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editorial : still the same



As a teenager growing up in Tanzania the most exciting church activities for me were the MV (Missionary Volunteers, now called AYS (Adventist Youth Society) programs. Every Sabbath afternoon we met for youth programs followed by witnessing in nearby villages where we gave Bible Studies and even preached. It was during this time that the “Voice of Youth” campaign was launched throughout the world church, and Tanzania took this project for its youth very seriously. In my early years Youth Ministry played a great part in shaping me into being a bold witness for Jesus Christ. And sometimes I wonder if I would have chosen the path of a preacher if Youth Ministry had not impacted my life the way it did.

I thank God that the Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministry, since its inception in 1879, has remained focused on its primary objectives, preparing young people for the Second Coming and challenging them to participate in the mission of the church. Thousands of young men and women have gone through the Pathfinder and senior youth programs of our church, and most of them today are still serving the Lord. Some are leaders in the church and others are outstanding government leaders around the world. Talking of the importance of the youth in the church, Ellen White said, “In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause...” *Gospel Workers*, page 67.

The General Conference Youth Ministries Department still believe in the founding purpose of Youth Ministry in the Seventh day Adventist Church. For over 130 years the Youth Ministries Department has been heralding the message to save and involve youth in the work of evangelism in the church. Youth Ministry is still the same and it will continue to be the same for the next generations of youth. It is because of this strong belief in the benefits of Youth Ministry in our church that we are producing this special issue on leadership for our subscribers and the delegates of the 59th General Conference Session.

In this issue you will hear about the importance of youth ministry from some of the most experienced youth leaders in our church, and how we can strengthen it as we enter the next quinquennium.

When we look at the examples that Jesus left us in the Bible, we see time and time again that He calls His followers to ALWAYS remain committed to their calling as disciples and leaders. (Luke 14: 26-27) Today is no different. If ever there was a time when we need to remind those who work with the youth about the importance of commitment and a biblically based and theologically sound philosophy it is now! There are so many voices around the world to distract young people, but for us Seventh-day Adventists, our voice must remain one with God through His spoken Word as we minister to our youth.

It is my sincere prayer that your commitment to your calling and passion for the salvation of youth will be rekindled as you read the pages of this special issue. ●

Baraka G Muganda, Ed.D.
World Youth Director.

devotional : the called



While a student at the Collonges Theological Seminary in France I remember trying to understand why Jesus chose the twelve disciples, and how he actually chose them. Now, without consulting your Bible try to think of the names of all the twelve. Do they all come to mind? Maybe Peter, James and John and Judas come to mind, and, yes, of course, Doubting Thomas. But what about the others? Can you remember them all by name?

The first time we see this list is in Matthew 10:2-4, “These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.” The twelve disciples were ordinary men whom God used in an extraordinary manner. Among the twelve were fishermen and two politicians—Simon the radical and Matthew the Roman Empire supporter (the tax collector). Except for Judas these are the twelve who became apostles, but all Jesus’ followers are called disciples, and the first one, named in Acts, is a woman—Dorcas!

Now that we have the list try to think of something special about James, the son of Alpheus or about Matthew, apart from the fact that he wrote the first Gospel. And what about Philip, and Bartholomew? We don’t normally think about them when we think “Jesus’ disciples”, most people think of or only remember Peter, James, and John, Thomas and Judas... why?

Because we usually remember the people who are upfront and visible. The ones in the spotlight—and the others? Well! But, does this mean that Jesus used a good method to choose some and goofed with the others?

No, He did not. He did not pick a uniform group of disciples—all like Peter (the natural leader), or all like John or Bartholomew. He chose each one because of, or in spite of, who they were. They were unique and so were their gifts and talents, and all was needed to help form a balanced group. For instance, Andrew was the disciple who brought others to Jesus. He brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus. “The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ).” (John 1:41 (NIV)

And it was Andrew who found and brought the little boy with his lunch to Jesus. “Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother,

spoke up, “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” John 6:8-9. And in John 12:20-23 we again find Andrew, this time he is bringing a group of Greeks to speak with Jesus. Andrew was the people finder. But do we normally think of him that way? Jesus needs all types of leaders, introverts and extroverts.

Jesus is the ultimate leader. He led by example and made disciples of men. He knew how to define His mission, convey it to the team, and train them to get the job done. And what a job they did! Jesus’ vision was not centered on their immediate vicinity. No, instead His vision was for the entire world and for time eternal. He charged His disciples: “... “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age” Matthew 28:19, 20. And His team is still impacting the world today. ●

Jonatán Tejel,
Editor



WHY STUDY YOUR BIBLE

By V. Bailey Gillespie, Ph.D.

If you were God and wanted to talk with human beings, would you have used such a complicated mode as a book to trumpet your message? Books are filled with all kinds of problems. They rely too much on the writer's expertise. In the days when the Bible was being written, they had to be copied again and again in order to be useful. Then they had to be translated so more people could understand them. And books use a vocabulary too often limited by the intelligence level of the writer. In other words, books are usually only as good as the author. That is the key to the significance of the miraculous book we call the Bible. God is the author of the most impressive book in the history of humankind.

■ **The Bible is the Word of God**—It is particularly humbling to think about the Bible as God's Word. The God of the universe, capable of thundering the eternal message throughout the heavens or painting a clear message of love on the clouds, chose to use a medium as human as the local newspaper to share the message of salvation and grace. And it is just because God chose to use such a common expression of communication that the Bible has the potential to meet our very personal needs. It can touch us where we live. God chose to talk to humans through a medium we all use every day, and to do so throughout history with confidence that the message of salvation would continue to be clear and transforming.

Recent research probing individuals' personal religious practice revealed that many people who identify with the Christian message have difficulty developing a regular, deep, and personal religious life. This research, called the *Valuegenesis* study, was completed two times by the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. First done in 1990 and again in 2000, the study targeted the faith, values, and commitment of young people.¹ More than 24,000 youth in grades 6 through 12 participated in this study to give us some insight into the religious habits of students. We will do this project another time in October 2010 to see if there are any new trends about these issues in the lives of the current generation of Adventist young people.

In this research we had hoped to discover that the Adventist Church was made up of devout Christians worshipping and praying on a daily basis. We had hoped to see Bible study too, but substantial numbers fell short of practicing this devotional exercise even once a week. Only slightly over half (53%) of the Adventist high school youth said they prayed personally at least once a day, and 5% never prayed on their own initiative in the first study in 1990. And reading the Bible devotionally (not part of any assignment for school) fared even worse, with only 14% of the youth in Adventist schools and considerably fewer among Adventist students in public education doing it on a daily basis. The largest single group, some 18% of the youth surveyed, studied the Bible less than once a month. We repeated the research in 2000 and found slight changes.² For example, ten years later, 17% read their Bibles on their own while 10% never read it at all. Thus, on the two key devotional practices of prayer and Bible study, Adventist youth were weak, according to this research project of over 12,000 Adventist-schooled students. In 1990, Roger Dudley suggested, "Such lack of spiritual nurturing may be a warning signal of fading interest in religion and eventual drop out from the church."³

And what is most interesting is the fact that Americans swear by the Bible; over 80% believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. But apparently they don't read it. "Sixty-five percent of Americans agree that the Bible "answers all or most of the basic questions of life." Almost half of people who believe this about the Bible read it at least weekly. Interestingly, 28% of those who agree with this say they rarely or never read the Bible."⁴

■ **The Bible is an Important Book**—The Bible is the most read book ever printed. There are more translations of it than any other book in the history of the world, and it has inspired myriad sermons, motivated scores of pilgrims, and directed millions of Christians to strive to be more than they are. But even with these glowing reviews, many Christians have problems making the Bible meaningful in their day-to-day walk with God.

During my teaching at La Sierra University, I often encounter students that have only a limited knowledge of the Bible. They have a new Bible given to them at graduation or on some other special occasion such as baptism. But when I ask them to open and study it with me in classes which explore dynamic personal religious experience and religious faith and life, they are often stumped at where to begin. And after they have been taught the tools and skills required for careful, reflective study, they are still faced with the biggest question of all in regards to Bible study.

The big question is that of finding true meaning in their Bible study for their own life. Everyone works at this problem—children, youth, young adults and adults. For teens, the search prompts questions about life phrased in terms of purpose, ultimate significance, direction, destiny, values, relevance, or understanding. If children ask "meaning" questions, they probably do it in the familiar words "why?" "Why not?" "How come?" "Where to?" and, "What for?" Teens often wonder about the same things but ask them in more

personal terms. These “meaning” questions reflect our concern about our real life now.

As a university professor I am often confronted after my “wonderful, insightful, carefully crafted” lecture on a dimension of spiritual life with the question of a new college student. “So what?” As annoying as this question is, it is a profoundly important one and one that really must be answered. We witness to the fact that an experience with the Bible brings new understanding about the meaning of life here and now. Your Bible, this interesting book, is about meaning-making. Encountering it confronts us with insight and understanding. We can be encouraged to make biblically aware decisions that are our own through regular Bible study.

The Bible’s use of narrative and stories is a useful tool here for decision making. Through the use of story, we can be successfully brought into the situation whereby the options for action can be observed and clearly known. The biblical story invites personal involvement. It simply gets us involved in the plot, and the conclusion of the story becomes our own.

The Bible provides moments which stretch the imagination of every one of all ages and, like case studies, opens up discussions about making decisions. The Bible

becomes a vehicle helping us change our attitudes and our very behaviors, and therefore, our lives can be changed by reading it.

■ **Simple Questions, Profound Importance**— We want to explore some most-asked questions about Bible study and provide some suggestions about their possible answers. These three questions are not all-inclusive, and in fact, may raise other questions you might consider in your own study. But they are ones that are often asked and are important to consider if Bible study is to become both relevant and meaningful.

How can the Bible relate to our daily life and give us a foundation to meet all of the situations and problems in life today?

Why is Bible study so important?

What can I do to help you have a more personal study of the Bible?

Let’s give these questions a try and see if your study of the Bible can be enriched and made more personal and important to you.

■ **Your Bible for Today**—The first thing to realize if we are going to have the Bible make sense in our lives is that it isn’t the *book* that makes the difference; it’s the *Person* we meet in the book who is important. Often we make the very pages of the Bible special. We are taught to respect the book, to

treat it with care and value it. But in reality, the book is just a book. However, it points to a person that has ultimate power and strength, and it is Jesus that can make a difference in our lives.

As we study the Book, we are confronted with challenges that test our values. Just as surely, we meet the people of the Word who, as they live, make good and bad choices. We learn the consequences of life-affirming and life-denying choices as we live for a time with each Bible character.

It isn’t just having this Book that makes a difference in our lives. It is the Person we meet there. The stories of Bible characters are recorded for a reason. Their lives point to something. Their victories teach us specific things. The pages of history roll as we turn the brittle pages of our own Bibles, but they roll towards something, some purpose. One unique thing about Christianity and, in fact, all religions that believe in one God, is that time always moves to a meaningful conclusion. There is no hint of cyclical time periods which encourage reincarnation doctrines. No mention of periods of history where God worked in a different way to save His people. Christianity sees history going somewhere—toward some purpose. As one student said, “Life is like a cafeteria line. At some point there is the check-out counter!”

One way Adventists view history as a great controversy. Through it we see all of the characters of the drama of salvation—the good and bad, the witnesses for each side, the tests of strength, not unlike those early Greek myths when the gods tested human power through challenges. But Christian history moves to one spectacular event. Beginning before the creation story (John 1) and moving through the scenes of the first reality of death caused by sin on earth (the Cain and Abel story), we see the direction and movement focusing on the coming of God to earth through his Son, Jesus.

The stories of conquest, freedom, tribulation, leadership and success all point to the coming of Christ who solves and

dominates the story. The temple tableau with its incense, music, garments and furniture directs the mind to the saving power of God and the death of Jesus for our sins. Even the altar of holocausts (burnt offerings) moved Old Testament believers to focus on the gracious, giving, saving act of God.

From the cities of refuge dominating the book of Joshua, which point to the nature of God's forgiveness, through the acceptance of the woman at the well, in which even "Samaritans" are included in God's kingdom, through the kind acts of the Messiah, Jesus is the central figure who teaches. He moves history. And what of the book of Revelation? Who is it that begins and ends the story? Who is walking among the churches? To whom do

all nations, kindred, tongues, and peoples finally bow? Jesus is the center of the story. In fact, Jesus is the story. So it is not the book that is important; it is the Person of the book who merits our consideration and ensures our spiritual success.

■ **Your Attitude is Crucial—**

It isn't the message that makes a difference; it is the commitment to what the Bible says. Sometimes we are in awe at the information the Bible records. But what makes a difference in our lives is the commitment to what we learn from the Bible. All of the memorization of the Bible, while a good memory exercise, may not give us the inspiration we seek for building a mature faith. We have argued before that one should always ask the question "so what" at the end of Bible study,

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He is the chief investigator and publications editor of the research project in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist entitled *Valuegenesis: A study of faith, values and commitment*, and *Valuegenesis2—additional studies on faith, values, and commitment*. **In the Fall of 2010 Dr. Gillespie will direct Valuegenesis3 in this series of generational research studies.** He is on the research team of *Cognitivegenesis* studying the quality of Adventist education.

His books in association with this research include, *Faith in the Balance*, with Roger L. Dudley, and *Perspectives on Values*. He edited *Teaching Values*, and was a contributor to the Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Religion in the area of psychology of religion. His latest books include, *Ten Years Later: A Study of Two Generations*, and *Hey! Love Them and They Will Come*, and with his wife, Judith, authors of *Keeping the Faith: A Guidebook for Spiritual Parenting* all available through AdventSource. He is a popular speaker and presenter for youth, young adults, and family ministry in the United States and abroad.

because making sense of the text, plus becoming committed to what it counsels, is the life-changing practice needed.

Looking for the “response aim” of the text is what decides the text’s impact on our soul. Commitment comes when we recognize the importance and relevance of something. Now, theologically speaking, we know that the Bible is an authority in our lives. The logic goes this way: If there is a God, that God might try to communicate with His creation. Any revelation from that God would be important to know. Since the Bible is one of the only specific revelations of God’s will we have in written form, the information we have in the Bible is there for a reason. And, by extension, the information contained in it would be important to understand and could guide us. In fact, it provides us insight into the very mind of God. Logically, then, the Bible’s importance and uniqueness demands attention, commitment, and action.

While this is logical and is easy to talk about, it is way too often difficult to do. We don’t give our loyalties easily. We have to be inspired and often challenged to stretch our commitments into action. This is what is so beautiful about Scripture. Through the stories of the Bible we learn how others dealt with the claim of God on their lives. We see the results of

commitment which leads to action. We see both the positives and negatives to those commitments. For example, we see Peter, James, John, Nehemiah, Deborah, Ruth, and Dorcas responding to the challenge of their faith. Their stories and choices help us sort out our own commitments. They become role models in a way. It is their message that points us to our commitments. That is important in our study of the Word of God. It is the spiritual insight we receive through our study that moves us toward serious personal commitment.

■ **It’s not what we know that counts**—It isn’t the knowledge we learn from the Bible that makes a difference in our lives as much as it is the application of that insight to our daily lives. There are lots of things to learn in the Bible. I remember when I was young, the youth of the church would meet together on Sabbath afternoon at the Clarks’ house and play “Bible Bowl.” This religious quiz game stretched our knowledge of Bible trivia and history. The game was usually won by my friend who had an almost photographic memory. And I usually went away discouraged about my knowledge of Bible information. I did not grow up learning all of the Bible stories and names. People like Abijah, Terah, Micah, and Shishank were

hard for me to remember, much less to know what they did in history. Later, when I had time to understand these people in their historical context and memorize their historical contribution in God’s story, it was much, much easier. I have since learned that the strength of my spiritual life is in direct proportion to the time I spend making sure I understand the text, rather than just learning the facts contained in it.

I can’t stress enough how important it is to know how to apply the biblical message to our personal lives. I find that victory comes when I understand *how* biblical characters obtained victory, not the mere fact that they were victorious.

■ **Digging Deeper into Scripture**—But now let’s get down to doing some creative Bible study. Here are seven principles of Bible study that can help you establish a meaningful relationship with God’s Word and give you some creative approaches to getting young people involved in this life-changing exercise.

1. *Remember, it is God’s story, but was written by people with the same struggles we face.* In the retelling, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Bible writers tried to share a glimpse of what God was really like. So try to ask the question to your youth, What is God trying to say to me

today? What is the message the Bible writer was desperately trying to give me? Don't stop your study until you have some practical answers to the stories of God's people.

