two weeks, he listens to the lectures, and he must have academics. It would be nice if the youth ministry class could be connected to a youth ministry team where the student lives. It is important that they practice youth ministry. Then, during the second course, they could analyze the actual program in the class. (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

I asked, “How are you making changes to the theory that will help your students?”

Radik explained, “I know we need to teach theory, but it must be connected to real ministry. The seminary was nice for me, because I already knew ministry. The students need to see a real example, and then they can get an education” (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

In his interview, Vasya said, “I want to help students understand theory from another perspective. I gave them an assignment where they needed to share how they planned to implement this information into their lives” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 21, 2014).

In February 2014, Vasya and the other teachers met to adapt the curriculum for decentralized training programs. One of the subjects they discussed is how to help the
students better apply the theory and principles to their ministries. Vasya used the whiteboard with the group and drew a chart on the board (see Figure 4).

He asked the other teachers for advice on what should be included in the chart. It included four columns and five rows. This project’s purpose was to add a new tool for the students to use, so they could do some self-evaluation of their ministries. The first column was to include the five characteristics of a spiritually mature young person: converted, churched, craving God’s Word, compassion for the lost, and consecrated. The second column was to include the five levels of youth ministry programming: pre-
evangelism, evangelism, growth, ministry, and reproduction. The third column was to include the five audiences of young people: community, crowd, congregation, church, and core. The fourth column was to include the programs that the student’s ministry was doing to reach youth at each of these levels.

Vasya said, “The student must record the specific programs that are in their church. This helps them to analyze and determine what is missing. After they do this project, they can see what they do not have. For example, do they have a program for the second and fifth levels” (personal communication, November 15, 2014)? After the analysis, the students were also to write a plan for how they wanted to improve their ministry and accomplish these goals.

After the group developed this chart from the brainstorming sessions, Vasya took it back to the youth ministry office to include in the updated and adapted *YM 101: Principles of Youth Ministry* course. This chart is now included in the seminar booklet they developed for regional training programs (see Figure 5). The title of the chart is “Практическое задание (работа в командах),” which translates as *Practical Work (Work for Teams)*. The Ukrainian teachers have developed a system in which the youth leaders can take the principles and theories and apply them to real life and to their specific ministries. The assignment is to be done as a group project with their leadership teams when the youth leader returns home.

**Focus on Needs in Ukraine**

In his interview, Vasya said, “An additional motivation I have for adapting the curriculum, is that I look at the needs of the students. I assign additional reading, because
I want the youth leaders to have more material and resources. For example, I added the notes on transferring leadership” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 21, 2014).

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**Figure 5.** New application chart for YM 101 notes – Practical work for youth ministry leadership teams.

*Note.* Reprinted from youth ministry regional training booklet, Kyiv Theological Seminary. Reprinted with permission.
Students agreed with this motivation for adapting the training. One student from Poltava said,

American teachers can give the theoretical part of the course, but not the practical. Now that the Ukrainian teachers have learned the theoretical processes; they can emphasize the transfer process in youth ministry; the practical teaching. If we can’t do it, no one can do it. It is best now to meet the needs and develop the students; this will lead to a qualitative change in the educational process. (Sergey, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Another student from a village in Western Ukraine agreed that the reason for contextualization is to better serve the young people of Ukraine. He said,

Vasya understands very well the essence of youth ministry because he was working with young people and knows how this or that knowledge works in practice. In other words, he is a practitioner. Therefore, all of the material that Vasya taught us, is very practical and understandable in our culture to serve the young people in our country and churches. (Vladimir, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

**Build Ukrainian Worldview Versus American Worldview**

There were 19 occurrences of codes underneath this statement in the interviews. Seven times, teachers and students said adaptations were completed to have a stronger Ukrainian worldview. In seven different interviews, participants mentioned that adaptations were made to get the training into their native language.

**Adapt From American Context**

Paul wrote, “This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience” (1 Tim. 1:18-19a, ESV). The charge that Paul is giving to Timothy is similar to the charge that the American teachers gave to their
Ukrainian students when they encouraged their disciples to contextualize the youth 
ministry training for the body of Christ in Ukraine.

The most common motivation for the Ukrainian teachers was the need to adapt 
the program from its American origins. I asked Sasha Tkachuk if he felt that this was one 
of his main motivations for the changes he had made.

Sasha said, “Everything depended on the teacher. When the teacher was caring 
about our life and culture, the teaching was amazing and practical. Mike, you lived with 
us, so you knew our culture very well. But when the teachers were sharing their materials 
without knowing us, their advices were less practical.”

I responded, “Thanks for the compliment, but you had teachers who did not live 
in Ukraine. How did you use their material?”

He answered, “That is why, before I taught any material or gave any notes to my 
students, I went through them very carefully with a sieve” (S. Tkachuk, personal 
communication, May 27, 2014).

Misha said this about the subject, “The disadvantages of having American 
teachers is associated with the difficulties of language and cultural barriers. Thus, lectures 
include more theory and less practical material. Yet at the same time, it encouraged us to 
think for ourselves” (M. Feyer, personal communication, June 3, 2014).

One of the students commented that the adaptations must continue from the American context.

One-third of the notes were not useful, especially for things that did not apply to 
ministry. There was a lot of material that only explained terms. Adaptation is 
more desirable; keep adapting it to the Ukrainian culture. Why give complex 
terms that are not practical? A lot of material will be learned and then forgotten, 
especially the American examples. There were also many examples from the book
that were not applicable for Ukraine. If possible, replace the American books for Ukrainian books. (Anya, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

**Needs Ukrainian Worldview**

Seven participants mentioned this adaption motivation. “One big advantage for Ukrainian teachers is that the theory and practice are much more compatible,” said Misha Feyer, teacher of the *Ministry to Troubled Youth* class. “As teachers share their experiences, they can be a good example. They have no barriers with interpretation, so a better communication process occurs. There are more opportunities for comments and questions” (M. Feyer, personal communication, June 3, 2014).

The Ukrainian teachers know where the students are coming from culturally, and they understand the situations their students face in their churches and lives. They make adaptations based on their own personal experiences in Ukraine, which the original teachers did not have. Maxeem, teacher at Rivne Bible College, said,

I tried to motivate students to wait before changing things. I tried to help them understand how we can work with our senior pastors and help them. Moving slowly can help us to get their approval, before we start bringing changes on our own. It can help the older pastors and leaders to understand youth ministry. (M. Zhilin, personal communication, May 5, 2014)

Students said that they appreciate the adaptations being made to a Ukrainian worldview. One student from Irpin commented:

I think that if a foreign teacher taught the course, they would pass on their own vision to learning and understanding youth culture. I think the vision and approach of the Ukrainian teachers and foreign teachers are different. Therefore, if the program comes from an American, a Ukrainian must teach it. They can adjust the worldview. Then it will be easier for us to understand the context of this course. (Pasha, personal communication, May 24, 2014)
Another student from Kyiv said, “It is a suitable curriculum, but there are still some things you need to throw out or replace with something that is closer to our Slavic culture” (Anya, personal communication, May 25, 2014).

**In Native Language**

The original American curriculum was translated from English to Russian over a four-year period under my supervision. At one time, I hired three different translators to work on the project. One translator was translating textbooks, another was translating notes, while the final translator was working as my interpreter in class and grading assignments. We chose to translate the notes into Russian, so we could use the curriculum in Russian-speaking countries outside Ukraine. This has already been helpful.

The Ukrainian teachers are making another adaptation by translating the curriculum into the heart language of Ukrainians. They are taking the Russian notes and translating them into Ukrainian. This is more than just a content adjustment. It is a worldview adaptation: from a Russian to Ukrainian worldview. This has even more significance now with the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Most classes at Kiev Theological Seminary have been taught in the Russian language. Vasya teaches in the Ukrainian language unless there is a student in the class who does not understand Ukrainian. The students really appreciate this change. One student from Zhitomir said,

It is so nice to listen to the teacher speak our native language. In class, the teacher was open to dialogue and answered our questions. There was even a case where a teacher was getting coffee for the class, so he asked students to share their testimonies and life stories while he was gone. We shared freely in our own language. This is very healthy for us as students, because it helps us to more closely get acquainted with each other. (Anna, personal communication, May 24, 2014)
Maxeem said, “I had to translate all the notes for the course I taught into the Ukrainian language, because my Russian is not good enough for teaching, and my audience was made up of all Ukrainian students” (M. Zhilin, personal communication, May 5, 2014).

Another student commented that there was improved education when the teaching was in her native language. “The communication process occurs twice as fast with Ukrainian teachers, which means that they can respond to a lot more issues that the students face in the process of learning and service” (A. Krivobok, personal communication, May 25, 2014).

Group projects were also done in the native language of the students. Marina, a student from Duanivtsy, said,

We had a better understanding of a book that was assigned for the course *Philosophy of Youth Ministry*. When the students were assigned book presentations, each student had to read one chapter and briefly introduce it to the whole class. This subject was easily perceived, because the teaching was in our native language. (Marina, personal communication, May 24, 2014)
CHAPTER 6

ADAPTATION OF COURSE CONTENT

Ephesians 4:11-13 tells us what the works for those called into leadership positions of the church are to be about.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (ESV)

The American missionaries, along with the Ukrainian leadership at KTS, worked hard to accomplish the goal of “equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.” For me specifically, this meant Ukrainian youth ministers. This included contextualizing the content from a Biblical culture through an American lens to the Ukrainian recipients.

Vasya Ostriy, the first Ukrainian youth ministry program director at KTS, has been the greatest force in youth ministry education adaptations. Vasya entered the program in its second year of existence, in the fall of 2004. As his program director, I was privileged to hand Vasya his Bachelors Degree in Youth Ministry four years later at his seminary graduation. I had noticed his potential for teaching early on, as did other his other professors. When Vasya was a sophomore, a visiting American professor stopped me in the hallway. He said, “Mike, aren’t you the youth ministry program director? I have a question for you about one of your students.”

I said, “Oh, really. Which one?”
“Vasya Ostriy. I am teaching a Homiletics course to the seminary students from every major this week. Each one of them is sharing a couple of sermons to the class, and I wanted to talk to you about Vasya.”

“Has he been a good student for you?” I asked.

“A good student??! He is the best student! And that is why I want to talk to you. Why is he a youth ministry student and not a pastoral student? With his speaking abilities, he should be in the pastoral program!”

I held my tongue to keep from saying what I wanted to say, regarding his condescending statement about the youth ministry program. I did my best to reply respectfully. “Sir, that is where we differ. I believe that youth ministry can be a life long calling, not simply a stepping-stone to the pastorate. I personally hope that we do have the best speakers and students in our youth ministry degree program!”

Vasya did not disappoint! During his third year of studies at the seminary, he enrolled in the first government accredited Masters Degree of Theology from Ostroiv Academy in Rivne. He was taking both degree programs at the same time. At the end of 2008, he graduated with this masters degree. During his senior year at KTS, he began co-teaching the Youth Culture course at the seminary with me, as well as starting a youth ministry certificate program at Rivne Bible College (RBC). He used our course materials. In 2009, he taught his first class under his own credentials at KTS. In 2010, he began teaching 2 classes per year in Kyiv while he continued to direct the youth ministry program at RBC. When I was looking for my replacement, Vasya became the obvious choice. In 2012, he moved his wife and three children to Kyiv to become the Director of Youth Ministry at KTS. He was extremely helpful to me in organizing the interviews for
this study, and he has been instrumental in personally making many of the content changes that are discussed in this dissertation.

The coding of the interviews revealed not only the actual adaptations that were happening, but the frequency of certain codes also gave validity to the statements that were produced. A listing of the frequency of each of the codes can be found in Appendix C. The highest frequency of any code (26 times) was the statement that teachers need to add more practical material to the content. The coding ultimately produced four focused codes related to the first set of adaptations, those that are related to course content:

1. Reduce theoretical content to add more practical material
2. Add Ukrainian examples and culture to course content
3. Reduce psychological content to add more Biblical content
4. Create a decentralized training program

**Reduce Theoretical Content to Add More Practical Material**

There were 45 occurrences of codes underneath this statement in the interviews. Twenty-six different times, the teachers and students talked about adding more practical material to the content. In 10 different interviews, the participants mentioned that they had reduced the amount of theory given in class.

**Reduce Theory in Class**

Radik Tsurkan was a joy to have as a student. He became a partner in ministry very quickly. He was the youth ministry regional director for the region of Poltava in Central Ukraine. He was responsible for the training and encouragement of the youth leaders in 70 Baptist churches in his region. He had vision to take the program to their
regional Bible college in Kremenchyk. On one visit to his area, we met with the president of his local Bible college and discussed youth ministry training. I also gave Radik the opportunity to be an adjunct professor at KTS. In 2009, he began to co-teach YM 223: Curriculum Development for Small Groups with me at the seminary. The next year, Radik taught this class by himself. He made several changes to the content of the class. While I was teaching the class, I taught a great deal about educational theory. My American colleagues who were teaching the same course at Boyce College in Louisville, KY recommended this. They were using a textbook written by Dan Lambert who had his doctorate in education and was also a youth pastor. I liked his book, so we translated it into Russian and used it as a textbook. I based a lot of our notes, including the theoretical material, on this book thinking that it would help the students write lesson plans for their small group ministries. It had been very difficult for me to explain these theories. The translator had to look up many terms in Russian pedagogical books for proper translation. Even when we explained what these terms meant the students had a hard time with many of the theories. When Radik fully took charge of this class, he came to me.

“Mike, can you explain to me more about the learning models that are in the notes? I don’t understand all these theories.”

“Radik,” I said, “I give you full freedom to adjust this course as you see fit. Take out notes; add to the notes. You have a lot of experience in this area. Do what you think is best.”

“Then a lot of the theories have to go.”

I agreed, “Do what you must.”
I interviewed him in May of 2012 with the Ukrainian teachers. He brought up this class and the changes that he had made. Each year as he taught the course he adapted it closer and closer to the Ukrainian youth leaders’ mentality. He said:

I took some of the theory out of the notes. I took out the 4 models of learning. This was not helpful, so when I was teaching the course the second year, I took it out. The models just made students confused. I told the students that we need to learn how our teenagers learn, and that we need to know theory. I tried to help our students understand; tried to feel the audience. I tried to make the connection. I shared my heart, knowing who they are and I said, “You need to have your minds and ears open.” But it did not work. Of course there are theories and models - but I removed the theories for the sake of the class. (Radik Tsurkan, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

Over half the notes that I originally started teaching with in YM 223: Curriculum Development for Small Groups have been removed. Radik has added a significant portion of original notes to this particular course in order to properly train the youth leaders to write their own curriculums for their small group ministries.

For our leaders the information about the brain of the teenagers is not so important, so I took it out. They need practical skills of how to talk to teenagers, how to create an atmosphere where they would listen, and through all of this, they would open up to be positively influenced by us as youth ministers. (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Several other teachers said the same thing about reducing the theoretical material in the class. The second course that all youth ministry majors take in their specialization is YM 102: Youth Culture. When I taught the course, I used a culture wheel from one of Paul Hiebert’s books. My goal was that the students would use this theoretical tool to evaluate the youth culture where they lived. Misha Vakhtomin commented about this course, “I taught the Youth Culture class. Youth ministry is like a cross-cultural mission. We probably added more about this. We removed the culture wheel from the notes. It
was not very important. It was more theory than practical help” (personal communication, May 22, 2014).

Some students that were interviewed by phone said that they felt even more theory could be removed from the curriculum.

I felt like a lot of the material in my class was theoretical, and that the amount of practical material in the class was quite small. I think I need more practice and practical notes. I enjoyed the lively discussions that made us think …. But I do not see the point of memorizing theory and terms. There was some useful information, but there were also some things that were not applicable. (Marina from Poltava, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

During the interviews, many participants said that there was a direct relationship between the reduction of the theoretical material and the addition of the practical content.

**Add More Practical Material**

While I was conducting my interviews in May, I had the opportunity to speak at the 2014 KTS Commencement. It was an honor for me to be asked to speak at this institution that had become like a second home to my family. At the ceremony, 3 students were receiving the first Masters of Arts degrees in Youth Ministry ever given in Ukraine, and I had the privilege of handing these students their degrees. Four additional students were receiving their bachelors degrees, and Sasha Muyler was one of those students.

Sasha has several years of youth ministry experience as the youth pastor of Grace Church in Rivne with more than 600 people in attendance. Over 90 % of his church is under the age of 30, so they have a large youth ministry. He had recently been installed as the new director of the youth ministry certificate program at Rivne Bible College (RBC). I was able to interview him on the afternoon of his graduation ceremony.
“Sasha, what are the biggest changes you have made to your youth ministry program from what you received for your American teachers and why?”

“From my experience, it should be more practical,” Sasha answered. “I am adding more real practice to the schedule. I want to see how my students are doing in the classroom. Theory is good, but very often we do not know how the students are able to apply it. We need to add more help for our students to put it into practice so they can implement it.”

I asked, “Do you think the theory is understood when you teach at RBC?”

Sasha paused, thinking about how to answer the question. “We need a better bridge because right now there is a gap between the theory and the practice.”

I then asked a leading question. “So you feel that the practical material helps the youth leaders learn better?”

“I really have seen success when a youth leader has already been working with the culture. Then they do not question why they are learning this material. They know their place and responsibility. As teachers, we need to know what to add to our training to help them in their specific areas.”

Sasha’s comments were similar to everyone I interviewed. This was the most agreed upon adaptation that had been made. Twenty-six people mentioned that more practical material had been added to the content.

Vasya said, “I want to give more practical training in all of the courses. The student will go back to the church and needs to know what to stop doing; what to start doing, and the next step in his ministry” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 19, 2014).
Maxeem Zhilin has taught at Rivne Bible College. He wrote on the online survey, “I added some practical lessons to the course that I took from my own ministry. This helped me to keep a balance between theory and the practical applications. It was more adding than changing” (personal communication, May 5, 2014).

Radik, teacher both at KTS and at Kremenchyk Bible College (KBC) said, “When I teach, I speak more about how to lead a small group and spend more time teaching my students how to be effective in a leading a small group. In our culture, I provide more opportunities for the practical teaching than the theory” (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 10, 2014).

I asked a few of the teachers to send me their course notes so that I could compare their notes to what the Americans taught in their classes. Radik sent me the PowerPoint presentations that he used for YM 223: Curriculum Development for Small Groups, as well as for the other classes he taught at KBC. One completely new presentation he added was entitled “Малые/домашние группы в практике церковной жизни,” which translated means, “Small/Home groups in the Practice of Church Life” (see Figure 6).

The new notes, which Radik added to the class, are focused on the practical application of the original notes on curriculum development that were taught by the American teachers. Radik did include four slides on the Biblical foundation for small groups, but he has 24 slides on how to use small home groups in a practical way. His main points include: (a) How to use the small group for evangelistic purposes; (b) What do you need to start a small group?; (c) How to call for reinforcements (team development); and (d) Counting the cost – How to have success with your small group.
For example, the four slides relating to the point Counting the Cost include the following notes:

1. Consecrated persons are needed to bring youth in that are far away from Christ. Ideally, you need two couples: one couple that is receiving guests and one couple that is leading the classes.

