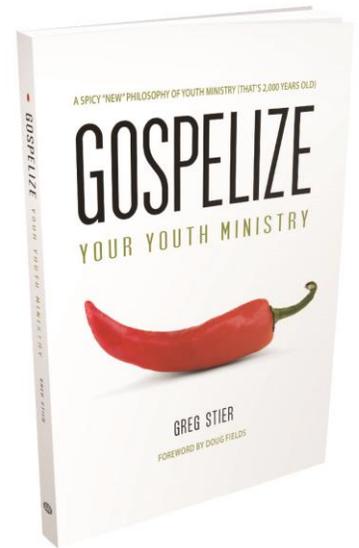


# Dare 2 Share Ministries

## Executive Book Summary

A Spicy “New” Philosophy of Youth Ministry  
(That’s 2,000 Years Old)

# GOSPELIZE Your Youth Ministry



By Greg Stier

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The strong and spicy heat of the gospel is the secret to effective and exciting ministry—just look at the early church! Gospel advancement was at the heart of the early believers’ discipleship, and the book of Acts gives us a vibrant picture of God’s plan to use us to build His kingdom.

In *Gospelize Your Youth Ministry*, Greg Stier unpacks the model found in the book of Acts, unveiling the seven key ingredients present within the early Church that fueled its vibrancy, exponential growth and spiritual depth. Today, youth leaders can blend these same basic ingredients together in their own unique, customized recipe to create a gospelized youth ministry that results in dynamic kingdom growth.

For youth leaders and adults with a heart for youth ministry who are looking to spice up their ministry and (re)discover the joy, excitement and transformation they’ve been longing to see—and that Jesus promised!

### IN THIS SUMMARY YOU WILL LEARN...

- Why youth ministries should prioritize the advancement of the gospel in and through their students.
- What defines a gospelized youth ministry and how it brings student transformation from the inside out.
- The seven key values of an effective “Gospel Advancing Youth Ministry” based on the book of Acts and the latest evangelism research.
- How to use Gospel Advancing principles to move a youth ministry from meeting-driven to mission-driven and from typical to transformational.

## Why Gospelize?

Jesus has called His followers to join Him in His mission and to share His message of hope and life—and that includes youth leaders and their believing students. Until our Savior returns, we must be busy with this quest He has called us to accomplish.

The quest to make disciples. The quest to spread the good news. The quest to ***gospelize***.

For many, the word evangelism sometimes smacks of bullhorns and pointy fingers of judgment. But gospelize sounds like transformation from the inside out. And this is exactly what this culture of teenagers needs.

From self-harm, to suicide, to self-image challenges, to sexual temptation, this generation has been bombarded by the Evil One. Our young people live in the midst of a generation of walking wounded who are longing for hope and looking for answers.

And Jesus offers them both—and more!

But we are the vehicles that Jesus works through to download this good news to these teenagers. We are His hands, His feet and His mouth. So we must reach out, walk toward and speak up.

Just what does it mean to “gospelize” your youth ministry?

To gospelize your youth ministry is to build a context in which the good news of Jesus is moving both deeply ***into*** the souls of your teenagers, and outwardly ***through*** your teenagers to others. When you make the gospel central to everything you are doing, you are gospelizing your ministry.

Gospelizing your youth group is much, much more than simply getting your teenager to share the gospel with their peers. When you read through the book of Acts, evangelism was front and center, but the priority of evangelism wasn't flying solo. The gospel-sharing efforts of the early followers of Jesus sprang out of a context of believers who loved God and loved others. Prayer was a huge emphasis, and so was a commitment to Scripture. Converts were not just made, disciples were multiplied. These priorities, plus a few others, became the building blocks that formed the foundation of an ongoing advancement of the good news.

**The author:** Greg Stier is founder and CEO of Dare 2 Share Ministries, a ministry that has equipped over a million teenagers and adults to relationally and relentlessly share the gospel of Christ.

As a former church planter and pastor, Greg believes in the power and potential of the church to transform entire cities with the gospel. As a former youth leader, he is committed to seeing this transformation erupt from the next generation.

