

## **Building a youth ministry based on God's passion.**

### **God's Word reveals God's passion!**

God's call and promise to Abram – "...all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you."  
*Genesis 12:3*

God's demonstration of power to Pharaoh – "...I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." *Exodus 9:16*

God uses Israel to reveal himself to the nations – "Observe (the laws) carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this is great nation is a wise and understanding people." *Deuteronomy 4:6*

Much worship in the psalms is concerned with God being glorified throughout the world –  
"Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples" *Psalms 96:3*  
"May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you." *Psalms 67:3*  
"All the nations you have made will come and worship before you O Lord; they will bring glory to your name." *Psalms 86:9*

Solomon's temple dedication prayer – "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name- for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name." *1 Kings 8:41-43*

### God reveals his passion for the nations through the prophets-

"I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations... and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations." *Isaiah 66:19*

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." *Habakkuk 2:14*

"My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty." *Malachi 1:11*

### Jesus further reveals God's intention for this world –

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." *Matthew 24:14*

"...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." *Acts 1:8*

### In the end, God will be glorified by all the nations –

"After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb..."  
*Revelation 7:9*

So, from Genesis to Revelation God seems to be revealing His great passion for His name to be glorified in all the earth. It makes sense, that God's people – those who have caught a glimpse of His glory and are being transformed into His likeness – would share His passion and long to see God's glory acknowledged and enjoyed by people from every nation, tribe and tongue.

For those involved in youth ministry, we have the exciting task of helping young people understand and share God's passion. We can help them discover how they fit into God's great global mission.

So where do we start?

### **What's your youth ministry vision?**

Have you got a BIG vision for your youth ministry? Does your vision reflect God's passion for the nations? Do you think your youth group could impact the world?

Check out chapter 9 of Tim Hawkins book, "Fruit That Will Last". When he first developed a mission statement for his youth ministry, it had only 3 words, "to make disciples". He realised that he only had a local vision.

*"God showed me that I had limited vision. Our mission wasn't 'to make disciples' but 'to make disciples of all nations'... When this first hit me, I said 'Lord, but how?' How could our little youth ministry possibly impact 'all nations'?... But I was convicted by God that he wanted us to think 'worldwide' as we set out on our mission of making disciples. I didn't know 'how' – all I knew was – God **wanted** Crossfire to 'make disciples of all nations'. Can I challenge your youth ministry to have the same worldwide focus?" (p. 93)*

The mission statement he came up with was, "We will impact the world for Christ by empowering students to be passionate disciples of Christ". Interestingly he discovered that when they enlarged their vision to become a worldwide ministry, their local ministry got better.

Is your vision just local? Do your youth have the impression that God's main concern is to save their friends and grow the youth group? Or do they understand that God's concern for the salvation of their friends and loved ones is part of a much bigger picture?

How can youth ministries help teenagers share God's passion for the nations and develop a global awareness that leads them to be active both locally and globally?

Here are some ideas:

### **Fuel your own passion for God's global mission**

No-one can impart a passion for God's mission to someone else if they do not possess it themselves. But if you have that passion within you to see God glorified among the nations, it will naturally be displayed to your youth as you go about your ministry and will influence the way you teach and pray.

The best place to start fuelling that passion is with God's word. Let Him speak to you about his heart and plans for the world. Do your own study on a biblical basis for missions.

Here are some books that may help you in your study:

Let the Nations be Glad – John Piper

*A must-read plea for God-centredness in evangelisation, points to worship as the church's ultimate goal and proper fuel for outreach.*

Gospel and Kingdom – Graeme Goldsworthy

*Provides excellent models for understanding the structure of Scripture and brings into focus the kingdom of God in Jesus' ministry.*

According to Plan - Graeme Goldsworthy

*Shows how the Bible fits together as the unfolding story of God's plan of salvation.*

The Message of Mission (Bible Speaks Today Themes) - Howard Peskett & Vinoth Ramachandra

*Explores in depth the cases of sending and being sent by God in the Scriptures and our privilege and responsibility to testify to the call of Jesus Christ.*

Here's some more info on the web you may find helpful:

[www.cms.org.au](http://www.cms.org.au)

Info on missionaries, prayer updates, how to support missionaries, how to become a missionary, latest CMS news and events. Click on 'Resources' to find some youth friendly information on different countries, some ideas for church services and other stuff.