2. Obedience and willingness of the group is necessary to go beyond the walls of the church; not just be spectators who are sitting in the audience.
3. This ministry will put you and your group face to face with people whose way of life and philosophies are different from the Gospel. They are often stubbornly opposed to the Christianity that they are familiar with.

4. Often the most persistent leaders are the most fruitful in God's kingdom. (R. Tsurkan, PowerPoint presentation translated from Russian, *Ministry to Troubled Youth* class at KTS, May 25, 2014).

   The students also agreed that adding more practical material to the content was a positive change to the American-based curriculum. One student from Poltava said that the changes needed to go even further.

   I think that the content is very appropriate, but not very practical for the context of our region. The theoretical side is lovely and very important for the development of a leader; to help him understand the culture of young people themselves. But this knowledge is not enough for productive service. It is not practical. I would like to see 35-40% of the courses aimed at the practical side of youth ministry, as close to the Ukrainian context as possible. (Sergey, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

**Add Practical Books Versus Theoretical Books**

   One of the young ladies to whom I handed a Masters degree diploma in May 2013 at KTS was Alina Krivobok. I had taught Alina in her first youth ministry classes, but Ukrainian teachers taught most of her courses. She is a translator and English teacher in her hometown of Poltava. For the last year, she has also been teaching courses on “How to be a Christian Interpreter” in her local Christian college. She is also one of the ongoing leaders for iCamp, an English camp ministry I started during our years in Ukraine. YMI has continued to run these camps every summer in Ukraine, bringing American youth groups together with Ukrainian youth ministers to conduct evangelistic camps for teens.
As I was interviewing Alina, I asked if she had made adaptations related to theory and practice.

“Yes, I have,” she said. “Since I was already teaching part of the youth ministry courses in our church, I can confidently say that the theoretical content is in need of more practical application. I am adapting it to our culture. Without contextualization, theory does not work.”

“I agree.” I confirmed; then asked, “Alina, you may not be teaching the youth ministry courses in a Bible college yet, but what do you think the next step is, towards adding practical material to these courses?”

She had already considered this issue. “I would like to assign reading that has been published from Ukrainian and Russian authors that is original and not translated from other languages.”

“But we have looked for these books,” I interrupted, “and we can’t find them.”

Alina had a plan. “One simple, but very effective way to accomplish this goal, is to gather the papers and assignments of students while we are teaching the course. All of the students can benefit from this assignment, and it will be based on the needs of their ministry. This will be an answer for others. Collect the resources, distribute them, and it will be a useful framework that is developed in Ukraine.”

“That is a great idea!”

“And,” she continued, “This will be applicable abroad throughout the former Soviet Union.”

Alina was not alone. Four people mentioned that they are trying to add more practical reading assignments to the courses in place of some of the theoretical readings
that are currently assigned. Radik Tsurkan has been making adjustments to assignments and to the readings in the YM 223: Curriculum Development for Small Groups class he teaches. He said:

I teach one week of a curriculum development class; then I teach one week concerning small groups, but I connect the two weeks. The first week is theory, and the second week is practice. In the second week, I added the course “How to lead small groups.” I first teach them how they should write this, but then during the second week, I help them apply it. For example, we prepare the lesson plans the first week, and then on Tuesday during the second week, they must actually do the lesson plans in small groups based on the first week of material. I try to figure out at what level they are at.

We sit and analyze the small groups during the second week. There were no notes at all on small groups from my American teachers. When I started teaching this, I had no material. I found an amazing book in Russian on small groups, entitled “Why Small Groups?” The editors are Mahaney & Somerville, but there are 8 authors in this book. They are all American authors. I now use this book, because it is more practical than the other books we had before. (personal communication, May 24, 2014)

**Simplify Terminology**

Five teachers mentioned that they needed to simplify some of the terminology in the notes. The fact that the material had been translated into Russian did not mean that it was all culturally appropriate.

Sasha teaches in Volyn Bible College in Western Ukraine, one hour from the Polish border. “I took the theories and bookish language out of the Youth Culture notes. I also took out words that we are not familiar with in Russian. I removed some theoretical charts and I shared my own experience from my culture” (S. Tkachuk, personal communication, May 27, 2014).

When I asked Misha Vakhtomin whether the material he inherited to teach was relative to Ukraine, he answered, “Some terms are not clear. I did not have enough time to change them, but I plan to do so the next time I teach. I would skip some terms and add
better explanation to important terms” (M. Vakhtomin, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

I questioned Radik Tsurkan to see if there was anything he felt that he had inherited from the American notes that were inappropriate for Ukraine. He said, “There is one assignment we give in the Curriculum Development course that puzzles me. They have to write a Scope and Sequence for their youth ministry. Why is it called this? It is a very hard term to understand. I don’t like this term.”

I felt badly that he as the teacher did not understand a term that he was supposed to teach. I explained what the term meant, and then added, “It is a pedagogical term. We use the term in education. My translator found this term in Russian pedagogical books as well, so we decided to use it in our notes.”

Radik replied, “It is too hard of a term. I have not removed it yet, but we need to remove it.”

“By all means, Radik,” I said. “You have full freedom to do this.” For me, it was another example of how the Ukrainian teachers were simplifying the terminology that they inherited from us Americans, so that they can convey appropriate meanings.

On the extreme side of simplifying terminology, I have an example from Boris (name changed for security). Boris taught some of the youth ministry material while he was on a mission trip to Tajikistan. He and Victor [name changed for security], another youth ministry teacher from the KTS program, have been invited to return to Tajikistan to train youth workers. They are planning to go again in the summer of 2015. I asked Boris if he will change the content of the notes.
He said, “We must. We will keep it simple. In the program at KTS, it was not really simple. We would like to make it simpler. I will not teach all the notes from the seminary, because of the persecution that this country has towards Christianity.

“I know that you will not get a lot of time to teach when you go there, so how do you plan to adapt the training?”

“We will probably accent discipleship and the camps,” Boris said, “because they can do camps for about 20 to 25 people without a problem. I would also help them with planning. This is a big need, and the course about Ministry to Troubled Youth would be really good. But I have to make it simple. I will need to simplify it even more than it is now.”

Add Ukrainian Examples and Culture to Course Content

There were 65 occurrences of codes underneath this statement in the interviews. Twenty-one different times, teachers and students talked about adapting the notes to Ukrainian culture. Also, in 21 different interviews, the participants mentioned that they added Ukrainian examples to the content. Eleven people mentioned that local authors had been added.

Adapted Notes to Ukrainian Culture

As a missionary, my desire from the beginning was to contextualize the notes and course work to the Ukrainian culture, but the Ukrainian teachers are taking it further. The first class I taught at the seminary, YM 101: Philosophy of Youth Ministry had a chart on which the entire program was based. This chart summarized the main youth ministry strategy that we were teaching. It originated from the notes of Dr. David Adams, the
Director of the International Center for Youth Ministry at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. My mission used this chart all over the world. However, when I started the work of contextualizing this chart to a former Soviet Union country, an obvious problem materialized. The chart had two parts. The bottom section was a pyramid describing the five stages or levels of youth ministry programming: Pre-evangelism, evangelism, discipleship, equipment for ministry, and leadership development. The top section had a star with five points, showing the five characteristics of a spiritually mature teenager. The chart showed that the goal of youth ministry was to design our programs in such a way that the result would be a spiritually mature teenager with five characteristics: converted, churched, craving God’s word, compassion for the lost, and consecrated. The contextualization problem I noticed was the star at the top of the chart, which looked similar to the Soviet Union star (see Figure 7). This was an obvious problem.

I mentioned this to my Ukrainian administrative assistant, Lena Yakim, and she had an idea. She had recently seen a short cartoon produced by a ministry that was based in St. Petersburg. In the story, a famous cartoon character gives her life to Christ and shares her testimony with her boyfriend. The character, Masyana, was known all over the Russian-speaking world as a partying teenager. We decided that if we used the Masyana character on top of our pyramid in place of the star and showed the cartoon of her salvation experience, then the meaning of a converted and growing teenager as the goal of youth ministry would be better understood. In my early years of teaching at the seminary, I experimented with this contextualized model. It seemed to work. We taught our model of youth ministry based on scripture, yet included Masyana as an illustration.
Figure 7. Original uncontextualized American youth ministry strategy.


This is an example of contextualization by Americans, but the Ukrainian teachers have taken it further. In my interviews, the teachers and students alike called this strategy
“The Masyana model.” The American teachers did not call it that. When I taught, Masyana was simply an illustration at the top of the pyramid. She can now be found copied throughout the youth ministry notes as a theme, and she is referred to throughout the program. Their adaptation was to change the name of the model to “The Masyana model” and claim it as their own. The latest version of the ministry model chart is seen in Figure 8.

![Figure 8. The Masyana model from Ukrainian YM 101 notes.](image)

*Note. From course notes, YM 101, Kyiv Theological Seminary. Used by permission.*
Other teachers made even more significant changes to the model. Victor (name changed for security), who has taught in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, said that he had a hard time explaining the first level of the pyramid, Pre-Evangelism, to his students, so I asked him what changes he made.

Victor said, “I changed the pyramid that is part of YM 101. We took out the pre-evangelism stage of the pyramid and included it in the evangelism stage. We started at the evangelism level. We also changed the pitfalls on each level. We talked a lot about this.”

“Did you feel like this was a cultural adaptation?” I asked.

“Yes. We saw benefits of these changes, so we now have four levels. Evangelism always includes relationship building in our culture, so I don’t understand why we would separate it. There were many questions from the students about the pre-evangelism level and it was too hard to explain, so we just took it out.”

Victor felt that relationship building (or the pre-evangelism stage) was assumed in Slavic culture and did not need to be separated from evangelism. Thus, he changed the American model to fit his culture.

Some Ukrainian teachers feel that additional adaptations to match Ukrainian culture need to be made in other courses as well. I asked Misha Feyer what other courses needed to be adapted. He said,

The notes and material from the Youth Ministry Programming course and the Curriculum Development course are relevant to youth ministry in Ukraine. On the other hand, the notes from the Youth Culture course are still based on American culture, and our culture is just now going through what the Americans have experienced before. Therefore, the material is dated. I would like to adapt this for our Ukrainian culture in our Baptist churches. The program can teach about
globalization too, so there is a connection. (personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Some students are noticing that the Ukrainian teachers are making cultural adjustments. On a phone interview, one student commented about the contextualization that is taking place,

In my opinion, the curriculum for the youth ministry courses for Ukraine is effective, but is not as good as it can be. I want to give many thanks to our Ukrainian teachers who are gradually adapting it to our culture and to our ministry. A lot of it is appropriate, but there are certain tasks, even resources, which for my ministry at the moment are not necessary. You never know, though; they may be needed in the future. Many things do not seem worth my attention, but then God brings them back to mind so that I can use them in my service. (Natasha Kvasyliv, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Add Ukrainian Examples

Several teachers shared that they are adding Ukrainian examples to their content. Many of these examples have not yet been included in the students’ written handouts, but they have been added to the teachers’ notes. Some teachers add examples orally as they are speaking.

Misha Vakhtomin said that it is a gradual process. “The examples are being added from the context of our culture. Names, lifestyle, life situations, problems of our culture; these are the examples which I am adding.” (personal communication, May 7, 2014).

Vasya said, “We are sharing about how this is working in our church. I gave Grace Church examples of how we used the philosophies in our church, and I also gave examples from different churches. How can we build this youth ministry philosophy in our Ukrainian churches?” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 21, 2014)

I asked Vasya if he doubted the relevancy of the content, since there were not very many Ukrainian examples. He said, “The curriculum is absolutely relevant. Maybe
it was harder to understand because there were not Ukrainian examples, but the principles were there. When I give examples, all of them are verbal examples, except for the vision of the Baptist Union.”

I questioned him further about this, “Do you have plans to formalize these changes?”

“Of course it is our desire to have printed examples some day,” he answered. “I have them in my teacher notes, but they are not in the student notes yet. This is something we will be working on for the future.”

Radik Tsurkan also had comments related to how he added Ukrainian examples to the Curriculum Development for Small Groups class. He used Ukrainian examples to challenge his students toward improvement in discipleship.

Based on my ministry experience, I raised the question to my students, “Why do I need to have a disciple?” I wanted to connect spiritual maturity to our involvement in discipleship. This is a new idea in the Post-Soviet Union times. Twenty years have already passed, but the format of our Christianity is still from the past. The Cathedral format is still in the whole church. People think that a pastor can stay behind the pulpit. Discipleship is not really in the Ukrainian church. Revivals are happening in small groups, especially in the Baptist Union. It is very slow, but we are going in this direction. As I was teaching, I tried to prove the necessity of having this model. I gave examples from our ministry. I led discussions and talked about the steps we need to take. I really tried to convince my students about this need. I was much stronger in talking about this than my American teachers were. They gave me good influence and helped me format this vision. I added my ministry examples and emphasized the fact that we need to change. (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

Ilya Shevelenko is a graduate of youth ministry from Kherson in Southern Ukraine. He was invited to be a guest teacher at KTS for the YM 101: Philosophy of Youth Ministry course. When I interviewed Ilya by Skype with my interpreter, he said that he had added Ukrainian examples in place of the American examples.
I gave more practical examples and my personal stories. Since the lectures started after lunch, I began with a passage from the Bible to throw a challenge to work with youth. I gave more Biblical talk and prayer, and then we went through lectures. I just went through the notes and added my own stories and examples. (Ilya Shevelenko, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

Teachers at the regional Bible colleges also added Ukrainian examples to the content. Sasha at Volyn Bible College said, “In the *Youth Camping* course, I added personal examples on how to lead camps in regard to tent camping. This meets our culture. Most of our churches are poor, so we must add examples that we can accomplish. We have also done extreme camps now for seven years, and we have had great results. I share these examples in class.” (S. Tkachuk, personal communication, May 27, 2014).

For the *Ministry to Troubled Youth* class at Rivne Bible College, Sasha Muyler does the same thing. “I was given PowerPoint lecture notes, but I added my own photos, stories, and examples from my experience. The students took notes from these lectures” (S. Muyler, personal communication, May 24, 2014). When he was speaking about the *Youth Culture* class, he said, “It was important to add information from our church programs to give *real* examples from our ministry. We do certain games at school with kids, their parents, and teenagers. We explain how they can use this in their local culture and what methods they may use to influence the society” (personal communication, May 24, 2014).

Several students agreed with the teachers. The Ukrainian examples that were added to the curriculum significantly helped their understanding.

Yes. The teacher gave advice, which contributed to a better understanding of the material. We learned how to conduct a youth survey on the basis of his own experience. When we each shared about culture of our cities, the teacher also shared his stories and ministry experience. He shared his experiences in reaching young people from his city. (Katrina from Odessa, personal communication, May 23, 2014)
Since Vasya is Ukrainian, he came closer to the context of youth ministry in Ukraine. At that time, he was involved in youth ministry in the city of Rivne; now he is still in youth ministry, but in Irpen. Vasya has so much to say about youth ministry from his own experience. He is well aware of the essence, or the philosophy of youth ministry, and he often tries to remind his students. (Sergey from Poltava, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

The students recognize the advantages of having Ukrainian teachers versus American teachers. “An American teacher is of a foreign culture, and his examples are far from our real Slavic life. I am so thankful for the examples of Ukrainian and Russian teachers that are similar to our own experiences” (Anya from Kyiv, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

Sveta from Kyiv said, “American teachers are from a foreign culture and share according to their examples, which are far from our real Slavic life. We appreciated the examples shared from Ukraine and Russia, which are similar to our own experience” (S. Stanislavchuk, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

“The original American material was good, so the Ukrainian teachers did not have to change the essence of the content. The exception is that the examples and statistics had to change, but the theory was pretty good” (Focus Group, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

From the interviews, it appeared that as the Ukrainian teachers shared personal examples from their lives, they gave credence to the material. When an American shared a personal example, it would not get the same emotional impact since it was shared from a foreign experience. This could also be true of a shared experience. When I was interviewing Radik, he said that he had gone to a deeper level with his students than his American teachers had.

“In class, I spoke about the importance of writing a spiritual journal. I first learned about this from my American teacher. I gave diaries as an example in front of everyone. I
showed real diaries; my diaries. I wrote red ink in my journal when I had hard times. I used different colors.”

I asked, “Did the American teachers do the same thing?”

“American just talked about it,” Radik said. “Many times I saw that God was talking to me through my notes. I even read some of these quotes in class. These things are not just theory; they show the students that it is real!” Radik smiled, “Americans did not do this. But right during the lectures, I showed them.”

Add Denominational Training

I took field notes when I walked around the youth ministry office in May 2014, looking for any changes that might have been made. One of the changes that I noted, were two posters related to the Baptist Union, the largest evangelical denomination in Ukraine. I remembered that Vasya had talked about this in our interview. He told me, “We added our denomination’s vision, plans, and goals to the notes. I am the assistant to the youth ministry director for the Baptist Union. We added this into the notes, since most of us are from this denomination. We also changed statistics from American to Ukrainian statistics, which we have from our denomination’s research” (personal communication, May 21, 2014).

There are four posters on the door. Two of the posters were related to activities within the Ukrainian Baptist Union Youth Ministry Department. One poster was an older poster that I had actually produced when I was a director here, advertising the youth ministry program. It had not been updated for over two years. I updated them annually when I was there. There was also a one-page document on the door, asking prayer for Ukraine specifically related to the crisis that is currently going on in the Eastern part of
the country. I think it is positive that not only the seminary, but the Ukrainian denomination, is taking ownership of the youth ministry program started by American missionaries.

**From Big City to Village Culture Changes**

Maxeem Zhilin and his brother Kolya graduated from the KTS youth ministry program in 2011. They are both orphans that grew up through 9th grade in government orphanages. After trade school, they entered our seminary with a desire to reach youth, and especially orphans, with the gospel. Upon graduation, they returned to their hometown of Rivne to start a home for orphans and to serve in their church as youth leaders. Maxeem has been a guest teacher at KTS and at Rivne Bible College. During our interview, I asked what adjustments he had made that were unique for his region of Ukraine.

Maxeem said, “When we have tried to share things from this youth ministry program to people from traditional churches, especially when we were doing this in the small villages, we faced some problems. Not everybody was very supportive.”

“Who was not supportive?” I asked.

“Pastors and brothers’ boards were not always supportive. They grew up with the Post-Soviet mindset. In order to not bring any tension between youth ministers and older leaders of the church, I had to leave some things out from the material that I was planning to teach.”

A couple of the other participants also mentioned that they needed to make cultural adjustments in the curriculum, that allowed those from villages to understand the content.
I continued to question Maxeem, “You also taught a class at the seminary in Kyiv. Did you make any similar changes to the course you taught there?”

He answered, “There were a few changes I made to the YM 202 class on Youth Ministry Programming. I did not make a lot of changes, because there was only a small amount of information in this course that wasn’t already completely adjusted to our culture.”

“Did you ever have village culture issues when teaching in Kyiv?”

