

# SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF MELANESIAN YOUTH: A CASE STUDY

**Emmanuel Kauna**

*Emmanuel Kauna is Dean of the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program at the Christian Leaders' Training College (CLTC) in Papua New Guinea. He holds a Bachelor of Theology degree from CLTC, and has a heart for the spiritual growth of Melanesian youth.*

## INTRODUCTION

Waigani Youth Fellowship has come a long way since its inception in the 1970s. It has produced some quality men and women, who have not only served Waigani United church congregation<sup>1</sup> with distinction, in leadership and ministerial positions, but have also gone on to serve the Lord in full-time ministry. Besides those who have gone into full-time service for the Lord, there are others, who are in theological training, and are anticipating to, one day, go into the service of God.

Over the years, there seems to have been a steady decline in the membership of the youth. The decline was not only in numerical strength, but also in its quality. The reasons for these are not clearly understood, and no one has explored why this is happening to Waigani Youth Fellowship. Lately, many young people have been moving from church to church, especially to where there is liveliness in worship and preaching. Why are the young people of Waigani Youth moving to these fellowship groups, when they already belong to a church? Is it because they are unable to find that form of worship at Waigani? Is it that, while the youth want to have freedom of worship, they find that they are being suppressed? Or is it because they, themselves, are not committed to bringing about changes in the church?

In this article we will address some of these areas, especially “leadership within the youth”, “programs that are run”, and, lastly, a look at the

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<sup>1</sup> Waigani United church is located in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

“Waigani United church congregation and its support” to the youth fellowship, and provide some solutions.

## YOUTH IN PERSPECTIVE

### WHO ARE THE YOUTH?

Youth are a special group of people, between the ages of 12-25 years, and are different from either children or adults; a group left “in between”, who have special needs. Technically, this period is called “adolescence”. Adolescence is described as a period of transition, which extends from age 12 to 25 years. It is a period that stretches from the beginning of puberty, through a long process of education, until a person is able to take his place as a responsible individual in an adult world (Richards, 1964, p. 17). It is estimated that 42 percent of the four million population of Papua New Guinea is made up of young people, under the age of 15 years.<sup>2</sup> In this section, we will look at youth, from the traditional and biblical perspectives, using Waigani United church youth as a case study.

### TRADITIONAL MOTUAN YOUTH

Distinctive names were given to Motuan young people, as an identity in the community. Prior to their initiation,<sup>3</sup> boys were known as *mero*, and girls as *kekeni*,<sup>4</sup> and, after fulfilling their initiation, they were then called *tau-ahu* and *hane’ulato*.<sup>5</sup>

### *Girl to Young Lady*

For the young girl to be recognised as a young lady, she had to undergo certain rituals, prior to the actual initiation. During the initiation, there were traditional norms she had to follow:

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<sup>2</sup> “United Nations Population Fund World Population Day”, in *National*, Friday, July 11, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Ceremonies or ordeals, in which a youth is formally invested with adult status. *Webster’s 3rd New International Dictionary*, Springfield MA: G. & G. Merriam 1964, p. 1164.

<sup>4</sup> *mero* and *kekeni* are Motuan for a young boy and girl, between the ages of one to 10 or 12 years.

<sup>5</sup> *tau-ahu* and *hane-ulato* are Motuan for mature male and female young people, after successfully completing initiation.

- (a) She would wear specially-decorated grass skirts, made specifically for cultural practices, and ritual celebrations.
- (b) She was not to plait her hair<sup>6</sup> and undergo tattooing of certain parts of her body. Other parts of her body would be reserved until she completed other tasks.
- (c) She had to learn clay-pot making,<sup>7</sup> a prerequisite for marriage, gardening, and housekeeping.
- (d) Learning and memorisation of cultural and religious beliefs/norms, as well as showing of obedience and respect to the elders.

### ***Boy to Young Man***

Initiation, for the male, was more vigorous, and would take up to three months. Often, this would be in isolation, but under the direct supervision of his uncle. The initiation ceremony included:

- (a) Fasting, praying to the dead ancestors, reciting and memorisation of sacred words/songs.
- (b) Learning the art of gardening, fishing, hunting, house-making, traditional dancing, and training to become a warrior.
- (c) After the initiation, the young man assumed a new lifestyle, and was governed by religious norms. He must be tough, brave, and be of integrity. “He now has the right to be seen and heard, and to sit among the elders of the clan and society (Toua, 1996, chapter 1). The pinnacle of a young man’s

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<sup>6</sup> Traditionally, plaiting of hair distinguished the lady who was married. The single girls had to let their hair down, to indicate they were single, and available for marriage. However, it also showed their beauty, too.

<sup>7</sup> There were four different types of clay pots, and each had specific purposes of use, from its different sizes and shapes.

dreams is to go on a Hiri voyage,<sup>8</sup> which brings pride, honour, and recognition in the community.

Culturally, youth have a special place in society. The Bible also gives special mention to the role of youth.

## **BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE**

### ***Psalm 127:3-4***

“Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior, are sons born in one’s youth.” This Psalm speaks of the potential blessings to the womb, when we obediently surrender our lives totally to God. “Children are like arrows that, when shot forth, will bring into our lives joy, contentment, comfort, and security, when we take care from the very beginning” (Spurgeon, 1993, p. 274). Consequently, children, like arrows, require much preparation in their early childhood.

### ***Psalm 128:3***

“Your children will be like young olive trees around your table.” “Olive shoots are symbols of God’s unhindered blessings, as well as vitality and continuance (Ps 52:8)” (Guthrie and Motyer, 1986, p. 532). This Psalm speaks of those things that will bring joy, contentment, and prosperity to a family/community. Olive shoots are new shoots, which grow out of an old plant. They speak of tenderness, because they can be easily bent or broken off, but they also promise to be of use, and to bear fruit in the future.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Jesus’ Ministry***

The scriptures are silent on the youthful life of Christ, but break the silence only in Luke 2:42-52. Luke’s account is significant. “It is the inner works of His mind as He reaches adolescence” (Sanders, 1952, p. 34). Luke 2:52 reads, “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in

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<sup>8</sup> An economic sea expedition, taken between the months of August and September, to the Gulf Province, for trading and bartering.

<sup>9</sup> Bob Fergie, “Youth Work in the Local Church” [Course Notes], Port Moresby PNG: CLTC POM, unpublished, p. 15.

favour with God and men.” Throughout Jesus’ ministry, He had great interest in children, and had a gentle way of understanding them. He used them as lessons, to proclaim the message of the Kingdom.<sup>10</sup> He rebuked His disciples, when they stopped the children coming to Him.<sup>11</sup>

From a traditional and biblical perspective, we can see that youth have a special place, not only in the society, but, also, in the church, as demonstrated from the life and ministry of Jesus. In this next section, we will look at Waigani Youth, as a case study in relation to youth ministry.

