

# *Ascension Notes*



Youth Service

## Youth Service

There are a number of good reasons that various cultures provide avenues for young people to leave home and discover the larger world beyond their immediate surroundings. Sometimes an adventuresome spirit can be disruptive if too closely contained. Some young people need to get away from oppressive home lives. Others will just enjoy meeting people and having new experiences.

I would like to see a Youth Service Corps established. In my imagination, by the time someone reaches 18 to 21 years of age they would have learned enough practical skills to be valuable and worthy of welcome wherever they were received. I can envision a socially acceptable activity for the young to travel about in some identifying clothing, maybe a shirt or hat, which would announce, "I'm on my walkabout." They would be taken into homes as they passed through the world and temporarily sheltered in exchange for chores or stories of their adventures.

Some would find romantic connections and settle. Others might find apprenticeship situations that suit their desires to learn and grow. Still others would travel for several years (no more than three I would suggest and generally two years) and return home with their horizons vastly expanded. There might be a system of Hostels created to support the system that should be kept as informal as possible to provide the individual participants with freedom beneath which is a social safety net for support when difficulties arise.

Better yet I'd like to live in a society where family units created guesthouses on their home sites. Youth service participants could use them. Travelers could use them. The effort to do so would be more than justified by the joy of sharing the stories of those on vacation or sabbatical and in time taking your own turn about the world.

It is important for a vital culture for people to have the melting pot of empathetic connections stirred on a continuing basis.