Greg is the author of seventeen books and is a regular contributor to *Christian Post*, *Churchleaders.com* and *Group Magazine*. He has been a featured speaker at Promise Keepers, Youth Specialties, Creation Festival, LifeFest and The Billy Graham Schools of Evangelism.

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This forward movement of the life-changing message of Jesus was not primarily accomplished through techniques, strategies or methodologies, but in the moving of the Spirit's power, first of all in the early disciples, and then through them to reach others.

So how do you create a context in which this happens on a consistent basis? That's what this book is about!

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## The Last Lost Chapter of Acts

In Acts 1:8, Jesus called His disciples to pursue His mission by being His witnesses, starting where they were at and expanding outward. But led by the Spirit, they didn't just make disciples, they multiplied them! This means life-on-life investment in those who had put their faith in Jesus, and implies training them to reach their spheres of influence. By the time you get to Acts 28 at the end of the book, you see that the gospel had advanced all the way to Rome. The result? Radical gospel transformation both inward and outward!

From the first page to the last page of Acts, this book drips with the relentless pursuit of the mission of Jesus. The explosive growth of the early church gives clues and cues that can help you experience that same brand of spiritual and numeric growth in your ministries. If you want to learn how to grow your ministry, the book of

Acts gives you a crash course! It's a blueprint for what it looks like to gospelize a ministry, a community, a city, a country and a world.

Acts not only describes the kind of transformational impact we should be purposefully pursuing, it also points us toward the right ingredients for building a Gospel Advancing Ministry that relentlessly pursues the mission of Jesus by relationally multiplying disciples, resulting in radical gospel transformation.

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## Mexican Food and Youth Ministry

In the same way that a lot of Mexican food is made from the same basic ingredients—tortilla with cheese, meat, and vegetables, every Gospel Advancing Ministry has seven basic ingredients that can be mixed together in a variety of different ways. From these ingredients, some will make a “taco” type youth ministry. Others will serve up a “burrito” type ministry. But they all incorporate seven ingredients—or values, if you will—as part of the recipe in some way and to one degree or another, with the gospel itself infusing the spiciness. As you mix these ingredients together in your own unique way with the gospel as the “kick,” they create a dynamic, spicy dish that gets people so excited that they want to share it with others.

These seven key values have shown themselves again and again to be true statistically, scripturally and strategically.

### Statistically

A few years ago, Dare 2 Share (D2S) commissioned a national research project that evaluated the effectiveness of youth ministries evangelistically. About 10% of those surveyed had a new conversion growth rate of 25% or more per year. In other words, a full quarter of their annual growth was due to non-Christian teenagers putting their faith in Jesus and getting plugged into the youth group. As D2S analyzed the research, it became clear that the highest performing youth ministries embodied these seven values.

### Scripturally

After identifying these seven values in our survey results, Greg Stier crosschecked them scripturally, specifically with the Gospels and the book of Acts. Jesus embedded all of these values into His earthly ministry. And He passed them on to the early disciples.

### Strategically

Greg has spent over 25 years in ministry as a youth leader, church planter and youth ministry para-church leader. Across those years and roles, he's labored to strategically inject a gospel advancing philosophy into each. In his role as founder and CEO of Dare 2 Share, he's engaged with thousands of youth leaders across the nation. His practical, frontlines observation is that these seven values are essential for an effective, transformational youth ministry.

These seven values are the seven basic ingredients needed to build a Gospel Advancing Ministry. As you begin to stir these values into your ministry, you and your teenagers will “*taste and see that the Lord is good.*”

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## Pray First

### Value #1: Intercessory prayer fuels it.

*“They all joined together constantly in prayer....”* (Acts 1:14).

Prayer is the first thing the disciples did after Jesus ascended. They met with Him in the heavenlies through relentless prayer. This snapshot of their commitment to pray constantly should demonstrate to us that we too need to join together and pray fervently and consistently.

We must pray. We must pray for each other and for the lost. We must pray for our churches and our communities. We must pray until our knees are numb and our voices are hoarse. We must pray until God answers.