### **CASE STUDY: WAIGANI UNITED CHURCH YOUTH FELLOWSHIP**

Waigani Youth is a ministry for young people within Waigani United church, and has membership, ranging from the ages of 12-25 years, for both singles and married. It is also ideally located adjacent to LifeLine Centre, UPNG, and PNGIPA.<sup>12</sup> Waigani United church serves the suburbs of Waigani, Morata, and Ensisi Valley, but has members from other parts of the city of Port Moresby, making it a multicultural congregation.

#### ***Brief History***

Waigani Youth was established in 1976, under the leadership of Isaac Soka, with guidance from Revd Wasum Koka. The Youth were divided into four groups, under the Four Square program. According to my informant (Pala, 2000), between 1977-1984, the program became more need-centred to meet both spiritual and social needs, *but livelihood needs were overlooked*. Due to a succession of leadership, there was inconsistency, in relation to spiritual growth and development. Growth is measured, both from membership, and the quality of leaders, the youth had produced over the years. Some of these leaders have served the church in various leadership capacities (ministry/administration), as volunteers with mission organisations, others have gone into theological training, and some are now serving in the Lord’s service. To name a few:

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<sup>10</sup> Mark 9:13-16; 10:13-17.

<sup>11</sup> Matt 19:13-15.

<sup>12</sup> University of PNG (UPNG), and PNG Institute of Public Administration (PNGIPA).

Revd Jyno Pala: EPMR Secretary and Regional Youth Coordinator  
Emmanuel Kauna: CLTC  
Kila Kauna (nee Pala): CLTC  
Iru Longgar (nee Numa): Melanesian Institute  
Kepo Kure: Missionary to India/OMPNG  
Philip Jeremiah: Acting Pastor, Six-Mile Settlement church  
Timothy and Elizabeth Kwara: CLTC

Besides providing leadership at the congregational level, Waigani Youth has also been at the forefront of leadership at the Circuit Youth level, especially when Waigani United church was under West Circuit, and then as North Circuit.<sup>13</sup>

### ***General Overview***

Moving into the 21st century, a couple of areas need attention. Firstly, the youth need to strengthen their commitment to the church. It seems members have been peripatetic, not giving their best support to the church. Secondly, it needs to reevaluate past and present programs. Data collected about the general spiritual growth showed how past programs have been beneficial in these areas:

- |     |                                 |                          |
|-----|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) | Growth in personal spirituality | 35 percent <sup>14</sup> |
| (b) | Insight into God's Word         | 30 percent               |
| (c) | Openness/confidence             | 20 percent               |
| (d) | Changed perspective of life     | 15 percent               |

Furthermore, the youth and church leadership needs to seriously address young people's needs and problems. It seems the youth/church need to

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<sup>13</sup> The United church congregations, within the city of Port Moresby, are divided into zones, called circuits. Waigani United church was in the West Circuit, but, later, it was moved under the newly-created North Circuit, which was necessitated by the growth of the number of United churches in Port Moresby.

<sup>14</sup> Fifty questionnaires were sent out, and 28 were completed and returned. The percentage listed is the percentage of respondents who marked this area on the questionnaire. For example, 35 percent means 10 of the 28 respondents marked that the youth program caused them to grow spiritually.

communicate the full gospel to the young people, especially to help them not only understand what the Bible says, but how they can apply it to their lives. Response (d) (15 percent), above, indicates that there is great need to let the Word of God transform our lives. Ashton and Moon said that it is one thing to hear the gospel, yet “it is all the more important to apply God’s revelation from the Bible seriously into our lives” (1986, p. 15).

The survey revealed that some causes of decline in spiritual growth are:

- (a) Western culture and influences 30 percent  
(unemployment, attitude problems, sex, drugs, etc.)
- (b) Other denominations 47 percent  
(doctrinal issues, lack of commitment, misunderstandings, pride, and divisions)
- (c) Others 23 percent  
(lack of personal and corporate prayer, nepotism/regionalism, lack of respect for elders/one another, lack of accountability)

## **SUMMARY**

There is a great, untapped resource among the young people. Former Police Commissioner Peter Aigilio sees them as valuable resources that need to be trained in the areas of physical, spiritual, and intellectual growth, and to avoid a handout mentality, so that they are equipped to do something valuable for themselves, and the community.<sup>15</sup> Others have gone to permanent employment, and family life, after undergoing spiritual rehabilitation, literacy classes, farming, vocational training, etc. “Over 150 young people, who went through City Mission,<sup>16</sup> have become good members of society.”<sup>17</sup> Waigani Youth needs to open its eyes to see their great potential, and move forward, with vision, to build up spiritual maturity and development in all aspects of human life. The church needs

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<sup>15</sup> “Police embark to change images of youths”, in *Post-Courier*, February 26, 1999.

<sup>16</sup> City Mission is a Christian organisation, which, not only houses street kids, drug addicts, and rascals, but also provides rehabilitation and training, education, and employment.

<sup>17</sup> “City Mission – On the other side of a dark tunnel”, in *Post-Courier*, September 29, 1998.

to rise and meet the needs of their young people. God has given the church the mandate<sup>18</sup> to reach out, and meet their felt needs, just as Jesus did.<sup>19</sup>

## **ANALYSIS OF WAIGANI YOUTH FELLOWSHIP**

This section will deal with analysing three specific areas within Waigani Youth Fellowship – analysing data collected on youth leadership and programs, and church support towards the spiritual growth and development of Waigani Youth Fellowship.

### **LEADERSHIP**

The greatest need, in leadership today, is integrity and vision. While a leader must have followers, “he will fail, if his followers find that he lacks forthright integrity” (Cory 1985, p. 211).

#### ***General Overview***

Leadership<sup>20</sup> in Waigani Youth Fellowship is an area that needs to be improved. Over the years, there have been frequent changes to leadership, and this brought about lots of changes, due to different styles, employed by different leaders. Analysis will be made from the general survey collected.<sup>21</sup> It includes the roles leaders played within the youth, the types of training received, or skills developed, to perform leadership responsibilities, the quality of leaders within the youth, the selection criteria, used to appoint leaders, and the strengths and weaknesses identified in the leadership.

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<sup>18</sup> Matt 28:18-20; 22:37-39.

<sup>19</sup> Is 61:1-3; Luke 4:18-19.

<sup>20</sup> Most of the leaders are elected annually by the youth. The elections are done through the voting system. Leaders are not paid. The leadership consists of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. Males or females can fill the positions. They serve for one year, and can be nominated again, for another year.

<sup>21</sup> Questionnaires are in the author’s possession, relating to Waigani Youth Fellowship.



Table 1 – Quality of young people in leadership:

(a) Good	78 percent
(b) Bad	9 percent
(c) Very poor	9 percent
(d) Poor	4 percent

Table 2 – Role in leadership, in regard to their responsibilities:

(a) Average	54 percent
(b) Effective	29 percent
(c) Poor	9 percent
(d) Very poor	4 percent
(e) Very effective	4 percent

The survey revealed that, while good leaders were elected, the way they implemented their expected roles was regarded as average. They only performed what their respective roles required of them. They were lacking in the areas of mentoring, discipling, training, and demonstration of management skills. There seemed to be a sharp contrast between the quality of leadership, and the roles they played. Other factors, contributing to these responses, were lack of support (47 percent), loss of respect (26 percent), lack of openness (16 percent), and lack of delegation (11 percent). While potential leaders are elected, they lack support, yet are expected to perform, because of their appointment.