2. *Remember, the words of the Bible are important, so read in a translation—yes, translation, not a paraphrase—that is relevant to you where you live now.* That probably means finding a modern translation that fits the teens you work with. The King James Bible just might not work too well, but the Message Bible may be just what you are looking for. Try out modern translations, look to see how they were translated, and select something based on the most recent and clear scholarship on the ancient texts of the Bible.

3. *Read the Bible in large sections.* All too often we simply find a good text and try to apply it. But without the context, any text might be misread. When people tell a story, they want you to hear the whole thing. For example, your pastor gives a glimpse of life in the Bible through an artful description of the geography and lifestyle of Bible characters. Moses lives in the richness of Egyptian courts. Daniel shines in the reflection of Babylonian lions. John the Revelator shows us a glimpse of loneliness in the midst of the sea surrounding

Patmos. Storytelling (narrative sharing) helps us understand. When someone stops just short of the punch line in a joke, the meaning and the feelings are forgotten. That is why reading the Bible is especially invigorating when done in large portions, at one sitting. You may wish to reread the short Gospel of Mark again and see that the chapters set out four major acts in the drama of Jesus' life: His preparation for mission; the conflicts raging around him; the trauma of the cross; and the final victory of the resurrection. When we see the whole book, we get the big picture.

4. *Don't be afraid to say you simply can't understand the text.* We must admit, at times, we are incapable of understanding all the mysteries that command attention in the Bible. How did the incarnation happen? How can God become human? What would happen if Jesus had sinned? Does God know everything? How did sin occur? Why is personal victory so hard? These and many other questions will come up in your study of the Bible. You may or may not find clear answers immediately.

But as in anything, when we don't understand, we seek help. And there are all kinds of help for the serious Bible student. We can call an expert or find explanation using other tools.

We can share our concerns with each other and help young people not to become discouraged if they can't seem to get an answer right away. Admitting that we don't have all the answers opens us up for the working of the Holy Spirit who is to lead us to all truth.

5. *Help your youth get on a schedule and help them keep it.* Find a special time for study, and discover a special place as well. In this age of fast food, fast film, one-half hour TV shows, Facebook and Twitter, blocking out time to study takes discipline. Find your own schedule, make your schedule fit you, and begin—by all means begin!

6. *Get it down.* Buy a special notebook. Find note cards. Open a personal file on your computer. Build a journal all your own. Always, always keep notes on what you study. Now, I know that this is the teacher in me talking. But I am amazed by how many students can sit in a college classroom thoughtfully staring at the instructor and never writing anything down. Perhaps they have photographic memories. But I know from my teaching experience that the students who do the best in class always write down what is being said. And, strangely enough, when exam time comes rolling around, they are usually rewarded for their effort.

7. *Look for the biblical principles.* As we look for the general principles in the Bible, we will find ourselves trying to make these apply in real-life situations. Our families will be impacted by the dramatic way our lives seem to be changing. But unless we find the general, universal principles, the specifics in our own lives will seldom change.

As we look to apply general principles to our lives, we have at least three options:

- (A.) We can apply the principles we discover in the Bible to the exact situation *in the passage of Scripture*. For example, when we are tempted to judge, we can think about the women taken in adultery recorded in the book of John. We see John suggesting that we all have sinned, and judging is never appropriate. Sometimes the situation the Bible character faced is the same as the situation we face. Ephesians 6:11,12 suggests that we need help fighting against the devil's arrows. Paul reminds us that our battle is not against "flesh and blood." This counsel is appropriate in exactly the same setting Paul gave it. We face the same problems and need the same solution.
- (B.) We can apply the general principle to a situation in our own life much like, but not

exactly the same as, the one in the Bible. For example, I have never been tempted to cast myself down from the pinnacle of the temple as was our Lord. But I have been tempted to put myself first above God's will for my life. This is the exact same principle. And those texts in the New Testament that suggest certain things can be "stumbling blocks" for others provide good counsel as we try to be equitable in our love and compassion. While the situation is not quite the same, the counsel in the Bible is appropriate to like situations.

- (C.) We can apply the counsel of the Bible to an altogether different situation. The Bible's counsel is so timeless that sometimes situations we face do not reflect the biblical one at all, nor are they the least bit comparable. Instead, we must apply the general principles of Scripture to our own situation. If the Bible suggests that Christians understand and practice grace because they have been saved by it, this principle lets the creative Christian identify personal situations where we need to learn to be just as graceful as God was to us in giving the gift of salvation. We attempt to apply the principle of the text to our own personal life.

The challenge to make the Bible come alive is a serious challenge, but a challenge that, led by the Spirit of God, will return multiplied by blessing when we take the study of God's Word seriously again. ●

(Endnotes)

1 Roger L. Dudley with V. Bailey Gillespie, *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance I* (Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press, 1992), 115.

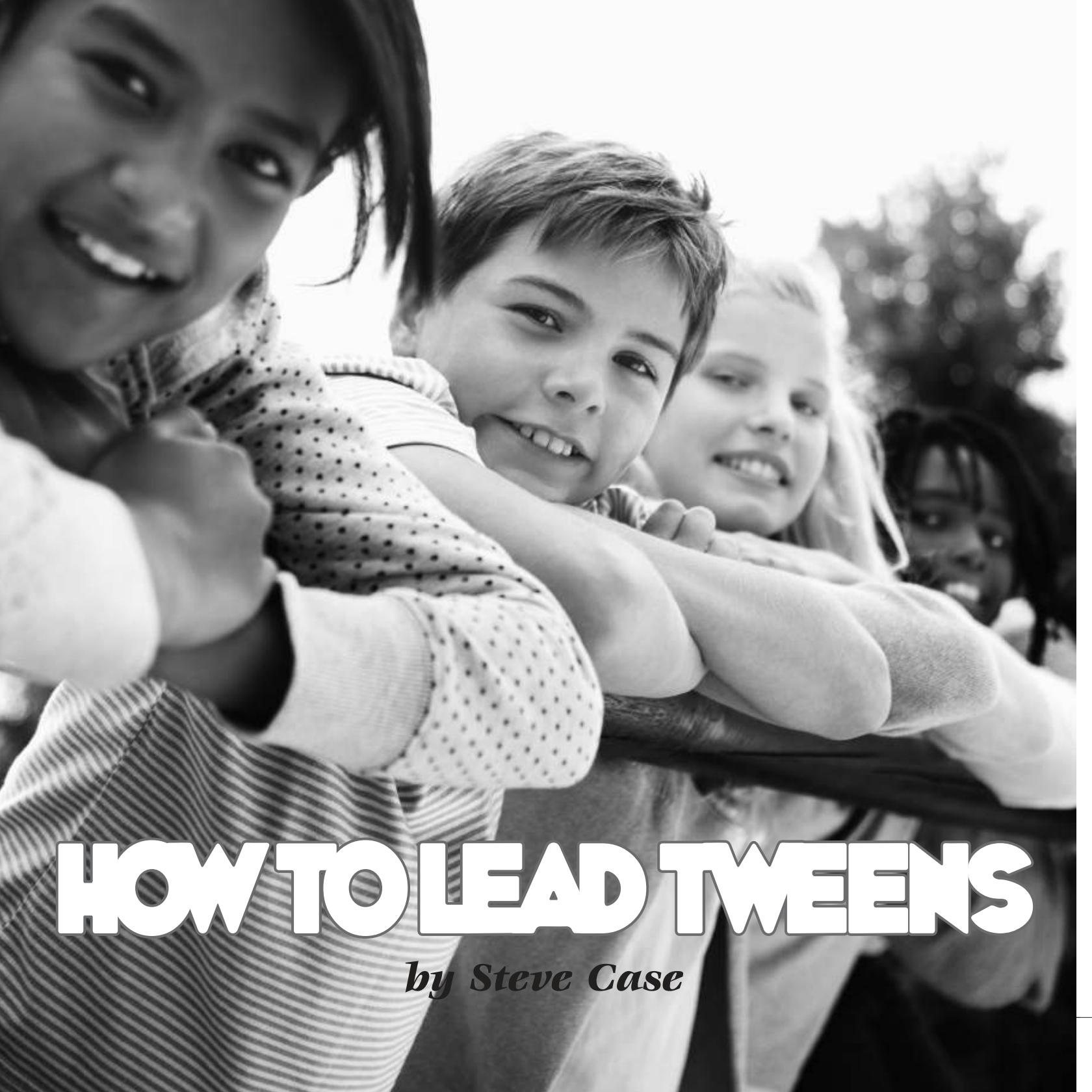
2 See V. Bailey Gillespie and Michael J. Donahue, *Ten Years Later: A Study of Two Generations* (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2004) for complete information on the 2000 *Valuegenesis 2* research project.

3 Roger L. Dudley with V. Bailey Gillespie, *Faith in the Balance*, 120.

4 William D. Romanowski, *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2001), 27. and the Gallup poll found at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/2416/Six-Ten-Americans-Read-Bible-Least-Occasionally.aspx> on 4/4/2010.



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HOW TO LEAD TWEENS

by Steve Case

Somewhere between childhood and adolescence lies that segment of life marked by transitions called “the tween years.” For those who count life in years, it’s approximately ages 10-14. If you’re in a church Sabbath School division, you’d mark it as juniors, or juniors and earliteens if you’re part of a large church. Schools consider this grades 5-8, which covers the second half of primary school in some parts of the world. In other parts of the world this would include the end of primary school and the start of secondary school—another illustration that the tween years are a time of transition.

“I’M NOT A LITTLE KID!”

Contrast the beginners (formerly cradle roll) kids with tweens and you’ll understand why tweens don’t consider themselves “little” or “kids.” From their perspective they are more like adults than like little kids. Oh, they don’t see themselves as adults, but neither do they perceive themselves to be kids. And those who consider them to still be little kids communicate disrespect—not the least bit helpful if you’re wanting to lead them!

When you notice tweens acting more mature than “kids,” tell them about it! Let them know that you notice and that it’s both positive and reasonable

to expect that from them; after all, they certainly aren’t “little kids” anymore. This isn’t a put-down on being a little kid; it’s just that they are past that stage now. Note their physical growth and achievements, their mastery of Bible stories and facts, their influence on others, the value of their prayers and the hope they inspire in others.

“EVERYTHING’S CHANGING!”

The quantity and quality of changes that occur during the tween years can be rivaled only by a person’s birth into this world. The main difference is that an infant won’t remember anything about this time of life, but the tween will! The physical changes with the onset of puberty are real, but not instant or uniform. One person might grow tall quickly while another’s sex hormones kick into gear. Some experience this early in the tween years and seem older than they really are. Others are “late bloomers” and most people think they are younger than their age—how embarrassing (and frustrating). In general, girls are a year or two ahead of boys. And yet they’re in the same group! And those are just the physical changes.

Mental changes begin as abstract thought starts to become possible. Social skills must change since the tweens are no longer

little kids. Spiritual changes are needed as tweens start to experiment with a personal relationship with God instead of just the religion passed down by parents and other key adults. Tweens also wonder where they fit into the Body of Christ. After all, they believe they have something to offer, but few adults think of them that way.

As a tween leader, you need to expect changes, and yet expect that it will come in unexpected ways and spurts. It’s sometimes like taking three steps forward (they get it!) and then moving two steps back (they are clueless!). At other times it’s only one step forward (they almost came through) and three steps back (one punched another after a flurry of verbal put-downs). Your role is to remain positive and hopeful, communicating a vision of what these tweens are in Christ’s eyes and what they are still becoming in your eyes. They will need correction and direction, plus affirmation and encouragement.

“I’M JUST THINKING.”

Tweens are still capable of memorizing lots of information. Pack it in! Keep memorizing Scripture. Play Bible trivia quiz games. They might not understand everything that’s sticking to their brains, but keep

Spiritual changes are needed as tweens start to experiment with a personal relationship with God instead of just the religion passed down by parents and other key adults.

going with this. By the time they're your age, their brains will become porous and won't retain all of the foundational facts on which to base their faith in the future. Having it stored internally will enable them to draw on it when they start to think reflectively at a later time.

In addition to being able to spit back answers, tweens are starting to think on their own, challenge existing mores, and question pat responses. Encourage this, although you might have to limit it to appropriate times and settings. Don't be threatened by their questions. It shows that they are starting to understand for the first time and they want to consider other possibilities before they make it their own (internalize it). One important skill to develop is the ability to paraphrase Scripture instead of only reciting or parroting the Bible. Provide both Bible trivia activities and opportunities to go deeper. You won't always know when your tweens are prepared for either, but they should be moving from trivia to depth. You can refer to it as building on facts to develop faith.

“LET'S DO SOMETHING!”

Although tweens aren't little kids anymore, they aren't “adult” enough to just sit and listen (as if all adults like to do that!). If that's your preferred mode, expect to institute lots of “shush” and “quiet please” reminders, and maybe more and more rules for behavior. It's better to put things into action than to sit and listen to someone talk about action. Compare how much time your tweens spend sitting and listening to you versus *doing* something. Take your great ideas and lessons and find ways to put them into action.

Instead of just talking about something, do it! Make the lesson into a game. Instead of talking about doing something nice for others, use the time to actually go and do it! Tweens would rather actually serve others than just talk about it. They could create a craft and then give it away. Rather than coloring pictures like little

kids do, form a few groups and shoot videos on a topic and share it with the class.

“I CAN DO THAT!”

Rarely is a tween ready to take over a program and run it from start to finish. That comes later. But begin to incorporate them now in small ways. If you're singing a set of songs during Sabbath School, bring several to the front to be part of the “praise team” even if they are just standing there. Add a few simple percussion instruments leadership participation without a need for lots of skill. You could ask several tweens to set up the quiz buzzers for your quiz time.

You'll actually need more adult assistance if you want to involve the tweens as leaders. Here's why: the adults do the majority of the work and the tweens get the credit. Instead of having adults put on a program, break it into components and have the tweens assist, whether it's working one-to-one or in small groups. As the tweens develop more skill and confidence, the adults can move to the background. When adults are needed, they are present and can fill that role.

“I’LL GO FOR THAT!”

Extrinsic rewards usually motivate tweens. While it’s admirable to emphasize intrinsic rewards over extrinsic ones, tweens prefer the extrinsic ones like prizes, treats, ribbons or trophies, points, even cash. So use them, without neglecting to cultivate the value and honor of intrinsic rewards like the satisfaction of doing something well, doing what’s right, peace, joy, filling a need, loving and being loved.

Pathfinders thrive on extrinsic rewards, whether it’s pins or honors or stripes or scarves. When adults continue to need extrinsic rewards it could be that they haven’t passed beyond the tween stage. Be creative in coming up with a variety of rewards that are meaningful to your tweens. Sometimes they

can delay gratification when they see a bigger goal, such as gaining points this week to go towards the monthly goal. Because this is prime time for extrinsic rewards, use them, and use them well!

“I MADE A DIFFERENCE!”

There’s no question that tweens can make a difference. Just ask them! Watch and listen to them. Consider what happened when Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem for the first time. Two things that stand out in that story of a 12-year-old (a tween) is that he got separated from his family for three days (big trouble) and he rocked and shocked the religious leaders in the temple (big difference).

Other tweens make a difference today as well. This usually shocks adults more than

tweens. If you’re a tween leader, you should expect it, encourage it, and celebrate it. The next time you lead tweens, skim over the seven statements above—the ones in bold print. Let these set your expectations and see which ones get played out in your interaction with the tweens. ●



Steve Case, Ph.D is the president of Involve Youth. After more than 30 years of working with youth, he considers these two ingredients to be the basic qualifications for youth ministry: love God, and

love young people. He is an international speaker to youth and those who work with them. Adventist lifestyle issues are one of Steve’s specialties. He produced a tape series called *Shall We Dance: Rediscovering Christian Standards* and edited a book by the same title. His newest book is *Connection: How to Have a Relationship with God*.

More of what you need to lead is now available online!

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LEADERSHIP

by Barry Gane

IN 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves in America. And yet 100 years later the African Americans were still victims of segregation. In 1963, in a speech at the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., expressed his vision for America. His speech galvanized a generation. Although I lived in Australia at the time, this speech helped me catch a vision of a different world. Its effect on me was overwhelming. King wanted “the riches of freedom and the security of justice” for all people. “Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God’s children,” he said. “Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.”

Let me cite a little more - "I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. . . . I have a dream that one day in the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream . . . of that day when all God's children, black and white, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty we are free at Last!'"