This intentional and intensive brand of prayer will keep us dependent on Him, strengthen our faith muscles and produce results that can only be explained by divine intervention.

When we pray and teach our students to pray, we are connecting them with the One who can transform not only their lives, but the lives of their friends, classmates, teammates, family members and coworkers. When prayer becomes the engine, and not the caboose of our youth ministry efforts, then we'll start getting serious traction toward building a Gospel Advancing Ministry.

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## Start in Your Circle

**Value #2: Relational evangelism drives it.**

*“...When Priscilla and Aquila heard him [Apollos], they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately” (Acts 18:26b).*

This short, subtle verse gives us a snapshot into how relational evangelism was done in the early church by the “non-rock stars”—those who didn’t have the kind of public persona of the more widely known apostles like Paul, Peter and Philip.

Priscilla and Aquila listened to Apollos. They took the time to understand who he was and what he believed. Through listening, they identified the gaps in his understanding. And *“they invited him into their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.”* They didn’t jump on him and beat him with their gospel bats. They lovingly helped him see the gaps in what he believed, and Apollos consequently became a powerful ambassador of the gospel in the hands of God.

In the same way, you must help your teenagers learn how to pull “an Aquila and Priscilla” with their friends. They need to know how to listen, find the critical gaps in other’s understanding of the good news, and then explain *“the way of God”* to them more accurately.

As you coach your teenagers to engage their peers with the right mixture of love and boldness, they will see more and more of their friends, classmates and teammates transformed by the gospel.

### Ask – Admire – Admit

One of the practical approaches Dare 2 Share uses to help equip teenagers for give-and-take gospel conversations is called “Ask – Admire – Admit.” This is shorthand for...

1. **ASK questions to understand where others are coming from spiritually.**  
“Can you tell me more about Wicca? I’m really not very familiar with it.”
2. **ADMIRE what you can about what others believe.**  
“I really appreciate how Wiccans believe in a supernatural world.”
3. **ADMIT that the reason you’re a Christian is that you’re so messed up that you need someone else to rescue you.**  
“May I share with you more about the One who rescued me from (i.e., guilt, fear, hopelessness, or some other aspect of one’s personal story)?”

## Follow the Leader

**Value #3: Leaders fully embrace and model it.**

The Spirit of God enabled the leaders of the early church in Acts to live the life and preach the truth that Jesus had modeled for them over the previous three and a half years.

Jesus made it clear in Luke 6:40: *“The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.”* The disciples were bold in proclaiming the truth, because **Jesus** modeled boldness in proclaiming the truth.

The same is true of you with your teenagers. If your teenagers are not engaged in prayer and relational evangelism, you need a mirror, not a bullhorn, because it starts with you, not them. If the youth leader—and the adult and student leaders—don’t have hearts that are broken for the lost, then neither will the teenagers in the youth group. And if those in leadership aren’t personally engaging in gospel conversations with others, then the students very likely won’t be either.

We must model prayer, spiritual growth, evangelism and disciple multiplication to our teenagers if we expect them to grow in these areas. We don’t have to be perfect at it, but we must be making forward progress toward the goal. As we do, our teenagers will follow our lead and become more and more like us, as we become more and more like Jesus.

## Go Exponential

**Value #4: A disciple multiplication strategy guides it.**

In the book of Acts, there were two types of spiritual movements, one obvious and the other under the surface. The obvious movement was seen when the apostles led hundreds, or even thousands, to Christ through their public preaching, as they did in Acts 2 and 3.

But the other movement, although less obvious, had even more impact in advancing the gospel. This second movement was demonstrated during Paul’s time with the Thessalonians, and later with the Ephesians in Acts 19:8-10. The power of the second movement was exponential. It centered on people reaching their own peers with the good news and multiplying the reach of the message as the result of more and more disciples sharing the gospel in their relational circles of influence,

until entire regions were saturated with the good news. The results are described in 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8:

*You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it.*

This regional saturation with the good news was not the result of any super apostle, but of everyday people sharing the good news relationally! The Thessalonians demonstrated this at its finest. They were mimicking Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:6), modeling joyful endurance to other believers (1 Thessalonians 1:7) and multiplying disciples to share the good news with everyone in their spheres of influence.