*Problems Identified and Stated.* This section deals with looking at problems and strengths within the Waigani Youth Fellowship leadership.

Table 3 – Views on how leadership is selected:

(a) Fair	50 percent
(b) Average	20 percent
(c) Very fair	17 percent
(d) Very unfair	13 percent

Fifty percent responded that selection of leadership was on fair grounds, while 13 percent said it was very unfair. Selection on fair grounds refers to leaders, appointed through a ballot system of elections. However, some felt it was unfair, because election of leadership was not based on spiritual gifting/leadership abilities, but on verbal gifts,<sup>22</sup> and based on whom you know.

Table 4 – Training for leadership:

(a) Average	57 percent
(b) Very poorly trained	13 percent
(c) Poor	13 percent
(d) Effectively trained	13 percent
(e) Very effectively trained	4 percent

There is a complete lack of training for leaders, even potential leaders. The youth leaders depend on the church to subsidise training, to equip its leaders. They do not take the initiative to train their own leaders, nor for spiritual enrichment. The “average” comment (57 percent) meant, for those leaders, that most of them had never had any formal theological training, or leadership training, prior to their appointment as leaders. Recommended training suggested was leadership and management (45 percent), discipleship (20 percent), biblical studies (19 percent), need-centred (10 percent), and communication skills (6 percent).

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<sup>22</sup> Verbal gifts refer to the ability to speak boldly, be a good song leader, or a good communicator.

Table 5 – Problem areas in leadership:

(a)	Communication/consultation	26 percent
(b)	Attitude	20 percent
(c)	Lack of commitment	18 percent
(d)	No vision/goal	12 percent
(e)	Inconsistent	8 percent
(f)	Authoritative	8 percent
(g)	Lack of integrity/humility	8 percent

Other problem areas were: lack of corporate prayer (could also be a reflection of personal prayer life), mismanagement, lack of discipline, lack of leaders meeting for planning, evaluation, and direction, which all scored between 2-5 percent. The problems, stated above, are also relevant to Table 2, regarding roles of leaders. It would seem that leaders are working in isolation, lacking administration skills, lacking in consultation, at all levels, regarding youth affairs, and lacking vision. While the leaders have the prerogative to run the affairs of the youth, they are accountable to the youth, the pastor, and to the church leadership, and this is reflected in response (a), above, with 26 percent.

*Other Problems and Solutions.* Other problems and solutions, stated from general interviews,<sup>23</sup> were:

Other problems:

- (a) Young married couples dominate leadership, yet are over-committed, with too many responsibilities with family, and other ministry.
- (b) Leaders are not equipped with adequate finances to run programs.

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<sup>23</sup> Interview conducted with M. Yanga, P. and T. Leva, K. Leva, K. and L. Alu, V. Ravu, I. and G. Vala, L. and A. Garo, and I. Walo. What has been recorded are consensus remarks on the youth, in relation to leadership (July, 2000).

- (c) Leaders do not actively participate in church activities,<sup>24</sup> and also lack commitment (or take a back seat), when their leadership tenure is over.
- (d) The position of the Christian-education worker, though it is good, it is burdensome, because there is no duty statement, and so his responsibility overlaps with the Youth, Sunday School, and Religious Instruction ministries.
- (e) With the segregation between the singles and marrieds, some difficulties could arise, such as counselling situations between a single boy and girl. A married couple has an advantage in counselling, as it will safeguard against wrong motives and desires.
- (f) Young people, within the regional groups,<sup>25</sup> are more active, yet are not willing to be part of the church youth.

Other solutions:

- (a) Youth leadership must be integrated into church programs. It was felt that the church was not fully utilising the youth leaders.<sup>26</sup>
- (b) Additional training is needed in areas of leadership and management
- (c) While it is a joy to see young married young couples playing an active part in the youth, it was suggested that leadership should now be directed to the single adults, to show their

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<sup>24</sup> Some of these leaders attend other denominations (Pentecostal groups) on Sundays, and are present in the church only on youth nights.

<sup>25</sup> Regional groups in Waigani United church are: Hula, Motu Delana, Saroa Gabagaba, Gulf, Milne Bay, Mashall Lagoon, and Keapara Oleana.

<sup>26</sup> Some youth leaders are involved with ministry teams, however, we need to see them playing a more-active role. It must be on the grounds of spiritual gifting, or their abilities, not just for the sake of making up the team. But, it is all the more important that the pastor/church leadership be able to screen these leaders, so that we are not only utilising our resources, but are also building them up for future responsibilities.

worth in God's service.<sup>27</sup> The single leaders are free, and will be better able to concentrate on their responsibilities.

- (d) Potential members for leadership should be sponsored for training. One informant said he took his own initiative to do biblical studies for his own spiritual enrichment, but sees that the youth benefit, because he imparts what he learns back into the youth.
- (e) A Christian education worker should be maintained. The position must have a duty statement, and must be a trained worker, who is able to train others (2 Tim 2:2).
- (f) Encourage and invite young people from the regional groups to be part of the church youth ministry.

Table 6 – Strengths of youth leadership:

(a) Openness/onesty	26 percent
(b) Commitment	21 percent
(c) Delegation of responsibility	21 percent
(d) Encouragement received	16 percent
(e) Visionary leadership	16 percent

Do strengths exist in the youth that are the direct result of positive roles that leaders play? Less than 10 percent suggested that the strengths of the leaders were seen from the organisations of inter-youth meetings and sports. The two positive attitudes of the leaders would be a contributing factor in: (1) relationship and team building within the youth; and (2) blending together their different gifts, and strengths, to strengthen the youth.

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<sup>27</sup> At the time of writing this article, the pastor, Revd William Numa, has changed the structure of the youth. The youth are now made up of single adults, while the young married couples are to have a separate fellowship. In most cases, the older married couples took on most of the responsibility of leading the youth. The switch to having only singles in the youth, gives singles the opportunity to participate, more meaningfully, by taking on responsibility.

In looking at the above issues, we have missed the Melanesian leadership model, especially the hereditary system, whereby leadership is not only passed on, but adequate training and grooming is a prerequisite, to build up the potential leader. As a leader, he/she has the respect of their community, and they never work in isolation, but with their people, for their welfare. It seems this Melanesian quality has been lacking in our leadership. We need to hold onto it, because it is of value, especially, as leaders, our task is to prayerfully groom potential future leaders.

### ***Characteristics of Leadership***

This section looks at different characteristics of leadership, mostly trying to address the issues stated under the general overview, and problems identified and stated. As Christian leaders, we need to develop the following elements of Christ-like characteristics, in order to lead.

*A Passion for Christ Jesus.* As spiritual leaders, our deepest commitment, “our unswerving devotion, our supreme love, our life-absorbing passion, must be for Christ” (Dewel, 1989, p. 100). Paul exultantly proclaimed, “to me to live is Christ”, and “I no longer live, but Christ who lives in me”.<sup>28</sup> A youth leader’s passion for Christ must begin with a passion of love for Him, “A. W. Tozer once said, ‘The great of the kingdom have been those who loved God more than others did’ ”(Dewel, 1989, p. 101).

