

GYS 2009 - “Service: Live the difference!”

GYS 2009 was an experience through where we learned that patience is important for communication with other cultures, which is necessary to improve relationships. It was also a place where our eyes were opened to see how God is working in the whole world in so many different ways and that we need to support and respect each other.

The theme of this Summit was: “Service: live the difference”. When we gathered as delegates we shared and discussed the **definition of service**, based on the information we got through the previous research through interviews and scripture. We concluded that service is initiated by God, it is important to do service in a relationship with God and with others and understanding the needs around us. Among the many qualities of a servant we found: humility, teamwork, obedience, submitting and working with the authorities are important in working towards the ideal church.

GYS participants and delegates dreamt of what an **ideal church** would be to them. Some of the conclusions they came to were: congruence between actions and words, churches with young people who are willing to serve God wholeheartedly and grounded in the word of God, strong teaching and discipleship about godly virtues, strong sense of community, a church that cares and works on behalf of the needs of others, being peacemakers. A space for everyone to use and develop their gifts with support.

In order to accomplish these dreams our **global action** plan starts with our service to the local church. Personal commitments we have made to improve our communication are: understanding cultural differences, learning languages, praying for each other, visiting other churches to learn and to appreciate our identity and roots better.

Some issues that are holding us back from the ideal church are: a **generation gap**, (older people feel like young people don't want to listen, young people feel like they're not being heard) **a lack of mentoring and discipleship within a church congregation and a lack of communication**. In order for the vision of the youth and the vision of the church to merge together and allow the church to grow a close relationship among generations will set a strong foundation.

How can the Mennonite World Conference help to overcome these issues? Within the generation gap give young people space to explore their gifts, involving young people in decision-making in the church (committees, leadership positions) and create a space for intergenerational dialog, envisioning together and working together. For the lack of teaching with emphasis on discipleship we feel that young people need to be given responsibility and leadership in decision making roles through mentorship. We would like to see young representatives involved in the General Council meetings so there can be mentorship for the leaders of tomorrow. For the lack of communication everyone should be willing to listen and learn to trust. We would like to see MWC be a communication tool. Areas such as offices being used as Internet facilities for the countries in the process of development. Another idea was a magazine where youth experiences, prayer requests, needs and service programs can be shared and promoted. As young people we would like to see youth representatives from each continent/conference as contributors to the articles of the magazine. This might be a task for future AMIGOS, delegates or Youth Task Force in the future. Another project to help improve communication could be continental youth gatherings.

If we can accomplish these projects **together** then we are sure that the outcome will bring the church of today closer to the ideal church.