

# PASS IT ON

A close-up photograph of two hands. A hand on the left, with a dark skin tone, is reaching out. A hand on the right, with a light skin tone, is holding a blue baton and passing it towards the first hand. The background is a blurred outdoor scene.

LEAD CONFERENCE 2019

# DAILY PROGRAM

## October 10 : 6-9 p.m.

- 5 :40 Special Video Feature  
GC Youth Department
- 6 :00 Welcome and Worship  
Blanchard G, Reyes K, Washington  
Adventist University
- 6 :25 Official Opening  
Wilson T, Ng GT
- 6 :40 Drum Core and Appreciation  
Peralta A, Blanchard G,
- 6 :55 Video : Our Global Youth  
Peralta A
- 7 :00 Youth History and Fun Facts  
Mokgwane P
- 7 :10 Special Music  
Washington Adventist University
- 7 :15 Devotional : Pass it On  
Blanchard G,
- 7 :35 One Year in Mission Video  
GC Youth Department
- 7 :40 Youth in Mission Reports  
Interviews
- 8 :30 Let's Talk ! Q and A  
Blanchard G, Mokgwane P, Peralta A,  
De los Santos A
- 8 :50 Unique Division Initiatives  
Mokgwane P
- 9 :00 Closing Prayer  
Manderson M

SCAN HERE



## October 11, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

- 7:40 Special Video Feature  
GC Youth Department
- 8:00 Welcome and Worship  
Blanchard G, Manderson M,  
Washington Adventist University
- 8 :20 Official Opening  
Wilson T, De los Santos A
- 8:35 Special Music  
Washington Adventist University
- 8 :40 Devotional : Pass it On  
Mokgwane P
- 9:00 Young Leaders Panel  
Reyes K, Peralta A
- 9 :15 Clubs and Resources  
Peralta A
- 9 :25 Senior Youth Ministry  
Mokgwane P
- 9:35 Let's Talk ! Q and A  
Mokgwane P, Peralta A, Blanchard G,  
De los Santos A
- 10:00 Intergenerational Video : Barna Study
- 10:10 Intergenerational Churches  
Musija Z
- 10:35 Youth Statistics : Trim D
- 10:45 Devotional : Pass it On  
Peralta A
- 11:05 Let's Talk ! Q and A  
Blanchard G, Peralta A, Mokgwane P,  
De los Santos A
- 11 :25 Impact and Beyond  
Blanchard G, Peralta A, Mokgwane P
- 11:40 Give Him 20 : Groups  
Mokgwane P, Mason M
- 12 :00 Closing Prayer  
De los Santos A

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# WELCOME LETTER

DEAR WORLD LEADERS  
AND YOUTH ADVOCATES,

Welcome! On behalf of the General Conference Youth Ministries Department we want to thank each of you for loving our youth around the world as they continue to grow in the grace of the Lord Jesus and become mighty in service for Him!

During this LEAD Conference it is our prayer that you will be encouraged to pass on to the younger generation our **Identity** in Christ, our **Mission** as Seventh-day Adventists, and Leadership in the local church. You will also be introduced to helpful resources and some amazing initiatives to help make **Passing it On** happen in your Divisions, Unions and Conferences!

You will notice that in this booklet we used the article approach for our presentations. This was intentional. Please feel free to use them in your sermons, workshops, seminars, etc. On the inside front and back covers is a QR code, all you need to do is scan it and it will take you to our regularly updated Dropbox, where you will find additional resources to help you learn more about the initiatives you heard presented today. Please also check out our website [youth.adventist.org](http://youth.adventist.org) and become our friends on Facebook @gcyouthministries; this will help you partner more intentionally with youth leaders and keep you informed about global youth initiatives that can be promoted and implemented locally.

Leaders, as you know, we are living at the very end of earth's history and God has a special work that requires the combined efforts of young and old Seventh-day Adventists alike. We desperately need each other! In Proverbs 20:29 the Bible tells us how each generation contributes to the other,

*"The glory of the young is their strength;  
the gray hair of experience is the  
splendor of the old" (NLT).*

Furthermore, the Bible tells us that just before the return of Jesus there will be an intergenerational movement among God's people.

*"Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day  
of the Lord arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of the fathers to their  
children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come  
and strike the land with a curse" (Malachi 4:5-6).*

Dear world leaders let's get on board with God's T.M.I. agenda and be Elijah leaders! Let's intentionally and strategically pass on our **Identity**, **Mission** and **Leadership** to the younger generation. May God continue to give you wisdom and courage to **"Pass it On!"**

Finally, we want to thank all our participants and contributors who worked to make this event possible. We praise God for the spirit of collaboration and teamwork in youth ministry at the General Conference office and throughout the Divisions around the world. A special thanks to all the young people who participated in this conference, whether publicly or behind the scenes!

Sincerely,

*Gary T. Blanchard*

PASTOR GARY



*Msgr. Pako*

PASTOR PAKO



*Andres*

PASTOR ANDRES



## ARTICLE

# PASS IT ON

BY GARY BLANCHARD

Anyone who plays or watches sports knows if you want to win the game, you have to pass the ball, puck or baton! This is true for football, basketball, hockey, volley ball and every other sport worth watching (sorry golfers). But did you know, that passing it on, is also vital to the success of God's church especially when it comes to youth and young adult ministry? If we want to reach and retain the younger generation for Jesus, we must "Pass It On"!

Research tells us that there are basically three values the older generation must pass on to the younger generation if we are going to reach and retain them. These values answer the deepest questions youth around the world are asking. According to the authors of the wildly successful book "Growing Young" those deep questions are "Who am I? Where do I fit? What difference do I make?" (p. 95). Thankfully the Seventh-day Adventist Church has outstanding answers for each as it seeks to intentionally pass on the values of identity, mission and leadership to the younger generation.

**1 IDENTITY** - The first vital value is identity in Christ. Young people naturally want to know WHO they are, and it is the responsibility of the older generation to help them understand their unique and life changing identity in Jesus. The world tells them their identity is found in their financial status, schooling, skin color or sexual orientation but the Bible points to something much greater! In John 1:12 and 1 John 3:1 the Apostle John teaches that when we received Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we become beloved sons and daughters of God. Interestingly, the Bible does not teach that everyone is a child of God! Of course, every person is of great value as proved by the cross but not everyone is His child! The Bible says this special identity is reserved for those who have placed their faith in The Son of God and are baptized. The Bible puts it like this, "So, in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27).

## KEY TO VICTORY

Why is this important? Why is it important for the younger generation to know WHO they are? Because knowing who they are is the key to overcoming every obstacle, challenge and temptation in their lives! It's also the key to having a deep, secure and growing relationship with God.

As a young man when Jesus faced the Devil in the wilderness in Matthew 4, he was tempted to doubt his identity. The Devil came to him and said, "IF you are the son of God tell these stones to become bread" (3). Notice Jesus quoted from the Bible doubling down on His confidence in God's Word. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (4).

What was going on here? Jesus is reminding the Devil that his identity is found in scripture not in the words, feeling or actions of others. You will remember in the previous chapter, at Christ's baptism, God had clearly said "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17). Putting His confidence in the identity already given to Him by His Heavenly Father, Jesus was enabled to defeat the devil in the wilderness!

It's also interesting that the Devil not only tried to get Jesus to doubt his identity as God's son, he also purposely left out the adjective "beloved." The wonderful truth is that we are more than just sons and daughters of God, we are BELOVED sons and daughters of God! Think about it! Every child in the world today is someone's son or daughter but sadly not every child in the world today is deeply loved. But as God's children we have a new and precious identity. We are beloved children of God! We are so beloved in fact that even when we fall into sin we are "not cast off."

The following quotation carried me through my youth and young adult years. Even now it gives me great confidence and courage. I praise God for the Spirit of Prophecy! "There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. EVEN IF WE ARE

OVERCOME BY THE ENEMY, WE ARE NOT CAST OFF, NOT FORSAKEN AND REJECTED OF GOD. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us" (*Steps to Christ* p. 64).

## DISCIPLE JESUS LOVED

Some might accuse the Apostle John of being egotistical since five times in his gospel he refers to himself as the "Disciple Jesus loved" (John 13:21-30, John 18:15-18, John 19:26-27, John 21:7, John 21:20) but John was not bragging. He was reminding himself and others of his privileged identity as a beloved child of God. This is why he was enabled to overcome where the other disciples failed. Remember of the twelve disciples it was only John that followed Jesus to Calvary! The others abandoned him and worse. You can see how knowing you are a beloved child of God can mean the difference between defeat and victory in our battle against Satan, it can also mean the difference between courage and cowardice as a disciple. Why not take a moment, right now and say out loud "I am the disciple Jesus loved!" How does that feel? Hopefully good but even if you feel nothing it is still true because it is based on the word of God. YOU ARE A BELOVED CHILD OF GOD!

### MAKING IT PRACTICAL

So how do we pass on IDENTITY to the younger generation?

- 1 Embrace your own identity as a beloved child of God.
- 2 Teach and preach it to the younger generation at every opportunity.
- 3 Model it by treating the younger generation as beloved sons and daughters of God.

An excellent resource which can help you do these three successfully and intentionally is Intergenerational Churches of Refuge (iCOR). This Adventist resource can be downloaded for free at [youth.adventist.org](http://youth.adventist.org). We challenge every Division, Union, Conference and local church to work through the iCOR Study Guide and to begin immediately modeling the values it promotes to the younger generation. Also look for iCOR workshops offered at IMPACT (the youth and young adult conference during GC Session), online and at various locations around the world.

### DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

I love the humorous story of the irate first-class passenger who was upset that his tickets had gotten mixed up and he would now have to sit in economy class. He started shouting loudly at the gate agent “do you know who I am, do you know who I am!” She tried desperately to be accommodating and patient but finally fed up with his rudeness, grabbed the intercom by her computer and said so everyone in the airport could hear “Hello folks I need your help, we have a man here who does not know who he is. If you know his identity, please come and help him immediately!” Although our young people do not have the awful attitude of the man in our

story, they are basically asking the same question... “Do you know WHO I am?” They sincerely want to know their identity! As church leaders and youth advocates, God is calling you to step up and “Pass it on!”

**2 MISSION** - The next vital value we want to pass on to the younger generation is MISSION as Seventh-day Adventists. Along with wanting to know WHO they are, young people want to know WHY they are here on planet earth. In other words, the younger generation needs purpose! Fortunately, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a denomination of destiny! According to Spirit of Prophecy our church was given “the most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals” (9 Testimonies p. 19).

Seventh-day Adventist are not better than other Christians, but we have been given a greater responsibility! We have been raised up to share the Three Angels Message found in Revelation 14. These are God’s famous last words before He returns! They center in Jesus who IS the “everlasting gospel” (vs 6). Adventist are called to invite the lost world to receive by faith “the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God” (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers p. 91). What a privilege, what an honor to be a part of a church movement that not only warns of judgement to come but also points to the cross and the justification and sanctification made available to all by faith in Jesus!

### FIRE RESCUE

Perhaps you will remember hearing about the terrible fires that swept through California USA last year. Many lives were lost because the flames moved so fast and often changed direction quickly at the whim of the wind. One woman who just barely escaped the flames tweeted the following “to the person who honked their horn like a maniac at 2 a.m. this morning and woke me up...thank you...you saved my life!”

To me this tweet summarizes the purpose of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the very last days of earth’s history. In the days, before the wrath of God is poured out and the entire earth is destroyed by fire, God has a people who will faithfully proclaim His warning message to the world. A people who will “honk the horn” of Bible prophecy like “maniacs” in order that the world will wake up from its sin induced comatose, receive Jesus as Savior and “...worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the seas and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7).

The wonderful news of the Gospels tells us that even though God’s wrath will be poured out just before the second coming, not a single person needs to be lost! The Bible says “For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour His anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live together with Him forever” (1 Thesalonians 5:9-10).

### YOUTH RETENTION

Many are asking today, how do we keep the younger generation in our church. This may be the question I am asked most often as I travel around the world. The answer is simple, and I believe it is backed by scripture and Spirit of Prophecy. If we want to keep our young people, we must get them actively involved in our mission of taking the Three Angels Message around the world. We must challenge them to live dangerously for Jesus that others might be warned and saved.

It’s interesting to me that one of the main reasons Noah kept his sons in the faith is because he faithfully proclaimed the message he was given. He stayed focused on the unique end-time mission God had given him and his boys caught their father’s faithfulness and integrity. Ellen White writes “Noah’s warnings had been rejected by the world, but his influence and example resulted in blessings to his family. As a reward for his faithfulness and integrity, God saved all the member of his family with him. What

an encouragement to parental fidelity!” (Patriarchs and Prophets p. 98). If God rewarded Noah for this, by letting him keep his kids, how much more will God reward Adventist youth leaders and parents who have faithfully shared his famous soul saving last words!

### WATCH YOUR TENT

One day the famous detective Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Watson were out camping. They pitched their tent and fell asleep. A few hours later Sherlock woke up Watson and said, “what do you see my friend?” Watson smiled and said, I see thousands of beautiful stars!” Sherlock quickly responded, “No Watson, look again, someone stole our tent!” As Seventh-day Adventists we have been given a vital message and purpose, an important “tent” you might say. But if we are not careful and alert, this “tent” could be stolen from us. We can learn much from other denominations, but unless we pour into the younger generation a sense of our own unique calling and mission, we cannot expect them to join us in the work and remain loyal long-term to God’s church. There is a great need within our denomination today for even more passionate and gifted youth leaders who love our mission and message and courageously pour it into the lives of the younger generation. We need an army of youth and young adult leaders who will make it their life work to strategize, mobilize and engage young people in the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church!

### MAKING IT PRACTICAL

So how do we pass on mission to the younger generation? There are at least two global initiatives that will help us accomplish this.

The first is One year in Mission (Be sure to read the chapter titled “Every Union One Year in Mission”). OYiM is an opportunity for young people to spend a year of their lives after high school or college to work side by side with other young people to reach the cities of

the world using “Christ’s Method Alone.” Just like Jesus these young gospel warriors spend their days socializing, sympathizing, serving and saving lost people (Ministry of Healing p. 143). To learn more about One Year in Mission and how you can get one started in your local church, Conference, Union and/or Division download the manual at [youth.adventist.org/OYIM](http://youth.adventist.org/OYIM). You might even attend our OYiM workshop at IMPACT (GC Session) or our online prerecorded OYiM University which is now available to all (OYiMU).

**MISSION VISION**

It is our prayer that mission service will become even more systemic in our denomination especially among our youth and young adults. In other words, we want every young person from babyhood to adulthood to be encouraged, equipped and empowered to serve for at least one year as a full-time missionary! We challenge church leaders to intentionally start an OYiM in every Union or Conference! Say out loud with me “every youth is a missionary!”

The second initiative is Total Youth Involvement (TYI) where young people around the world are challenged and given the resources to hold their own evangelistic meetings. They can do this in either a traditional context, through small groups, one on one bible studies or even YouTube, WhatsApp etc. For more information and to access all the free power-points and preaching essentials go to [youth.adventist.org](http://youth.adventist.org). Nothing will infuse our young people with passion for our vital message than preaching and teaching it. We challenge every church to have at least one youth-led evangelistic service every year! The General Conference Youth Department in collaboration with the 13 Division youth departments are praying for 100,000 youth led evangelistic sites yearly around the world. Just recently I attended a Division wide Youth Congress where 400 people were baptized as first fruits of this Total Youth Involvement initiative! I was reminded of the amazing results young people can have when the older generation passes it on!