A leader must have vision. Today we live in a world that is hungry for leadership. People will follow anyone who articulates a vision of a better tomorrow. A major role of the leader is sharing that vision and empowering those that follow to achieve it.

What is leadership? There are a number of definitions but I will

give you just one. "Leadership is the discipline of deliberately exerting special influence within a group to move it toward goals of beneficial permanence that fulfill the group's real needs." This presupposes that to lead you must have followers. In fact Leadership is conferred by followers.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

How is the leader developed? Let's look at a Biblical example that can throw some light on the subject. Judges chapters 6,7,8 contain the story of a very reluctant leader. This is really the story of how God the leader equips and empowers his follower Gideon to become a leader himself.

Israel was in a mess. Their enemies had hounded them like stray dogs back into the mountains and caves. They couldn't plant crops or herd cattle. They were in constant fear and total despair. Although they had separated themselves from God, like all people they cried out to Him in their extremity.

We often confuse leadership with position. Here God takes on an obscure nobody. "But Lord," Gideon asks, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." (v 15)

God lets him know that He believes in him, that He can see his potential. When the angel of the LORD appears to Gideon, he says, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." (v 12) Gideon is hardly this, he is hiding, suspicious, threshing wheat in an old wine press, hoping like mad not to be discovered. God sees his full potential. We tend to become what those who are important to us think we are. We become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There are four basic stages to God's leading and preparation of Gideon.

STAGE I—Direct

God shares His Vision of a routed enemy. He *directs*, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"(v 14). "I will be with you. . . You Will. . ." (v 16) Here God is very specific about the details of what He wants done. Gideon brings a meal to the visitor. God as leader demonstrates His presence and power with the tip of His staff. The meal is consumed by fire. The leader has to *model*, to demonstrate that he can do it.

STAGE II—Teach

God is still very directive but this time He allows interaction

to *teach*—He doesn't do what He expects Gideon to. Gideon does what he is told but he is afraid. But God uses this stage to build his confidence, and shows him he has the ability to get things done. "Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it." (v 25) He does what God asks but he does not in the daylight but under the cover of darkness. Even in his weakness Gideon experiences God's support. God is truly his *mentor*.

STAGE III—Participate

"Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him." (v 34) God still very much present but now Gideon is not taking specific commands. However, he still needs his confidence boosted. He is now willing to do the task but he still needs support. Remember the fleece – he is still tentative and unsure. Gideon now *participates* in the task. At this stage mentoring is still crucial but God takes on a new role: that of *monitor*.

STAGE IV - Delegate

Gideon now tries to rely on numbers and God has trim down the army to remind him where his strength really lies. Gideon is finally ready and God *delegates* power and leadership to him. He believes that God has empowered

him and he undertakes the task with confidence. John Gardner says, "It is not uncommon that inside a mediocre performer is an excellent performer awaiting liberation."

"Watch me," Gideon told his army. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"(vv 17, 18)

God took Gideon where he was, He saw his potential and adapted His leadership style in order to transform and build Gideon. It has to be noted that the God of the miracles could have done it without Gideon but there would have been no change in the people who had drifted from Him.

Leadership involves a process. First the leader must be a model. His/her life must be in harmony with his/her words - this consistency is called integrity. Integrity has to do with consistency of words, actions, values and principles. Alan Simpson puts it well, "If you have integrity, nothing else matters. If you don't have integrity, nothing else matters." The life of the leader will be a model to those they lead.

Young leaders can send a poor message in the area of sexual purity. If there is inconsistency in their behavior here it can cause

havoc. President Clinton may never live beyond the words that he used to deny his inappropriate behavior with staff member Monica Lewinski. His words rise to haunt him as people doubt his credibility. The disconnect has made him unbelievable. There is a character flaw here. General Norman Swhwarzkopf of *Desert Storm* fame, talking about the importance of character, stated, "Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy."¹ It is integrity/character that makes trust in a leader possible and trust makes leadership possible.

Another vital part of the process of leadership is mentoring. Mentoring is a dynamic, intentional relationship of trust where one person enables another to maximize the Grace of God in their life and service. Of the 400 leaders mentioned in the Bible only 100 finished well. Mentoring is an essential part of the journey to leadership. **The International Youth Foundation** put it this way;

"Every young person needs at least one adult who is irrationally committed to their well-being. Millions of children grow up virtually alone - disconnected from adults. No love. No supervision. No positive role models. Yet these people must still find their way - they still grow up

to become adults. Children can endure the most miserable conditions —even thrive in the midst of them when—if they have at least one loving adult committed to their success.”²

Once a young person begins to lead close support will still be needed. At this stage the older leader will step back a little and monitor the progress. The young people will know that they have support and will step out and try things they dare not risk alone.

Ultimately the new leader will be on their own —responsibility is now delegated to them. And like Gideon they will begin to model, mentor, monitor other young leaders before they move on to new responsibilities. “Authentic leaders genuinely desire to serve others through their leadership. They are more interested in empowering the people they lead to make a difference than they are in power, money, or prestige for themselves. They are as guided by qualities of the heart, by passion and compassion, as they are by qualities of the mind.”³ ●

(Endnotes)

1 John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998, p.58.

2 Benjamin Kirshner ed, *Youth Participation: Improving Institutions and Communities: New Directions for Youth Development*, No. 96 Winter 2002 Wiley Periodicals Inc. page 66.

3 Bill George, *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003, p. 12.



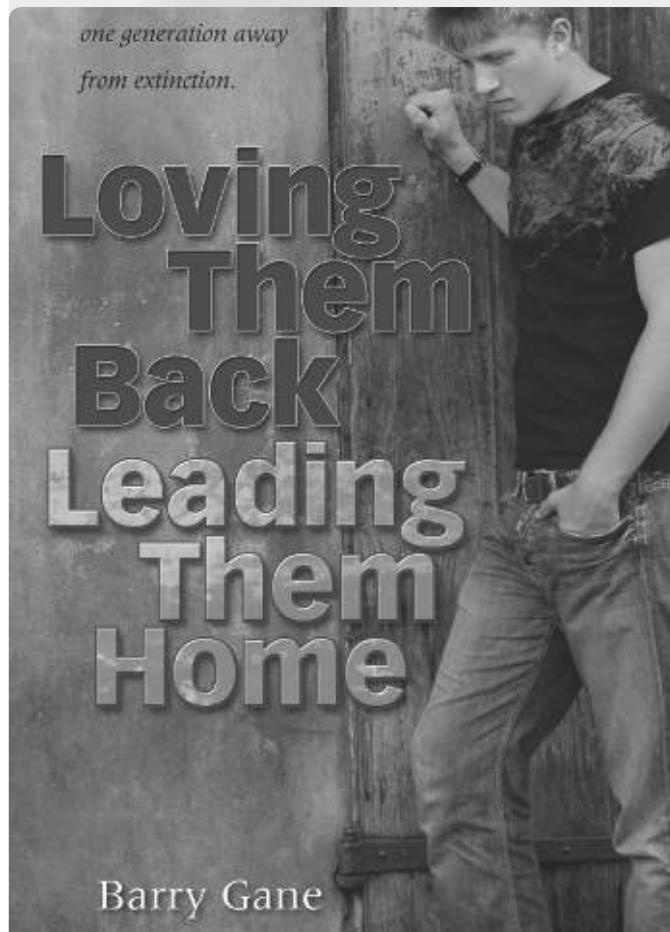
Barry Gane, Ph.D., has been involved in youth ministry for more than 30 years, and his passion is to see young people find their way home. Having been a wayward youth himself, he is uniquely qualified to reach out to these teens and to train the adults who care about them.

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WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

Building up God's Kingdom and involving youth in the mission of the church

By Baraka G. Muganda, Ed.D.

"So you are Mr. Muganda?"

"Why do you ask?"

"You have a son in my class."

"Not so loud, keep quiet; people will believe I really have a child in Samoa and when I am not from there."

I told her the story of how my "son", Muganda Tautua, got his name.

In 1996 I was the guest speaker at the South Pacific Division Youth congress in Brisbane. Each night as I spoke I addressed real issues that involved young people. Unbeknown to me, Fiona, a young adult delegate in her late 20's was attending these meetings. The messages impacted her so much that sometime during the meetings she called home and asked the name of her baby to be changed, who was at the time several months old, to Muganda. She said she was so touched by the message that she wanted to name her son Muganda, and hoped he would grow up to be a preacher like me.

So, when this teacher approached me I was taken aback because I did not know that anyone else knew about this story of Fiona, and her son.

A few years ago Fiona sent me a photo of her son, Muganda Tautua, as a reminder of that week years ago when I dared to become transparent. I keep it in my office, and every time I see it I am reminded that, Youth leadership is action, and our actions must impact others and carry spiritual and social implications.

BE RESPONSIBLE.

Sometime in 1999 I was preaching at the Montemorelos University in Mexico on *Finding The Right Marriage Partner*. One night after I was finished speaking an old man, in his early seventies, approached me with tears in his eyes. "I wish I had met you before I got married. I would have made another choice from what I have now." As the conversation continued I realized he was regretting his marriage of 40+ years. I told him, "It's too late now. Carry your cross." Imagine, regretting a decision you made over 40 years ago, and still living in the past. Some choices, once made are made! Marriage is one of those choices that must not be taken lightly. Over the years I have made a very conscious decision to demonstrate to young people that marriage can be enjoyed and celebrated for a lifetime. A good leader knows how to accept responsibility for choices made and work within the choices.

BRIDGE THE GENERATION GAP. When I was growing up in our home there were five of us all together. I remember at meal time the entire family sat at the table and enjoyed the food. We shared the same conversation with Daddy and Mom though we were young. Yes, sometimes the table would turn into a court but Daddy would steer it back to doing the business of eating and come back to the court later. Our

parents taught table etiquettes and as children we learned from them how to sit, chew food and even talk after you have swallowed the food. My father made sure that the conversation at the table was enjoyed by both groups and that food was for all of us. My mother was very creative in ensuring that the whole family enjoyed the food. She even went one extra mile to cook the food in such way that those children who did not like to eat it did. Now when I look back I have no regrets at all of eating with my own family as I did in my home when I was growing up.

This experience reminds me of what we do with our youth in the local church. In some churches they have resorted to do two churches one for youth and the other for Adults. I want to say that, a good pastor will have one church for the whole church family and that will require him or her to prepare the sermons in a such way that all generations will say there was something for me. We cannot divide the family on Sabbath during the worship hour based on age. Youth leaders and pastors must be challenged to be creative in meeting the needs of the whole church family. Have sermons that will meet the needs of all generations during worship hour.

BE CREATIVE. Have you ever had something in mind that needed to be done, but you just could not come up with "the real

way" to get it done, so you created something that had not previously existed. That's creativity. Creativity is doing things outside the box, extra ordinary performance. A good youth leader must be creative. Creativity begins with a yearning to be different, to answer question by imagining more than one correct new answer. Sometimes when we come up with the answer it is different from what was there before. A good leader will be able to bring about change in creative ways.

TAKE A POSITION ON ISSUES. In my travels around the world I have been asked several times to state my personal position on hot potato issues in the church. While conducting youth seminar in Uganda a few years ago, a young girl wrote to me a question using the abbreviated sms format of today's generation. She wrote, "Ps is t wrong 2 dance?" I did proceed to answer the question and shared with the participants my position after showing them the danger and the outcome of dancing. I had to show them my position even if some of them chose to disagree with me.

A good youth leader will have a position. Young people want to be led by a leader who has principles to stand on. They do not like a leader who beats all over the place and ends up leaving the young people in the air. At the end of the morning session as we

were going for our lunch, a young girl accompanied by her two friends approached me and said, "Pastor, Muganda," I responded by saying, "yes!" she went on to say that "I am the one who asked the question on what's wrong with dancing and I have a follow up to your response," "How about dancing in my bedroom alone with my friend or sister is that still wrong?" I went on to remind her my position and then she said "Pastor I do really appreciate your

position on the matter and will follow your direction. This is my first time to have someone tell me about dancing with such clarity and I do like your position because you are clear."

A good youth leader will let those that you lead know your position and what you stand for. They may not agree with your position but will always respect you. Young people do not respect a leader who shows laizz faire type of leadership. "Do not care"

leadership. As a leader be firm with love as you share your position with those that are under your care.

It was lunch time and decided to join the young people in the line for lunch. I could have chosen to sit at the table and wait to be served but as in many times I mingle with youth during the outside church activities. I happen to stand behind a young girl who was attending this youth congress

for the first time and I also found in our conversation with her that she was not an Adventist. When I asked her what religion she was affiliating with she answered me that she was an atheist. I could not believe her words as I wondered why an Atheist attend an Adventist Youth Congress! So we talked while the line was moving slowly and I asked her why was she there?

ALWAYS MAKE AN ALTAR

CALL. She told me that she had visited many youth groups to see how they worship and this time she decided to accompany her Seventh day Adventist friends to the congress to see how Seventh day Adventist Youth worship, as we came to the end of the line picked up our food I asked her if I could join her at the table. I wanted to continue my conversation with her. Before I left the table at the end of the meal I invited her to give her heart to Jesus on Sabbath. She was scared to death. She said to me that she would not be able to do that. For the remaining three days I made sure to sit with her during meal times. I did not pressure or scare her, but every time I was an opening to gently remind her, I reminded her to give her heart to Jesus Christ. On Sabbath morning I called out her name and she came to the front crying and gave her heart to Jesus Christ.

off the mark.com by Mark Parisi



This is what I call the power of relational youth ministry. We got to spend time with young people during free hours. We must spend one-on-one time with our youth. Youth are looking for leaders who are on the same level in their lives as they struggle to give their lives to Jesus Christ. Jesus did the same thing in His ministry, Philippians 2:5-11. Jesus was there with his smiles and hugs. He was part of the people. Relational youth ministry does not require us to appear like youth and be cool, nor are we to think that if we are not like them then something must be missing but instead authenticity is all important.

GET TO KNOW THE YOUTH. As youth leaders we are called to be in their world without losing our identity as leaders trying to be of their world. Let the youth see you as a leader all in all. Once relationship is established youth will see transparency in the leader and will be led to accept Jesus. Ellen White in understanding the importance of relational youth ministry wrote, “we should seek to enter into the feelings of the youth, sympathizing with them in their joys and sorrows, their conflicts and victories... we must meet them where they are if we would keep them... let us remember the claim of God upon us to make the path to heaven bright and attractive”, Gospel Workers, pages 207 – 212. Dean Borgman agrees with Ellen

White when he says, “We are called to waste time with young people “hanging out” with them. Unprogrammed social time will form the heart of our ministry as it seems to have done in the life of Jesus. Young people will learn to become Christian because they are in regular informal contact with Christian people who model the faith...friendship and relationship will not only be the means of ministry, they will be the ministry itself.” Pete Ward, God at the Mall: Youth Ministry That meets Kids Where They’re At’(Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1999) pages 37.38.

IT’S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS.

For leadership to succeed someone must lead and someone follow. In the past the traditional leader would lead and everyone else follows, but that method is not as common anymore. More and more, church leaders are employing the *servant-leadership* style where leadership is by example and building relational trust with others, and where there is a dependency on the entire team for success. Leadership then moves away from the restrictions of the “specialists” and the “qualified” and lends itself to anyone who is willing to take advantage of opportunities for spiritual and personal growth.

Do not for a moment believe that the young people are not watching you. And do not think

that they won’t see right through you, if you are insincere—they know a fake when they see one. And they know the real thing when they see it. Many of them will even ask you real tough, uncomfortable questions. Because of this is it even more important than we live transparent lives. Honest lives. Lives of integrity. If and when we make mistakes, be honest with them, they will understand. Real leadership is developed by relationship. Transformed by relationship. Mentored by relationship. And sustained by relationships.

Youth Ministry in the Seventh day Adventist church is accomplishing two main objectives. To serve our youth into God’s Kingdom and to involve them in the mission of the church. But before we send them out we need to show them that God loves them and the church does and has a place for them to experiment their talents and gifts, that is why God is calling for Leaders who have such a passion for ministering to young people. ●



Baraka G. Muganda, Ed.D is the Youth Ministries Director at the General Conference World Church Headquarters.



IN STEP WITH JESUS

Adventurer, Pathfinder, and Master Guide Report

Jonatán Tejuel, World Pathfinder Director

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.
— Deuteronomy 6:4-9, NIV

THE ADVENTURERS

In the discipline given during the first years of childhood, parents are making lasting impressions upon the minds of their children. It is in these early years that they are laying the foundation of character. (7MR 8.1)

Worldwide there are approximately 32,000 Adventurer clubs, with a membership of almost 1.5 million children, ages 6-9. The Adventurer club is designed to strengthen the parent-child relationship, by providing activities that require that parents and children work together.