“Yes, I did,” Maxeem replied. “I have also changed some things there, because I was teaching this course to people who are serving in villages, who did not live in the big cities. I think these changes helped them apply the lessons practically.”

Add Ukrainian Statistics

Vasya Ostriy, KTS Youth Ministry Director, has been gradually adding Ukrainian statistics to the content. I asked him to send me documents from different classes he has been teaching, and he included a PowerPoint presentation that he added with several statistics about the churches in Ukraine. It is very important for him and the other teachers to replace the original American statistics that were present in the notes. Vasya commented, “There is not enough motivation for students with American statistics. It is important that students have an understanding of the Ukrainian situation” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 22, 2014).

For example, one slide of his PowerPoint presentation gives statistics about the number and size of churches in the Evangelical Baptist Union in Ukraine. The slide in Figure 9 says that there are 1,405 churches in the Union with 1-30 people in the church, and there are 69 churches with over 300 people. The numbers in the slide say that there
Figure 9. Example of a YM 101 PowerPoint slide with Ukrainian statistics added, showing numbers of churches of various sizes in the Evangelical Baptist Union.

Note: From PowerPoint presentation developed by V. Ostriy for course YM101. Used by permission.

are 772 churches with up to 15 people; 633 churches with between 15-30 people; 434 churches with between 30-50 people; 305 churches with between 50-100 people; 180 churches with between 100-200 people; 74 churches with 200-350 people; 31 churches with 350-500 people; 18 churches with 500-1000 people; and 10 churches with more than 1000 people.
Four participants in the study mentioned that they had added new statistics to the content. This included Misha Vakhtomin who commented that he plans to research for more statistics concerning youth, before he teaches his next class.

I love the principles found in the notes. Though the next time I teach, I will study more about Ukrainian youth in advance. I will do a survey of youth before class. All the statistics in the notes for the class I taught were old. The general sequence of the class was good. I would like to make more changes the next time I teach. I like the iceberg principle theory, which is in the notes. I would prefer more Ukrainian examples. I want to help the students to understand today’s situation more. (M. Vakhtomin, personal communication, May 22, 2014)

Add Local Authors

A few of the teachers are trying to add new reading material from Russian and Ukrainian authors, but it is difficult to find. They would like to replace reading material translated from American authors, but they must first find or produce the books before this is possible. When Sasha Onyshuk taught a portion of the Youth Missions course, he added additional reading from Sergei Sukyenko, a Russian author. The book’s title is Thoughts Outloud, approximately 170 pages in length (S. Onyshuk, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

As I was leading our focus group, students commented, “Ukrainians inherited the American reading materials. I would rather have books from my own language and culture. We noticed that some of the grammar needs to be changed. We found mistakes in the translations” (Focus Group, personal communication, May 22, 2014).

A masters student said, “Regarding educational materials, and I believe that all of us students would say this in unison; the authors of the original source should be people of Ukrainian culture. This requires adaptation of the reading material for Ukraine. It
needs to be changed, including the statistics and examples” (A. Krivobok, personal communication, May 24, 2014).

Another masters student said, “The notes are very well suited for Ukrainian culture. However, I would like to see more books on youth ministry written by Ukrainian ministers, because the American books are not adapted to our culture, especially the books we used for practical training” (Vladimir Demidovka, personal communication, May 24, 2014).

When I discussed this issue with Radik, he had a plan that was very similar to the idea formerly mentioned by Alina Krivobok. I asked, “Radik, are you still teaching the Curriculum Development students to write their own lesson plans?”

He said, “Vasya and I felt that there were too many lessons to write for this project. Remember that when you taught this course, you had the students write 16 full lesson plans for 4 different age groups, for 4 years of curriculum. I reduced the work when I taught my 2nd and 3rd year, but now we have put the work back to the way it used to be.”

I asked, “Why did you do this?”

“I was talking with Vasya. Our Ukrainian minds need to have this material, and it needs to be published. We want to publish the best work of the students, so now we are making the lesson plans again. If the students succeeded before, they can succeed in the future” (personal communication, May 23, 2014).

As I continued to explore the youth ministry office, I noticed the bookshelves. My eyes were drawn to the books on the shelves, and I saw that they were full of Russian and Ukrainian books. It appeared that some of the books are resource books, while some
books are for sale. Most of them are related to youth ministry. We did not sell books from this office when I was at the seminary. This is an addition from the Ukrainian teachers. I was encouraged to see many more books than I had seen previously, but I believe that many of them are still translated from American authors, rather than original works from Slavic authors. It was good, however, to see that this adaptation is a high value to both teachers and students and will eventually be fully realized.

Add Transitional Training to Help Youth Pastors Work with Pastors

Ilya Shevelenko lives in the city of Kherson in Southern Ukraine. He graduated from KTS in 2011. Ilya has been a guest teacher at KTS, as well as training youth leaders in his region using the youth ministry curriculum. My original plan was to travel around Ukraine during the month of May in order to conduct my interviews face-to-face with the Ukrainian teachers, but the crisis limited my travel abilities. Ilya was unable to travel to Kyiv, so we conducted our interview by Skype.

Ilya’s first teaching experience was unique. In 2007, the church planting and pastoral ministry directors agreed with me, that we needed more cross-pollination between the majors at the seminary. We decided that all of the pastoral students should take YM 101, while all of the youth ministry students would take CP 101: Introduction to Church Planting. Ilya’s first teaching assignment at the seminary had been to teach a portion of the YM 101 class to the pastoral students. This was one of the hardest classes I taught, when I was a teacher at KTS. While we were talking about the adaptations he made during this course, he asked if he could share a story,

One pastor asked, “Are these really your notes; is this material from you? Do you really believe in what you are teaching?”
I said that this was the first time I had taught, so I would need time to analyze the notes more for myself. He said that the information that was being taught was on a shallow level. It was like milk.

“Mike, I am telling you what he thinks. I talked to Vasya about this, as well. The pastor thought that our principles of youth ministry are based on human foundations and not on the Bible. He did not like the order in which the principles were taught. For example, the principle that says youth ministry is to be based on Biblical truth. He thought it should be moved to be into the first place of the notes. I think it is the third principle that we teach. There was also a lot of discussion about the principle that says youth ministry should be built on enthusiasm. I need to chew on this some more. (I. Shevelenko, personal communication, May 21, 2014)

I asked, “Did the situation with the pastor resolve itself? Did he leave the class in a better mood?”

“First, I must say,” he answered with a smile, “that it was good that Vasya helped me with the discussion in the classroom on this subject. The pastor said that if I would send a youth leader to study at the seminary’s youth ministry program, the youth leader’s principles would be like water, non-tangible, and weak.”

“Did you agree with him?”

Ilya thought for a moment and replied, “I said that I did agree with him in certain matters and that there should be some changes to the program. I told him that normally we teach this program to first year students at the seminary, and he was a third year student. He already had experience.”

When we initiated this system at the seminary for pastoral students to take the youth ministry program’s introductory level course and vise versa, we had to fit the courses into their programs at the junior level, or third year. This is what Ilya was referring to.

He continued, “We need to review this information. The group was a pastoral group, so maybe this information was too simple for them.”
I interrupted. “Could there be another reason, as well?”

“Yes, it relates to our culture. The church culture is not relaxed and free, so they look carefully at things that bring change. I asked him [the pastoral student] to talk to the Program Director, but he never talked to Vasya, to express his opinion.”

“Do you think this was the general opinion of everyone in the class?”

Ilya shook his head. “Oh, no. This was just one person. The others were glad that I took part in teaching. I think they enjoyed the class” (I. Shevelenko, personal communication, May 21, 2014)

Vasya and a couple of the other teachers mentioned this problem. They are trying to solve it by adding material to the course that will address a problem that the Ukrainian church is facing. They want to add practical material to help the youth leaders directly in their ministries. Vasya commented on this issue,

I have added reading material from a Russian author that I was introduced to. I added articles on the theme of “transferring leadership” or “transitional models.” I did this, because the Ukrainian students need to know how to change from the old Ukrainian ministry models to these new models that we are teaching them at the seminary. This would give them a plan for how to make the transition smoothly. Our goal is that there would be fewer conflicts. I needed to teach our students how to get from the old models to the new. I also taught them how to take their leadership team or staff to the new philosophy. I attended a seminar called the Institute of Leadership and Guidance. It was led by a Russian-German named Rudy Duke. The author was born in Russia and immigrated to Germany. This material shows the process. Sometimes youth ministry students are newly converted and do not have leadership positions yet. This helps them to understand the process, when they will face these problems. (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 19, 2014)

Reduce Psychological Content and Add Biblical Content

There were 18 occurrences of codes underneath this statement in the interviews. Eight different times, teachers and students talked about adding more scripture to the
notes. In four different interviews, participants mentioned that they were adding evangelistic training to the material of the course.

**Reduce Psychological Material**

Three of the participants mentioned that they had reduced the amount of psychological material in the notes. Some of the teachers did not like the assigned reading materials, especially if the American author was a Christian psychologist. One Ukrainian teacher said,

> When I first read the assigned reading for the class *Ministry to Troubled Youth*, I shared my opinion to the teacher. I was aware of the problems relating to psychologists, because I had read Les Parrott books before. He talks about psychology and more about the needs of youth. The author said that their needs were not met correctly, and the Bible calls this sin. I would also like to say something about the *Family Ministry* course, which talks about filling our needs. I believe that the book about five love languages is against the Bible. We need to be talking more about the Bible in our classes. I do this when I teach. In these books I see a lot of psychology, so I take that out. I would advise Vasya to take out all the psychology from all of the courses. (S. Tkachuk, personal communication, May 27, 2014)

Not everyone agreed in this area, but it appeared that several teachers did not like material that came from American Christian psychologists or clinical counselors. As I was discussing the topic of teaching methodologies with Radik, he also mentioned the negative influence of psychology on the church.

> I use the discussion method of teaching all the time. If I realize they need some information, I give it. In general, we use the process of discussion in the class. I am sharing what God is leading me; what is fresh for me. I don’t want to simply give them the conservative way. For example, concerning psychology – it takes many believers away from the truth. Our philosophy of church should be based on small groups; it is not simply added to the church as another ministry. This is how the church exists. For many people, this information can be new. They say, “WOW!” It gives me the opportunity to keep teaching them. (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 23, 2014)
Remove Controversial Material

Some other subjects in the youth ministry curriculum caused controversy to teachers and students. A minority of my participants mentioned that they needed to remove controversial material, but it seemed to match the overall addition of practical material to the content. One student made the following comment:

The philosophy of youth ministry was taught more from American culture than Ukrainian culture. For example, the question of whether rock music is acceptable in the church or not. Here in Ukraine, it is a very controversial issue. In the course *Ministry to Troubled Youth*, we had constant debates. One of our debates was about when a Christian who uses drugs comes to the pastor and asks for his help. We say that such a person is not a Christian, and he needs to repent before he asks for help. (Bogdan, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

When I was conducting my Skype interview with Ilya from Kherson, I asked if there were certain parts of the content that he was planning on removing the next time he taught.

Ilya answered, “Yes. Let me talk about Masyana and using this example of youth ministry. Some or one of the pastors did not like the image. I can assume that he has or they have stereotypes.”

I said, “I thought Masyana was a better way to contextualize the strategy. What do you think?”

“Maybe this image is acceptable for the younger generation, but he does not like this image for the older generation. I can suggest some things.”

“That is why I am asking these questions. What do you think you will do differently the next time you teach?” I asked.

“I would for sure still teach the principles of youth ministry. I went through them as a student, so nothing surprises me. I would still use “Masyana,” but it depends on the
audience.” Ilya explained further, “For youth pastors and students at the seminary it is good, but maybe among the pastors, I would change it” (I. Shevchenko, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

Add Evangelism Training

“We must add an evangelism course or evangelism training to our current courses. Every course has the assumptions that our students understand this already. I try to add it when I am teaching.” (S. Tkachuk, personal communication, May 27, 2014).

Misha Feyer is one of our first-generation graduates who has begun to co-teach the Ministry to Troubled Youth course. As he and Program Director Vasya Ostriy discussed what they planned to teach, they decided that they would like to add the XEE curriculum (Evangelism Explosion for Youth) to the course. Misha is a certified trainer in this curriculum, as well as being the youth coordinator in Ukraine for Evangelism Explosion. Misha said, “I told Vasya that this would be great, because we are talking about the troubled youth, and the main question that we pursued is how to evangelize them, right? We do not just need to know about their needs, because their need is Christ, and we know that definitely.”

As I continued my interview with Misha, I could sense he was passionate about one of the changes he made to the content of the course. I decided to direct my questions towards this particular adaptation. “Misha, We gave an assignment during that class, instructing students to go on the street and ask youth questions about what they liked to do, how they liked to spend their free time, etc.? Did you continue with this assignment?”

Misha answered, “When we did the street survey of youth culture with an American teacher, we met a lot of young people, but we did not share about God. We
only asked questions about a specific topic. After my graduation from the Seminary, I had opportunities to share about Christ, and that is when I realized that I did not know how to do it right.” He paused for a moment, and then continued. “So, when I was invited to teach at the seminary, I thought it would be very practical to approach young people and to bring the gospel in their language.”

I continued my line of questioning to determine what changes he had made, “So did you change the survey which the Americans created?”

“I would say that we did not change the survey, but we added to it. Instead of just doing the street surveys and meeting people, we added some more questions. We were asking different type of questions. We went more to evangelism, so that’s why we added the XEE curriculum.”

“How did the students respond to this addition?” I asked.

“Really well. Right after I taught the session at the seminary, I went to Odessa because some of our students asked me teach the whole XEE course in Odessa.”

“What was your thinking process as you made this change?”

Misha thought and then shared, “During the session, our group of students prepared questions about tattoos on their bodies. So I led a discussion in class at the time of our lessons, and I asked them, what was the reason for our survey. What was the goal of our survey? They said that there was no goal.”

I was surprised. “They said that there was no goal? Really?”

“Yes,” he replied. “They said, ‘We just want to know their culture. Why are they doing it?’ But that’s not going to help in general to them. We are believers, and we have
some answers. When we are meeting people, we are called to share the gospel. We don’t want to just use people for answers” (M. Feyer, personal communication, June 3, 2014).

Misha’s adaptation was not simply the desire to add evangelism training, but to add Biblical content and practice that would encourage his students to use their time wisely. He adapted the goals of this project, so that it changed from gathering information and cultural awareness to a ministerial practice of evangelism.

Add More Scripture and Use Biblical Terms

Eight participants said that they added more scripture or changed the terms in the notes to vocabulary from the Bible. Victor [name changed for security] was teaching in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan where the concept of having a youth leader in the church is brand new. He decided to make major adjustments to the curriculum so that the pastors would accept the new information.

When we talked about the professional skills of a youth pastor, I changed the terminology to the biblical qualities of a youth pastor. We work with brothers who know these biblical truths, but we talk more about pastoral qualities. Then I asked the question, ‘Should youth ministers be considered pastors?’ They were quiet, but they had to agree. Many brothers realized that it was not Americans teaching us now; it was the Bible. (Victor, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

As Victor said, having more biblical terminology in the notes gave credence and authority to the youth ministry principles. The pastors could not say the principles were from a foreign culture, especially with a Ukrainian teacher. I used a probing technique of questioning to get more information.

“Victor, can you tell me specifically what changes you made to the curriculum?”

“I changed some principles, because for many pastors there were not enough biblical principles. Some of the principles I renamed. To some of them I added more
biblical foundation. People said, ‘You call it the main principles of youth ministry, but there was no biblical foundation.’”

“Did you change any focus that you had in your training?”

Victor knew what I was looking for. He answered, “We have now a bigger accent in our notes that youth ministry is from the overall church ministry. I was teaching that the senior pastor is responsible for youth ministry, and he delegates his responsibility to the youth pastor.

I smiled, because this had been a goal of my training, and here was one of my disciples training in the same manner. The difference was that he made adaptations to improve the acceptability of the training for Slavic cultures.

Victor concluded by saying that he “underlined the idea that pastors and youth pastors are doing the same ministry. I also emphasized that the youth pastor is a pastor from a biblical standpoint” (Victor, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

Ilya added more scripture to his class. As mentioned earlier, he said, “My lectures started after lunch, so I started by sharing a passage from the Bible and threw them a challenge to work better with youth. I gave a biblical talk and prayer time, and then we went through the lectures” (I. Shevelenko, personal communication, May 20, 2014).

Sasha Tkachuk said that the next time he teaches at Volyn Bible College, he will add a biblical portrait of a pastor from the gospel of John. “John 10 speaks of the Good Shepherd and what He was doing as a pastor. Youth pastors feel like Rambo from the movies. Knowledge can make you proud, but we need to be broken. Youth pastors need more servant-leadership training from scripture” (Sasha Tkachuk, personal communication, May 27, 2014).
During my research, I asked Vasya and the other teachers to send me the latest version of their notes for the youth ministry classes. I compared their latest version of the notes to the notes from which we taught as American teachers. Most of the notes remained the same, except for the additions that have been previously mentioned. However, when I was reading the latest Russian version of the YM 101 notes, I did see some changes. The changes were made to the main points of the course entitled the “Youth Ministry Principles” (see Figure 10).

Vasya Ostriy felt that certain parts of the curriculum needed to be adjusted to reflect its origin from scripture. After hearing the concerns from pastors and other students, he chose to change the five youth ministry principles that are taught in YM 101. He made adjustments in the terminology and added scripture references. The original five principles, which originated from Boyce College and YMI, were:

1. Youth ministry must be professionally led.
   a. Youth Ministry training
   b. Theological training
   c. Longevity of vocation and location
2. Youth ministry is non-traditional.
   The message is the same, but the methods change.
3. Youth ministry is Biblically-based.
   The Word is unchanging and cross-cultural.
4. Youth ministry is local church oriented.
5. Youth ministry is built upon enthusiasm.
   This includes enthusiasm toward the Word generated by enthusiastic programming (notes from YM 101 lectures, Youth Ministry International, 2002)

Vasya sought advice from both American and Ukrainian colleagues to change these five key youth ministry principles. This section of the YM 101 notes (Figure 10) can be translated as such:
1. God's work is being done by God's people (1 Tim. 4: 12)
   Know the Bible (Theological education)
   Know youth and the methods to reach them (Education specialization)
   Longevity in service

2. God's people use cultural methods (1 Cor. 9: 19-23)
   Continuously evaluate the productivity
   Do not create a "sacred cow"
   Look for new methods and approaches

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1. Божью работу делают Божьи люди (1Тим.4:12)
   Знает Библию (богословское образование)
   Знает молодежь и методы их достижения
   (образование по специализации)
   Постоянен в служении

2. Божьи люди используют культурные методы (1Кор.9:19-23)
   Постоянно анализирует продуктивность
   Не создает «святую корову»
   Ищет новые методы и подходы

3. Культурные методы не противоречат Слову Божьему (2Кор.4:1-6)
   Божье Слово неизменно
   Принимается в разных культурах
   Слово Божье нужно преподавать доступно

4. Слово Божье объединяет народ Божий (Еф.4:1-6)
   Молодежное служение—церковное служение
   Не допустимо церковь в церкви
   Методы служение ограничены культурой церкви

5. Когда народ Божий вместе, излучает энтузиазм (Фил.4:4-7)
   Служение связано с благословением
   Служение должно вдохновлять
   Совместное планирование команды должно зажигать

Figure 10. Principles of Youth Ministry, adapted by Kyiv Theological Seminary, in Russian.