Are you leading this “second movement” with your teenagers? Too many times, believers lean on evangelistic “professionals” like the youth leader, guest speaker, evangelist, pastor and so on, to do all of the evangelism. But the real opportunity for advancing the gospel among this generation lies in getting your teenagers to share the good news with their peers.

As your teenagers engage friends, classmates, teammates, coworkers and family members, the Word of the Lord will ring out across your community. This approach to relationally multiplying disciples may not be as sexy as a big outreach, complete with bands, speakers and flashing lights. But in the long run, it has the potential for a much broader reach.

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## Conquering Your “14er”

**Value #5: A bold vision focuses it.**

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).*

The boldest vision of all time started with Jesus Himself. His goal was that the gospel would be taken “to the ends of the earth,” and that disciples would be made and multiplied in every tribe and nation (Matthew 28:19).

Do you have a bold vision for your local community, for every part of your city and for the ends of the earth? Is that bold vision driving your youth ministry efforts across the street (your “Jerusalem” and “Judea”), across the tracks (your “Samaria”) and across the world?

Greg is the product of a youth ministry that had a vision, not just for their immediate community, but for the entire city. A suburban Gospel Advancing church reached “across the tracks” to share the good news with his family. This church’s vision was bold, and as a result, their impact was huge.

It’s easy to get myopic about the four walls of your youth room and forget how big the community and world you live in actually are. Jesus is calling you to have a bold enough vision that you can make an impact far beyond your own walls.

As you and your students get a heart for the lost teenagers across your city, your plans will reflect this broader vision. Your vision needs to be so big that God has to show up, and other youth leaders need to be recruited to help accomplish this vision.

But you need to think globally too. There are billions of people in the world, many of whom have never heard of Jesus or His good news. The power of mission trips can give your teenagers a heart for the world like nothing else. Experiencing the mission field will cause them to pray differently, to give differently and to act differently. A bold vision starts with your community, but it’s not fully complete until it begins stretching across oceans.

Developing a bold vision across the street, across the tracks and around the world will trigger miracles you never imagined. Lives will be changed, souls will be saved and tragic situations will be transformed. Your teenagers will never be the same as a result of them joining you in the pursuit of a bold vision for the glory of God!

### **Youth Leader Bill Freund’s Bold Vision**

“To give every high school and middle school student in Castle Rock, Colorado, the opportunity to hear, understand and respond to the gospel, through prayerfully training, inspiring, mobilizing and equipping students to engage their friends.”

A bold vision brings focus to your ministry efforts and impacts your calendar and programming.

## From the Foreword by Doug Fields

*Gospelize Your Youth Ministry* is the clearest articulation I've ever read of how evangelism meets youth ministry...If you study it, think deeply about, translate it with your current church culture in mind, it has the potential to change you *and* your youth ministry.

Greg Stier's ideas don't come from random stories of exceptionally evangelistic youth leaders, instead he frames everything on the timeless values discovered in the Book of Acts. On every page you can feel Greg's heart beating to live out these truths personally and help youth leaders embody them practically.

As I read the pages of this book I was reminded of why I felt God's call into youth ministry so many years ago...because down deep inside, I truly believe that the Good News of Jesus can genuinely heal a broken generation with lasting hope.

Trust me, this book will refresh you, encourage you, and re-focus you on the original Jesus mission that got you into ministry. In addition, it will help you develop a plan of action that will transform the way you view and do youth ministry for the rest of your life.

As you learn more about **evangelism**, I encourage you to think deeply about how evangelism connects with the other biblical purposes—it can deepen your **discipleship** efforts, ignite your **ministry** opportunities and enhance your **fellowship**. Apply these ideas with love, humility and consistency and you'll find yourself and your teenagers engaging more fully in **worship**.

God's purposes are waiting to be lived-out in you and the youth ministry He has entrusted to you.