In addition to the many age-challenging activities, ranging from games and outdoor activities to nature exploration and family camping, field trips and community service projects, the club's activities are geared toward making the Bible more relevant to parents and children, and creating opportunities for parents to learn parenting skills while at the same time enjoying special activities with their children.

The 4-year, age-specific curriculum includes approximately 75 specialized awards in the areas of Arts & Crafts, Nature, Recreation, Spiritual development and Household Arts. For more information on these levels and awards please visit our website: www.gcyouthministries.org.



Jonatán Tejuel is the World Pathfinder Director at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA.

adventurer

PLEDGE

Because Jesus loves me, I can always do my best.

LAW

- Be obedient
- Be pure
- Be true
- Be kind
- Be respectful
- Be attentive
- Be helpful
- Be cheerful
- Be thoughtful
- Be reverent

pathfinder

AIM

The Advent Message to All the World in My Generation.

MOTTO

“The love of Christ constrains me.”

PLEDGE

By the grace of God,

I will be pure and kind and true.

I will keep the Pathfinder Law.

I will be a servant of God and a friend to man.

LAW

The Pathfinder Law is for me to:

Keep the morning watch.

Do my honest part.

Care for my body.

Keep a level eye.

Be courteous and obedient.

Walk softly in the sanctuary.

Keep a song in my heart.

Go on God’s errands.

THE PATH... FINDERS

Jesus told his disciples, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). He did not merely point the way to God. He himself claimed to be the only way to the Father and the source of eternal truth and life.

Sixty years ago the Pathfinder movement was officially voted as a structured club in the Seventh-day Adventist® church. The philosophy was carefully and prayerfully chosen on the premise that “children learn best by example, rather than precept.” As they see leaders and parents model spiritual and social values, they too will aspire to develop high moral principles, loving and caring attitudes, and determination to excel in all their various pursuits.

The objectives of the Pathfinder club is to, help the young people to understand that God and His church love them, care for them, and appreciate them. Encourage Pathfinders to discover their own God-given potential. Inspire young people to give personal expression of their love for. Make the number one priority of your club program the personal salvation of every Pathfinder. Build into a Pathfinder’s life a healthy appreciation and love

for God’s creation by enjoying outdoor activity (campouts, nature walks, nature honors, etc.). Teach Pathfinders specific skills and hobbies that will make their lives more. Encourage the Pathfinder to keep physically fit. Give opportunity for the development of leadership by encouraging club members to work together and share in leadership responsibility. And, seek to foster the harmonious development of the physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual life of the Pathfinder.

Pathfinding is not just a program that trains our children to learn and improve skills. The Pathfinder club also serves as an outreach ministry that helps to take care of people in need, while sharing with them the Word of God and one of its main focuses is evangelism. I am going to share two stories with you of how Pathfinding can be used to bring others to Jesus.

STORY #1

Eastern Central Africa Division Camporee, Mwanza, Tanzania, summer 2008.

During the camporee the Tanzanian Union leadership scouted the area for children who were very poor and had nothing and no one to take care of them. They found thirty non-Adventist children from

the surrounding villages and “adopted” them. At the end of the camporee they presented the children to the delegates and all those present and announced that all 30 children were going to be taken care of by the Union and would attend the local boarding academy. This really touched me; I had to fight back the tears from coming. Just as Jesus, our leader, give us hope for a better future, these leaders gave these children hope for a better tomorrow. I would like to see every Pathfinder Club involved in this kind of project. I’ll like to see every leader focused in caring about the children we have already in the church, but also going out to offer other children the same hope Jesus gives us today.

STORY #2

In January 2009 I attended the Chilean Union Camporee and had the privilege of meeting a very interesting lady who shared her story with me. This lady, a nurse, said she felt the need to leave her native country, Chile, and to go to Easter Island to do evangelistic work with the native people of that island. She is a Master Guide and worked with the Pathfinder club and decided that the best way to reach the local people was to organize a Pathfinder Club on the island so that she could care for, teach and love the Rapa-Nui

children. After several months the group grew to more than 20 people, including parents and children. In January 2009, because of this lady’s efforts, the first three Rapa Nui people were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist® Church. Because of the vision of a leader who believed in the potential of the Pathfinder Club as an Evangelistic ministry, in May 2010 the first Seventh-day Adventist® church was organized on the Rapa-Nui (Easter) Island.

The Pathfinder ministry is one of the most active ministries in the Seventh-day Adventist church. With God’s help this ministry has grown to what it is today.

Remember the Path... Finders in your prayers.

Leaders throughout the world have been actively engaged in organizing camporees for their clubs. Space will not allow me to list all the camporees and other events that have taken place. On the following page I am going to share with you the events that were held at a Division-wide level.

THE MASTER’S... GUIDE

The Master Guide continues to be the highest level of leadership within the Adventurer/ Pathfinder programs of our church.

The Master Guide has accepted the responsibility of guiding

children to Jesus. Our goal is to see the parents, who should be the first guide of the children, work hand-in-hand with these leaders in leading their children to Jesus.

Although this ministry is the highest leadership level, we need leaders to recognize that they cannot stop growing. They need to continue seeking knowledge, both from the Bible and through various training seminars and conventions organized by their conferences, unions, and divisions.

When you are called to a position of leadership you can sometimes make the mistake of thinking you are ultimately the one in charge, and that the end result depends solely on you. But this is not so...it’s a paradox. The results depend on you, but at the same time it does not REALLY depend on you. You see, it is God who chooses you. And it is He who will give you the skills, talents, knowledge, and wisdom necessary to succeed. He will guide you into choosing the team of workers that is best suited for the job—sometimes He may not choose your friends or the ones you think you should work with, BUT He will always choose the one that is right for the job.

So, how do you find success as a team?

By letting the Master be your Guide. ●

DIVISION-WIDE CAMPOREES AND OTHER YOUTH EVENTS

1. Trans-European Division Camporee was held in Denmark, July 25 to August 1, 2006. There were around 1,700 Pathfinders participating in this Camporee with the motto “Back in Time”.

2. More than 6,000 Pathfinders throughout the South Pacific gathered in Australia to attend the first-ever South Pacific Division (SPD) Pathfinder Camporee January 9-14, 2007. An initiative of the division’s Adventist Youth Ministries, the camporee took place at the Seventh-day Adventist Convention Centre in Stuarts Point, New South Wales, Australia. The motto was “The Twelfth Gate”.

3. Euro-Africa Division Camporee was held in Fountainbleu (Paris) July 31 to August 5, 2007. This event has been attended by about 1,500 teens coming from all parts of the European Countries, and also some other countries from the rest of the world. “Turn to the Light” has been a call for them to realize that their contribution is precious to generate an effective society, where peace, tolerance and respect towards everybody are the basis of life.

4. Southern Asia Division Pathfinder Camporee was held on January 14-17, 2009. More than 1,000 Pathfinders attended. The motto was, “Stand for Jesus”.

5. North American Division Pathfinder Camporee is organized every five years. Thousands of Pathfinder groups from all divisions worldwide gather together for 5 days. It is a time when Pathfinders and their leaders can fellowship together, work on AY Honors, and most importantly, draw closer to Jesus Christ. The most recent event was held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin August 11-15, 2009. Over 36,000 Pathfinders attended. The theme for the Camporee was “Courage to Stand.”

6. The Southern-Asia Pacific Division Youth Department had its 1st Division-wide Pathfinder Camporee on October 19-24, 2009 at the Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) with the theme, “Called to Shine.” There were around 5,000 Pathfinders attending the event and participating in all the different activities.

7. More than 5000 Pathfinders from every country in the South African Indian Ocean Division met in Aliwal, South Africa for a week-long Camporee on December 7-13, 2009. This was one of the biggest gatherings so far. Running under the theme “Heroes of Faith”, the Camporee was a blessing for the youth and for the leaders attending it.





SENIOR YOUTH REPORT

Senior Youth/Young Adults and Ambassador Report

*Hiskia Missah, Associate Youth Director
General Conference World Headquarters*

Globally, there are 74,751 Adventist Youth Societies (AYS) with 3,090,748 members. The statistics of the SDA (Seventh-day Adventist®) church showed that 65 – 70% of the 16,000,000 World SDA members are youth under 31 years old making the total number of SDA youth around the globe 11,200,000 people.

During the 2001 International Youth Leadership Convention (IYLC) an action was taken to form another level of ministry after the Pathfinder age to meet the needs of the

age group of 16 to 21 years. In many cases, this age group level has been a neglected group which needs encouragement, guidance and training to prepare them for adulthood. They need to be trained so they will become physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually qualified, healthy and strong, ready to become responsible and trustworthy Adventist adults. Then in 2006, the World Adventist Youth Advisory voted the existence of the new level of ministry under the name

of Ambassador Ministry. This ministry is not intended to replace the current Senior Youth program, but instead to strengthen the Adventist Youth Society program.

Before the Ambassador club was launched some World Divisions were already operating activities for this level under different names, such as Senior Pathfinder Club, Medical Cadet Corps, Civil Defense Groups, Master Guide, Club Centinela (IAD), Companions (EUD), ACT-Adventist Collegians with Tidings (NSD). However, since its inception, we have received some good news about the new organization of Ambassador. From SSD, "Based on our activities we have many youth Activities that are done by Ambassador Ministry, . . ." From IAD, "We have five Ambassador groups operating." From ESD, "The Ambassador Ministry was welcomed in our Division in a very special way AND AS A RELEVANT program. . . Every union and every field have the Ambassador program. . . In many places, they have had outings, camps, and even retreats. The biggest was conducted in Nairobi areas. . . and 700 ambassadors attended. 89 were baptized as a result of morning and evening messages." In the Solomon Islands almost every church has an Ambassador club. In the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division every union has already

launched the Ambassador Club. The South American Division was already operating under an old name, Clube de Jovens, but they are now using the Ambassador logo.

Other noteworthy features of Senior Youth activities are the Elijah Projects. The Elijah Project is a collaborative effort of the Center for Global Evangelism, the World Youth Department, Personal Ministries/Sabbath School and Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) to involve Seventh-day Adventist youth in the presentation of a full-scale, Christ-centered, doctrinal evangelistic series. The following is the report of Elijah Projects since its inception in 2006 up to 2009. There were 42,738 Elijah projects being conducted, involving 269,660 SDA youth, resulting in 189,204 souls being baptized.



During this quinquennium, the highlight of Senior Youth/Young Adults ministry was the Second World Conference on Youth and Community Services held in Taipei, Taiwan on December 24, 2007 to January 5, 2008. This conference was attended by 1,500 youth and youth leaders from all over the world and was preceded by 29 Community Service Projects in the country of Taiwan done by 540 delegates. Their services were in the form of Teaching English Language and Sport, Cleaning and Rebuilding a Cemetery, Visitations to the Orphanages and Retirees, Cleaning and Repainting Sport Hall, Office building, Churches and some other services in the communities. The Governor of Taipei was so delighted and grateful to the SDA youth for performing all these community services that he gave us permission to use the Meeting Hall for our conference free of charge and not only that, he invited the delegates of our congress to attend and participate in the Drum Ceremony, a yearly ceremony conducted by the Government of Taiwan.

That Special Drum Ceremony was conducted on January 1, 2008. 10,000 people attended and this has broken the Guinness Book of World Records because 10,000 drums, big and small, were played in this celebration. For the first time in the history of this secular

country, the Governor of Taipei made a special request asking the SDA delegates to sing religious songs in this drum celebration and another special request was made requesting the SDA delegates to pray for the government and the nation of Taiwan in different world languages. In responding to these requests, the youth singing groups from Samoan Islands and Korea sang some religious songs in this secular country where the majority of people were Buddhists. The services done by the SDA youth in Taiwan were so much appreciated by the Government of Taiwan that the Governor of Taipei gave the SDA church the privilege of teaching the English language to the 36,000 school students in Taipei.

Baraka Muganda, the World Youth Director, in one of his remarks regarding the work done by the SDA youth said: "We are trying to make mission a lifestyle in the lives of our youth. We want to involve every person in the church." This wish is in harmony with what Ellen G. White wrote in her book, *A Call to Stand Apart*: "There is no line of work in which it is possible for the youth to receive greater benefit. All who engage in ministry are God's helping hand. They are co-workers with the angels; rather, they are the human agencies through whom the angels accomplish their mission. Angels speak through

their voices, and work by their hands. And the human workers, co-operating with heavenly agencies, have the benefit of their education and experience." (p. 66)

On May 15, 2007, the 100th Anniversary of the Youth Department was celebrated in Gland, Switzerland, the exact place where the General Conference voted to organize the General Conference Youth Department in 1907. This special celebration was done simultaneously with the youth congress of the Euro-Africa Division. As the culmination of that celebration, a tree representing the youth department was planted. After that celebration, the Youth Departments in the entire World planted trees in many different places around the planet.

One of the achievements of the GC Youth Department was the remaking of its Website which has been appreciated by youth and their leaders around the world. Besides supplying rich information and resources to the public, particularly the young people, this website serves as a spiritual nurturing agent to many people through its unique "Prayer Request Service." There have been so many prayer requests made and many people have been prayed for and strengthened. Please feel free to browse our website at <http://gcyouthministries.org>.

Youth congresses and leadership training seminars with attendance ranging from 5,000 to 70,000 were conducted in all the World Divisions and their respective Unions throughout this quinquennium.

Ellen G. White was right when she continued in the same book, *A Call to Stand Apart*: "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!" ●



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Delegating : lessons from Moses

Pastor Mulumba Tshimanga

Moses, the man of God, was a leader par excellence. He was a human being, with his shortcomings and weaknesses. Yet, no leader found favor in the eyes of God as he did.

Moses' character is that of a leader who is at the same time a disciple of the Master, the follower of the Caller. He learned not to resist God when he did not understand, to question Him, but still trust Him where there seemed to be no light, and to follow Him anywhere he had the assurance that his Caller was ready to go with him. Even though he did not understand certain things and the way they were going to happen, he trusted the One who called him and hoped for the success of his mission.

Moses did not work for himself. He worked for the people. He was their servant. He sacrificed for them. In fact, he lived for them and

carried their burdens. He ultimately died for them.

Moses is also known as a trainer, a coach. From the time he was advised by his father-in law until they arrived at the Jordan. His leadership became that of delegation and training (coaching). This is what this article is all about, leading through training.

The three main functions in leadership are serving, helping people grow, and making things happen. All of the three are essential.

SERVING

The leader's first role is to serve. Servant leadership is that of Jesus. The leader is a servant of his people. He is there for them and their welfare. He cares for them at all times. His decisions are made to favor them, to help them grow and to draw every single good thing out of them. He even dies for them.

Making this happen is not only the function of leadership but also its *raison d'être*. Leadership is about performing the duties, attaining the designed goals and objectives. It is good to plan, but it better to achieve what we plan. In order to do that, we need people.

Helping People Grow

The leader's second role is to help people grow. In the process of using their skills and involving them in making things happen, he trains them. This training is both individual and collective. He forms with them a team, in which they share responsibilities, both individually and collectively. Teamwork is the best way of training people today. Leaders tap people's skills, abilities and talents. They take time to discover their people's talents and build on them to provide training and direction.



Pastor Mulumba Tshimanga is the Youth Director in the East Central Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

The leader's third role (really an outgrowth of the first two) is to make things happen. This occurs through the methods outlined above. The best training method is the one that is not theoretical. People learn easily by doing. Directions are given, rules set and principles explained before practical processes are put in place to help people apply whatever instruction they have been given. The leader sets the example, disciples follow. And things happen. The goals are reached. Or apparent "failure" leads to new understandings and new goals. Then the process begins again.

The whole process of training is that of the leader's duplication. He multiplies himself into many. It is called **Discipleship**. It is looking after people, monitoring them and putting them to work so that they may become like you (but only inasmuch as you are like Jesus). They learn by doing, just like Jesus' disciples, who spent all their time with the Master hearing from Him, learning from His words of instruction, and practicing all He bid them do.

It is also about letting them do what they have been taught, letting them to do it on their own. That is coaching. Coaching is risky. It requires confident, trusting delegation as well as risking the worst. I decided to teach my children how to drive when

they were twelve. My first son is a patient person. He patiently followed my instruction even though it was hard sometimes, until he became a driver. I knew I was hard on him but could not do better, I thought.

