Bringing Fun and Laughter

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What a fortnight! I will never be the same again after four of us from Living Hope Church experienced such love from our brothers and sisters at Joshua Generation in Cape Town. Also because of the beautiful words God spoke to me during our time there in November 2016. Aside from the awesome way that Jesus is at the centre of everything at this church, in my view, our Four12 partnering church, Joshua Generation Church (JoshGen), models one other thing very well: every person serving seemed to be doing what they were doing from a place of life, and not duty.

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I was given the opportunity to attend all kinds of gatherings around JoshGen. The morning congregation at City Bowl, the evening congregation at Durbanville, a worship service at Edgemead, an Evangelism Seminar and Outreach at Sunningdale, a City Bowl youth night, and many others besides. All the people I encountered serving at each of these gatherings, rather than going about their labour (and youth work is labour!) in a sullen 'clock-in, clock-out' way, were bringing fun and laughter to their serving and in essence to the gatherings. How inspiring!

These individuals have great skill in bringing God's life to what they do. It really amazed me and is such a refreshing contrast to what we sadly see in many parts of the world, where many see 'church' as dead religion. I want to take this truth with me everywhere, the truth that the church

we build is the one belonging to God, who is the giver of life!

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Here are some observations on the building blocks of a biblical, New Testament culture, drawn from what I observed during our time with Joshua Generation Church:

Observation 1: People Love People through Having Fun

When someone knows God's love, they can't help but see what God sees in others. 'JoshGen' is a church full of people who love and value their brothers and sisters. This leads to an incredible appetite for hanging out and having fun together – both inside and outside regular meetings. You might think this distracts from the mission of getting people saved and discipling them, however, it actually complements it! Through enjoying the people, these people know they are appreciated, and often, through this alone, their hearts are won.

Observation 2: Boldness in Stepping Out in the Spirit and Living Life in God is key

Let me share some examples of this in this paragraph. Over a lunch during a conversation about a challenge the new Douglas evening church plant faces back in the Isle of Man, a local JoshGen person said, 'Is it cool if I just pray into that right now?' During the social time at the end of a meeting, a person (whom I had met just 2 minutes earlier) came up to me and said, 'Can we prophesy over you?' During a community group, we saw somebody lying in the road after being hit by a car, so a group said, 'Let's go pray with him.' In short, there's a constant atmosphere of life overflowing! It's the fulfilment of verse 1 Thessalonians 3:12: 'May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else.'

Observation 3: Everybody is on The Team

At one of the gatherings, we heard from a group of guys (who aren't deacons, worship leaders or elders) about the trip they had organised to Zimbabwe, which God used powerfully to change lives. One of them described it as feeling God so heavily upon him when he crossed the border in Zimbabwe, it was as if he felt he had turned into Superman. It's not just the elders or a few gifted speakers that are being a part of changing nations. Everyone gets to play, everyone gets to carry the vision and everyone gets to build the kingdom of God and His church.
You may not be an elder or an apostle, but the question is, as God said to Moses, 'What is in your hand?' In other words, you may not be a 'five talents person', according to the parable in Matthew 25, but maybe God has given you 1 or perhaps 2 talents to invest for him. What are you going to do with what you do have?

These are three big observations that I saw that make up JoshGen's 'life skills'; their ability to bring life and godliness to everything they do. Thank you, JoshGen, for showing us around Cape Town, loving us, teaching us and feeding us in more ways than one.