

European Valuegenesis: a challenge!

As most of you know, during the next two years the churches within Europe will be under the spotlight with the biggest youth survey ever organised in our countries. This is the Valuegenesis Survey for Europe. Thousands of youth between 14 to 25 years old, living in 17 European countries will be invited to fill up a questionnaire to express their opinion on; Faith, Values, Commitment to Home, Church, School, Society, and so on. This will give the church a clear picture of a new generation which is growing with its own definition of Adventism.

Very often youth are judged at face value by their silences, their apparent apathy, their sitting in the back, or in the balcony, or chatting in the corridor etc. etc. Such a picture often comes out blurred with at best little clear definition and sadly often an incomprehensible or incomplete image. Through Valuegenesis we would like to give more focus to this picture and to enhance the potential of a generation of youth which is growing in spirituality, as showed by the first two Valuegenesis surveys held in the USA. Most crucially our picture will be that of European Adventist youth.

The Jose Figols Youth Centre, situated in Collonges, France will be the focal point of the European edition of Valuegenesis survey. Manuela Casti, the director of the Centre, has helped form a network that includes youth professionals from both the Euro Africa Division and Trans -European Division. The width of the survey will embrace 17 countries with many different languages, cultures and spiritual backgrounds. It will also involve the coordination of three European Adventists colleges, Collonges, Newbold and Friedensau, to guide the research. Additionally an International company will be contracted to care for the data collection. It's impossible to estimate how many hours and days of hard work is hidden behind this project and I thank Manuela Casti for her tremendous work. Also a heartfelt appreciation also to all members of the Research Committee for their commitment.

But practically, how does Valuegenesis work?

The questionnaire has been based on the established Valuegenesis 2 survey instrument used in USA but with a clear European definition as directed by the Research teams from Collonges, Friedensau and Newbold. The questionnaire will then be available in a web-based formula and youth will be invited to complete the survey "on-line." To make this possible a personal password will be made available for each young person which will expire when the questionnaire is completed.

This new formula to collect data on-line has been approved by Bailey Gillespie, the Valuegenesis' coordinator in USA, and has several advantages:

1. It will involve not just a proportional sample of young people but a "census" including potentially ALL European Adventist youth aged 14-25 in the 17 participating countries (both baptised and non - baptised.)
2. There will no need to invest a long time in gathering a detailed demographic database of European Adventist young people.
3. Modern technology will help provide a very reliable survey, gathering the answers from even relatively "small" Conferences. .
4. The web-based survey will give immediate availability of the findings and also provide a ready base for flat score results and further more detailed analysis.
5. The process will be quicker and more cost effective as there will be no need of entering data by scanning, with the related consequent expenses and delays;
6. There will also be a greater accessibility of the questionnaire, without mailing and collecting printed forms.

Today youth use computers more or less daily. It will be very easy to fill up such a questionnaire. The biggest partners of this project are youth, so, offering this technological formula we hope to facilitate their involvement.

For those youth that do not have a computer, the same questionnaire will also be available in hard copy through the Union/Conference Youth Departments.

Within few weeks, all pastors of the Union/Conferences involved will receive a letter with the important details on how to promote and manage the survey. The pastors and the local churches are very important partners in this project as they will help distribute the passwords which will in turn make possible the data collection. I would like to thank all pastors which will manage carefully this part of the programme that will in many senses determine the success of the whole project.

All further information can be downloaded from the website www.valuegenesis.org .

This site will be operative as an information source until it will become the official Valuegenesis web site. To enter the site it will be necessary to have a password which will protect the identity of all responding youth as the questionnaire can be completed anonymously.

Now we are ready to take off and the project will last until 2008, a normal length for a scientific study of this size. At this point we do not have big claims but we do have the following message to our youth:

Who's changing the church? You are! Your mouse can change it. Be our partner. Be church.

Corrado Cozzi