

Spiritual State of the World's Children

Mexico





Spiritual State of the World's Children A Qualitative Study

Mexico

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The Metadigm Group is a non-profit research organization with the goal of equipping other organizations to conduct research and improve their efficacy. Processes necessary to achieve organizational priorities and embed research skills into day-to-day organizational operations are developed through seamless processes offered in data collection, strategic planning, market profiles, and outcomes development. For more information, visit www.metadigmgroup.com or email info@metadigmgroup.com.

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Section I: Project Overview

Convened Groups

The following groups have been used in discovery research; each region is unique. These categories were reexamined in a Mexico context and in convened groups to maximize the information gathered.

- Government Leadership
- NGO
- Pastors
- Youth Leaders
- Teachers
- Students

Regions for Focus Groups

OneHope contracted the Metadigm Group for this project. The Metadigm Group's Executive Director, Allen Reesor, and the Research Manager for Latin America, Farid Moreno led and co-facilitated the project with a assistance of Richard Luna (OneHope). CONEMEX (Evangelical Mexican Counsel) and the Mexican Theological Baptist Seminary collaborated to make this project possible. Training was conducted by Dr. Allen Reesor and Farid Moreno.

Leadership and Facilitators

- Mexico City, Mexico State
- Monterrey, Nuevo León State
- Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas State

Focus Group Composition

Each focus group was comprised of a single demographic and limited to no more than eight participants of similar social parity. Some of the demographic groups were represented by several groups, which met separately. The findings of each group represented a single demographic, and were consolidated into a single report for that group. Information included in the final report does not contain identifiers that might determine name, identity, or opinion of any group member.

Format

The focus group sessions were 90 minutes or less in length. The facilitators encouraged group members to describe their living experience, as they informally assess the needs and activities from their perspectives. Common themes were evaluated for inclusion in the final report.

Schedule for Data Collection

The topics for focus groups were identified and finalized in meetings with ministry leadership representing various denominations and disciplines. These meetings occurred before the training and immediately prior to the focus group research.

Focus groups were conducted from May 26 – May 28, 2008 by Marisol Camacho Medina, Vasti Reyes Alvarado, Lic. Lissete Gonzáles Espinoza, Gaudencia Gomez Santiago, Nora Ramirez, Yenni Palafox de Sevilla, Alfonso Sevilla, Ociel Lua, Tuth Noemí Escobar Ramirez, Heber Rodriguez Jiménez, Luis Alberto Mora Luna, Armando Lara Cortéz, Joel Aguilar Palacios, José Antonio Martinez Clemente, Sein Antonio Galmadez López, Noe Isacar Iglesias Sánchez, Víctor Jabes Martínez Ost, and Omar Rodríguez Bello. The draft report was completed on May 30, 2008.

Data Analysis and Reporting

The comments and findings of each focus group were transcribed into the Data files. The general discussion, main points, conclusions, and recommendations were written and read to the group at the end of the session.

This information was compiled and translated by Fernando Marquez, Marisol Camacho Medina, and Farid Moreno. The draft report was evaluated and interpreted by Allen Reesor, D. Min. and Farid Moreno. The questions and issues identified as essential for decision-making, distribution planning, and outcome design were recommended by design and ministry personnel, and then finalized by leaders at the Strategic Planning in Mexico City on May 23, 2008. It identifies common and/or recurring themes and compares these to other secondary research data.

This report was circulated for validation by key personnel familiar with children and youth in Mexico; Paco Palafox, Betsaida Fajardo, Dennis Poulette, and Ps. Cirilo Cruz. Following their response, their additional comments, observations, and corrections are included in the final report. The final report is the sole property of the Metadigm Group and OneHope, and may only be reproduced with permission from its authorized agents.

Focus Group Research Questions

1. Can programs be developed so that children will find salvation more appealing than entertainment?
2. Are youth willing to attend public religious services?
3. Will youth find holistic religious activities more attractive than spiritual programs?
4. Are youth interested in reading, and would a more visually appealing edition of the Bible encourage scripture reading?
5. Does a church that focuses on community needs and develops relevant programs have more appeal for youth?
6. Are parents willing to attend workshops?
7. Will families participate in counseling?
8. What are factors affecting intra-family relationships and communication?
9. What are criteria considered important to have a good family?
10. What experiences do youth value and dislike most in family?
11. What are positive activities experienced in family?
12. What do children value in their parents, and what makes for increased closeness?
13. What are common definitions of values and key values in a person's life?
14. What are youths' attitudes toward heterosexual and homosexual intercourse and abortion?
15. What moral values are most often practiced and/or ignored by children, youth, and adults in Mexico?
16. What values or lack of values create the problem of depression and suicide?
17. How does an understanding of God and participation in church affect values?
18. Where should people learn their values?
19. What kind of media do youth and children prefer?
20. What kinds of TV programs are their favorites, and why do they like these programs?
21. How much time and value is placed on internet and computer activity?
22. What do or would they find appealing in the Bible and religious activity?
23. What do they find negative about media?
24. How effective is media in shaping values and decisions?
25. How aware are pastors, youth leaders, and parents of the values and behaviors expressed by the children and youth as primary concerns?

Focus Group Themes

Government

- What is your opinion concerning parents' role in the education of their children?
- How has their experience prepared them for their work with children?

- How does media influence families?
- What programs (events) are the most effective influences on youth values?
- What do you think youth values will be fifteen years from now?
- What are the most common needs you observe among youth?

NGO

- What factors have you identified that contribute to family disintegration?
- How do you think media helps promote or destroy good values?
- How can we restore the values lacking in our society?
- What advice would you give families to be happy?

Teachers

- What attitudes do you see most often in your students, and what are the causes?
- When you talk to youth directly, what generates positive and negative reactions?
- What do you think your students face or have faced in their personal lives?
- Do educational programs have influence on the formation of values?
- How do you think media has influenced education?

Pastors

- What are the most common needs you have seen among youth?
- What activities are young people involved with in your community?
- How does the media influence youth?
- What events do youth find most attractive in your community, and what effects do they have?
- What would you change if you were the youth pastor?

Youth Leaders

- Does the church exert influence on boyfriend/girlfriend relationships among youth?
- What type of media do you use to evangelize youth?
- How would you encourage family unity among youth?
- What activities do you consider to be most helpful for discipleship, and do young people invite their friends?
- As a youth leader, what needs do you have?

Youth (13 - 15 years)

- If you were not going to school, what would you like to do?
- What is your biggest fear?
- Who is your hero and why?
- What is your favorite pastime, and what keeps you from doing it?
- Describe a good boyfriend/girlfriend relationship.

Youth (16 - 18)

- What problems do you have right now?
- How do you see yourself in 10 years?
- If you had the power to help somebody, who would you help?
- What kind of problems have your friends had in their boyfriend/girlfriend relationships?

