

Evangelical Alliance Council, September 16th 2009
Responses from the World Café Discussions

What should youth agencies be considering as they prepare young people for adulthood?

- When does youth work begin/end? 9-29? Need to have this discussion. Might be better to talk about a maturity spectrum.
- Some young people have to 'bring up' their own siblings and parents. Need to support parents and fill in the gaps where there are no parents.
- More resources for people coming out of university (or for those not going to university)
- Agencies need to be 'adult' themselves in order to provide support for young people
- Have a vision for seeing young people influencing different spheres in society – holistic mission – in the workplace, arts, media etc.
- Have substance – be focused on building character, not entertaining young people
- Focus on preparing young people to take responsibility and be independent
- Lifelong discipleship
- Raising leaders
- Para-church needs to resource not replace the church
- Asking young people how God fits into their lives - ensure we are coming at it from their perspective, not what we assume.
- Identifying cultural norms and speaking counter-culturally into them (see Mike P's comments on the 3 things driving culture for them today).
- Remember they live in a more pessimistic world e.g. finance, realities of the job market, the harshness and mundane-ness of life etc.
- Training in apologetics
- Asking questions about identity and vocation and intentionally engaging with those questions at every stage e.g. 'what is the legacy of my life?'
- Mentoring graduates into the job market e.g. CARE Internship.
- Focus on preparing young people to take responsibility and be independent
- Youth agencies must understand what Christian maturity is
- A holistic preparing for life – making sure we ask what life today is for young people; and how does God fit into that life? Identify cultural norms and speak counter-culturally into them – see Mike P's comments on the 3 things driving culture for them today.

Can churches and the agencies that focus on the 18-30s age group better collaborate to rise to the challenge?

- Start by acknowledging this is an issue
- Improving communication between the agencies – building a desire for genuine relationship without an agenda

- Churches need to listen to what the agencies have to offer – break with traditional ties and be open to the new
- Para-church agencies need to recognise that there is more power and sway in them approaching churches when they are working in coalition than alone
- Agencies should listen to what really works in churches – a two-way relationship
- Humility in the agencies – learning from those with more experience
- Recognise that there is no definitive model
- Partnering to plant new churches – eg. Soul Survivor and YWAM plant
- Offering to broker plants for churches working together – hosting/fostering/facilitating plants
- Find churches doing it well and let them become a learning centre for agency staff who can then use the experience to produce resources
- Collaborate on significant research
- Develop leadership opportunities for those in their 20s – both as staff and in church roles
- Churches to appoint specialist 20s workers / life stage groups.
- Churches need to listen to what the agencies have to offer – break with traditional ties and be open to the new
- Agencies and churches need to work more closely with universities
- Agencies as a catalyst to help people be better parents and help parents mentor their kids into their 20s
- Training preachers to apply Scripture to 20 somethings
- Facilitate singles ministries
- There's a problem at the moment of competitive spirit versus Kingdom focus
- Theological divisions amongst student agencies may be causing problems.
- When people relocate in this age group, churches and youth agencies could collaborate to help them find new churches.
- Find churches doing it well and let them become a learning centre for agency staff who can then use the experience to produce resources
- Being aware and using one another's resources based on trust- networking the various stories - being a catalyst to join various new conversations up

Has the Evangelical Alliance got a contribution to make in supporting the Church in responding to the 18-30s challenge?

- Any table-top conversation has to involve the 20s and the risky thinkers outside the Alliance
- Have more Council and Board members in their 20s
- Signpost to organisations or resources – see whether additional resources are required
- Helping to reflect and understand the issues
- Facilitate communication between various parties

- Do a road trip, bringing churches together in different areas to talk through these issues - encourage this conversation in a wider context - regional/local symposium
- There are few agencies working specifically with this group. Do we need to encourage current youth agencies to expand their remit to encompass people in their 20s?
- National initiative around the 'big conversation' - resources that teach churches how to listen to 20/30's
- Share good principles and best practice
- Share stories to inspire - ideas rather than solutions - on the website and in idea magazine
- Explain the challenge to church leaders - educate them in their response
- Share the stats and projected trends with the churches to help them plan
- Provide more information in the online church search, so people can identify churches with a 20s programme
- More research into the key moments when people opt out of church
- Encourage church leaders to keep track of church members as they move to different areas, to link people up with new churches
- Bring a sharper focus on prayer for this issue to prayer networks.
- Do current youth agencies need to expand their remit to encompass people in their 20s?
- EA could talk to other traditions and learn from them.
- Encourage this conversation in a wider context - regional/local symposium
- Prayer initiative - bring a sharper focus on prayer for this issue to prayer networks
- Tell good news stories in Idea/online
- Creating space for conversations like today and helping to reflect and understand the issues and facilitate communication between various parties