



YOUNG ADULT SUNDAY

Sunday, April 29, 2012

(See below for links to Vibrant Young Adult Ministries and great books for Young Adult Ministries.)

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The unit you are viewing, Young Adult Sunday, is a compact unit. This means that it is not a complete commentary of the Scripture(s) selected for this day on the calendar, nor does it have a full, supporting cultural resource unit and worship unit. Instead, to enliven the imagination of preachers and teachers, we have provided a sermon outline, songs, suggested books, and suggested articles, links, and videos. For additional information see Young Adult Sunday in the archives of the Lectionary for 2008–2011. 2011 was the first year that the African American Lectionary has posted compact units for moments on its liturgical calendar.

I. Description of the Liturgical Moment: Young Adult Sunday

What qualifies one as a Young Adult in the church differs from one African American faith community to the next. Age groupings for those in young adult ministries are usually cast as 18–35, 20–40, or 21–35. However, we all know of middle-age adults who refuse to leave the young adult choir, the Single's Ministry, or other young adult groups even after they turn 50!

Unfortunately, more often than not, young adult ministries are dying instead of thriving in the Black Church. They are dying primarily because of limited resources and inadequate attention given them by pastors and older Church leaders, leaving young adults struggling to find ways to have their voices heard and their contributions valued in the Church. Young adult ministries desire spiritual guidance, affirmation, and financial support. They have an inkling that something in the church and the world isn't right and desire that their voices be heard on a host of issues; they can offer solutions and broaden the dialogue. Since many young adult ministries are overlooked by the Church, they may wonder, why do we exist at all?

In a world where many young adults are struggling with joblessness, low-paying jobs, educational debt, children, victimization, abuse, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS, et al., they need to feel genuine acceptance from the Church. The Black Church in particular cannot afford to continue to overlook the problems facing the Black Young Adult community. It must focus its

attention on this generation, which will lead the church into the future. If Young Adult ministry is to be effective, more resources must be provided, social ills must be addressed, and the Black church must be willing to create a space that is “safe” for community and healthy dialogue on all issues. If an issue affects young adults, it must be up for discussion. A culture must be created that says that young adults cannot be given less credence in the church because they may have less money and have less tenure in the church.

Young adults played major roles during the modern Civil Rights Movement. In fact, although it was a middle-age adult who sat down (Mrs. Rosa Parks) so that we could all stand up, it was a young adult (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) who took up the mantle and gave leadership to the movement. Young adults in fields of every type have shown again and again that they are capable of leading, vision casting, and heading major movements. But somehow this message does not seem to have reached the Black Church. The historically black denominations and even most white denominations that contain large numbers of Blacks are still primarily led by persons over age 55! Even those churches with young pastors (under age 40) often do not have thriving young adult ministries. Given the challenges now facing our community, it is past time that we accept and seek the leadership and skills of the young adults in our churches. So many are ready to fearlessly and with great commitment to God and their church give of their best to the Master.

In our text for today, we meet a young adult of ancient times who is totally committed to his God. He has the courage of his conviction that it is only his God whom he will serve, no matter the consequences.

With this as our backdrop, we provide a sermonic outline that pastors can use to encourage their young adults and show them that the church believes that they have the commitment, capacity, and courage to lead today.

II. Young Adult Sunday: Sermonic Outline

A. Sermonic Focus Text: Daniel 6:16-28 (New Revised Standard Version)

(v. 16) Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, ‘May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!’ (v. 17) A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. (v. 18) Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no food was brought to him, and sleep fled from him. (v. 19) Then, at break of day, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions. (v. 20) When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, ‘O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?’ (v. 21) Daniel then said to the king, ‘O king, live for ever! (v. 22) My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong.’

(v. 23) Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. (v. 24) The king gave a command, and those who had accused Daniel

were brought and thrown into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. Before they reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces. (v. 25) Then King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every language throughout the whole world: ‘May you have abundant prosperity! (v. 26) I make a decree that in all my royal dominion people should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: For he is the living God, enduring for ever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end. (v. 27) He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for he has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.’ (v. 28) So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

B. Possible Titles

- i. The Lion Dens of Life
- ii. Stand Up for What You Believe
- iii. The Necessity of Protest

C. Point of Exegetical Inquiry

With any pericope, it is important to know as much as possible about the protagonist (the main human character). Appropriate exegesis requires that a preacher learn what motivates protagonists to do or not do something. See what the Bible and other documents tell you about the state of their relationship with the Divine, their family, their friends and their foes. In each Scripture, protagonists are teaching lessons we need to learn. The more we know about them, the better we will understand how protagonists came to do or say whatever it is they are doing or saying; and, we will better understand what we need to do to emulate and in some cases avoid behaviors of these protagonists. For our text today, Walter Brueggemann aids us in this task concerning its protagonist, Daniel. In An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination, Brueggemann writes:

The narratives of [Daniel] ch.1–6 give an account of the way in which Daniel the Jew exercises immense influence in the Kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The narrative clusters around Daniel, whose name means “God has judged” and who apparently was a traditional figure of wisdom, piety, and virtue. There is no doubt that in these narratives Daniel is a representative Jew who has learned to sustain and enact his *distinctive Jewish identity* in the presence of *indifferent or hostile imperial power*, a task required of every serious Jew in the Persian and Hellenistic periods.¹

III. Introduction

In his book Democracy Matters, Cornel West unveils the hidden dangers waiting to destroy young adults. He states, “This media bombardment not only robs young people of their right to struggle for maturity—by glamorizing possessive individualism at the expense of democratic individuality—but also leaves them ill equipped to deal with the spiritual malnutrition that awaits them after their endless pursuit of pleasure.”²

These words are especially pertinent to African American young adults because the videos on television and the Internet, the glamorization of greed, and the endless desire to be accepted and affirmed, keep the average young adult much too busy for a pursuit of God. Unfortunately, these “endless pursuits” also do not prepare them for the lion dens of addiction, dens of abuse, dens of materialism, dens of anger, and dens of isolation.

The text of Daniel 6 and the words of Cornel West intersect. Daniel was threatened to bow to the powers of his day. Today, so many young adults are incited and seduced by the media and systems of power. They are prodded to do exactly what society wants them to do while society continues to breed an anti-critical thinking atmosphere that frowns upon creativity, activism, and the pursuit of one’s authenticity. Because Daniel did not follow the media or systems of his day, he was cast into a den of lions as an example and as a scapegoat.

What happens when a society breeds a culture of non-critical thinking and attempts to seduce or threaten young adults so that they will live lives of situational commitment to God? We end up with a society just like Daniel’s—everybody bows when the media and societal systems of power blow their trumpets. How can we teach today’s young adults to stand as courageously as Daniel stood? What would God have us say to young adults today?

IV. Moves/Points

Move/Point One – God allows some tests because they:

- a. showcase God’s sovereignty;
- b. showcase human limitations; and
- c. showcase human dependency.

Move/Point Two – God knows.

- a. God knows whether or not we have integrity;
- b. God knows our intentions; and
- c. God knows our circumstances.

Move/Point Three – God can change the social order and we must co-labor with God.

- a. It is futile to construct systems to thwart God or God’s people;
- b. God liberates the oppressed; and
- c. Since God made the change, and gave us the power to participate in the change, God should get the glory.

V. Celebration

God allowed the King to place Daniel inside the den, but God got inside the den with Daniel. I'm so glad to report that God does not allow a situation to happen to us without getting in the situation with us. That's good news! God is not only God outside the lion dens of life, but God is the same inside the dens. Each one of us has our own lion dens—fear, low-self-esteem, hopelessness, addiction, poverty, unemployment, sexism, and the list goes on and on. But whatever your den is, God will get in the den with you, then God will bring you out of the den. Won't he bring you out! Do I have any witnesses? Has God brought you out?

VI. Illustration(s)

If you go to the gym and lift weights, you are experiencing a burden with purpose. If you work out with a partner or a trainer, their purpose in placing weights on you to lift is to develop you. The purpose of lifting weights is to build muscle. Now, if someone took that same weight and threw it at you, the purpose would be to harm you. The same weight causes pain but not for the same reason. One pain is to develop you. Another pain is to harm you. God allows trials or temptations in the life of the believer to develop them. Satan brings trials or temptations into the life of the believer to destroy them. . . . When you understand what God is doing and when you understand what the Devil is doing, then you understand the prayer of protection.

If you are learning how to drive and the man next to you grabs the wheel, that's to help you stay straight. When you get in the car with someone who wants to hurt you, who jerks the wheel, that's to cause damage or danger. So when Jesus says to pray for protection, He is saying to pray that God leads you into those things that are only for your development, and never let Satan get a hold of you for those things that are for your destruction. That's the prayer. Lead me not into anything that will tear me down. Only lead me into those things that will build me up. And even if it gets me into something I ought not to be into, get me out of it quick. Deliver me from evil. That's the essence of the prayer.