- What would you do different when you are a parent?

Section II: Executive Summary

General Information

Between 1940 and 1980, Mexico experienced substantial economic growth that some historians call "El Milagro Mexicano", the Mexican Miracle. The assumption of mineral rights by the government, and the subsequent nationalization of the oil industry into PEMEX during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas del Río (1938) was a popular move, but sparked a diplomatic crisis with those countries whose citizens had lost businesses expropriated by the Cárdenas government.

Although the economy continued to flourish, social inequality remained a factor of discontent. Moreover, the PRI rule became increasingly authoritarian and at times oppressive. An example of this is the Tlatelolco Massacre of 1968, which according to government officials claimed the life of around 30 protesters, while according to many reputable international accounts around 250 protesters were killed.

In the 1970s there was extreme dissatisfaction with the administration of Luis Echeverría which took missteps in both the national and international arenas. Nonetheless, it was in this decade that the first substantial changes to electoral law were made, which initiated a movement of democratization of a system that had become electorally authoritarian. While the prices of oil were at historically high records and interest rates were low, Mexico made impressive investments in the state-owned oil company, with the intention of revitalizing the economy, but over borrowing and mismanagement of oil revenues led to inflation and exacerbated the crisis of 1982. That year, oil prices plunged, interest rates soared, and the government defaulted on its debt. In an attempt to stabilize the current account balance, and given the reluctance of international lenders to return to Mexico given the previous default, President de la Madrid resorted to currency devaluations which in turn sparked inflation.

The first small cracks in the political monopolistic position of PRI were seen in the late 1970s with the creation of 100 deputy seats in the Chamber of Deputies assigned through proportional representation with closed party-lists. Even though at the municipal level the first non-PRI mayor was elected in 1947, it was not until 1989 that the first non-PRI governor of a state was elected. However, many sources claimed that in 1988 the party resorted to electoral fraud in order to prevent leftist opposition candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas from winning the national presidential elections who lost to Carlos Salinas, which led to massive protests in the capital. Salinas embarked on a program of neoliberal reforms which fixed the exchange rate, controlled inflation and culminated with the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which came into effect in 1994. However, that very same day, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) started a two-week-lived armed rebellion against the federal government, and has continued as a non-violent opposition movement against neoliberals and globalization. Being an election year, in a process that was then called the most transparent in Mexican history, authorities were reluctant to devalue the peso, a move which caused a rapid depletion of the National Reserves. In December 1994, a month after Salinas was succeeded by Ernesto Zedillo, the Mexican economy collapsed.

With a rapid rescue packaged authorized by United States President Bill Clinton and major macroeconomic reforms started by president Zedillo, the economy rapidly recovered and growth peaked at almost 7% by the end of 1999. After a comprehensive electoral reform to increase party representation during Zedillo's administration, as well as discontent with PRI after the economic crisis, this led the PRI to lose its absolute majority in the Congress in 1997. In 2000, after 71 years the PRI lost a presidential election to Vicente Fox of the opposition National Action Party (PAN). Neither party had absolute majority in the Congress.

On March 23, 2005, the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America was signed by Vicente Fox. During the 2006 elections, the position of PRI in the Congress was further weakened and became the third political force in number of seats in the Chamber of Deputies after PAN and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), even though the party still has the plurality of state governorships. In the concurrent presidential elections, Felipe Calderón, from PAN was declared winner, with a razor-thin margin over Andrés

Manuel López Obrador PRD. López Obrador, however, contested the election and pledged to create an "alternative government".

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION¹

POPULATION:

109,955,400 (July 2008 est.)

POPULATION % BY AGE:

0-14 years: 29.6% (male 16,619,995/female 15,936,154)

15-64 years: 64.3% (male 34,179,440/female 36,530,154)

65 years and over: 6.1% (male 3,023,185/female 3,666,472) (2008 est.)

POPULATION RATIO MALES TO FEMALES:

At birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

Under 15 years: 1.02 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 0.95 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.76 male(s)/female

Total population: 0.96 male(s)/female (2008 est.)

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA:

\$12,500 (2007 est.)

% EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR (2007 EST.):

Agriculture: 3.9%

Industry: 26.3%

Services: 69.9%

ADULT LITERACY:

91%

RELIGIONS:

Roman Catholic 76.5%, Protestant 6.3% (Pentecostal 1.4%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1.1%, other 3.8%), other 0.3%, unspecified 13.8%, none 3.1% (2000 census)

LANGUAGES:

Spanish, various Mayan, Nahuatl, and other regional indigenous languages Spanish

Key Issues

Strengths & Opportunities

- Youth want to be actively involved in family decisions and spend time with their parents.
- The church is more aware of the reality faced by youth than in the past, and has begun to explore ways to be relevant to youth and establish a communication.
- Some youth programs and ministries are already working with children and youth under different denominations, although there are not enough united efforts.
- Media, technology, and internet resources to interact with youth and foster an environment where they can connect with their peers to share experiences is available and can be used to coach and counsel youth with confidentiality and security.

¹ Information drawn from Country Watch (2008), Wikipedia (2008) and World Factbook (2008).

Weaknesses & Threats

- Dysfunctional families are a problem in Mexico and exacerbated by a lack of awareness and interest evidenced in parents in the situations faced by children. This is commonly reported and evidenced by comments that youth are looking for more committed family relationships.
- Government educational and social programs have not set long term goals for the development of children and youth. Plans and programs often lack commitment and strategy.
- Communication between youth and parents is poor or does not exist at all in many situations; youth feel that they do not have a voice in family matters and decisions.
- Youth see no consistency between what their parents and adults in general say and do. This is also expressed as an attitude toward the church.
- There seems to be no clear difference between Christian and non Christian youth when it comes to problems like abortions, unwanted pregnancies, physical abuse, homosexuality, drugs, alcohol, lack of identity, or the desire to belong to sub-cultures. In the case of Christian youth, this is a problem that is concealed from the adults in their lives and in consequence they live a double standard lifestyle.

Responses to Research Questions/Areas

1. Can programs be developed so that children will find salvation more appealing than entertainment?

Children will have to be approached with a message of salvation and hope in ways that are appealing and entertaining. Entertainment and the message of the gospel are not mutually exclusive, although most of the reports indicate that church programs do not have high levels of appeal for youth. New programs, using their language and music, need to be developed to address their specific needs and interest with biblical answers.

2. Are youth willing to attend public religious services?

All programs, whether in the church or out, must be interactive and promote a positive experience to create youth appeal. Pastors and youth workers suggest that concerts and public events are appealing, but are not always followed by effective contact with participants. There is strong evidence that youth prefer small group interaction within the context of larger social events. There should be further research conducted to determine whether open and public religious services are appealing to youth.