**HOW TO TAME A CHURCH**

They say if you want to tame a lion you need a stool with three legs! Apparently, the lion is distracted by the three legs of the stool and rendered incapable (in his own mind at least) of eating the zookeeper. How do you tame a church? How do you tame a generation of young people? You get them distracted by other things, even good things, but things that distract them from their unique purpose as Seventh-day Adventists. I believe we need to re-wild the Seventh-day Adventist Church by helping the younger generation grasp their unique IDENTITY as beloved children of God and their unique MISSION as Seventh-day Adventists! I love how one professor at Adventist University inspired his students regarding our mission. He was known to often say “It’s ok to be SDA!” And I agree! Let’s “Pass It On”!

**3 LEADERSHIP** - Finally, the third value we must pass on to the younger generation is LEADERSHIP. Young people need to know WHO they are, WHY they are here and finally WHERE they belong. When the older generation especially the leaders begin to train and share ministry opportunities with the younger generation, the youth begin to feel like they belong in their church. When I was pastoring churches, nothing would warm my heart more than hearing a younger person refer to the church as “my church!” This only happens when a young person takes ownership and this only happens when they are equipped, encouraged and empowered by the local church leadership. What does Moses, Jesus, Paul and Barnabas have in common? They all faithfully and intentionally passed on leadership to the younger generation. Through the process of OBSERVATION (watch me minister), PARTICIPATION (minister with me) and ACTIVATION (start your own ministry) the young people under their mentorship grew into world class leaders and passed on identity, mission and leadership to the generation following them.

Perhaps the greatest leader-maker in the New Testament (second of course to Jesus) was Barnabas. He was an exceptional and godly leader. The Bible says this about him “For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord” (Acts 11:24). But that’s not all, Barnabas truly believed in passing on leadership to the younger generation! In fact, he not only advocated for Paul and even put his reputation on the line for him, he also intentionally sought out the young man and invited him to join him in ministry (Acts 9:27, 11:25). Whether he understood that there is “no success without a successor” or he simply recognized that involving young people in ministry was beneficial on many levels, we don’t know, but we do know that Barnabas effectively mentored Paul into the greatest Apostle in church history. How did he do it? The same way all great leader-makers do it!

**OBSERVATION**

First, he invited Paul to observe him in action. We see this happening in Acts 11 where Barnabas was serving as the church pastor in Antioch. Interestingly, Paul was not required to attend any classes or read any books or complete any degrees (that we know of anyway). Like the disciples of Jesus, he learned by watching Barnabas in action. The most effective way to mentor young people into ministry and leadership is not in a classroom but in active ministry itself! It’s by doing life and ministry with them. It’s about bringing them closer to you so they can learn from your words and works. No wonder, one of the first commands Jesus gave the future leaders of the church was “come and see” (John 1:39).

**PARTICIPATION**

Second Barnabas gave Paul opportunities to participate with him in ministry, “...so for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people...” (Acts 11:26). This often is the forgotten step in

making leaders. We either dump ministry responsibilities on the younger generation (overwhelming them) or we refuse to “pass it on” effectively by giving them opportunities to work side by side with us first. When Jesus was feeding the five thousand, he could easily have done it without the 12, but instead, Jesus blessed the food, handed it to the disciples who then distributed it to the people (Matthew 14:19). Both Barnabas and Jesus refused to skip this step and instead gave the younger generation ample opportunity to participate in ministry with them. Remember the theme of the General Conference youth department is not “dump it on” but “pass it on!”

**ACTIVATION**

The final step in the process of making leaders is activation. Here is where you begin to suppress your own drive to dominate and allow the younger generation to lead instead. Nowhere is this more clearly revealed than in Acts 13. In this amazing chapter “pass it on” happens. The reader will notice that in verse 2 the Holy Spirit mentions Barnabas first and Paul (Saul) second. This is to show that Barnabas was the leader of the two. However, in the middle of the chapter things change! By verse 13, Paul is mentioned first and becomes the primary speaker for the two (16). For the rest of the chapter and most of the book, Paul is mentioned first than Barnabas (42, 46). What’s going on? Barnabas has successfully passed it on! Observation has moved to participation and participation has moved to Activation!

**CLARITY FROM CONTROVERSY**

It’s true that Barnabas and Saul had a temporary falling out later in their ministry. You can read about it in Acts 15:36-40 but clarity came out of this controversy. First, we see that Paul is no longer Barnabas’s mentee, he has become a colleague and a leader with his own opinions and dreams. In other words, Barnabas had not created a mere reflector of his own thoughts but a free agent ready to “march to the beat of a different drummer.” Second, Barnabas apparently effectively in-

fused Paul with the same commitment to passing on leadership to the younger generation. Even though Paul would not work with John Mark (at least at first), he did go on to mentor Timothy, Titus and Silvanus and many others (2 Cor. 1:1, 1 Thess. 1:1, Gal. 3:1, Acts 15:40). Finally, despite this painful experience, Barnabas did not let bitterness consume him. Instead he simply reinvested in another young person (John Mark) and in fact continued to love and support the Apostle Paul. This may be the greatest gift Barnabas passed on to Paul, the example of a Christ-like character.

Let me make one more observation. With the growing trend toward ageism, it's encouraging to know that there will always be work for the older generation. They are not to pass away from the scene of activity but actually become more committed in passing on leadership to the younger generation! As already mentioned, Barnabas went on to mentor another young man...John Mark!

Let me ask you some questions! Who are you mentoring between the ages of 18-35? Who are you taking through the process of observation, participation and activation? Who are you empowering to be your successor? As one famous pastor said, "there is no success without a successor."

LEADERS LITMUS TEST

Here's how you know when you've been successful as a leader. When the young person (s) you are mentoring becomes active in their unique style of leadership. How do you know when you've become an exceptionally great leader-maker? When the young person you've invested in becomes an even greater and more influential leader than you?

Don't believe me? Just ask Barnabas or even Elijah for that matter! You might even ask Jesus who said the following words to the young people he had also successfully mentored, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12).

CRAB MENTALITY

They say that if you put a bunch of crabs in a bucket none of them will escape. This is because crabs become easily jealous of other crabs who try to rise above them. So, if one of them starts to climb out of the bucket they simply pull him back down again. Sadly, this crab mentality has kept some insecure leaders from letting youth and young adults rise and shine for the kingdom of God. But God is calling us to "Pass it on" like Barnabas, Elijah, Moses, Paul and Jesus Himself!

MAKING IT PRACTICAL

Here are some basic steps you can take to begin passing on leadership to the younger generation today.

- 1 Invite a young person between the ages 18-35 to join you in ministry.
- 2 Invest in them so they can observe you in action and participate with you in ministry.
- 3 Use your influence to help them launch their own ministries and make an even greater impact for God's kingdom.

The General Conference Youth Department has several resources you can access to help you "Pass It On" to the younger generation. The following resources can be downloaded for free at youth.adventist.org or @gcyouthministries on our social media platforms.

- o Senior Youth Leadership Curriculum (SYL)
- o Adventist Youth Leaders Magazine (AYLM)
- o Our Monthly "Pass it on" Video Report
- o Intergenerational Churches of Refuge (iCOR)

DON'T BALL HOG

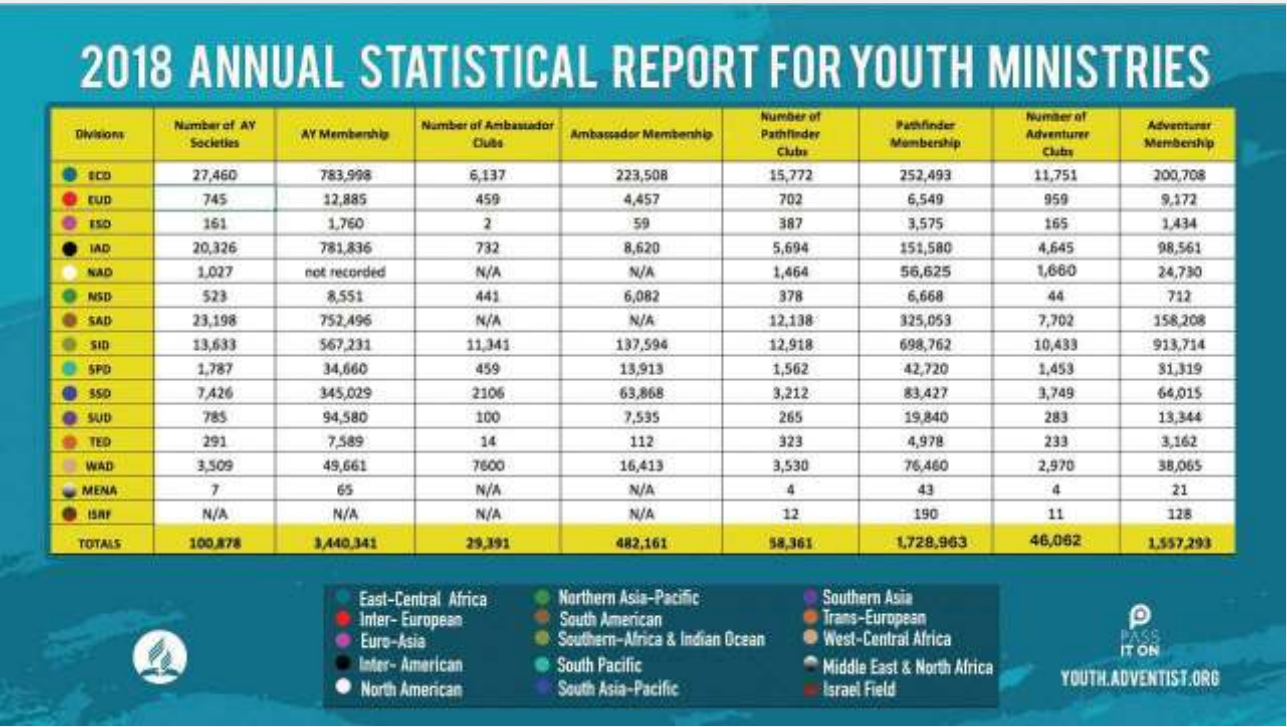
So, I conclude this chapter with an appeal. Don't be a ball hog! In the United States we call someone who refused to pass the ball to his or her teammates a "ball hog." This is an individual who thinks he or she can take on the opposing team alone. This is also an individual who has a belated sense of his own worth and will ultimately lead his team to defeat. Please don't be one of those in the church either. If God has appointed you as a leader, then he has also appointed you as a leader-maker!

Instead of keeping influence for yourself, why not work intentionally, prayerfully and passionately to pass on identity, mission and leadership to the younger generation. Will they make mistakes? Of course! Will they

let you down? Probably! Will they hurt your feelings? Maybe! Will they become a greater leader than you? Hopefully! Will you regret passing it on to the younger generation? NEVER!

Our young people desperately need to know WHO they are, WHY they are here and WHERE they belong. I believe all three of these questions are answered best within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. What a privilege to work with young people! What a privilege to be placed by God in a position where we can "pass it on" to the younger generation! What are you waiting for? Now is the time to intentionally pass on identity, mission and leadership to the younger generation!

YOUTH STATISTICS



## ARTICLE

# GLOBAL INITIATIVES

BY PAKO MOKGWANE

## 1 GLOBAL YOUTH DAY

With the support of General Conference Administration, the 13 Division youth directors, MENA Union and the Israel Field, Global Youth Day (GYD) was launched on March 13, 2013. GYD happens every third Sabbath in the month of March. It has become one of the biggest events of the church. In 2017 alone, GYD garnered over 150 million impressions on social media. The vision of GYD is to recapture the reality of Adventist youth as a global movement mobilized for service, contributing to the proclamation of the everlasting gospel and ushering in the second coming of Jesus Christ. There is a lot more to religious faith than simply going to church and listening to sermons. The true practice of religion involves the revelation of God's love in living out Jesus's gospel commission as He commanded before He ascended to heaven. Grounded in the concluding Words of Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus has made it possible for us to point everyone

to the ultimate hope of the better world through selfless acts. Thus, the idea of GYD is to "Be the sermon."

After seeing all the news reports, testimony videos, and worldwide activities, we know God has been ministering to those in need through the tireless efforts of young people committed to being the hands and feet of Jesus. Global Youth Day has since become the largest single initiative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

GYD is not an event—it is a lifestyle that should encourage the youth to perform acts of kindness on a daily basis and awaken in them an awareness of their responsibility to the church and the communities they are called to serve. It encourages the youth to perform acts of kindness on a daily basis. We appeal to all church leaders to get involved in all the activities of Youth Ministries, including GYD; involvement in church activities is a great way for leaders to connect with young people. GYD is connected to the Week of Prayer (WOP), Home Coming Sabbath (HCS) and Total Youth Involvement (TYI).



## MISSIONARY BOOK OF THE YEAR

We encourage the youth to distribute the Missionary book of the year on Global Youth Day. The 11 million "hands and feet" that participate in this day are a force to reckon with. They can cover large ground in a short space of time. Each young person is encouraged to purchase at least ten books for distribution on this day.

## THEMES

Each year the young people become the sermon through various activities. The youth are creative visionaries who come up with interesting ideas of how to be a sermon. Most of the young people express their creativity within a given theme. However, because many communities may have unique needs at any given time, divisions, unions, conferences, or churches may need to deviate from the global yearly theme and use a theme that is more suited to their immediate need.

The yearly themes unite the efforts of the youth and help to address the sabbath observance issue. The theme for 2020 is iCARE; during 2020 the youth will focus their efforts on caring for refugees, strangers and the homeless.

- 2017 Donate: Blood
- 2018 Give: Food and Water
- 2019 Adopt: Prisoners/Old aged/Orphan/Patient
- 2020 iCare: Strangers/Homeless/Refugees
- 2021 Share: Clothes/Money/Time/Gifts
- 2022 Visit: Missing Members/Neighbors/School or Work Mates
- 2023 Appreciate: Police/Military/Fire Department/Medical Personnel

## PROJECTS

Each local church is encouraged to register their project on [www.globalyouthday.org](http://www.globalyouthday.org). Through the website, it is easy to see the level of participation by each Division. In the near future, we will transition to an App – a more youth friendly platform than the website.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The hashtag for each is determined by the year. The hashtag for 2020 will be #GYD20. All social media posts should always include the hashtag. Through the use of the hashtag we are able to quantify the number of impressions on social media. One of the ways to be involved is to maximize the initiative by changing profile pictures to the GYD frame of that particular year.



It helps to make awareness of GYD. The more people share posts from GC, Division, Union and Conference pages, the more the impressions. Without a doubt, the young people are excited to see their leaders involved and interested in their programs.

2 WEEK OF PRAYER

The annual Week of Prayer (WOP) is more than just a week of sermons preached. It is a week to reconnect spiritually. It takes place the third week of March each year. The WOP helps us achieve the Reach Up and Reach In pillars of the strategic plan of the Adventist Church. A series of short sermons are prepared according to the theme of the year. For example, this year the theme is Local Church and the sermons addressed the operations of the local with church and the spiritual journey of young people.

So, why does the Youth Week of Prayer begin on Global Youth Day? Because we believe that everyone can reach someone through kindness, and what better way to begin an outreach program than with kindness toward the community. Kindness can be taught, and it can be learned, and that the 8 days of learning and reaching the community through sermons and acts of kindness will influence the local and global communities the Church is called to serve.

PRAYER

What is a Week of Prayer without prayer? In most cases a lot of sermonizing happens more than prayer sessions but let us remember that the focus should be on prayer and getting a closer connection to Jesus.