*FAT Principle.* Dr Howard Hendricks said, “In search for good teachers, I always look for FAT people – those who are Faithful, Available, and Teachable” (1987, p. 19). It is not what they know in their heads, which is the determining factor, but are they faithful in what they have done? Are they available to teach – without arm-twisting? And are they willing to learn? The word “faithful” in Greek is πιστός, meaning passive, faithful, to be trusted, and reliable (Vines, 1981, p. 72). As youth leaders, we need to be trusted, a reliable workman,<sup>29</sup> and have a teachable heart. The FAT principle needs to develop three areas. The intellectual and social dimensions of life are addressed below. The third is covered in the next section.

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<sup>28</sup> Phil 1:21; Gal 2:20.

<sup>29</sup> 2 Tim 2:2.

The intellectual dimension:

- (a) Maintain a consistent study and reading program.
- (b) Enrol in continuing-education courses – courses that will improve not, only your content, but also skills.
- (c) The need to know members of the youth.

Social dimension: The need to maintain relationships with people around you, whether in the church, community, or at your work/sports places. Melanesians are sociable people, and so, as leaders, this should flow naturally, as we associate with others.

Quality leadership is, first and foremost, having a passion for Christ, and then having good relationships with others. Thus, spiritual development can be nurtured.

*Spiritual Development.* As a youth leader, developing one's spiritual life is of paramount importance. Leadership is a dynamic process "in which men/women, with God-given capacity, influence a specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group" (Clinton, 1988, p. 14). Development includes all of life's processes, not just formal training. In this section, we will look at some areas of spiritual development that is needed in a leader's life.

Intimacy: Intimacy with God started in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2), where God had a personal relationship with Adam, and had warm and close fellowship before the Fall.<sup>30</sup> Lawrence Richards (1987, p. 116) suggests two specific areas of intimacy: prayer of the heart, and corporate worship.

Prayer of the heart: Prayer is communing with God, simply being with Him, and aware of His presence. The Psalmist expresses this in Ps 63:1-8 and 84:1-12. A leader needs to establish prayer of the heart as a priority.

Corporate worship: A gathering of God's people, sharing faith, prayer, and praise, hearing God's Word, seeking to draw God's people close to

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<sup>30</sup> Gen 3.

the Lord: to enjoy, affirm, and to praise Him. It is a time of participation, involving the exercise of spiritual gifts, as God's people lead each other to a clearer vision of God.

**Commitment:** Leadership requires a commitment to God, to live a daily life as disciples of God, and as servants of our fellowmen.

**Discipleship:** The Greek word μαθητής literally means a "learner" (Vines, 1981, p. 316). To be a disciple of Christ means to be a learner, and to fully surrender to God (i.e., our will, our choices, and obedience, having a yearning for God, and building a relationship with others).

**Servanthood:** Means to serve, which is associated with meeting the personal needs of others, particularly the needs of Christians. Jesus said, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve".<sup>31</sup> It means putting aside our interests, or our pain, having compassion for others, and living a life of self-sacrifice, as we reach out to aid others.

### ***Biblical Perspective of Leadership***

The biblical principles of leadership are, firstly, that we see Christ Jesus as the "Head of the church".<sup>32</sup> "This Jesus acts in the present age, as well as the one to come. . . . It is God's express intention that Jesus is to function as the head over everything, for the church, which is his body" (Richardson and Hoeldtke, 1980, p. 15). Secondly, the church is a living organism, and we are part of Christ. Paul said; "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you are part of it."<sup>33</sup> With these thoughts, let us now look at the biblical perspective of leadership.

**Moses' Leadership.** Moses was a man, who enjoyed an extraordinary relationship with God. Scriptures speak of him that "the Lord would speak with Moses face-to-face, just as a man would speak with a friend."<sup>34</sup> He directed the worship of the people of God, but he neither had the status of a priest, nor did he serve over sacrifices. He gave laws, and

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<sup>31</sup> Matt 20:28.

<sup>32</sup> Eph 1:22-23.

<sup>33</sup> 1 Cor 12:27.

<sup>34</sup> Ex 33:11(GNB).



administered justice, but so much more than a judge, since he mediated a new understanding of God (Tidball 1986, p. 36).

Tidball (1986, p. 36) gives eight points about Moses' leadership. However, I have selected four important areas:

- (a) Mistakes were used for the glory of God.<sup>35</sup>
- (b) Time spent with God.
- (c) A man of intercession, because of his direct intimate relationship with God.<sup>36</sup> "We shall find that our most-successful efforts for our people were the hours – not when we were speaking to them for God, but when we were speaking for them to God."<sup>37</sup>
- (d) Man of integrity, vision, and obedience.<sup>38</sup>

*Paul's Leadership.* One of the aims in Paul's ministry was "to proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone, with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect (or "mature" – GNB) in Christ".<sup>39</sup> Paul was an inspirational leader, who was not content with winning souls, he desired to win Christians, who would not remain spiritual babes, but progress to mature, spiritual adults.

- (a) Paul had a concern for the congregation's spiritual development towards maturity, and, as a body, to also make progress. He sought truth, promoted holiness, encouraged unity, and sustained faithfulness.
- (b) Paul was under a sense of obligation,<sup>40</sup> and lived a life of relationship.

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<sup>35</sup> Ex 2:11-15.

<sup>36</sup> Num 11:11-15; 12:13; 14:13-19; Ex 32:31-32.

<sup>37</sup> A quote by Charles Bridges, in his book, *The Christian Ministry*, Edinburgh UK: Banner of Truth Trust, 1830, on Moses' life of intercession.

<sup>38</sup> Heb 11:24-27.

<sup>39</sup> Col 1:28.

<sup>40</sup> Rom 1:14; 1 Cor 9:16.

- (c) Paul was a man of integrity. This was evident in his attitude towards money,<sup>41</sup> refusing to allow it to be a stumbling block to anyone (2 Cor 6:3). He desired to make spiritual progress (Phil 3:12-14). He lived out the gospel he preached.<sup>42</sup>

*Jesus Christ, the Model Leader.* Jesus Christ was both a servant and shepherd leader! God has a shepherd heart, “He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young.”<sup>43</sup> Repeatedly, in the Old Testament, when their human shepherds (Israel’s leaders) failed, God took His sovereign authority, and promised to intervene.<sup>44</sup> Then, in John 10, Jesus announces that He is the Good Shepherd, whom God had promised. He will fulfil all the Old Testament promises, and the role outlined, of the faithful shepherd in John 10:2-5.

*Conclusion.* In traditional Melanesian society, leadership required training, to be able to become a leader, especially within a hereditary<sup>45</sup> system (Chao 1984, p. 134). Although Melanesian leadership systems have been lost, due to changes/development, we can still hold to some of the principles, especially that of training. We need to adapt the leadership principles, shown from the biblical perspective, especially that servant leadership, as shown by Jesus Christ in Phil 2:6-7. If Waigani Youth is to develop spiritual maturity within the youth, it must start with the leaders.

