

Youth Building Peace

Since the year 2000 tomorrow, the 12th of August, has been kept as International Youth Day, endorsed and promoted by the United Nations.

To quote from the official website:

“... there is growing recognition that as agents of change, young people’s inclusion in the peace and security agenda and in society more broadly, is key to building and sustaining peace. Another Security Council Resolution ... ([in] 2016) reaffirms the important role youth can play in deterring and resolving conflicts, and are key constituents in ensuring the success of both peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.”

International Youth Day 2017 has as its theme "Youth Building Peace" and “is dedicated to celebrating young people’s contributions to conflict prevention and transformation as well as inclusion, social justice, and sustainable peace.”

It is a cliché, but nonetheless true, to say that young people are our future – not only for our own country but for the whole world. Of course they may not have the experience of those of more mature years. They will still have much to learn. Though in areas of conflict or deprivation they will have experienced things we have been spared and will have had to grow up very quickly.

Against that young people have a concern and an energy that older people may have lost. For as we get older it is easy to become complacent, even cynical, in the face of the world’s problems. Our world needs new insights, a fresh approach to problems, yes, even a sense of anger at injustices.

That is of course why education is so important and essential to the well-being of society, not an optional add-on. Inevitably some young people are more motivated than others. Which it is why it is important to listen to their concerns and value what they can offer.

Young people should be encouraged and nurtured, not sidelined or ignored. That applies as much to the Church as to the world outside the Church. We need to heed the encouragement and optimism expressed in our Bible reading just now (1 John 2.12-14): “I write to you, young people, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

11th August 2017
Kingsley Boulton