*“Jesus felt the need to pray. This is why He taught His disciples how to pray. Jesus’ life of prayer is a beautiful example for all young people. He found comfort and communion with His Father. Frequently He would steal away from the craze of His surroundings to connect with God. If the Savior of men, the Son of God, felt the need to pray, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.” (Ellen White, Steps to Christ, p. 93).*

This year and in the years to come, a worldwide youth fasting day (Wednesday) will be part of this week of prayer and spiritual emphasis. It will begin on Tuesday (night) and end the next evening. The youth may decide to break the fast before or after the evening worship session. We recognize that some youth may be members of a church where fasting is not a regular occurrence. They may want to begin with a 12 hour fast. Collectively, the youth should also decide ahead of time to fast from a specific activity or phenomenon. For example, fasting from social media, television viewing, etc. There are three main types of fast:

- 1 Water Fast, where you abstain from all food and juices.
- 2 Partial Fast, this is when you eliminate certain foods or specific meals.
- 3 "Juice" Fast, this is when you drink only fruit or vegetable juices during meal times. Try to provide some light, healthy refreshment for those who will be breaking the fast at church.

3 HOMECOMING SABBATH

During the last decade the erosion of religious faith, religious affiliation, confidence in the Bible, and belief in God has steadily moved from the older age to the younger youth and young adults. This decline has spread across our churches. So, what can we do to help stem this tidal erosion, retain our youth and young adults, and regain those who have already left or have one foot-in-and-one-foot-out? Homecoming Day. If properly planned, it can be a celebration of a 6-3-month program designed to give Bible Study, encouragement, and prayer to those who have left the church or who still attend but are disengaged. It is a day in which young people celebrate the return of those who have backslidden or left the faith.

Not all will come back with just one phone call or one visit, it sometimes takes painstaking effort to ensure that this happens. Therefore, the youth MUST BE INTENTIONAL in seeking their peers. The ideal Homecoming program will keep it simple and straight to the point and serves as a reminder to everyone that salvation is free and simple and is the result of living a life dedicated to Jesus. The love of God is at the center of Homecoming Sabbath and it is meant to demonstrate the love of God for both former members and church members though there is more inclination towards former members.

The Homecoming Sabbath is held on the fourth Sabbath of March, the last day of the annual youth week of prayer. Please visit our website for more information on how to develop a Homecoming program.

4 TOTAL YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

**Global Youth Day (GYD) is already the largest response to the Total Member Involvement call to action.** We encourage every Division to determine when Total Youth Involvement (TYI) can be done; a week in which Ambassadors and Young Adults stand in the pulpits or sit in groups to teach the Word of God or employ unique initiatives to passionately call other young people to Jesus.

Involvement call to action. Immediately after the annual Week of Prayer comes another week in which Ambassadors and Young Adults stand on the pulpits or sit in groups to teach the Word of God and passionately call other young people to Jesus. This is an expression of Total Youth Involvement. While the world church is focusing its effort on the Total Member Involvement initiative, the Youth Ministries (department) has decided



to make the mantra intentional and relevant for what we do by dubbing it Total Youth Involvement.

*“Christ’s Method ALONE will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then bade them, “Follow Me” (Ellen White, Ministry of Healing, p.143).*

GYD has been true to the first part of the method but very little has been accomplished for the “Follow Me” section. Intentionality breeds purpose. Purpose begets consistency. As following Jesus is the core of evangelism, we want to inspire every hu-

man being to be baptized as a disciple of Jesus. With such a great army as the YOUTH, rightly trained, GYD should not only be the biggest initiative of the Adventist Church but the biggest evangelistic endeavor also.

The Adventist church has over 150,000 local congregations. Our request is that at least one hundred thousand (100,000) churches become preaching or small group sites to proclaim the Three Angels’ Message to the world. That’s just two thirds of the number of local churches worldwide. Imagine the Impact!!

Some Divisions decided to do TYI during the week that followed the Week of Prayer. However, others may choose a different date because of schedule conflicts. We are happy to respect the flexibility in dates. It is our joy to see youth make their missional contribution. The earlier the leadership begins to prepare, the better the output and quality of work. Through collaboration with ASI and AWR, Youth Ministries has produced slides and have already posted information and the roadmap for this annual program. The materials are available from <https://youth.adventist.org/Total-Youth-Involvement>. God is calling on Pathfinders, Ambassadors, and Young Adults to be involved! Be engaged. Do something for the Lord. The youth are rightly placed to do this because we have confidence in the prophetic statement. “It is the Youth who shall finish the work.” Surely, God trusts the creativity and energies of the youth. We, therefore, urge every Adventist Youth Ministries committee of the local church to rise to the occasion.



## 5 ONE YEAR IN MISSION (OYIM)

OYiM is a multi-faceted urban missionary movement with a vision for the youth to establish a transforming presence in the cities of the world. It is designed to give teams of young people (18+) an opportunity to magnify Jesus in the cities through the Three Angels Message! Missionaries need to be Ambassadors or Young Adults, at the very minimum, a high school graduate.

**They should be:**

- 1 Committed Seventh-day Adventist
- 2 Active in their local church
- 3 A good team player
- 4 Highly recommended by their pastor
- 5 Willing and able take an entire year off from work/school to focus on this ministry.

**For more information**

<https://youth.adventist.org/OYIM>

## 6 eWEEK OF PRAYER

The electronic Week of Prayer (eWOP) is held on the second week of November and further addresses the theme of the year through short videos (1-2 minute). It happens on Facebook via the GC Youth Ministries page (<https://www.facebook.com/GCYouthMinistries/>). The videos can be downloaded from the GC Youth Ministries YouTube channel. The eWeek of Prayer videos invite commentary, reflection and reformation. Each day is punctuated with quotations from Ellen White and other writers, that speak to the theme.

## 7 GIVE HIM 20

In our quest to have more sessions among youth groups, Give Him Twenty (GH20) is a prayer circle that can be enlarged anytime and anywhere. Give Him 20, what? Give God twenty minutes of your time pouring out your heart to God for strength, requests, praises and a petition of the Holy Spirit to capture the minds and hearts of young people around the world for mission purposes. GH20 takes place online via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/325298914731269/>).

## 8 YOUTH ALIVE

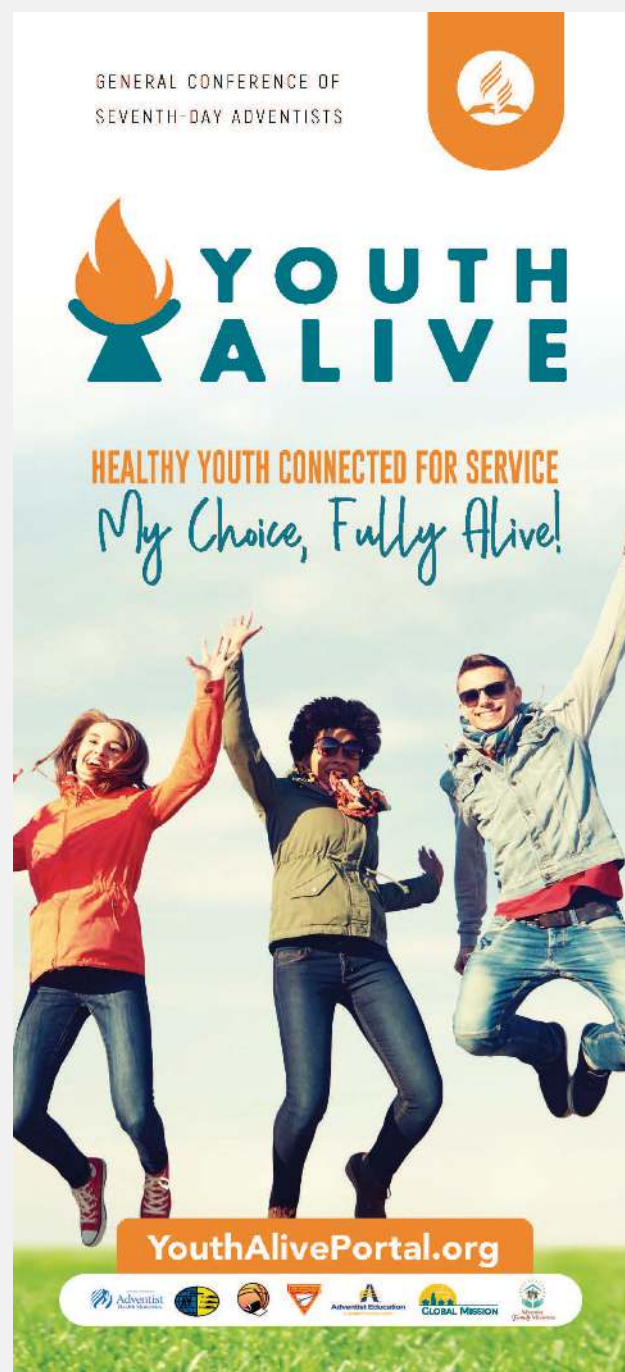
Youth Alive is a program designed to build resilience among teens and young adults by equipping them to make healthy choices. Through the Youth Alive Program, the youth can better understand their gifts and their purpose. Many today are trapped, becoming enslaved by addictions such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs, pornography, gaming, media. Youth Alive focuses on nurturing relationships that build resilience against these at-risk behaviors that plague young people around the world. Youth Alive promotes a healthy, purpose-driven life for any teen seeking to live a fulfilling life free from addictions and emotional pain. The youth leader at the local church is the contact person for implementation of this program. Youth Alive has been written by Health Ministries, Education Department, Family Ministries, Global Mission and Youth Ministries.

**The Youth Alive theme is:**  
MY CHOICE, FULLY ALIVE!!

**The Youth Alive Motto is:**  
Healthy Youth Connected for Service

### The Youth Alive offers:

- Conference or Camps
- Service and mission opportunities
- Local Youth Alive Clubs where everyone is included, accepted and respected
- Friendship Group Meetings where youth can learn play and be inspired
- App and online access to classes, articles, books and blogs discussing topics related to physical, mental, emotional, social, financial, and spiritual health and well-being.



## 9 WORLD PATHFINDER DAY

World Pathfinder Day (WPD) is an annual day intended to celebrate and empower Pathfinders around the world. For almost 70 years the pathfinder ministry has been a conduit to impact the lives of millions of young people inside and outside the Adventist church.

With clubs all over the world concurrently celebrating Pathfinder day we hope to bring a heightened sense of awareness to this uniform ministry. We hope it will instill a sense of unity and belonging as Pathfinders are able to recognize they belong to a global community.

Pathfinder ministry serves as a school of training for both Christian principles and life in general for many young people around the world. At its core it's a solid method of evangelism where young people can invite their friends to learn about Jesus and practical life skills. On WPD we celebrate the impact the Pathfinder ministry.

The Pathfinder ministry train young people to become leaders while pointing them Jesus. Spiritual growth is a natural result of the ministry. On WPD we empower Pathfinders to demonstrate the leadership skills learned. Pathfinders are responsible for the execution of the Sabbath program, beginning with Sabbath School. This gives them an opportunity to demonstrate responsibility and adults trust.

Both in-reach and outreach are designed into the WPD celebrations. Pathfinders serve their local church through the Sabbath service inside the church. Clubs are encouraged to hold baptisms for Pathfinders who have surrendered their lives to God as a result of the ministry. This is certainly a highlight in the day's program. Community outreach is an integral part of Pathfinder ministry as Pathfinders go on God's errands.

An afternoon outreach, Global Pathfinder Service (GPS) give Pathfinders an opportunity to be agents of God's love. Pathfinders are able to take the Advent message into their communities all around the world as they serve as the hands and feet of Jesus.

Overall WPD is a day of service. Pathfinders serve their church as well as their community! In 2019 our theme is created with purpose. As we remind every Pathfinder that God created them with a purpose, we hope they will demonstrate their gifts in service to their church and community.

## SUMMARY

- **GLOBAL YOUTH DAY** – A day in which the Youth and Young Adults miss out on hearing sermon to “be a sermon.”
- **WEEK OF PRAYER** – A series designed for Youth Biblical Spiritual Emphasis as it relates to theme of the year. involvement and participation at the Local Church.
- **HOME COMING SABBATH** – A day to celebrate youth who have found their way back to the Lord as a result of being intentional in seeking them.
- **TOTAL YOUTH INVOLVEMENT** – A seven-day series designed to win Youth and Young Adults to Jesus.
- **WORLD PATHFINDER/ADVENTURER DAY** – once-a-year Sabbath officially set aside to give Pathfinders an opportunity to be seen, heard, and acknowledged in their local church.
- **eWEEK OF PRAYER** – An online (Facebook: GC Youth Ministries) series designed for Youth and Young Adult Biblical Spiritual Emphasis as it relates to theme of the year
- **GIVE HIM 20 – A LIVE** twenty-minute session of prayer by groups (2 or more) of young people at their most convenient time.
- **YOUTH ALIVE** - a program designed to build resilience among teens and young adults by equipping them to make healthy choices.

## ARTICLE

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING RESOURCES

BY PAKO MOKGWANE



### INTRODUCTION

Membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is increasing at a rapid rate, and in some Divisions, the youth are the majority. This reality necessitates a keen interest in the development and empowerment of the young people. The General Conference Youth Ministries has produced two leadership curriculums that connect the youth with their departmental operations as well as the mission of the church. While these leadership curriculums play a vital role in shaping and grooming the young people for leadership, the ideals of leadership are best learnt by observation. Thus, the best training of our youth and young people is taught through modeling, through mentorship. Leadership training rests on every leader of the church. Exemplary lives appeal more to the young minds more than theoretical charm. In following the example of Jesus, he or she becomes an example to young followers. Leadership is an important subject in Youth Ministry because of the strength of the prophetic word; it is the youth who will complete the

work. We are definitely living the last days, if ever there was a time to embrace their giftedness, channel their energies, and pass on the baton, it is now.

### YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN LEADERSHIP

Young people and adults should be actively involved in the life and mission of the church. In most local churches, participation is skewed towards adults thus making leadership an adult enterprise (Papu, 2019). The participation of young people in the decision-making processes, in leadership, mission and worship heightens the feeling of belonging (Mokgwane, 2018). The core of belonging is founded in an authentic relationship with Jesus, but when it is complimented by an atmosphere of love, inclusion, and care, our local churches will become churches of refuge for all. When young people see themselves represented significantly in all levels of the church structure, it sends signals of trust and confidence in them. It's a loud statement of recognition and affir-

mation. Conferences, Unions and Divisions should be intentional in providing opportunities for young people to serve as members of their executive committees. Jan Paulsen (2009), former president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists once said,

*"Keeping youth and young adults engaged in the church must be one of our highest priorities... I don't have the words to express the depth of my conviction that we must give young adults meaningful roles within the church. It can't be mere 'busywork', but we must vote them into substantive roles that bespeak a high level of trust, include them in decision-making processes, seek their involvement in ways that say: 'We want to hear your voice!'"*

In his 2000 study Roger Dudley found that the church is losing many young people, and not because of doctrinal problems, but because of relational issues. Thus, the idea of empowering the youth is not just a philosophy but a strategy towards arresting the attrition of the youth. The giftedness, energy, resourcefulness and creativity of the youth are strong arguments for

involvement. Therefore, young people can no longer be relegated to being mere consumers or consultants but important players in decision making (Mittra, 2009). In 2017 Dr. Ted Wilson, the leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, called on pastors and leaders to embrace youth in their different endeavors and provide opportunities for them (youth) to get involved and given a chance to lead. Yes, the leadership of the church should make every effort to engage the youth who are dedicated and spiritually mature while working hard to encourage involvement from those who are detached from the church.

### YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

The promotion of youth leadership is not to be understood as consigning the adults out of their positions so that the youth can take control. No! the young and the old need each other. Young people bring various gifts to the table. The wisdom of the adults is unparalleled. The two groups can achieve more by working together. Therefore, any future effort to engage young people in leadership needs to focus on strengthening intergenerational partnerships and building the connections between youth and adults (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2006). However, according to the

group Youth in God's World (2012), "Such partnerships can only come about when the older generation is willing to acknowledge its limitations and invite younger people to play their role now, to weave meaning out of the threads of responsibility and creativity. The partnership is denied when youth is merely seen as the hope for the future." J. R. Throop Throop (2006) contends that the church and its adult leaders should move away from the notion that "young people are the future of the church." Tomorrow they will not be the youthful future any longer. They are the church now. They are here and now in the church. Opportunities for the youth will be a reality when the leaders stop hoarding their positions (Rosado, 1996). Besides, what is youth leadership without a space and opportunity to serve?

