

MISSION POSSIBLE PROJECTS

Focus on New Zealand Youth
and What Presbyterians Are Doing



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How Many Young People aged 13 to 24 in New Zealand?

The **2006 census** tells us:

- Around 730,000 young people in the year ending 31st Dec, 2006.
- Make up about 17.5% of the total population.
- The *majority* of this group is aged between 13 and 18.

How many young Presbyterians?

The **2006 census** tells us:

- 400,839 people of all ages *listed* themselves as Presbyterians.
- Peter Lineham and Alison Fields put the number somewhat lower at 385,000 [source: NewVision NZ Vol III, published 2008, pg 164].
- An average figure is around 392,700 people
- If the proportion of 13 to 24-year-olds amongst Presbyterians is the same as the general population, there ought to be some 68725 young people in our churches.

However, the 2000-2005 church statistics show that only some 28,000 Presbyterians in total attended church throughout the country on an average Sunday. But the number of 13 to 24-year-olds amongst these is about 25%, or about 7,000, higher than the proportion of 13 to 24-year-olds in the general population.

However:

Do all 392,700 Presbyterians actually attend church?

An example:

The **2006 census** tells us:

In the township of Mosgiel, (an area with strong Presbyterian roots) some 3100 people stated they were Presbyterians -
the number actually attending the two local parishes is around 600.

Presbyterians in the Census

In the 2001 census, 25,551 people in the Dunedin Presbytery identified themselves as being Presbyterian. Presbyterian statistics record an average June worship attendance of 2,593 people in 2005 in the whole of the Dunedin presbytery.

[Just a couple of points to note: though Anglican and Presbyterian congregations had dwindled by around 6% each from the figures in the previous census, by the time of the **2006 census** there had been substantial increases in people affiliating with Orthodox Christian religions (37.8%), Evangelical, Born Again and Fundamentalist groups increased by 25.6% and increases in Pentecostal churches were 17.8% higher than previously.

Further, people who didn't define their Christian affiliation were also down by 3%.

This may indicate one of three things:

- that former Anglicans and Presbyterians have moved into other denominations,
- that they no longer categorise themselves in terms of a denomination though they remain Christian
- that they have drifted to a place where they no longer regard the church as essential to their lives.

The **first** group may now be well-established within a different denomination.

The **second** group are people who need to be re-established in a church community context (which may not be 'Presbyterian' in its outward form).

The **third** group need to be re-missionized by showing that Christianity has true value.]

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Ably assisted by:

90 leaders employed either part or full-time by churches

- 4 to 5 assistant leaders on average, in each church.
- Chaplains at the Presbyterian Schools nationally and in some ecumenical schools.

What training is available for these leaders?

- The annual **Connect** meeting for youth leaders:
Workshops, speakers, worship, forums, networking
- Regional training programmes.
- **Going Somewhere**, led by senior youth leaders aiming to develop potential youth leaders

Usually held over an eight-week period

Aims to build realistic/fantastic expectations of youth ministry

Provides a creative space to explore leadership

Teaches practical skills

Builds community and networks

How do we express our mission to young people?

Four major goals:

- training
- resourcing
- networking
- advocating

Fuel Magazine (produced twice a year)

One of the things we all need in some shape or form when working with young people is fuel for dreaming. Fuel is a magazine aimed at fuelling youth leaders for their ministry to young people.

Who looks after the leaders?

The PYM leaders are under the pastoral care and governance of the Assistant Executive Secretary.

Another initiative for caring for Youth Workers was begun earlier in the year, in Dunedin.

The Dunedin Youth Workers Network

- has sixty members
- is organised by two Presbyterian youth workers
- trains youth workers in matters such as domestic violence and internet safety
- is part of the [National Youth Workers Network](#)



PYM November 2007 Focus Group Gathering

The PYM Vision

To make Jesus Christ known:

**Offering young people opportunities to grow in their faith in God.
Building healthy Christ-centred youth ministries that provide
opportunities for networking, training, resourcing and advocacy to all
those working in youth ministry.**

We aim to do this by growing Christ-centred youth ministries that...

LOOK IN

Encourage young people to grow in a Christ-centred faith in God

LOOK AROUND

Encourage young people to grow in Christ-centred communities

LOOK OUT

Encourage young people to grow Christ-centred mission hearts to serve

What issues do youth leaders encounter amongst young people?

The positives:

There are many young people in New Zealand living ordinary lives, enjoying sport and the arts, working hard at school and tertiary education, with good extended families [the role models killed in the April 2008 Elim College tragedy are prime examples]

The negatives:

There are many young people who lack the opportunities of their peers, who have little support at home or live in dislocated family situations where there may be abusive adults.

There are many young people who come from good backgrounds but have fallen under the influence of alcohol, drugs, and a variety of other evils.

