

# CRAZY FUN AND SERIOUS BUSINESS

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Recently I visited a youth group in Kenosha, Wisconsin, that was equal parts crazy fun and serious business. Andy McGowan, the 31-year-old youth leader at Immanuel Baptist Church, was the leader of the zany mayhem. The youth room, which was packed and stacked with kids, had a spinning-wheel-meets-game-show-meets-pizza-meets-dance-club feel.

I've known Andy for several years and have always thought of him as a serious guy who's all about the serious business of making disciples who make disciples. And he is. But that night I saw the other side of Andy, who was as pumped as any teen in the room. He resembled a game-show host on Red Bull and espresso shots. As Lecrae thumped in the background, Andy even showed a group of kids and youth leaders his horrible yet fully-committed dance moves.

After I spoke, though, Andy got serious. He was all business about getting the wall-to-wall teenagers dialed into a relationship with Jesus (if they were unbelievers) and sharing their faith (if they were believers).

Andy represents a whole network of youth leaders in Kenosha, known as "The Kenosha Allies," who are equal parts crazy fun and serious business. I got to hang out with them at a barbecue at Andy's house after church,

and laughter erupted while the youth ministers strategized the serious business of reaching every young person on every local high school campus with the gospel.

Another thing every youth leader in this network is serious about is intercessory prayer. They know it has broken down denominational territorialism and united them to accomplish a common cause. They're deadly serious about praying for each other, praying for revival, praying for their kids, praying for their town, and praying for growth (both spiritual and numeric) for *one another's* groups!

Crazy fun and serious business aren't either/or propositions for youth ministry. They're both/and. Youth rooms should reek of sweat and erupt with laughter. So have pie fights with reckless abandon. Shoot each other with paint guns and have the dumbest, kookiest fun possible. But when it's time to get serious, get deadly serious. Call teenagers to something higher (worship), something deeper (theology), and something wider (evangelism).

As I used to tell my middle schoolers, echoing the message of Ecclesiastes, "There's a time to be spastic, and there's a time to refrain from being spastic." ●