Time came for my second son to go through the training. The experience was not the same. I give him all the instructions given the beginners: how the engine works, the gear box, the steering, the light, the road signs...Not too much theory. Then started the practices. We had to hit the road. On the first day he was patient and tried to cope with my impatience. For a few days, he could cooperate with me when I always held the steering wheel thinking he was going to hit another car coming from the opposite direction.

One day, as I was holding the steering wheel, he braked and cut the engine, gave me the car key, opened the door and asked me to drive back home.

"Son," I said, "it is still early, we have enough time. Do you have any appointment I did not know of?"

"Dad," he replied, almost crying, "do you want me to know how to drive?"

"Of course," I said proudly. "If it is so, please let me hold the steering wheel," he said.

From that day, I left the steering in his hands with a heart

bouncing at every encounter with a car coming from the other direction. In the process he learned how to drive well. Several years later, I went to visit with him in Florida where he was studying. He took me in his car.

"You are a good driver, son," I noticed.

"It is because you let me hold the steering wheel," he said.

It takes courage and risk to help people grow. Moses had to send spies to the Promised Land. The mission was perilous. They could be killed. In fact, they almost got killed there. But the risk was worth it. In the process, Joshua and Caleb learned how to trust in the Lord and be courageous. In the process, they learned the sense of sacrifice and abnegation. They also learned optimism, determination and accountability. In the process, they became great leaders.

Leading by training is the best style of leadership. Great leaders make great leaders. It is simple, workable and learnable. Training is making disciples and letting them hold the steering wheel. Better results are achieved if training is practical and if the trainees' abilities are respected and properly used. Great leaders use this process to ensure that they produce another bunch of leaders ready to take up their job and ensure succession. Jesus did it, Moses also. ●

Bring Them Back!

Pastor Corrado Cozzi

Statistics say that between 60 and 70% of Adventist youth are leaving the church every year. Statistics say that only a low percentage of youth find the way back to church. Statistics also say that 85% of those who leave the church never receive a visit from anyone saying they care or inviting them to return to church. Of that number, some who decide to return to the church on their own find it difficult, if not impossible, to fit in or even feel accepted. Statistics say... I could continue presenting statistics we gathered in these last years in order to understand this issue.

But statistics cannot give the name of each youth that is living outside of the church. Statistics cannot state their feelings, and above all, they cannot fix the problem. Our youth are not statistics. Of course, speaking about this phenomenon, we are obliged to use findings and figures resulting from studies done, but to repeat this “refrain” doesn’t help to suture this hemorrhage. Let me say that behind these numbers are often youth who have experienced sufferings and troubles. Do we know their names? Are we really interested to bring them back home?

Yes, we do want them back, yet there are some questions that need answers before it can happen.

Do we really understand why they left? Youth leave the church, not God. The

experiences that some of them have had the courage to share are very sad. Studies show that they left, among other reasons, because of lack of intergenerational relationships, meaningless worships, too much emphasis on non-essentials, too many institution-oriented programs, rather than people-oriented work, lack of meaning and purpose, not having been invited to think for themselves, etc. Of course, not only incoherencies and intolerances pushed them out of the door, but also the attraction of alternative lifestyles. In any case, are we really interested to welcome them back home? What are we willing to do in order to reclaim our youth into church? Are we ready to negotiate some changes?

I believe that we can reverse this “exodus” trend. I believe that the time to analyze the phenomenon has come to an end and the time to state a strategy on how to react has arrived. For several years we have been confronted with this issue. Our magazines continue to alarm the church about this “slipping out the back door”. But when we only read articles on youth dropping out, we can easily fall into a trap: to wait for “the church” to respond accordingly. This is most destabilizing because “the church” is everybody and nobody. Behind “the church” there are names, yours and mine, that are called to be aware of the urgency for action. Are you



Pastor Corrado Cozzi is the Youth Director in the Euro-Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

willing to do something? Are you ready to commit yourself and do your best to collaborate on finding solutions for this problem?

I'm pragmatic and maybe naïf, but I believe that it is not only possible, but also part of our mission. Looking for new souls and spending strengths and resources on this while our youth are living next door is no longer acceptable. God will make us accountable for our youth, even if they have their part of responsibility in what they have chosen. It's time to put in our church board agendas strategies to reclaim our youth.

A starting point could be to write a list of names, no statistics, but names of youth that used to belong to our churches. It is not easy to be in contact with them after a long time of absence from church. Be sure most of them unconsciously are waiting for somebody to knock at their door. Take time and go to search for them, phone them, pray for them, try to create a contact. Today we have Facebook. It could be a first step to re-conquer their confidence. Personally I'm in contact with youth that left the church once, but not God. They love God, they believe in Jesus; they need some help.

The experience of Nehemiah may teach us that nothing can hinder us in reaching our goal to bring back home those that nurture deep within them this desire. As "Elijah Projects" are motivating youth for evangelism, let a possible "Nehemiah Strategy" compel us to reclaim our missing youth and prepare the way for their coming back home. God is able. ●

True Heroes of Faith

Pastor Peter Syrotkin

Youth activists in the church – this is so cool. This army of helpers seems to be able to solve any kind of problem and overcome any difficulties with its ever-active energy. Because of their faith our churches are filled with young people, Pathfinders clubs are organized and interesting campmeetings take place. Ministry to God becomes a really joyful experience for all the church, when hearts of fathers are opened towards their children and hearts of youth to older ones. Young life is blossoming. Their energy transforms all evangelistic work in different countries of our division – youth ministry has a diverse arsenal of resources.

Youth ministry in our World Church is contagious. We live in such a globalized world, where all national, cultural, political, religious barriers, no matter how powerful they look, disappear when sharing salvation brings brotherhood. A Ukrainian young man, a girl from Yakutia, a teenager from Armenia and youth leader from Kyrgyzstan, a Russian young man and a girl from Tataria—lots of warm hearts, set on fire with love to Jesus. What could stop them?

Of course, devil wants to stop this power. He also has his own arsenal. He'd like to separate all of us. He wants to



Pastor Peter Syrotkin is the Youth Director in the Euro-Asia Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

dissolve us in the hydrochloric acid of insignificant vanity. He wants youth to get stuck in a swamp of questionable values. Money, video, music, the Internet ... But Christ changes lives in an amazing way! How powerful is the influence of His spirit! His intervention is current and timely!

Siberia: Huge distances are covered because of the faithfulness of our young brothers [and sisters, I assume? Don't want to add if not true], youth carries the torch of faith helping seniors, studying the Bible, conducting festivals of worship. Moldova, Caucasus: Youth knows what it means to be a missionary whose light of life is the Bible. Belarus: Young people are active in music, video and creative ministries and witnessing.

Far East: Marches against smoking and alcohol addiction and prayer chains join our churches that are thousands of kilometers apart. Central Asia, Ukraine: Youth campmeetings, many joyful meetings at missionary conferences, congresses and everyday ministry at local congregations. Rapid growth of Pathfinders clubs and Adventurers in many places, creation of new Internet projects, hundreds of different evangelistic and youth programs. All this would not be possible without bright, gifted youth leaders who love the Lord more than anything else.

And we have such young people. Older brothers and sisters notice them and support them. They are trained and given help.

They are loved. But this is not enough. They need much bigger and more serious support. Because behind them are millions of others, thrown into the devil's mill.

The Church faces the challenges of our times. Wars, terrorism, persecution, feuds between nations, sly deception—this is the fierce reality of our world. More and more the church will need the energy and power of youth, their boldness and courage. Only Christ, His huge love that inspires millions of people, could break the barriers of stereotypes, destroy traditions of formal and “sleeping” Christianity, to call to life an awesome influence of a simple human life, given into God's hands. We can see hundreds and thousands of these lives. Real heroes will meet Christ. ●

FROM E. G. WHITE

Although they may profess the truth, yet if men pass along day by day with no living connection with God, they will be led to do strange things; decisions will be made not in accordance with the will of God. There is no safety for our leading brethren while they shall go forward according to their own impulses. They will not be yoked up with Christ, and so will not move in harmony with Him. They will be unable to see and realize the wants of the cause, and Satan will move upon them to take positions that will embarrass and hinder.

—Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 423.
(Christian Living 4.4)

Transforming Lives

Pastor Bernardo Rodriguez

The million and a half youth of the Inter-American Division have been “Obsessed with Jesus” and are committed to the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. We imitate His style of leadership to serve in order to transform lives.

In support of our Division’s vision and strategic plan to prepare each member for the Kingdom of God, during the last five years we have developed the following programs and activities:

1. Youth Leadership and Prayer Convention

With a total attendance of 5,350 youth leaders from 34 different countries, the Youth Convention was held in Medellin, Colombia from July 24 - 28, 2007. For 100 continuous hours the Bible was read and intercessory prayers were raised to God. The youth donated 2,654 units of blood and participated in multiple community service projects. 40 training seminars were given and we celebrated the 100 years of Youth Ministry within our church on Sabbath, July 28 with a total attendance of 15,000 Adventists.

2. Elijah Project

As a result of multiple youth evangelism campaigns within the last five years our young people contributed 104,894 souls to

baptism. This is 10% of the total that was achieved in Inter-America.

3. Mega Youth Sabbath

From the University of Montemorelos in Mexico with the attendance of 2,000 youths, the First Mega Youth Sabbath was held via satellite. We were blessed with the presence of Pastors Paulsen, Muganda and Tejel from the General Conference and Pastor Leito from our Division. The young people were motivated to rejoice in worshipping God and made a commitment to the mission of the church.

4. Bible Contest

Using the latest technology, each year a Bible Bowl was held throughout our territory. It has been an efficient program to help our youth study the Bible continuously and develop a spirit of fellowship among them. The final winner of the last Intra-Division Bible Bowl will be the official delegate at the General Conference Session in Atlanta.

5. Day of Kindness and Compassion

Our young people were joyful participants in the Day of Kindness and Compassion that was held along with ADRA in this five year period. By sharing one million dinners with one million people in need the following scripture was fulfilled: “Whatever you did for one of these my brethren, you did it to me.” (Matt. 25:40)



Pastor Bernardo Rodriguez is the Youth Director in the Inter-American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

6. Youth Leaders in Haiti

In the terrible tragedy of Haiti we lost 450 young Adventists, including several prominent leaders. However, among those who survived, many have provided assistance as Master Guides and Pathfinders volunteering at the hospital and in rescue groups, delivering water and food, clearing debris and helping with multiple service tasks that ADRA has completed.

One of the acts of divine protection happened for the students at our Adventist University. At the exact moment of the earthquake 800 young people were in the school auditorium for a special meeting. The large building swayed side to side and cracked but it did not fall. The Angel of the Lord protected them from death.

Our young people have shown their love, courage and commitment to serve the needy. They do not give up and with the help of God they will “take flight like eagles, they shall run and not grow weary” (Isa 40:31) until they have proclaimed to all of Inter-America that Jesus is coming soon! ●

Reaching Youth Through Preaching

Pastor James Black

Preaching can be an effective method for reaching youth if properly applied. Many speakers find it challenging to preach to youth, but youth are really no different from adults. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God can use our explanation of scripture to resonate with youth.

It is not about sounding like youth that gets their attention through the preached word, but rather, making the scriptures come alive in our presentation. Preaching must be informative, creative, and relevant in application in order to reach today's youth. The best way to do this is, I find, is to preach in the first person or to place myself in the parable or the story. If the biblical lessons always appear to be historical, then the application can sometimes be disconnected.

For example, I receive a favorable response from a group of youth when I preached on Jesus meeting the women at the well. I literally refrain from drinking water in order to identify with being thirsty. Drinking from a bottle, I take a long gulp until it's all gone and then make the point that although I am no longer thirsty, thirst will return. Unless we partake of the Christ, the Living Water whose well never runs dry, we will spiritually thirst again.

Training youth to preach is an excellent means of getting them involve with ministry. In some cases even children are now preaching. Though some leaders are not in favor of this practice, many of us who have encouraged and trained youth to preach have found it be extremely rewarding to the participants. However, I would caution that before youth are allowed to enter pulpits as speakers, they must receive training.



Pastor James Black is the Youth Director in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

An excellent, creative tool for training youth to preach is the book “Hey Youth! Preach the WORD!!!” In this book four suggestions are given for preparing youth to preach. They are:

a. *Spiritual preparation.*

Youth must first develop a spiritual connection and relationship with God which comes out of a lifestyle of prayer and devotion.

b. *Reading and studying.*

Youth must be familiar with the subject matter they are presenting. It should be obvious that they are prepared and have something significant to share.

c. *Practice.* Youth are usually more confident when they have practiced. Preaching is no different. The more one practices, the better they can deliver.

d. *Proper rest before sermon.*

Youth must appear strong when standing before an audience to speak. Late night preparation just before the sermon is not a good practice. The more rest you get the sharper your mind. God wants to shine through our youth.

As a conference youth director, I started putting youth in pulpits in 1991. Many have become pastors and church leaders in their local church, conducted successful evangelistic meetings, and won many souls to Christ. Let them Preach! ●

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HOW TO LOWER OR KEEP CHOLESTEROL LEVELS HEALTHY

Probably the most effective way to lower cholesterol levels is to make changes in eating habits and lifestyles.

- **Eat less fat**

the more fat you eat the more cholesterol the body makes. Limit saturated fat.

- **Eat less cholesterol**

cholesterol only comes from animal products. Eat less animal products.

- **Choose low fat or fat-free**

go a step further and avoid animal products all together.

- **Increase fiber intake**

Fiber from foods such as oats, beans and vegetables lower cholesterol level.

- **Increase physical activity**

aerobic exercise is known to increase your good cholesterol. Exercise 20 -30 minutes daily at least four times per week.

- **Keep weight healthy**

the heavier you are the more your body packs fat and cholesterol.

—Source: American Heart Association

Keeping Young People in the Church

Pastor Manny Cruz

I was baptized at the age of seventeen. I remember it as if it were yesterday. If you ask me why I chose to join the church at an age when others were leaving, I have to say that it was because I felt accepted, appreciated and I really felt that the church loved me. Not only did I join the church but I stayed in the church because of it. You see, one of the reasons that young people stay in the church is because someone in the church loved them enough to spend time with them, “Teens who had at least one adult from church make a significant time investment in their lives also were more likely to keep attending church. More of those who stayed in church – by a margin of 46 percent to 28 percent – said five or more adults at church had invested time with them personally and spiritually” (<http://www.lifeway.com/>).



Pastor Manny Cruz is the Associate Youth Director in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Retaining Through Mentorship

The dictionary defines the word mentorship as “a formal relationship between a student and a professional adult to further the student’s knowledge, skills, or career” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mentorship>). Notice the word relationship. As I think back on my first several years in the church as a young adult and the church leaders and adults that

“mentored” me, I don’t remember a single sermon that Pastor Walter Solis preached, but I do remember the time he spent about an hour with me in the church parking lot just answering my questions about the military and the Sabbath. I remember the choir director begging me to join the choir (she called it recruiting) and working with me so I could catch up. I remember the Adult Sabbath School Superintendent asking me to run the program one Sabbath and guiding me through the whole thing. I will never forget the Pathfinder leader and his wife who “adopted” me as their spiritual son and spent countless hours counseling me and listening to me as I struggled through my junior year in high school. I don’t remember any Bible study or prayer meeting. Don’t get me wrong—I’m not saying we shouldn’t do this in youth ministry; these are foundational in any ministry. What I am saying is that it was the relationships that kept me coming back.

I believe that sometimes we complicate things in the church when it comes to working with young people. We look for the latest resource, the most cutting edge, up-to-date, out of the box, radical tool that will keep our youth in the church. This is wonderful! It’s excellent! It’s great that youth ministry leaders are trying to stay current and relevant. We must keep doing that. However, I would suggest to you that nothing

would substitute investing time in the lives of young people. Developing relationships with each of them. This is called mentorship.

In John 21 Jesus says to Peter: “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus

said, “Feed my lambs.” Three times Jesus commands Peter to feed His lambs. I believe that this command is for the church today, particularly for the shepherding or mentoring of the little lambs. Jesus asks you today, “Do you love me?” If your answer is yes, then “feed His lambs” or should I say: “mentor His young people” ●

Serving Through Creativity

Pastor Otimar Gonçalves

Ruth Noller, a researcher from the University of Buffalo, says, “Only God creates and human being only copy.” Ruth also says that “Minds are like parachutes – they function only when open.” This is a great truth in the world of creativity. Creativity is not a gift for a few blessed people, but is above all potential to be explored. Creativity is born in the face of difficulty or necessity.

If you want to be an extremely creative person then keep your mind always open to new ideas and new activities in a constantly boiling world.