Note: From YM 101 course notes, Kyiv Theological Seminary. Used by permission.
3. Cultural methods must not contradict the Word of God (2 Cor. 4: 1-6)  
   God's Word never changes  
   Cross-culturally relevant  
   The Word of God is sufficient  
4. The Word of God brings together the people of God (Ephesians 4: 1-6)  
   Youth Ministry = church service  
   It is not acceptable to have a church in the church  
   Methods of ministry are limited by the church culture  
5. When the People of God are together, they Radiate Enthusiasm (Phil. 4: 4-7)  
   Ministry is connected with blessing  
   Ministry should inspire  
   Combined planning team should ignite a fire  
   (YM 101 notes, KTS, translated from Russian, November 15, 2014)  

As I did a comparison between the original five principles and the adapted five principles, I noticed that the word *professional* was removed from the first principle. Another change is that scripture references have been added to each of the main points in the Ukrainian version to give it stronger biblical authority. The new version states that cultural methods are limited by God’s Word. The American version implies this, but does not state it outright. In the American version, Principle 4 makes reference to the large para-church youth movement in the United States by stating that youth ministry should be focused on the local church. The Ukrainian Principle 4 focuses on the relationship of the youth ministry that is already *in* the local church and states that it should not be a separate ministry. Generally speaking, the Ukrainian adaptation focuses on connecting each of the principles to scripture in a greater way.

**Create Decentralized Training Programs**

There were 16 occurrences of codes underneath this statement in the interviews. Eight times, teachers talked about the programs that they were creating for regional seminar training. In four different interviews, participants mentioned that they were
combining or reducing the courses in order to provide more opportunities for youth ministry training.

One of the key adaptations that I observed was the Ukrainian teachers’ desire to adjust the curriculum for regional training. As Sasha Muyler said, “Not everyone who takes part in youth ministry and has a desire to study has the opportunity to come to the Seminary and spend so much time for training” (personal communication, May 24, 2014). Vasya and his team had a strong desire to create a decentralized training program, but that would require them to adapt the curriculum content. I met one-on-one with Vaysa and asked him to explain the motivation behind his plan.

I am in leadership of the Baptist Union of our 2,000 churches. Every region has a youth ministry leader. They only do what they have heard before. There is no high-level youth ministry training in the former Soviet Union outside this seminary. Many youth ministry leaders will not go to the seminary. We want to help youth leadership teams all over Ukraine. We want to teach them seminars. We want to give 4-5 hour seminars and to make it practical for them. (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 21, 2014)

“So what was the process behind creating this new version of the original content?” I asked.

“We met with our graduates. We discussed which topics should be in the seminars, and we chose five main subjects.” Vasya leaned forward as he continued, “We started the process to create seminar curriculum, and we want to use the youth ministry graduates as the teachers. They can train the leaders in their regions.”

“When did you do this?”

He sat back in his chair, “So, of course you are familiar with the annual meeting of the Advisory Board or what we call our graduates reunion.” I had started these annual meetings of our graduates, including each current class of seniors. My intent was that the
students who studied youth ministry at the seminary could get to know our graduates, so they could support each other in their regional ministries around Ukraine.

Vasya continued, “The reunion takes place during the *YM 403: Professional Orientation* class. This past year, we invited only those graduates who have already taught a youth ministry class, or who are open to teaching.”

I interrupted for clarification, “This is the time we normally invited *all* of the graduates to meet with the current seniors in the program, but you are saying that this year, you invited only the graduates who were involved in teaching?”

“Yes, that’s right,” Vasya answered. “We divided all the participants into four teams and gave them a task. We shared our plans to prepare and train youth leaders in the churches. To do this, we wanted to base the teaching on our current courses and create a new set of notes. Each team had to select the five most important courses or topics. Then they had to make a rating of the importance of these topics and the sequence for teaching.”

Once again, I paused for clarification. “Let me make sure I understand. You were talking about classes like *YM 101, Youth Culture, YM Programming, etc.* You wanted each team to determine what they thought was the most important material to keep, and what they thought could be left out?”

“Exactly!” Vasya replied. “After all the teams presented their findings, we had a full group discussion. You can see the results in the photo images that Sam (Hughes) took from the whiteboard.”

I took out my phone and showed him a photo. “Like this one?” (see Figure 11)
He confirmed the photo, saying, “Yes, that’s it. We had this idea to create material from KTS when I became the director of the youth ministry program. This idea has only come to reality now, and now is just the beginning. We are still in the process of making these changes.”

“Who has been involved in this process?”

He replied, “Everyone. I shared the idea with Mike Gustafson and Sam Hughes (American youth ministry teachers). First, we talked about it at the level of ideas, but then
we decided to make concrete steps. We engaged our students, graduates, and teachers in this process.”

Vasya’s goal has been to create five booklets that are also note-taking guides from the edited versions of the notes. These guides could then be used for seminars or teaching at the regional Bible colleges. They also can be used as the teachers go to foreign countries. The first guide was completed in September of 2014, and I discuss it in Chapter 8.

**Ukrainian Teachers for Regional Seminars**

Several participants talked about this adaptation in content development as discussed in the previous dialogue with Vasya. Sasha Muyler, director of the youth ministry program at Rivne Bible College (RBC) created a new class for his regional training, using part of the notes from his youth ministry training at KTS.

I taught a few youth ministry classes at RBC this past year, including *Youth Culture* and a new class that we developed entitled *Social Work with Destructive Families*. We combined content from KTS and my own experiences of serving in our city’s youth ministry. I included content from a sports program course too. I want to combine the theoretical knowledge from KTS with practical knowledge from our own experiences in our region. (S. Muyler, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Ukrainian teachers, not American teachers, have conducted all of the regional training. The regional training has been reaching students that probably would not have success in the academic environment at KTS. “The best kind of training for this kind of person is one-on-one and not at the seminary. This kind of person needs care and regular discipleship, not academics” (S. Onyshuk, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

In 2007, I visited Radik Tsurkan in his church ministry in Poltava. I knew that he had plans to train youth leaders in his region, and I wanted to see him in action in his
youth ministry. My wife, Judy, and I went to his church, which was named Salvation Church. The church building was under construction when we arrived, but the fellowship hall was complete. They had the fellowship hall set up as a youth club. Every week, they invited at least one non-Christian youth to attend the club. The program included music, games, conversations around tables, and a speaker, who would share a message related to the topic for the night.

When we arrived, Radik and his youth leadership team greeted us. There were several young people involved in putting out the food, others were setting up audio and sound equipment, while still others were getting tables ready. It all seemed very well organized. We made our way to one of the back tables and sat down. The theme of the night, Things are not Always as They Seem, was shown on a PowerPoint slide. I remember that the slide had an Adidas logo on it, but Adidas was spelled incorrectly to make a point. The D’s in the logo were replaced with letter B’s. The students were asked if they saw anything wrong with the picture. The games that were played during the night were all related to the theme.

At one point during the night, Radik got up with his guitar to lead worship, but for most of the night, others from his youth leadership team were leading different parts of the program. Radik came to sit with Judy and I at the back table. I asked him several questions about his ministry, while we saw it going on around us. He had 70 churches in the region that he was responsible for, and his goal was to encourage the youth leaders in their ministries, as well as to develop a regional training program.

I asked about his responsibilities with his church. I assumed that he was still the youth pastor of his own church, even though he was serving as the Regional Youth
Director for his region. Radik answered, “No, Mike, I am no longer in charge of youth ministry in my church. For the past year, I have been training Zhenya to be the new youth minister.”

I was surprised; I thought that it would not be possible for him to leave his position. Radik continued, “Mike, you taught us that we need to disciple others to replace ourselves. I have done just that. Do you see the young man that is now speaking? That is Zhenya. He is the new youth minister here at this church.”

I was impressed, as this was not common in Ukraine. Radik had trained someone to replace himself! He truly had the heart to train up youth leaders in his region. This is how it should be. He then made a comment that meant a lot to me, “Mike, you realize that if I am your spiritual son, then Zhenya would be your spiritual grandson.” In just five years of ministry in Ukraine, because young men like Radik were catching the vision of 2 Timothy 2:2, God had given me a spiritual grandson in Ukraine.

In 2014, I interviewed Radik again. This time it was for this study, to talk about the adaptations that he had made in the training. At one point during the interview, he stopped me, and asked, “Mike, do you remember Zhenya, the youth pastor at my church, whom I trained?”

“Certainly, Radik. I am a proud grandfather.”

“Actually, you are now a proud great-grandfather! Zhenya has now trained another youth minister to replace him. The regional training is working.”

**Combine or Reduce Courses in Program**

In order to create decentralized training, the Ukrainian teachers have had to adjust the program to make it acceptable in regional Bible colleges, as well as for seminar use.
In a smaller way, this has also happened at KTS. I asked Vasya to explain what they have done in Kyiv.

“We have combined the courses *Youth Missions* and *Camp Programming*. They used to be two separate courses, but now we have one, two-week course with a week on each subject.”

I asked, “Are you considering any other changes in the core youth ministry curriculum at the seminary?”

“Yes, we are planning on working with other majors at the seminary, to combine courses between programs. We are thinking of doing this with the *Youth Missions* course. We are talking to other program directors to put classes together.”

I asked him a tough question, “How would you teach information that is specific to youth ministry, if there are students from other specializations with them in the classroom?”

He already had an answer, “We have talked about that. Our goal is to have one week all together when we teach generally about a subject such as camping. Then, the second week, we can split into our specializations and just talk about youth camping. (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 21, 2014)

Misha Vakhtomin also had a suggestion for a class combination during his interview, “I would like to combine some courses. For example, *Youth Discipleship* and *Ministry to Troubled Youth*. I would like to teach on each subject for a 20-hour class, rather than two 40-hours courses” (M. Vakhtomin, personal communication, May 23, 2014).
**Ukrainian Teachers for Foreign Countries**

Two of the teachers have been taking the youth ministry training to foreign countries. They have made several adjustments to the content in order to be contained in the constraints they were given. Many of these adjustments are similar to changes that Vasya and others have made to the curriculum for regional training.

Victor (name changed for security) has trained in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. First, I asked him to share some of the difficulties they faced in Tajikistan:

In Tajikistan, they asked us to help with a children’s camp. I felt that this could be real life training. We did have difficulties. The church is required to get approval from the government, and we needed it by June 20. We never got the approval. It came time to do the camp in September. When we left with our hosts on September 15 to go to camp, we had no approval. So we did the camp against the law. Every day people were watching us conduct the camp. There was a big prayer chain. One time, KGB came to talk to me about the kids at camp. I had seen these people watching us for three days in a row. I was asked if I was an intern in the country. I said, ‘Yes,’ and they did not close us down. I

In another town, the KGB closed a Christian camp. One night some people drove to our church. They started to ask about the youth, but they just looked around and then left. This is the way they do youth ministry in that country. (Sergey, personal communication, May 27, 2014)

I asked, “Did you do some formal youth ministry training in either of these countries?”

Victor answered, “Yes, especially in Uzbekistan. I taught two years ago. It was a very interesting. I was put in a car. They took us to a house and told us to stay in the car. They closed the gates, opened the door, and told us to go quickly into the house.”

I asked, “Did you do the training in that house?”

“Yes, we lived the whole week in the same house. We never left that house. All fourteen people were living together in one house. We slept on the floor. We were studying and eating together. In one week, I taught the same methods you taught us!”
felt privileged to have had a small influence in training youth leaders in Uzbekistan through Sergey, who continued, “I gave two lectures each day. I talked about our strategy pyramid and the goal of youth ministry.”

“Are there any Bible colleges there, which you could teach in? Maybe underground?”

“We worked with the Union of Underground Churches,” Victor explained. “I met one of the leaders of this union. He said that he wanted to show us one place. We worried about being discovered. We came to an apartment in a building in Tashkent. Forty people were there, and they were studying for three months. They go home for three months, then come back for more studying.”

“How long do they do this?” I questioned.

“They continue this process for about two years. It is an underground seminary, and someday, they want to invite us to come and teach youth ministry courses.”

“Victor, did you hear any testimonies of God working despite the persecution?”

“Oh yes,” he smiled. “They gave some unique testimonies. One girl was a leader of a kids’ camp, but her brother was a colonel in the KGB. According to the law, he was supposed to arrest her, but the whole family should go to prison, so he protected the kids’ camp. He was there and heard what we were preaching about Christ. This honestly gave fire to my heart” (Sergey, personal communication, May 27, 2014).

Boris (name changed for security) was another KTS graduate who has taught with Sergey in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. I asked if he had made adjustments to any of our courses when he taught.
When we were in Tajikistan, we were given the opportunity to teach a course on *Ministry to Troubled Youth*, since it could be used in the school system. We actually taught in the public schools. We knew that our purpose was to share the gospel. We gave our testimonies at the beginning of each lesson, which included Jesus. We could use any tool that we have. The Tajiks who invited us asked us to go into the school and share different topics. We had been communicating by email with the pastor in advance and asked him for opportunities to share the gospel. So he said he would figure out how. He set us up in the schools. When we got to the school, we asked if we could share our testimonies. They allowed us to, as long as they were short. So, for five minutes we shared about our lives with Jesus, and then we shared our lesson. We did change the material to a normal secular lesson.

I commented, “I never dreamed that our curriculum would be used in a secular setting to share the gospel! Did you use the original PowerPoint presentations?”

“No, they checked our computer hard drives when we came through passport control,” Boris explained, “so we could not have religious material on our computers. But we remembered what we had been taught and shared the principles from our memories.”

I probed further, “What was your purpose in teaching an adapted youth ministry course in the public schools in Tajikistan?”

“The first purpose was to share our testimonies to the school students. The second purpose was to build relationships between the schools and the local church people. The pastor and youth leader came with us to the school. We involved them with the class, and we had fun in the lesson. We even did youth group type games after school” (Boris, personal communication, June 3, 2014).

The decentralized training program that the Ukrainian teachers are developing will be useful in the regional Bible colleges, in seminar training, and in cross-cultural settings in foreign countries.
CHAPTER 7

ADAPTATION OF METHODOLOGIES AND TEACHING STYLES

In September 2009, nearly three years before our family left Ukraine, I walked into room A25 at the seminary and felt like a proud parent. Vasya was teaching from his laptop, which was connected to a video projector. His PowerPoint notes were visible on the screen in the front of the room. The notes looked familiar to me, but they were in a different language. He had already translated the Russian PowerPoint slides into the Ukrainian language. There was a group of 12 youth ministry students sitting around tables in the room. Normally, I would have been teaching this class; now my disciple was teaching this class. I was very excited that at this moment, one of my main goals for coming to Ukraine was coming to fruition.

The students were sitting attentively, but they were also actively participating in the discussion. Vasya was not simply lecturing; he was actively teaching this class. He would pause at times and point to the PowerPoint slide and ask the students questions. They would respond, discuss the point, and Vasya would direct the class in the way he wanted them to go. At times there was appropriate laughter, and everything was in the Ukrainian language. There was no translator in the room. There was a different atmosphere in the room, since everyone understood each other. Vasya held himself in a professional manner, yet he was very friendly, as well. At times he would take out a marker and write on the whiteboard. When he wrote, he wrote smoothly, quickly and
without hesitation. If I had been writing on the board, I could have written a few Russian words, but nothing like Vasya was doing. After observing for over an hour, I told the students that I had to go. Everyone politely said goodbye and returned their attention to their teacher. Vasya was their teacher. I was pleased. He was accepted as their own and had both experience and education. If you had been in the hallway when I was leaving the classroom that day, you would have seen a tear in my eye. I was working myself out of a job. On that day, I had seen that it was a reachable goal. Until Vasya got his masters degree, there had not been a Ukrainian youth minister in the country that had the education qualifications required to teach. That had changed. Second Timothy 2:2 was being fulfilled. Now it was up to Vasya and the future teachers to adapt the curriculum we had given them and to change the methods of teaching so that they were more applicable for Ukrainian youth leaders.

Since 2009, Vasya and seven other Ukrainian teachers have been adapting the educational methods. There have not been major changes, yet they have been significant. The coding produced four focused codes related to the adaptations of methodologies:

1. Focus on group learning rather than individual study,
2. Implement teacher-assisted methodical training,
3. Greater relational training versus lectures, and
4. Increase family style and reduce professionalism

**Focus on Group Learning Rather Than Individual Study**

There were 32 occurrences of codes underneath this statement in the interviews. Eleven times, teachers and students talked about focusing on group projects. In seven
different interviews, participants mentioned that they had used group reviews for testing and quizzing, which was not done by the American teachers.

**Focus on Group Projects**

The Ukrainian culture is group oriented and relational. Even though the most common methodology in the secular university is lecture, most of the testing consists of oral evaluations with the entire group present. It is no wonder, then, that the Ukrainian teachers have added more group projects as a method of training in the youth ministry program. Radik Tsurkan added a large group project to the *Curriculum Development for Small Groups* class. I asked him to explain the purpose of the project during his interview.

“We write lesson plans for a small group Bible study during the first week, on Tuesday,” Radik said. “During the second week, they act out the lesson plans in a mock small group, based on the first week of material. By doing this project, I try to figure out at what level each student is at.”

I asked, “What is the actual assignment?”

“I divide the students into groups of three or four. Each group must do a presentation, in which they prepare a one-hour small group Bible study. They need to reduce the information, if necessary, to make it happen. I give them four topics: friendship, fairness, love and disappointment.”

“Do they prepare the lessons for a high school group?”

Radik answered, “Not exactly. I assign different age categories of small groups to prepare for. The main assignment is their first mock small group with non-Christians, and they need to share gospel. They show this in class.”
I probed deeper, “How do you do the grading for this project?”

“We analyze the process together, including the room setting, how people meet each other, their discussion, etc. After each group shares their mock lesson plan, we talk about it as a whole group.”

“Can you say that the entire group gives a grade for each group’s project?”

He smiled, “Yes, you could say that; with my input, of course” (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

When American teachers taught the Youth Culture class, there was one individual presentation assigned, in which each student studied a youth subculture and shared his findings with the whole class. When Misha Vakhtomin taught the class in the spring of 2014, he assigned more presentations to be shared with the class, including a group presentation.

I split the students into groups related to the region of Ukraine in which they lived, and I gave them a group project. Each group explained the youth culture of their region in a group presentation. Later in the class, they did a second presentation as individual students about the youth in their city without PowerPoint. The third presentation with PowerPoint was about the sub-culture that they were studying in their research. In total, they gave three presentations to the class in two weeks. (M. Vakhtomin, personal communication, May 22, 2014)

A few students commented that they appreciate the group projects and feel that they have learned better under these assignments.