3. Will youth find religious activities that deal of all the topics of life (social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, etc.) more attractive than only spiritual programs?

Typically youth view church programs as legalistic and unappealing. This may be because the church attempts to deliver solutions and answers rather than stimulate discussion and discovery. Church leaders and youth workers indicate that sometimes the church and parents are unaware of the issues faced by youth or afraid to deal with them. Appealing programs, whether public or media, must be very direct and clear, and invite the youth to draw their own conclusions, ideally through interactive discussion and experience. The church and families must permit enough freedom for youth to make mistakes in the context of love, affirmation, and trust.

4. Are youth interested in reading, and would a more visually appealing edition of the Bible encourage scripture reading?

There is little evidence that young people pursue reading as a pastime activity. They are more likely to read on the internet when looking for specific information. Any new material will need to be highly visual with short sections of text that contains complete thoughts. Print material should stimulate thinking and promote concepts that can be experienced before they can be accepted as true. Most Bibles and print targeting youth contain too much text and too lengthy a presentation before arriving at how the idea can be applied to life.

5. Does a church that focuses on community needs and develops relevant programs have more appeal for youth?

Youth do not seem to be aware of community needs or interested in community service. While it was mentioned that this attitude should be developed in youth, it is doubtful that an emphasis on community issues alone would be appealing. Youth are more concerned about dealing with issues faced by friends and family or those that have occurred in their own lives. It is possible to stimulate community awareness by helping them see that their experience is relevant and needed by others in similar situations.

6. Are parents willing to attend workshops?

There is evidence that parents are unwilling to attend workshops. This may be due to the fact that they are not aware of their own and their children's needs. It is also possible that they do not find the institutions or organizations offering the workshops to be credible. Parents are characterized as being more self-centered than in the past, and may find workshops that address their own sense of need more appealing than those that seem to increase the expectations placed on them and impose additional burdens and responsibilities.

7. Will families participate in counseling?

Families are very private about the problems they are dealing with and often are unwilling to admit their need until it is too late. It is suggested that family pride, the idea of being able to deal with your own problems, may inhibit them from seeking help. Youth and parents are characterized by lack of trust, unless confidentiality is protected they are unlikely to seek counseling assistance. Families do not typically discuss the problems even amongst themselves, and as such are even less likely to involve an outsider in family issues.

8. What are factors affecting intra-family relationships and communication?

Factors affecting family life are both internal to the family and external to the community. Relationships are not generally as trusting and secure as in the past. Expectations placed on parents and the changes of gender

roles make it very difficult to identify solutions to the problems they face. Positive relationships are characterized by trust, good communication, and mutual respect. The intergenerational differences in values, ideals, and goals mean that many families are unable to communicate effectively. Parents are identified as being increasingly aware of their own needs, which become their priority rather than the needs of the family. Children feel isolated and have fears of abandonment, which in turn drive the youth to seek peer relationships and distance their parents even further. These issues are further aggravated by economic pressures, social instability, and fragmentation of the community. All of these factors inhibit effective communication between parents and of parents with their children.

9. What are criteria considered important to have a good family?

Good families are characterized by trust, good communication, and mutual respect. Parents are expected to support their children as they make decisions through a balance of discipline and freedom. Youth cite their parents as role models some of the time and this is true more often of mothers than fathers. A good family has a strong and protective father figure and a caring and supportive mother figure. Children in the ideal family would be willing to accept guidance and responsibility as they mature.

10. What experiences do youth value and dislike most in family?

A significant unmet expectation voiced by youth is meaningful family time with parents. This is, however, balanced by a desire not to have parents intrude without invitation. Youth indicate that they would like their parents to understand and participate in their favorite pastimes. They do not appreciate the impression that parents deny them the time to engage in preferred activities without first understanding why they enjoy them.

11. What are positive activities experienced in family?

Although specific activities were not identified, the common theme was spending time together in activities that have appeal to all family members.

12. What do children value in their parents and what makes for increased closeness?

Youth value respect and support from their parents. When parents encourage the children to develop their own values without imposing those the parents hold it is highly appreciated. Children want their parents to listen to them and advise them without judging. They are aware that they will probably follow the same paths as their parents, but hope that they will offer their children more freedom.

13. What are common definitions of values and key values in a person's life?

Key values are trust, respect, and communication/listening. Trust is defined as the willingness to allow freedom within the context of continued support and respect. Respect is defined as the appreciation of another individual and the willingness to love and value them. Communication has an emphasis on listening and understanding the perspective of another person, and allowing them to hold that value while remaining in relationship.

14. What are youths' attitudes toward heterosexual and homosexual intercourse and abortion?

Young people seem to hold individualistic and relative moral perspectives on sexual issues. There is recognition that sexuality often creates personal problems, but youth do not want rigid guidelines imposed on them. Teen and youth pregnancy is identified as a problem that has significant social implications and creates a burden on families and society.

There was little internal information about abortion. Homosexuality was treated as an experience that individuals would not prefer for themselves, but did not condemn in others. Christian youth are more likely to accept the need for moral guidelines regarding sexuality.

15. What moral values are most often practiced and/or ignored by children, youth, and adults in Mexico?

The value that is promoted above all is self-interest, which is directly contrary to the values of respect for others, responsibility, and community action. Traditional moral values across society seem to be at risk of disappearing. Parents are either unable or unwilling to develop moral values in their children. This may be due to the lack of communication, or that they are unaware of the degree to which common social values have been eroded. Values are attacked and undermined by the media, and are replaced with consumer and egocentric activities that have no value judgment applied to them. The education system has emphasized tolerance to the point that values are seen as intolerant and obstacles to social development. The church has

not yet addressed effectively or communicated in a relevant way the biblical values that it holds. These values are most often communicated legalistically and rejected by youth and in many cases by parents as well.

16. What values or lack of values create the problem of depression and suicide?

Self-centeredness is the value that promotes depression since individuals often feel that they have received less than they deserve or that others are not attending to their needs. The lack of respect and responsibility mean that those who have depressive or suicidal perspectives do not have a balanced understanding of how their needs compare to those of other people. The conjunctions of these value sets results in people who want to receive, but are unwilling to contribute. A frequent manifestation of this is loneliness and isolation, which is justifiably evidence by the disintegration of family time and closeness.

17. How does an understanding of God and participation in church affect values?

Without an understanding of God, Biblical values are difficult to sustain. However, it is essential that formation of values be communicated in a relevant and attractive way. Youth are unwilling to accept conclusions and dictates. Their understanding of God needs to be one that promotes a sense that God accompanies them in developing values that promote success in life. As the visible representation of God, the Church needs to demonstrate this characteristic.

