

Practical Insights for the Pacific Region (2013-2017)

My concern for people in the Pacific Islands began during a visit to Vanuatu in 2001. My focus in ministry is on prayer, appropriate evangelism, forming disciples and developing leaders. I served as National Director of YFC Australia from 2009 to 2013 and as Pacific Regional Director for YFCI from 2013 to 2017. This is a summary of insights and recommendations arising from my doctoral project (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2018).

Summary of Outcomes and Insights

This doctoral project concentrated on the Great Commission and the need to multiply new disciples. That focus generated several theological insights that can inform Christian mission. Theories concerning multiplication movements revealed further insights and principles. The use of imagination and “imaginaries” were discussed, particularly in relation to strategic planning and organizational change.

11 clear and practical statements were made about YFC ministry and these can be used to induct people into YFC ministry and also to evaluate the outcomes of their ministry. These statements can be used as a form of plumb line in the design and building of new youth ministries.

4 key practices were recommended for adoption and integration by YFC worldwide. Examples of their implementation in the Pacific islands were briefly discussed. It should be noted that there are many ways to implement the practices and that the examples are not prescriptive, but illustrative. The important common features of these methods were the need to create opportunities to hear from a variety of perspectives; the need to empower and equip every new Christian with the tools to grow in their faith, share the Gospel and disciple others; and the need to trust new Christians with leadership roles in order to create a culture of multiplication ministry.

Key Recommendations

1. These **11 principles** can be presented as statements that should be true for any youth ministry and can be used to measure, assess or shape youth ministries in each Pacific nation:
 - a. We participate in God’s evangelization of the world by passing on the Gospel message so that young people will be saved.
 - b. We adapt our methods in order to safely deliver the Gospel to young people who do not yet have access to God’s life-saving message.
 - c. We serve God in partnership with others and thereby illustrate for outsiders the Gospel message of reconciliation.
 - d. Our ministry is optimized for reproduction and multiplication by applying common principles of multiplication movements.
 - e. We teach new disciples to love God, love others and make disciples.
 - f. Our leaders prayerfully build spiritual capacity and healthy cohesiveness.
 - g. We have local fundraising strategies and are not financially dependent on wealthier countries.
 - h. Our leaders are in the habit of interacting, listening, observing and discerning.
 - i. Our leaders learn and investigate together with the young people and engage them in a process of enquiry and reflection.
 - j. Our leaders activate people’s memories, acknowledge their grief and hopes and remind them of God’s liberating power.
 - k. Our leaders discern and draw attention to emerging patterns of interactions to generate group coherence and thus enable collective progress.
2. These **4 practices**, if embedded in a youth ministry, will call people into God’s mission, enable young people to discover Christ, equip them to follow Jesus and maintain an effective strategic focus based on discernment:
 - a. Teach all new disciples to love God, love others and make disciples.
 - b. Learn and investigate together with young people and engage them in a process of enquiry and reflection.
 - c. Activate people’s memories, acknowledge their grief & hopes, & remind them of God’s liberating power.
 - d. Discern and draw attention to emerging patterns of interactions.

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