—Tony Evans, Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations.³

See the Sermon Illustrations section of the African American Lectionary for additional illustrations that you may wish to use in presenting a sermon for this moment on the liturgical calendar.

VII. Sounds, Sights, and Colors in This Passage

Sounds: The voice of the King; the roar of the lions; the voice of Daniel; the king having a restless night in bed; the screams of the soldiers and their families;

Sights: A dark cave; a large stone; the king sealing a stone with his ring; a pride of lions; Daniel's accusers being killed; the King preparing letters to send throughout the nation; and

Colors: The blood of the soldiers' bodies; the darkness of the lions' den; the black stripes of some of the lions; and the color of the clothing worn by Daniel and the king.

VIII. Songs to Accompany This Sermon

A. Hymn(s)

- Sweet Hour of Prayer. By William W. Walford
- Lead Me, Guide Me. Text and Tune by Doris Akers
- Where He Leads Me. Text by E. W. Blandy. Tune by John S. Norris
- He Knows Just What I Need. Text and Tune by Robert J. Fryson

B. Well-known Song(s) for Choirs and Praise Teams

- Chosen Generation. By Martha Munizzi
- Cover Me. By Smokie Norful, Fred Hammond, and J. Moss
- Things Will Work Out. By Ricky Dillard
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8lu9CDmBr4>
- The Great I AM. By Earnest Pugh
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edSYIYSVNNE&feature=related>
- I Smile. By Kirk Franklin
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4VBhU7NqZU>

C. Liturgical Dance Music

- Bless the Lord (Son of Man). By Jon Owens and Kelly Owens
- Great Expectations. By JJ Hairston

D. Modern Song(s) (Written between 2000–2011)

- When the Battle Is Over. By Donald Lawrence
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aA36cJbx3tE&feature=related>
- He's Able. By Deitrick Haddon
YouTube : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCpEJaKv1Ww&feature=related>
- God Is Great. By Ricky Dillard

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6V9I6QZVJ0s>

- Stronger. By Myron Butler and John Webb
- Imagine Me. By Kirk Franklin

E. Spiritual(s)

- Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel. Arr. by Barbara Hendricks and Moss Hogan
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s01O0rPIsgk&feature=related>
- Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord. By Undine Smith Moore
YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&feature=endscreen&v=pWeAky-G3yk>
- Children, Go Where I Send Thee. African American Traditional. Arr. by Evelyn Simpson-Curenton

F. Sermonic Selection

- Great Is Thy Faithfulness. By Thomas O. Chisholm. Tune, (FAITHFULNESS), by William M. Runyan

G. Invitational Song or Instrumental

- Precious Lord, Take My Hand. By Thomas A. Dorsey
- I Give Myself Away. By William McDowell
YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7ofQmeao9I&feature=related>

IX. View These Links for Vibrant Young Adult Ministries

- Assemblies of God National Young Adults Ministries, Springfield, MO. Online location:
<http://youngadults.ag.org/> accessed 12 December 2011
- The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral of New York, Jamaica, NY. Online location:
<http://www.allencathedral.org/yam/yam.html> accessed 12 December 2011
- Christ Tabernacle Church in Glendale, NY. Online location:
<http://www.christtabernacle.org> accessed 12 December 2011
- Christian Cultural Center in Brooklyn, NY. Online location:

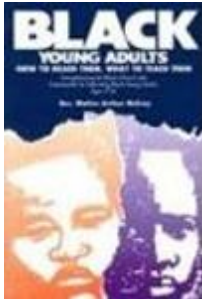
<http://www.cccinfo.org> accessed 12 December 2011

- The First Baptist Church of Glen Arden in Glen Arden, MD. Online location: <http://www.fbcglenarden.org> accessed 12 December 2011
- Berean Christian Church. Online location: <http://www.bereanchristianchurch.org> accessed 12 December 2011

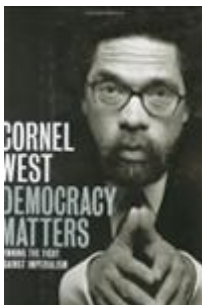
X. Videos, Audio, and/or Interactive Media

- Consider having your young adults produce a gospel music video. See the video produced by the Mt. Zion Young Adult Department as an example. This is the video featured for today's unit. Online location: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQD60Dj42rA> accessed 11 December 2011
- See the YAM MINISTRY COGIC (Tuesday Night Bible Study). Online location: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVjfk7B1aaA> accessed 11 December 2011
- Advice for Young Adult Preachers from Dr. Gardner C. Taylor. Online location: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ok4DPb4cJtE&feature=related> accessed 23 November 2011

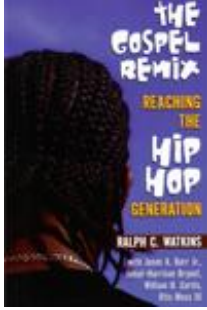
XI. Books to Assist in Preparing Sermons or Bible Studies Related to Young Adults



McCray, Walter Arthur. Black Young Adults—How to Reach Them, What to Teach Them: Strengthening the Black Church and Community by Educating Black Young Adults. Chicago, IL: Black Light Fellowship, 1992.