18. Where should people learn their values?

As indicated by youth and the adults interacting with them, more attention needs to be given on how values are presented to them. They need to be presented in their language and an appropriate learning style. Young people need an opportunity to be coached on discovering these values, so they can adopt them with a sense of ownership. Youth are more likely to learn by interacting with other peers to information offered in a style that resemble that of media communication, even if it is in print, rather than using traditional academic and theoretical methods. Media and technology are effective vehicles to communicate with youth as they are familiar with such. These products could be used by schools, churches, and at youth events in the community.

19. What kind of media do youth and children prefer?

It was a clear indication that technology including computers, cell phones, TV, mp3, iPods, and video games are frequently used and accepted by children and youth. Presentations and communication employing digital technology are preferred by young people. Internet activities such as chatting, blogging, navigating through web sites, text messaging, creating and maintaining profiles in Hi5, Facebook and Myspace, and emailing are referenced by youth as a significant part of their life. The internet is one of the most preferred ways to communicate with friends and peers and even with their teachers.

20. What kinds of TV programs are their favorites, and why do they like these programs?

It was mentioned by youth and confirmed by adults that movies, especially the ones with violence and sexual content, are preferred by youth. Young people are also attracted to TV shows that include their music style and dramas, or cartoons of other youth dealing with situations relevant to them. Examples of such situations are school, family situations, and communication barriers.

21. How much time and value is placed on internet and computer activity?

Youth spend a significant amount of time on the internet and computer-based activities. Although media is a great influence in the lives of children and youth, it is a communication channel that can easily and frequently bombard them with ideas supporting violence and sensuality. It was mentioned that even younger children are encouraged to use and given unrestricted access to internet and computer activities, and in their case they are particularly vulnerable to negative aspects. Young people receive a lot of information through the internet, and it is reported that they use their access to information as a means of emotionally manipulating parents and adults to get what they want.

22. What do or would they find appealing in the Bible and religious activity?

The church would be more attractive to youth if Bible stories had a specific goal and dealt more explicitly with biblical principles and values that help them deal with relevant issues such as dating, sex, urban tribes, and drugs. This information can be communicated most effectively through interactive programs using their language and music style, perhaps even more so if offered in their own context outside of the church. These programs can also be supported with the use of media and technology. Youth should be guided to discover and develop their gifts and talents and prepared to serve the community. Encouragement and coaching on ways to sustain family integrity and stability is an area that needs to be addressed.

23. What do they find negative about media?

Youth are mostly exposed to morally destructive messages by the media. Although there was some evidence that Christian youth are aware of the negative influence of media on thinking and behavior, most are not. Because of family problems, economic pressures, and loneliness youth spend a great deal of time watching TV and on the internet. Because they lack formation by parents, they are vulnerable and often misguided by media. As they seek love and identity, media is reported to influence behaviors so there has been an increase in levels of violence, bad language, sexual experimentation, selfishness, and consumerism. Children and youth are often over informed about issues that are inappropriate for their age and stage of development. This also contributes to moral breakdown as they are inundated with negative values and situations they do not fully understand but are ready to imitate.

24. How effective is media in shaping values and decisions?

While media can be a positive asset in education and provides access to youth, it is not always well used by education programs. Media is generally driven by profit and, although potentially helpful, is primarily antagonistic to moral values. Values are cast as prejudices and most programs portray violence, sensuality, and drugs. Even news programs focus on the sensational and negative. The cumulative effect is that media promotes the breakdown of values. Parents are either unable or unwilling to monitor what media children watch. Parents have no idea what kids look at when they use these media, and so media has taken the place of parents in forming the values of children.

25. How aware are pastors, youth leaders, and parents of the values and behaviors expressed by the children and youth as primary concerns?

Pastors believe young people are involved in sports, internet, and social activities and that some of these activities lead to drugs, sex and alcohol abuse. They also indicated that youth are especially influenced by and attracted to music; however, many of their activities promote irresponsibility, sexual experimentation, and lead to drop out or poor performance in school.

Youth leaders acknowledge that youth need attention, love, understanding, support, and to be heard so they can develop a positive sense of identity. This attention is particularly needed from their parents but is often missing. They feel the church is unaware of what is happening and not too involved in addressing real needs. For many, the church is still focused on rules rather than personal relationships even as it transitions to new initiatives. Such initiatives include implementing discipleship programs to respond to the needs of those new believers coming into the church through evangelistic outreaches. According to youth leaders, young people respond best to transparency, personal mentoring, and one-on-one relationships.

They indicate that parents seem to be unwilling to accept the reality of youth culture and resist attempts to equip them to become more effective. Parents are also often unaware and not engaged in their children's moral formation. This reality is further complicated by the negative influence of media on youth resulting in destructive behaviors such as sexual deviance, violence, and selfishness. When these behaviors are added to family situations including lack of father figures and presence in the home, poor communication, and economic pressures, they result in youth experiencing a lack of identity, isolation, or loneliness and rebellion. Such conditions lead many young people to turn to subcultures, such as "Emos" (emotional hardcore), and to experiment with sex and drugs.

Section III: Synopsis of Data and Findings

Synopsis of Government Leaders Focus Group

Government workers seem personally discouraged by the situation they face in their work. Programs are not really designed to address the long-term needs of people and the realities that need to be addressed are becoming more difficult in the meantime.

Family disintegration is a significant contributor to the problems faced. Children are not raised by their parents; in some cases older sibling are made responsible to develop good values. The values that should be taught at home are left to the education system, which should be focused on academic training. The changing social and economic realities make it even more difficult for parents to practice the qualities of good parenting: participation, love/physical affection, trust/closeness, and acceptance that permit children the freedom to make mistakes and learn within the context of family care.

Government officers, especially the police, are faced with this situation: they are not trained to work with children and youth below 18 years of age, yet the new laws treat these minors as adults and move them into even more destructive environments. Often their personal and corporate experiences are the only information they have on how to deal with youth problems, although they are referring to the internet and books to supplement their own experience.

Although media is a great significant influence in the lives of children and youth, it is primarily an avenue to promote violence and sensuality. Even young children are encouraged to use the internet but it is mostly a source of negative influence and parents have no idea what kids look at when they use these media. It is necessary to offer and encourage the use of positive internet sites and to give youth an alternative. These programs need to be very clear in the language they use and confront kids with the truth. Sports programs should be developed and even video games that allow youth to learn better values would be good. These participants are not optimistic about the future; without strong intervention, they predict the values found in Mexico will be characterized by selfishness and violence. Youth already expect authority without responsibility as is evidenced by the increase in teen pregnancy and abortion. Without some changes in disintegrating family, the family will decline to the place where it may no longer function as a social institution. The critical factor is whether the emerging generations are able to receive the education and moral formation needed for a strong society.

Government programs are primarily economic and do not promote values. The church is unaware of what is happening and not too involved in addressing real needs. Education is focused on literacy, and families are not functioning well, especially due to the lack of father figures and presence in the home. Values must be instilled to make a difference for the future.