Alcohol is one of the major paradoxes in New Zealand society.

On one hand:

- Parliament is content to keep the minimum drinking age at 18, in spite of obvious flaws with this strategy;
- alcohol companies show no scruples in building up a customer base from young people starting out life away from home and studying at University or Polytech;
- poor role models (kidults) amongst sportsmen and women, a number of whom have come to grief as a result of too much alcohol consumption.

On the other hand:

- we have advertisements aimed at young twenties intending to show them the consequences of not drinking and driving;
- we have continual cries from the police and social workers about young people binge drinking, wandering the streets late at night, and generally getting into trouble.

*In mid-April 2008, the then Justice Minister, Annette King, [called for a review of the drinking age](#), in response to the vicious attacks on tourists by some Christchurch youths. But attempts to raise the drinking age again have been 'rebuffed' by Parliament. Ironically – or perhaps intentionally – King's statements appeared under a report in the **Otago Daily Times** telling the readers that a teenage brother and sister had been attacked in separate alcohol-related incidents on the same night.*

Drugs, including party pills, are a major issue for young people.

In the April 2008 *Fuel* magazine, published by PYM, **Madeleine Peacock** writes on *Dealing with Addictions*. One of her main points is the necessity to befriend and pray for those with addictions but not necessarily try to deal with their addiction. Working with those who have experience in these areas is essential.

Sexually transmitted diseases and a lack of understanding of the consequences of a casual sexual behaviour leave many young people damaged. For example, New Zealand has one of the highest rates of **chlamydia** in the world. It's most common in teenagers and young adults, many of whom are unaware that it can lead to sterility.

Chlamydia is the country's most common sexually transmitted disease, with the number of diagnosed cases jumping by 28 per cent at sexual health clinics and 147% at Family Planning clinics between 2002 and 2006.

In spite of this, film and television continue to show 'adults' acting as though sex was something that had no consequences.

Boy racing, tagging, online computer games and crime add to the list.

What are the hotspots around NZ as far as youth are concerned?

The 2007 Quality of Life survey:

- Manukau City and Porirua have the youngest populations in New Zealand.
- More than 1 in 4 (26.2%) of the people in these areas is *under the age of 15*, whereas the average in the rest of the country was 22.3%.
- Manukau also has the highest unemployment with a relatively high percentage of the population living in areas of high deprivation.

Media Reports of Increased Violence

- A noticeable increase in violence in both Dunedin and Christchurch this year, cities formerly considered relatively safe.
- The violence tends to be as a result of small groups of young people randomly attacking other people, especially other younger people, mostly people they don't know.

In March this year a group of young people between 17 and 23 [arranged for a hui](#) on the subject of violence in Dunedin streets, because of 'fears that the Dunedin situation [of violence] was spiralling out of control.' The group said that there was 'fighting between Dunedin 'crews' [gangs], attacks on people from other crews, tagging of city property and crime, mainly because the young people involved had nothing else to do.'

The career path to full-on gang status is marked by a series of steps: wanna-bes; territorial neighbourhood street crews; youth gangs taking part in self-serving petty crime; to the top-tier of criminal street gangs vying for organised crime status.

At the end of 2007, **Christchurch became the nation's new violent crime capital**, according to the [city's own paper, The Press](#). The mayor, Bob Parker, blamed the 24-hour alcohol culture, and the politicians for liberalising liquor laws.

Christchurch is also a city struggling to deal with the 'boy racer' problem, though as one columnist, John de Buerger, writes, '[boy-racery is not the cause, but a symptom of a deeper malaise.](#)'

How is society helping?

Help is available in all the official institutions, along with a vast number of small-scale, charities:

- The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services recently introduced a new program called, *Let Us Look After Each Other*. This is a wide-ranging program that includes the nurturing and protection of New Zealand's children.

There are a surprising number of mentoring programs in NZ, none of which were initiated by official groups. These include:

- [Big Buddy](#) and [Brothers in Arms](#), both of which aim to provide an adult male for children who lack a father.
- **I Have a Dream** [more on this below] and [Great Potentials](#), both of which aim to offer resources to children and their families so that they can be motivated to see education as worthwhile.
- [Pillars](#) for the children of prisoners.
- [ProjectK](#), aimed at maximising the potential of young people.

Contact details for all these groups can be found at their web addresses.

Does education make a difference?

[I Have A Dream](#) empowers children from low-income families to reach educational and career goals that otherwise are beyond them.

IHAD takes an entire year from one particular Primary School and continues to work with that same group right through to Tertiary level, supporting them financially and educationally.

In New Zealand this has been funded by one person, who himself had the dream to see children assisted.

How are other churches looking after young people?

