

Youth can change the world!

“You have established a stronghold from the mouths of children... to silence the enemy and the avenger “(Psalm 8:2)

There are more youth in the world today than ever before, and they are mostly concentrated in developing countries. The number of youth and children together constitute nearly 40 % of the world's population. Geographically speaking, the largest population of young people is concentrated in Asia and the Pacific (approximately 60 % of youth live in Asia; 15 % in Africa; 10 % in Latin America and the Caribbean and the remaining 15 % in developed countries). In these years millions of adolescents face the prospect of early marriage, early childbearing, incomplete education and the threat of HIV and AIDS.

These facts alone are a major challenge for us and we need to grasp the incredible potential of youth ministry in order to see a world changed! A research verifies that a person's life-long behaviours and beliefs are generally developed during childhood and early adolescence. In the overwhelming majority, moral and spiritual foundations are largely set in place by age 9! Fundamental perspectives on truth, integrity, meaning, justice, morality, and ethics are formed at this early stage of life. If we can reach children and youth and disciple them when their life perspectives and worldviews are being shaped, we will set them on a rock that cannot be easily moved.

Some years ago as we were leading outreaches with children and youth we suddenly realised that "Christianity began as a young people's movement". This is a small detail, but it is a reality of the Bible that our church doctrine seems to have forgotten and failed to consider. Most of the apostles were probably still in their twenties when they went out after Jesus. It is quite a shock for us bible school scholars to think that the original disciple group was a young men's band! Since Christ focused on young people while He was on earth, we need to invest our life in reaching the youth in all the nations and help them to become radical disciples of Jesus. In the Bible we read that Joshua was the servant of Moses from his youth, and we know that he became a godly leader (Numbers 11:28). Josiah inherited the kingdom of Judah at eight years of age (2 Kings 22:1).

When he was sixteen, he sought God and began to reform the nation! (2 Chronicles 34:3-7). David was a young man when he challenged the giant Goliath and stood for God against an entire pagan nation and before his own nation's frightened king and army.

In 1 Samuel 17:33, we read the words of the king of Israel to David: ***“Then Saul said to David, ‘You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth’***. The attitude that young people are “not able” was known at that time as well. God worked through this young man's faith and courage and a powerful lesson about the value of serving God in our youth remain through history!

We are regularly confronted in our teams with the question of what is a real effective ministry for us. We have often come to the conclusion that our ministry is successful as we influence people and help them to become "world changers". Youth who have a whole life ahead of them to live for Christ are an amazing tool in the hands of God to shape values in our society and bring a spiritual transformation in our regions.

What are we doing as follower of Christ to reach this generation? As Christians, we often react against the youth culture, rather than responding to it with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. We are not so far from the disciples in Matthew 18:10 who tried to prevent children and young people to bother Jesus and therefore we miss God's best. We see several signs that God is at work among young people today. We strongly believe that the youth generation has the incredible potential of impacting the nations and create a mass spiritual revolution!

When God asked "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Isaiah answered, "Here am I, Lord, send me." It is our prayer and heart's desire that there will be many adults and young people who follow the Lord's call to make disciples of all nations. We have noticed that this new generation has an incredible faith to see God moving in a new way. The breakthrough will only take place if we are willing to reach people with the love of the Lord through lives who are radically committed to God. Some of our observations are:

- Youth are open to God and desire a relationship with Him.
- Young people are spiritually hungry and curious about God's voice.
- There is a need to develop strong links for discipleship to all youth.
- Many ministries and organizations have access to adults only through their children.
- Youth have a basic trust in Jesus and this allow us to easily build programs for discipleship and social formation.
- Music and Medias are an important source of influence and can be used to communicate to young people.
- We need to strengthen families in order to restore the concept of authority and build healthy relationships among communities.

We have often heard that our youth will be the leaders of our next generation, but when we observe the business and Media world we see that the most innovative and revolutionary discoveries come from young people! Therefore it is our aim to promote ways to help youth in becoming more actively involved in making positive contributions to their communities though lives transformed from Jesus. Let's go and make disciple of all "Youth"!