Synopsis of NGO & Christian Ministry Leadership Focus Groups & NGO Interviews

Government workers seem personally discouraged by the situation they face in their work. Programs are not really designed to address the long-term needs of people and the realities that need to be addressed are becoming more difficult in the meantime.

Family disintegration is a significant contributor to the problems faced. Children are not raised by their parents; in some cases older sibling are made responsible to develop good values. The values that should be taught at home are left to the education system, which should be focused on academic training. The changing social and economic realities make it even more difficult for parents to practice the qualities of good parenting: participation, love/physical affection, trust/closeness, and acceptance that permit children the freedom to make mistakes and learn within the context of family care.

Government officers, especially the police, are faced with this situation: they are not trained to work with children and youth below 18 years of age, yet the new laws treat these minors as adults and move them into

even more destructive environments. Often their personal and corporate experiences are the only information they have on how to deal with youth problems, although they are referring to the internet and books to supplement their own experience.

Although media is a great significant influence in the lives of children and youth, it is primarily an avenue to promote violence and sensuality. Even young children are encouraged to use the internet but it is mostly a source of negative influence and parents have no idea what kids look at when they use these media. It is necessary to offer and encourage the use of positive internet sites and to give youth an alternative. These programs need to be very clear in the language they use and confront kids with the truth. Sports programs should be developed and even video games that allow youth to learn better values would be good. These participants are not optimistic about the future; without strong intervention, they predict the values found in Mexico will be characterized by selfishness and violence. Youth already expect authority without responsibility as is evidenced by the increase in teen pregnancy and abortion. Without some changes in disintegrating family, the family will decline to the place where it may no longer function as a social institution. The critical factor is whether the emerging generations are able to receive the education and moral formation needed for a strong society.

Government programs are primarily economic and do not promote values. The church is unaware of what is happening and not too involved in addressing real needs. Education is focused on literacy, and families are not functioning well, especially due to the lack of father figures and presence in the home. Values must be instilled to make a difference for the future.

Synopsis of Pastors' Focus Groups

Young people are involved in sports, internet, and social activities. However, some of the social activities lead to drugs, sex, and alcohol abuse. Youth are especially influenced by and attracted to music. However, many of their activities promote irresponsibility, sexual experimentation, and drop-out or poor performance in school. The media contributes to moral breakdown by portraying negative values such as violence, sex, and promoting selfishness/consumerism.

Pastors recognize that the most vulnerable groups in the church are the children and youth. Youth need attention, love, understanding, support, and to be heard so they can develop a positive sense of identity. This attention is particularly needed from their parents, but is often missing. To develop values and integrity, they will also need the support of the church in training and prayer. However, the church programs are not too strong in addressing these needs since the church has been perceived as too legalistic and promoted programs that do not have contextual appeal and relevance.

More resources must be allocated to the programs addressing the needs of children and youth. For the church to be more effective, it will need to teach principles and values to youth addressing things such as dating, sex, urban tribes, and drugs. In order to communicate effectively, the programs will need to use their language and music style and be taken out of the church. Youth should be offered the opportunity to develop their gifts and talents, prepared to serve the community, and offered an opportunity to sustain family integration.

Synopsis of Teachers' Focus Groups

Teachers see family structure and lack of interaction between children and parents as an underlying cause of many problems they see in youth. Young people hang together, but when they confide about their problems it is most often about family problems. However, as they are distrustful of adults, so it is difficult to help. The family structure has been eroded due to little time for parents to be with family, domestic violence, and parental neglect. Parents are unwilling to accept the reality of youth culture and resist attempts to equip them to become more effective. This unattended problem within families tends to produce poor communication, lack of identity, isolation/loneliness, and rebellion in the students. The result is that youth, misguided by media, seek love and identity in counterproductive behaviors: violence, bad language, and sexual experimentation.

This reality is further complicated by exposure to sexual deviance in media, alcoholism, and drugs in the community and lack of financial resources. Young people have access to a lot of information and use it to manipulate parents and adults to gain their own self-determined goals. While media can be a positive asset in education and provides access to youth, it is not always well used by education programs. Additionally, the education programs are poorly prepared to build character, and in an attempt to encourage tolerance, actually expose youth to destruction of values. Any government programs are too short-term in their goals to be effective.

Synopsis of Students' Focus Groups

Youth 13-15 years of age express a fear of being alone and without parents. The lack of parental involvement reinforces this, and several felt subculture affiliation such as an EMO group was an alternative. They do sense that they need to develop professional careers for future security. However, they are most frequently involved in personal activities often focused on media: TV, movies, and video games. Often parents are not involved in these activities due to lack of time or not being familiar with newer technology. Christian youth are somewhat interested in religious activity, but otherwise seem to express more self-centered attitudes than non-Christian youth.

They value relationships based on trust, respect, communication, and without abuse. They are suspicious of media role models and public figures. Some identify parents, particularly mothers, as role models and the Christian group identified Jesus as a role model. Most often they expressed fear of losing their parents, lack of trust and, for the non-Christians, death and facing God.

Overall, 16-18 year old youth are positive and look for relationships in which they are valued and empowered to live independently and productively. They describe "youth" as a time of joy and fear since there are both opportunities and uncertainty. They describe the future in terms of their own financial security and careers and having a family, although non-Christians are less certain of marriage and having children. Their view of parenting is that it should involve listening, concern, support, and giving of time. They recognize the need for discipline but also the need to help children learn to make good decisions by giving some freedom to make mistakes.

At the moment, they are dealing with school, family situations, and communication barriers. They indicate that friends who are in a serious relationship with another person have problems with violence, manipulation, and unwanted pregnancy.

Their free time is comprised of activities with friends, primarily interpersonal events, such as going out to eat or to a movie, but also sports. Non-Christians mention activities with parents. They express concern for those who are facing crisis in their life, and while some think in terms of helping those they do not know, most focus on their friends and family in need in terms of social outreach.

Section IV: Raw Data from Focus Groups and Interviews

Government Leaders

Introduction Question: How do you feel when you are not at work?

- Useless
- Frustrated
- Stressed out
- Disrespected
- Our society lacks values
- Worried about the lack of school education; it leads to crime
- Very young parents, which in turn creates a whole new set of problems

Transition Question: When bills about children/childhood are signed into law, are these properly designed?

- The existing programs are inefficient, unimportant; there aren't good results (3)
- An analysis of government support programs shows their deficiency; they are more concerned about statistics than results
- Institutes and organizations committed to working with destitute and vulnerable groups lack the financial support to provide wider coverage

Theme 1: How do you feel about the parents' role in their children's education?

