

Experiencing Revival – and Thinking Further

A Swiss delegation travelled to a conference held by the Heart of God Church in Singapore. IDEA asked Lisa Curiger and Tobias Bendig from Viva Church Switzerland to share their experiences.

How can a church remain permanently young and dynamic – not just once, but over many years, generation after generation?

This question led a delegation consisting of leaders from Viva Kirche Schweiz and FEG Schweiz as well as several pastors from these associations to travel to Singapore to visit Heart of God Church (HOGC).

A Church with Young People – for Young People

The journey did not begin with a plane ticket but with a book: 'GenerationS – How to Grow Your Church Younger and Stronger' written by HOGC's founding couple, Pastor Lia and Pastor How. It describes how a church does not simply care for young people but intentionally disciples them, living out a vision of a church for – and with – teenagers and youth. The Young Generation Team Viva Kirche Schweiz came across the book a year and a half ago, which repeatedly sparked discussions. Their curiosity grew so much that two members of the team attended the national conference of the Bund Freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden (BFP) - Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany last September, where Pastors How and Lia, together with a young team, shared personally about the heartbeat and life of their church. This awakened the desire to get to know this movement on-site. HOGC is a modern independent church in the city-state of Singapore with more than 5,000 attendees on a weekend. What is impressive is not only its size but its DNA: Young people are not the leaders of tomorrow but of today.

Love for Teenagers – Not Just a Target Group but Co-Creators

The young generation is at the center of HOGC – and they are given responsibility. The goal is to lead young people to Jesus and train them as leaders. This involves not only spiritual maturity but also character development, growth in skills, and capacity for thinking. The church relies on a finely tuned three-generation model: a younger teen serving, an older youth mentoring, and a young adult supervising – all working together in one ministry area. This enables real learning, guided growth, and deep relationships. One symbolic example: Cohen joined the worship team as a drummer at the age of seven and, at ten served for the first time in the main service



Swiss delegation and their hosts

– in front of over 5,000 young people. This is possible because older ones continually invest in the younger generations and make room for them. What matters is not talent but trust. This is reflected in a core statement of the church: 'Give them a voice, a vote, a veto.' True involvement requires courage to co-create – even when young people challenge the ideas of the older generation. The attitude is: 'We must enable the next generation to go further than we did.' This willingness to hand over responsibility is challenging – and at the same time inspiring.

Prayer – Not an Add-On, but the Source and Engine of Revival

A core conviction at HOGC is: 'Revival can happen wherever we are.' It begins with prayer for friends and family. Prayer groups have been founded by HOGC teenagers, usually soon after their personal decision for Jesus. One girl shared how she and a friend started praying together – and within weeks their group grew to over 15 people. Prayer in HOGC is not an accompanying program but a foundation. In services, small groups, and friendships, people pray regularly and fervently for spiritual breakthroughs in their environment. As a result, young people often bring dozens of friends to church. Leadership emphasizes repeatedly: without prayer there is no revival – and without young people who pray, there is no transformation.



Praise at the GenerationS Pastors Conference in Heart of God Church Singapore

Discipleship at the Center

What deeply impressed us at HOGC was their heart for discipleship. For them, following Jesus is not a teaching format but a relationship-centered lifestyle. It often happens in close one-to-one contact. Pastors model this through shared meals, sports, conversations, or ministry together. Pastor Lia put it this way: 'When they feel my love, they will also accept my correction.' This combination of acceptance and challenge shapes the way young people are allowed to grow. Teenagers are trained early to be attentive to their environment: Who is open to the gospel? Who shows genuine interest in following Jesus? The church speaks of 'sons of peace' – people who signal: 'I want to learn what it means to follow Jesus.' The focus is not on those who only want to consume, but on those ready to be shaped – and to invest in others themselves. The many testimonies from teenagers and youth at the conference were moving – not because they were perfect, but because they spoke honestly about failure and growth and about life-changing encounters with Jesus. Their motto: 'We want to raise many strong disciples, not just one strong leader.'

Transferability – and Necessary Questions

Of course, not everything can be directly applied to the Swiss church landscape. Structures, culture, and history are very different. Some observations also raise critical questions. Pastor David Ohnemus (Viva Kirche Amriswil) summed it up: 'We have a church history of over 150 years – with many traditions and patterns. Naturally, it is easier to build a new parallel structure

than to change an existing church.' While different generations work together naturally at HOGC, in Switzerland we often struggle to break out of established ideas of working in age groups. The challenge remains: 'What is Singaporean culture – and what is Kingdom-of-God culture?' (Dani Eichenberger)

What Does This Mean for Our Churches?

For us as a study tour group, it became clear: Switzerland does not need a copy of HOGC. But it does need churches that do not lose their focus on young people. Tobias Bendig put it bluntly: 'If we continue as we are, our churches will die out – we cannot afford not to focus on the young generation.' We need churches where young people are not only welcome but needed. Where older people don't step aside but build bridges. We need the older generations as mentors, intercessors, encouragers, supporters, enablers. Because young people do not replace the older generation – they amplify them.

Conclusion

Heart of God Church in Singapore shows how not just one generation can be reached but many can be released. Their example is both challenging and encouraging. Spiritual life grows where trust, responsibility, and prayer are given space. Our churches can become younger. But that does not happen automatically – only if we want it, and if we are willing to make room for it.