### FOCUS ON THE LOCAL CHURCH

The local church should be the hub of youth ministry. It is critical for youth ministry to be understood as a support of the functions of the local church. The General Conference Youth Ministries World Advisory (2016) made the following statement:

*"The 2016 General Conference Youth Ministries Advisory, as part of its ongoing re-Visioning of youth ministry, wishes to*

recognize the local church as the primary location and target of its ministry for young people around the world. While it affirms the significance of large corporate events such as summer camps, rallies, camporees and congresses to foster fellowship with the wider youth community and to provide opportunities for decision making, it chooses to place ministry to young people in local churches at the center of its priorities and process. The local church is the spiritual home of our young people; their membership is in the local church. It is in their families and in their local churches that young people are spiritually nurtured, step up to follow Jesus, embrace His call to discipleship and find their place in God's service. While many of them make decisions at or during wider church events, the location where they are mentored to become devoted followers of Jesus and to live out their Christian experience is the local church."

Youth ministry is not a competing parallel structure. If anything, youth ministry should be at the center of the local church's operations. Our core function is to resource and

build up youth ministry in the local church. The leadership curriculums of Youth Ministries are designed to make leaders out of young people, be true to the teachings of the Bible and remain relevant for the local church and its functions. The requirements of these leadership curriculums ensure that the participant is strongly connected to their local church. The youth are not leaving the General Conference and its Divisions, Unions or Conferences, they are leaving the local church. We therefore need to rethink and realign so that all that we do stays applicable to the local church. It is for this reason, the Pastor's and Elder's Handbook for Youth Ministry has been produced.

Pastors and Elders are the gate keepers of the local church. If they don't have an appreciation for youth ministry, the programs and initiatives of youth ministry will not find support.

Ellen White (1915, p.207) writes,

"Very much has been lost to the cause of truth by a lack of attention to the spiritual needs of the young. Ministers of the gospel should form a happy acquaintance with the youth of their congregations. Many are reluctant to do this, but their neglect is a sin in the sight of heaven"

Will this strong counsel from the prophetess go unheeded? We have noted with great appreciation the efforts of church leaders to connect and empower youth. This has come with delightful benefits for both the leaders and the youth.

## LEADERSHIP CURRICULUMS

We have two worldwide leadership curriculums in Youth Ministry, **Master Guide (MG)** and **Senior Youth Leader (SYL)**. Master Guide is for leaders who wish to be involved with Adventurers and Pathfinders (Junior Youth). Senior Youth Leader is for those who wish to be involved with Ambassadors and Young Adults (Senior Youth). Each curriculum is useful for its target age group. The needs and comprehension of adventurers are vastly different from the needs and comprehension of young adults, hence, specialization helps to gain a greater degree of efficiency because of the limited scope thereby offering expertise for the chosen age group. The two leadership curriculums focus on the personal spiritual life and growth, first and foremost. The leadership skills are geared to promote passion for God, understanding the world of nature, outreach ministry, service to others, and a lifestyle of that denotes healthy living.



### 1 SENIOR YOUTH LEADER

In response to the growing need of leaders, the loss of ambassadors and young adults, the wave of technology and the focus on the local church, Senior Youth Leader (SYL) has been written for Leaders who wish to be involved with Ambassadors (16-21) and Young Adults (22-30+). Thus, SYL is a leadership curriculum for Senior Youth Ministry. SYL replaces the Youth Leadership Award (YLA). This curriculum is new. It was launched in 2018 during the Global Youth Leadership Congress in Germany.

**For more information visit:** <https://youth.adventist.org/Resources/Leadership-Training>

### 2 MASTER GUIDE

The Master Guide (MG) curriculum is for Junior Youth Ministry and has been around for many years. It is written for leaders who wish to be involved with Adventurers (04-09) and Pathfinders (10-15). In 1922, Comrade and Master Comrade were introduced via the Comrade Band. Comrade changed to Guide and ultimately Master Comrade changed to Master Guide in 1951. This curriculum has made its mark in Youth Ministry. In some Unions, local church elders were chosen from among qualified Master Guides. Pathfinder Ministry is the strongest retention program we have in the church, due to the hard work, professionalism and commitment of Master Guides.

**For more information visit:** <https://youth.adventist.org/Resources/Leadership-Training>

## WORLDWIDE RECOGNITION

The curriculums are recognized worldwide. While each curriculum allows for contextualization, those who successfully complete these leadership curriculums can take up the responsibility of leadership anywhere in the world. The principles of leadership are the same, but the method of delivery and implementation may differ. Cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence and contextualization are taught and encouraged to help fill the gaps.

## MENTORSHIP

Each candidate is expected to choose a mentor to take them through the program. The idea of mentoring helps the young people to partner with adults. The mentor does not complete the requirements for the candidate but guides the candidate through the curriculum. This enhances relationships between the youth and the adults. Youth-Adult partnerships lead to positive relationships between the partners because of connection and mutual respect. Both the adult and the young person benefit from the relationship. The relationship can go beyond the completion date since young people face a lot of challenges. A consistent relationship with a mentor or mentee comes in handy at all times. The common English adage says, "It is better to prevent than to cure!"

PORTFOLIOS

A candidate for any of the two leadership curriculums is expected to put together a portfolio (physical or digital) showcasing fulfilment of requirements. Review of completed portfolios is handled by the designee of the Conference/Mission Youth Director. Portfolios are reviewed with a simple Pass or Fail. A failed portfolio should be returned to the candidate with recommendations of what the candidate should do to obtain a pass mark.

RELATIONSHIP

The Master Guide (Junior Youth) and the Senior Youth Leader (Senior Youth) curriculums have some similar requirements and pre-requisites. Candidates can attend some lessons together though each curriculum will dictate the emphasis (junior or senior) thus effecting specialization. Those who already completed the Master Guide program may be exempted from some SYL requirements. SYL and MG are not new levels of the department, they are leadership curriculums for Senior Youth and Junior Youth respectively.



GRADUATION/INVESTITURE

The Graduation or Investiture service should be an impressive occasion at which a General Conference, Division, Union or Local Conference/Mission Youth Ministries Director should be in charge. If the Conference/Mission Youth Director is not available, his/her designee can perform the graduation. We recommend that such graduations should be done during official church meetings or services. This will help the members to recognize the solemn responsibility given to graduates. Furthermore, it will enhance members’ understanding of the connectedness of the youth ministry and its operations to the life and mission of the local church.



LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

Every quarter Youth Ministries publish a resource called Adventist Youth Leader. The work of the General Conference Youth Ministries is largely a leadership role. The team works to resource its leaders by giving youth ministry tips, encouraging the leaders, sharing experiences and promoting world initiatives. Burn out is common among youth leaders because of the nature of the work. Self-awareness, trust in God and intentional personal growth are necessary disciplines to circumvent the wiles of the devil.

<https://youth.adventist.org/Media-Publications/Adventist-Youth-Leaders-Magazine>

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ARTICLE



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INTRODUCTION

We have already entered a new reality in relation to youth engagement with faith issues and their church. Ending high school is a major turning point for many, since it is the beginning of the end of what is considered “parental faith”. This is to worship and attend the services and activities of the church as they were groomed by their parents throughout the years. Additionally, as boomers and traditionalists in Christianity expect of them. The pervasive electronic communication or Social media and cyberspace have not been pos-

itive influences in the faith journey of some. Youth face untold temptations to resist existing social norms and status quos to find their own identities, make choices and be whom they want to be. Consequences of social action do not headline their agendas, if they do exist. Yet, many if not most of them, do make sober decisions about career and vocation choices. Church leaders must face the challenge of understanding today’s young people and engage them in the development of emotional connections and commitment to what is more than just service or temporal issues, but their eternal destiny, salvation at the Second Advent of Christ.

GENERATION Z AND Y

Generation “Z” are those born between 1995 and 2015 (ages 4-24) and Generation “Y” or Millennials are born between 1980 and 1994 (ages 25-39). Many millennials and especially the latter group of Generation “Z” do not attend the same local church from Sabbath

School to the worship service and the afternoon programs on Sabbaths, as often as their parents and grandparents do. Their outlook, beliefs and values diverge, and they display a lower level of religious affiliation. A growing number consider themselves religious Nones. “Clearly 36% of young millennials (those between the ages of 18 and 24) are religiously unaffiliated as are 34% of older millennials (ages 24-33). Fewer than six in ten millennials identify with any branch of Christianity compared with seven in ten or more of older generations” (Stark, 2016, p. 11).

Once they graduate from high school many of them are not at their local church. Where are they? Either in universities, somewhere out of their local community or at work. If they are still within the local community, they are busily engaged otherwise than being preoccupied with their home-grown religion. Of course, this is not the one hundred percent. Those who are no longer in church and even many of those who remain, consider the present practice of Christianity as hypocritical and have negative impressions and diminished expectations of church.

Recently, I engaged a group of professional millennials in discussion about their concept of faith and the church in which they grew up. Here are some of the responses: “The perception of the seniors in church is that our relationship with Christ boils down to just going to church. I am more accepting, and open minded of social issues and standards in society than the members of my church”; “I am independent. By that I mean I think for myself and am forward thinking. Our generation challenges the status quo. Our parents instilled fear in us while growing up, but I do not feel that we are going to be struck down by lightning if we do contrary to what we have been taught at home and church”; “While we are not true to the teachings of the church we actually do enjoy who we are. We do not want to be all in with religion. There are other options to contend with in life. We want to go to church on our terms”; “We do accept the bible as a good foundation for people, but when you

grow up you have to make it applicable to yourself, on that basis, to each his own”.

The theory, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD) was first introduced by sociologists Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton. They studied the religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers, which led to the coinage of this theory. In his book *The Benedict Option*, Rod Dreher referenced the five principal tenets of this theory that explain the thought pattern of millennials who go to church:

1. A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

When characterizing generations Z and Y, they are stereotyped by actions, attitudes and behaviors that do not conform to the traditions of boomers and traditionalists. However, there are numerous actions, attitudes and behaviors that are characteristic of these generations that must also be noted. A large number of them in the church are convinced that the message their church believes and proclaims is authentic. They continue to be influenced by their Christian upbringing. They are conscious of their relationship with God and others and are intentional in their responses to be relevant in a positive manner. They possess resources, ranging from skills, networks of relationships, ability to articulate clearly and profoundly and are interested in the various ministries and doctrines of the church. They are committed

to using their time, influence, talents and resources to assist the church in fulfilling its mission. Generation Z and Y make the church rich and relevant and through the aid and guidance of the Holy Spirit enhance the future of the church.

## CHALLENGES AND THOUGHT PATTERN OF THE YOUTH

An education and health charity, Central YMCA, 2016, surveyed 1,600 young people aged between 16 and 25. They asked them to assess the nature of the challenges they face today. The challenges they mentioned were: lack of employment opportunities, failure to succeed in the educational system, issues related to body image, family problems, substance abuse, pressures of materialism, lack of affordable housing, negative stereotyping, pressures of 24-hour social networking, crime, lack of positive values, reckless sexual behavior, developing and maintaining wholesome social relationships, living up to parents' expectations – most notable, “go to church” and remaining faithful in a church that is traditionally too strict and too strong.

Many young people in the church find it a challenge that the involvement of most church leaders with youth programs and activities is limited, yet they are the ones who plan, design and execute activities for them. “They just “give it to us” rather than engage and participate in meaningful ways with us” said one of the respondents. Many do not see the wholeness of the organization which must be considered within the context of having a ministry to influence and retain them with their diverse interests within the church. They experience a church that is judgmental and sees everything as just black and white. They are de-motivated because they are not allowed to face their challenges without duress. “Leaders, boomers and traditionalists are hard on us; we are not experiencing the love we desire” is another response. Expressing disgust with the church, one profes-

sional millennial said; “With our curious minds we are discomforted with the church because of the perceived concept that once you are a member of the church you have arrived. To do anything out of the realm of the traditional is like the world is coming to an end. The struggle with a church that is less than accommodating is the reality we face. We have to deal with the do's and don'ts of church every day. We are tired, is there a better way?”.

Globally, church leaders are struggling to grapple with the reality of ministering to Generations Z and Y and how to involve them in the life and mission of the church. How quickly the church can become a self-organizing system that finds new methods to harness talents and utilize the strengths of these generations is a major challenge. Some methods that worked in the past to get attention, compliance and participation are now ineffective. Reality summons a new approach. How confounding, yet real, that many leaders, especially some of those who have decades of experience, must sit in the unfamiliar seat of “not knowing” and open themselves to radical new ideas of wisdom and willingness to learn through asking the right questions of generations Z and Y, listen to them and in the process, avoid contradictions. Margaret J. Wheatley said; “To be responsible inventors and discoverers, we need the courage to let go of the old world, to relinquish most of what we have cherished, to abandon our interpretations about what does and doesn't work. We must learn to see the world anew. As Einstein is often quoted as saying: No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it” (page 7).

How do church leaders understand Matthew 5:18 (KJV) “For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Also, Matthew 24:35 (NIV) “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away”. The laws of God and biblical principles are foundational to our Christian faith. These are as unchanging as the Lord who said; “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not

consumed” (Malachi 3:6 KJV). To conceive or classify the certainties of the faith as negotiable is irreconcilable, un-biblical and misguided. What are these unchangeables? How do we engage the young people to understand them and develop an appreciation for them? The scripture shapes faith. How effective is church leadership in going beyond providing materials for the youth, which is significant, to the esteemed position of helping them to truly understand scripture. Not just to understand it, but to make applications about its role and function in shaping attitudes and commitment toward the present life, dealing with others and preparing for the life to come. When leaders and the youth arrive at such understanding, then everything else that we do and embrace within the body of believers should be subject to the principle or test of the “old world”.

Many consider the present attitudes of Generations “Z” and “Y” respecting traditional norms, values and practices of the church as chaotic. When you listen to some boomers and traditionalists, the phrase of the poet Yeats, “Things fall apart; the center cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world” (Wheatley, p.19) appears apt in describing the reality within the Church. It is collapsing they think and only a miracle can save it. Scripture does not support this view. Jesus said; “... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18. Ellen White explains it this way; “Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theatre of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform” (Acts of the Apostles p. 12).

According to Wheatley “A system is defined as chaotic when it becomes impossible to know what it will do next” (p.22). If chaos is a correct designation of the church involving the young people’s reaction to standards and norms and the way the leaders address such, then Wheatley’s next statement is germane, “Chaos summons self-organization. Not according to some idealized

plan, but because the environment demands it. Many leaders find it difficult to let go of the old form and figure how best to organize in a new way” (p. 24). In this 21st century, the church struggles to find leaders that best respond to the needs and desires of the youth. The youth are looking for what Max De Pree, former CEO of Herman Miller calls “roving leadership”. This is the indispensable people in our lives who are there when we need them. Since the existing relationship between the young people and leadership, boomers and traditionalists within the church appears to be chaos, according to Wheatley, it is a new order that is not a bad status. It is a wake-up call, not fragmentation. It is time for leadership to take steps to create a new mode of operation because the existing is not functioning effectively. It is a call for change. The organization’s biblical principles contain sufficient information about its intended “shape”, what it needs to accomplish and how its members should be involved. When leadership and the youth work freely with those principles, to interpret them, learn from them and talk about them, then through many iterations, a pattern of spiritual and ethical behavior will emerge.