The teacher involved us students in the process by using techniques such as discussion and group work. For me, this seemed a most effective method, as training took place in the process. I will remember what I learned in the group projects for much longer. (Yaraslov from Poltava, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

I really enjoyed the dialogue. We had lively conversations as a class and in groups. The assigned group presentation helped us to discover more information; more than just taking notes. I especially enjoyed working as a team. I feel that this
is the most effective method; it helped me and the whole class to better understand and learn the material. I have often wondered, what is the best method for teaching the material? It depends on how each of us learns, and since all students are different, we need a variety of teaching methods, including group projects. (Pasha from Irpin, personal communication, May 25, 2014)

Added Learning Games

Six participants talked about the fact that their teachers added learning games to the class. This was not done with the American teachers at the seminary. Each person that mentioned this addition to the teaching methodologies spoke about it positively.

I remember there was a game. I really enjoyed the theme of the course when it was presented in a playful way. It helped me to better understand the essence of the course. There were plenty of illustrations that were drawn on the board, which also helped us to understand the object and its parts. There were also practical tasks that helped us to think and to check ourselves, to see if we had really learned the material or not. (Vanya from Irpin, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Vasya uses a variety of teaching methods. He asks probing questions, making the audience analyze and reflect. He also uses practice tests, debates, creative tasks, games, and other assignments. Everything, including the games, is aimed at the application of knowledge that he wants us to practice. (Marina from Uzin, personal communication, May 25, 2014)

Group Review for Testing and Quizzes

Vasya introduced a new way of preparing the students for exams. He helped the students review for the exams together in the class in a gradual manner. Other teachers followed his example. I asked Misha Feyer, who is now a teacher, but was also a student under Vasya’s instruction.

“How did Vasya help you prepare for the exams?”

“Vasya often taught through specific, practical steps,” Misha answered. “He taught through the context of our ministries. It was easy to memorize the content of the
course and take the exam, because throughout the course, Vasya visually showed images to us for group review of the material.”

“Did he do this right before the final exam?” I asked.

“No, he did this each day. We began each class with a small test to aid in memorization and final exam preparation.”

“Did you get tired of this? I mean, taking a test every day?”

Misha thought for a moment, and then replied, “No, I think it was helpful to give more tests. He gave more than the American teachers did. Thus, students can easily pass the exam at the end of the course, and we can remember the information that we covered for a longer period of time.”

I probed deeper, “So you think this helped in the learning process?”

“Definitely. For example, if we learn to cook every day little by little, repeating the process daily together, then at the end of the course, everything is much deeper in the memory. (M. Feyer, personal communication, June 3, 2014)

Misha Vakhtomin followed Vasya’s example when he taught. “I gave quizzes everyday from the previous lecture. This helped them prepare for the final exam. We added more quizzes than the Americans do, to help prepare the students better for the exam. (M. Vakhtomin, personal communication, May 22, 2014)

When I discussed this with the focus group, they gave additional insights. I commented, “I did not know you had this style of exam in the Ukrainian colleges. Why do you think that your Ukrainian teachers here at the seminary give you more tests than the American teachers?”
Voldya said, “Normally, in Ukraine, we do not have exams. Ukrainian teachers
train us during the lesson how to take an exam, maybe because the exam style is foreign
to us. So, the Ukrainian teachers better prepare their students for the tests.”

I asked, “Did Vasya and the others use any special methods for test preparation?”
“Yes. Vasya used visual objects in the review. He created charts for the wall,
answered Alina. “He and the other Ukrainian teachers gave more effort than the
American professors. Preparation was done every day with the Ukrainian teachers. The
quizzes were the same, but the preparation was different” (Focus group, personal
communication, May 21, 2014).

Marina, one of the second year students in youth ministry, also commented on the
group reviews used in class:

The teacher often used quizzes or tests. And before the test, we were constantly in
the class repeating the material through a variety of ways. For example, someone
would go to the board and answer the question. Sometimes students would
respond to the teacher's questions. Later, when he gave a midterm and a final
exam, most of the students received a high score. Also, the teacher helped us learn
the material by having us students check our own quizzes. Every test helped us
memorize more. (M. Dunaivtsy, personal communication, May 26, 2014)

Less Printed Notes Given

One method that most American teachers have used when teaching is to hand out
Russian notes for the course, with phrases purposely left out of the notes. Usually, the
teachers showed PowerPoint presentations with the same notes, yet these notes had the
blanks filled in and were projected in class for the students to see. The students would
copy the missing phrases into their notes as the teacher taught. The idea behind this
methodology of teaching was that the students would have a printed copy of all the notes
that the teacher wanted them to have, yet would not have to write the whole time the
teacher was teaching.

The two Ukrainian teachers that have the most teaching experience are Vasya
Ostriy and Radik Tsurkan. Both of them, plus a couple other participants, said that they
are giving less printed notes to the students. Some of the notes have been removed from
the original material. I asked Vasya if he has done this.

“Yes, I removed some of the notes. Sometimes there were too many points. We
removed a lot of notes from the *Camping* course, the *Curriculum Development for Small
Groups*, and the *Youth Ministry Programming* course. Some of the material was not
necessary.”

I asked, “What process did you go through for adjusting the notes?”

Vasya replied, “Actually, as the teacher, I use all of the material.” But then he
explained the process for adjusting the student notes, “We analyzed all of the material,
and then we chose which material we wanted to print. I actually gave this as an
assignment to the students. We gave all the notes to one class, and then we changed the
material together.”

“Do you continue to give out note-taking guides?”

“Yes, but we now have updated notes, and they are fewer than we gave in the
past. We also put notes into charts to make the material more practical.” (V. Ostriy,
personal communication, May 19, 2014)

I also asked Radik if he had made any adjustments to the notes he gives out. “This
year I did not print notes,” he said. “They did not have any of the normal notes that have
been given in the past. They had to write notes from PowerPoint.”
“OK, Radik,” I said with a grin, “we have known each other a long time. Tell me honestly why you didn’t do this?”

Radik is honest. “When American teachers give out fill-in-the-bank notes, I do not think it is effective. They only have to fill in the blanks. Students become lazy. We could give them key points with more space to write or just let them write all the notes by themselves. If it is possible, I just let them write.” (Radik Tsurkan, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

Students seem to agree with these thoughts. Alina from Chernivtsi, said, “I did not like it when we were given all of our notes, because it is better to write ourselves, so that we can remember.” (personal communication, May 23, 2014).

**Oral Discussion of Theories**

As previously discussed, teachers have been reducing the theoretical material in the curriculum, yet not all of the theory has been removed. To help facilitate learning of these theories, some teachers lead in oral discussion with the group of students. Radik said, “I use the discussion method of teaching all the time. If I realize they need help with information, I want to talk about it. I want to help them understand the material. In general, I believe that teaching is a process of discussion” (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

Students felt that these discussions about the theories helped them understand the material.

I noticed the teaching methods that were used in the classroom. Our teachers involved the whole class in the discussion, to enable students not only to listen to the teacher, but also to think about how to apply theoretical knowledge in their ministries. (Marina from Uzin, personal communication, May 25, 2014)
We had both lectures and discussions. In the discussions, we talked a lot about the theoretical material. It helped us so much. That was best way to master the material. You could hear opinions and your classmates’ thoughts, so you gained understanding. (Anya from Belaya Tserkov, personal communication, May 25, 2014)

Each of the Ukrainian teachers had previously taken all of the courses under the direction of American teachers who may have also used this method, but the discussions were usually held between the teacher and one student in the classroom setting. The difference with Ukrainian teachers is that they allowed the entire class to help each other in the discussions, so that a student who understood the material could help another student during the discussion times. One large factor involved in the differences of class discussion under an American or Ukrainian teacher, is the fact that the American teachers were often limited by a lack of language.

**Implement Teacher-Assisted Methodical Training**

There were 43 occurrences of codes underneath this statement in the interviews. Teachers and students talked about increased use of the whiteboard in the class by the teacher 11 times. In 10 different interviews, participants mentioned that charts and graphs were added to presentations from the Ukrainian teachers.

**Step-by-Step Training**

In the introduction, I wrote that Vasya has made adjustments to his teaching methods. One of the adjustments relates to the typical research paper that is required for a three-credit college course. Typically, when students study in a modular format, they are given a post-class assignment, which includes a paper to be completed at home. This kind of assignment is rarely given in a Ukrainian college and is a foreign method of teaching. These assignments were of high value at KTS, which uses a Western-based educational
Many Ukrainians entered the seminary with no experience of writing a research paper. When I was teaching at KTS, it was common for only 50% of my students to send their papers to me on time. When Vasya began teaching, he understood the problem. His solution was to bridge the gap of these two cultures by helping the students accomplish the goal through step-by-step training.

I asked, “Vasya, what adjustments did you make to the assignment to help the students have success?”

“They do a portion of the paper every day during the session, and the paper is completed on the last day,” he answered. “When they leave, their paper is ready.”

I probed for further explanation, “So, every day in class you give them a homework assignment to write two pages of their final paper?”

“Yes, this works much better,” he said. “As they do their homework each day after the lectures during the modular session, they turn it in to me. I can check it and make recommendations if something is wrong. The papers are much better if they listen to my recommendations.”

“It sounds like you are getting higher quality papers, as well.”

“If they change their papers based on my suggested corrections, then yes.” Vasya smiled. “No matter what, though, they are learning through the process” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 19, 2014).

When I met with my focus group of masters students, they repeated what Vasya said, “Americans understand and show the whole class. They see the big picture. Ukrainians teach methodically and teach step-by-step” (Focus group, personal communication, May 22, 2014).
Less Post-Class Assignments

This adjustment goes along with the previously stated adjustment. Each of the teachers are assigning less post-class assignments to match their own Ukrainian educational experiences. Vasya noted, “In the first year of class, they need to understand how to study. They are often forgetting to do their post-assignments after they leave the seminary. We need to help them get established” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 19, 2014).

One student believes that this adjustment fits their culture better. “The teachers’ plans are offered in the context of the Ukrainian mentality. What was most effective was that we did our homework in the classroom and then went home without any load. (Bogdan, personal communication, May 25, 2014)

Increased Use of Whiteboard

Eleven participants noticed an increased use of the whiteboard with Ukrainian teachers versus the American teachers. Vasya said, “I use different methods of teaching, but I prefer using the whiteboards. I love to draw charts, images, and pictures. I like to show connections. I did not add the charts to the printed notes, so I draw the charts on the whiteboard” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 21, 2014).

Students like this method of teaching. Vitaly from Lugansk said, “Vasya draws charts to help us remember. It helps us prepare for the exam. We had more memorable lessons through the group reviews. (personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Vladimir also shared his preference for this method of teaching. “Most of all I liked his teaching when he used the whiteboard. Our teacher explained the material in the drawings, which were very easy to remember. As easy as it is for me to perceive and
remember information, it is still better if it is visualized. This method is effective for me” (V. Demidovka, personal communication, May 25, 2014).

Another student from Zhitomir agreed. “In one of the courses, we touched on the subject of how to help young people with a problem. The teacher used the whiteboard to graphically show the process of how to work with that person” (Anna, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

**Charts and Graphs Added to Presentations**

Ten participants talked about charts and graphs being added as a visual teaching method. Vasya and other teachers helped the students learn the concepts by adding visuals to their presentations. I asked Vasya to explain this adaptation.

“In order to enhance our philosophy of youth ministry, I have added different charts. For instance, I added the Engel scale.”

I asked, “Isn’t Engel an American?”

“Yes he is,” he answered. “I found the material in Russian at a conference. Engel shows how to measure the spiritual level a person and show how far he is from Christ. We can understand if he an atheist, a new convert, or maybe in between. I have added this chart and several others to help us. Charts help our Ukrainian culture.”

“Did you use charts in any other way?”

He replied, “Once I made the students analyze the notes to make them practical. They needed to put them into a new chart. I drew three columns on the whiteboard, and they had to put the most important things into these columns. We had a new chart in the end.”

“That’s brilliant!” I exclaimed. “I don’t remember teaching that method to you.”
“You didn’t. This is a new methodology of teaching that the Americans did not give us.” Vasya continued his example, “I had the students take the notes and re-organize them into charts as a group. Their learning was enhanced as they analyzed the notes, and the repetition helped as well” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, May 19, 2014).

Several students talked about the charts that Vasya and others drew on the whiteboards to connect the notes visually.

The teaching style was alive. He used charts and tables; it was not dry lectures. It helped us to be constantly paying attention, and we understood the course better. (M. Feyer, personal communication, June 3, 2014)

He added charts, symbols, and stories for better memorization of theoretical material. (S. Stanislavchuck, personal communication, May 27, 2014)

One of the most interesting and effective methods was when the teacher used the help of pictures and drawings. Vasya helps students memorize quickly and well, the material that is already in the classroom. This occurs when each student participates in the process. The student picks up the association to memorize terms. The teacher used many charts and tables in the classroom. This helped us clearly understand and remember information. So the students learn the most important lessons. (Marina from Uzin, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Flowcharts help us see the big picture and show weaknesses in the students’ answers. For example, the graph showed how much time is spent on each section of the program, which helped students see how much time to spend on each part of the lesson. (M. Dunaiivtsy, personal communication, May 25, 2015)

**More Repetition and Memorization**

Americans who visit traditional Ukrainian churches on short-term mission trips often talk about the poetry they hear during Sunday morning worship services. The poems in church recited by grandmothers and children are examples of a common Ukrainian educational method: repetition and memorization. Seven participants in the interviews mentioned this change in methodology.
One masters student said, “Teachers in the classroom used various methods for repetition every time. The teachers added several visuals. Visualization of the material helps us for better memorization” (A. Bytenko, personal communication, May 24, 2014).

A student from Ternopil shared, “The most effective way for me to learn was when the teacher used illustrations in presenting the material. This contributed to my memorization. Also, the teacher created an appropriate working environment” (Anatoly, personal communication, May 25, 2014).

Another student from Sumy said that the memorization led to spiritual fruit. “The teacher used visuals and repetition, which contributed to better memorization of the subject. I was able to apply the knowledge I gained with the guidance of God. I believe it has produced results. (Irina, personal application, May 25, 2014)

**More Skill Training**

This final code also relates to how the Ukrainian teachers are assisting the students directly more than the American teachers did. It was mentioned three times by students. The teachers are taking time to practically develop skills in the classroom. One student from Irpin said, “I learned much from the practical side during this course. I now know what to do, because we studied the younger generation. I have learned skills and now have actual experience in studying the surrounding subcultures” (Pasha, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Natasha, a third year KTS student, also mentioned her skill development. “This education is very useful for me, because it changes me personally. It teaches me the habits and skills that I do not have, such as learning how to prepare lessons, lead events
and so on. It helps me to educate new leaders. (N. Kvasyliv, personal communication, May 26, 2014)

A graduate also talked about the skill training that she received, “I gained useful skills in organizing projects, camps, and a leadership team. I learned to understand complex theories by organizing the material” (S. Stanislavchuk, personal communication, May 30, 2014)

**Greater Relational Training Versus Lectures**

There were 16 occurrences of codes underneath this statement in the interviews. Eight times, teachers and students said that the lectures were shortened. In four different interviews, participants mentioned that the Ukrainian teachers had added more prayer times in the classroom.

**Shorten Lectures**

As youth ministry training has expanded to other Bible colleges in Ukraine, the teachers have had to work within the educational structures of each institute. At Rivne Bible College, Volyn Bible College, Kremenchuk Bible College, and in foreign countries, the courses had to be shortened. Each of the Ukrainian teachers made adaptations to fit their time constraints. Sasha Onyshuk explained his situation, “I had only eight meetings for a total of 16 hours. The structure was set for us. We wanted to talk about the goals of youth ministry, as well as the steps of ministry development” (S. Onyshuk, personal communication, May 26, 2014).

Sasha Tkachuk made the adjustments for Volyn Bible College.

When I taught at our regional Bible college, I taught YM 101: Philosophy of Youth Ministry. I did not have two weeks to teach, I only had one day. Since I did
not have time to teach it all, I changed it to fit eight hours. I taught only the
principles of youth ministry, and I gave more practical information on how to start
a youth ministry. I had to teach YM 101 and YM 202: Youth Ministry
Programming. I combined this. First, you must have the basis for ministry, or you
start from nothing. (S. Tkachuk, personal communication, May 27, 2014)

Radik Tsurkan trained youth leaders in his region on Saturday meetings at
Kremenchuk Bible College (KBC) and a church in Poltava. He had to be very selective
on what he chose to teach. He said, “At KBC, I had to reduce the lectures from 40 hours
to 6 hours. I chose the main points. I reduced the information. I kept the five principles of
youth ministry. The main statements stayed. The Masyana characteristics and the
pyramid stayed, too. When I shortened the information, I still emphasized the role of the
youth pastor in the church” (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

When Boris taught in Tajikistan, he also had to shorten the lectures. “It was
important be shorter. I adjusted the material to the basic things. I would explain to them
that before going to the people they serve, they need to know the people they serve. But I
kept it short” (personal communication, June 3, 2014).

Add After-Class Corporate Worship

One evening, while still living in Kyiv, I needed to go back to the seminary for
something. I usually kept normal working hours, so I was rarely at the seminary at night.
Modular students were in town for a session, and Radik was teaching them each
afternoon. There were never any classes held at night. Students had free time or worked
on their homework assignments. As I was walking to my office, I heard singing. It was
coming from one of the classrooms. In fact, it was coming from the classroom where we
usually had our youth ministry classes. I peeked into the room. The lights were off and
there were candles lit all around the room. The students were all in a circle singing, and
Radik was leading them in worship. This was a wonderful addition to the youth ministry training that I had never done. One student commented about it during his interview.

My teacher, Radik, used many different methods for teaching in the class including lectures, the use of the whiteboard, presentations with PowerPoint, showing videos, leading discussions and giving out group work. Sometimes he used an unusual method for us, teaching us with a game. But the most effective and practical method, that in my opinion produced the greatest change in my life, was the time he made for prayer and worship after class. (Yaraslov, personal communication, May 20, 2014)

More Prayer Times

The Ukrainian teachers also added more prayer times in class. I was so glad to see this, and I wish that I had led more prayer meetings during our lecture times than I did.

“We need to involve God more often in the process of teaching. It means that we need to challenge students to pray, even during class. This way, we are showing them our dependence on God’s teaching. This example will be passed to them” (R. Tsurkan, personal communication, May 5, 2014).

A student from Chernivtsi shared her appreciation for the prayer times as well.

“Teacher frequently asked questions, use conversation to engage students in active learning. It was especially interesting when we are together with the teacher to pray and read the Bible at the beginning of class” (Anna, personal communication, May 24, 2014).

Teach Around a Table

In our seminary, we had individual student desks in each classroom. The academic atmosphere that we imported required that we should have some semblance of professionalism. The Ukrainian teachers are exporting the training to other countries. They are making adjustments as needed. In Tajikistan, Boris taught around a table in a
home because of the current persecution of Christians in that country. He said, “We met four times a week for two weeks. We would sit around the table and talk. Our team included five people from Ukraine, and there were also five people from Tajikistan. These were really active and interested in the doing something for the youth” (personal communication, June 3, 2014).

