TAKE 5

TAKE 5 is . . .
Your five-minute refresher, a "quick read" for Network members focusing on spiritual growth, resources, and the mission of youth ministry.

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Phone: 858-451-1111
Fax: 858-451-6900
Email: take5@youthworkers.net
Website: www.youthworkers.net

National Mentor Recruitment Training Event, September 24-27

Here's your invitation to join us: www.mentoryouth.com/training-promo. (A Flash plug-in is required to view. Visit www.mentoryouth.com if you need help downloading Flash.)

This event is co-hosted by MentorYouth.com, a division of the National Network of Youth Ministries, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Available Vessels

By Dr. René Rochester

from the heart

Recently, I was serving at a couple of youth camps. One was in Pine Bluff, Arkansas and the other at Black Mountain in North Carolina.

Each day, the young people would file into the gymnasium or the pavilion. I noticed that whether I was with African American youth from the impoverished edge of the Mississippi Delta, or with a diverse group of young aspiring athletes, the anticipation, excitement and wonder was evident on the faces of the youth.

God is no respecter of persons. What He will do to refresh and restore one, He will do for another.

For the last 20 years or more, I have had the privilege and opportunity to work at many youth camps. Working with thousands of youth workers and youth from every walk of life has kept my heart encouraged in knowing this: *God is no respecter of persons.* What He will do to refresh and restore one, He will do for another.

We often want a boxed formula or a packaged ministry format to carry out the work of ministry, but I have grown to better understand that you cannot package and wrap up the Holy Spirit in a kit.

Jesus told a religious leader of His day: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8, NAS).

How God chooses to grow and change an individual is not in our control. All we can do is create an environment for the Holy Spirit to move in the hearts and minds of our youth.

Our greatest responsibility is to be a vessel through which the Spirit can do His work. We need to reflect what the song writer says: "Lord, I'm available to You…" Use me, Lord…"

If this is our simple prayer – "to be an available vessel" – then the Father has the freedom through the blood of Jesus and His seal upon our hearts to fill us daily with the power and anointing of His Spirit. This is the challenge to those of us in youth ministry today.

We can get caught in what I call *marketable ministry madness*. I have learned that I cannot do effective ministry from another man's vision.

I can have the form of the vessel, looking like the "best of the best" in youth ministry. But if I haven't been before the Lord and asked Him to make the vision real for me and the youth I am called to serve, my jar remains empty.

No power…no anointing…no effectiveness.



René Rochester is the National Community Collaborative advisor to the president of Youth for Christ USA and the founder and CEO of Urban SET. René provides resources, curriculum, training and development of teachers, counselors and other youth workers at www.drrene.net.

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