I will present you with four applicable practices that can help you be a creative person:

Keep in constant communion with God.

Only God is the original creator of good inventions in life. We human beings only have flashes of creativity and this limits us significantly. Therefore, if you want to be a person with great power of creativity, you need to be finely tuned with the Source of all good ideas – God.

The question which arises is: How can I be in perfect communion with God? Let me answer to the point: Have a daily program of Bible study and personal prayer. The result will be

more than mere moments of creativity; your ongoing connection with God will turn you into an almost original ‘creator’

God will give you creative new ideas in Biblical texts that you have already read at least thirty times; this has already happened to me several times.

Be curious and observant.

Every day hundreds of unusual situations spring up and if you are always ‘tuned in’ to everything or almost everything that is happening around you, it is possible that you will take away excellent creative ideas to apply to your daily work environment. If you are able



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to always carry a notepad with you, it will be very productive in the field of creativity and innovation.

Observation must be exercised with discretion, and it is on this point that you should be selective; it was God who gave us that selective 'filter' for everything that you see in your daily life. Be a new sponge – absorb that which is good which happens around you. You never lose by listening to and observing the behaviors of others.

Read a lot.

The slogan of the ministry of education of Brazil is: "Who reads, travels." This is a crystal-clear truth: reading takes us to places we have never even imagined we would go, the wings of reading steer us quickly from the blindness of ignorance, to the platform of knowledge in an instant.

It is very possible that on these flights initiated by our reading of good books and good magazines, brilliant ideas emerge. The Brazilian author, Monteiro Lobato, said: "A country is made with books and men." I always enjoy reading with at least a pen in my hands to take notes: do so and beautiful, creative ideas will appear in your mind.

Strengthen your mind.

As creativity is an activity that is almost essentially mental, it is good for you to take special care of your brain, for example: sleep at least eight hours a day, avoid situations or environments with a lot of noise, try to have as little stress as possible, forget negativity, be an enthusiastic person about life, do physical exercise especially in fresh air and have a few moments in nature; this can bring creative ideas such as you have never imagined.

Ah... and don't forget, creativity can be developed and acquired daily, and that depends only on you. Therefore, be creative for the honor and glory of the Creator God! ●

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Reaching Through The Family

Pastor Eugene Fransch

Despite the many articles on the eroding influence of the family unit in guiding our youth into adulthood, the truth is that the family unit is still a fundamental unit in influencing them for success in adulthood, and in the area of relationships with others and God.

When teens/youth are asked about their family situation, their comments reveal that the concept of the word “family” has been grossly distorted. Some live with Mom and Dad, others with Dad/Mom only. Some live with neither Dad nor Mom. A few don’t know one or both parents. Common words expressed among teens in conversations with them are – Divorce-Separation-Abandonment-Abuse... emotions of Hopelessness! Our Youth are facing a “crisis of character” that only the family unit can help!

Many troubled homes urgently need to have Christianity made real in their midst. Even those with

spiritual strengths need reinforcement. The great news is that despite all the negative forces affecting families today, the family still continues to be a crucial force in the spiritual and social development of our teens and youth.

The fundamental priority of families where the parent(s) engage with their youth is in the area of **decision-making**. The freedom to make individual choices is at the heart of each person’s relationship with God.

Helping youth make good choices is crucial to their spiritual and social development. Youth become adults one day at a time through thousands upon thousands of interlocking life experiences. Decisions they make in their twenties are influenced by experiences they had when they were five.

The atmosphere of daily home life is important to our youth. It needs to be a place where they enjoy bringing their friends. Are

the spiritual times fun and exciting and nurturing? Are the youth respected as individuals and are their opinions respected? All these considerations play an enormous impact upon the decisions young adults make about their direction of their spiritual lives.

The family unit serves as a moulding incubator where youth begin to shape their character for the future through the decisions they make. Parents have an important responsibility in this key area to help their youth develop sound, biblical decision-making skills that will assist them in their journey into adulthood and making the faith of their parents, their faith!

Another key influence upon youth that families have is that they help their members from birth to develop skills needed for healthy relationships in friendship, marriage, family, and other relational networks where relationships play such a



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critical part in human life.

The family is the best place for youth to learn important life values that will prepare them for the world outside. Here are the fundamental important reasons why God gave us the family unit.

1. Provides for intimate and social relationships.
2. Meets our needs for love and belonging.
3. Establishes personal identity and a sense of self worth.
4. Transmits values from generation to generation.
5. Acts as a primary agent in discipling its members for Christ.
6. Gives to the world a revelation of God and His ways.

Our families still serve to guide youth into adulthood through learned skills that will enable them to be successful in the world, even amid the various pressures it faces from within and without. ●

Connecting through Proper Planning

Jobbie Yabut

Most of the time, the youth are called for special projects or tasks. Although driven with much passion, they sometimes fail because the work is done haphazardly due to failure of planning. If we are given a task by a boss or a superior in our department, we tend to do our best to prove that we could accomplish the responsibility we are called for aside from the adept service we want to achieve. How much more is that true when it is for God whom we serve above all? The youth are called by God to be His helping hands. It makes me wonder as I witness young people in our institutions doing great things for Him.

But amongst the most serious questions to ponder is: do we really plan? Being convicted of the importance of planning is the key that unlocks success. In this process, we first lay our burdens on God, asking for wisdom and guidance, relying upon His strength that is much needed to fulfill the desire to serve. While planning, we involve God as the Head of the team, recognizing the importance of His mentorship. Isn't it wonderful to have teamwork with the Omnipotent God? Aside from that, the young people are blessed to have experienced pastors, teachers, leaders, and friends to consult and to take advice from.



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The Bible clearly upholds this principle of planning in Proverbs 15:22, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." At all times we have to be discreet enough to have options in our plans so when one plan doesn't work out, there's another alternative to utilize; "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." (Proverbs 19:21) During these crucial times, faith is severely tested, yet an ardent faith bears good works as it is written, "Faith without work is dead." (James 2:20) Gillespie and Dudley emphasized in the book *Faith in Balance*, p. 44, that "One of the most significant predictors of mature faith is active participation in service activities and projects." And yes, great planning produces wonderful accomplishments. ●

Connecting Through Finding The Will of God

Pastor Nick Kross

As a child I dreamed of finding a treasure that was worth a lot of money. I was captivated by the ocean and shipwrecks, so on my holidays to the Sunshine Coast of Queensland, my cousins and I would dive for treasure. We found a lot of sinkers and fish hooks, but nothing of much worth. My hope was that I would be famous, with people asking me questions about my find. When I gave my heart to Jesus at the age of 19, my connection with Him led me to realize that fame didn't mean significance. I began to realize that He offers us a treasure more valuable than any treasure in a sunken ship. Jesus offers us a life with Him throughout eternity.

There are a few basic questions in life that every young person needs to answer in order to find true fulfillment. **The first question** is who will we connect with and what influence will they have on our life? The answer to this question can only be found by accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and saviour. Jesus once said, *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."* (Matt 13:44) Becoming a part of the kingdom of heaven through our connection with Jesus Christ is the first and most important step in living a life of significance. According to Jesus, His Kingdom is a treasure more valuable than any other treasure on earth.



Pastor Nick Kross is the Youth Director in the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Once we have found Christ and the spiritual life He offers us, **the next most important question** we need to answer is, what purpose does Jesus have for me as a part of His Kingdom? Jesus was very clear about how His followers could help Him accomplish His mission. Listen to how He spoke to Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, early in His ministry. *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."* (Mark 1:17) For Jesus, every follower was to connect with others in order to share the good news of the Kingdom.

We live in an age of media fantasy, leisure, sports, networking sites, education, career development and consumerism. However, with all the conveniences of life, meaning and purpose are sadly lacking for many young people. There is only one place where true meaning is found and that is through entering into a faith relationship with Jesus and living to share the good news of His kingdom. Finding our purpose in life helps us create a road map that connects others to Jesus and His Kingdom. It's only as we find Jesus and His purpose that our treasure hunting ends and our real life begins.

If you want to know God's will for your life, spend time connecting with Jesus in His word and in prayer, then go out and share the good news. You too can become a fisher of men and women for Jesus. ●

Reclaiming Through Commitment

Pastor Paul Tompkins

The loss of young people through the back door is a real issue for the church today! I believe there is an overwhelming need to reach out to those who may, for whatever reason, have become inactive over the years and reclaim them for Christ and the church.

Yet despite this one of the most shocking statistics that I have seen is that only 15% of young people who stop coming to church ever receive a follow-up visit or even a call from anyone at church.¹

I believe the first step is, therefore, to recognise the problem and to be committed to be part of the solution. The reason for this is that searching for the lost is a biblical imperative and not an option.

The recurring theme of the lost sheep² shows clearly that not only are we to take the initiative in searching for the lost but also, like the father in the parable of the lost son, we must be committed to watching, waiting and preparing for their return.

Reclamation

Reclamation is one of the key Strategic Themes of the Seventh-day Adventist Youth Department. This is important

because just as the prodigal “came to his senses” (Luke 15:17b) and set out for home, so too will many modern-day lost sons and daughters. Our task is to make sure they meet the father first, rather than the elder brother, on their return.

To do this I believe that the church must become a place of refuge for our youth. Just as God appointed cities of refuge³ for his people so today must the church fill this role.

Ellen White Comments; “The cities of refuge appointed by God’s ancient people were a symbol of the refuge provided in Christ.”⁴ She also adds that “The church is God’s fortress. His city of refuge which He holds in a revolted world.”⁵

In Numbers 35:15 we read that refuge was extended to “Israelites, aliens and any other people living among them.” They had somewhere to go and the same concepts of protection, strategic placing, sanctuary and long-term care still need to be there today for our young people. At one time or another they will seek this refuge.

Roots and Identity

A young lady I know gave up on Christianity in her teenage years – attracted by another lifestyle and



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ultimately an unhappy relationship. Her early upbringing, however never left her, and neither did the prayers of her loving parents.

One day she woke up in her flat, in a faraway city, aware of a void in her life. She looked out the window and saw the cross of the church opposite—one she had seen many times but somehow never noticed. Memories of her childhood, church retreats and other events came flooding back and she stood there crying. She suddenly wanted to read the Bible and know if God still cared for her and would hear her cry.

She searched for a Bible – her own copy had long gone but she knew there was one there somewhere, given by a grandmother. Finally she located it and opened the pages at random – to the middle of the Bible and the book of Psalms. There she read words to the effect that the Lord hears my cry—and she knew that God had directly answered her call.

That changed her life—she left for home immediately, announcing to her parents that their prodigal daughter had returned. The change was real and profound; when I subsequently met her again she had been baptized, was leading out in youth activities and was soon to be married to a young man I knew from church camps.

We must never give up. The search for identity sometimes leads young people away, but prompted by the Holy Spirit, the call of warm memories, and a renewed search for roots and identity also call young people home. They will come home searching for these elements, and I believe in increasing numbers! ●

References:

¹ *Gane and Case*, 13.

² Luke 15

³ Numbers 35:9-15, Deut 4:41-43. 19:1-9, Joshua 20:8-9.

⁴ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 516.

⁵ *Acts of the Apostles*, 11.



THIS IS IT!

This is the year you'll read your Bible through and then wonder why you've never read it all the way through before. Of course, it helps to crawl into Dwain Esmond's head and watch how things play out from his inimitable perspective (go ahead, look it up!), which makes it almost painless!

Seriously, you'll encounter some people in the Bible who act just like people you know. People who asked hard questions and dealt with some of the very same issues you struggle with. And through it all, God's tough decisions reveal a Creator deeply invested in His creation. (Yeah, God's faced some pretty hairy situations too. Remember, He's working with humans here.)

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Shut the Back Door!

Pastor Nkeruwem John Enang

The presence of a large youth membership (about 70 – 80% average) is a great blessing to our church, because with their input, much can be done to accomplish the mission of the church. In fact, without their leadership, the church would quickly fail. God's servant E G White, in *Messages to Young People*, p. 196, presented what the church stands to gain from the dynamic input of youthful energies put into the work thus: "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the world!" Here we see a two-pronged advantage – the youth if retained, trained and involved, will provide the energies and dynamism needed to carry the work of God forward now, and the assurance that the work will have been put in capable hands for the future.

The large youth membership can present a huge challenge as well, if we are not able to keep them, but simply lose them. The church cannot afford the latter option, and that is why the issue of retaining the youth is of utmost importance. It means therefore that we must adopt an intentional and proactive approach in retaining our youth.

Why do the young people leave the church? When the church does not appear to be relevant to their spiritual, social and emotional needs.

1. When they cannot find leaders who model the principles the church teaches.
2. When the issue of salvation is packaged in a way that makes it lack the joy, beauty and attraction that should create in the youth the desire to be saved, and the motivation to work for the salvation of others.

What must we do to retain our youth?

1. Provide for them leaders who are what Christ and the church expect the youth to be. (Deut. 6:4 – 9)
2. Present to the youth the attractive and imperishable trophy Christ has for overcomers and challenge them to go for it. (Rev. 2:10,11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21)
3. Make each church a youth discipleship center, providing all the youth-related ministries like the Adventurer Club, Pathfinder Club, Ambassadors, Young Adult Ministries, Youth Sabbath School etc., and make the needed materials available.
4. Involve them in the mission of the church.

The stakes are high – eternal life. Diligence is required (see Deut. 6:7). "Your service in the cause of God must be more hearty, full, and thorough" (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 215) ●



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THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By Ikechukwu Michael Oluikpe

A family invited some people to dinner. At the table, the wife turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, “Would you like to say the blessing?”

“I wouldn’t know what to say,” the girl replied.

“Just say what you hear Mommy say,” the wife answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said, “Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?”

Well, you’d say, “What a prayer!!!” but she did exactly what her Mom told her to

do: “say what Mom says”. She followed her Mom’s example. It is clear from this short story that leadership is really all about influence. This is especially true in the lives of young people.

The age of youth or adolescence is most probably the most interesting and exciting but also one of the most challenging stages of life. It is a significantly critical period in their lives that can make or mar them depending on their choices and experiences.

One of the most unique features of youth is their ability to keenly observe and imitate. Most of their learning is done by imitation. Therefore the kind of modeling and examples

that they receive at this age is very important. This brings to the fore the importance of the work of Youth leadership in the church.

The work of the youth leaders especially in the 21st century is very significant because of influence, as stated earlier. So the question is, “What kind of influence do we as youth leaders have on the youth of our churches?” The work of the youth leader is a very special responsibility that God has entrusted to us that should not be taken lightly. This is because the future lives of our youth depend, to a large extent, on our leadership ministry. Our youth will become a reflection of who we actually are.

Jesus talked about youth in His ministry. He said, “Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My Name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:4-6) Do you feel the weight of that Bible passage? It’s heavier than a millstone! Very serious, isn’t it? Jesus sounds as if it is a matter of life and death. Well, it is indeed a matter of life and death.

Most of our youth in the 21st century are surrounded and bombarded with all kinds of things from the media, peers and other sources in the society. Most of them in our churches are already headed the wrong direction, full of confusion as to what to do in the midst of all this information. This sets them up for making wrong decisions that bring negative results and mess up their lives for a long time. At such a time as this, God has placed us as youth leaders in our churches to give them direction – to help them find their way and to set their feet in the path to eternal life.

However the key question is this: In this “crisis age” of their lives, when they begin to ask questions about life and begin to search for meaning in life, what do our youth see in us as youth leaders? If youth are a reflection of who we are as youth leaders, then *who are we?* What do they see in us? What do they see us do? What do they know and what can they tell about our lives and especially our relationship with God?

Jesus warns us in the above text that at this stage in their lives, we should be careful how we lead them, especially with the example of our lives. We should be careful so as not to mislead them because if we do mislead them and cause them to stumble, the consequences are heavier

than a millstone on the neck of a drowning man.

The things that I share in this article are basically from my own experience in and exposure to youth ministry in the SDA Church. Since youth ministry is basically the same all over the world, I will be sharing, primarily from my experience, key principles and points for spiritual youth leadership.

What does it mean to be a spiritual youth leader in today’s world? As seen above, it is a life-changing role to play in the lives of today’s youth. Its significance cannot be overemphasized and should not be overlooked or neglected. How can we, through our youth leadership, bring our youth to Jesus in the midst of the challenges of the present age? Here are a few key points from my experience.

1. Have a living and active personal relationship with God (spiritual life)

As asked earlier, what do your youth see in you about your walk with God? Is God real to you? Well, the youth can tell if He is or not. Most of the time, youth are very objective and can tell the honest truth about their observations. They can see how serious and meaningful our relationship with God is. They

know and they can tell how excited we are about Jesus. They know because they watch and whatever they see they imitate or follow . . . or choose not to.