### **A LEADERSHIP APPROACH TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH**

Church leadership must embody the organization’s principles and guide the organization to experience the ideals it envisions. In other words, the leaders must genuinely practice what they preach because disabling consequences result from the opposite. Among such consequences, is that the youth respond to the church and its mission with less commitment than is expected. According to Mort Meyerson in an interview with Wheatley (1996), “It is not the leaders’ role to make people know exactly what to do and when to do it. Instead it is their role to ensure that there is strong and evolving clarity about who the organization is” (p.131).

Church leaders need to help the youth live by values. They need to practice their understanding that it is shared concepts that invites participation and not policies and procedures, important as they are. Leaders that empower millennials through providing them opportunities to know the truth and by being transparent with them will be endeared to them. Youth need leaders and not bosses. Church leaders have the great privilege of presence and direct contact and access to the young people. This provides them a firsthand opportunity to listen to them and address their concerns as they arise. This proximity empowers them with relevant information regarding personal, family and organizational challenges that the youth face. Usually, because of the status and respectability of organizational leaders the youth show deference to them. This opens possibilities for leaders to actually make a difference in their thought processes.

Finlayson and Zacher (Krasner, 1983) posited, “decision making procedures are the prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choices” (p. 275). One of the areas that church leaders need to address as they face the challenges with the young people is how decisions are taken. Precondition, process, and outcome should be intentionally employed. Precondition addresses core relationships between the youth and the organization in order to create understanding and motivate them to develop positive affinity towards the church. Process deals with conversations that lead to the development of shared values through which participation occur. Outcome is the shared understanding and practice that actually emerge. Deutsch, Coleman, et al., (2006, p. 197) argue that for common understanding to be achieved, the parties of common interest need to engage together. In that case, there needs to be a diagnosis of the issue at hand and then the development of alternative possibilities to arrive at an agreed position. This includes four general phases’ “diagnose the issue,

identify alternative solutions, evaluate and chose the mutually acceptable path and commit to the decision and implementation.

Obviously, there are numerous issues involving the youth that leaders must address in a Christ-like manner and a suggested approach has already been advanced. In the process, it may be helpful for leaders to avoid the temptation of spending much time arguing about their dress, their music, their deportment, their games, their movies, and their dates, and more effort on one to one mentoring and modeling situations. The youth are a part of God’s army and they must be mobilized. This statement of Ellen White is still relevant; “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the work of a crucified, risen and soon coming Savior might be carried to the whole world” (*Education*, p. 271). Jesus’ leadership model in dealing with His disciples is relevant; Mark 3:13-15 (ESV) “and He went up on the mountain and called to Him those whom He desired, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons”). Verses 16 – 19 identified the names of the persons He called to abide with Him. Verse 19 says; “and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him”. Interestingly, while all the disciples of Jesus struggled with their personal issues, only Judas actually left the team. He had opportunity for repentance, however, he chose suicide. The others remained with their personal struggles and contributed to fulfilling the mission. Jesus invited them, had conversations with them, trained them, involved them and gave them hope. Today, those disciples await their eternal inheritance in the kingdom of God. There are three specific things that church leaders may consider doing as they seek relevance with Generation Z and Y:

1 INVITE THE YOUTH

Invite the young people that are members or are associated with the church: that is to say, intentionally engage with them in heart, mind and body or with empathy, interest and energy. Go after them as God did with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and invest in their growth. Be present with them by exuding calm and control. This makes them want to be there and ultimately become accommodating. By inviting them, leaders give attention to the young people. The invitation is about building relationship with the youth. Intentional strategies: to eat meals together with them, do fun things with them, spend time doing things with them that they are interested in, get to know their stories, build a community with them.

Story telling is not one directional, it is all inclusive. Infect them with passion. Inspire and help them to find mentors. Enhance their sense of knowing that they are members of a global movement, something that's radical and life changing, a part of something bigger. Remove the barriers that isolate. Traditions and ceremonies do have their place. However, as long as they are not salvation issues, they are only considered sacred by one generation yet irreconcilable and irrelevant to the youth. Do not allow these barriers to maintain their sting. Rigidity that is irrelevant to the gospel is not a wise course of action for nurturing young people in the faith. By invitation, leaders search for the youth, find them, address their issues and therein is fertile ground to retain and help them grow in Christ. Invite them and equip them.

2 EQUIP THE YOUTH

Equipping is a systematic process through which individuals are taught and this may be done by instruction and practical activities that result in improved adherence to values. Leaders must teach

the youth by providing them knowledge and skills and help them to develop positive, wholesome attitudes. The supernatural dimension is critical in the equipping process. This is where the leaders of the church perform their spiritual roles by providing them guidance in the study of the Word, and other inspirational reading through varying forms. Prayer is an essential aspect of this dimension and innovative methods should be employed in executing this. Embrace every opportunity to share the gospel with them and guide them in imparting to their friends, acquaintances and others.

Young people are the best tools or strategies for reaching other young people. They naturally know more young people than leaders do, and they know each other's' language. There are many social skills that they may be taught as well, which will empower them to become more relatable. Methods that have worked but which may be improved upon as new ones are developed and utilized are: camps, small group efforts, bible study teams, prayer sessions, spiritual counselling, faith journaling, spiritual retreats, workshops on faith building, and youth conferences.

The training should be short term, task oriented and targeted on achieving a change of attitude, skills and behavior in specific areas. It is important to choose wisely the method of training, as the retention rate from seminars and lectures is about five percent, as compared to seventy-five percent through practice by doing and ninety percent by teaching others.

3 INVOLVE THE YOUTH

God has a special mission for each one. He gifted us with abilities, personality, and certain qualities that will help accomplish His plan. God calls His people to all kinds of vocations. Leaders need to help

the youth to look for ways to fulfill His unique purpose for their lives. It does not matter how spiritual the parents of these generations are, or the elders, pastors or leaders of their Church. People are only saved by a personal relationship with Christ. When Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission, He was in essence giving them a mission. Leaders must help the young people to feel valued, use their skills and to feel accepted while serving others. They must be helped to feel that there is something for them at church to enjoy and to do. Involve them. Create ministries and or projects and deploy them. Offer them recognition and highlight their successes. Talk about them and what they are doing. It is a growth process. The youth want to be recognized for their involvement. Do not disappoint them and do not discriminate. Yes, there are exceptions. A few prefer to remain incognito, and they should be given that benefit, as well. However, be in touch with them and offer affirmation.

CONCLUSION

Generation Z and Y do have genuine needs. In fact, it is not easy to be young today. When youth lose their sense of belonging in church, leaders become concerned and the organization at large loses a sense of its wholeness. However, when they feel that sense of belonging, they remain committed to the faith and mission of the church, and this is comforting. Their independent thinking and desire to challenge the status quo are unnerving and distance is created between them and leaders of the church. While in most instances they behave as though unmindful of this distance, some actually do care and desire improved relations. The leadership of the church does have a responsibility to seek common ground because the church's mission is the salvation of all.

The challenges that young people face with church standards and their actual conduct, summon church

leaders to act, as it cannot be business as usual. This is an enormous undertaking for leaders, but the task is not impossible. There are numerous possible options and approaches as they engage with the young people. The church is the Lord's and He continues to be in charge. He provides vision and wisdom to those whom He appoints in positions of leadership. Leaders and young people who find the path, remember that it is not just about being in church, it is about, as Ellen White puts it, "the joys of service in this life and the higher joys of wider service in the life to come." For generation Z and Y, boomers and all others, the destination is not the church, it is the Kingdom of God. Together, let's make it!

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## ARTICLE

# EVERY UNION... ONE YEAR IN MISSION!

BY GARY BLANCHARD

Perhaps you've heard the story of the sixteen-year-old boy who wanted the keys to the family car. He asked his Dad for the keys and his dad said "Okay, but there are three things you need to do for me. First, you need to read your Bible every day, second you need to get your grades up in school and thirdly you need to cut your hair."

Several weeks later the boy came to his father and asked again for the keys. The father asked if he had done what was required of him before receiving the keys. The boy said "yes." The father said, "I see you have been reading your Bible every day and your grades are much better, but I've noticed that your hair is still not cut." The boy smiled confidently and replied, "True dad, but Jesus had long hair!" The father looked his son in the eyes and replied, "You're right son, but remember Jesus had to walk everywhere he went."

Don't laugh too loud, since the boy in our story sounds a lot like Seventh-day Adventists! We too are asking Jesus for the keys to the kingdom. We preach

and pray for His soon return but have we done the work we've been asked to do?

You be the judge!

*"The work of the cities is the essential work for this time. When the cities are worked as God would have them, the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed" (Ministry to the Cities p. 10).*

*"The message that I am bidden to bear to our people at this time is, work the cities without delay, for the time is short" (Ministry to the Cities p. 26).*

To a large extent, we have not done the work God has given us to do. Many cities around the world remain unreached and unimpacted by The Three Angels Message! Ellen White had the following words to say...

*"The work that should long ago have been in active operation to win souls to Christ has not been done. The inhabitants of the ungodly cities so soon to be visited with calamities have been cruelly neglected. The time is near when large cities will be swept away, and all should be warned of these coming judgments. But who is giving to the accomplishment of this work the wholehearted service that God requires?" (Evangelism p. 29).*

According to Spirit of Prophecy, Adventists have actually been sleeping on the job!

*"Often, we have been told that our cities are to hear the message, but how slow we are to heed the instruction. I saw One standing on a high platform with arms extended. He turned and pointed in every direction, saying, 'a world perishing in ignorance of God's holy law, and Seventh-day Adventists are asleep.' The Lord is pleading for laborers, for there is a great work to be done. There are conversions to be made that will add to the church such as shall be saved." (Evangelism p. 32).*

## INSUBORDINATION

Perhaps the biggest issue facing our church today is "insubordination" to the great commission! Ellen White wrote in 1901 "We may have to remain in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel..." (Evangelism p. 696). Like the young man in our story, we must decide how badly we want the keys to the Kingdom! We must decide how badly we want Jesus to come in our lifetime!

## JESUS AND CITY EVANGELISM

Interestingly, Jesus prioritized preaching the gospel to the cities! He understood that in every city there are people like the woman at Jacob's well, who are thirsty to know the kind heart of God and His free gift of eternal life (John 4:10).

As multitudes came to Jesus from the city of Sychar, Jesus turned to his disciples (you and I included) and said some of the most encouraging words in regard to city evangelism! "Don't you have a saying, it's still four months until the harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for the harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together" (John 4:35-36).

Notice that Jesus is so zealous for the lost people in the cities, especially those who are thirsty for the gospel, that he orders the church to pay the reapers a salary. Jesus understood a simple but profound truth. Ripe will rot if it's not reaped! Although "sowers" are just as important, Jesus needs reapers to be fast and focused on the harvest before it's lost.

For a couple years my family and I lived beside an orchard in Wenatchee, Washington. We noticed that when the farmer waited too long to harvest the apples they would fall from the tree and quickly rot on the ground. Every day in every city, there are hearts yearning for God and the hope that only He can offer. But every day there are also souls perishing "without God and without hope." We must move fast and focused on the orchards of the world. Without question, city evangelism is our most urgent work as a church! So, if this is our work, how should we go about reaching our local cities?

## ONE YEAR IN MISSION

First, we strongly recommend that every church leader gets the book “Ministry to the Cities” a compilation written by Ellen White and produced by the *Review and Herald*. Although not exhaustive, this little book is jammed packed with timeless and God inspired methods that will work in your city especially if acted upon with prayer and the blessing of the Holy Spirit. I would also recommend Rico Hill and Jared Thurmon’s practical book “The Blueprint: A Manual for Reaching the Cities.”

Secondly, we must understand that our youth are the most effective agents for reaching the cities of the world. They are the “silver bullet” you might say! Ellen White writes “If the young men in our cities would unite their efforts to discountenance ungodliness and crime, their influence would greatly advance the cause of reform. It is the privilege and the duty of every youth, as an angel of mercy, to minister to the wants and woes of mankind. There is no class that can achieve greater results for God and humanity than the young” (Ministry to the Cities p. 78). But how can we mobilize our youth to effectively reach the cities?

Thirdly implement a “One Year in Mission” in your conference or Union. OYiM as it is called is a global youth initiative started in 2013 with a singular focus...to reach the cities of the world with the Three An-

gels Message. Although Ellen White doesn’t call it One Year in Mission, she describes it perfectly in the following quotation.

*“Brother and sister (Stephen and Hetty) Haskell have rented a house in one of the best parts of the city (Nashville), and have gathered round them a family of helpers, who day by day go out giving Bible readings, selling our papers, and doing medical missionary work. During the hour of worship, the workers relate their experiences.*

*Bible studies are regularly conducted in the home, and the young men and young women connected with the mission receive a practical, thorough training in holding Bible readings and in selling our publications. The Lord has blessed their labors, a number have embraced the truth, and many others are deeply interested. It was in this way that fishermen who left their nets at the call of Christ were trained. A similar work should be done in many cities. The young people who go out to labor in these cities should be under the direction of experienced, consecrated leaders. Let the workers be provided a good home, in which they may receive a thorough training. The Lord has a precious, sacred work of soul-saving to be done in the world, and it is to be done now”*

*(Ministry To The Cities p. 82).*

**There are at least six features of OYiM found in this passage. Let’s briefly look at each.**

**1 One Year in Mission is a CITY initiative.** There is no doubt from this quotation that the “city” is the primary focus. She mentions it three times. This make sense, since the majority of the world’s population lives in the cities, OYiM is an initiative that works “smarter not harder” by looking for lost souls in the most population dense places. OYiM is not for rural or country evangelism (as valuable as this is), it is distinctly designed to reach the “cities” of the world!

**2 One Year in Mission is launched from a center of influence located within the city.** A center of influence is simply a rented or purchased facility where OYiM missionaries can live and launch their ministries. In this case, the center of influence was a “rented” home in a safe part of the city. In choosing a center of influence we must keep in mind the spiritual and physical health of our missionaries as well as their proximity to the harvest. To learn more about “centers of influence” and how to access funding be sure to go to [missiontothecities.org](http://missiontothecities.org).

**3 One Year in Mission provides a buffet of ministry options for the local community.** Did you notice in her quote that young people did a variety of things? They gave Bible studies, sold Adventist resources and did medical missionary work. The beauty of having a team is that it provides variety of talents and spiritual gifts that can make it more successful in meeting the various needs of the city. Interestingly, some of these ministries take place in the center of influence itself, while others are done outside the center. Recently, I visited a very successful OYiM and was pleasantly surprised to find that many of our OYiMers were professionals in their field. There were doctors, educators, lawyers and carpenters etc. All of them were using their expertise to serve the community and warm hearts to hear the gospel message! What a wonderful testimony to the power of “Christ method alone” (Ministry to the cities p. 59). There is synergetic power when teams of young people work together to socialize, sympathize, serve and save the lost in the cities of the world! How large should these teams be? Personally, we believe the teams should be large in order to have greater impact (perhaps 12 or more) but this is not always possible so

smaller teams should be encouraged as well. Another question we often hear is “when should a young person join an OYiM?” Again, we personally recommend they join during one of their two “gap years”. This would be either directly after high school or college. Having said that though, whenever a young person is being moved by The Spirit that is the best time!

**4 One Year in Mission is for Adventist Young People.** Notice how she mentions “young men and young women” as the key laborers. One Year in Mission is designed to involve committed Adventist young people ages 18-35. You will also notice an element of intergenerational involvement since the young people are led by “experienced and consecrated leaders.” Two of these older folks “brother and sister Haskell” are mentioned by name. Without question the secret to a successful OYiM is recruiting the right young adults to minister and selecting the right adults to lead the OYiM ministry. By the way, many young adults are very qualified to lead an OYiM and should be appointed to this work. Especially those who have served already as an OYiM Missionary. Some Unions or Conferences may wish to appoint a pastor to

this responsibility, but it should be his/her primary focus. Church planting pastors are ideal.

