

Theological Reflections on the 4/14 Window Nurturers Movement.

Abstract

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The '4/14 Window' has been with us for some time. That most people who make a decision to follow Christ will do so under the age of 18, (i.e. the '4/14 Window') is not just a youth leader's frothy conviction – it is an established fact. Recognizing this, the growing '4/14' movement has long focused on 'Reaching and Rescuing' the '414ers.' More recently they have emphasized their 'Rooting and Releasing,' viewing them as not just *objects* of evangelism and mission, but also as *agents*.

It has been argued though that some of this may be overenthusiastic or mis-guided – that children and young people are exploited when thrust into roles or missional activities which are unbiblical or inappropriate. The exploitation of the young girl in Acts 16 comes to mind.

A recent, encouraging emphasis within the 4/14 Movement is the 'Nurturers' focus. The starting point is that children and young people can be, or are in fact, 'their brother's keeper.' The emphasis is on encouraging young people to care for and minister not to adults, but to their peers and younger siblings. It is felt that these may be roles for young people which have more legitimacy and impact.

There has been some 'theological thinking' about the assumptions and expectations of the 4/14 Window Movement, but little or none on the 'Nurturers.' This paper reflect on this, seeking to critically assess and advance the theological foundations for the 'Nurturers' Movement.