



Media Release

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Attn: News Editor
For Immediate Release

Bring the soul back to our streets

For many years now across Australia Christians have been getting together to put on Festivals for their local communities to mark significant events and points in the calendar. These Festivals were the brainchild of a Christian Youth & Community Organisation called Fusion as a way to bring communities together again, with the Body of Christ at the centre. Current figures indicate that one in five Australians have attended one of these festivals. When Sydney hosted the Olympics in 2000, Fusion coordinated a network of Festivals on the opening night bringing 20,000 people together in their local communities to celebrate the event. On the back of this, Fusion was invited to Greece last year to do a similar thing.

A team of about 60 Fusion volunteers from Australia, UK and Canada travelled to Greece to help local Christians run Festivals in several locations across the country. These Festivals became the ground for communities to connect in a spontaneous and very real way. Young and old, once strangers in their neighbourhood came together in such a way that was to change how they saw each other forever. Individuals were in tears as they saw community restored to their streets; something profound and healing was taking place. And it was all done unashamedly in the name of Christ and His Kingdom.

The same phenomenon has been witnessed this past year in England, Northern Ireland, Jamaica, and Canada and continues across Australia as local Christians work to reconnect with their communities in this unique way. One member of the community at a Festival held in Oxfordshire last year said, 'if this is what church is like, I'll come next week'. Fusion has subsequently been asked to bring Festivals to the World Cup in Germany, the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne 2006 and the Olympics in Beijing in 2008.

Fusion Youth & Community began ,in the UK 2 years ago and have been networking with local Christians to find fresh and effective ways of reconnecting with their communities. Festivals have been a key part of this. Marty Woods, Director of 'Fusion Youth and Community UK' says, ***"This year we plan to have 10 Festivals before July 2005 in cities, market towns and villages across the UK."***

Festivals have proven to be an effective means for Churches to move from praying together onto next steps in combined mission to see whole communities transformed. What is the secret? They are based on creating an 'Open Crowd', a warm inclusive community where everyone is wanted and everybody belongs. The skills and

understandings necessary to build the Open Crowd have been put together in a course called **Foundations** which has been developed over the past 45 years of Fusion's work with young people and their communities.

March 13th 2005 sees the start of the next week-long Foundations course to be held in Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. It provides Christians with skills and strategies necessary for transforming their communities, including how to create the Open Crowd. The unique training and leadership program, road tested by thousands of people from all walks of life, is preparing people across the world for co-operative mission. The course concludes with an opportunity to participate first hand in what the Greek communities experienced last summer as course participants put on a Festival for the local community.

About the Course:

The strength of the course lies in the integration of three streams. The Living with God stream is designed to help us come to terms with our lives by being able to distinguish between the voice of God and the host of other human needs and prejudices which clamour for our attention. Living with Others helps us in the development of practical skills which allow us to become vehicles of love, change and growth in the lives of those we share our lives with. Living with Yourself takes us on a journey of discovery into the make-up of our own souls. How did we get the picture we have of ourselves? Can we trust it? How does our body with its nervous system, its hormones and other chemical responses impact on us? What's the difference between true and false guilt? Can attitudes be changed? How do we develop new habits that serve us?

This course will run from the 13th to the 19th of March 2005 and is open to everyone. To find out more information about this and other Foundations courses in the UK and overseas either contact Marty Woods on 01865 876596, email marty.woods@fusion.org.au or go to <http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/fusionuk/foundations>.