

AFTER

THE

MUSIC

STOPS

**Effective Youth Ministry
Beyond the **BIG** Event**

Russell St. Bernard

After the Music Stops: Effective Youth Ministry Beyond the Big Event
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THANK YOU

I am thankful to God for calling me to youth ministry; my wife (Erica) for standing by me, with me, and for me; for family for believing in me; all of the pastors and leaders that I have served under and served with; and to all of the parents and students who have been impacted by what I do, but even more so, who have impacted my life as we served in ministry together. I am excited to see what God has in store next. Thank you for buying this book and for your commitment to ministry...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Russell St. Bernard is an anointed, gifted, and passionate preacher of the Gospel. He has been equipped with a challenging and insightful Word for people, both young and old. Rev. Russell's focus is to help God's people realize and obtain their God-given purpose and call.

Rev. Russell was born in Brooklyn, New York, and was raised on the rough streets of Brooklyn's Bedford Stuyvesant (Bed-Stuy) borough. After graduation

from high school, Rev. Russell wanted a change, and he found it at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. From Morgan, he received a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration.

Before accepting Christ and his call to ministry, Rev. Russell was a well-known party promoter on Morgan's campus, as well as in the greater Baltimore area. However, after receiving Christ and acknowledging the call on his life, he chose to promote Christ to everyone in which he came in contact. After accepting his call, he received his Masters of Divinity from Howard University School of Divinity, where he graduated with honors.

Rev. Russell began serving as the Minister to Teens at Empowerment Temple A.M.E Church in Baltimore, Maryland, under the awesome pastoral leadership of Rev. Dr. Jamal-Harrison Bryant. Russell took the lead in a bi-weekly youth services, called "Teen Temple", where more than one hundred young people used their gifts and talents to worship God. Many of those teens participated in youth dance

and drama teams, were DJs, and did so much more during "Teen-Temple" worship.

Under Rev. Russell's leadership at Empowerment Temple, youth were sent to Jamaica on Missions trip and participated in weekend conferences featuring special guests and artists. He also held youth services inside youth detention centers and ministered to those who were locked up, but not locked out, of the Kingdom.

After leaving Empowerment Temple A.M.E. Church, Rev. Russell became the Pastor of Student and Young Professional Ministries at The Fountain Ministries in South Florida, under the pastoral leadership of Pastor Wayne Lomax. At the Fountain, he equipped young people for all areas of service in order for them to change their lives and the lives of those in their communities. Under Rev. Russell's leadership, the HYDRO (Youth) Ministry started "The Saturday Night Remix", a youth service where young people worshipped God in a way that made sense to them. During the first year of "The Remix", over 80 young people joined the ministry and came to know Christ.

While at The Fountain, Rev. Russell was also blessed to be published under The American Bible Society's student magazine "Elementz of Life", as well as by The Urban Youth Workers Institute's National Youth Ministry Training "Reload". Currently, Rev. Russell is the Minister to Youth at Reid Temple A.M.E. Church in Maryland.

Rev. Russell is the very proud husband of Mrs. Erica St. Bernard, with whom he resides in Maryland.

introduction

Who Am I?

Let me start by saying that I do not claim to know everything there is to know as it relates to youth ministry. Therefore, my intention in writing this book is not to give the impression that I am the consummate professional on the topic. While I have established some proven practices through trial and error (yes I have made mistakes in ministry), my intent is not to say that what I do in youth ministry is always the best practice, and that what I do should be copied. I do believe there are some practices in youth ministry that work better than others, likewise, there are some practices that should never be used (we will talk about those). The simple purpose of this book is to help leaders starting a youth ministry to do it more effectively. The secondary purpose is to assist those with existing youth ministries to push forward in service to their students.

Why Did I Write This Book?

Like many in ministry, I have had the opportunity to attend, as well as conduct, training sessions designed to provide information on creating and managing successful ministries. Often, after the sessions I attended, I would leave with a lingering feeling that, while the material was comprehensive, more information needed to be shared, and I was not the only one who felt the tug for more. Within hours of most of these trainings, I would receive calls and emails from others seeking more details, and the dialogue about implementing components into their specific ministries would begin. As I prayed to God about how to be more effective, how to implement what I'd learned, and how to better serve, I began to restructure the materials I had gotten from the various training sessions, and combine them with my specific demographic and church community in mind. In doing so, I realized that the best way for me to assist other ministry directors and leaders was to offer assistance for longer than just the few hours being in a training session afforded. This book is my attempt to help you with your ministry as you strive to reach more students for Christ and raise them to be who God has designed them to be.

How Is This Book Formatted & What Will You Get From It?

