



Provincial Youth Council - REPORT ON THE YOUTH MINISTRY OF ACSA

Perspectives and proposals for a more effective Youth Ministry

This report was presented at Provincial Standing Committee meetings on 28th September 2011. A more detailed report is available, on request.

Your Grace, Synod of Bishops and members of Provincial Standing Committee. I greet you in the precious Name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I speak on behalf of Provincial Youth Council and all the children and young people of our Province.

This presentation will deal with the current status of the ministry to young people and in particular, the motion raised at Provincial Synod in 2010 regarding the investigation into whether younger priests will positively impact the youth ministry and what the young people think of the church and its ministry to the youth.

Various initiatives contributed to the outcomes of this report including a survey that was done across the Province, workshops that were held and comments gathered from the AYSA web site as well as the Facebook Page. Some of these comments are printed in a lead article in this edition of the Southern Anglican.

Survey results – what the youth are saying (in no priority order):

- There is a reluctance to create opportunities for young people to participate in church.
- Young people want support and mentoring.
- Young people need a safe space.
- Young people need to be heard.
- Meaningful programmes lead by competent leaders.
- Need access to resources/investment.
- A need to connect God's Word with reality.
- They need authenticity from the leadership.

The Spiritual State of the World's Children research project was created to provide an understanding of the heart-felt needs of young people. 160,000 children in 40 countries were surveyed on their attitudes and behaviours in six key areas, namely faith, family, violence, sexual ethics, addictions and unethical behaviours and beliefs. See : www.onehope.net for the full details. A few of the pertinent points are listed below:

About Family:

- 26% report that their fathers have died or that they do not know them.
- 23% reported their parents are divorced or separated.

And those who were living with their fathers:

- 51% spend 15 minutes or less a week talking with their father about things that really matter;
- 59% of respondents reported they sometimes or frequently wonder if their mothers love them.
- 59% never or almost **never talk to their fathers** about personal concerns.

About Sexual ethics:

- 30% report they have already had sexual intercourse;
- They are most likely to learn about sex from television/movies, classmates/friends, and textbooks;
- They are least likely to learn about sex **from parents** and the internet;

About unethical behaviours:

Over the past three months –

- 62% admit having lied to their peers
- 58% indicate they have lied to an adult
- 36% watched a pornographic movie and 29% read a pornographic magazine
- 35% intentionally tried to emotionally hurt someone and 30% tried physically to hurt someone

- 28% have had suicidal thoughts and 14% attempted suicide

About their Faith:

- 7 out of 10 are certain of God's existence, believe God is omniscient and omnipotent and still involved in people's lives;
- 2/3 have made a personal commitment to Jesus that is still important to them;

However:

- 64% believe all major religions pray to the same god;
- 76% believe the Holy Spirit is only a symbol;
- 53% believe Jesus did not physically return to life;
- 52% agreed that all religions teach equally valid truths

Additional facts . . . (context)

- 1 youth leader – can only effectively minister to max 5-10 young people.
- Friday night youth activities are not enough.
- High turnover of youth leaders due to burnout.
- Absence of good parenthood is biggest impact – highest concern of youth pastors.
- Kids need parental and additional mentorship.
- Kids can't cope with external influences and this leads to bad decision taking.
- Problematic education system and lack of employment opportunities creates greatest stress.
- >50% of our kids are fatherless !

Therefore, young people . . .

Facing sooooo much in life:

- MUST be giving EVERY opportunity to get ANCHORED in the love of Christ,
- Aught to focus and commit themselves to God's purpose and MISSION for their (impressionable) lives.
- And, NEED to be TRANSFORMED and strengthened (daily) in the Holy Spirit in order to be able to take wise life decisions.

OF THIS THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT !!!

A Multiple Change Approach is required, viz.:

- Continuous and holistic spiritual development for sustainability and growth – outcomes at every age.
- Whole church involvement – congregational approach (Prof Malan Nel – UP).
- We need Biblical Parents – a focus on developing our parents according to God's directives (Deut 6).
- Focus on 4-14 window to set a good foundation – this is a world wide initiative at this time.
- Youth Leaders/Pastors are needed – 1 per parish – developed through an Academy (AYPA).
- Programmes that enhance spiritual development.
- Younger clergy – yes, but we need to consider the retraining of existing clergy!

Proposals for this PSC

- Focus on the Young by all parents, ministries and organisations. The year of the Young?
- The establishment of a formative or development team to set up the Anglican Young People's Academy (AYPA) which will deal with :
 - o The development of the interventions required for the spiritual development of the young
 - o The (skills) training of youth leaders/pastors/workers in these interventions.
- Developing a programme for the admission of younger leaders to ordination.

Jesus said: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God already belongs to such as these." (Matt. 19:14, Luke 18:15-17, Mark 10:13-16). This is a strong call to our Church to refocus our attention, energy and resources in the emerging generation so as to ensure that the Kingdom of God is continued and further grown, through the Anglican Church as we know it.

God bless you as you prayerfully contemplate the future of this most important ministry of our Church.