

Why focus on young people? If you follow our ministry, you will know that God has given us a heart for the young people in Guyana. We will never deemphasize discipleship and church planting, but our efforts among those 15-24 will only intensify as we move forward. As you read in our last update, you will know that suicide is a big problem in Guyana. In all the years we have been doing ministry here, we have always been shocked and saddened at the frequency of hearing of people taking their own life, especially when we serve in such a sparsely populated area. In just the past couple of weeks we are aware of at least 4 suicides in our region alone. This puts a new level of seriousness and urgency to our efforts among youth.

After these recent life-ending tragedies, I did a little research to see where Guyana was on this issue. I had a sense that the numbers would not be good. As recent as 5 years ago Guyana had the **highest per capita suicide rate in the world**. It appears that more recent numbers have Guyana at number 3. The rate of suicide in Guyana is more than double that of the United States (and the rate in the United States is not good). Of particular interest to our ministry in Guyana is the fact that 70% of the suicides in Guyana take place in rural areas. One Guyanese official was quoted as saying, “many young people turn to alcohol and self-harm to **cope with the feelings of helplessness, poverty, and economic despair.**” To back this up, I discovered that 80% of Guyanese adolescents had their first drink before the age of 14, and many started as early as elementary school.

We don't want another young person in Guyana to feel hopeless and despairing of the future. With that in mind we want to focus our energies, as it relates to young people, toward a holistic ministry approach. The three pillars of our efforts will include; **Character, Conduct, and Careers**. Character looks at who we are; Conduct looks at how we live; and Career looks at how we contribute. Character is founded upon the gospel and an ever-growing relationship with Jesus. Conduct is founded upon the process of spiritual formation and applying that to everyday life. Career is founded upon life and job skills that enable positive contributions to the needs of family, community, and nation.

You can start right now by getting involved. **Will you lead your youth group, or even your own children, to pray for the young people in Guyana?** There is a war being waged and Satan has a goal – to steal, to kill, and to destroy. Opposing him, Jesus also has a goal for these young people – to give life and life more abundantly! Pray against the wave of helplessness, poverty, and economic despair in Guyana.

THANK YOU! Over the past several days we have been able to distribute more of the COVID 19 relief supplies you have provided. Pastor Paul has reported making a delivery to the Warau villages near him. The people were shocked and overwhelmed by the show of love from Christian people they have never met. The people are eager, more than ever, to have regular services in their villages to learn of God.

SPECIFIC PRAYER REQUESTS: Thank you for those who regularly pray for our ministry – prayer is our single greatest and urgent need. Here are four specific requests: 1) “Opening up” of Guyana (still uncertain); 2) increase in monthly and project funds – we are underfunded in both areas; 3) growth and spiritual impact of current ministry efforts; 4) wisdom in planting churches – **requests are coming from at least 6 villages** on a regular basis, (many more will follow)!