

Training Young Leaders for Church Revitalisation

Many churches in Europe realize that they are in need of renewal or revitalization. And many church leaders struggle with how to bring about this revitalization. Paul gives us a profound insight when he writes, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young” (1 Timothy 4:12). It is obvious to us that we need the younger members of our churches to restart, renew and revitalize our fellowships. Therefore, it is vital how we value, train and bring younger people into leadership.

Øyvind Åsland is General Secretary (CEO) of Norwegian Lutheran Mission. Last year the organization celebrated its 125th anniversary. During the last few years he has led some major changes: prioritizing resources towards new areas of mission (scaling down in traditional areas in order to reach the least reached people groups) and starting church planting in Norway as the church situation in Norway has changed. Øyvind has also served as a missionary in Kenya. He is married to Reidun and they have three children.

1. It starts in the family

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

2. Theology matters

Revitalization of Churches can be necessary. Doing this on a sound, solid theological foundation is crucial.

3. Murinho vs Solskjaer

Lead by fear or lead by trust. The recent development in Manchester United is an interesting case of the leader’s potential to trust young people and earn trust from them.

4. Relationships

Mentoring and creating relationships with young people are essential components of nurturing leaders and change.

5. I've got your back!

Be available. Support the young leaders when they fail. Make sure they know that you will also give them the support they need to make changes when opposition comes.