**5 One year in Mission is one of the most effective ways to train our young people for ministry!** Jesus trained His disciples by actually doing ministry with them and then giving them opportunities to debrief. For an entire year, OYiM Missionaries (OYiMers) will also be putting into practice what they are learning. For example, they will learn to give Bibles studies effectively by actually giving Bible studies! In our quotation, Ellen White calls this “a practical, thorough training.” But wait, there’s more! These young missionaries will also have opportunities to “relate their experiences” (good and bad) and receive counsel and encouragement from their peers. This is the perfect environment to “rightly train” God’s army of youth.

**6 One Year in Mission has one particular objective.** The goal of OYiM is to bring lost people into a saving relationship with Jesus and to help them embrace the Three Angel’s Message. Therefore, OYiM is in complete alignment with our Evangelism and Church Planting Departments. In fact, One Year in Mission in some places has been

used to plant or help facilitate a church plant in a city. Some may argue that we should lower our expectation regarding OYiM since it is a youth initiative, but these individuals should read carefully the following quotation and make a mental adjustment. “It is the privilege and duty of every youth, as an angel of mercy, to minister to the wants and woes of mankind. There is no class that can achieve greater results for god and humanity than the young” (Ministry to the Cities p 78). It’s interesting that nowhere in scripture are we told to plant churches. The great commission is a call to preach the gospel and make disciples. Church planting then is not the mission but the result of faithfully making God’s priorities ours! Therefore, OYiM teams that faithfully follow Jesus should not be surprised if the fruit of the efforts leads to a new church plant.

## WHY EVERY UNION ONE YEAR IN MISSION?

It is the prayer of the General Conference Youth Department along with Division Youth Directors around the world, that every Union launch an OYiM yearly! In fact, to help facilitate this the General Conference has sent some financial resources to every Division. Combined with Evangelism and Church planting dollars, these resources could make this worthy vision a reality!

*Some argue that not every young person will want or even be able to take a year off to focus on OYiM.* Although this is true, it is also true that in every Union and Conference there are young people who would jump at the opportunity! These young men and women are feeling an urgent call from God to reach the Rehab’s, Nebuchadnezzar’s, Priscillas and Aquila’s living in the great cities of the world! How do we know? Because in our travels, we meet them all around the world!

The General Conference Youth Department believes our young people want to be challenged to live dangerously for the Lord and OYiM is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

For OYiM to be successful though, we must do what we can to heavily promote the ministry, recruit young missionaries and equip them for soul winning success.

## BENEFITS

By the way, it may be that from among them we will discover our church’s greatest talent for evangelistic and pastoral work! All around the world we hear stories of young people who have decided to become pastors or Bible workers as a result of their OYiM experience. Many others have expressed their gratefulness for the opportunity since it birthed in them a heart for mission service. One young lady joyfully shared with us that she now has evangelistic eyes and believes that “once a missionary always a missionary.” Recently, I spoke to a couple who met during an OYiM and were married the following year. They now lead an OYiM in their Union. So, the benefits for our youth even beyond winning souls for Jesus are great!

*Some wonder why young people need to dedicate an entire year to mission service.* They wonder if it might be better for them to do short term missions instead. Short term mission initiatives like Mission Caleb are excellent opportunities for young people to dedicate vacation time to reaching the cities of the world. We wholeheartedly support short term mission initiatives! In fact, many young people have been so turned on to missions after just three weeks of Mission Caleb that they have immediately signed up for One Year in Mission! So short term mission trips are good and in themselves can awaken a mission heart in the younger generation. To learn more about Mission Caleb download the manual at [youth.adventist.org](http://youth.adventist.org).

However, OYiM gives our young people more time to experience radical heart change and more opportunities to grow in their evangelistic skills and to ultimately see greater results not only in their own spiritual growth, but in the salvation of souls they have been praying for and

actively reaching. We definitely need short term mission trips, but we also need long term mission options for those who want to make an even greater impact.

Some have opted to be a student missionary for this reason and we highly recommend this as well. But again, OYiM is unique in that it is for all our youth even those who do not attend our schools, moreover it is team-based so they have constant comradery and peer support. Is OYiM better than short mission trips or any other long term mission initiatives? Not at all, it’s just different.

*Finally, some wonder if the city near them is even open to our message.* To this concern, Ellen White writes “In every city, filled though it may be with violence and crime, there are many who with proper teaching may learn to become followers of Jesus. Thousands may thus be reached with the saving truth and be led to receive Christ as a personal Saviour” (Mission to the cities p. 31). God himself put it like this to the Apostle Paul in Corinth “...I have much people in this city” (Acts 18:9-10).

The encouraging news regarding city evangelism is the fact that cities like Sychar and Jericho are reached one person at a time! Jesus reached just one woman by a well and through her multitudes came to believe in

Him. Joshua’s two spies reached the prostitute Rahab with the gospel (scarlet cord) and as a result she and all her loved one’s in the city were saved as well. So rather than become discouraged by the evil we see in our cities or overwhelmed by their size and the work that needs to get done, let’s remember that everyone can be supernaturally reached one person at a time.

## RESOURCES

To learn more about One Year in Mission and how to get one started in your Conference or Union be sure to download a free copy of the manual at [youth.adventist.org](http://youth.adventist.org). You can also go to our OYiM group page on Facebook, join it and see pictures and videos of young people around the world celebrating what God has done and is doing through their year of city outreach. Also, check out our prerecorded OYiM University online at [youth.adventist.org](http://youth.adventist.org) and learn the what, when, where, how, why and who of OYiM.

May God move in your heart to start a One Year in Mission in your Union. Just imagine the impact not only on our youth but on the men, women, boys and girls they will most certainly win to Jesus!

Can you say it with us?

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## ARTICLE

# CURE FOR HEZEKITIS

BY GARY BLANCHARD



How do we reach and retain the younger generation? Without a doubt this is one of the biggest questions being asked by parents, youth leaders, teachers and church administrators around the world. Especially, as we hear reports that between 60-70% of our youth disappear from active church life in their twenties and never return. Interestingly, but not shockingly, the reason for this crisis is clearly spelled out for us in the word of God. Go figure!

In Isaiah 38 we learn about the God-fearing King Hezekiah who was diagnosed with a terminal illness but by the grace of God was healed and given 15 more years of life (vs 5). However, in the next chapter we learn that visitors from Babylon came to “congratulate” him on his recovery and in an act of complete stupidity King Hezekiah showed them all the treasures of the kingdom (39:1-2). When the delegation left, Isaiah the prophet confronted the king, prophesying that the Babylonians would return, take the treasures for themselves, kidnap and castrate their kids making them slaves in Babylon.

Now notice Kings Hezekiah’s shocking response to this terrible news! “This message you have given me from the

Lord is GOOD. For the king was thinking, At least there will be peace and security during MY life” (Isaiah 39:8).

Why are we losing so many young people today? Why are they being dragged away from the church and assimilated into the world? Because this kind of attitude, we will call it Hezekitis, is also coming from the older generation! Notice king Hezekiah was a Godly man and was one of the greatest kings Israel ever had but like many Godly church leaders today, he was more concerned about the present, about his generation, and gave little thought to the future and those who would one day lead!

Sadly, it was during the extra 15 years of life God had granted him that Hezekiah and his wife had a child that would become one of the most wicked kings in Israel’s history! He was Godless, lawless and heartless and the Bible testifies that he became a leader who “led them (Israel) to do even more evil than the pagan nations that the Lord had destroyed when the people of Israel entered the land” (2 Kings 21:9).

Currently in the United States everything from guns to drugs is being blamed for the state of affairs among our nation’s youth. Violence is high, and you can’t watch

the news without another school shooting or violent act being committed by the younger generation. Of course, this reality is reflected in other countries as well, but few are aware of the real systemic problem behind the moral free fall among the younger generation. It is the conviction of this writer, that Hezekitis is the problem—like king Hezekiah we are either preoccupied with our own generation or unconscious of the desperate need of the younger generation for our pro-active attention. Among this generation is a deep need realized or not for spiritual fathers—an older generation who cares for the lives and souls of the up and coming Manasseh’s (*Millennials and Generation Z*).

But there is great news! God has a cure for Hezekitis and real hope for a Manasseh generation! God’s word predicts that just before His return, He will send “Elijah the Prophet” who will “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers” (Malachi 4:5). Interestingly, Ellen White compares Elijah to those living at the end of time. She writes “Elijah was a type of the saints who will be living on the earth at the time of the second advent of Christ and who will be “changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,” without tasting of death” (PK 227). So just before the return of Christ God will raise up a generation that

will cure His church of Hezekitis as they wholeheartedly pursue intergenerational youth ministry.

Elijah the Prophet was without question one of the greatest youth leaders in the Old Testament. He was a Godly man like Hezekiah, but one who cared for the younger generation and did more than just preach “total youth involvement.” Elijah “rolled up his sleeves” and invested compassionately into the younger generation as if the future of the church depended upon it! Elijah understood that effective youth ministry is intergenerational, and he did three profound but simple things to cure Hezekitis!

## CARE

First, he cared for them. You will remember when the widow of Zarephath’s son died, it was Elijah that carried the boy’s body upstairs, stretched himself over him three times and cried out to God to bring him to life. Intergenerational ministry follows a simple formula—proximity + prayer = revival. When the older generation builds close relationships with the younger generation (proximity) and cries out earnestly for their spiritual revival (prayer) supernatural things happen! You will remember in Ezekiel 37, that it was only after Ezekiel prayed for the Spirit to revive the dry bones that the army of God came to life (verse 10). I believe this prophecy applies specifically to our

army of youth, but that’s another article. Caring for this generation is about praying earnestly for their spiritual revival as we pursue close relationships with them.

I love how Ellen White herself appeals for more proximity and prayer in regard to intergenerational youth ministry:

*“The youth are the objects of Satan’s special attacks; but kindness, courtesy, and sympathy which flows from a heart filled with love to Jesus, will gain their confidence, and save them from many a snare of the enemy. There must be more study given to the problem of how to deal with the youth, more earnest prayer for the wisdom that is needed in dealing with minds...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 p. 207-212).*

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

The General Conference Youth Department has an excellent resource that will help you, your

church, Conference, Union and Division become more effective and intentional about caring for the younger generation and curing the Hezekitis among us. The resource is called “Intergenerational Churches of Refuge” or iCOR. It is a resource that church leaders can study preferable with their leadership teams in order to intentionally and effectively care for the younger generation. You can download the resource for free at [youth.adventist.org](http://youth.adventist.org). Also stay tuned for training opportunities at [@gcyouthministries](https://twitter.com/gcyouthministries) and [youth.adventist.org](http://youth.adventist.org).

### CHALLENGE

Second Elijah challenged them. On Mount Carmel he did not preach smooth and comfortable messages. Instead he shook the younger generation up by challenging them to get off the fence and follow the Lord wholeheartedly. “If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him” he declared (1 Kings 18:21).

Once a young man was sitting on the fence and Jesus approached him challenging him to get off the fence and follow him wholeheartedly. The young man said, “No thank you Jesus, I want to remain on the fence.” Jesus went away sad. Next the devil appeared to the young man and invited him to follow him wholeheartedly as well. The young man replied in the same way, “No thank you, I am going to remain on the fence.” The devil smiled and said, “That’s ok young man, you can remain on the fence, after all I own the fence!”

Yes, the younger generation needs to know that Jesus loves them, and his grace covers their sins and that justification is theirs by faith alone and not by works BUT where are the challenging messages today? Where are the messages calling young people to live holy lives for God, to keep his Sabbath, to live pure, to grow in grace, to be Spirit-filled and sanctified? Where is the challenge to live counterculture for Jesus even when it’s dangerous? Where are the messages calling for health reform, mission service, tithing responsibility and respect for

religious and political authority? Maybe you’ve noticed we feature tons of David testimonies but few Joseph and Daniel stories of God’s grace. Moreover, where are the warning messages that the end is near and faith as well as repentance is required of those who wish to be saved?

Ellen White writes:

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*“The smooth sermons so often preached make no lasting impression: the trumpet does not give a certain sound. Men are not cut to the heart by the plain, sharp truths of God’s word...when will the voice of faithful rebuke be heard once more in the church...If they were not so rare, we should see more of the power of God revealed among men...it is not from love for their neighbor that they smooth down the message entrusted to them, but because they are self-indulgent and ease loving. True love seeks first the honor of God and the salvation of souls...God calls for men like Elijah, Nathan, and John the Baptist—me who will bear His message with faithfulness, regardless of the consequences; men who will speak the truth bravely, though it call for the sacrifice of all they have” (PK pg. 140-142).*

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I believe it was the great Charles Spurgeon that warned “A time will come when instead of shepherds feeding the sheep the church will have clowns entertaining the goats.” Oh Lord how we need church leaders who will courageously challenge the younger generation like Elijah!

### HELPFUL RESOURCES

There is no better resource for this than Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy. We encourage leaders around the world to learn from credible Christians authors but always prioritizing Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy! We challenge ADVENTIST youth leaders to make young disciples for Christ teaching them to “OBEY ALL” that Jesus taught even the countercultural and dangerous truths (Matthew 28:19-20).

### CALL

Thirdly Elijah called young people. In the eyes of most, Elijah was an example of ministry success. After-all he was well loved and respected by the church but apparently in the eyes of God his ministry was incomplete. In 1 Kings 19:16 God “commands” him to pass on leadership to the younger generation! Someone once said, “no success without a successor” and apparently God agrees. Ellen White writes “As Elijah divinely directed in seeking a successor, passed the field in which Elisha was plowing, he cast upon the young man’s shoulders the mantle of consecration” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 219).

Like many of us, Elijah seems to have obeyed God’s command here half-heartedly. I may be wrong with this assumption, but you will remember when he found Elisha, he

threw the mantle over him and kept walking (1 Kings 19:19). This seems to be the common way we mentor young people today. Instead of training them for ministry and giving them responsibilities, they can handle, we throw the mantle over them and shout “sink or swim kid,” “Don’t let us down” after all “you are the church of today!” But calling the younger generation into ministry and leadership is about passing it on, not dumping it on them! Jesus took the young people on his ministry team through a process which took three years. He began with observation (watch me do it), then participation (help me do it) and finally activation (you do it). Elijah did the same thing over a period of several years. Sister White writes “Ministry comprehends far more than preaching the word. It means training young men as Elijah trained Elisha, taking them from their ordinary duties, and giving them responsibilities to bear in God’s work—small responsibilities at first, and larger ones as they gain strength and experience” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 222).

Thankfully Elijah grew to be an amazing mentor to Elisha. Some might even argue that he was so good at it that his young successor exceeded him! Ellen Whites seems to affirm this when she wrote, “When the Lord in His providence sees fit to remove from His work those to whom He has given wisdom, He helps and

strengthens their successors, if they will look to Him for aid and will walk in His ways. They may be even wiser than their predecessors; for they may profit by their experience and learn wisdom from their mistakes. Henceforth Elisha stood in Elijah’s place. He who had been faithful in that which was least was to prove himself faithful also in much.” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 228.4)

The greatest compliment to the older generation is when the younger generation that they have cared for, challenged and called into ministry become even wiser than they! Unlike king Saul who grew jealous of his young successor, and even worked to sabotage him, Elijah encouraged and equipped Elisha and became a spiritual “father” to him. You will remember that as he ascended in a fiery chariot Elisha shouted “...My father! My Father! I see the chariots and charioteers of Israel” (2 Kings 2:12). What a compliment to the older generation when the younger generation responds to their fatherly love expressed through caring, challenging and calling! So, leader never forget, if the ones you are mentoring grow to be better speakers, teachers, administrators and even leaders than you...then praise God you’re in good company with empowering leaders like Elijah, Barnabas and yes even Jesus who empowered his followers to even greater things. Jesus said, “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in

me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even GREATER things than these, because I go to my Father” (John 14:12). Wow think on that!