Increase Family Style Teaching and Reduce Professionalism

As previously mentioned, one evening I took time to visit the youth ministry office and take some field notes. My purpose was to discover physical changes that had been made in the office since I had left it two years before. The changes I noticed in the office paralleled with my interview results regarding the adaptations that have been in the style of teaching.

In the main open area of the office, they added a couch and took out the former administrative assistant's desk. When I was teaching at the seminary, I had hired a fulltime assistant and translator. When I left, this position was no longer needed. They had replaced my assistant’s desk with a fairly old, donated couch. The office had a family oriented feeling, with the couch replacing the desk. Books and materials in the office seemed to be less organized from an American’s viewpoint. It seemed to lack a professional aura that is present in most American seminary offices. A family atmosphere had replaced the professionalism.

As I looked around the room, I noticed that my four-month reusable, dry erase calendar was not being used. I remember carefully recording class dates and events on this calendar for everyone to know. We had also recorded information regarding who
would be teaching which class on this board. Now, it hung nearly empty; the only thing written on it was a note to someone and the email address of the director.

After speaking with some students, I discovered that the director now gives one responsible student a key to the office. The students may stay until late into the night in this office, where as before, they had never received access after hours. It was clear that the office had more of a family atmosphere than a professional atmosphere. It appears that the students really appreciate this change, as well.

The atmosphere that they have created at the seminary matches up with scripture, that tells the body of Christ to care about each other, to not have pride, to help one another like a family, and to care about the instructor.

Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load. Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. (Eph. 6:2-6, ESV)

**Greater Informal and Open Style**

When I came to the seminary to teach in 2003, a Ukrainian colleague told me that I needed to be more professional when I taught. He even said that because I was asking for the students’ opinions in class, I was not being sensitive to the academic culture of Ukraine. I asked the students if they thought he was correct. (By the way, this colleague did not teach at the seminary.) They told me that he was correct about Ukrainian academic culture, but that they preferred my teaching style. For the next 10 years, I taught in an American style with openness and a semi-professional atmosphere. I kept
normal office hours. American professors taught with a mixture of styles, but it was not a complete family atmosphere. The setting was academic, and we kept it professional.

When I returned to KTS to conduct the study, I found that this had changed. The Ukrainian teachers had created at even stronger family atmosphere and had reduced a great deal of the academic professionalism in the youth ministry program. The students were in favor of these changes.

On one of my interviews with Radik Tsurkan, a teacher in the program for the past five years, we discussed the informal atmosphere that I had observed.

Radik said, “I remember when you were teaching the class, Mike. You took the students’ desks from being set up in rows. You changed to a circle method of teaching, not lines of tables.”

I agreed. “I do remember that day. I felt more comfortable with this setup, so I kept teaching in that manner.”

“Well, I learned from you. I also remember that every time we came to the seminary for sessions, your family invited us to have dinner in your apartment. You needed our company,” he added sarcastically and smiled. “This opened our hearts to you. I realized that I needed to be with my students informally, as well. So, now we sing together at the seminary until 1:00 am; maybe two nights during the two-week session; the students do their homework after that.”

“I never did that,” I said.

“True. They become more open to me, and now when they leave the seminary at the end of the session, we are friends.” Then he added, “The last time I went home,
students sent me requests to come see one of their youth programs. We are having friendly conversations, even though they are 10 year younger than me.”

“You have taken the program to another level of openness. I think this fits Ukrainian culture.”

“I think so. When I have free time, you will find me sitting and talking with them. They are learning this way, too.”

At first I thought this was not an adaptation to our program, since this was a value that we American teachers wanted to have, as well. Yet, as I listened to the interviews and observed the teachers with their students, I discovered that they had increased the level of openness and reduced the professionalism within the program.

One student commented, “During discussions, we students saw our teacher’s openness, and that attracted our attention. At the same time, the teacher set a goal to educate the student. Personal examples that the teacher gave always spoke louder than any theoretical material” (A. Bytenko, personal communication, May 23, 2014).

During our focus group, I asked them about their use of the office after class time. Alina said, “As you know Mike, we did not have the key to the office with our American director, but then Vasya came, and we had opportunity.” She smiled. “The office became our home, a place really close to us. In the secular world, we would not go alone to the dean’s office, but when you have the key it becomes your home. Now we have a sofa, too.”

Misha added, “We had more food with Americans. But this office is the most open place. We have spiritual food and physical food. Everyone is jealous of our youth ministry office. It is like honey here. This makes education more practical.”
“We have more trust,” Alina continued. “For us, when we came during our first year, it was more closed. Before, we only came to talk to the director. Now the fellowship is between us. The first-year students don’t come here because the older students chase them away. With every break, we come to the office”

“Americans went home after class,” Misha commented, “but Ukrainian teachers lived on campus, so they shared our experiences and prayer. We learned a lot things sitting with the teacher after class.”

I smiled and reminded my students, “Now, you do remember that you ate pizza in my apartment on more than one occasion?”

They all laughed. Alina said, “Of course. American teachers did invite us to their homes, but we had more time with the Ukrainian teachers. Radik would lead us in playing some games and singing songs together after class. Sometimes it would go late into the night” (Focus Group, personal communication, May 22, 2014). I could sense that truly loved their Ukrainian teachers and the open relationship they had developed with them as students.

Several students commented on the open atmosphere they felt with their teachers. All of them spoke about it in a positive manner.

Radik had a soft tone, open posture, and excitement when he taught. All of this helps and improves the acceptance of information. His openness and enthusiasm helped the audience to be constantly alert. It was evident that he considered all of this important stuff, and he tried to pass it on as clearly as possible. (Yaroslov from Poltava, personal communication, May 23, 2014)

Following the example of an open, friendly atmosphere in the youth ministry office, the students learned how to build open personal relationships with other young people and to interact in a group. One of the other students told me that the essence of ministry is "love for people,” and she is already beginning to put this
into practice into her ministry. (A. Bytenko, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

What is his style of teaching? The teacher can be called friendly. He is not too official. There is nothing artificial or excessive about his friendliness. A student can easily step up and speak to him in his own language, and ask if he does not understand. (Anatoliy from Ternopil, personal communication, May 25, 2014)

I liked the openness of the teacher, because the classroom had a friendly atmosphere that promoted learning and openness between students. We were not afraid to express our opinions. It was easy and simple in the classroom to discuss some topics and find answers to our questions. The tone of the teacher was friendly. He also had the ability to keep his audience's attention. (Vladimir from Demidovka, personal communication, May 25, 2014)

In my interview with Alina Bytenko, a masters degree student who had Vasya Ostriy as a teacher for several of her classes, she shared about the way he openly pursued his students relationally for the sake of their success.

“I was talking with another student about Vasya, and the comments might interest you,” she began. “He truly engages the audience to study the subject, creating a homey atmosphere in the classroom.”

I asked, “Do you know specifically how he does this?”

“As a teacher, he helps students to find a way out of problematic situations in their ministry, and he is open to help them; he is not just about the classroom or the coursework.”

“And you sense that his past experience helps Vasya teach?”

Alina nodded her head. “He clearly understands what he is teaching, because he himself had a large part in ministry and work with young people. Vasya delves into the life of every student and his academic performance. He understands their needs, prays for them, and encourages them like family members” (A. Bytenko, personal communication, May 24, 2014).
Seventeen participants mentioned this adaptation made by the Ukrainian teachers. “He comes to class and fills it with a positive atmosphere, so that the students feel at ease in a home-like atmosphere” (Marina from Uzin, personal communication, May 24, 2014).

Sveta mentioned that openness was related to knowledge of the culture. “The teacher always had a likable tone of teaching. He used elements of humor and created openness to students. He gave constructive criticism. He knows our culture, so he was sensitive to the emotional and physical condition of students and used the correct encouragement” (S. Stanislavchuk, personal communication, May 30, 2014).

**More Teacher-to-Student Interaction**

I saw this change about a year after Vasya moved his family to Kyiv in the summer of 2012 to take over my role as the new director of youth ministry at KTS. I made contact with him to get a report of how things had gone over the past year. He said that since he had moved from Rivne to Kyiv, he had a lot of contact with the students and could spend more time mentoring the students, teaching them, and serving together.

In his report, he talked about the annual meeting of our youth ministry graduates and students that had taken place a couple of months earlier. They had celebrated 10 years of the National Center for Youth Ministry. He said that he was seeing the impact of our students and youth ministry graduates all over Ukraine. He was encouraged by the fact that our students and graduates were not only serving in churches; they were also as leaders of regional youth ministries and were serving in foreign countries. For example, at that time, he said that our graduates were serving on leadership teams for the Baptist Union of six different regions of Ukraine. In the Poltava region, Radik Tsurkan was the Regional Youth Director. In the Zakarpattia region, the Regional Youth Director’s
assistant was our graduate and teacher, Sasha Onyschuk. In Rivne, we had three students on the Regional Leadership Team (Victor Vlasyuk, Sergey Sergienko, and Oleg Tsimbilisti). In the Kherson region, Ilya Shevelenko was the Assistant Regional Youth Director. In the Volyn, Andre Savich was on the Regional Leadership Team, and finally Misha Feyer was a leader in the Kyiv region. He said that when he has time he tries to meet with each of these graduates to talk about their ministry and encourage them in their teaching roles.

Vasya also mentioned that he was meeting every month with youth leaders in the Kyiv region. At each meeting, they have 50 to 70 youth leaders. He said he is praying that they will have even more youth leaders from churches in Kyiv at future meetings, because they want the personal contact with each of the church leaders. This was a great deal more interaction than any of our American teachers had with our students.

At the end of his report, Vasya shared that he had assisted with a denominational meeting of the Regional Youth Directors of Ukraine and their assistants. The meeting had taken place at KTS on March 22-23, 2013. He said that one goal for 2014 was that every church’s youth ministry would develop small groups in homes for non-Christian youth, as well as providing leadership training for the small group leaders. They recognized that many youth ministers were not building relationships with non-Christian teens. Through regular interaction, they want to focus their attention on evangelism and leadership development. He ended his report by saying, “During these meetings we had some problems. We were all stuck in the snow in Kyiv for an additional two days. Roads were closed for 100 miles around Kyiv. Trains were canceled or delayed, so we had lots of extra time to fellowship together” (V. Ostriy, personal communication, April 12, 2013).
Seven participants in my interviews appreciated the fact that the Ukrainian teachers gave more teacher-to-student interaction than did the American teachers. Each of the American teachers that lived in Kyiv spent time with their students, but their Ukrainian counterparts have increased the personal time they have spent with each of their students.

During the two weeks of the session, the program director met with each student to conduct private meetings. It was a meeting concerning accountability of service and personal spiritual growth. I really like hearing advice from a mentor. Quizzes I do not like, but on the other hand they do help to focus on the key aspects of the material. My favorite time is talking with the teacher. (Anya from Kyiv, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

Vasya Ostriy literally takes care of each student. He monitors the progress of students, prays for them, encourages them, and teaches them. He is a responsible minister dedicated to the service of youth. He understands their needs, is familiar with their worldview, and he takes an active part in their lives. (Marina Uzin, personal communication, May 24, 2014)

When I was interviewing Misha Feyer, who teaches Ministry to Trouble Youth, he expressed his desire to improve on the adaptation. “One of the first things that I need to strengthen is to have more personal contact with students. There is already good communication between Ukrainian teachers and students, but we can do even better. I have the secret to achieving this; we need to buy more coffee” (M. Feyer, personal communication, June 3, 2014)

Correct Students’ Mistakes More

As I was meeting with the focus group, I asked, “Do you see a difference between the way that American teachers and Ukrainian teachers grade your assignments?”
Volodya answered, “When Americans grade or evaluate tests, they see the strong skills and give more encouragement. The Ukrainians encourage, but they also talk about our mistakes; the Americans do not do as much”

“Vasya mentioned that he had you all grading your own quizzes and tests in the classroom. Is that true?”

Misha responded quickly. “Yes. Ukrainians grade their own exams in class, but Americans do it by themselves. It was easier for the Ukrainian teachers to grade the essays.”

“Do the Ukrainian teachers grade harder?”

Alina said, “They were strict, but there were more comments from Ukrainian teachers. Ukrainian teachers give more oral evaluations, too” (Focus group, personal communication, May 21, 2014). It is obvious that the teacher’s command of the native language of their students helps them evaluate so much better.

**Reduce Professionalism**

Three of the participants said that they had reduced some of the professionalism in the teaching style. This coincided with the increase in the family atmosphere of the youth ministry program. When I was interviewing Sasha Tkachuk from Lutsk, he made comments regarding the capstone class of the program, *Professional Orientation to Youth Ministry*.

“One senior level class that is not meeting our needs is the course, *Professional Orientation to Youth Ministry*.”

“Why is that, Sasha? Do you think it is related to cultural differences?”
“Yes, I think so. We do not need the final assignment for this class, which is creating a personal portfolio. It is different here in Ukraine. In America, education is important, but it is upside down here. For ministry, the calling decides; the education does not make a pastor.”

I probed a little further, “Do you think that this is a problem?”

Sasha thought for a moment and responded, “Youth ministers need to be reminded about their calling. Each teacher has the temptation to say that his or her subject is the most important, but the students’ calling is the most important! Love God and love youth. As a result, they will need an education.”

“In your opinion, do you think it is wrong to pursue professionalism?”

“No, it is not bad to be professional,” he was quick to say, “but this is not a criterion for anyone to be in the ministry. The church decides this. I do not think that this course is culturally appropriate. We need to think more about this. (Sasha Tkachuk, personal communication, May 27, 2014)

As I continued my exploration of the youth ministry office, I noticed that many of the decorations were similar, but there were differences as well. Some of the decorations were related to the Euro Cup that had been held in Ukraine the previous year. There were new posters on the wall related to Facebook and Twitter. There had obviously been a party in the office during the weekend, and apparently the crew in charge of clean-up had gotten busy with other things! The trashcan was overflowing, sugar was spilled across the table, and a dirty spoon was left out in the company of an open tea container and a half-used coffee packet. I am sure that if I had visited the office at a different time, the area would have been cleaner. I did feel the reduction in the academic atmosphere that had
been present before, but I saw that the shift from professionalism to a family atmosphere was a shift wholeheartedly approved by students and teachers alike.
CHAPTER 8

RESEARCH VALIDATION

After organizing the data into the appropriate focused codes and categories, I validated the research through evaluation by peer debriefers and member checking.

Peer Debriefers’ Comments

My peer debriefers received the completed dissertation at the end of November 2014 in order to review the research and evaluate my conclusions. They both felt that the conclusions were appropriate based on the research data. Jimmy Winfrey, a youth pastor near Louisville, KY with an MDiv from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary said, “The significance statement was very convincing in regard to why this dissertation and this research is needed. It was helpful to me in my own ministry” (personal communication, Dec. 1, 2014).

My second peer debriefer was Matt Joiner, a youth pastor at Springdale Community Church in Louisville, KY. He has an MDiv from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with a concentration in youth ministry. He took 33 credits of youth ministry from the seminary, the origination point of the courses that I taught in Ukraine. He has led a short-term mission trip to Ukraine and ministered alongside some of the Ukrainian teachers in this study. He affirmed the results of this dissertation, especially in regard to the group collaboration he saw on his trip to Ukraine.
I remember seeing the differences between Americans and Ukrainians on our mission trip in 2012. When we had free time at the English camp, our American students would separate and become individuals on their cell phones in their down time. But when the Ukrainians had free time, they would spend it together in a group. They would kick a ball in a circle or throw a Frisbee together. They had cell phones too, but they wanted to spend time together during their free time. The fact that the Ukrainian teachers focused on group collaboration in order to create a group learning system makes a lot of sense to me. (personal communication, Dec. 2, 2014)

Both debriefers also had critical suggestions for change. Jimmy suggested that I add scriptural support to my theory, which I did. Matt suggested that I evaluate the appropriateness of the adaptations made. I have added his comment to considerations for further research in the future. Their comments have completed the triangulation of this research and I believe have validated my results.

**Member Checking**

After performing the axial coding, I thought that it would be prudent for me to ask the Ukrainian teachers more about the contextualization process by email. I sent the 10 focused codes to a few of the teachers and asked them directly, “Choose one of the focused codes (adjustments) that you implemented when you taught a youth ministry class. Please tell me the adaptation process you used, as you contextualized the training you received from your American professors.” Vasya was the first to respond. He wrote back about a situation he had with some pastors who took the Philosophy of Youth Ministry course. He wrote:

I would like to speak specifically about focused code number 3, which says to reduce psychological content to add more biblical content. In the course *YM 101*, we use Biblical references when talking about Masyana in *Characteristics of Spiritually Mature Youth* and the pyramid, which is our youth ministry strategy. But we had not used Biblical references in the notes when we were talking about the five principles of youth ministry. When I was a student, I did not have a problem with this, because the spiritual principles were talked about in the discussion, even though they were not directly in the notes.
When I was teaching the pastoral students at the seminary, they talked about this and asked why these principles were not from the Bible. They said it looks like something from a philosopher. So I changed the name of the principles to be more Biblical and added references from the Bible as well. (V. Ostriy, personal communication, November 13, 2014)

Based on Vasya’s example, when the new teachers were challenged about the content, the teachers evaluated the issues and made a decision to adapt or change the content as necessary. God’s Word was their authority.

When Radik answered my email, he wrote about focused code number 5, which says to increase family style teaching and reduce professionalism. He wrote, “My teaching style is sure to include something from my heart with the students. I am always open to telling them what I feel on any issue. This approach helps me properly teach my students. I openly talk about any issues or problems they are having. This helps me to build an atmosphere of trust in the classroom” (personal communication, November 13, 2014). The reason for Radik’s adaptation was centered on his desire to create the right atmosphere for learning. The process in his mind was simply that; he chose to make the change because he had the freedom to do so.

When Misha Feyer answered my question by email, he chose to write about axiom 8, Greater Relational Training Versus Lectures. Misha wrote, “During every lesson I taught, I had students tell each other what they had learned. I wanted to make sure they understood the material. We also had a question-and-answer time at the end of each lesson about ministry, so I could share personally” (personal communication, November 17, 2014).

Misha made the methodological changes of repetition and group learning to be certain that the students had mastered the skill or understood the concepts of the lesson.
There was no real process for making the change, other than the coming to the conclusion that his method would be the most effective. Since he had the authority to choose his own teaching method, he made the adjustment.

When Tom Steffen (2011) wrote specifically about our Ukrainian case study in his book, *The Facilitator Era*, he made the following comment concerning the needs of the training, “Our training must move beyond the cognitive to include the practical. Education and in-service ministry should be wed, as in the Ukraine and Mediterranean case studies. Candidates should be carefully trained and observed in three areas; knowing (cognitive), being (affective), and doing (behavioral)” (p. 344).

