

## Youth Advisor's Report for 2014 Synod AGM

There is often this tension when you start a new job, particularly in ministry, and even more so when there has been a period of time between people in the role. People are waiting for you to begin. They are eager for you to make things happen; to run events; to make changes; to see what you can offer them; to put your stamp on programs and resources. On the other hand, you want to be able to take time to settle in; to meet people; learn the context; work out where things are at; and then see how you can use your skills and passions to help move forward.

Four months into my new role as Youth Advisor and I think I am handling that tension well. The annual events and training opportunities that have been offered in the past are being offered again this year and are making their way into people's diaries. But at the same time my focus has been predominantly on meeting people. I am spending a lot of my time travelling around the region, attending churches, sharing and participating in youth groups, meeting youth leaders and connecting with other key youth organisations. I feel it is important that for a role such as mine, where my purpose is to network, train, resource and advocate for youth ministry in the region, that I spend time getting to know the youth ministries (their leaders, young people and their churches) and that they get to know me!

I have thoroughly enjoyed going around the Synod region connecting with the various youth ministries we have, of which there are many! (More than 50% of our churches have some sort of active youth program). I have met many faithful youth leaders, both volunteer and employed, who are faithfully discipling the youth in their church and connecting the church with the youth in their community.

I would like to thank my colleagues, Bruce Fraser, Fergus Sime and Cheryl Harray for going out of their way on many occasions to help my family and myself settle in to life in Dunedin and also helping me get orientated with the churches in the Synod region. I'd also like to thank all of you who I have met in person or connected with over the phone or via email. Everyone has been so receptive and hospitable. Most of all I would like to thank the Synod itself for giving me the opportunity to work in this role and be able to support youth ministry in the region for a job!

Lastly, let me remind you that the role of Youth Advisor is to support, encourage and help equip you for youth ministry. It is a gift from the Synod to you. Feel free to contact me with any questions or needs you may have...or if you just want to get together for a coffee and a chat!

Brad Kelderman

Youth Advisor