



Student-run Movement

Any organisation or Movement that aims to develop the spirituality of humans, especially young people, needs to make sure that in doing so they don't discount or disempower their abilities as a person. To simply run something FOR young people can never have the full impact of developing committed and capable Christian leaders (AYCS, p. 14).

One of the key ways in which the YCS develops leadership among secondary school students is in their ownership of the movement. The YCS is run, on all levels, by the student members. Adults, of course, have an important role to play in supporting students and offering the experience of their lives to the students' actions and reflections. However, it is students who are in charge. From the setting of budgets and the employment of workers, to the development of national campaigns and the running of National Conferences, students in the YCS are responsible for every decision and action which takes place.

Leadership skills will inevitably be developed as students readily take up the challenges of chairing meetings, organising meetings and taking part in deep reflection on the actions they carry out. Not only do YCS students develop the personal qualities of leaders, such as patience, confidence and decisiveness; they are also formed in more practical skills. YCS leaders are able to take minutes during meetings and set the direction of actions; they are confident public speakers and willing to constructively criticise the actions of others. The YCS movement challenges students

to accept the responsibility of living out their mission from God and changing the world, and empowers them to do this by continually acknowledging their absolute ability to do so.

The Young Christian Students movement is unique, as it develops Christian leadership among secondary school students. It is not by teaching students what leadership is, but by providing opportunities for students to discover this themselves that the YCS empowers students to live as Christian leaders. As students take actions developed from the Review of Life, they are enacting the call of their faith and inspiring others to do the same; they are living as 'a new generation of apostles'.

References

- Australian Young Christian Students (AYCS) 2008, *Never Underestimate the Students (NUTS)*, Australian Young Christian Students' Movement resource, AYCS, Granville, NSW.
- Benedictus XVI 2006, 'Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the youth of the world on the occasion of the 21st World Youth Day, 9 April 2006, accessed 26 June 2008 <www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20060222_youth_en.html>.
- O'Sullivan, H 1991, *The Clatter of Wooden Clogs: A Challenge for Today's Young Worker*, Australian Young Christian Workers Movement, Granville, NSW.

