



Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry: Theory and Praxis in Urban Context

By *Fernando Arzola Jr.*

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Youth ministries in an urban context are too often left to their own devices. The resources available to them are overwhelmingly conceived, tested and produced exclusively in the suburbs, and bring little to bear on the realities of urban youth culture. As a consequence, youth ministries in large cities have tended to settle onto one of three paths--a traditional paradigm that jealously guards the spiritual formation of its young people, a liberal paradigm that concentrates exclusively on personal growth, and an activist paradigm that galvanizes youth around the social concerns surrounding them. While each of these emphases is important, too often they are pursued to the neglect of the others, and the urban church suffers. Fernando Arzola Jr. proposes a fourth way, a prophetic paradigm that integrates the three and cultivates young people who are spiritually rooted, emotionally mature and responsive to the needs of their community. In this pace-setting book he draws on various disciplines--from biology to sociology, from psychology to theology--to guide urban youth workers into an effective and transformational ministry to youth.

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Editorial Review

Review

This release comes from the pen of a native of the city: an urban Latino who knows the needs and demands of urban youth and meets these with appropriate theology, thought, and action. I commend this book to priests and youth workers without reservation. Dr. Arzola speaks from where we all wish to go with our youth and the church. (Jeffrey A. Mackey, O.P., *The Living Church*, October 5, 2008)

As a parish priest, my last confirmation class was a class of 16 suburban youth. I was the more prepared and the more tooled to meet their needs because of reading Dr. Arzola's work than I would have been otherwise. I commend this book to priests and youth workers without reservation. Dr. Arzola speaks from where we all wish to go with our youth and the church. (Rev. Jeffrey A. Mackey, O.P., *The Living Church*, October 5, 2008)

In this pacesetting book he draws on various disciplines--from biology to sociology, from psychology to theology--to guide urban youth workers into an effective and transformational ministry to youth. (Leadership, Fall 2008)

Arzola, who heads up the Urban Family Empowerment Center in the Bronx, writes passionately and succinctly about developing a prophetic style of urban youth ministry. I would suggest, however, that much of what he has to say can be applied to any ministry, youth or otherwise, within the urban context or not. (Frank A. Mills, *Urban Paradoxes*, May 14, 2008)

. . .a must-read for anyone working in urban youth ministry or anyone from a suburban setting attempting to understand the mindset of urban youth ministry. . .high time that *someone* wrote a book that specifically addresses youth ministry in the urban context. The book is a very straightforward manual that is surprisingly user-friendly. (C. E. Moore, *The Christian Manifesto*, April 1, 2008)

"A timely, truly interdisciplinary study that tackles one of the most pressing issues of our times. When urban centers attract the largest segments of our population, and when our youth--urban or otherwise-- counts less with their parents' presence (taken away by an insatiable time-swallowing labor market, in order to make ends meet), or with public resources (sucked away by a frenzy of lowering taxes and privatization), the life-saving role of the churches is back at the center of social life. Arzola's book provides a compass for our churches to face the challenges posed by such a novel predicament of our urban youth--and he does it with both the contributions of his predecessors in mind and a diverse, multiethnic, changing youth and readership in the horizon." (Otto Maduro, Ph.D., professor of world Christianity, Drew University Theological School)

"Finally! A comprehensive analysis of current urban youth ministry models, with a clear presentation of developing a balanced approach for reaching young people in the city." (Dr. Tommy Carrington, D.Min., president, Urban Training Network, and adjunct professor, Trinity International University / Palm Beach Atlantic University)

"Finally! Something new to the field of youth ministry. A must-read for anyone who wants to deal with young people in a comprehensive and holistic manner." (Rev. Raymond Rivera, D.D., founder and president, Latino Pastoral Action Center, Bronx, New York)

"An excellent analysis moving our attention away from the merely programmatic concerns of youth ministry to more foundational ones. Sound theology accompanies thoughtful illustration and evidence of thinking outside the box. Arzola's model descriptions and his thoughtful illustration of what a 'prophetic youth ministry' is, as a paradigm for engaging the rapid, multidimensional and multicultural growth in the urban context, challenges youth ministers and those concerned with youth in general to discern what is vital and essential in their youth ministry leadership in order to contribute meaningfully and constructively to the new communities being formed. While it is a book that is connected to those in urban areas, Arzola clearly articulates a future that will demand greater moral imagination and prophetic will if we are to respect the dignity of every young person that God allows us to impact. I found it to be a pragmatic assessment that actually is quite hopeful. A must-have book in every pastoral library." (Rev. Hiram Rios, pastor, Grace Fellowship Church, Florida, and Rev. Dr. Elizabeth D. Rios, copastor, Grace Fellowship Church, Florida, founder, Center for Emerging Female Leadership, and contributing editor, PRISM magazine)

"Fernando Arzola Jr.'s seminal work is essential reading for all those committed to transformative and prophetic youth ministry both within and outside of cities globally. This is a well-researched volume with wide-ranging theoretical and practical implications for those called to equip youth as prophets for the Christian church and wider society." (Dr. Robert W. Pazmiño, Ed.D., Valeria Stone Professor of Christian Education, Andover Newton Theological School and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)