You will see several things as you read the chapters. First, while much of the information is geared toward youth ministry, it can also be used for adult ministry. This book will give you clear examples and solutions for problems that will arise in ministry whether you are a senior pastor, lead pastor, youth pastor, youth leader, volunteer/servant, parent, or just someone wondering, "How can I be more effective in ministry?". Several sections end with assessment questions to be discussed with your team. After all, ministry is teamwork (our first section). The questions are purposely designed to help you evaluate thoughts and strategies as it relates to your specific ministry. The responses will serve as a guide to help you implement information and/or ideas covered in that particular section.

As you travel from "T.E.A.M." to "Make the Shift" to "The Process", and then enter into the discussion on "The Hip Hop Culture", you should be able to stop along the way and put what you have read into practice. At the finish line (the end of the book), there is an array of resources I have used, and those I have created in order to ensure you have all the tools you need to make your ministry more effective after the music stops. Those resources include: books, music, websites, other ministries, and Christian companies that can help you on this journey. Additional resources highlight some monthly themes I have utilized including: artwork that corresponds, as well as uniquely created training materials I used in my leadership positions for student and adult leaders. The resources also include a tracking tool that can be used to assess, as well as gauge, students' needs.

Why After The Music Stops?

The title of this book, "After The Music Stops", comes from the thought that youth ministry should be about more than the one big event or service. It is the belief that *young people in ministry should be DOING ministry, not just attending ministry events*. A few years ago, Christian Hip Hop artist Lecrae released an album entitled "After The Music Stops". His goal was to challenge youth ministries, and Christians alike, to push passed the concert to have a deeper and

stronger relationship with Christ. In far too many youth ministries, the focus is geared toward the event, while almost no energy, or time for that matter, is spent on what to do with the students after the event. Have you asked yourselves how will you lead them to grow after this event? If they come back to church after this event, will you have programs ready to welcome them into a real relationship with Christ? Are you tracking their spiritual and personal growth as a way to help them reach their God purpose and potential? These, among many other, questions not only need to be asked, but also answered by each youth ministry.

We need to spend as much, if not more, energy and focus on the follow-up details of the main event as we do on the main event itself. This does not mean that we shouldn't have a main youth event, it simply means that we, as "ministers" or "servants", understand that the ministry doesn't stop there, but that our process of growth needs to be strong, as well. It is a shame to gather 10, or 100, or 1000 students together for one event, but not know if the majority of these students are connected to the ministry in a way that will ultimately assist them in connecting and growing with Christ. Our job, or calling, is to focus on both the event and the growth of those who attend them. Prayerfully, they will end up serving Christ.

WE NEED TO SPEND AS MUCH, IF NOT MORE, ENERGY AND FOCUS ON THE FOLLOW-UP DETAILS OF THE MAIN EVENT AS WE DO ON THE MAIN EVENT ITSELF.

So, let's have a great main event or service, but let's also look past that, to after the music stops, by helping these students build real relationships with Jesus Christ.

Thank You!!!

I thank you for your support of this book, your service to Christ in ministry, and your desire to do better for those whom you serve. I pray this book is helpful and becomes one of the tools you utilize to assist you in Doing Youth Ministry More Effectively...After The Music Stops. **Let's Begin!!!**



T.E.A.M.

You have heard it said before that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Well, in ministry, and in youth ministry more specifically, this holds true. However, the focus is not always on the weakest link, (which you should identify and **staff your weakness**, I will explain this in detail soon), but on the fact that the chain would not exist without the links. In youth ministry, we have to have the same understanding that, while God has blessed us to be over the ministry or lead part of the ministry, without the "Team", we would not exist, nor would we be half as effective as we are now. Ministry is not done alone but with a team of people who are supporting and assisting in various areas in order to make the overall vision a reality. Let me be clear. You can do ministry alone, however, your ministry can be that much better if you have a team to support you. Many times, what stops us from working as a team is the power struggle that determines who gets to be in charge.

Lack of teamwork, and furthermore, the lack of having a team, is the reason why so many youth ministries are ineffective and end before they begin. In other cases, either one, or a handful of people do everything before "church burnout" sets in, which leads to the ministry being dissolved. Have you ever been to a restaurant only to discover the same person taking your order, preparing your food, and serving

you that meal? Chances are, you would do one of two things, either leave before you received your order, or suffer through the horrible meal and service with the understanding that you will never come back again. Understand that it takes more power and authority for you to allow someone to help you than it does for you to do it all by yourself (or attempt to do so). The reality is that the lack of teamwork in some of our ministries encourages people to either leave before they get what they came for, or endure the event having already determined they will never return.