How then can I improve my relationship with God? Well, we know the usual ways – Bible study, prayer, worship, praise, fellowship, service and outreach, among others. These are a few of the “disciplines”(relationship enhancers) that make us more open to God. However one truth

and not halfheartedly. These disciplines are the foundations of the spiritual life. It is in doing this that our assurance of salvation is renewed and all that we need for the ministry is supplied. It is through these disciplines that we receive power to live holy and godly lives – to be true models for our youth.

Sadly, many youth leaders are so busy planning and working for the Lord that they do not find the time to walk with Him, and as a

2. Pray for your youth specifically and regularly

In youth leadership as in all of Christian ministry, there is a need for prayer power. Because prayer can do anything that God can do, it is of absolutely primary importance that we harness its power for the salvation of our youth. The Bible is clear that it is not by power or by might but by the Spirit that this spiritual work is done (Zechariah 4:6). As we pray and open ourselves up to God’s

leading through our devotional lives, we also need to pray that our youth may be open to God and His work of salvation in their lives and in that of others around them.

In order to pray for our youth effectively, we need to know them personally

is that there is a great tendency to do these spiritual activities just as a routine to “fulfill all righteousness”. We lose our first love for the things of God. There is a need to pray that God will revive us and cause us to love spiritual things and do them with all our heart. So it is one thing to do these as a routine and it’s another thing to “put your heart into it” as you do it. Whatever you choose to do as spiritual disciplines and whenever you choose to do them make sure that they are done wholeheartedly

result end up stressed, working in their own strength, power, wisdom and experience. They get burnt out and frustrated like Martha (Luke 10:40, 41). They lose balance in the abundant life and miss out on the rest that Jesus promises to give to those that trust Him (Matthew 11:28-30) – the rest that comes from letting God lead your life and work every day through your devotional life with Him. The spiritual life of the youth leader is truly the heart of youth ministry.

In order to pray for our youth effectively, we need to know them personally – know their names, their parents, family (brothers and sisters), school life and challenges. The youth leader might not get all these but a few basic ones will do - name, grade and challenges will suffice.

The next question is, “How do we get the youth to tell us these things if they don’t trust us?” Well, get them to trust you. How? Show them that you love and care for them in practical ways – call their home to say “Hi” once in a while, remember their birthdays,

help them with an assignment or school project. Do small practical things and you'd be surprised.

So let's review the points so far and see how they are linked: To pray for the youth specifically and regularly, we need to know them personally. To know them personally, we need to work with them practically. To pray for the youth, we need to have our own personal regular devotional time with God. See the link?

How can we pray specifically and regularly for our youth? One practical way I used (and still do today) is to make a prayer calendar. This helps you to pray for one youth every day or a group of youth every week. At first, it may be challenging to fix all the names but when you are done, it's a blessing to wake up every morning and during your prayer time, lift up the precious name of the young person scheduled for that day.

The reward is really fulfilling. It's more interesting if you have a birthday list of all your youth and fix their names on their birthdays for prayer. It's the first great gift they get that year, apart from a text message, email, or birthday card, among others.

When we pray specifically and regularly for our youth, we invite God's power to work in their lives and situations and to open them up to the leading of the Spirit

regardless of their backgrounds and experiences. And most of all, it draws us closer to them because when you pray specifically and regularly for someone, you naturally get closer to him or her.

3. Live honestly and openly with your youth

Because youth are keen observers, they can tell how real we are with God and with them.

Sometimes we as youth leaders separate ourselves from our youth by using our authority and position. When we distance ourselves from the youth and don't want to be vulnerable and real with them, we do ourselves and the youth a disservice. We pretend to be what we are not and many times give them the wrong impressions of us. Then, if we should fail in some aspect of our life, we will shock our youth and most probably disappoint, discourage, and disillusion them.

Like Jesus, Paul and other good Bible leaders who had followers, we need to live honestly and openly with our youth. Let

them know our strengths, our weaknesses, our fears, our joys – let's share our lives with them. Let them ask questions about us to know us better and let's answer honestly as much as we can. Share experiences from your life that they can learn from. Laugh, chat and talk with them. Spend time with them and be yourself with them. If there is a problem in a particular situation, tell them the truth wisely and in love. Let's invite them to pray with us about the problem so that, together with them, we can experience the power and reality of God in our lives.

It is important to state here that as we deal with youth, there are delicate things or issues that we should not present to the youth. Therefore there is a need for the wisdom and leading of the Holy Spirit in these issues. This again underlines and emphasizes the importance of having a personal walk with God. There is a need for balance – as much as possible, share your life with the youth as they share theirs with you. Be close to them and don't cover up or pretend with them because they will find out. However, pray for wisdom and tact in dealing with sensitive issues that relate to your relationship with them. The essence of this is: If they see how your relationship with God works for you then they will trust us and want that relationship with God too.

4. Know what current contemporary issues and challenges your youth are facing

I must commend the SDA church in this line for finding ways to deal with youth issues like drugs, sex, fashion, music, entertainment, movies, dating and courtship, peer pressure and the likes. The church has provided excellent resource materials for these societal challenges but another question is “what if I don’t get the resources for these? What do I do?” This is a reality we have to face. The answer is that there is a need for the youth leader to be resourceful through the leading of the Holy Spirit and the work of God. The youth leader can network with resource persons around the community and find creative ways to present practical Biblical answers that address contemporary youth issues in society.

I have seen that youth will be more active in church if they are well fed spiritually with the Word of God. They will become enthusiastic about God when the Bible is relevant to their life situations – when they can get authentic and practical answers and solutions from Biblical teaching. I must say, that many of our Sabbath School and youth teachers and leaders do not provide relevant Bible messages

for their youth when they teach and preach. The sad truth is that our youth leaders don’t make the Bible relevant to youth because the Bible is not really relevant to them personally. We can only give authentic answers from the Bible to our youth when the Bible is meaningful to us personally.

On one hand, youth leaders should know the Word of God but on the other hand, they should know current youth issues. Know their slang, language and slogans. Know their fashion – the designer names of their shirts, pants, footwear and how it affects their lives. Know the music tracks and movies that they are watching, among others. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, the spiritual youth leader can draw from the Bible to address these current trends. When youth leaders have a living walk with God and know our youth and their challenges personally, we can truly make the Bible relevant to them in the 21st century.

5. Involve the Youth in leadership and ministry

One of the ways to keep youth spiritual is by involving them in the work of the Lord.

Don’t let them just sit there with

all their bundles of energy and do nothing. Delegate! Give them something to do! Tell them what to do and how to do it! Give them the opportunity and watch them do it!

Don’t expect too much from them. Love them and be patient with them. Gradually you will see great leaders in action. This will prepare them to be good successors and will keep them in the church as youth leaders in their own turn. We make them love the church by making them a part of it.

In the 21st century the media and internet cyberspace have become probably the greatest parenting influences to our youth –presenting to them values and models that seriously challenge and oppose Biblical principles. Since the youth spend more time with these than with parents and church leaders, they definitely imitate and believe more of what they see, hear and interact with.

Consequently the church ends up with very few committed youth, halfhearted youth or no youth at all. Therefore this is no longer time to assume that our youth are well taught in church and have a personal relationship with God. It is no longer time for youth to be seen and not heard. This is the time to consciously and intentionally work for their salvation and to establish them in this faith through a living, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is time to personally confront them with the life-or-death question, “How is your relationship with Jesus Christ?” It is time to wage war in earnest prayer against the devil and his evil worldly influences in the lives of our youth (2 Corinthians 10:4,5; Ephesians 6:10-18). It is time to claim their souls for Jesus (Isaiah 49:24,25). Like the men of Asher, who knew the times and what to do, youth leaders have been called to be watchmen and shepherds over the souls of the youth – to know how to minister to them in the 21st century (1 Chronicles 12:32). This is the time to do it (Romans 13:11-14; Ephesians 5:15-16). By doing this earnestly, we can raise a generation of youth for the Lord that will finish the work – a generation that will remain true to God and His teachings like the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35:1-16).

It is important to point out here that youth leaders may plan nice programs for the youth but youth leaders can never choose Jesus for the youth. They have to choose Jesus for themselves – personally. Though spiritual youth leaders cannot choose Jesus for the youth, they can provide an environment

that opens the youth up to choose Jesus for themselves. We can plan programs that the youth will remember one day and surrender to Jesus. The greatest reward for the youth leader is to meet his youth in heaven and hear them say to us, “You are one of the reasons why I am here”.

Though the youth of the SDA Church have a lot of well-prepared material resources for their spiritual life, their spirituality should not be assumed as doing fine based on these. If the youth cannot see the reality of spirituality in their leaders, then they will reflect the quality of lives of their leaders. The spiritual lives of the youth, most of the time, is a reflection of the spiritual lives of their leaders. So are we talking the talk (Deuteronomy 6:4-8)? Or are we just saying ‘Do as I say, not as I do’? (Matthew 23:3) On one hand, the lives of youth leaders can cause the youth to leave the church and consequently we lose the future of the church. On the other hand, our lives can influence the youth to love the church, stay and be established in the church for all time to come. We can create a “pyramiding effect” where we as youth leaders train our youth to be youth leaders and they train other youth leaders in the future and the impact goes on for generations. We can raise a great generation for the Lord through our lives and examples that ultimately pay off in eternity.

Many youth will make it to heaven because of the lives of their youth leaders. I hope we will find our youth in heaven one day soon when we gather there. I pray that one of the reasons why they will be there will be because of our lives – lives of spiritual youth leadership. ●



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TECHNIQUES FOR YOUTH EVANGELISM IN THE SOCIAL NETWORK ERA

Pastor Balvin Braham

The fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:6-8) created alienation that affects human beings throughout the ages. In order to counter the effects of this fall, God sent His son Jesus (Genesis 3:15; John 3:16) into this world to ransom the human race through His sacrificial death (Matthew 27:32-51). The plan of salvation effected by the sacrifice of Jesus (John 3:17; Philippians 2:6-11) enables the restoration of human beings to the image of their maker (Education, pp. 29, 30).

The mentality of post-moderns gives priority to secularism and materialism which manifests in at-risk-behaviors, delinquencies, addictions and other forms of pleasurable endeavors at the expense of the Christian lifestyle initiated by Jesus. Seventh-day Adventist youth who accept Jesus as their personal Savior, have a responsibility to reach their peers and others with the gospel of Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16). Ellen White said; "Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life" (Christian Service p.9).



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Attracting the attention and interest of today's generation requires the use of all the best practices as well as untried methods. In this age where the social media is very pervasive, and virtually irresistible to post moderns, it should be intentionally engaged in any evangelistic strategy which seeks to be effective in spreading the gospel. Ellen White said; "New methods must be introduced.

God's people must awake to the necessities of the time in which they are living. God has men whom He will call into His service,—men who will not carry forward the work in the lifeless way in which it has been carried forward in the past. . . .” (Evangelism, p. 70) Social media provide an ideal opportunity for Seventh-day Adventist Young people to present the gospel in this 21st Century.

Ellen White said “The one work more precious than any other is the work of soul-saving. The same intensity of desire for the saving of souls that marked the life of the Saviour marks the life of His true followers. The Christian has no desire to live for self. He delights to consecrate all he has and is to the Master’s service. He is moved with an inexpressible desire to win souls to Christ. Those who have nothing of this desire might better be concerned for their own salvation. Let them pray for the Spirit of service.”(Ellen G. White in *Australasian Union Conference Record*, August 15, 1902).

Technology, Approaches and Applications of Social Media

Social media provide the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the young people in particular, with a plethora of technologies,

approaches and applications that may be effectively used to extend the gospel commission. Some of the heritages of social media are; a) the world wide web where gospel events may be streamed live; b) the You Tube portal where videos of sermons, dramas, and various types of gospel presentations may be posted; c) the development of web portals for posting of sermons and other Christ-centered activities as well as the creation of interactive chat rooms for Christian conversations; d) youth connection outreach groups on the world wide web; e) MySpace Christian interactive forums f) facebook wall space evangelism; g) e-mail marathons for Christ; h) spiritual gifts or talent-oriented social media ministry, where through the use of social media, individuals use their spiritual gifts or talents to minister to others; i) cell phone outreach, where text messaging is a fundamental means of imparting short messages of encouragement. Network buddies, blogs, Twitter, Tagged, and Podcasting of audio files are other methods that may also be used to share the gospel.

Teleseminars

Teleseminars are an inexpensive way in which the youth may gather a group of people regardless of their location to present the gospel of Jesus.

This is an ideal approach to promote the teachings of Jesus and educate people about the Christian lifestyle. Teleseminars may also be known as audio conferences, teleconferences, teleclinics, and telecalls. To make this approach effective, the youth may combine their efforts in witnessing groups to conduct these conferences. They should establish dates to commence the seminar, the subjects to be dealt with, the number of sessions to be conducted, the duration of each session, and the number of persons to be invited to participate. A list of the names of desired seminar participants should be made. Then the individuals should be contacted and invited to the teleseminar. Each participant should be given specific instruction as to how to sign into the seminar.

Webinars

By adding the video component, the program may become a webinar. Similar approach may be utilized in the webinars as in the teleseminars. While in the teleseminars there is only an audio feature, in the webinars, there are both audio and video features. Physical location is not a challenge and people are able to spend time on the electronic gadget that arrests their interest to learn of the significance of faith issues.

TIPS ON HOW TO CONDUCT EFFECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH PROGRAMS

• **Tip #1: Establish a series**

Determine a theme for the initiative and develop 5-day (or week-long) course. Package it like the chapters of a book so that not one session can be missed, and then promote it as an online course.

• **Tip #2: Mention related events or activities**

Throughout your social media series, drop in some shameless promotion of related church or gospel activities that will expose the participants to other Adventist programs. If the content relates to something that you participate in then you may offer more in-depth information.

• **Tip #3: Use your Social media outreach as a premium**

If you have a membership website, or even a related gospel program, you can use this media outreach program as a trial offer to your site or gospel program. For example, when they attend this outreach program, you can offer them a 10-day trial to your membership website or related gospel program. When the trial is over, they may renew based on the established membership requirement.

• **Tip #4: Be alert**

Know what is happening in the world around you (Present Truth) – what are people talking about? Address those matters. It may be in the area of sports, politics, economics, religion, technology etc.

• **Tip #5: Be thoughtful**

People are not seeking for more e-mails or programs to participate in, they have enough. Do not send emails that are thoughtless and inappropriate or invite individuals to participate in forums just because the technology or the tool is available and encouraging. Have a purpose for the engagement.

• **Tip #6: Think about yourself**

As an individual who understands how people react, before inviting an individual to participate in a forum or an outreach program, think about what would impress you. Let that guide your judgment and the initiative that you invite others to participate in.

• **Tip #7: Make it meaningful**

Aspire to create an initiative that is meaningful. Endeavour to make people remember you, your website, the program and the good experience they have during the interaction.

• **Tip #8: Become invested in the activity**

If you get an unpleasant reaction, do not ignore it; neither become discouraged. Respond in a very kind and Christlike manner. Let your network partners know that you value their feedback and seek their suggestions for improvement. Invite them to take part in improving their experience. Give due recognition to network partners, as this goes a long way in helping you to achieve your gospel outreach goals.

Conclusion

Being a Seventh-day Adventist youth is a Divine privilege. To be involved in evangelistic outreach activities is inspiring and mission fulfilling. Mission outreach is about helping people to deal with their spiritual longings and establish positive relationships as well as satisfying daily needs. Building your presence on the Web, interacting with the online community, and social networking through all the available technologies and mediums are important assets in the process of fulfilling the gospel commission. Let the youth of the Seventh-day Adventist church arise and be going, for – NOW IS THE TIME! ! ●

BIBLE STUDY: junior youth

Contributor: Kimberley Tagert-Paul



STANDARDS AND VALUES

Where Do They Come From?

LEADERS NOTES:

Young people are just learning to make their standards and value their own. Influences of the world are so strong at this age. Encourage them to use God's Word for their choice of standards to help them become all they can be.

Ice Breaker : Rising Above the Tide

All work stops. Everyone's attention is drawn to the man at the center of the village. He is accused of acting irresponsibly. One by one, every man, woman, and child walk slowly to form a circle around this one who has committed the crime. All faces search his eyes—wondering what they will find there. He stands alone, in the center of the village, guilty. He knows it and knows what he deserves. They know it too.