[www.desiringgod.org/library/topics/missions/missions\\_index.html](http://www.desiringgod.org/library/topics/missions/missions_index.html)

Lots of excellent articles on missions by John Piper.

## **Teaching youth about Mission**

✿ Teach mission from the Bible. Help your youth to see that God's salvation plan (from Genesis to Revelation) is for the whole world (not just for our friends). God wants to involve us in his work to draw all nations to himself – this is a great privilege. Challenge your youth to respond to God's call to spread the gospel all over the world. The Great Commission in Matthew 28 is probably the most common text used to teach about mission, but many Christians have heard it so often that it loses its impact. Get people to have a look at passages like Genesis 12:1-7, Deuteronomy 4:5-8, 1 Kings 8:41-43, Psalm 67, Psalm 96, Isaiah 2:1-5, Matthew 24:14, Luke 4:14-30, Luke 24:44-49, Acts 1:1-9, Romans 15:14-22, 1 Peter 2:9-12, Revelation 7:9-10.

✿ Take a look at some of these Bible study resources on the internet:

[www.cms.org.au/resources/bible-studies](http://www.cms.org.au/resources/bible-studies)

Take a look at the CMS Bible studies, "God's Mission and Ours" – these might give you some ideas, but you would need to adapt them for youth.

[www.thetravelingteam.org](http://www.thetravelingteam.org)

Look under 'Resources' for lots of helpful stuff including Bible studies giving a biblical overview of mission ('Implementing missions/Bible studies') and heaps of articles. Contains missionary biographies as well as quotes, book suggestions and testimonies.

[www.mission1.org](http://www.mission1.org)

Click on 'Free Resources' for some Bible studies. You'll have to register with your email address and a password. There are two Bible study series giving a good overview of God's passion for his glory and for the world – they are called 'Tell of His Glory Among the Nations' and 'The Story of His Glory'. You would probably need to adapt them for youth but they are a very helpful starting off point.

✿ Use games and fun activities to help your youth understand mission and global issues.

Wycliffe UK ideas bank : [www.wycliffe.org.uk/resources/ideabank.html](http://www.wycliffe.org.uk/resources/ideabank.html)

A collection of tried and tested simulation games, stories, discussion materials and more, ready to help you present the challenge of mission to youth. Particularly focussed on Bible translation.

World Vision Resource Centre : [www.worldvision.com.au/resources](http://www.worldvision.com.au/resources)

Great resources to encourage awareness of poverty, debt, environment and other issues. Includes posters, games and profiles of developing countries.

Tear Fund Educational Resources : [www.tear.org.au/resources](http://www.tear.org.au/resources)

Start by looking at 'Simulation Games', 'Resources for youth groups' and 'Incite' which is a magazine for youth leaders with lots of activity ideas.

No Bible Sunday : [www.nobiblesunday.org](http://www.nobiblesunday.org)

Heaps of activities to help your youth value their Bible by drawing their attention to the needs of many Christians around the world who have to do without God's word.

- ✿ Email your youth links to websites that will inform and inspire them about the world in which they live and the work God's doing in different places. Here are some suggestions:

Miniature Earth : [www.miniature-earth.com](http://www.miniature-earth.com)

Has a flash miniature documentary showing the way the world is divided up in terms of people and resources.

We Were Humans : [www.luccaco.com/wewerehumans](http://www.luccaco.com/wewerehumans)

Flash miniature documentary comparing the money spent on war to what could be spent fighting poverty.

Taking it Global : [www.takingitglobal.org](http://www.takingitglobal.org)

Plenty of info on global issues as well as forums for young people to discuss issues and express themselves creatively. Good place for youth to interact with teenagers from all over the world.

Underground : [www.underground.org.au](http://www.underground.org.au)

The youth division of Open Doors. Will help teenagers learn about Christian persecution and find ways to do something to help.

