

Radical Discipleship Program Targets Teens

Barry St. Clair isn't satisfied with simply taking the gospel to young people. If future Christian leaders are going to rise up to tell the world about Jesus, St. Clair believes they need to be properly equipped.

The founder and president of Reach Out Youth Solutions, St. Clair and his organization have been training and discipling youth for more than 30 years in more than 30 countries with their Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry. The program was created to produce life change and equip life-changers globally to influence the younger generation to follow Jesus.

Reach Out's Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry Forum is a one-day program for pastors, youth pastors, children's ministers and youth ministry leaders and volunteers. It focuses on Jesus' simple approach to life and ministry, and helps churches to implement a plan of action unique to their church to help the younger generation become fruit-bearing disciples of Jesus.

St. Clair believes direct **discipleship** with today's youth is something that has sorely been lacking in churches in the United States in recent years.

"Statistics are proving that for years that many churches have really not been doing the right things in their **youth ministries**," St. Clair said. "Many churches have missed the boat. It seems like youth ministries have been focused on activities. While those things are OK, they're not getting the job done.

"We've got to switch the paradigm. We must have a radical return to Jesus and His way of doing ministry. We're taking the principles Jesus set down and we're implementing them into this program. There is a reason it has worked all around the

world. There needs to be a personal connection. We need to get churches back to discipleship.”

Reach Out’s vision is to “influence as many teenagers as possible to follow Jesus.” Its design is to: 1) help youth go deeper in intimacy with Christ; 2) to pray with passion for God’s presence and power; 3) to build leaders for in-depth and long-term ministry; 4) disciple students to move toward maturity in Christ; 5) penetrate the culture through relationships; and 6) create outreach opportunities to reach students for Christ.

In the early 1980s, St. Clair mentored former *Charisma* Editor J. Lee Grady.

“Barry has a proven track record of discipling hundreds of youth leaders who are now touching the world for Jesus,” Grady said. “From personal experience, I know that Barry’s message is effectively grounding youth as well as **youth leaders** in the Scriptures. I was one of his ‘guinea pigs,’ for lack of a better term. And that just started his whole discipleship concept.”

St. Clair, International Director Eric Ball and National Director Roger Palmer head up the JFYM team. The organization also has a board of directors, and Lawanna St. Clair, Barry’s wife, heads up operations.

Reach Out Solutions has implemented its programs in 13 different countries in Africa. The programs have also been brought into communist Cuba, the Ukraine and Iran, a predominantly Muslim country. St. Clair said there has been a huge response in the Ukraine, where the average **church youth group**, he says, has grown at a rate of 313 percent each year.

In Africa, Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry Forums have reached more than 80,000 children per year for the last seven years and have raised nearly 150 leaders to help train youth pastors and children’s ministry leaders.

A former Muslim, Kenyan Charles Juma got saved at 15 and came to the United States 10 years ago to continue his Christian education. He has returned to Africa every year and has been instrumental in discipling and training African church leaders to reach their youth for Christ.

“For the most part, Africa is a very young continent with regards to the age of its population. The population of most countries in East Africa is 75 percent under the age of 25,” Juma said. “Most children have been orphaned because of HIV/AIDS, tribal wars, hunger and other factors. Many of the orphaned youth will most likely end up in the same situation as their parents if the church does not step in and offer them the hope of Christ and the biblical guidelines for living.

“From my perspective, things have really gone well. Today, we have more than 150 Eagle leaders (leaders certified to implement JFYM) and we have trained more than 3,000 other leaders who are ministering to youth. We have two main things going on—public school **evangelism** and leadership training. Each of your leaders has been taught how to penetrate the youth culture, how to create outreach opportunities, and how to disciple the saved youth. As such, many of the churches we work with are experiencing meaningful growth in their youth ministries and are truly grateful to God for JFYM.”

Surprisingly, JFYM’s efforts have met with little resistance in East Africa, including Islamic communities. While there has been some success, there understandably have been a few issues in Iran and Egypt, however.

“There are always concerns about the possibility of opposition,” Juma said. “Yet, we really have received nothing but the warmest opposition in all the places to which we have gone. One of the reasons is that God’s grace and favor have been upon us. The Lord has blessed me with very good education, experience and long history of service to young people in this region. Thus, I have earned the respect of the

people and the right to be heard.”

St. Clair said the JFYM programs have been received better overseas than they have in the United States. However, the programs certainly touched the lives of many American kids and youth leaders.

“The JFYM Forum has been a game-changer for me personally, both at the local churches I served and as a statewide youth leader,” said Steve Maltempi, student ministry strategist at Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. “It gets at the heart of student ministry.”

Reach Out Solutions also has a program for parents called Parent Fuel, which equips them to love God with all their hearts so that they can lead their children to do the same.

For more information on Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry or how to bring the program to your church, call 770-413-6045 or email JFYM at *info@*.