West, Cornel. "The Necessary Engagement with Youth Culture," in Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004, pp. 173–200.



Watkins, Ralph C., Jason A. Barr, and Jamal-Harrison Bryant. The Gospel Remix: Reaching the Hip Hop Generation. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2007.



Stephens, Benjamin, and Ralph C. Watkins. From Jay-Z to Jesus: Reaching and Teaching Young Adults in the Black Church. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2009.



Smith, Efreem, and Phil Jackson. The Hip-Hop Church: Connecting with the Movement Shaping Our Culture. Nottingham, UK: IVP Books, 2005.



Groschel, Craig. It: How Churches and Leaders Can Get It and Keep It. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.

XII. Notes for Select Songs

A. Hymn(s)

- Sweet Hour of Prayer. By William W. Walford
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #442
- Lead Me, Guide Me. Text and Tune by Doris Akers
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #474
- Where He Leads Me. Text by E. W. Blandy. Tune by John S. Norris
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #550
- He Knows Just What I Need. Text and Tune by Robert J. Fryson
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #358

B. Well-known Song(s) for Choirs and Praise Teams

- Chosen Generation. By Martha Munizzi
Location:
No Limits—Live. New York, NY: Integrity, 2006.
- Cover Me. By Smokie Norful, Fred Hammond, and J. Moss
Location:
21:03. Total Attention. New York, NY: Verity, 2008.
- Things Will Work Out. By Ricky Dillard
Location:
New G and Chorale. No Limit. Detroit, MI: Crystal Rose Records, 2000.
- The Great I AM. By Earnest Pugh
Location:
Rain on Us. New York, NY: Worldwide Music, 2009.
- I Smile. By Kirk Franklin
Location:
Hello Fear. New York, NY: Verity Gospel Music Group, 2011.

C. Liturgical Dance Music

- Bless the Lord (Son of Man). By Jon Owens and Kelly Owens
Location:
Tribbett, Tye. Stand Out. New York, NY: Sony, 2008.
- Great Expectations. By JJ Hairston
Location:
Youthful Praise. Resting on His Promise. Nashville, TN: Light Records, 2009.

D. Modern Song(s) (Written between 2000–2011)

- When the Battle Is Over. By Donald Lawrence
Location:
Donald Lawrence & CO. YRM Your Righteous Mind. New York, NY: Verity Records, 2011.
- He's Able. By Deitrick Haddon
Location:
Voices of Unity. Together in Worship. Indianapolis, IN: Tyscot Records, 2007.
- God Is Great. By Ricky Dillard
Location:
Ricky Dillard and New G. Keep Living. Nashville, TN: Light Records, 2011.
- Stronger. By Myron Butler and John Webb
Location:
Butler, Myron & Levi. Stronger. Brentwood, TN: EMI Gospel, 2007.
- Imagine Me. By Kirk Franklin
Location:
Hero. Inglewood, CA: Gospocentric, 2005.

E. Spiritual(s)

- Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel. Arr. by Barbara Hendricks and Moses Hogan
Location:
Hendricks, Barbara and Moses Hogan Singers. Give Me Jesus| Spirituals. EMI Records, 2005.
- Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord. By Undine Smith Moore
Location:
Fisk Jubilee Sings. In Bright Mansions. Nashville, TN: Curb Records, 2003.

- Children, Go Where I Send Thee. African American Traditional. Arr. by Evelyn Simpson-Curenton
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #623

F. Sermonic Selection

- Great Is Thy Faithfulness. By Thomas O. Chisholm. Tune, (FAITHFULNESS), by William M. Runyan
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #158

G. Invitational Song or Instrumental

- Precious Lord, Take My Hand. By Thomas A. Dorsey
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #471
- I Give Myself Away. By William McDowell
Location:
As We Worship Live. New York, NY: Koch Records, 2009.

Notes

1. Brueggemann, Walter. Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. p. 351.
2. West, Cornel. “The Necessary Engagement with Youth Culture,” in Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004. pp. 173–200.
3. Evans, Tony. Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009.