As I consider the adaptation process that the Ukrainians did to the American curriculum, I see that they were unconsciously critiquing the American curriculum using Tom Steffen’s church planting critiquing model. Steffen (2011) wrote, “As to effectiveness, this critiquing model requires that teams think through the reasoning behind the model. He instructs teams to analyze and to write out their findings about these six topics: history, key features, assumptions, strengths, weaknesses, and adaptability” (p. 364). The results of the critique caused the Ukrainian teachers to adapt the content, teaching style and methodologies.

**The Cultural Value of The Pragmatic**

When I asked different Ukrainian teachers to identify the process of adaptation that they used, they found it difficult. I believe that the reason it was difficult is because they value the pragmatic over the theoretical. Since I lived in Ukraine for 10 years, I understand this. Once I was talking to the director of Rivne Bible College, and we were discussing life in Ukraine. We had lived in the country for five years, and we had
experienced our fair share of trials. The director asked how I liked living in Ukraine. I answered, “It is hard. Everything takes so much time. For example, if I need to get a certain document stamped at this office, I must go to another office to get it stamped again. It is simply hard for a foreigner to live here.”

He smiled and said, “We understand, because it is hard for a Ukrainian citizen to live here, as well.” I caught my breath. The day-to-day logistics of life in Ukraine had been difficult for me. I did not think about the fact that everyone has to deal with these problems; not just foreigners.

This is also true of the day-to-day logistics of ministry and ministry training. When it is hard to live, the practical things take priority. It takes time to travel from your apartment to the church when you do not own a car, gas costs twice as much as it does in the United States, and you don’t have the money to order a taxi. It takes time to work a fulltime secular job to feed your family, yet you also need to find time to fulfill your ministry duties in the church.

The difficulties of life in Ukraine have increased exponentially with the current war crisis. I recently received an email from a veteran American missionary and friend, June Johnson, who has lived over 20 years in Crimea. Currently, she is living in the States because of the crisis, but she keeps in regular contact with her friends in Crimea. People are dealing with questions of food, safety and clean water in June’s area of that war torn country. She wrote,

Nearly everyday, I read the news about Ukraine. As discouraging and sad as it is, there is so much bad happening in the world that Ukraine hardly makes the paper or TV now. I called one of my very best friends in Ukraine this morning by Skype and listened as she talked at length about the various responses to the war. She lives about an hour’s drive south of the fighting. While there is a heavy pro-
Ukraine military presence in their city due to the port and roadway system, their town is peaceful. I say that tongue in cheek, because when I greeted her, I asked, ‘How are you?’

She answered, only half joking, ‘We didn’t get shot today, so all is good!’ The city’s location lends itself to be a staging area for the front. Practice gunfire by automatic weapons and tanks are heard every day.

She told me much. In large, their city did not want to be a part of Russia...yet they have found themselves in the blood path that creeps south toward Crimea. Their city is filled to the brim with refugees who are currently lodged, but in houses meant only for summer use. What will happen when the temps drop below freezing? The folks whose income completely depended on tourism made nothing this summer. The winter ahead looks bleak for them. Evangelistic opportunities of all kinds are presenting themselves, and so many churches are helping in the name of Christ. Sadly, other churches are scared to reach out.

She spoke of blessings. She told about a windstorm that had gone through their town in late September, toppling 3,000 trees. Overwhelmed with the cleanup, the city told its citizens to take all the wood they wanted. Her husband took a whole ton out to her parents who live in the village. They are now set up with wood for the winter. She spoke of how God has provided work for both her and her husband, allowing them to pay their utility bills, put food on the table, and help their neighbors in need. Many families in their church have given away all their extra clothing to the refugees. The safe drinking water in this city must be purchased, and one man in the church has taken it upon himself to provide drinking water for five refugee families for free. I told Ira of my hope to visit in the spring, but it only brought a fleeting smile. I understood. When life is such that just getting through today occupies your all thoughts and energy, thinking about something five months away is hardly possible. (J. Johnson, personal communication, November 10, 2014)

This is a perfect example of how dealing with day-to-day issues has effected how Ukrainians look at the training process in ministry. When life decisions are so important, the entire culture values the practical over the theoretical. When I asked, “Why did you make that change?” The answer was always the same, “because it was the best thing to do.”

Through the interviews and data analysis, the contextualization process finally emerged. Yet even the process of contextualization is rooted in the cultural value of the pragmatic.
Student Testimony From the Ukraine War Zone

As Vasya and I discussed the current ministry in Ukraine, I asked him about students that were located in Eastern Ukraine. He told me the story about Vitaliy Andritz from Lugansk. Vitaliy had recently written his testimony for the new YM 101 booklet, which is being used for regional training. His testimony shows a real life connection to the youth ministry program and that the contextualization is working.

At KTS, youth ministry students are taught to adapt and modify the program according to the circumstances and the culture in the location of their ministry, because youth ministry is unconventional. The only things unchanging are the truths that the Lord God gives us in His Word.

I am a senior student in the youth ministry program who has studied these truths and principles. I have begun to implement and put them to practice. The education at the seminary has literally lit a spark in me and my ministry. We were just a small group of young people when I started, and now, just a few years later, we have become a full-fledged youth ministry of the church. Step-by-step, following different pre-evangelism and evangelism methods, we are building the ministry:

• Baseball – this helped us to invite new youth; when we were in the process of training and the baseball games, we developed friendships
• Indoor Soccer in the gym was very effective for relationship building
• Christmas and Easter programs for relational development
• Gifts for orphans and the poor; this melted the hearts of everyone who participated in this

The next step was the issue of spiritual growth for those who have been with us for a long time. We came up with the idea of long-term, interesting, lively training:

• School Without Walls - a unique opportunity to build a learning process as required by the culture and characteristics of our church (like a Theological Education by Extension)
• Began a youth ministry leadership team which allowed young people to cultivate spiritual growth

Finally, it became clear that there was a big chasm between sports and fun and the church. Youth came to sports, but did not become part of the youth class in church, especially on Sunday. We did become confused on what to do. We decided to organize the existing believing Christian youth into a youth club. The basic idea was to implement the five principles of healthy ministry (from Doug Fields and the KTS youth ministry curriculum). We implemented youth clubs, summer camps, A School Without Walls, training team leaders … everything was going great until the war came!
Oh yeah, I forgot to say that the youth ministry, which I described above, was in the city of Luhansk in Eastern Ukraine. Then everything collapsed, and everything was gone. (V. Andritz, personal communication, November 5, 2014)

Everything that Vitaliy described in the first part of his testimony was an application of what he had been taught at KTS. He had put into practice the principles of youth ministry, and God was using him and his leadership team. But then the separatists backed by Russian military came into his region and changed everything. As of the writing of this dissertation, the city that used to have a population of half a million is in shambles. Many buildings have been destroyed and people are trying to find food. The banks are closed and there is no infrastructure left. It is a city under siege. And Vitaliy was there. He shares what happened to him and his family in the rest of his testimony.

Military action began in the Donbas region in the early summer of 2014. We all had to scatter throughout Ukraine. Since young people are particularly mobile and not particularly tied to something tangible (they do not own an apartment, a car, or even have a job), they left immediately. We all departed in different directions: Kharkov, Cherkassy, Dnepropetrovsk, Simferopol, Odessa, Chernovtsy, Kyiv, and other places in Ukraine.

Many ministers had to leave their homes, churches, and the city. They had to face the trial of starting from nothing. They were in a new place and needed to organize a ministry, an effective ministry. After several months of moving around, my family and I stayed in Cherkassy, where part of my church had moved with the pastor. I am really thankful to God for the circumstances that fell upon us, because five months ago, I had felt that God put me in the service of the Lugansk Youth. I had planned to devote a huge amount of time to this place and ministry. Everything was there: my work, home, church, etc.

Now, we had to start all over again. And in the beginning we had nothing but words to start our ministry. Even the first meeting, we did not even have a Bible. I am grateful to KTS and the youth ministry program for what they taught me. It helped me to know what to do in such circumstances, when you are starting in a new place. I am not sure that the training program was adapted for such a "non-standard" situation as mine (considering the military operations and full family relocation), but now we can say with confidence that the program of the course YM is even suitable for this purpose.

In Cherkassy, we have started a new youth club. We already have 10-14 people. We are discussing with the youth on how to expand the boundaries of the Kingdom of God. Currently, there are no ministry plans, no team, and no money to implement interesting projects. But I know that thanks to the knowledge that I
have already obtained, and that I continue to receive at KTS, and with God's help, we can continue to minister to the youth. We will help them to grow spiritually, fulfilling the Great Commission and using programs suitable for this harvest and the body of Christ.

PS. I have been studying the culture of the new city and the culture of my new youth group, and we begin to think about the kinds of projects and ministry that could be relevant for us. I am also willing to be part of the extraordinary, unconventional, and various programs and activities of our future youth ministry. (V. Andritz, personal communication, November 5, 2014)

I never expected that the youth ministry program we started in Ukraine would undergo such a test. The training has now been tested under war conditions and the full relocation of a youth pastor and his family. I have no doubt that as the study has shown, the Ukrainian youth pastors are taking complete ownership of this training and will continue to adapt and contextualize it in the future.
CHAPTER 9

THE INDIGENOUS CONTEXTUALIZATION MODEL

When we left Ukraine, we did not know how well the ministry would thrive. I
was asked to speak at the KTS commencement in May of 2012. This was the last time I
would speak to the teachers and students before my family moved backed to America. I
shared the following words:

This week marks our 10th year in Ukraine. This is our sixth youth ministry
graduation and our final graduation at KTS. We have loved our ministry and life
here in Kyiv, and the main reason is because of the spirit that we have found at
the seminary; the spirit in the hallways, the spirit in the classrooms, the spirit of
our students when we invited them to be in our home. The spirit of the Lord has
been in this place! And we are going to miss you.

2 Corinthians 3:16-18 says, ‘But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is
removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is
freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are
being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For
this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.’ (ESV)

Graduates, did you enjoy the spirit you found in our home? Did you enjoy
the spirit in the classroom? This was the Lord, and His Spirit brings freedom. He
comes to dwell in us, and we can commune together in a way that the world
desires. They want this spirit, but they don’t know what it is. Show them this
spirit in your churches, in your homes, on the street. And we will never forget the
spirit we experienced from the administration of KTS, the faculty, and the
students.

We recently sold our apartment. We bought it nine years ago, and we sold
it this past month. When we purchased the apartment, we were new to Kyiv and
did not know the culture. The owner walked us through the entire apartment at the
closing, and then said that she must be the last one out when we left. I was
confused. She explained that she must leave with her domovoi - her house spirit.
She could not leave her house spirit in our apartment; she had to take it with her.

When we moved out of our apartment a week ago, we did something
completely different. We had participated in nine years of Bible studies, prayer
meetings, and student meetings in our apartment. The spirit of the Lord had filled
our apartment. We hated to leave this place, and we cried. Judy showed the new owners where she had read her Bible on the balcony of our bedroom. Before we left our apartment for the last time, Judy and I paused at the door and did something completely different than our previous owners had done. We prayed, and we asked God to LEAVE His spirit in that place. We prayed that the new owners of our apartment would feel His presence when they entered their new home.

As believers, no matter where God calls us to serve, may we serve in such a way that people can say, "The spirit of the Lord has been in this place." We love you! (M. Manna, KTS commencement speech, May 26, 2012).

The challenge of my last speech for the teachers and students in Ukraine was to serve in such a way that God’s spirit would be evident in their lives and through their work. When I returned in May of 2014, I saw that God was, indeed, at work in and through them! God was using the first generation of Youth Ministry students to teach a new generation of youth pastors in Ukraine. They had developed their own contextualization process. They had adapted the training so that the next generation of youth ministers would be prepared to serve the Lord even better.

**Understanding the New Theoretical Model**

I believe the adaptation process that was observed in Ukraine is similar to the indigenous processes of contextualization in other areas around the world. As previously stated, youth ministry theological education is a branch of practical theology. Thus, this process of contextualization specifically relates to practical theology.

Based on the observed process of adaptation and the data described in the previous chapters, I have formulated a central understanding, which I am calling the indigenous contextualization model, and have defined it as follows: A model of practical theological education utilizing indigenous group collaboration to organize the content into a relationship, methodical, group-learning system, which is required to achieve long-term knowledge acquisition and application from a foreign context.
In this chapter, I discuss this cyclical model in greater detail. This model (see Figure 12) presents a process for this form of contextualization with three major steps:

1. Evaluation of foreign content (Motivations), which leads to …
2. Indigenous group collaboration to organize and contextualize content (Process), which leads to …
3. Implement relational methodical group-learning system (Product), which leads back to …
4. More evaluation of foreign content (Motivations), which continues the cycle.

**Evaluation of Foreign Content**

The cyclical process starts on the top of the chart in Figure 12. This first step of the Ukrainian contextualization process was when the Ukrainian teachers received the information from their American teachers and evaluated it in light of Scripture and their own cultural knowledge. This is critical contextualization from the host culture as they receive foreign practical theological training. As they received it, they chose to retain most of the foreign content. Kraft (2005) asked questions related to this issue.

Lastly, we need to look critically at our theories of contextualization in relation to counter examples that seem to challenge some of our findings. Why, for example, does it look like many of the largest, apparently most “successful” churches (e.g., in Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, large parts of Africa) are poorly contextualized? Are there factors that override and culturally fit? If so, what are they? Are we missing something in our commitment to our theory? Could it be that our theory is wrong?” (p. 34)

I believe that due to globalization, a good deal of the youth ministry educational content that is appropriate for American youth ministries is appropriate for Ukrainian youth ministries, as well. These examples run counter to contextualization theory, yet it
Figure 12. The indigenous contextualization model - cyclical process.

Note. Artwork used by permission from stickfigurepeople.com.

appears that the indigenous culture may have evaluated a portion of the foreign content and deemed it not to be actually foreign.

However, as the Ukrainian teachers continued the critical contextualization, they were motivated to make adaptations based on their Ukrainian worldview and the current needs of their students. When adaptations were needed for the overall curriculum or for
the foundational principles that would be used throughout the course of teaching, the Ukrainian teachers said that the Bible was their final authority, not the American curriculum.

If the Ukrainian teachers deemed a small change necessary, each teacher exercised freedom to change teaching methods and content without permission from other people; they simply made the decision themselves and adapted. As time went on, Vasya and other teachers saw the need to make larger adaptations to the content and methods.

We find scriptural support for this principle in the early church in the city of Berea.

The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing, as well as men. (Acts 17:10-12, ESV)

The men of Berea examined the new information, which happened to be from a foreign source, in light of the scriptures to see if it was true. The author of Acts praised them for doing so and called them “more noble” than the people in Thessalonica, even though they were examining the words of Paul, who is the hero of the book of Acts. It is appropriate and good for the indigenous culture to evaluate foreign content.

**Indigenous Group Collaboration to Organize and Contextualize Content**

The second step on the Figure 12 chart shows that the Ukrainian teachers chose to have an indigenous group collaboration to organize and contextualize the content. The most structured time that this happened was at a Homecoming event in February 2014,
but it also happened in small group meetings and during informal coffee meetings, as the teachers discussed ways they should adapt the youth ministry training. Their discussion concerned not only content, but delivery methods, as well.

The process included collaboration among youth ministry graduates who were teaching youth leaders in their regions, both formally and informally. The result was an evaluated curriculum that the Ukrainian teachers felt they could take ownership of. I remember when Ilya said to one of the pastors, “This was the first time I have taught, so I need time to analyze the notes more, for myself.” This statement indicates that Ilya did not own the curriculum fully at the moment he was asked the question.

Now, as they take the new *YM 101* curriculum to the regions, they recognize that their very own team of Ukrainian teachers have adapted and even added new content to the curriculum. They are choosing to own it for themselves. Often, they call it (what is “it”?) the Masyana strategy, a term that we Americans never used. Even the name shows the ownership of the Ukrainian youth ministry teachers.

It appears that if the nationals do not adapt the material themselves, then they may not fully adopt it as their own. I believe this principle will hold true in any culture; however, this study is focused exclusively on Ukrainian culture. Through group collaboration, the Ukrainian teachers created a learning system that is similar, yet different than the learning system they received from their American teachers.

John Drane (2008), a practical theologian, wrote, “We must listen to the pedagogical theorists (who) emphasize the importance of learning that engages all the senses” (p. 137). As the Ukrainian teachers said, the training models need to emphasize the practical that connects with the theological. As practical theology is contextualized to
each culture, more culturally appropriate content will be added. Indigenous group

collaboration will result in seminary education that is applicable to each people group.

We find scriptural support for this in the way the early church handled their first
major controversy at the Acts 15 council.

2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small disension and debate with them, Paul
and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem, to the
apostles and the elders about this question…. 4 When they came to Jerusalem,
they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they
declared all that God had done with them…. 6 The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this
matter. 7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them,
“Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by
my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe…. “ 12 And
all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related
what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. 13 After
they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has
related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his
name…. 19 Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the
Gentiles who turn to God, 20 but should write to them to abstain from the things
polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled,
and from blood. 21 For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those
who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole
church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and
Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the
brothers, 23 with the following letter … 31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced
because of its encouragement. 32 And Judas and Silas, who were themselves
prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. 33 And after
they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those
who had sent them. (Acts 15:2, 4, 6-7, 12-14, 19-23a, 31-33, ESV)

This incident shows that the early church valued group collaboration. Foreign
content had been introduced, and the church leaders gathered together to “consider this
matter.” They also “debated,” “spoke,” and “listened” to each other. A judgment was
made and communicated back to the other culture on what was to be done in light of the
evaluation. The result was that when the new foreign church plant in Antioch “read it,
they rejoiced because of its encouragement” (Acts 15:31, ESV). The content had been contextualized which required compromise was delivered through group collaboration, even though it was not completely indigenous.

**Relational Methodical Group-Learning System Implemented**

The third step of the contextualization process is on the left side of Figure 12. This step shows the partial conclusion of the Ukrainian adaptation process. The end result is that a relational methodical group-learning system is implemented. This is a learning system that is applicable for the Ukrainian youth ministry student; one that will equip him with the knowledge and practical training he needs to meet the spiritual, physical and emotional needs that are unique to Ukrainian youth.

One student shared briefly in his interview about an assignment Vasya gave in class that is a good example of this learning system. At the end of a modular session, Vasya passed a copy of the class notes they had covered to every student in the class. He drew a blank chart on the whiteboard and gave the group an assignment. As a class, they were to determine which notes were the most important and which they could throw out. They were to summarize the notes in such a way that all the major points were present in the chart. Vasya remained in the class to help them think through the process. If necessary, he would guide them and make suggestions along the way. When the chart was completed, each student was required to copy it to his or her notes. They were to memorize the new chart, because they would be tested on it for the final exam. Vasya then led the class in a group review of the chart to help them study for the test.

This example shows the relational aspect of this learning system. Vasya remained available as a guide through the entire process. It is methodical in that Vasya set out clear
steps for the students to follow, including how to effectively study for the test. The learning system was definitely group-oriented from the start, in that Vasya required the entire class to work together for the common goal. His goal was much greater than just helping his students do well on the exam. His desire was for the whole class to acquire knowledge and practical information that they could apply to their ministries after they left the seminary.

