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GYMN Asia Update

- ☺ 45 Certified Trainers
- ☺ 12 Countries Had Gone Training
- ☺ 3,383 Youth Leaders Trained

This seminar is very helpful to me, it enlightened my vision, and broadened my ministry and challenged my ministry to youth.

Silchi Birong Marak
Tura, India
May 2008, Level 1

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Youth Connection

Missions and Your Youth Group

As a young Christian I was once invited by my friend to join a course on world missions. I was hesitant at first, little did I know that that would be the start of a love for missions that has brought me to remote islands of my country and placed me in an organization that is reaching youth globally. By missions, I refer to the effort of all the body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission as found at the end of Matthew:

"And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:17-20

My plea is that you include world-missions in your overall strategy and make it more central in your teaching. Consider the following reasons why missions is so important:

1: Missions is Biblical

The verses often talked about on this topic are Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8 which we will look into later, but these are only two among hundreds of verses in the Bible that show God's concern for the nations! From Genesis where he calls Abraham and blesses him and says to Abraham "...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." to the book of

Revelations where the following song is sung to Jesus "... you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." We cannot escape the fact that missions is one of the major themes of the Bible. If we do not tackle missions in our youth group we are missing a big part of what the Bible is all about.

2: It is the Greatest Cause

Human beings give their life for great causes and no cause is greater than this one. From my own experience, I am not a person easily moved but many times I have been in tears at the greatness of God in missions. Youth especially love a challenge and the Great Commission is the biggest challenge there is. It is more important than creating solutions to any global crisis, for those deal

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with this short life while missions deals with where people will spend eternity.¹

3: We Get More of God's Greatness

Missions is important most of all because it enlarges our view of God. This is true not just for our youth but also for us, as youth leaders. As we look into missions and deepen our involvement in it we get to see more of the magnificence of God's character. As we begin to discover God's concern for every family of the earth we begin to comprehend just

how deep the love of God is. When we look into how God has worked from history until today we start to understand the power of a God who watches the nations like ordinary men watch over sheep.

To put it negatively: If we do not have a world-view of missions we risk belittling our God. John Stott once told a story of visiting a tiny church in England while on a study leave. He worshipped with them every Sunday, participated in their fellowship, and heard their discussions. He related his dismay when week after week, the pastor would preach about issues facing the village, pray about concerns in the church, and discuss decisions related only to their congregation. "I came to the conclusion," Stott observed, "that these people worship a village God."²

We cannot allow the same things to happen to us. We cannot afford for us and our youth to have a small view of God.

I believe that no youth leader would disagree that missions is important but I go on to urge each one to include more of missions into the overall strategy of your youth group.

Although Jesus' command applies equally to all, I find when-ever I talk on missions that it is the youth who are the most receptive. They are the ones who can easily and eagerly follow the command to go to the uttermost parts of the world. They also are the ones with plenty of time and energy to give to missions. Many of those who are con-

sidered pioneers in the mission field caught the vision when they were young. Sharing the passion for missions may one day move one of your youth to make a ☺ great impact in missions for God.

Another thing to note is that being a mature Christian is not a requirement to discuss missions or be involved in it. It is even at times missions that will help turn hesitant believers into passionate followers of Christ. Step back one verse from the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 and you will find in verse 17 that “when they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted” yet Jesus went and gave them the command anyway to go and make disciples of all nations. This would include the doubters. I have found that when I bring my entire youth to a missions-field or talk about missions, I am gratefully surprised when I hear a teen I did not expect to, share how significant that event was for him. Young people who seem unconcerned of others often return from mission trips passionate for Christ.

Here are some practical ways to make this happen:

Cultivate a heart for missions.

What makes missions exciting is that we are excited about it. Even the hottest topic told without passion will put people to sleep. Young people can

somehow sense passion and if our heart for missions is dull this will do nothing but discourage our youth no matter how eloquent a speaker we may be. Take a moment to reflect on the verses we have mentioned in this article. Are we as concerned about missions and reaching the whole world the way the Bible wants us to be? A good place to start is to pray, confess our lack of love and ask the God to fill us with his Spirit for missions. Notice in the following verse that to have the power to witness for Jesus you need the Holy Spirit. *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8.* All throughout the book of Acts we find the disciples never far from prayer. Persist in prayer and you will find the Lord answering your desire in astonishing ways.

As you pray, plan. One good plan is to have what I call a Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, Ends-of-the-Earth Strategy.

Jerusalem is the place you are in. This may be friends or neighbors or the people who share the same interests with you. Teach the youth to be missionaries in their own homes, their own schools and the places they hang out in.

Judea and Samaria are places and people nearby that are different in some ways. This could be in background, economic status, rural versus city setting, or those of a different culture living in your area. The best way to do this in your youth group is to bring them physically to such places to minister even for a short time or for a visit. If there is an option, team-up with those in your area already involved in doing this.

Ends of the earth. The first step in reaching the uttermost regions of the earth is to connect with the overall picture of missions worldwide. Engage your students in what is happening globally; television, the internet and other forms of media have made this easier to do than ever. Become a student of missions: Talk to those in your church or faith group on missions, read up on what has been done for missions. The second step is to respond. How can your youth group best become a part of world-missions? Try out different strategies: this can range from joining in prayer for missionaries, adopting a missionary or nation, or bringing your youth group on missions to a foreign land.

As you engage more and more in the Great Commission I pray with the Apostle Paul--*that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the*

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...of people who can write articles, newsletters, etc. about youth for our blog.

Contact us for more info.



1. Thoughts taken from “*What Man Does in the New Birth*”, a message by John Piper
2. Anecdote from “**The Message of 1 Timothy & Titus (The Bible Speaks Today)**” by John R. W. Stott
3. (at back) Patterned on “How to Develop a World Missions Strategy for your Youth Group” Article by Tammie, Living 33:6:8 blog@living3368.wordpress.com

Reflection and Action Items:

1. Go over the verses found here (Genesis 12:3, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Revelations 5:9). What do these verses show of God's concern for the world?
2. In your regular Bible reading times take note of words like “nations”, “peoples”, “world”, “all families” and “every tribe” that show God's global perspective on the world.
3. What are the causes that you would be willing to die for? How can you make God's cause of discipling the nations for Jesus more important in your life?
4. Think about the story of John Stott found on page 1, are there ways that we might be unintentionally portraying our God as small or insignificant in our youth group? How can we prevent this?
5. What parts of the strategy Jerusalem-Judea-Samaria-Ends of the Earth do you need to communicate more of to your youth group? Do you have a unique strategy for your part in the Great Commission? (We would be glad to hear about it. Keep in mind that we, at GYMN (Global Youth Ministry Network) are actively involved daily in this area of missions, feel free to contact us about how you can connect your youth globally.)