"Fernando Arzola Jr.'s book is brilliant, insightful and well-written. In the often mysterious world of urban youth culture, Arzola stands out as a thoughtful leader and as a truly prophetic voice. This book is a necessary read for all who practice youth ministry in metro areas across the nation." (Christopher B. Brooks, national coordinator, URBNET)

"An urgent and creative contribution to the all-important field of youth ministry." (Rev. Virgilio Elizondo, founding member, Mexican American Cultural Center, and one of Time magazine's top 100 Innovators/Visionaries for the New Millennium)

"A comprehensive study full of insight for urban youth ministry drawn from many disciplines. Important, challenging, holistic and solidly biblical. Highly recommended!" (Dr. Ronald J. Sider, Ph.D., president, Evangelicals for Social Action, and professor of theology, holistic ministry & public policy, Palmer Theological Seminary, Eastern University)

"Fernando Arzola Jr.'s book, *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry: Theory and Praxis in Urban Context*, is brilliantly and broadly conceived. Holistic in the best sense of the word, informed by theology, theory and praxis, this book lays a solid foundation for effective urban ministry of any kind, but especially youth ministry. I recommend it to those considering working in urban youth ministry, as well as those currently working in this field." (John M. Perkins, president, The John M. Perkins Foundation)

"Arzola's is a strong voice from within the urban community, providing what only an insider can. He gives an honest tour of the strengths and weaknesses of urban life and its intersection with youth ministry. Arzola offers a resource that flips the script, contributing insight and an urban voice that may also be reinterpreted for suburban contexts. Finally, an urban youth ministry book that is suited for both academic courses and lay readers. It offers an excellent use of research, theory and substance from real-life insight." (Amy Elizabeth Jacober, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Practical Theology/Youth Ministry, George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Waco, Texas)

"At last, an ethnic evangelical voice from the city stands on his urban academic platform and calls youth ministry to rethink its mission in the city and beyond. Fernando Arzola's *Toward a Prophetic Youth*

Ministry: Theory and Praxis in Urban Context stands in line with the many urban precedences that have shaped youth ministry as we know it today." (Dr. Mark H. Senter III, Ph.D., Chair of the Educational Ministries Department, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)

"Fernando Arzola's *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry* is a fresh and provocative new voice in youth ministry---a much-needed urban voice in the critical youth ministry dialogue. Arzola's book promises to be a significant contribution to the literature of youth ministry, but more importantly, if its prophetic words are heeded it will bring about a holistic transformation of our youth." (Dr. Eldin Villafañe, Ph.D., professor of Christian social ethics, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)

"Finally someone is writing with a specific and critical eye toward what it means to do holistic youth ministry in urban contexts. Professor Arzola offers a keen and necessary analysis of various paradigms of urban youth ministry. This work is important for at least two reasons: (1) It fills a void. Not many scholars have written with both the city and its youth in focus. (2) It offers a view toward youth ministry that seeks to transform both persons and places. The call of God's prophets was to bring justice through rebuilding lives, restoring cities, caring for orphans, widows, aliens and the displaced. Arzola challenges us to think about what it means to do 'prophetic youth ministry' in the inner city. I highly recommend this book to all who care about being agents of justice in a world plagued with injustice." (Calenthia S. Dowdy, associate professor of youth ministry & culture, Eastern University)

"Rather than trashing folks who see and do ministry differently than he does, Fernando Arzola has discovered the strengths of a wide variety of urban youth ministries and integrated them in a way that will both affirm and challenge all of us who love city kids in the name of Jesus. Here is a book born not only of practical experience and research, but also of deep and careful reflection, which takes seriously both personal discipleship and social justice in the inner city. Pay attention to Fernando Arzola." (Bart Campolo, founder, Mission Year, and founder, The Laundromat Project)

About the Author

Fernando Arzola Jr. is the author of books covering the fields of religious studies, adolescent development, community engagement and first-year studies. Currently, he writes poetry. Arzola received his Ph.D. from Fordham University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Fugate:

What do you think about book? It is just for students because they are still students or this for all people in the world, the actual best subject for that? Just simply you can be answered for that issue above. Every person has various personality and hobby for every single other. Don't to be pressured someone or something that they don't need do that. You must know how great and important the book *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry: Theory and Praxis in Urban Context*. All type of book are you able to see on many options. You can look for the internet methods or other social media.

Donna Lacher:

Nowadays reading books be than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading practice give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge the rest of the information inside the book in

which improve your knowledge and information. The knowledge you get based on what kind of reserve you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with training books but if you want really feel happy read one using theme for entertaining for instance comic or novel. The particular *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry: Theory and Praxis in Urban Context* is kind of e-book which is giving the reader capricious experience.

Stephen Thrush:

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them loved ones or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity here is look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent the whole day to reading a e-book. The book *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry: Theory and Praxis in Urban Context* it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of those who recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. In case you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book has high quality.

Penny Stout:

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