RESOURCES

The General Conference Youth Department has some wonderful resources for those who want to grow as youth leaders who care, challenge and call the younger generation to ministry for The Master. Senior Youth Leadership (SYL) is one of these training resources. We also have the new Adventist Youth Leaders Magazine designed to equip leaders around the world to more effectively pass on leadership to the younger generation. Both of these resources are free for download at youth.adventist.org. Why not make sure all the youth leaders in your area of influence have these resources in hand?

THANK YOU!

My deepest respects and appreciation go out to the parents, youth leaders, teachers, club directors, pastors and administrators around the world who are investing their time, talents and treasures into the generation coming behind them. You are the fulfillment of Malachi’s Promise!

On behalf of the General Conference Youth Department, we thank you! Only in the future will we know how much we owe to your vigilance, dedication and hard work.

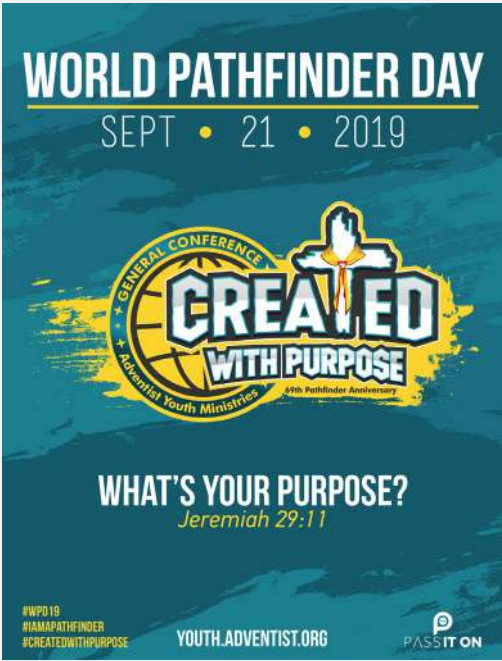
Hopefully this article has stimulated your thinking and strengthened your resolve to intentionally lead God’s church in caring, challenging and calling the younger generation. I believe this article contains the key to reaching and retaining the younger generation. The cure for Hezekitis is simple but not easy for sure. We as church leaders must act intentionally now!

What matters most in these last days, is that we pour into the younger generation and resist the urge to care only for ourselves and our generation. Now is the time

for the Elijah leaders to step up and stand out in behalf of the younger generation. It’s time to intentionally care, challenge and call them! As mentioned above, Hezekiah was a godly king and no doubt he cared deeply for his son Manasseh, but life has a way of forcing priorities and if we are not careful, it is highly likely that our priority will be for ourselves and will naturally lead to neglecting the needs of the younger generation. But Jesus will help us; He prioritized children and He can put this same desire within each of us.

Why not take some time in the next few days or weeks to come up with a written and intentional plan to “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children” in your area of influence?

Never forget that Malachi 4:5-6 is not just a promise it’s a warning! “Look I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse.”



ARTICLE



THE YOUTH AND TEAMWORK

BY ANDRES J. PERALTA, D. MIN.

“STRENGTH LIES IN DIFFERENCES,  
NOT IN SIMILARITIES.” STEPHEN COVEY

Teamwork is a divine idea and of great importance, which is centralized in the same triad essence of God. The Trinity constitutes the perfect divine team. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have always worked together to provide and sustain the universal creation. Under the divine government, nothing stays free by chance. The creation of man is a result of the divine team, that said: “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). The idea of working in a team, then, originates in God and fulfills the reason by which we were created. As a result, since its origin we see that human beings gather together, and they do so in great societies as well as in the smallest circle of the home. It’s fundamental to value the joint work so that our societies, governments and religious entities can survive and reach success.

MEANING OF TEAMWORK

According to the Spanish Language General Dictionary, a team is a “group of people organized to carry out an activity or task.” According to Wilkes, it’s “a group of people connected for the mission of reaching a shared goal.”<sup>1</sup> Based on his own experience, the investigator says that a team is “a group of people with common and clear objectives and purposes, organized to reach a defined goal.” Katzenbach and Smith use the definition of the team from Harvard University Business School: “A small group of people with complementary skills that are committed with purpose, common capacities of which each one is equally responsible.”<sup>2</sup> For his part, Glenn Parker says with wisdom that not every group of people is a team and that not every team performs effectively, and that is because a team is a group of people with a high sense of interdependence oriented towards an achievement, goal or fulfillment of a task.”<sup>3</sup>

According to Mead and Stowell, no organization can function well without the participation of a group

of people, because people are more efficient when they unite their efforts to achieve common objectives.”<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, for Stephanie and Steven, teamwork in a coordinated way is the most valuable asset an organization has. The motive is simple: it’s much easier to carry out responsibilities, ideas and services, which contributes to the guarantee of success.<sup>5</sup> In addition, they point out that when a person does something spectacular it’s because he had the support and the commitment of others.<sup>6</sup> Another author, Maxwell, considers that it’s important to know that we are too small to do great things; a person cannot do anything transcendental except they do in a group and all important act in history always has a team of people involved.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, Malphurs says that a good team is integrated by individuals with distinct personalities and capacities, and that these differences are what makes a significant contribution to ministry.<sup>8</sup>

We all know that we live in an individualistic world, in a world in which “I” penetrates in all the spheres of life, home, society, business and government. Maxwell comments that the “individualism wins trophies, but teamwork wins the approval of others.”<sup>9</sup> Dungy also says something very interesting in that regard: “As a team, the ensemble has to be better than the sum of each individual part.”<sup>10</sup> For his part, Butterworth believes that we should sacrifice personal glory for the collective good and support the team.<sup>11</sup>

This remains clear with what happened to us during superstorm Sandy, when the Adventist Community Services Department along with the youth of the City of New York met at their respective churches and formed teams to support the effort sustained during innumerable hours of voluntary work, fundraising, distribution of articles of clothing, food and personal care packages and the most important: helping victims of the storm move out of the affected houses. That is how we met Maria, who had lost her house, her belongings and, as she herself said, even hope. Maria’s house was close to the coast, and that was a very big risk. She told us that

she thought that the storm wasn’t going to be too big and decided to stay, but the water started to enter the house and immediately she found refuge in the second floor. As the water entered her house, it destroyed all she had. Maria thought it was the end for her family. Days after the storm, a team of young people came to her house and she tended to them; in spite of her loss, she felt grateful to God because she was alive along with her two children. Her hope was revived when she saw the team of young people willing to help her. The team took out everything that was destroyed, and the house was cleaned. In this story we can see how a team with a clear vision, mission and objective could do great things for God. Maria was impacted by the act of a group that knew why they were on earth: to be a blessing to others.

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A HEALTHY TEAM

Now we have seen how important it is to work as a team and how it prepares us to be more effective, to learn more and guarantee success, which brings various additional benefits for our development. We also learn to live in a community, to support each other, to minimize pride and to reach great success. The investigators propose seven essential elements that motive a team: values, mission, vision, purpose, objectives, and defined strategies. Let’s see a brief summary of each one.

### HAVING VALUES

Values are like a compass that guides the team and helps in decision-making. Having values is united to the question: in what do we believe? Values, as Butterworth says, identifies the norms and the path to follow to achieve harmonious work<sup>12</sup>; in this sense, it functions as the helm of the behavior of the team since it governs the behavior of an organization and besides, it is, according to Blanchard, the nonnegotiable principles that define a leader.<sup>13</sup>

Maxwell observes that “the organizational values influence and guide the behavior of the team in the same manner in which the personal values influence and guide the behavior of an individual.”<sup>14</sup> Consequently, it is recommended to practice our values, institutionalize them and praise them publicly. The values of ministry, in particular, dictate the what and the why of things. In other words, the values determine the vision.<sup>15</sup>

Before continuing, here is a brief anecdote: at an event to which I was invited to preach, a church family got together to serve the homeless during the weekend. They said that our mission is to serve people who had nothing and that roam the streets. That Saturday and Sunday they prepared more than three thousand plates of food to give to the homeless. Hundreds of brethren went to different points of the city; we organized ourselves by zone and by team, and the result was phenomenal: finally, the needy were touched by an act of love. Some of them expressed that they were forgotten but now they had life and hope.

Also, I remember Kim, a businessman who because of circumstances of life had lost everything. His wife had abandoned him, and he had found refuge in alcohol in such a way that he ended up in bankruptcy. When we found him, he was on the floor, ruined. We offered food but he didn’t want it. He disregarded us and said that he didn’t need us. Kim’s heart was hardened; there was pain and resentment on his face. Then one of the youths said: “Let’s sing to him”, and another started to play the guitar. In one second, Kim started to cry bitterly without control. One of the youths gave him a hug and he cried even more. After some time, Kim started to tell us his story and we all sat at his feet to listen to him attentively. First, he thanked us for the songs and the hugs, and then, in a funny way, he told us that he was hungry, and that he would accept the food. Today, we can say that the team’s act of going out and touching lives made an extraordinary change in Kim, that now is a manager of a large company thanks to the reestablishment of his life.

He loves God greatly and also the members of the same church that helped him.

Together in mission we can change the world.

### HAVING A MISSION

Having a mission is to know where we are heading to. It affects the future planning of the team or organization; it defines what is our labor or activity and it helps us know what we are dedicated to. Also, it is very important to know who our audience is. The mission is, in short, what the ministry should fulfill.

### HAVING A VISION

A team without vision is destined to disappear. A ministry without vision is like a carpenter without a hammer. Barna wrote that only two percent of the pastors “can articulate the vision of their churches.” And he added: “This is the reason for which many pastors aren’t efficient; they don’t know where they are headed.”<sup>16</sup> The vision defines the future, describes it, feels it and anticipates it. It also helps answer the following questions: Where are we going? Why are we doing what we are doing?<sup>17</sup> Vision is the photography of the future that will give purpose and direction to the group,<sup>18</sup> that is, it relates to our dreams and aspirations, who we can become.

In a similar fashion to the other authors, Malphurs says that having a vision brings unity and not having it brings disunity. This means that when there is a common vision, in general, there also is harmony in the team.<sup>19</sup> A ministry without vision doesn’t know where it’s going, it’s disorganized; but having a vision, on the contrary, keeps the team united because it stimulates passion, gives energy, alters the status quo and disrupts the mediocre mentalities and decadent ministries. The same Mulphurs affirms that “warm and definite vision has the potential of melting the most frozen heart.”<sup>20</sup> Whereas, the vision responds to the what, purpose, as we will now see, responds to the why.

■ **HAVING A PURPOSE**

Maxwell comments that “although the vision tells people where they need to go, purpose tells them why they should go there.”<sup>21</sup> Purpose helps maintain us in the right path, make adjustments, improvise and innovate, even when we find obstacles or difficulties.<sup>22</sup> Blanchard and Stoner point out that the organizations exist for a purpose and that, above all, the large organizations give it much importance, since it inspires compromise and emotion.<sup>23</sup> Rick Warren, for his part, thinks that purposes should be simple, clear and specific, since in that way energies are focused and time is saved<sup>24</sup>; and in addition it allows for everyone to remember it, which is important so that they are able to transmit it later.<sup>25</sup>

Purpose, in short, describes the reason for the mission and, in the words of Stowell and Mead, guides and motivates teamwork.<sup>26</sup>

■ **HAVING GOALS**

Goals help the team reach a final objective because they are processes that should be followed and completed. According to the Real Academy of the Spanish Language, goal is the “end toward which someone’s actions and desires are directed to.” Maxwell is clear when talking about goals: “Without goals, nor a strategy to reach them, vision isn’t attainable nor measurable.”<sup>27</sup>

■ **HAVING OBJECTIVES**

Objectives are declarations used to outline in a quantitative and qualitative manner the proposed achievement in the short and long term. Objectives help us to eliminate the deficiencies that can exist and help crystalize the action or work plan, which in turn is formed by goals.

■ **HAVING STRATEGIES**

A healthy team should have defined strategies according to its values. The same clarifies how the team will fulfill its purpose and objectives, that is, how the minis-

try will implement its mission and vision.<sup>28</sup> It’s formed by planned actions to achieve a purpose, meaning that it answers the question: How are we going to achieve it? In addition, it details the results that the team should fulfill in the long term. In other words, strategy solidifies the path and the place.<sup>29</sup>

These seven essential elements will cause the team to reach great results. With strength and conviction, nothing can stop the team in the fulfillment of the mission.

**NOTES**

1. Wilkes, 1998, p. 215
2. Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 45
3. Parker, Glenn, 2008, p. 16
4. Mead and Stowell, 2007, p. 51
5. Ibid., pp.3-4
6. Ibid., p. 7
7. Maxwell, 2009a, Kindle, u. 154-1268
8. Malphurs, 1999, p. 20
9. Maxwell, 2009a
10. Dungy, 2011, p. 16
11. Butterworth, 2007, p. 73
12. Butterworth, 2007, p. 182
13. Blanchard, 2006, Kindle Edition, u. 1676 de 1971
14. Maxwell, 2008, p. 207
15. Malphurs, 1999, p. 225
16. Barna, 1995a, p. 125
17. Ibid., p. 82
18. Blanchard and Stoner, 2011, Kindle edition, u. 1710-1971
19. Malphurs, 1999, p. 20
20. Ibid. p. 31
21. Maxwell, 2009a,
22. Ibid
23. Blanchard and Stoner, 2011, Kindle edition, u. 459-1971
24. Warren, Rick, 1998, p. 106
25. Ibid., p. 107
26. Stowell and Mead, 2007, p. 82
27. Maxwell, 2009a, u. 272
28. Malphurs, 1999, p. 14
29. Stowell and Mead, 2007, p. 83.



It’s very important that our missionary work has a solid biblical foundation, which brings us to the matter of teamwork. We won’t make a difference between “missionary work” and “evangelistic work”, as if the first talks about missions abroad (where there is no Christian presence) and the second about the preaching of the Gospel within the cities (where there is a presence).

**THE CALL FOR TEAMWORK TO FULFILL THE MISSION**

In about seventy-eight sources in the Spirit of Prophecy, Ellen G. White’s book, the word “company[team]” is used almost always as “tools” or “resources” of work. The exceptions are the following: “Let the very best workers that can be found be organized into a company to sell our literature and also give away papers to some that cannot buy”<sup>1</sup> and “Let a class of canvassers be fitted up, by thorough instruction and drill, to handle the publications that shall come forth from the press.”<sup>2</sup>

In another passage, White uses the word “team” wanting to refer to a “group of administrators.” It shouldn’t be difficult to see in the following quote the concept

of “work team”: “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!”<sup>3</sup>

White was clear that the active participation of the youth is fundamental to firm up the divine plan of the missionary work: “The Lord has pointed out to the youth to be his helping hand”<sup>4</sup> But of course it is not easy to organize the youth in the evangelistic task. Therefore, the youth are told that they should form missionary groups, and also the “young women and children”<sup>5</sup> are called. In this same writing, White fervently asked them to “unite together upon some plan and order of action.” And then asks: “Cannot you form a band of workers, and have set times to pray together and ask the Lord to give you His grace, and put forth united action?”