When the advisory council met in February 2014 and wrote the adapted curriculum, they included a final assignment on the last page. It is the blank chart that was discussed in Chapter 5 (see Figure 5). The youth ministry students were instructed to connect the three models or theories to their ministries. The goal was practical application. The students were instructed to do this assignment when they got back to their home churches, together with their youth ministry leadership teams. The assignment focused once again on group learning. Vasya and the other Ukrainian teachers are taking very seriously, the responsibility to train the current generation of youth ministers for the churches of Ukraine.

In Acts 2, we find a clear example of how the early church implemented group living and relational teaching underneath the leadership of the twelve disciples:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47, ESV)
The church was just beginning. They had to organize thousands of new believers, and they chose a group-oriented family system. I believe that the leaders were organized and methodical based on the re-organization that happens at the beginning of Acts 6. The relational methodical group-learning system implemented by the Ukrainian teachers looks similar to the early church in the book of Acts.

The reason that I said that this step is a partial conclusion is because I believe this process is cyclical in nature. After the learning system is implemented, the indigenous culture evaluates the content and methods again. The process of evaluation and adaptation is a continual process.

**Long-Term Knowledge Acquisition and Application From a Foreign Context**

The desired result is found in the first phrase of the Indigenous Contextualization Model statement. Education includes knowledge acquisition and application. Wisdom is often defined as knowledge that has been applied. The goal of the missionary (or anyone involved in discipleship, for that manner) is that his training would be on going. This research showed that to become long-term, the practical theological education must be owned by the host culture. Ownership comes through the three-step process described in the indigenous contextualization model.

**Comparing the Indigenous Contextualization Model to Hiebert’s Critical Contextualization Model**

The indigenous contextualization model agrees with Hiebert’s model, yet adds more details, which relate to practical theology education. When Hiebert talks about (1) *gathering information about the old*, we can infer from our study that the Ukrainian
teachers already understood their own culture. Therefore, this step was not necessary for the indigenous contextualization model. In his second step, he says that they must (2) *study biblical teachings about the event*. For the Ukrainians, they accomplished this as they added scripture to the original content and removed psychological content, which they believed was anti-scriptural. The third Hiebert step states that we need to (3) *evaluate the old in the light of biblical knowledge* (2009, p. 29). In his final book, Hiebert states that this must be done in community, which is exactly what the Ukrainians did.

This calls for a community-based hermeneutics in which dialogue serves to correct the biases of individuals. On the global scale, this calls for both local and global theologies. Local churches have the right to interpret and apply the gospel in their contexts, but also a responsibility to join the larger church community around the world in seeking to overcome the limited perspectives each brings, and the biases each has that might distort the gospel. (Hiebert, 2009, p. 29)

In the new indigenous model created through this study, Step 1 relates to Steps 2 and 3 of Hiebert’s model, the host culture evaluates the foreign content by studying scripture and comparing it to their own culture. Hiebert’s fourth step says that they need to (4) *create a new contextualized Christian practice* (1994, p. 188). This step correlates with the second step in the theological education model, which calls for group collaboration if adjustments are to be made. The final step of the indigenous contextualization model is the implementation stage, which Hiebert assumes in his model. The indigenous contextualization model calls for a relational methodical group-learning system to be implemented *after* it is created through group collaboration. Table 2 shows the comparison of these two models.

The difference between Hiebert’s model and the contextualization model presented in this study is that this research model is detailed and specific to practical
theological education. Another difference is that this model is developed from an indigenous method evaluating foreign content, rather than the contextualization coming from the Western missionaries.

I believe that this indigenous contextualization model is also similar to the Praxis Contextualization Model described by Stephan Bevans (2013). “The praxis model is a way of doing theology that is formed by knowledge at its most intense level—the level of reflective action” (Chap. 6, para. 4). It appears that the host culture will continue in a

Table 2

Comparison of Hiebert’s Critical Contextualization Model to the Indigenous Contextualization Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiebert’s critical contextualization model (initiator oriented)</th>
<th>Indigenous contextualization model (receptor oriented)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gathering information about the old</td>
<td>Evaluation of foreign content (encompasses Hiebert’s Steps 2 and 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Study biblical teachings about the subject or event</td>
<td>1. Evaluation of foreign content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Evaluate the old in the light of biblical knowledge</td>
<td>2. Indigenous group collaboration to organize and contextualize content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Create a new contextualized Christian practice</td>
<td>3. Relational methodical group-learning system implemented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Implementation is assumed) | |

Note. Based on Hiebert, 2009.

cyclical pattern of evaluation and action. Additional studies 20 years in the future would be useful in discovering how the practical theological education is further contextualized.
Implications

For Foreign Missionaries

This research focused on the adaptations that Ukrainian students made to the youth ministry training they received from American missionaries. When I came to Ukraine, I, along with other American missionaries who taught YM courses at the seminary, attempted to contextualize the American curriculum to the Ukrainian culture. We understood our own culture, the culture for which the original curriculum was developed, but we were guests to the recipient culture. Our goal was to find Hiebert’s bicultural bridge, so that Ukrainian youth ministry students would actually grow from our training and desire to become the future trainers of youth ministry. It appears that we had success in reaching this goal, as the first generation of Ukrainian teachers is taking ownership of and contextualizing the curriculum. They are effectively training a new generation of youth ministers in Ukraine.

This study should help future foreign missionaries construct better bicultural bridges as they train in different countries. They would be wise to make adaptations similar to those made by the indigenous culture in this study. If this model was chosen, the curriculum and methods would be more appropriate for the host culture, but ownership by the indigenous culture may still not be achieved. A better option for the foreign missionaries would be to involve the host culture in the adaptation procedures as early in the process of contextualization as possible.
For Host Cultures

The receiving culture also can learn from this study. The results show that ownership is achieved when indigenous adaptations are made to the curriculum and training methods. Thus, it would be recommended that ministry leaders in the host culture come into a partnership agreement with foreign missionaries as early in the contextualization process as possible, in order to discuss adaptations of the curriculum and methods of training. It is important to keep an open atmosphere with a focus on relationships as discussions are held. Annual meetings should be held between the ministry leaders of the host culture and the foreign missionaries, in order to facilitate adaptation. Since trust is necessary in any partnership arrangement, the adaptations may not be able to be rushed. The key will be that both parties have a mutual respect for one another as servants in the body of Christ.

For American Youth Pastors

I was surprised by the comments from both of my peer debriefers, that this study helped them think through their own youth ministries in the local church. One youth pastor said, “This study has caused me to evaluate my charts and programs in our own youth ministry. It is good for me to evaluate what I am doing, and I need to adapt. I have been on autopilot mode, and reading this study has helped re-energize me” (M. Joiner, personal communication, Dec. 2, 2014). I hope American youth pastors can use the same methods utilized by the Ukrainian teachers in the contextualization of their own local ministries.
Future Study Recommendations

It has only been two years since the Ukrainian teachers have had full leadership of the youth ministry program, even though two of them have had five years of teaching experience. I believe that this study was helpful in observing the beginning stages of the adaptations while they are fresh and new, but it may have been more profitable to do this study after the Ukrainian teachers have been leaders in this program for 8-10 years. This study, however, can provide a baseline for future studies concerning the contextualization of the youth ministry program in Ukraine.

This study did not attempt to evaluate the appropriateness of the adaptations made by the Ukrainian teachers. One of my peer debriefers said, “I understand that the Ukrainians wanted more practical training, but there may be a danger from this as well. It is possible that they may be overreacting to unhelpful information. Training that is mainly pragmatic can also misinform” (M. Joiner, personal communication, Dec. 2, 2014). A further study could evaluate the appropriateness of the adaptations that are being made, in light of the actual results. This kind of follow-up study, however, may need to be initiated and conducted by the indigenous culture.

This dissertation’s model cannot be considered to work in every region of the world until further studies are completed. Additional studies in other cultures need to be done to further explore the topic of the contextualization process being done by the national churches and believers. Group collaboration, which was done in Ukraine, may not be able to be accomplished in an honor-shame culture. Further studies in Asia, Africa and South America would be helpful to further validate the indigenous contextualization model.
Significance of this Study Beyond Ukraine

In Chapter 1, I stated that this study helps international youth ministry trainers better understand the needs related to training youth ministers in Ukraine. At the time this dissertation is being written, I am currently a staff member with Greater Louisville YFC. One of my responsibilities is to develop and coordinate a World Link partnership between our local YFC chapter and Ukraine YFC. This position allowed me to attend the YFC General Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand, in September of 2014. One of my goals was to connect with other Russian-speaking YFC leaders, and I was not disappointed. Every YFC national director from Eastern Europe and Central Asia was at the conference. I made new friends from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and several other of the -stan countries. It was fun to be able to fellowship with YFC leaders who were learning English, but were glad to be able to speak with an American in Russian. I learned about their ministries, prayed with them, and exchanged contact information. It will be interesting to see if God may lead us to assist some of the more unreached countries in the future.

As I think of the significance of this study beyond Ukraine, I cannot help but believe this study can be especially applicable in other Slavic contexts. The cultures are similar, so the principles would be closely related as well. One of my new friends from the conference in Bangkok, is the YFC National Director for Kazakhstan. He lives in the city of Ust-Kamenogorsk, population 300,000, near the mountains in Eastern Kazakhstan. He has focused on planting student house churches in their city. They currently have four youth churches meeting in apartments. They also conduct a sports ministry and have used English to reach out to the large college student population. I believe that if someone
were to begin a youth ministry educational program in Kazakhstan or another Slavic country, it would be wise to consider how the Ukrainians have contextualized the program to their culture and follow their example.

One evening during the YFC General Assembly conference in Thailand, the worship leader ended the session by asking people from the audience to come to the microphone and sing "How Great Thou Art" in their heart language. The leader started in English, then groups of two or three people would come on stage and sing it in a different language. When they were done, another group would take their place, singing while the band played on. My guess is that the worship leader thought this would go on for six or seven languages, but that was not the case. Language after language, the words of that great hymn were sung! It seemed to go on and on, but surprisingly, none of us grew tired of it. We stood and hummed along as each language was sung, and I am sure the song was played for at least a half hour! The Spirit of the Lord was felt in that place. I began to get a glimpse of what I presume heaven will be like ... all nations worshiping before the Throne. I longed for heaven! The difference will be, that we all will understand each other. We may not all speak the same language in heaven, but we will all understand each other as we praise God together. I look forward to worshipping with believers from Ukraine and other Slavic countries who are there as a result of the contextualized youth ministry training that I observed in this study. My prayer is that the principles learned through this study will give others a clear idea of how to take youth ministry training to the nations, and that the kingdom of God will grow as a result.
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Adams, D. (1993). The development of youth ministry as a professional career and the distinctives of Liberty University youth ministry training in preparing students for youth work. (DMin project). Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA.


APPENDIX A

KYIV THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY YOUTH MINISTRY
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course descriptions of the youth ministry courses developed by Youth Ministry International and offered at Kyiv Theological Seminary from the unpublished English catalog.

YM 101: Principles of Youth Ministry (3 credits)

This course is a study of foundational principles from scripture in establishing and maintaining a ministry to adolescents. Emphasis is placed upon a system of ministry philosophy and general principles for adolescent ministry. This is a distinctive course at KTS and is a prerequisite for all Youth Ministry courses.

YM 102: Youth Culture (3 credits)

Basic determinants critical to adolescent culture will be evaluated and observed. Identification, integration, and application of the contemporary youth culture are emphasized. Focusing on the science of the anthropological and societal nature of the people-grouping of youth. Special attention will be given to reaching the global adolescent within the context of his or her culture. Prerequisite: YM 101
YM 202: Youth Ministry Programming (3 credits)

This course explores administration and management of student ministry including outreach and teaching strategies for students and their families. It includes recruiting youth workers and training methods. The student will acquire skills to administrate and develop programs. Budget planning and implementation will also be included. **Prerequisite:** YM 101

YM 213: Curriculum Development for Small Groups (3 credits)

This course is an examination of characteristics of the learner and the teacher, and the development of a Biblical curriculum for small group ministry. **Prerequisite:** YM 101

YM 223: Contemporary Communication to Youth (3 credits)

A study of platform techniques, sermon construction, teaching strategies, lesson preparation, and general speaking qualifications within the context of biblical guidelines and cultural appropriateness. Special emphasis is given to adolescents and age appropriate communication. **Prerequisite:** YM 101

YM 331: Ministry to Troubled Youth (3 credits)

An examination of typical conflicts that contemporary youth confront in life. Special attention is given to conflict resolution in relationships as well as spiritual giftedness and temperaments. **Prerequisite:** YM 101
YM 347: Youth Discipleship (3 credits)

Principles and methods of spiritual maturing in the context of social, physical, and cultural youth development. **Prerequisite:** YM 101

YM 402: Camp Programming (3 credits)

An overview of Christian camping including promotion, planning, programming, staffing, and evaluation. Special attention will be given to implementation.

YM 403: Professional Orientation to Youth Ministry (3 credits)

Students will focus on their call to ministry examining personal growth and commitment. Job descriptions, staff development and relationships, goal setting, and time and financial management will be emphasized. Students will learn to write a professional resume. **Prerequisite:** YM 101

YM 446: Youth and Family Ministry (3 credits)

A comprehensive examination of the adolescent in context within the family dynamic. This course will examine contemporary home life in the culture. Special attention will be given to providing strategies and resources to parents. **Prerequisite:** YM 101

YM 453: Contemporary Youth Missions (3 credits)

An overview of evangelizing adolescents as a distinct people group in a cross-culture environment. Special attention is given programming missions trips as well as how to be effective as an international youth ministry trainer. **Prerequisite:** YM 101
YM 487: Youth Ministry Practicum (3 credits)

This experiential learning course (practicum) focuses on leadership development of youth within the church as well as those people helping with the youth ministry. This course is completed under the supervision of a youth minister or pastor.
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE PHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS OF PROFESSORS AT THE SEMINARY

Sample Phone Interview Questions in English

The phone call will start with the following statement: “This phone call interview is completely voluntary and you can choose whether or not you would like to provide this information to me or not. This phone interview is being used for research to help the ministry at Kiev Theological Seminary and for doctorate research for Professor Mike Manna. This information is private. I may also be recording this session as well. The recording and information will be kept secure. You may be quoted in a research project. Is this acceptable to you?” If the answer is “Yes” the phone interview may proceed.

1. Tell me about your involvement with youth ministry training from ______________________ (teacher’s name). What class did you take and where? Can you also tell me the dates you took the class?
2. Can you tell me about the methodologies that were used in teaching the class? Did you feel they were effective?
3. Can you tell me about the teaching styles that were used in the class? Did you like his teaching style and was it conducive to your learning? Please explain.
4. Did the teacher hand out notes to you for the class or did you take notes personally? How many pages of notes do you think you took from the class?
5. Can you tell me how relevant you feel the youth ministry curriculum is to Ukraine?
6. Did you feel that the teacher understood youth ministry and could teach from experience?
7. How did the training help your ministry or work?
8. How did the training help you personally?
9. Do you plan on using this training to train others? If so, how and when?
10. Have you ever taken and youth ministry training anywhere else? How did this training from this teacher compare to the other training?
Телефонный звонок будет начинаться со следующего утверждения: «Это телефонное интервью полностью добровольно, и Вы решаете, желаете Вы или нет предоставлять мне ту или иную информацию. Это интервью используется для докторского исследования профессора Майка Манны, задача которого помочь служению Киевской богословской семинарии. Эта информация конфиденциальна. Во время интервью, некоторые из ответов могут быть записаны. Запись и информация, которую Вы предоставляете, будут защищены. Но, возможно, Ваши высказывания будут цитированы в каком-либо научно-исследовательском проекте. Соглашаетесь ли Вы со всем вышесказанным?» Если ответ «да», то интервью может быть продолжено.

1. Расскажите мне о Вашем участии на программе «Молодёжное служение» под руководством преподавателя ________________ (имя преподавателя). Какие курсы Вы прошли и где? Можете ли Вы назвать даты, когда вы посещали занятия?

2. Поделитесь, пожалуйста, какие методы преподавания были использованы во время занятий? Чувствуете ли Вы, что они были эффективными?

3. Какие стили преподавания были использованы? Понравился ли Вам стиль преподавателя и насколько способствовал он Вашему обучению?
4. Предоставлял ли преподаватель конспекты или Вы вели их самостоятельно? Каким был окончательный объем конспекта, который Вы забрали с собой, уходя из занятия?
5. Как Вы считаете, насколько подходящим является учебный план курса «Молодежное служение» для Украины?
6. Чувствуете ли Вы, что преподаватель понимает суть молодежного служения и преподает исходя из личного опыта?
7. Как помогло обучение Вашему служению или работе?
8. Было ли обучение полезным Вам лично?
9. Планируете ли Вы использовать эти знания, чтобы научить других? Если «да», то, как и где?
10. Получили ли вы еще какое-ли образование на программе «Молодежное служение» в других учебных учреждениях? Сравните их, пожалуйста (насколько разным/одинаковым было полученное образование).
APPENDIX C

CODE COUNT FREQUENCY

Four main classes of categories and codes emerged during the coding process. The categories in each class and their total frequencies are listed in bold with the codes and their frequencies listed in their respective categories.

Adaptation of Course Content

**Add Ukrainian Examples and Culture To Material**

- Adapted notes to Ukraine culture 21
- Add denominational training 2
- Add transitional training for pastors 4
- Add Ukrainian examples 21
- Add Ukrainian statistics 4
- Add local authors 11
- From big city to village churches 1
- From Russian to Ukrainian language 1

**Reduce Psychological Content and Add Biblical content**

- Add evangelism training 4
- Add more scripture 8
- Reduce psychological material 3
- Remove controversial material 3
Reduce Theoretical Content to Add More Practical Material 45

- Add more practical material 26
- Add practical books vs. theoretical 4
- Reduce theory in class 10
- Simplify terminology 5

Create Decentralized Training 16

- Combine or reduce courses 4
- Ukrainian teachers for regional seminars 8
- Ukrainian teachers for foreign countries 4

Adaptation of Methodologies

Focus on Group Learning Rather Than Individual Study 32

- Added learning games 6
- Focus on group projects 11
- Group review for testing/quizzes 7
- Less printed notes given 4
- Oral discussion of theories 4

Greater Relational Training vs Lectures 16

- After-class corporate worship 2
- More prayer times 4
- Shorten lectures 8
- Taught around a table 2

Implement Teacher-Assisted Methodical Training 43

- Charts and graphs added to presentation 10
- Increased use of whiteboard 11
Less post-class assignments 4
More repetition and memorization 7
More skill training 9
Step-by-step training 2

**Adaptation of Teaching Style**

**Increase Family Style and Reduce Professionalism** 28
Correct students’ mistakes more 1
Greater informal and open style 17
More student-to-teacher interaction 7
Reduce professionalism 3

**Motivation for Adaptations**

**Build Ukrainian Worldview vs. American** 19
Adapt from American context 5
In native language 7
Needs Ukrainian worldview 7

**Focus on Current Needs vs. Theoretical** 6
Focus on needs in Ukraine 3
Theory must be connected to real life 3