Ok, now that we understand the importance of having a team, let's look at some of the keys to becoming an *effective* T.E.A.M. The Team has to be **"Tied-Together"**. There is no way you can have an effective team if everyone is not on the same page. The team must be in line with each other. As the leader, it is your job to make sure that everyone on the T.E.A.M. works together in a way that will benefit first the team, and then the students that you are called to serve (We can't ever lose sight of that goal). In a team that is 'tied – together', it is understood that no one person is the "star", but that everyone

YOUR TEAM HAS TO BE "TIED-TOGETHER"

brings with them their strengths and weaknesses. As a team it's important to talk through these strengths and weaknesses early in order to be clear where some people will and will not be effective. It is critical that every team member be honest about

their weaknesses, and to work to improve them, in order for the team to be impactful.

As you identify these strengths and weaknesses, it's important to "staff the weakness", which means that you make the necessary adjustment to allow a team member who is gifted in an area to do that particular job to help the team move forward. For example, while I love music and believe that I know when things sound good and bad, it's not my area of strength to lead the students in the choir or anything that involves playing, singing, or reading music. It would be more advantageous for me to find someone that is gifted and talented in that area, and get out of the way, in order to allow them to operate in their strength. Letting go is key because sometimes

we allow a team member to take over the area without really letting go of the area, so we end up micro-managing them and killing their ability. Then end result in that type of scenario is that we, the team, end up hurting the students we were supposed to be serving. Another area of mine is administration. While I can do some things in this area, if I try to fully take charge of all administrative duties, I will do more harm than good. I will forget to call people back, I will come to meetings with an agenda filled with misspellings or no agenda at all (☺), and any number of other things that a person with strengths in administration can do in their sleep. Again, it is our job as leaders to be smart enough to know what we can't do, and strong enough to allow someone else on the team to do it.

The team also needs to be **"encouraged"**. The Bible says that David encouraged himself (1 Samuel 30:6). I believe that if David had a stronger team, a team with at least one encourager, then he would not have had to encourage himself. As a leader, it is important that you learn how to encourage yourself. God has established you to be the main cheerleader, and there shouldn't be anyone with a higher praise for the team than you. Don't forget that these people who are serving in the ministry have other jobs and responsibilities, yet they are committed to their service in the ministry.

YOUR TEAM ALSO NEEDS TO BE "ENCOURAGED"

If someone on your team does well, get a card, or allow the students to make a card, which tells them how important their service has been. This is always a winner. You can also allow for a moment in the beginning or end of an event for you to publicly thank them for their service and commitment to the ministry (I wouldn't do this often as you don't want to set the precedent of this being expected by everyone when they do something well, after all ministry is service). It might be a nice thing to be able to fill up someone's gas tank, buy them a nice shirt, or get them a gift card from a local Wal-mart, Target, or other store you know they like. You may also want to do a small thankful lunch or dinner for the people that serve in the ministry once or twice a year as a way to show them that you are appreciative of their work and service to the ministry.

You encourage not only in the good times, but also in the bad times. This is especially true in youth ministry since you will be trying new things that may not have been done before, at least not at your church. While this is exciting, the reality is that the chance of failure is also high. You will still need to encourage your team with the understanding that *“failure is the price you pay for success”*. This is also key because if you only encourage or celebrate when things go well, then the message you send is that you’re only excited if the team doesn’t mess up. While this might be true in some respect because we don’t want our people to continue to make mistakes, we also don’t want them to avoid trying new things for fear of making a mistake.

FAILURE = GROWTH IF YOU LEARN

This is the reason why so many youth ministries, and ministries in general, keep doing the same events. They are afraid to fail. I have heard of Churches where leaders celebrate failures just as they do successes with the understanding that those failures gave them new insight, and brought them that much closer to what they should be doing. I encourage you today to find a space in your ministry where you will be the cheerleader for your people, in good and bad times. It will make a big difference, not only in what they do, but also in what they attempt to do for the ministry. Whatever way you encourage the people with whom you serve is really up to you. Just remember, in order for you to have an effective team, you must be an encourager.

Accountability is essential to having an effective team. *It is important to note that the team needs to be accountable to each other, and that you all must be accountable to God.* You should be able to respectfully “check” your team members when you believe the ministry is not moving in the right direction, and, likewise, your team members should feel free enough (and just as respectful as you are with them) to “check” you when they think something is going on that shouldn’t be. In my opinion, accountability and honesty are vital components that are missing when it comes to Church and teamwork. I wonder about that church’s accountability structure every time I see a news story about an adult, who served in the Church,

that is arrested for matters relating to money, sexual abuse, or any other issue. Did they have one at all? You and your team have to understand that there is no such thing as a “one person show”, and that, at the end of the day, we are all held accountable to God who sees all, knows all, and is everywhere.