### Doug Fields

Youth Pastor of 30+ years  
Author of 50+ books, including  
*Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*

## Counting What Really Counts

Value #6: Biblical outcomes measure it.

Outcome is a word that sounds “businesslike.” But God is all about outcomes. Outcomes reflect the results of our labors—the fruit that we are seeking to produce as a result of our ministry efforts.

When Barnabas visited Antioch in Acts 11, he “*saw what the grace of God had done.*” What did he see? He saw outcomes! He witnessed firsthand the fruit of the good news being preached and accepted. What did that fruit look like? It was both qualitative and quantitative. It was good and there was lots of it! In the same way, we want to see the evidence of God blessing our ministry efforts—“outcomes”—on both levels.

On a qualitative level, we want our teenagers to grow in their knowledge of and service to Jesus. As Peter said:

*...Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:5-8).*

God wants our teenagers to develop godly character and be “productive and effective” for His kingdom. These are the qualitative outcomes He is looking for and working toward in them and in us.

On a quantitative level, these outcomes have to do with the number of people we are impacting with the gospel of Jesus. As Acts 2:47 reminds us, “*The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*”

This particular value should prompt you to personally ask the tough, but critical, questions. Questions like:

- What percentage of your teenagers are actively sharing their faith with their peers?
- What percentage of your youth group became Christians as a result of your teenagers' outreach efforts?

Because it's not just about numbers, it's about the **right** numbers. And the right numbers have to do with how many are coming to Christ and growing in Christ as a result of you mobilizing your teenagers for making disciples who make disciples.

## Program Your Priorities

**Value #7: Ongoing programs reflect it.**

*...The number of disciples was increasing...So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:1-4).*

The apostles could have gotten caught up in the minutia and micromanaged every aspect of the food distribution ministry needed in Acts 6, but they didn't. They delegated some ministry responsibilities so they could take care of their top ministry priorities.

What were their top priorities? When you look closely at this passage, you see evidence that they prioritized these same seven gospel advancing values we've been in the process of unpacking! Think of it like this...

**Value #1:** They programmed prayer.

**Value #2:** They programmed evangelism, because part of the ministry "of the word" is evangelistic in nature.

**Value #3:** They had built into leaders who reflected these same values as evidenced by results described in Acts 7 and 8.

**Value #4:** All of this is a result of the fact that "the number of disciples was increasing."

**Value #5:** This rapid multiplication was an outgrowth of the bold vision Jesus laid out in Acts 1:8.

**Value #6:** Feeding the poor is definitely a biblical outcome, as is the number of disciples being multiplied.

**Value #7:** Since this is a key passage for programming your priorities, it's hard to miss this one!

As a result of the apostles' relentless commitment to programming their priorities, the early church was a gospel advancing powerhouse. They didn't let other priorities, or other people's priorities, hijack the plane. Instead, they delegated other duties to qualified leaders and kept their eye on the end goal.

In the same way, you must program these seven values into your daily schedule, weekly programs and annual calendar. This is the only way they will truly become ministry priorities, because what dominates your schedule dominates you. If you don't purposefully and passionately incorporate these values into your programs and your calendar, they're just words on a page (or wall or website).

## 3 Ways to Gospelize Your Programs

The [gospeladvancing.com](http://gospeladvancing.com) website and the Gospel Advancing Ministry app provide loads of practical ideas for gospelizing your programming, so check them out. But here are three simple, biblical programming ideas you can do right away.

### **Idea #1: Give the gospel every week.**

We must let the gospel message bleed across everything. And because redemption is the theme of Scripture, **any** lesson can transition into the gospel. When you give the gospel weekly, both evangelism and discipleship are happening simultaneously! Jesus' message is being shared **and** you're discipling your Christian students by modeling how to bring the gospel up. As your teens hear your salvation segues each week, it will help them learn how to think about virtually every conversational topic as an opportunity to point people toward Jesus.

### **Idea #2: Create space for teenagers to share gospel advancing stories.**

Some youth leaders call it "Take 5 for THE Cause," or "Pause for THE Cause," or simply "Open Mic," but whatever you call it, this is a time where teenagers can share stories—good, bad or ugly—and pray for each other about the real life gospel conversations they're having with their peers!

