

L

MESSAGE

Quality not Quantity

The L-Message can be found at www.seymouruc.org.au/l-message

In Christian ministry (whether it be youth groups, Sunday School or Church congregations) there is an unwritten and often unacknowledged driving force that when aired everyone cringes and then fanatically tries to deny and ultimately wish weren't true.

It sounds like this: 'If only we had more people!' 'If only my youth group had 20 kids in stead of 5' or '500 kids instead of 50'. 'If only Sunday morning attendance would break the 100 mark.' 'If only we could get more people to come along!'

We don't like to admit and we try to justify these attitudes by pleading that we are chasing The Great Commission, but too often ministry is more a numbers game than intentionally investing in people. The danger surfaces when life change takes a back seat to growing attendance in our programs.

What good is it to have a youth group of 50 kids who turn up each week, but are not growing in their love for God. I put it to you that it's far more Christ honouring to assist the Holy Spirit in transforming 5 lives and changing them into radical Christ followers, than it is to attract 50 or 500 young people to a program each week and in the finish see that no one who has been affected by Christ's power and presence.

So if this is true and we can all agree to it, why are we so concerned with numbers? Shouldn't our prayer be: "God send me **one** person, who I can pour my life into so that with your help they can follow you for the rest of their life!" How often do your prayers echo this sentiment? The theory applies to youth ministry, but also to children's ministry, Church work and so on. I think we tend to gravitate toward numbers, because we can measure numbers and quantities and therefore feel successful. We can attract a crowd and feel as though our efforts are being fruitful. We can increase our size and convince ourselves that we are good at this youth leadership deal, or fulfilling our ministry calling. But wouldn't Jesus celebrate more so the one young lady who stepped out of the destructive life patterns she was engaged in and turned to Christ. Wouldn't Jesus be thrilled to see the rebellious young man who has felt rejected for forever, find love and acceptance in God? Of course and far more so than 50 kids having a blast on a Friday night and leaving unchanged, unloved and unvalued! Ministry is not a numbers game, it's a people connection. And with that comes heartbreak and disappointment and worry and concern and laughs and tears and celebrations and commiserations, but aren't these the things that Jesus actually calls us to a part of.

You see them each week. You build relationships with them, they invite their friends, they hang around for a while, then they move on. What good is it if not a single life is changed, altered, enriched, touched, encouraged, challenged? What good is a weekly youth (baby-) sitting club?

I received an email this week containing some advice for working with people, and in particular young people, take heed to these wise words:

"A good youth worker must always have the capacity to be let down and maintain the attitude of not being offended or discouraged; but he/she must never ever let that young person down. Young people read you by your sincerity and reliability. They are watching who you are and not so much listening to what you say."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

You get what you pay for. A sign in a repair shop said: "We do three types of jobs: Cheap, Quick, and Good. You can have your choice of any two. A good, quick job isn't cheap. A good, cheap job isn't quick. And a quick, cheap job won't be good." – What sort of job do you do with the people you are ministering to and working with?