

# FRESH FAITH

## 35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, what can our young generation contribute to the church?

### The Value of Grace

by Alannah Tjhatra



As a kid, Joshua Hernandez was always drawn to the idea of being a teacher. He liked the idea of working with teenagers, and his outgoing personality helped him connect with others on a personal level. So when Joshua became the assistant men's dean at Kingsway College, he knew this must be part of God's plan for him.

Joshua, who's now 28, grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist home in Brantford, Ont., and attended public school for most of his life. In 2018, he took a job as the cook at Camp Frenda. There, one of his responsibilities was organizing a vast team of teenagers in the kitchen. His interactions with them came

naturally—and when he was hired as assistant dean, he brought this same energy to his new position.

"My goal as a dean is to model a Christlike character, develop meaningful relationships, and love and serve others like Jesus," shares Josh. He enjoys having long talks with the boys, discussing spiritual and personal life matters. He does everything from prayer calls on Sabbath mornings to workout sessions with the guys from the dorm.

Joshua stresses the importance of checking in with the students—asking them what their stories are, how their lives have been going lately. And this impact goes both ways: he not only seeks to inspire them but also finds himself inspired by them, often.

"I see God working through the boys when they care for one another, when they go the extra mile at work, and when they come to my office to have deep discussions about the challenges they're going through," explains Josh. "For example, if one of [the boys'] roommates or friends is sick, they'll check in on them, take food to them. Just those small things are really impactful."

Josh explains that his role has taught him a lot about the value of grace. "You're really kind of put in a father-figure role here. ... It's really helped me to humble myself, and to just think, *Man, God is so good*. He really cares."

Through his work, Joshua has further learned the importance of being supportive and listening without judgment. He hopes to show each student that everyone has a valuable identity in God. And in truly getting to know who a person is inside, we may start seeing—in one another—the beauty that God sees in us. ■

#### Aidan Li

Creating ways to evangelize and bring souls to Christ that utilize the tools given to us in the 21st century.



#### Chris Ngugi

I believe that people in the church of my generation should be willing to just be someone's friend. No pre-judgment. No hypocritical piety. No angry arguments. Just some good old-fashioned Jesus-centred love.

#### Julia Randall

We contribute passion, creativity, and concern. Our generation consists of people with unique strengths and perspectives, but unified, we use these to take multifaceted approaches to important issues.



#### Laura Oliveira

I think young people are usually the most effective outreach contributors in a church. Because current social issues have the most effect on the younger generation, we're a great intermediary between society and the church.

#### Nora Martin

The church needs to put more of an emphasis on actually doing things in the community, helping out, and spreading resources. Otherwise, it's all just empty words.



#### Zoe Shiu

A healthy skepticism toward church ideology and practices. We should evaluate whether our dogmas actually help the healing, growth, and love of others; and if they don't, respectfully challenge the status quo with our behaviour.