- The responsibility must be shared: home is for values and principles and school is for academic training (2)
- Parents are very materialistic and children are merely their reflection (3)
- It is not good to emphasize overprotection more than a good education
- Some children assume the role as parents to their younger siblings, thus all lack in education
- Parents are dysfunctional
- There are parents who pass their criminal values on to their children (3)
- Mothers in general have become neglectful of their children
- Parents are losing authority; some even go to the police to report their own children for abusing them
- Work with single mothers and those separated from their husbands due to violence has showed that the root of family disintegrations is the result of financial and educational issues

Theme 2: What are the required ingredients for a good family?

- Participation
- Understanding
- Communication (between father/mother/children)
- Let their children be themselves without impositions
- Closeness
- Trust
- Physical affection
- Love
- Acceptance – allowing them to fail, so that they will learn from their own experiences

Theme 3: How has your experience prepared you for your work with children?

- There is not enough training about dealing with children under 18
- Their experience has been empirical and circumstantial

- Upcoming legislation punish on the same level minor and adult offenders (future laws will judge children as adults)
- They have tried to do what is right, although many times they are at variance with what the law mandates
- We seek to learn through magazines, the internet, about what is most current (2)
- Managing techniques and social adaptation with minor offenders have shown to us that the lack of affection , guidance and self-worth leads them to crime

Theme 4: How does the Media influence the family?

- Materially, in comparison to the parents, the media teaches the kids more (2)
- Devastating. Much violence (2)
- Sensationalism
- On sales (consumerism)
- Primary school children are encouraged to have internet
- The internet has gained preponderance in the spread of information, outside of the control of the parents

Theme 5: What programs (events) are more effective in influencing the youth's values?

- Videogames,
- Soccer
- family TV programs (like Muevete, MTV), which promote eroticism, violence, sensationalism
- There is no knowledge of the existence of such programs
- They suggest the creation of groups that encourage sports activities
- To encourage young men and women a military education to instill the values and discipline typical of a good citizen
- The necessity to create audiovisual material able to educate the youth with the same characteristics of current TV programs
- Utilize technology in our favor
- It is advisable to upload the Book of Hope on the internet, using a format appealing to each of the targeted age groups
- To create an edition for parents and children that allows them to interactively teach each other
- By means of other electronic media, to use straight language to address current issues such as anorexia, bulimia, abandonment, child prostitution, etc.

Theme 6: What will be the youth values in 15 years?

- Selfishness (2)
- Perversion (2)
- Lack of respect
- Licentiousness and promiscuity are being promoted
- Less values, perhaps marriage will cease to exist and the family will no longer be as we know it (3)
- Violence will be on the increase (3)
- Everything will depend on the education that these young men and women have at this time
- If we begin to promote reading, through TV and other modern media, things will change
- We are arriving at an era of drug addiction
- The use of weapons is currently encouraged
- Unemployment and lack of opportunities will lead to prostitution in poorer areas (2)
- Pregnancy at very early ages in very poor areas due to their parents' migration to the United States
- TV programs will promote licentiousness and sex

- Search for success at any cost, without scruples
- A generation without hope (2)
- Claim rights, but avoid responsibilities
- Teaching must be geared towards the development of role models who will fill the void of the father figure
- There won't be effective programs to help children and youth, that will encourage good values in the next few years

Additional Comments:

- Educational legislation seeks to eradicate illiteracy in our country; but the remoteness of some villages and the lack of a road infrastructure, prevents many from getting an education. Electronic media, especially TV, is being used to reach them
- Government programs help subsidize income in poorest areas
- Abandonment of hard work has been promoted, and the children are now seen as a potential to increase their income and an excuse to not work, resulting in increased alcoholism and family procreation
- In light of a lack of a father figure and guide, children and youth exhibit a natural resistance to all that represents authority to them. By the same token, their personal suffering distances them from the concept of love, which makes them resistant to the message of the gospel, and to the concept of a father (GOD) who loves them and protects them
- It is estimated that for every 30 minutes that their parents spend in fellowship with their own friends, TV and the internet takes up from 3 to 4 hours a day; this makes clear who (what) introduces the values to the home.
- Pastors, ministers and congregations have not done a responsible study about what currently occupies the children and youth's minds, as well as the way in which they acquire their knowledge, and the language they use to communicate; therefore there is a void, a gap that prevents them from freely and openly receiving the message of the gospel. As such, communication is substituted by entertainment
- The values must be increased.
- Our culture needs to pay close attention to the sub-cultures (urban tribes), since these are constituted by people whose needs are not met in their homes.

NGOs & Missionaries

INTRODUCTION: WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

- I have time to do it.
- There is unity.
- I can grow personally and spiritually.
- I can help others (3).
- I do it with joy (2).
- They feel proud of what they do (2).
- We are able to promote laws that bring about equality.

TRANSITION: WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO HELP SOCIETY?

- To see people with needs (3).
- Being aware of the lack of values.
- Knowing that we can contribute and generate a change in society.
- Offer a different opportunity in life to the least (2).
- To have the opportunity to be a connector between people.
- To understand God's call in our lives.
- It is a way to be thankful to God.

THEME 1: WHAT FACTORS HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED THAT CONTRIBUTE TO FAMILY DISINTEGRATION?

- Economic problems (2).
- Politics.
- Social problems (3).
- Lack of values (4).
- Lack of Communications and a close relationship with parents (4).
- Lack of interest from parents (3).
- Having no defined family and family goals.
- Not taking family opinions when making decisions.
- Youth desire to live life the way it pleases them.
- Influence of foreign cultures (2).
- Lack of a relationship with God regardless of what religion youth follow (3).
- There are no strategies to resolve family disintegration issues.
- Even parents encourage others to not respect others and have no discipline.
- There are no father role models that can lead and guide children including those with no fathers at all (3).
- The change of roles between mothers and fathers.
- Lack of forgiveness.
- Double standards in the homes.
- Sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

THEME 2: HOW DO YOU THINK MEDIA HELPS EDIFY OR DESTROY VALUES?

- Mass media destroy good values (3).
- Disregard the lack of values calling them prejudices.
- They are deceiving.
- Promote drugs, sex and prostitution in the programs they show (3).
- Do not care about damaging society as long as they are profitable.
- Lack of control over the Internet because you can find any type of information and have access to it (2).
- News present information about violence, sex, sensationalist issues and even accompanied by explicit pictures.
- Media has replace parents.
- They motivate people to do things at a very fast pace.
- It is necessary that parents learn how to regulate the use of media and teach children to use them responsibly.
- They inform about sex but they also destroy.
- They show too much violence.
- They do not respect family models or present wrong concepts about it (2).
- Manipulate emotions.
- It is hard to distinguish between good and bad media.
- There is little budget to have access to them.

Theme 3: How can we restore lacking values in our society?