## **WAIGANI YOUTH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS**

From its inception, Waigani Youth centred its activities on the Four Square program,<sup>46</sup> and was changed some years later, under the leadership of Jyno Pala (now Revd J. Pala). However, according to Revd Pala, the Four Square principles were still used, despite changes to the youth

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<sup>41</sup> Acts 20:33-35; 1 Cor 9:15-18; 2 Cor 12:14-18; 1 Thess 2:7-9.

<sup>42</sup> 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Cor 1:18-19.

<sup>43</sup> Is 40:11.

<sup>44</sup> Jer 23:4; Ezek 34:11-16, 23; Zech 10:3.

<sup>45</sup> The succession of the chiefly office is, ideally, from father to eldest son. The chiefly status and rank are determined, strictly, by hereditary and genealogical seniority.

<sup>46</sup> Four Square program consists of Devotion, Education, Service, and Recreation, which is based on Luke 2:52, and is approved by the United church to be used in the Christian education programs.

program. Most programs were based on evangelism,<sup>47</sup> outreaches to Central Province and Gulf Province<sup>48</sup>, camps/retreats, inter-youth fellowships, and sports. However, over the years, there have been changes to the program, which may be due to leadership changes, movement of young people,<sup>49</sup> law and order, and finances. Some of these changes were in minimising evangelism activities to rural villages, no social activities, and camps/retreats seem to have faded away from the annual programs.

### ***Waigani Youth Fellowship Data Analysis***

In this section, we will look at the data collected from the survey, conducted from Waigani United church, regarding youth programs.

Table 1 – Impact of the Four Square programs:

(a) Growth in personal spirituality	35 percent
(b) Insight into God's Word	30 percent
(c) Openness and confidence	20 percent
(d) Changed perspective of life	38 percent

How has the Four Square program impacted your life? Other responses were: meeting new people, development of leadership qualities, identification of spiritual gifts, all between 1-5 percent.

It was noted that, in the Four Square programs, there were opportunities for learning. A former chairman said that the Four Square program was relevant, even though it was outdated, nevertheless, the creativeness of the program depended on the leadership of the groups. Impact on personal spirituality was a result of biblical teaching, and having guest speakers, speaking on issues facing young people. While response (c) (20 percent)

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<sup>47</sup> Programs, such as, open-air meetings, at different market places, mini-crusades, and rural outreach programs.

<sup>48</sup> These outreaches to Central Province (Keapara/Alukuni, Kapari, Kelerakwa) were made, with consultation between the youth leaders, and the respective pastors, the same would apply to outreach in Gulf Province, which was organised by the Travellers' Ministry to Kavako, Pukari, and Kerema Town.

<sup>49</sup> Many young people are unstable, meaning that they move from one denomination to another for fellowship, and Sunday worship, but are present (though not consistently) at youth nights.

highlighted members who were able to interact with one another, and to the congregation, their confidence resulted in a boldness to share the gospel, within the church, and during evangelism programs.

Table 2 – Other programs to help develop growth towards spiritual maturity:

(a)	Evangelism, camps, and retreats	32 percent
(b)	Social activities	17 percent
(c)	Biblical teaching	15 percent
(d)	Prayer and fasting	13 percent
(e)	Youth and missions week	13 percent
(f)	Guest speaker(s)	10 percent

What other programs have been run to help develop spiritual maturity? Other programs that scored below 10 percent were; CLTC (UMIC/TEE) programs, inter-youth programs, talent nights.

On response (a), most leaders recognised the need to evangelise, and so, such programs became yearly activities. Social activities (f), included visitations to the hospital, Cheshire Home, and home visitations (death/sick/backslidden Christians). Responses (d) and (a) had topics, mostly chosen by leaders, on spiritual issues, however, there was a lack of teaching on moral and ethical issues facing young people today. Prayer and fasting (d), an important Christian discipline, seemed to be on a decline. Many have testified of the need to revive corporate prayer and fasting, which was important for the members, and also for the youth fellowship in general. It would be more appropriate to encourage personal prayer habits, in order for corporate prayers to be effective. Lastly on response (e), only 13 percent responded, yet these programs gave opportunity for the youth to express themselves, and to learn more insights about the Bible.

Table 3 – What can be done to improve present programs?

(a)	More biblical teaching	31 percent
(b)	Meeting of “felt needs”	20 percent
(c)	Evangelistic activities	18 percent
(d)	Create programs towards spiritual maturity	12 percent
(e)	Need for strong leadership	9 percent

Other programs are: seminars/workshops, reintroduce the Four Square program, and more involvement of pastor and elders, or mature-gifted laity, to be used in the youth programs.

On response (a), there is a slight contrast with Table 2, whereby biblical teaching scores only 15 percent, while evangelism, camps/retreats scores 32 percent. It would seem there is a need for more in-depth biblical teaching, while evangelistic activities scored only 18 percent. Response to (b), felt needs, is a clear indication that the needs of different groups within the youth should be addressed. Examples of felt needs were studies on marriage and family life, family health care, sewing, and basic budgeting for marrieds. For singles, topics were finding the right partners, purity, and exposure to missionary work. Other programs, like AIDS awareness, drug/alcohol, and skills like mechanic, building, and gardening, need to be taught. These needs are not only spiritual, but are also social and livelihood needs. Table 4 shows 46 percent as weak (lack of input), which confirms this as a need worth implementing within the youth program. In any case, while there is a need for in-depth, sound, biblical teaching, good, strong relationships are also needed.

Table 4 – Waigani Youth Fellowship’s view of social and livelihood needs:

(a)	Weak	46 percent
(b)	Mostly spiritual and social needs	28 percent
(c)	Recognise but not implemented	26 percent

The above table indicates the view of Waigani Youth Fellowship towards social and livelihood needs. This data shows an imbalance in creating

programs within the Waigani youth. Let us look at some areas that may provide assistance in alleviating the above-mentioned issues.

### ***Program Planning***

Program planning is vital for the growth of any organisation. Planning gives direction, with proper goals and objectives in place. Planning also helps to avoid “last minute” decisions, and/or preparations.

*People, not Programs.* In the planning of programs, the focus must be on people, and not how exciting the program will be, or how many people will be involved, though they are of some significance. Jesus spent most of His time with His disciples, monitored their development, and had a vision for their future ministry. He spent hours in prayer for them, challenged them, gave them responsibilities, and even gave them the freedom to fail. He allowed them to see Him weak, and even in His greatest moments of suffering.<sup>50</sup>

It is important to note the church is God’s agent for change, and must, therefore, implement programs that can help bring changes into the lives of the young people. “In Ex 19:5-6, we see a three-fold identity of Israel, in her relationship to God, and to the world” (Chow, 1986, pp. 21-30). Israel had an obligation to show other nations of God’s love, likewise, young people, too, have an obligation to bring God’s love to the world. We will only look at “God’s treasured possession” and “a holy nation”, while “priesthood” will be covered in another section.

