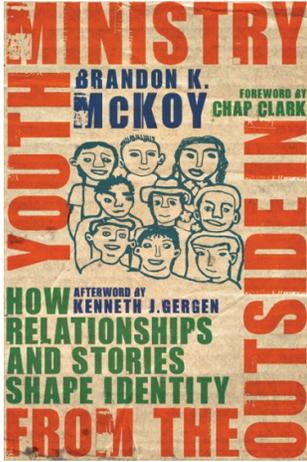




BOOK DETAILS



Youth Ministry from the Outside In: How Relationships and Stories Shape Identity
Available October 2013
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Brandon K. McKoy (D.Min., Fuller Seminary; M.Div., Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity) serves as youth pastor at New Hope Baptist Church in Gastonia, North Carolina, and as an adjunct instructor at Gardner-Webb University in the department of religious studies and philosophy. He has ministered to youth and their families for over fifteen years.

Moving from Jesus in Your Heart to Christ in Our Midst

The grand cultural narrative of individualism that shapes Western society has permeated the church and youth ministry, resulting in youth that are too often unable to articulate and integrate their Christian faith into daily living. Although there has been an increase of literature concerned with the lack of Christian identity formation in current youth ministry practice, many of these books remain locked into the very individualistic assumptions and worldview that have helped to create the current situation. *Youth Ministry from the Outside In* is the first book to expose those assumptions, present a thoughtful case for identity development through relationships and stories, and provide new forms of youth ministry practice that can reverse current trends and shape the future of youth ministry.

“I found individualism so pervasive among my youth that no matter how many times I presented relational lessons on the kingdom of God and body of Christ, youth continued to frame their understanding within their individualistic view of culture,” explains McKoy. “The relational reign of God was reduced to how God ‘relationally’ reigned in them, and participation in the body of Christ was always about their individual part.”

Many youth ministry practices teach self-esteem, self-worth and self-value, which elevates the self as central and builds upon individualism. But if the uniqueness of youth is seen as originating “internally,” then what happens when they fail? Failure becomes an internal, individual problem. Any inadequate performance or public failure throws youth into questioning their deficiencies.

Employing a blend of practical theology and social constructionism theory, McKoy uncovers that youth do not find their significance “alone” or “inside,” but through their relationship with God and others. Youth ministers who embrace this relational focus on identity will change youth ministry practices, and youth will gain what they need most: to know they are connected, to feel they belong, to see that their life matters and to love in God’s relational reign.

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