

# The Large Hadron Supercollider

hyphen

The Large Hadron Supercollider is the world's largest supercollider. It is contained in a circular tunnel that is seventeen miles in circumference, about six-hundred feet below the town of Geneva, Switzerland. It came online in September of 2008, amid fears that the experiments conducted in its confines could cause a black-hole that would destroy the earth as we know it. (As you may have noticed that hasn't happened yet.)

The supercollider sends two beams of protons around the tunnel in opposite directions. These beams of protons intersect, and the resulting high-energy collisions allow scientists to observe the smallest physical particles of matter, giving them insight into the nature of the universe.

The proton beams are accelerated around the tunnel by more than 1,600 magnets lining the walls of the LHC, most weighing over 29 tons. The protons progress through each stage of the tunnel moving faster and faster until they near the speed of light. Only then do the particles reach the optimal level of energy needed to fulfill their purpose.

Seeing someone discover their purpose in the kingdom of God is a beautiful thing. Conversely, watching someone's potential go untapped is painful. With the coming of Jesus closer than ever before, it is vital that we do everything that we can to help our youth move into adulthood with a clear sense of purpose.

Typical "church kids" will start out going to nursery class and progress through Sunday school classes designed to reach them at their specific level of intelligence and maturity. As they ascend through these stages they are acquiring knowledge and understanding. The goal is for them to leave Sunday school and hit the youth group with a certain level of spiritual intensity.

Once in the youth group the pace only quickens. Now there are youth services, youth rallies, youth conventions, youth fellowships, and youth camps. Any parent of a UPCI teenager can attest to this fact. This is a good thing. We are training up our teens to be mature active members of our local churches. The goal of this stage is to bring teenagers to the brink of adulthood with a spiritual intensity so strong they will burst into their twenties full of ministry and grounded in the truth.

But, for a lot of individuals, this is where the process begins to breakdown. According to a report by The Barna Group entitled "*Most twenty-somethings Put Christianity on the Shelf Following Spiritually*" (barna.org, September 11, 2006) **81% of teenagers will attend a church for a period of at least two months.** Of these, only **20% of twenty-somethings maintained a level of spiritual activity after graduating high school** and **61% of young adults completely disengaged from spiritual activity.**

The report goes on to say 'Twenty-somethings continue to be the most spiritually independent and resistant age group in America. Most of them pull away from participation and engagement in Christian churches, particularly during the 'college years'. The research shows that, compared to older adults, twenty-somethings have significantly lower levels of: church attendance, time spent alone studying and reading the Bible, volunteering to help churches, donations to churches, Sunday school and small group involvement, and use of Christian media.

This means that at a time when some of the biggest life decisions are being made, young adults are choosing to factor God out of their lives. The transition from adolescence to adulthood is quite possibly the most important transition in anyone's life. One that should be supported by the Word of God and the church.

# The Large Hadron Supercollider...continued

The logo for 'hyphen' is located in the top right corner. It consists of the word 'hyphen' in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are colored: 'h' is blue, 'y' is orange, 'p' is green, 'h' is red, 'e' is yellow, and 'n' is light blue. The logo is set against a dark gray rounded rectangular background.

Twenty-somethings choosing to walk away from God isn't always directly caused by sin. Pentecostal twenty-somethings can become overwhelmed with the newness of adulthood and the challenges and experiences that come with it. Often, what is happening in their lives consumes more of their attention than what they are doing in the church — so they gradually flow away from the church, and, eventually, from God.

Matthew 24:38-39 says “For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” This passage of scripture can be taken as a warning of sinfulness, or it can be taken as a warning against lack of focus. Eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage can all be done without having sin involved, but verse 39 shows us that the people were so involved in these activities, that the flood caught them by surprise. Their attention had been diverted and they were unable to be saved.

Young adulthood is inherently unstable. Moving, going to school, changing jobs, starting relationships, planning weddings, having kids and all the other necessary tasks of young adulthood, are not sinful in themselves, but they can be distracting.

If all we have to offer them is a seat in the adult Sunday school class and a pat on the back we will continue to lose young adults at an alarming rate.

Over the last year I have seen a young man so torn between the choice of career or ministry that he wasn't sleeping at night. I have seen young couples torn apart by divorce. I have seen young adults on the brink of financial ruin. I've seen a young minister fall into the trap of drug addiction. What do they all have in common? They are all between the ages of 18 and 30. And they all grew up on apostolic pews.

Like the Large Hadron Supercollider, let's keep our young adults moving in a focused path, so that at whatever stage of life they are in they're operating at their peak spiritual intensity. Hopefully, in both situations, we can avoid causing a black hole. ★

— **Joel Gray**

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