- By having families that take action (4).
- Uniting efforts between civil authorities, religious, and intellectual authorities and parents.
- That the government promotes a change through educational media (2).
- Changing legislation regarding values.

- Creating programs in which parents can be educated on principles and values and can bring that knowledge to the homes (2).
- Promoting respect.
- Being truthful and consistent (2).
- Using love.
- Being fair.
- Being heard (2).
- Promoting family harmony.
- Providing security and protection to the family.
- Avoiding programs that promote violence.
- Offering a counseling program for youth over the phone.
- When God regenerates our society changing our minds and hearts.

Theme 4: What advice would you give families to be happy?

- Practice love (3).
- Acceptance (2).
- Patience
- Learn to enjoy who they are and what they have as a family (2).
- Respect every member of the family (4).
- Spend time together (3).
- Encourage physical contact and affection in the family.
- Being spiritual.
- Having faith.
- Being honest.
- Accepting Christ in their lives and seeking a relationship with him (2).
- Communication, listening to every opinion from all family members (4).
- Learning to overcome those things that a particular family member does not like (2).
- Defining personal and family goals that require living with moral and spiritual values (2).
- Encouraging parents to be the authority.
- Rescue values and families.
- Respect in the family, effective and permanent.
- Parents are responsible and have the opportunity to teach children and youth their rights and help them live in them.
- Offer love in the family.
- God is the foundation for happiness and His commandments are to be followed and make us more educated.
- Parents have allowed love to be lost, this open doors for division and the lack of forgiveness.
- Utilize resources at our disposal to promote participation in society, religious authorities, teachers and government.

Pastors and Clergy

Introduction: What is the best thing that has happened in your ministry over the last six months?

- To see people coming to Christ and getting involved in church.
- There was a forum about “values” to modify laws and to make this type of discussions available and accessible to others.

Transition question: what is the most vulnerable group or department in your congregation?

- Youth

- Adolescents
- Theme 1: What are the most common needs you have seen among youth?
- Attention (2)
- Lack of identity (2)
- Love
- Understanding
- Support
- Being accepted by society
- No support from their parents
- Communication with their parents
- Dysfunctional homes
- Being heard
- Lack of values
- Friendships
- Integrity
- Being recognized
- Intercession from the church
- There are no solid teachings for the youth
- Parents being present in their lives
- Appropriate motivation sources

Theme 2: What activities do young people do in your community?

- Sports
- Dancing
- Movies
- Internet
- Drugs, sex and alcohol
- Going out at night (bars)
- Sometimes they participate in political activities hoping to get some financial remuneration for it.

Theme 3: How does the media influence youth?

- Capturing all of their attention thus affecting negatively moral and values
- Encouraging selfishness
- It consumes them
- Incite violence
- Stimulates sexual practices

Theme 4: What are the most attractive events for youth in your community and what effects do they have?

- Go to bars with live music
- Concerts
- Everything related to music
- Irresponsible sex or sex without care
- Drug addictions (2)
- Delinquency
- Alcohol
- School drop outs
- Extreme sports

Theme 5: What would you change if you were the youth pastor?

- Teach principles and values to youth addressing things such as dating, sex, urban tribes and drugs.
- Change the music style
- Speak using their own language
- Do activities outside the church
- Youth clubs where they can develop their gifts and talents
- Teach them to serve the community
- Promote positive family integration

Additional comment:

- It is necessary to provide resources for youth ministries including appropriate materials and programs for youth located in different geographic regions because many times they have to work with materials that have not been contextualized.
- The church has not been attractive to youth because of its legalisms; they see it as a list of don'ts.
- They see the dynamic methods used in church as obsolete; this is why it is important to use current technology.

Teachers

What attitudes do you see most in your students, and what causes them?

- Rebelliousness
- Parents' neglect (2)
- Disintegration of family structure (3)
- Domestic violence
- Friendships "Birds of a feather flock together"
- They lack the basic, which is love (2)
- Lack of affection causes them to use foul language amongst themselves
- Lack of interest towards those values makes them adopt a negative and contentious attitude (2)
- The information from the mass media diverts them towards loss of identity in regards to their sexuality
- Isolation from their own family
- Lack of communication
- No objectives
- Parents' neglect: "I must work, I do not have time for you"

In your conversations with the youth, what topics do you find that triggers more positive or negative reactions?

Negative:

- At that age, kids are more absorbed by their own problems
- Internet and cell phones take up much of their time
- Their friends are their confidantes
- There is no communication with their parents
- The most recurrent theme they discuss with their teachers is their difficulties at home
- Problems with friends
- Communication with their peers has diminished
- They are explosive when we want to invade their privacy; that makes it nearly impossible to discuss values in a positive manner

Positive:

- They have a need for affection, and if we use understanding and love, we will find positive reactions and openness to dialogue, to communicate lost values due to the disintegration of family structure (2)

What do you think your students endure or have endured in their personal lives?

- Loneliness
- Feelings of rejection when the parents focus their attention more on the older or the younger children (the 'sandwich child' syndrome)
- Blending of families with different lifestyles, education and values
- Neglect is what causes the changes in conduct (3)
- Inability to make correct decisions (2)
- The root [of the problem] is their parents
- They have too much confusion (2)
- Many of them only worry about their exterior, and do not care about healing their inner self
- Homosexuality
- Lesbianism
- Drug use (2)
- Alcoholism and other practices (2)
- Lack of financial resources
- They are not encouraged or taught to strive harder
- There is no follow up at home of values taught in school

What influences have educational programs on the formation of values?

- There are school projects that aim at integrating family, society, students and teachers, but are not properly developed. The teachers themselves lack the character to be a role model
- Topics of homosexuality and abortion are very open and promote licentiousness; the parents approve of them
- There is nothing that prevents 14 – 15 years-old guys from promiscuity
- Early pregnancies

In what ways do you believe the Media has influenced Education?

- Its influence is excessively negative
- Teach openly destructive behaviors and ideas
- Tolerate perverted views that lead to the loss of moral values, through TV, radio and other media programs
- Has been a very useful tool to secular education
- The media has taken the wrong turn toward. It only talks about pornography, licentiousness, Internet chatting with women who sell eroticism
- It has a negative bearing on young people whose values are lacking
- It has an extremely negative influence, TV more specifically
- TV places them somewhere between reality and fiction (2)
- TV promotes family disintegration, explicit sex, a false socio-economic level by endorsing lifestyles of famous singers, artists, etc.
- Courtship is taken very lightly; they openly portray homosexual relationships
- Children prefer TV and videogames
- Teenagers are addicted to the internet

Additional Comments:

- There is an urgent need to educate the parents

- To find a way of “forcing the parents”, so to speak, to become aware of the current excesses their children are living (2)
- Uneducated parents equals to disoriented children
- Family problems seriously affect children and teens
- Kids imitate their parents’ good and bad behavior
- Government programs are not effective because their goals are short-term
- Parents do not want to attend workshops or counseling; they only assist when their children are threatened with suspension. Usually the parents whose children do not need it do attend
- Parents do not want to assume responsibility with their children

Young People/Students

If you did not go to school, what would you like to do?