This is the Babemba tribe of South Africa. And what is about to happen will astound you. This man, guilty of injustice, will be treated very differently than you would expect.

When the circle is finally broken the offending member, newly forgiven, is symbolically welcomed back into the tribe and greeted with joyful celebration. The offender is healed and so is the village.

This Babemba tribe, from Northern Zambabwe, have passed on a legacy of love to their members, something that sets them apart in how they value each member of their tribal family. What a lesson we can learn from their example.

DIG-IN

Our values and standards are important in our lives. They are part of our belief system. They affect how we do what we do and how we think. They affect how we treat others and what we expect from their behavior. In fact, our standards and values are an important part of who we are.

So what do you value most? It's a question we don't often stop to think about but we should. Getting our values in order helps us to focus on what is most important in our lives. The clearer you are about what you believe in and why, the more effective you will be in life and the more happiness you will receive.

Mark Twain once wrote, "If you think you can, you can. If you think you can't, you're right." Somehow, you need to know what you believe in and put your values in order. Then there will be little stopping you!

HOT POTATO:

From Big Screen to Small Screen

Where do your standards and values come from? As Christians, this is a very important question because the world is watching us. Like it or not, we are to set a higher standard than the world. Our lives are examples of our Heavenly Father and we are to be a light in the world. If you claim the name Christian, then you must be an example of the One that makes you a Christian. It doesn't mean that you won't fail sometimes. But the world is watching and what they see will make a difference in who they choose to follow.

It's not easy living in a fishbowl but it comes with the choice of being one of God's children.

Now that you are maturing, you will begin to set up your own system of standards and values. We initially get them from many places. First and foremost, our values come from our parents. They teach us what they believe and place value on and that gets passed down to you. We get our standards from church. We watch others and learn from their lives. We get our ideas on living from God's Word. It is the ultimate book on living right. Our culture also affects how we live.

But there are other influences too, that make up who we are and what we value. Like it or not, Hollywood has a big influence on us. And many of those values have jumped from the big screen to the small screen—television. Much of what we value is taken from what we see, and for many, that means television. The media influences us greatly. But, it is our choice to let this happen.

So how do you make your values your own and not your parents? How do you choose who to follow and what standards to live by?

HOT POTATO QUESTION

If you take a look at your life, can you clearly see what values and standards are most important to you? If not, how will you be able to define your values? Can you look at your friends and see your values through their lives? Do the people you admire help to define your values? How about the material you read? Does it set a standard for your life? Is that standard one that you want to continue? Does the type of music and other entertainment you enjoy reflect your standards and values? Do you think you are called to be an example to others? Why or why not? Have you allowed standards and values of the world to creep into your life? Are your values based on opinions? Should they be based on the Word of God? Is your life example consistent with what you think your values are? If not, what do you need to do about it?

APPLY IT/BIBLE TEXT DISCOVERY:

Romans 12:2

Why do you think the Bible says that we shouldn't look to the world for our standards and values? What values would we most likely find there? Are there any good things in the world around us that we can emulate? Where does good come from? Is it in man's nature to do good?

Why or why not? Where can we find the best place to secure our values? How can we be transformed? Is it hard work? Is it worth the price?

Mathew 5:16

Do you sometimes feel like you are living in a fishbowl? Should you live that way? Does what others think about you make a difference? Should the way you dress and the way you behave always set an example of who you are inside? Why or why not? Can the way you dress and act change others' perception of you in a way that you don't want them to? How can you "let your light shine" without seeming that you are trying to be too good? Should that matter? Why or why not? Do people in the world want to have a good example to follow?

1 Peter 2:12

Is it hard work to always live right? Why or why not? What happens when we make a mistake? Will others perception of us change? Will God forgive us when we slip? Does living right give you a guarantee that life will be easy and perfect? Why or why not? If we are accused of doing wrong when we are living right, who will be our judge? Does your age give you an excuse for your behavior? Why do you think that way? Do adults expect young people to live right? Can you, at a

young age, be a powerful witness to others by your behavior and choices?

1 Corinthians 3

What foundation does Paul encourage us to build on? When is that foundation laid in our lives? Does Paul encourage the people to look to him or Apollos as an example? Are we called to be farmers to make ready the soil, plant it, and gather the harvest? What are we called to do? Is a seed planter also a harvester? How can you plant good seeds with your life example? Does planting always mean a good harvest? Do you need to examine your values and standards and see if they are what you truly want them to be?

EXTRA GEM

Ellen White wrote about values that came from the world. Read what she wrote . . . "We are Christ's witnesses, and we are not to allow worldly interests so to absorb our time and attention that we pay no heed to the things that God has said must come first. There are higher interests at stake. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Christ gave His all to the work that He came to do, and His word to us is, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. So shall ye be My disciples. Willingly and cheerfully

Christ gave Himself to the carrying out of the will of God. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Shall we feel it a hardship to deny ourselves? Shall we draw back from being partakers of His sufferings? His death ought to stir every fiber of the being, making us willing to consecrate to His work all that we have and are. As we think of what He has done for us, our hearts should be filled with love." (MYP 314.3)

SHARING TIME

How can you set a standard that others would want to adopt? Think about the way you dress, your entertainment choices, and how you talk. Are they showing your inner values? What can you do to influence others to make good choices. Brain storm and make a list of the qualities you most admire. Then make a list of the qualities you should most admire? Are they the same? What do you need to do about it?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Make a top ten list of the values you want in your life. Order them in importance from the most valuable to the least valuable. Now look at the list. Where do your top values come from? Are they yours or someone else's? What can you do to make your values your own? Ask God for help. He values you more than anything. ●

BIBLE STUDY: senior youth/young adult

Contributor : Troy Fitzgerald, Ph.D.



HOPE FULL

The Scope of Truth, The Hope of Life **Young Adult Bible Studies on the 28 Fundamental Beliefs**

Whether you are discovering what Seventh-day Adventists believe for the first time or re-discovering it again as young adult Christian, *Hope Full* will:

1. Expose you to Christ as the source and center of every teaching of Scripture.
2. Engage you in a thoughtful, personal study of the Bible.
3. Invite you to think hard and feel strongly about the unique Adventist message.
4. Deepen your experience with the Savior and His calling in your life.

Editor's Note: This is lesson #11 in the Bible Studies series that explore our 28 Fundamental Beliefs as Seventh-day Adventist Christians. The entire series will be available Summer 2010. Contact your local ABC, AdventSource or online at www.gcyouthministries.org.

This journey is designed to prompt you to think and flesh out the message of Scripture for yourself and to integrate the truth you discover to your life. The 28 Fundamental Beliefs are postured for you clearly and unashamed. As you study, by yourself or in a small group, know that your earnest seeking will be rewarded with new insight and a rich experience through the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Each topic/teaching has four parts: **Engage**, **Discover**, **Relate**, and **Express**. Because everyone favors a unique style of learning, the different components allow you to customize and emphasize what works best for you.

● Engage

An open-ended introduction to The doctrine with stories, value shaping activities, and a personal, thought provoking connection to the doctrine.

- **Discover**

The simple doctrinal statement, as embraced by the Adventist Church, with the verses that support that teaching listed for you to read or look up in your Bible. A brief focusing question prompts the seeker to practice studying the text carefully and personally.

- **Relate**

A look at how the storied life of Christ and others in Scripture flesh out each doctrine in a relevant way. This section offers a narrative connection to the doctrine as well as a few devotional points to think about.

- **Express**

A set of questions for personal or small group use that engages the student to not only experience the major tenets of a particular truth, but to find ways to express it to others and live it out in their daily life.

Because a study on the 28 Fundamental Beliefs will be used around the world in a variety of settings, the following section offers various ways to use this resource. You can use Hope Full in a small group or for your personal study.

Hope Full attempts to urge young adults to experience a life of devotion to Christ as their Savior and the Head of His church. Young adults are not called to simply obey commandments, but rather, the Risen Christ. They are not compelled to mindlessly keep a day of the week but to become loyal to the Lord of the Sabbath. The long awaited hope of the Second Coming is not simply an awareness of last day events, but a deep desire for Christ to come and personally take His children home. May God bless you and bind you close to Him as you lead others to “love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and strength.”

GROWING IN CHRIST

ENGAGE

For five-year-old-boys everything becomes a contest--a competition. So when it came time plant the corn in the garden the simple practice of backyard farming soon turned into a race. Who would grow corn the fastest? The area had been divided equally, the same seeds, same water source, and the same sunlight baking the ground. After almost two weeks, the corn broke through on his father's side of the garden, but not on the young sons side. “Just give it time,” The father said patiently. But the father's corn continued to break open the ground surge toward the sky while nothing happened on the other side. How could this happen? Same corn. Same ground. Same water. Same sun. The father was curious so after the young son came home from school he observed his son and immediately discovered why his corn was not growing. Everyday, after school, the little boy would get a spoon and dig up his corn trying to see if it was growing. As disciples of Christ, we are destined to grow. However, much like anything planted, if all the energy goes into trying to see the change instead of devoting yourself to change things that cause the transformation, it just wont happen. There is a spiritual battle going on in the world today and we know that battles are not fought and won by simply trying to win with all your might. There is a strategy. We are designed to grow.

Where on you on the continuum? To what degree do you live each day with the awareness of the spiritual war that rages in the world?

- ___ Ambivalent
- ___ “Aware but it’s not really about me”
- ___ Suspect the spiritual battle is more real than we can see
- ___ Keenly feel the struggle between good and evil

DISCOVER

As you read the statement of belief below think about what aspect of this experience intrigues you the most. What part of your life do you want to experience growth and change the most?

GROWING IN CHRIST

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience.

As you read the passages of Scripture that describe Christian growth, identify the five that are most meaningful to you.

Psalm 1:1-2

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 77:11-12

I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.

Colossians 1:13-14

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 2:6, 14-15

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Luke 10:17-20

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from

heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Ephesians 5:19-20

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:12-18

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet

of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 2:9

If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Philippians 3:7-14

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Be joyful always; 17pray continually; 18give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 20:25-28

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

John 20:21

Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Galatians 5:22-25

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 4:4

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Hebrews 10:25

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

RELATE

Perhaps one way to describe doctrines is to look at them as windows in a house where you look out at the world and see a particular view of the relationship between God and people. The most recent addition the family of windows grows out of the emerging need for action in the midst of a spiritual war. For those who place their trust in the saving work of Jesus Christ, they are, by the very nature of their relationship as children of God, part of the battle between Christ and Satan. It is through this window that children of God see the promise, the authority and the responsibility of their relationship to God.

The promise of transformation is portrayed across the pages of scripture through people like Abraham (Genesis 17), Esther (chapter 4), Gideon (Judges 6),

Moses (Exodus 3 & 4), John the Baptist (Luke 1 & Malachi 4) and Peter (Matthew 16:13-19 & Luke 22:24-32). When Jesus looks at the disciples and tells them straightly: “You will do even greater things” and if you remain united with Him, “you will bear much fruit” and the fruit will “last.” (John 15:5,16) It is not an accident that the gospel spread so effectively when Christ promised, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8-11).

Authority to overcome. When Jesus saw the needs of the world he called for more laborers to work (Matthew 9:35-38) and subsequently empowered them with unmistakable authority to work on behalf of His name (Matthew 10). According to John the Revelator, this authority has come to those who claim the blood of Christ, testify, and live devoted to Christ, even if it costs them their very life (Revelation 12:10,11).

Responsibility to exercise. Clearly, God binds all who believe and receive (John 1:10-12) Christ to Him with a new standing but living as children of God. Moreover, calls for people to flesh out their calling through the exercising the disciplines of the spiritual life: Bible study, worship, prayer, service, sharing their faith and living passionately for the sake of the gospel (2 Peter 1:5-7; Psalms 119:11; Luke 6:40; Mark 5:18-20).

The real beauty behind this teaching is that you can't "know it" without practicing it. But as you claim the promises made about you, and use the authority given by Christ, engaging in a life of action, the transformation will happen. You may not even notice it. Even as the seeds planted in the soil grow, you too will transform into the image of Christ you were created and redeemed for.

EXPRESS

When in your life have you sensed keenly the spiritual forces of good and evil? What happened? How did that experience shape your walk with God?

How have you seen God transform and grow people? Who are some examples in your life?

Who are some people in Scripture that have shown unmistakable growth as a result of God's grace in their lives?

In the Christian life, what do you think is the difference between trying to change and training for change?

What are some areas of your life where the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak? If you were to choose one area of your life where you could be more disciplined, what would it be?

Of the list of practices below, the rank in order of those you practice the most (1) to the least (8)

- ___ Prayer
- ___ Solitude and Quiet Reflection
- ___ Worship
- ___ Guidance through Bible Study
- ___ Service and Acts of Kindness
- ___ Fellowship and Community
- ___ Sacrifice/ Leaps of Faith
- ___ Fasting & Repentance

Reflect on your responses and be deliberate about practicing the spiritual life with a partner or small group this week.

FINALE — QUOTES

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. —Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pg. 68

As the flower turns to the sun, that the bright beams may aid in perfecting its beauty and symmetry, so should we turn to the Sun of Righteousness, that heaven's light may shine upon us, that our character may be developed into the likeness of Christ.

—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pg. 68

You are just as dependent upon Christ, in order to live a holy life, as is the branch upon the parent stock for growth and fruitfulness.

—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pg. 69

Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.

—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pg. 70

Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. —Ellen G. White

As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know His tender, pitying love. —E. G. W ●

CREEPY, CLIMBING CHOLESTEROL

Gloria Beecher

Have you ever heard the saying, “Too much of a good thing may become bad for you”? Well that can be said of cholesterol. The body needs cholesterol, but when your cholesterol level becomes too high it puts you at risk for heart disease and other serious health problems.

The sad news is that high cholesterol gives no warning signs as it creeps up on you. If it goes unchecked it creeps up higher and higher and keeps climbing until it gets you.

What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fatlike substance that is made mostly by the liver. It helps the body to make hormones, use fat, as well as provide insulation for nerve and brain tissues.

Two kinds of cholesterol will be mentioned here, LDL or low-density lipoprotein and HDL, or high-density lipoprotein. Although both kinds are made from fat, cholesterol and protein, each works differently and has opposite effects on the body. LDL is known to be the ‘bad’ cholesterol while HDL is the good kind.

How Cholesterol Works

The whole process is like production in a factory. Fat from the food you eat is digested and carried to the liver. The liver makes cholesterol packages of lipoprotein, packs them into the blood and the blood transports the packages via the blood vessels throughout the body. After the packages are delivered, cholesterol returns to the liver and starts its ‘run’ all over again.

During transportation, some LDLs break apart and pieces become stuck and help to form plaques on the wall of the blood vessels. Over time this causes the blood vessels to become narrow, and the narrower the vessels the more difficult it is for the blood to pass through. Eventually the vessel may become blocked, or a piece of the plaque may break off and block the blood vessel. The result... a heart attack. Now you see why LDLs are called ‘bad!’ They really are!

HDLs or good cholesterol work against LDLs in that they rescue the stuck pieces of LDLs and return them to the liver where these ‘bad guys’ are either broken down and excreted or recycled. Naturally, you want your HDLs be much higher than your LDLs so they can outdo the LDLs.



A teacher and a registered nurse, Gloria Beecher lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her family. She is the mother of two girls—one a senior in college, the other a 11th grader. She loves to sing, write, cook, and play word games.

Are You at Risk?

You might be genetically predisposed to high cholesterol levels or your lifestyle and eating habits may cause your cholesterol level to be too high or become high later on.

Here's a quick quiz to find out if you are at risk for high cholesterol.

1. Do you eat a lot of fried foods?
2. Do you eat high-fat desserts, lots of gravy and sauces?
3. Do you eat a lot of processed, canned or frozen foods?
4. Do you eat a lot of fast food?
5. Do you use whole-fat dairy products such as cheese and whole milk?
6. Do you eat a lot of beef and other fatty, red meats?
7. Are you overweight?
8. Do you hardly exercise if at all?
9. Do you have a family history of heart disease?

The more questions you answered 'yes', the greater the chance that your cholesterol levels might be high or heading to unhealthy levels.

You can also do a simple blood test to know your levels.

Healthy levels should be:

Total cholesterol less than 200 mg/dl

HDL more than 40 mg/dl

LDL less than 100 mg/dl

You cannot change your genetic make-up, but you can control your cholesterol levels by choosing healthier habits.

Don't let the creepy, climbing cholesterol get hold of you. ●

MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

[HTTP://WWW.AMERICANHEART.ORG](http://www.americanheart.org)

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