## **Prayer**

Help your youth group pray for missionaries and global issues regularly. Prayer is not just some token thing we can get teenagers to do to be part of mission – it is foundational to the ministry of CMS. Remind your youth of how important it is to pray. Our prayers have a huge impact! Also teach them that the thing we pray for are an indication of what is important to us. It is right to bring our own needs before God, but He also longs that we might share His passion for the nations and participate in His mission through prayer for the world. Here are some different ideas to help youth engage in prayer:

- ✿ Keep your group up to date with your link missionary's ministry and pray for them regularly. You can
  - Read the CMS Prayer Diary and the monthly prayer points in 'Mission Matters' to help you know what the group can pray for.
  - Encourage your youth group to 'Pray around the World' (CMS resource combining games, activities and prayer points for different missionaries across the globe. Although written for children, would suit young teens).
  - Look through 'Beyond', the CMS youth magazine which comes out 3 times a year. Contains prayer points scattered throughout.
  - See our website [www.cms.org.au](http://www.cms.org.au) – click on 'Pray' for up to date prayer points and missionary news.
- ✿ Get on the CMS email prayer update and email some of the prayer points to your youth

- ✿ Throw a dart at a world map and pray for the country it hits. Use “Operation World” for country info & prayer points. You could put a pin in all the places you pray for – over time you will see all the impact you are having all over the world.
- ✿ Do a quick multiple choice quiz on a country or missionary and then pray for them using the info they learned.
- ✿ If the group is not ready for out-loud prayer, get your youth to write down thoughtful and specific prayers for a missionary. Everyone can read out their prayer. Why not send your prayers to the missionary for their encouragement.
- ✿ Have a bowl of M&M’s – everyone picks one M&M without looking.
 

RED = Australia	BROWN = Asia
BLUE = Europe	ORANGE = South America
YELLOW = Africa	GREEN = North America

Group up according to colour and pray for that continent and some of the missionaries there. You could write out the prayers and stick them to the world map on the spot that was prayed for.

- ✿ Pray Bible prayers eg Psalm 67, Matt 9:37-38, Eph 6:18-20, Col 4:2-4
- ✿ Keep a group prayer journal. Buy an A4 exercise book and draw up the pages into 2 columns, one column to write down the prayer and the other to record how the prayer is answered. Each time the group meets, record the prayer requests of each person (encourage them to pray for other people, world events, missionaries as well as themselves) then pass the book round the circle and have each person pray one or two points out loud.
- ✿ For a more confident and motivated group – ask one youth to come up with some prayer points during the week for a particular missionary or country (give them the info they need – or CMS web address). They should come up with enough prayer points so there is one for each person (for a large group, split into 6 groups so there only needs to be 6 prayer points).
- ✿ Draw 3 columns on a board or large sheet of paper, one column for ‘The World’, one for ‘Australia’ and one for ‘Us’. Put prayer points in each column. Or draw a target with 3 circles and label each circle with the same categories.
- ✿ Photocopy/enlarge on an A3 sheet a photo of a missionary family with lots of blank space beside or around the edges to write in prayer points. Get the group to read the latest letters/info and write down on the sheet things to pray for. Pray as a group.
- ✿ Give the group a copy of the day’s newspaper and ask them to find things to pray for. Or cut out articles from the previous week’s papers (enough for one per person) and have them skim over their article and pray about what they read. Include articles about both local and global news and issues.
- ✿ When a missionary is on home assignment, invite them to come and talk about their ministry and their prayer needs. Ask them how prayer makes a difference in the work they do. Have the group pray for them while they are there.
- ✿ Draw a large map of the world (doesn’t need to be exact, just recognisable) on the floor (use chalk). Provide prayer points for each continent. Split into 6 groups and rotate

around the continents, praying for 5 minutes for each. Groups can sit in the outline of the continent.

- ✳ Get a copy of the book 'Jesus Freaks' by DC Talk which contains stories of persecuted Christians from different parts of the world and different centuries. Read one of the more recent stories and pray for the Christians and the country in the story. There is info in the back of the book about lots of different countries. You could make this a regular part of your prayer time by lending the book to a different teenager each week and have them read the story and lead the prayer time.

