

BETTER THAN XBOX

Sophia Sinclair talks to Dion Fasi, the Associate and Youth Pastor from Massey Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd in Auckland. Dion has been involved with several mission focused trips and also works part time for Anglican Youth Ministries in Auckland as a Network Mentor. Sophia asks Dion about the challenge of engaging today's kiwi youth in mission.

Based on the 'caught not taught' theory, what aspects of mission have you seen catch on?

This was definitely the case with me in regards to overseas missions. I heard someone speak at a youth camp about their experiences of short term mission. I responded to their challenge to go on a mission and signed up for a four week Kenya and Tanzania trip at the end of that year. That one trip had me sold on the idea of mission - I've been on three more trips since then and I'm always thinking about when and where to go next. I've shared my experiences on these trips with the youth group I run, and now whenever I ask the group who of them would be keen to go on a mission trip many of them put their hands up! I hope to take them somewhere soon. I'm a huge believer in short term trips overseas...aside from the big impact they make on the places they go to (don't listen to anyone who says short term trips only benefit those who go on them), it also

gives people a taste of mission that develops into a life-long passion. At the least it gives them a greater vision for serving God and reaching out to people wherever they find themselves, whether they're at home or overseas.

What generational differences make it easier for young people to engage in mission?

Without children and fixed employment it is a lot easier for young people to engage in mission in to the form of short term overseas mission trips. They also are more likely to make spontaneous decisions on the spur of the moment, as excitement often outweighs caution. This makes them more likely to sign up for mission and then worry about finance and risk later on.

What generational differences make it harder for young people to engage in mission?

Young people are dependent on outside provision so financially it is harder for young people to engage in overseas mission. In terms of local mission, while adults struggle with insecurity and fear of rejection, young people often struggle even more, so that can be a big challenge to them sharing their faith amongst peers here in their home country.

From your experience discuss specific tools which have helped young people engage in mission.

I reckon hearing stories from other young people who have experienced mission is the most powerful tool...it tells them that they can do it too. Being given opportunities in the local

church to step out in faith is also important. If they're used to trying new and often scary things (such as sharing a testimony or preaching at a Sunday Service) it means mission is just another of those opportunities rather than this huge thing that only spiritual giants do. Why expect them to minister elsewhere if we won't let them minister in their own church?

What challenges are the majority of young kiwis facing in today's world?

Young kiwis face the same issues that young people all over the world have always faced: they want to know that their life has purpose, significance and value. They struggle with the way they look, where they fit in, and what they have to offer. They want to know that they are loved.

A challenge that is possibly more of an issue now than it might have been for previous generations is the way that young kiwis are bombarded with an overload of information and ideas.

How might these challenges impact the types, shapes and styles of mission young people are involved in?

These challenges make young people perfect candidates for any kind of mission where they are taken out of their comfort zone and away from the normal everyday life they live. Going to Kenya and sleeping in mud huts, preaching a sermon in Fiji when they've never done anything like that before, helping build a church hall in Cambodia...activities like these can capture their hearts with a vision for mission. It offers a thrill that is real and has a purpose that the latest Xbox game can't deliver.