God’s treasured possession – In Deut 7:6; 14:1-2, the usage is in the context of God’s choice of Israel, out of all peoples of the earth, and with emphasis on Israel’s observance of God’s commands.<sup>51</sup> Just as Israel was God’s people in the Old Testament, so, in the New Testament, believers are designated as God’s chosen, a royal priesthood.<sup>52</sup> Young people, too, are God’s treasured possession, and must be cared for, too.

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<sup>50</sup> Matt 26:36-46.

<sup>51</sup> Deut 26:16-18.

<sup>52</sup> 1 Peter 2:9-10; Eph 1:11-12; 5:22-23.

A Holy Nation – The people of Israel were set apart for worship and service of Yahweh, a nation to be different from other nations. They were told not to be like those in Egypt, or the Canaanites,<sup>53</sup> but were commanded to be holy, and consecrated, just like God. The youth of today need to stand guard against secularisation and compromise, just like Paul’s exhortation,<sup>54</sup> “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its mould, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed.”

*Spiritual Approach.* In our desire for spiritual maturity and development, one area, towards which we can work, is to have an evangelical and ecumenical approach. We need to be building up spiritually-mature Christians, who are firm in their faith, show Christ-like attitudes and attributes, and who have a passion for Christ and the world. We want to see young people have “a faith with a missionary outreach of compassion and urgency” (Peirard, 1984, p. 380). There is also a great need to build up young people, who are committed to work for the revival and renewal of their own church. We need to teach and encourage ecumenism in the young people, “who will have a change of heart towards other churches, and exhibit the catholic mission of the church to the world<sup>55</sup>” (Sullivan, 1983, p. 128).

Five areas are relevant in improving spiritual growth and maturity. They are “Theology, Christian living, Church life, Personal giftedness, and Concern for world needs/missions” (Fasse, 1996, pp. 42-51).

Theology<sup>56</sup> – Theology is often attached to those who are Bible College students, teachers, and clergy, but we fail to recognise that ordinary men/women are also acting theologians, because we seek to address issues concerning God and His nature, and His response to humanity. However, several things also influence our theology of God:

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<sup>53</sup> Lev 18:3.

<sup>54</sup> Rom 12:2 (PHILLIPS).

<sup>55</sup> Matt 28:19-20.

<sup>56</sup> Theology is a combination of two Greek words: θεός (*theos*), meaning “God”, and λόγος (*logos*), meaning “word”, so theology is simply the study of God.

- (a) Our life's experiences. Young people have a different worldview of God (i.e., they may see God as a loving Father, or as one who is holding a rod of discipline, because He hates sin).
- (b) Our personalities shape our theology. While we believe in the same Bible, yet we are affected differently by it, due to our personalities. Young people are energetic, and get excited in their worship and fellowship, while older people feel it is best to approach God in reverence.
- (c) Our level of emotional maturity affects our ability to understand God, and, therefore, our theology. Most young teenagers operate at a very concrete level, so they find it difficult to understand the abstract concepts of grace, Trinity, and so forth. Young people need to grow in their theology, teaching in God's Word, and how to read it. There is a proverb, "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day, teach a man how to fish, and he eats for a life time." It is better to work side-by-side with the young people, teaching them God's Word, until they are mature to feed for themselves, rather than expect young people to be able to know everything all at once.

Christian Living – The important issue is that the Christian lifestyle is more easily caught than taught. In the Old Testament, children learned God's commandments through their everyday living, and not just taught at specific times.<sup>57</sup> Jesus' ministry was marked by the way He trained the 12 to share His life, thus learning how to live, as He wanted. Young people need to see Christ-like life around them.

Church Life – Young people often see church as an immovable institution, and is inaccessible to the younger generation. However, Heb 10:25 reminds us it should be different. There will be reasons why young people leave the church, but the young people need the church as much as it needs them. Youth have something to offer to the life of their church, and the kingdom of God. J. F. Kennedy, when President of USA, said, "Ask

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<sup>57</sup> Deut 6:6-7.



not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” Youth must not expect the church to meet their needs, but feel that they, too, have an obligation to contribute to the welfare of the church.

**Personal Giftedness** – The belief that all Christians are gifted is foundational. Youth are gifted, and have something to contribute to the life of their church, and the kingdom of God. Each is gifted at three levels: The level of natural gifts; the level of skills, acquired/developed through training and education; and gifts given by the Holy Spirit.<sup>58</sup> It is vital for the youth to discover their gifts, and find places where they can be expressed, as part of personal spiritual growth.

**Concern for World Needs/Missions** – God made it clear that concern for the needy must not be overlooked,<sup>59</sup> and Jesus made it clear that our concern for the poor, the needy, and the destitute is a spiritual act of service to God.<sup>60</sup> Educate young people about world needs, while not losing the evangelistic edge, and bring them face to face with social action programs. World missions are grounded in God’s character, Christ’s commands, and the condition of the lost, who have never heard of the gospel. Youth must realise that mission is a divine initiative and, as children of God, we have a part to play. “Not only does God seek the unsaved, He also directs believing men/women (including youth) to be involved in communicating the gospel” (Hulbert, and Mulholland, 1990, p. 11).

### **Summary**

While there is a great need for corporate prayer/fasting, and sound biblical teaching,<sup>61</sup> young people’s felt needs must be addressed. For example, while we need corporate prayer/fasting, we need to encourage it more at the personal level, first. To grow up spiritually, we need the right kind of programs, programs that meet the totality of a person: physical, social, spiritual, and livelihood needs. There is an absolute need for a revamp in

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<sup>58</sup> 1 Cor 12:28-31; Eph 4:11-12.

<sup>59</sup> Deut 15:7-9; Amos 5:21-24.

<sup>60</sup> Luke 4:18-19; Matt 25:37-40.

<sup>61</sup> Titus 1:9.

the Waigani Youth Fellowship programs, if we are to achieve spiritual maturity and development among the young people.

## **CHURCH COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT**

For Waigani Youth to be effective, it needs the support of the church, just as the church needs them. Waigani Youth has enjoyed a cordial relationship with the church for many years now, and many youth activities would not have eventuated without moral and financial support. In this section, we will evaluate the church's role by looking at Jewish education, then, from the data collected, and, finally, look at the biblical mandate of the church. What lessons can be learnt from these cultural and biblical principles of education for Waigani United church?

### ***Jewish Education System***

“Jewish education was synonymous with life. It unfolded life, giving it direction and meaning. The Jewish child receiving education was dedicating his life to the service of God, and to the obedience of all His laws” (Eavey, 1964, p. 50). We will look at “Jewish Education from the Patriarchal Period: Priests and Parents”, from the book *History of Christian Education*, by C. B. Eavey.

*The Patriarchal Period.* God chose Abraham that he might charge his children, and his household after him, to keep God's ways. The Lord paid high tribute to Abraham's steadfastness in teaching His ways when He said, “For I have chosen him in order that he may command his sons and his descendants to obey Me, and to do what is right and just”.<sup>62</sup> Abraham's period of education was natural and informal instead of formal. “[H]is children (including all their descendants) saw Abraham offer sacrifices to God. They naturally learned, both obligation to worship Him, and acceptable ways of doing so” (Eavey, 1964, p. 46). Likewise, in Melanesia, informal models of learning were more useful and effective, as young people observed, and then participated in whatever skills or crafts that were taught.