Accountability must be key in what we do since we represent the highest power in the world. What we do, or don’t do, is a reflection of who God is. The easiest way I have seen and practiced this is to allow the Spirit of Accountability (it is a Spirit more than just a practice) to be part of who and what the team represents. In order to bring in this Spirit of Accountability, the team must consistently to make time time for openness and sharing in the ministry. For example, during meetings with the team, *there needs to be a roundtable, as opposed to a boardroom, mindset.* In most boardroom meetings, there is a direct leader of whom everyone is afraid and tries to please to the point where they won’t share, or will avoid certain topics in order to remain on the leader’s good side. The roundtable construct means that, while there is a leader at the table, the meeting is conducted in such a way that everyone at the table has the floor to ask questions or say whatever they feel is important in order for the team to move ahead. It is your job as the leader to make sure the team feels as if what they say is valid in order for the team to progress. One thing I do consistently is state the following to the team: *“Everyone needs to have input. There are no stupid ideas or questions. This Ministry is not mine, it’s ours.”*

Also important is for the team to feel as if they can come to you with their issues and concerns. As the youth pastor or youth leader, your main Spiritual role is to assist the students. However, you also play a Spiritual role with those who serve with you in the ministry. Yes, the senior pastor is the shepherd of the house, and I am, in no way, advising you to try to take over what they are doing. However, what I am saying is that you have a responsibility to those that serve with you, especially since they are with you more than the senior pastor. It is part of your job to be concerned with their lives and Spiritual

**YOU ALL MUST
BE ACCOUNTABLE
TO GOD**

growth. *If something happens in their lives, it will impact the way they serve.* I try to make sure everyone who serves with me knows I am available (at the office, via email, or by phone, which is always on...pray for me, lol) to talk not only about Church stuff, but also about their life stuff, and I stress that what is shared remains between me, them and Jesus. In doing so, they feel I am in their corner, supporting and praying for them regardless of what happens.

DOES EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM KNOW THE MISSION?

Mission is the last component that helps to create an effective team. What is the mission of your youth ministry, and does everyone on the team know the mission? Does everyone on the team know what role they play in achieving the mission?

The team will run faster, and with more efficiency, once everyone knows the mission of the ministry. Do you have a youth ministry mission or purpose statement? This is important as you build the team, and as you try to inspire people to join the team. What are you encouraging them to do, and why should they want to do it? In my previous ministry, the ministry purpose was, "to be a relevant light". Everyone who served understood we were in the business of working so students saw the ministry as a light in the darkness, and understood God in a relevant way. Everyone could agree with the direction and could see how their actions played a role in making the mission/vision come to past.

Also key is the idea Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*, shares in his book about having not only the right people on the bus, but the right people in the right seat. Nothing hurts a team, and a ministry, more than having the right person serving in the wrong place. It makes the "big" picture easier to see and achieve when everyone is in the right place, sitting in the right seat.

Allowing the team to see their role in the "big" picture is important and needs to be shared often. I consistently celebrate the different parts of the ministry, be it the drama team, music team, video team, greeting team, or another team, and express to them that those persons that came to either receive Christ or build a better

relationship with Jesus, came because as a result of the work those ministry workers did both during the week and the service. After all, we never know exactly what draws people to Christ, but it's our responsibility to want it to happen, and continue to trust that God will make it happen. As you keep the mission of your ministry as a main focus, the team will understand their role, and work harder at what they do for Christ.

As you completed this section, what thoughts came to you about your team? Hopefully these questions will help you answer that question and move forward.

QUESTIONS

1. How many people are one your team?
2. How many more people do you need in order to do ministry, and to accomplish your mission?
3. What is your mission as a team?
4. Does everyone know this mission and their role?
5. Is everyone on the team in the right role?
6. How often do you encourage your team?
7. Do you encourage through the good and bad?
8. When was the last time you encouraged a team member after a bad ministry experience?
9. Are you accountable to your team and are they accountable to you? (How are you pushing everyone to be accountable to God?)
10. How often does your team get together for things or events that don't involve Church?

AFTER THE MUSIC STOPS: EFFECTIVE YOUTH MINISTRY BEYOND THE BIG EVENT

Being called or wanting to serve students in your church and community is one thing, but doing so in an effective way that produces fruit is something totally different. In this book youth ministry leaders and supporters will learn practical ways to develop, equip, and empower their youth ministries "After The Music Stops". In a day when many youth ministries are focused on the "main" event whether it's the youth day, youth conference, or youth explosion, this book will help the youth ministry team form a process for what should be done after the "big" event in order to help the students develop "meaningful" relationships with Jesus Christ. There are many practical examples from successful youth ministries as well as from Rev Russ's experience. Each section features discussion questions designed to enhance the effectiveness of your youth ministry.

Serving students after the main event is key to being EFFECTIVE in youth ministry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Rev. Russ has been leading in youth ministry for over 10 years and has a passion to equip & train students as well as leaders after the music stops.

www.AfterTheMusicStops.org

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