- They would like to sleep
- Spend many hours watching TV
- Surf the Internet
- Listen to music
- Play video games
- Go out with their friends
- Two youth said they’d like to go out with their parents
- Some said would like to read the Bible
- This indicates that most of these youth prefer non-religious activities

What would you consider a good boyfriend-girlfriend relationship?

- When both parties respect, understand, communicate with each other.
- When their opinions matter equally
- When abuse or sexual harassment is not present. If it is, it could lead to early sexual activity. Avoiding this could help prevent failed relationships, pregnancy, abortion, venereal diseases.

What is your greatest fear?

- Loneliness terrifies them
- Fear to darkness, and especially to death
- The thought of losing a parent, or both, terrifies them
- Very afraid to face life without their parents

Who is your hero, and why?

- They all expressed that their parents and Jesus Christ are their heroes because their parents reflect exemplary lives, positive counsel, enthusiasm, courage and efforts.
- The Lord Jesus, because He gave His life for every one of them and gave them eternal life

What is your favorite pastime, and what keeps you from doing it?

- Practice sports such as soccer, with their parents/siblings participation; volleyball
- TV programs such as cartoons, soap operas
- Video games which encourage violence, aggressiveness
- Inactivity, idleness
- Listen to music of any genre

What keeps them from enjoying their pastime:

- Having to work to help pay for their own education
- Lack of interest on parents’ side to enjoy these pastimes

Additional Commentary:

The desire of every one of the participants is to reconsider their moral and spiritual values that will help them improve co-existence with peers and relatives, thus resulting in more peaceful, respectful and loving relationships.

Non-Christian Youth (13-15)

If you did not go to school, what would you like to do?

- Work to help my parents and to provide for my own needs; to get money to share with parents, siblings and friends
- Rest enough to have growth healthy and enjoy it; every kid needs it

What would you consider a good boyfriend-girlfriend relationship?

- One based on respect, communication, willingness to listen to and share with each other
- One where there is no physical or psychological abuse. This could be rooted in poor communication and trust with parents.

Possible solutions:

- Parents should learn to listen to their kids' daily concerns; not doing it can lead to unwanted pregnancies; marrying far too early, fully unprepared to face the problems of life, resulting in abandoned children living in extreme poverty; teen prostitution and drugs.
- Create workshops to teach parents to find guidelines to properly lead their families in unity, love, friendship and fellowship. This will result in young marriages based on proper family values, and whose main goal is the pursuit of God in all family and social areas.

What is your greatest fear?

- Most said death; they do not feel ready to face God Almighty
- One of their greatest fears is the loss of parents, because of their dependence on them.
- The lack of trust in their current world

Possible solutions:

- Find the means to create youth clubs that will reinforce their self-esteem and trust in God as the Supreme Being, and in the Lord Jesus Christ as their source of peace.

Who is your hero and why?

- Most youth no longer believe in the secular heroes presented by the Media (TV, magazines, or daily life) A minority see their parents as their heroes, since they knew how to win their hearts

What is your favorite pastime, and what keeps you from doing it?

- Video games

Additional Commentaries:

The Media (computers, TV, radio, cell phones, etc.) gives them wrong or misleading information. That minority whose parents are their heroes could be ready to be presented with the Gospel. Most kids interviewed agreed on the loss of values due to the break-down of communication with their parents; their parents not teaching them values. The family breakup encourages the loss of moral, spiritual and civic values; also wrong choices as suicide, lack of sexual identity, and many other.

Christian Youth (16-18)

Introduction Question: What is it like to be young?

- To feel 100%
- Cheerful, joyful, but with fear
- Full of strong emotions
- Swell, but with some uncertainty

- That you have your whole future ahead of you
- Your emotions run skin-deep
- The greatest time to enjoy life

Transition Question: What do you and your friends like to do when you get out of school?

- Sleeping,
- Going for coffee (3)
- Going to the movies
- Talking with friends
- Playing soccer (2)
- Playing pool
- Not exactly doing school work as a team
- Going out to eat
- Going for ice-cream
- Going for a ride

Theme 1: What issues do you have at this time?

- Family
- Poor communication with parents (3)
- My future college education and what it entails (2)
- Disobedience
- Feeling discouraged at times, but must study harder
- Knowing whether what we are doing is correct
- GPA

Theme 2: Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

- Married (6)
- Working (7)
- In gastronomy, my profession, and starting my own business
- Living on my own, being a good musician
- Working in a kindergarten
- Finishing school or / and enjoying the fruits of what I'm doing
- Not sure what, but definitely serving the Lord
- Living in a small city
- Traveling

Theme 3: If you had the power to help someone, who would that person be?

- My aunt, who is going through a divorce and, of course, my cousins
- My 3 uncles' health: One underwent surgery, the other, doctors can't find what is wrong, another, lung problems, had a heart-attack, and has uric acid. All 3 have high BP
- A friend, whose main problems are: he is not a Christian and has contemplated suicide
- Dysfunctional uncles/aunts and cousins
- Youth from church
- Friends and family
- Those in drugs/vices or are orphaned

- Those who have no access to food, or things like that

Theme 4: What sort of problems do your friends have in their romantic relationships?

- They slap each other while fighting; yelling and insults
- They are already parents, he got her pregnant (4)
- They fall too deeply in love, and end up hurting themselves
- Sometimes they cause divisions due to problems they themselves create
- Another friend and his girlfriend moved in together
- He blackmails her with suicide if she leaves him. It got so bad, they had to sue him
- Lack of self-respect and mutual love: Examples: 1) A 16-year-old dating a 25-year-old gang-member who caused her to disrespect her mother and beat up her uncle. She ran away. 2) A guy older than his girlfriend, blackmails her, forces her to work selling candy. She then pays when they go out.

Theme 5: As a parent, what would you do differently?

- Respect what children think, support them in their needs, but not impose their beliefs; spent more time with them
- Hard to explain, it is easy to follow the same path that parents used to guide them. But hopefully change it as we realize our shortcomings
- I would raise them just like they raised me, but with a bit more freedom
- Be strict in some cases, but listen to them when something is in their hearts
- Respect their feelings, their thoughts and allow them certain liberty as long as it does not hurt them
- More communication; give them freedom to a justified extent; respect their ideas, silence, solitude, feelings; do not question them about everything
- Respect them, love them, be their friend

Additional Comments:

- That these answers will be geared not only towards knowing their problems, but to handle them in a way that solutions will be found