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<sup>62</sup> Gen 18:19 (GNB).

*The Priests.* The priests were responsible for acquainting the people with the teachings of the Law, which had been delivered into their hands. “Moreover, the priests were to teach the people how to worship, to instruct them in the law of sacrifice, in ritual, and in religion duties” (Eavey, 1964, p. 55), as prescribed by Moses in Deut 31:9-13. It was also the duty of the priests to teach people how to live in relation to one another. They gave advice, and instructed the people, in respect of ethical and civil duties, in terms of practical living. In our context today, it would be appropriate for the pastor and elders to take the role of the priest, to teach the young people about God’s Word, as well as giving instructions about ethical and civic duties, in terms of practical living.

*The Parents.* Within the law, provision was made for the teaching of the Law. Parents were commanded to teach their children the history of the people, and the commandments, and the ordinances, of the Law.<sup>63</sup> God had a plan for educating His chosen people, as a consequence, this (Jewish) people have always regarded education as the most important activity of life, next to doing God’s will. Children were/are a gift from God, and parents were responsible to God for teaching them, “parents were the child’s first teachers, and the home the fundamental educational institution, throughout most of Jewish history” (Eavey, 1964, p. 51).

### ***Data Analysis on Waigani United church Support and Commitment***

Table 1 – Church support to Waigani Youth Fellowship, in its efforts to achieve spiritual maturity:

- |     |   |            |
|-----|---|------------|
| (a) | Generally weak, depends on leaders/pastor | 57 percent |
| (b) | Helpful                                   | 43 percent |

Five percent responded that the support was for financing activities, such as camps, training, and seminars. However, some feel the reason for this lack of support may be attributed to the youth leaders’ lack of consultation with the pastor and church leaders.

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<sup>63</sup> Ex 12:26-27; Deut 4:9-10; 6:6-7; 11:19.

Table 2 – Church view about Christian and para-church organisations:

(a)	Aware, but not encouraged	52 percent
(b)	Acceptable	22 percent
(c)	Not enough awareness	15 percent
(d)	Relationship level only	11 percent

It seems there is a general awareness of these organisations (as per responses (a)=52 percent, (b)=22 percent), however there's a lack of knowledge ((d)=15 percent), by the church of how these organisations can help the youth. As for response (c) (11 percent), this represented church members, who were part of these organisations, and who tried to improve awareness within the church. Therefore, there is not much exposure. Thus, it is difficult for youth to seek outside assistance for their spiritual development.

Table 3 – Possible reasons for lack of church support:

(a)	Church failure to recognise youth potential	33 percent
(b)	Youth leaders' failure to communicate	30 percent
(c)	Lack of long-term vision or goal	19 percent
(d)	Financial support	18 percent

Responses (b) and (d) would be in agreement with Table 1, as a lack of church support, but they also show that youth/church leaders are working in isolation from each other, while responses (a) and (d) (33 percent and 19 percent) are possibilities that need to be addressed. If the young people are leaders of tomorrow, why aren't they recognised for their potential, and used by the church? Could it be that there are not any mature young people, or they lack confidence, or is it because there is a lack of commitment? Of the respondents, 19 percent said the church needs to share its long-term goals/visions about the direction and future of the church, and developing human resources. What is its mission statement (if there is one), so that the youth can work in partnership in achieving those goals, and building up young people to be part of those goals?

Table 4 – Reasons young people leave Waigani United church:

(a)	Friends pull them along	44.4 percent
(b)	Use of musical instruments	24.8 percent
(c)	Other churches are meaningful	16.4 percent
(d)	Young peoples' own decisions	16.2 percent
(e)	Bored with old/not happy	13.9 percent
(f)	Because of marriage/husband	11.5 percent
(g)	Not strong in faith	10.6 percent
(h)	Satan tempted them	7.7 percent
(i)	No good help from worship	6.0 percent
(j)	Others	1.0 percent

(source: *Catalyst* 25-2 (1995))

Peer influence, susceptibility to outside pressures, emotional appeal, compromise for the sake of spouse, and exercise of personal autonomy were recognised as important components in the decision to join another church. It seems the attractions of new churches are more compelling than the former churches. I believe this is a common trend, even in Waigani United church.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Pastoral Care***

Tidball said, “pastoral theology relates to the interface between theology and Christian doctrine, on the one hand, and pastoral experience and care, on the other hand” (1986, p. 24), while John MacArthur said, “every church leader is a shepherd. A shepherd leads, feeds, matures, comforts, corrects, and protects – responsibilities that belong to every churchman” (1995, p. xiv).

From the data collected, pastoral care is lacking, as seen from Table 1, with 57 percent. From the United church constitution, pastors were chosen by God, with particular responsibility “to the sacraments and the

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<sup>64</sup> This was research on Youth in PNG (1995) through the Anglican, United, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, SDA, and Evangelical Alliance churches, by the Melanesian Institute, in Goroka.

Word, and also the pastoral oversight of the church” (1968, p. 9) but why are some pastors dominant in their role? When the Polynesians brought the gospel, they also brought “their culture of the hierarchical social structure: the pastor having a high-chiefly rank, i.e., church life revolving around the pastor and his home” (Williams, 1972, p. 19). This is in contrast to the biblical model and the United church constitution. We pray, God forbid such mentality. What role can the church play in response to “shepherding”?

*Recognise Youth as an Assembly of God’s People.* The church is a community of God’s people, to whom Christ gave His life, and became the head of the church.<sup>65</sup> Young people are part of the church, and must be nurtured towards spiritual maturity. Dr John Stott (*The Contemporary Christian*) elaborates this further from John 10:1-16. Firstly, the good shepherd *knows* his sheep; *serves* his sheep; *leads* his sheep; *feeds* his sheep; *rules* his sheep; *guards* his sheep; and the good shepherd *seeks* his sheep (1992, pp. 280-289). I fully agree with Dr John Stott, from this biblical perspective. Young people need to be taught that mistakes must be seen positively, must spend quality time with God, and must also be men and women of integrity, just as Moses was, when God called him into leadership. I would add that sheep do not retaliate, but gently follow the master’s commands, and, as youth leaders and members, it is our responsibility to be like Christ: to be obedient, humble, and submissive to those in authority.<sup>66</sup>

*Recognise Youth as a Priesthood of Believers.* “M. Luther affirms priesthood of all believers among all Christians as having the common dignity, calling, and privilege before God” (Wright, 1988, p. 532). Just like Israel was distinguished and set apart for God,<sup>67</sup> the church is, likewise, described as being called to offer spiritual sacrifices.<sup>68</sup> This is an important area for the church in recognising the potential there is in young people, especially in the areas of spiritual giftings towards spiritual maturity. What then could be some areas that the church can work

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<sup>65</sup> Eph 5:25; 1:22-23.

<sup>66</sup> Is 53:7; Phil 2:5-8.

<sup>67</sup> Ex 19:6; Is 61:6.