White spoke about the need for our youth to receive special, not “casual” attention, since they need something “more than an occasional word of encouragement.”<sup>6</sup> She adds that not just any person can reach “those youth who are apparently careless and indifferent”, instead only those “whose heart is filled with love and sympathy” can

do it. The motive is simple: “Not all can be helped in the same way.” If we know how to observe, we will see that “often those whom we pass by with indifference, because we judge them from outward appearance, have in them the best material for workers, and will repay all the efforts bestowed on them.” To these youth “there must be more” time “given”, “more earnest prayer for the wisdom that is needed in dealing with minds.”<sup>7</sup>

For this reason, White asks that we be careful and utilize our wisdom at the time recruiting youth. Even those who are careless and a bit indifferent should be guided so that they can work as a group and attract youth and adults who don’t have knowledge of our Lord.

In her book *Christian Service*, White uses the word “company[group]” as synonym of “team” and announces what God awaits from us: “Young men and young women, cannot you form companies, and, as soldiers of Christ, enlist in the work, putting all your tact and skill and talent into the Master’s service, that you may save souls from ruin? Let there be companies organized in every church to do this work.”<sup>8</sup>

White knew how youth thought and that’s why urgent efforts emerged to organize in “groups in all the churches.” If the youth are motivated and organized in missionary work teams, they would be instruments in the hand of the Lord to reach other young minds.

Finally, what occurs with the youth will be determined by the visionary leaders of the church: “We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged.[...] We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth.”<sup>9</sup> White affirms that “it is not enough to show” how much the youth need to do for the Lord or urge them to realize their part in the work of God: “they must be taught how to labor for the Master.”<sup>10</sup> Organizing the youth would be beneficial in many areas: they can work as “nurses, gospel visitors, and Bible readers, as canvassers, ministers, and medical missionary evangelists.”<sup>11</sup>

Before continuing, I would like to tell a brief story that relates to what was said by White. It has to do with the Greater New York Conference Youth Department

team, where I learned a lot about the power of working in a team. I remember that we took the initiative to reach the community through the ministry of Compassion, which placed an emphasis on being the hands and feet of Jesus. The objective of such a ministry is to touch lives and demonstrate the love of Jesus in a tangible way. In the springtime, the team organized more the fifty community projects in the metropolitan area of New York, where it served in the streets, hospitals, nursing homes, police and fire departments, and in addition they cleaned parks, gave out literatures, gave food to the homeless, prayed for the disheartened people, gave talks and orientations on health and gave fruits and flowers to the sick, among other projects. Remember that when Jesus sent his disciples, he did it two by two (Mark 6:7-13) because he knew about the power of working as a unit, of working as a team.

Also, I should mention Carlos, a man that didn’t have legs, needed food and was alone. His suffering, of course, was huge since he lost his legs at a very young age. He shared how he had forgotten the flavor of life and was full of sadness, pain and bitterness, to the point that he had thought about taking his own life. The group of youth that had arrived at his home heard him with empathy and also with sympathy. After a long conversation, the decision was made to clean his little house and offer him food and clothes, among other immensely needed items. Then Carlos’ life changed. Now, a team of youth had the goal of offering him love and satisfying his needs. Today, Carlos is a different person because a group of people made the decision to present Jesus to him in a tangible way, a Jesus that was alive in the people that represented Him. This shows us that when we come together to serve the power of heaven, all is affected for good.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH IN THE FULFILLMENT OF THE MISSION

With cleverness, White says that the youth can overtake the laymen or preachers “advanced in years” in regard to “the influence [...] that the young can have upon their

associates”<sup>12</sup> Of course that there are exceptions. Adults with charisma exists that can attract the youth, but experience tells us that a youth can reach his friends with much more ease: “Educate the youth to help the youth.”<sup>13</sup>

God knows the moral mechanism of humans and more when they are young. Therefore, He wants to involve the youth in the task of preaching the Gospel. Just as it happens with the adult, the mind of the youth that live in urban zones is different than those who live in rural zones. This reality demands an effective and particular strategy, that takes into account the strength of the youth in the church. In 1913, White wrote: “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.”<sup>14</sup> And she spoke about the “fresh energies” of the youth as “uncrippled energies.” The participation of the youth in the preaching of the God in the cities not only would be a blessing to the unbelievers, but also “that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action” it will pay tribute to God and impart “salvation to their fellow men.”<sup>15</sup>

White knew the challenges of urban evangelism and particularly the implication of reaching the youth. In her work, *Gospel Workers*, we read: “There must be more study given to the problem of how to deal with the youth, more earnest prayer for the wisdom that is needed in dealing with minds.”<sup>16</sup> If we don’t know what the youth in the great cities need, we will never be able to reach them or impact them with the saving truth.

But White not only recommends a committed and extensive missionary work, she also suggests a simple strategy. There is no need for a complicated evangelistic program that overlooks those that surround us. Thus, *Messages to Young People* recommends: “Let those who desire to work for God begin at home, in their own household, in their own neighborhood, among their own friends. Here they will find a favorable missionary field.”<sup>17</sup> This missionary task is so important that it serves as the foundation and “test” of the “ability or inability” of the missionaries “for service in a wider field.”

At the time of occupying the youth in missionary work in the cities, White advises not to overlook an important point: “A similar work should be done in many cities. The young people who go out to labor in these cities should be under the direction of experienced, consecrated leaders. Let the workers be provided with a good home, in which they may receive thorough training.”<sup>18</sup>

She saw with enthusiasm the participation of the youth in urban evangelism but didn’t think that this work should be carried out in an automatic way. The youth should become instruments of God in a free and voluntary way, considering that “God will make the young men of today heaven’s chosen repositories, to present before the people truth” only “if they will give themselves to Him.”<sup>19</sup>

White died in 1915, and it seems that she had a premonition that soon she would rest from her labors in the church. That year, she said something that should be taken very seriously by our senior leaders: “The standard-bearers are falling, and young men must be prepared to take the places left vacant, that the message may still be proclaimed. The aggressive warfare is to be extended. Those who have youth and strength are to go into the dark places of the earth, to call perishing souls to repentance.”<sup>20</sup>

#### NOTES

1. White, E., *Evangelism*, p. 432.2
2. White, E., Lt66-1901.7
3. White, E., *Messages to Young People*, p. 196.1
4. White, E. *Testimonies to the Church*, 7T 63.1
5. White, E., *Messages to Young People*, p. 197.2
6. White, E., *Gospel Workers* 1915, p. 208.1
7. Ibid
8. White, E., *Christian Service*, p. 34.1
9. White, E., *God’s Remnant Church*, p. 19.1
10. White, E., *Christian Service*, p. 30.5
11. White, E., *Christian Service*, p. 33.1
12. White, E., *Messages to Young People*, p. 204.1
13. White, E., *Messages to Young People*, p. 203.3
14. White, E. *Evangelism*, p. 478.1
15. Ibid
16. White, E. *Gospel Workers*, p. 208.1
17. White, E. *Messages to Young People*, 207.2
18. White, E. *Evangelism*, p. 108.3
19. White, E., *Evangelism*, p. 24.2
20. White, E., *Evangelism*, p. 23.3
21. White, E., *Evangelism*, p. 478.1

## ARTICLE

# DESIGNED FOR DANGER

BY GARY BLANCHARD

I have a theory that young people were designed to live dangerously! That's right I am convinced they were designed by God for danger! In fact, in Psalms 127:4 young people are described as arrows in the hands of a warrior.

Now we know, when a warrior shoots an arrow, he sends it into the enemy's front lines. Adventist young people were not designed to play it safe but were given the dangerous task of taking The Three Angels message to the world.

There are at least three strategic areas we need to carefully prepare our youth to go into. These areas are dangerous places, and our youth need to be well prepared by their parents, youth leaders, pastors and teachers to infiltrate.

### 10/40 WINDOW

The first is the 10/40 Window. 90% of those living between North Africa and Asia have never heard the "everlasting gospel" and will die "without God and without hope in this world" (Ephesians 2:12). Like the Waldensians of old our young missionaries need to be sent quickly but carefully into this vast mission field. They will often need to serve as architects, businessmen, doctors rather than pastors or evangelists. For more information on how to reach the 10/40 window go to [missiontothecities.org](http://missiontothecities.org). See also ADRA.org.

### SECULAR UNIVERSITIES

The second is the Secular Universities of the world! Like Daniel and his three friends at the University of Babylon, our young people need to be sent into the progressively liberal Universities of the world to speak up and stand out as followers of Jesus Christ. In every University there are future world leaders who like Nebuchadnezzar have hearts open to God and His Word and are looking for young men and women of integrity, prayer, wisdom, health and a knowledge of Bible prophecy. To learn how to send them effectively into the Universities go to [pcm.adventist.org](http://pcm.adventist.org). Also, be sure to subscribe to our GC produced Dialogue Magazine.

### CITIES

The third area to target is the cities of the world. In every city there are Rahabs who are open to the gospel. Individuals who may be captive to vice but filled with a deep respect for The Lord. These individuals, like the Woman at the Well are ready to not only defend the cause of God but to receive the gospel and gather in their friends and family. To learn more about OYiM be sure to go to [youth.adventist.org/OYIM](http://youth.adventist.org/OYIM). In fact, there is even an online University on this website where you can download pre-recorded training. See also the article titled "Every Union One Year in Mission."

### HOW TO REACH AND RETAIN OUR YOUTH?

At the General Conference Youth Department, we are often asked why so many Adventist young people are leaving the church and what can be done to win them back? In previous articles we highlighted the importance of passing on identity, mission and leadership to the younger generation (see article titled Pass it On) as well as forging close mentoring relationships as modeled by Jesus, Paul and Barnabas etc. But there is another factor that must be considered. If young people were designed for danger, why would they want to remain in a safe church community? Here is what this writer believes is one of our greatest systemic problems. We have become way too safe in regard to our Christianity and if we wish to attract the younger generation, we must rewild the Seventh-day Adventist Church around missions!

### REWILDING ADVENTISM

Rewilding is a fairly recent term which was coined after Yellowstone National Park brought the banished wolves back. For several decades they had banished the wolves only to discover that without them the deer population got so out of control that the park lost its beauty and variety of wild life. The deer ate all the grass, berries and tree seedlings and as a result the birds, rodents and bears left the park. Although wolves are predators, they are ironically also life givers by thinning out the deer population. You can google this amazing phenomenon and watch how rewilding Yellowstone National Park literally saved the park!

I believe there is a lesson in this for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The safer we choose to be in regard to our mission calling to all the world, the more we will experience an exodus of the younger generation. Why? Because they were designed for danger, not for the sake of danger, but for the cause of Christ and His Three Angels Message! If we would bring the danger back by equipping and sending our young people into the most dangerous places of the earth, I believe we would experience our own "rewilding" phenomena!

But wait does Jesus really want us to "rewild" the church? Does he really expect young people to live dangerously for Him? Absolutely! Sending young people into dangerous places, like arrows in the hands of warrior, is His idea! Notice the following words spoken by Christ himself to his young disciples, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

Of course, we must never send our youth stupidly into dangerous places. Jesus made that clear when he said we need to be "shrewd" about it. In other words, we must be strategic like any military leader who wants to defeat the enemy and not get defeated.

### REALITY CHECK

Let's be honest, every young person is eventually going to leave your home, church, school, club or youth program! This is healthy and part of God's plan. But the question we need to be asking

ourselves as leaders when they move out is "will they live dangerously for the world or for the cause of Jesus?" Either way they are going to live dangerously!

The second question and perhaps the most important one we as "warriors" need to be asking is "did we prepare our young arrows to live dangerously for the Lord?" "Did we prepare them to be wise as serpents and gentle as doves as they share the Three Angels Message among the wolves?"

### THREE ANGELS...WHAT?

So, what is The Three Angels' Message? I have asked this question around the world and been shocked to discover that our young people to a large degree have no idea! Now granted The Three Angels' Message is a deep study and can be preached without a shortage of material for months or more. In fact, if one goes through Revelation 14:6-14 they will discover that imbedded in these few verses are the core doctrines of our church (Sabbath, State of the Dead, Sanctuary, Salvation, Sanctification, Second Coming etc.) and each one alone can easily fill up a sermon series! So, the content of the message is unarguably vast!

But is it possible to simplify it in such a way as to galvanize our youth around it and inspire them to live dangerously to share it? I believe so, and I praise God for this simple summary of The Three Angels' message given to us by Ellen White. She wrote that we are to invite the lost world to receive "the righteousness of Christ, which is manifested in obedience to all the commandments of God" (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* p. 91). There it is, The Three Angels'

message is an invitation to be covered in Christ's righteousness and transformed by His grace! Somebody please say "Amen!" This clear understanding when accompanied by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit will set our young arrows on fire!

### OUR GREATEST NEED

If someone were to ask what is the greatest need in our church today? I would say leaders who lead from the front. Young and Old alike who are willing to live dangerously for Jesus and His Three Angels' Message! In fact, this in my opinion is the only way we can reach and retain the younger generation. Why? Because as one youth pastors put it "this generation is reached by inspiration."

Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the story of Jonathan and his armor bearer found in 1 Samuel 14. You will remember that King Saul was playing it safe, sitting under a tree. Meanwhile the Philistine armies were closing in and all his young adult warriors were leaving. They were either deserting to the enemy side or simply hiding in the caves. Saul the leader of Israel started with 3,000 young warriors but now had only 600. Why? Because this generation is reached by inspiration and there is nothing inspirational about a leader who lacks the courage to live dangerously for the Lord!

Thankfully there was an inspirational leader among them. His name was Prince Jonathan and he decided to live dangerously for the Lord. To make a long story filled with incredible lessons short, Jonathan attacked the Philistine garrison and God honored his faith and courage by putting their enemies in a panic. Then something wonderful happened. As Jon-

athan led from the front, all the young people who had left Saul's side rejoined and helped defeat the evil forces and expand God's kingdom!

Want to lose the young people we have in the church? Then keep playing it safe! Want to reach and retain them for the cause of God instead? Then lead from the front by living dangerously for the Lord yourself. Even if you only have one other person to join you in faithfully declaring the Three Angels message and living in obedience to God's commands!

It's also interesting that Jonathan did not spend any time trying to woo the defecting young adults back to the army of God. We spend millions trying to do this with little if any effect! Instead he understood that this generation is reached by inspiration and would only be attracted back if the cause was risky and stakes were high for God!

### THE BURNIE KUNU STORY

Perhaps you heard the heart crushing story of Bernie Kunu a young Seventh-day Adventist medical missionary who lost his life in Papua Indonesia on March 29, 2018. Apparently, it was a case of missing identity and the young man who was engaged to be married in January of 2019 was violently murdered and buried in shallow grave. This young man knew he was serving in a dangerous place, but deeply believed in the cause of Christ and was willing to lay down his life if needed be that others might be healed physically and spiritually!

What I find so fascinating about this story, is that following this tragic

event numerous young people have volunteered to live dangerously for the Lord in that mission field. But should we really be surprised? No way! After all the youth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were designed to live dangerously and we as a church will continue to have the privilege of their company if we understand this, create opportunities and utilize the ones we have to send them!

### CHALLENGE

I have challenged youth leaders around the world with this simple thought. When Jesus returns, and the great controversy is over, do you want Him to find you wearing a quiver full of arrows you have entertained and kept safe? Or when he returns do you want him to say "well done good and faithful servant" when he sees that you have emptied your quiver into the enemy's front lines? As one wise pastor put it, "It's not your seating capacity it's your sending capacity that matters." Youth Leaders, Pastors, Parents, teachers and Administrators now is the time to lead from the front, to be an inspiration to the younger generation and send them into the most dangerous places on earth!

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#### WEBSITE

URL: <https://youth.adventist.org>

#### Global Youth Day

URL: <https://www.globalyouthday.org>



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URL: <https://www.facebook.com/GCYouthMinistries>

**GIVE HIM 20 GROUP:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/325298914731269/members>

**GYD:** <https://www.facebook.com/GCYouth-MinistriesGYD>

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