



Dr. Marsha Boyd-Mitchell (centre, front) is the executive director of Christians Action Federation NB Inc., and head of schools for Sussex Christian Schools. Here she stands with students of Soojung Vision School, Seoul, South Korea.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”
Matthew 11:28, NIV

As I write this article, I am back in southeast Asia to visit parents, agents, and schools for the first time in three years. Since my previous visit, COVID changed so many things; international travel was one of those obvious changes. Travelling to Seoul, South Korea, I was able to visit Soojung Vision School, which we consider a sister school to Sussex Christian School. I was happy to do chapel for a group of middle school-aged students and present Christian Action Federation New Brunswick's Rekindle Hope program.¹

On my visit, I talked to agents, teachers, and school administrators along the way. They spoke to me about the situation in South Korea with their youth. School leaders describe a heaviness students carry to perform well and receive high grades in school. *For the past two decades, South Korea has had the highest suicide rate among developed nations.*² Teens and preteens are concerned that they cannot get ahead enough to have a good life; they feel despair.

I am always interested to hear the triumphs and struggles of young people around the world. How are different cultures raising up a next generation of youth, and especially youth in the

life of the church? Soojung Vision School exists because the leadership of the church wants an opportunity to train young Christian leaders. Even in that school, the principal says it is hard to transcend culture and look to what God has for us in the Scriptures. They have a new focus in South Korea about mental health struggles, and are trusting for a breakthrough before more young people reach the breaking point.

Matthew 11:28 says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,” and the next verse continues, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” The God of the Holy Scriptures wants rest, balance, and restoration for our lives. Our souls need rest to be able to prioritize seeking first the kingdom of God and to be still and know who he is, and have him speak to us.

I was pleased to be able to share the themes of CAFNB's Rekindle Hope with this special group of young people. I was able to encourage them to rejoin, refuel, restore, recharge, and reset. The message of this presentation is that now that restrictions have lifted, it is important for youth to meet “in person” with others. They need to enjoy the health benefits of being



with friends and family, and not just meet over technology.

Our body craves many unhealthy foods, and they are readily available. We want to raise responsible youth to consider a balanced diet as part of refueling a healthy body and a healthy mind. Sleeping each night is a practical way to find rest (recharge). In many parts of the world, North America included, research concludes that young people are not getting enough sleep. Technology is a huge factor, as it is ever-present with most students. The students in South Korea are no exception to this. They are studying so hard at night that sometimes they sleep through classes during the day to keep rested. Others talk late into the night or play games on their device. A reset is needed to evaluate tech habits, considering a stronger mental health.

Exercise will help to restore our body's ability to process stress and tension. These healthy habits are best formed in youth. Encouraging playing a team sport, or individual fitness and strengthening outlets are key to forming the body God has entrusted us with.

Southeast Asian countries are just now feeling mandates and pandemic restrictions lift that the West saw ease a year ago. This can be a season for spiritual renewal for all of us, young and old. We all need to consider taking the time to reflect on God and his Word, and really getting down to living out the guidelines he set out for us. Living a godly life leads to the kind of rest and peace mentioned in Matthew, Chapter 11. Please continue to pray for the young people in South Korea and for our youth here at home. The Creator of the universe wants them to feel hope.

1. cafmb.ca/rekindle-hope.
 2. “South Korea Is No Country for Young People,” by Katrin Park, Foreign Policy (foreignpolicy.com).