<sup>68</sup> 1 Peter 2:9.

through, in terms of training and discipleship, in order to use them within the church, both present and in the future? I do agree with the suggestions offered by a former chairman of the congregation, and currently an elder,<sup>69</sup> regarding the equipping of young people.

The suggestions are:

- (a) Seekers' classes and discipleship classes.
- (b) Solid biblical teaching/seminars, etc., on ethical, moral, and environmental issues affecting young people today.
- (c) Screen youth programs, and give directions, ensuring that programs achieve goals.
- (d) Set long-terms plans/visions, and share with youth, in order to work in partnership, not isolation.
- (e) Character building.

### ***Summary***

As we looked at the Jewish perspective of education, we can learn many lessons, in retrospect, to what God was doing, and wanting to accomplish. When Israel failed to honour God, when parents became lax, and priests became complacent in the performance of their duty to instruct children diligently in the Law, which was also "called the Torah, literally 'instructions' " (Anderson, 1988, p. 377), the results were idolatry, thus prompting God to bring punishment. The church needs to take a hard-line approach in education, recognising the fact that biblical teaching is the greatest need among young people. In Melanesia, education was a priority. This was signified from the initiation ceremony that trained young people to be mature and accepted as respectable adults. Young people were able to also control their bodily desires, as well as respect the opposite sex. However, that respect, and control of bodily desires, are now gone. Some causes of problems today are not only Western influences, but also religious (hyped-up worship/music, spiritual gifts more than spiritual fruit, praying as if in warfare, and not waiting in

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<sup>69</sup> Mr Verenagi Ravu – interview July, 2000.

quietness, etc.), resulting in spiritual pride, hypocrisy, and a superiority/inferiority complex.

Young people become victims, because they are unable to cope with these changes, nor are they able to confront these issues on their own, because they haven't been taught how to address these changes. The church needs to apply its shepherding role in a more meaningful manner. An application of Deut 6:4-9, both in families, and in the church, is needed. Today, when there is no biblical "instructions", idolatry, complacency, and faithlessness will creep in, and young people will not only walk out on the church, or join other churches (Refer to Table 4), they may go back to the ways of the world, forsaking God. For Waigani Youth Fellowship to gain spiritual maturity and development, it needs the support of the church, to guide and to instruct in the wisdom and knowledge of God, through the Bible.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We have explored and seen the strengths and weaknesses within Waigani Youth, especially in its endeavour to equip its members for growth towards spiritual maturity and development. Data analysis covered significant areas, such as "Leadership", "Programs", and "Church Support".

As we move forward into the 21st century, we need to reevaluate, and make constructive changes, to help the youth to move forward, in order to achieve this goal of "spiritual maturity and development". Following are recommended suggestions I am putting forward for consideration and implementation within the Waigani Youth Fellowship and Waigani United church.

### **LEADERSHIP RECOMMENDATION**

#### *Consultation*

- That the leaders meet quarterly with the pastor, either in the beginning or end of the month, to keep the pastor abreast of the youth.



- Leaders to have quarterly meetings with its members, by way of youth evaluation/forum.

### ***Election***

- That the church be involved in the process of appointing the leadership of the youth.
- That the youth submit candidates for various positions within the youth leadership, and the pastor, with the eldership, will screen the nominations before appointing leaders to serve in the leadership.<sup>70</sup>

## **PROGRAMS RECOMMENDATION**

### ***Program Objectives***

- Have objectives or goals, when making youth programs.
- Have “evaluation” of past programs prior to drawing up new programs.
- Program planning be done in consultation with the Pastor so that it is also aiming towards one common goal.

### ***Need-Centred Approach***

- That the youth adopt a three-year program cycle for consistency and continuity. This program will also accommodate the social and livelihood needs of the youth. Below is a suggested program.

### ***Christian Foundation Approach (Used with permission from CLTC TEE)***

- Year One: Discipleship
  - (a) Discipleship and Christian disciplines
  - (b) Worship
  - (c) Relationships (boy/girl and parents/children)
  - (d) Christian marriage and family life
  - (e) Christian ethics

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<sup>70</sup> This suggestion was thought of prior to me attending a leaders’ retreat (Waigani United church), which I was able to attend in early July, 2000, when I went to collect my data.

- Year two: Bible and Theology
  - (a) Introduction to the Bible
  - (b) Bible interpretation
  - (c) Christology (study of Christ in His divinity and humanity)
  - (d) Holy Spirit
  - (e) World mission
- Year Three: Ministry
  - (a) Leadership and management
  - (b) Pastoral care
  - (c) Evangelism
  - (d) Christian education (youth and children's ministry)
  - (e) Communication skills
- TEE Studies be used as "resources" in bringing spiritual enrichment into the leadership team.

## **CHURCH COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT RECOMMENDATION**

### ***Budget***

- That the church be consistent with its allocations against projects presented by the youth, as well as for general youth work.
- That the youth furnish its financial reports, as records of how money was spent, in order that it can be allocated, more or less, depending on its needs.

### ***Pastoral Care***

- That the church exercise its "shepherding" role in nurturing the spiritual life of the youth.
- The pastor is to set aside time to meet with the youth once a month for guidance, counselling, and mentoring, either for the general youth or for leaders.

- That the pastor use the “seekers’ class” as a model to help the young people know more about the church sacraments and doctrines, etc.
- That, in the event the pastor is unable to make time, appointment to the youth of “spiritual parents”, who are both mature and committed, is needed.

### ***Christian Education Worker***

- That the church maintains this position, with a review bi-annually, but with:
  - (a) A duty statement to be drawn up to guide the Christian education worker,
  - (b) A budget to be allocated to fund its work,
  - (c) There be an adequate pocket allowance.
- A Christian education worker needs to be trained in theological studies and have management skills so that he/she will not only train others but also manage the Christian education department.

I believe these recommendations are essential to help the Waigani Youth to move forward, with assistance, towards spiritual development and maturity. With proper guidance, programs, and funding, it will be able to achieve its goals, above all, with the help of our Heavenly Father!

## **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, we, as leaders, must realise that we have abundance of young people, with potential, who, when given the right training and support, will go a long way in helping the Youth Fellowship of Waigani to grow and develop spiritually and mentally.

In the youth today, we want to build up strong, mature disciples, who will also help others (2 Tim 2:2), but we need to be adequately preparing them for such ministry, not only in the present time, but also for the future. It is not just ordinary “followers” we want to see in the church, but spiritually-mature disciples, and this is in compliance with the Great Commission that Christ handed down before He ascended into heaven. As a Youth

Fellowship, and as a congregation, it must be a priority to see that training and teaching of the Word of God is combined with proper pastoral care.

So far, we, as a fellowship and church, have only sent out less than 10 young people into the field, serving in the capacity of pastors, and also into Christian organisations like CLTC and OMPNG. This is not enough, when we see that Waigani Youth has been established since 1970. Can we prepare more men and women to hear the call of the Lord, and move on by faith? This is the challenge we have, but it must first begin with us, as a Body of Christ, equipping these men and women to be strong and mature before they can serve the Lord.

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