### **Idea #3: Spend actual time praying for the lost in your meetings.**

Make room for the power of God in your programs, by making room for prayer in your programming!

## The Way of Grace

Grace transforms. It transforms our teenagers from the inside out. If we don't see that transformation initially, we don't revert to preaching the law. Instead, we preach God's grace even more.

Charles Spurgeon once said: "When I thought that God was hard, I found it easy to sin. But when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I smote

upon my breast to think that I could have rebelled against One who loved me so and sought my good.”

Here’s the crazy thing about grace, once you receive it through faith, it begins to transform you. Jesus changes your “want-er,” and you become a new creation. Sure we can abuse it, and, if we’re honest, often do. But when we let grace do its work, it does exactly what the writer of Titus 2:12 describes: “*It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.*”

We need to preach this message of God’s grace again and again and again to our Christian teenagers so they walk in it, and to our unreached teens so they embrace it.

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## Apostolic Resolve

God has given you a mission, your specific piece of advancing THE Cause of Christ in your own community. You must identify it, relentlessly pray over it and do everything you can in the power of Christ to accomplish it. There is a generation of teenagers in your midst who are literally on the highway to hell, and we have the message that can rescue them from it! Don’t lose sight of this vital mission that God has placed firmly in your made-worthy-by-the-blood-of-Christ hands!

Throughout the book of Acts, we’ve seen the church constantly doing just that. Again and again, they improvised, adapted and overcame. Their growth came through prayer, hard work and duct tape.

These Spirit-fueled followers of Jesus started in the temple, but soon scattered to house churches. The Jerusalem apostles were quickly eclipsed by localized elders, as the church grew and expanded across Judea and beyond. When there were areas of service that needed to be taken care of, deacons were put in place so the leaders could focus on the ministry of the Word and prayer. When persecution hit the church in Jerusalem like a hurricane, the believers scattered and used it as an opportunity and preached the Word wherever they went. They would not be stopped.

When the Gentile believers came into the church of Antioch in droves, the legalists from Judea arose and pushed against this message of grace. But the church adjusted again. They clarified and codified the gospel

message, corrected the legalists and re-sent missionaries out to make sure that everyone knew the true message of grace.

Paul improvised, adapted and overcame, as well. When thrown in prison, he didn’t sit idly by waiting for a better outcome. He wrote letters which were included in the canon. When he was forced out of the synagogue in Ephesus, he shifted locations to the School of Tyrannus, and he adjusted his strategy from addition to multiplication! There he unleashed an unstoppable force of disciple multiplication through the Ephesians.

The Church was launched with an Acts 2 bang, and kept moving and adjusting and evolving until it had saturated much of the known world with the good news of Jesus. This same unstoppable force, this missional community of love and truth, has been the ramrod in the hands of Christ for the last 2,000 years to batter the gates of hell and rescue souls headed to a dark eternity.

And now it’s your turn to improvise, adapt and overcome. Be assured that your quest will have plenty of failures, but may you fail forward in the power of God.

Take these seven values of a Gospel Advancing Ministry, and find your own best recipe for building a gospelized youth ministry that fits your context. Make the gospel central to everything you do, and you’ll end up with a spicy dish that gets people so excited they want to share it with others!

### **Praise for *Gospelize Your Youth Ministry***

“Greg Stier takes his infectious heart and razor-sharp mind and pours it into *Gospelize Your Youth Ministry* in a way that is both inspiring and practical. Greg’s commitment to an evangelism that invites ‘transformation from the inside out,’ especially as lived in and through teenagers, is what drives his ministry and grounds this helpful and detailed resource. What he makes clear from the first pages is that evangelism is not simply a programmatic option among many for youth ministry, but is rather the core reason and outcome of a healthy ministry. In *Gospelize* Greg provides the foundation, the plan, and the structure to ensure that the book of Acts lives on in and through your ministry.”

**Chap Clark, PhD**  
**Professor of Youth, Family, and Culture**  
**Fuller Theological Seminary**