The **Anglicans** have several youth sections linked to their [main site](#)

Resources from older articles out of the Crumbs magazine,

- The TORU Anglican Centre for Youth Ministry Studies, with short courses and a blog,

CYMA (Churches Youth Ministry Association) section, with links to other sites, including the Presbyterian Youth section of our website.

The **Catholics** have a group called the NCYC (National Catholic Youth Council).

Their function involves:

- Communicating the concerns of young Catholics to the Conference and submitting regular reports
- Discovering the concerns and issues pertinent to young Catholics
- Supporting communication with young Catholics in each Diocese
- Compiling a directory of those employed in full or part time youth ministry in each diocese;
- Monitoring training opportunities for youth;
- Establishing a recognised Diploma in Youth Ministry
- Speaking on issues of importance concerning young Catholics; and
- Liaising with relevant national bodies
http://www.catholic.org.nz/themes/theme_young.php

The Salvation Army

- strategy to *with and for* the youth of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- recognizing that a healthy church will have a *proper balance between congregational life and involvement in effective mission* in the world.
- young people are searching for a great cause and purpose for their lives.
- key focus is to inspire and equip Salvation Army youth for *involvement in effective mission activities*. [from [The Salvation Army's website](#):]

The **BYM** (as opposed to the PYM) is the [Baptist equivalent](#) of the Presbyterian Youth Ministries.

‘We want to impact every community and young person, not just babysit our church kids.’ They also have a passion to reach young people who aren’t in areas where there is good youth ministry already established. [Dec 2007 Baptist Magazine]

Leaving Home, Leaving Church

A group of young people who leave everything behind

A Statistics New Zealand survey has found a strong correlation between the size of a person's student loan debt and the chance of that individual working overseas within a year of graduation.

Though many young New Zealanders travel, the desire to return to their home setting is strong; over 85% of those surveyed in a recent poll suggested that they would prefer to raise children in a similar environment to which they had been brought up in. There has been some anecdotal evidence that New Zealand expatriates in Australia (sometimes known as 'Kwassies'-Kiwi Australians-in local slang) are now coming back sooner than expected for lifestyle reasons. Reasons for coming home include having to put up with higher temperatures in Australia, better education opportunities in NZ for their children and less hectic lifestyles.

Many New Zealand graduates are lured to neighbouring Australia as a final destination, where wages are generally higher and economic opportunity more diverse, yet still providing the outdoor, natural lifestyle they are accustomed to, and within short travel time to family. The Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement makes such exchanges easy, although heavily one-sided.

This is a major problem for a small country like New Zealand, as traditional 2 year working holidays are fast turning into 5-10+ year expatriations. This is an even bigger problem when considering the age group 25-35 are the most productive tax years. It is this expatriate age group that provides more net inflows into an economy (taxes) than it removes (health, education, pensions).

The flip side to this, due to New Zealand's immigration policy of giving preference to professionals and the high inflow of immigrants into New Zealand, is that New Zealand is in the 'Brain Exchange' a net 'Brain Gainer', with relatively high numbers of immigrant professionals from Iran, Middle East, Philippines and Malaysia.

This has been extracted from an article on Nationmaster.com

Youth Ministry charts a course.

The staff of Baptist Youth Ministries have been working with a consultant to come up with a strategic plan to allow it to free up valuable resources, attract more funding and shape the way forward.

For many years BYM has been one of the Baptist Movement's most successful ministries and is widely recognised as being the most effective of all the various denominations' youth programmes. But BYM's youth consultants say that is still not enough.

'We want to impact every community and young person, not just babysit our church kids,' Christchurch Baptist Youth Consultant Mike Dodge told Assembly 07. 'So we hired a consultant who listened to us, talked to us and coached us through this process because we were lost by ourselves. He told us we did youth ministry really well but need the machinery.'

The result is a strategic plan that looks at structure, national coverage, finance, management, communication, policy, events, marketing and training.

The first step towards implementing the plan will be to set up a new trust.

'We've resisted doing this until now because we believe in the Baptist Union,' says Mike. 'We are part of the Union and we don't want to be seen to slip away and do our own thing. But the consultant told us we have no rules for governance and no rules for how to do stuff, so we realised we needed some formality.'

BYM wants to take on a part time manager to manage the new trust. 'We don't want Merrilyn (National Youth Consultant) involved in detail,' he says.

It also wants the new trust to be able to attract new sources of finance. Mike says BYM is grateful for the annual budget it receives from Baptist Union but the Union has a shrinking budget to fund an increasing number of ministries, so the plan is to find a couple of entrepreneurs who can help BYM find new funding streams. 'We don't our dreams to be killed by the buck!'

Another major goal is to improve BYM's national coverage.

'We don't want to just be in regions that really believe in youth consultancy or have a strong association of churches who can afford to employ people,' he says. 'There are lots of places that fall between the gaps and we want to be very intentional about making them part of the fantastic stuff that is going on around the country.'