

Q & A



***Don't Despise Our Youth***  
*Renewing Hope for Urban Youth Ministry*

November 11, 2025 | \$19.99, 192 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-1302-1

**David A. Washington** (DMin, North Park) is the founder and senior pastor of Kingdom Covenant Church, an urban inner-city ministry on the South Side of Chicago. He is the author of *Kingdom Church: A People Committed to the King's Agenda* and a youth ministry and gang intervention specialist with over three decades of experience working with youth, gangs, and prison ministry.

## Seeing the Good and Potential in Our Youth

### What made you decide to write this book?

**David Washington:** As a man whose life was transformed by youth ministry, I know its power and potential. As a pastor who has dedicated many years to serving youth in the church and community, I see many particular issues with youth and problems with churches addressing the youth. Among these, finding people to serve the youth and developing robust ministries.

For these reasons, I wanted to write a book to address what I see as one of the causes of declining youth ministry and not merely address symptoms. This cause that I argue is the despising of youth and youth ministry. By despising, I mean, the disregard, or failure to see its importance and the great potential of the youth's contributions to the kingdom of God and the local church.

### Drawing from your story, what does "youth ministry" mean?

**David:** In my opinion, youth ministry is the notion of churches strategically reaching and discipling youth to do ministry in their churches and communities. When youth minister to youth, it is often more impactful than when adults are ministering to youth. This philosophy of youth ministry also helps to raise the value of youth in our eyes because we can see them as co-laborers with us in the ministry of our congregations.

### How are youth often undervalued in today's world?

**David:** I believe many in the world, especially the urban context, understand the value of youth. This is why so many young people are being exploited. The issue, however, is that too many of the wrong people are investing in the urban youth and giving them time and attention. Drug dealers, gang leaders, music execs, criminals, street figures, and other negative influences are indoctrinating and utilizing youth in urban communities for fraudulent reasons.

On the other hand, local churches are giving less time and attention to this demographic because many are devaluing and underestimating the importance of raising this generation up to be city, suburban, and urban missionaries among their peers and future leaders in our local assemblies. Churches undervalue youth by not having budgets for them, by not having ministries for them, and by ignoring their needs and contemporary issues in the pulpit. Youth have energy, time, and strength that the church should be utilizing.



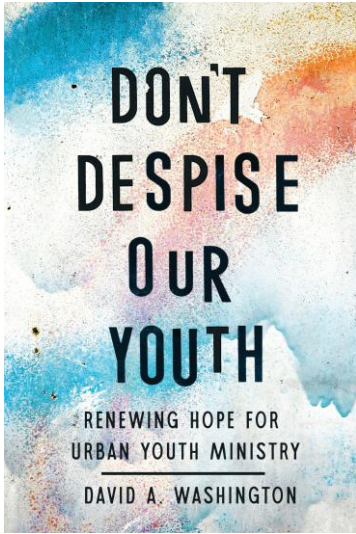
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#### **Why is this book needed right now?**

**David:** Churches in various contexts in general, and in the urban context in particular, are struggling to find committed workers, youth ministers, and adult support for ministry among the youth in their churches and communities. I wrote this book to cast vision about who the youth in our midst truly are, their importance to the local congregation, their potential as future generation leaders in the church, and our calling, responsibility, and committed spiritual labor among them.

Many of the contemporary youth ministry books fail to address prevalent issues that youth face in the urban, inner-city context, and many of the youth living in this context are becoming more uncontrolled. Today's traumatic experiences, addictions, worldviews, gun violence, and death rates needs to be addressed, and those losing hope while working with the youth need to be inspired, encouraged, and edified right now.



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BIO



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## Senior Pastor Brings Robust View of Urban Youth Ministry

David A. Washington (DMin, North Park) is the founder and senior pastor of Kingdom Covenant Church, an urban inner-city ministry on the South Side of Chicago.

He is the author of *Kingdom Church: A People Committed to the King's Agenda* and a youth ministry and gang intervention specialist with over three decades of experience working with youth, gangs, and prison ministry. He has worked directly with youth in some of the most challenging settings urban life has to offer.

David earned a bachelor of science in biblical studies from the Moody Bible Institute and a masters in divinity and a doctorate in urban ministry from North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, graduating with honors.

Gang life and drug dealing were heavy influences in David's urban growing-up years on Chicago's South Side. He miraculously came to faith at nineteen through the evangelistic ministries of Salem Baptist Church. After surrendering his life to Christ, he vowed to devote his life to God and give up all he had. He went back to the same gangs—but this time with the intent of sharing the gospel.

Because of this ministry, he was able to introduce thousands to the Lord in many capacities, including youth ministry, prison ministry, evangelistic counseling, and pastoral care ministry. He spent fifteen years at Salem Baptist Church and nine years at Oakdale Covenant Church before being led to plant Kingdom Covenant Church in Chicago's inner city.

David's story and heart for reaching the lost have led to a passion for valuing and ministering to underserved youth, particularly urban youth. He cares about "casting a vision about who the youth in our midst truly are, their importance to the local congregation, their potential as future generation leaders in the church, and our calling, responsibility, and committed spiritual labor among them."

David has been featured in:

- *The Gospel Coalition*
- *Christian Today*
- and more.

He resides in Chicago with his wife Vernée and two adult children, David Andrew and Chemin Mariah.



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