### **Care for your link missionary**

- ✳ Have your youth group write letters or emails to your link missionaries and send birthday cards and parcels.
- ✳ A great idea is to get your youth to donate a couple of dollars each and send them off to the shops in groups to buy items to put in a parcel for a missionary. This activity helps youth to think about the sorts of things that missionaries might be missing while they are overseas and gives them the opportunity to be a blessing to someone else. Check with CMS for guidelines if you want to send a parcel.
- ✳ When your link missionary is on home assignment, try to arrange for them to speak at a youth event. Encourage your youth to ask questions and to also pray for the missionary while they are there.
- ✳ If your link missionaries have children, talk with your youth about ways you can especially care for them when they are on location and back in Australia. Work to establish friendships between your youth and missionary kids through letters and emails and by inviting them to youth group when they are home.

### **Help your youth engage in other cultures**

- ✳ Challenge each person to talk to a person from another country they don't know very well and find out about their culture, language, religion etc. Ask them to share what they learned with the group
- ✳ Take your youth group to visit an ethnic church (it would be great if the service was in a different language) to see how Christians from other countries might worship God in a different way. You could try to arrange in advance to share a meal after the service with some of the congregation to find out a bit about their background.
- ✳ Encourage your youth to take up a student exchange opportunity if their school offers it. Get the youth group to raise money to help them go.
- ✳ If you are really in for a challenge, arrange a trip for your youth group to visit your link missionary on the field. This may take a lot of fundraising, but anything is possible – think BIG. This sort of trip will be life-changing. Talk to CMS about how this might work.

### **Encourage your youth to give to mission**

- ✳ Provide regular opportunities for youth to give out of their pocket money or wages to missions and global causes. You could take up special offerings regularly or keep a missions money box and keep a running total of how much is raised.
- ✳ Try some fundraising. You could come up with some more creative ideas for fundraising such as this one – each person starts off with a couple of dollars and has a couple of months to increase it by 'investing' it. For example they might buy ingredients for a cake

and sell slices at church for \$1 each. They now have \$12 which they can keep 'investing'. (Sounds like the Parable of the Talents – Matt 25:14-30).

- ✳ Teach youth biblical principles about money and warn them of the dangers of materialism which is rife in our society. Help them to realise how rich we really are in Australia. God has blessed us with great abundance which gives us amazing opportunities to bless others and use our resources to help extend God's kingdom. Some great Bible texts to look at with your youth: Luke 16:19-31; Philippians 4:10-20; 1 Timothy 6:3-19; James 5:1-6

### **Help your youth get active in their local community**

Have your youth group do acts of service in your local community – it could be mowing lawns, washing cars, painting fences, picking up rubbish, planting trees, helping at a nursing home – anything. Find out from your local council if there are any projects they want people to help with. This sort of service is great for building teamwork in your group and also helps them understand humility. If appropriate it would be fantastic to combine the acts of service with some form of gospel proclamation (word and deed together – very powerful).

### **Make use of CMS events and resources**

- ✳ Camps – Summer Under the Sun runs every January. The next one is January 16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> 2009. In May, we also run a camp especially for the Bendigo region but youth from anywhere are welcome. At CMS camps, youth will have a fantastic time meeting other Christians their age, receive quality Bible teaching, have a chance to engage with some CMS missionaries and hear some amazing stories of the work God is doing all over the world. We also have a youth traineeship designed to help youth be equipped for leadership.
- ✳ Have a CMS speaker come to a youth service or other event. Talk to Anna Hore-Lacy – 9894 4722 or [ahore-lacy@cms.org.au](mailto:ahore-lacy@cms.org.au)
- ✳ Beyond – a CMS publication for youth which comes out three times a year. Distribute it to your youth and encourage them to read it. Use it to start off discussions and make use of the prayer points throughout.
- ✳ Audio/Visual resources –there are loads of videos on different topics you can order or borrow. Have a look on [www.cms.org.au/resources/recordings/](http://www.cms.org.au/resources/recordings/)

### **Tell us your feedback**

CMS would love to hear from you about the ways you are helping youth engage in God's global mission, so we can encourage you and share your ideas with other youth leaders. Also let us know how you would like us to help you in your ministry, if we can help you find particular information or teaching tools or if you have ideas for events you would like us to run. We are always looking for new, relevant ways we can serve the variety of youth ministries in Victoria. So don't hesitate to give us a call or email and talk to us about how we can work together to see God glorified in the lives of young people.

Call CMS on 9894 4722 or email Anna Hore-Lacy – [ahore-lacy@cms.org.au](mailto:ahore-lacy@cms.org.au)

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