



I WILL
GO

Adventist Youth Ministries
GENERAL CONFERENCE
2022



Adventist Youth Ministries
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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I WILL GO

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Dedicated to the Global Youth



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Introduction

I was thrilled when I heard that the General Conference had adopted the motto I WILL GO!

For the next five years, this motto will put the mission of the church front and center and keep us focused in these crazy times.



They say when zookeepers want to tame a lion, they use a stool with three legs. Apparently, the lion is distracted by the legs of the stool and unable to focus on attacking the zookeeper. In time, through the use of distraction the zookeeper can tame this powerful animal.

What a lesson there is in this!

The Devil like the zookeeper wants us distracted too. Why? So he can tame us and reduce our impact in this world. He knows if he can get Adventist distracted by politics, internal controversy, social unrest, conspiracy theories, financial concerns, pandemics etc. he can keep us from what matters most, our God ordered mission to take the gospel to all the world and make disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20). I believe, our new motto I WILL GO protects us from this taming effect and helps us keep the main thing the main thing!

FIVE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

As the General Conference Youth Department which includes the thirteen Division Youth Departments around the world, we now have the responsibility of answering the following six essential questions.

These questions will help us drill down on ways to practically implement the I WILL GO motto into Adventist youth ministry and help every young person join the church in mission!

- *Who will go?*
- *Why will they go?*
- *Where will they go?*
- *What will they go with?*
- *How will they go?*
- *When will they go?*

WHO WILL GO?

Regardless, of one's age, Jesus commands all to go! This is an intergenerational command to preach the gospel and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). Because of this, the Seventh-day Adventist Church rejects ageism and seeks to include young and old in its mission strategy (Acts 2:17-18). Our history as a people provides an amazing testimony to this. Our pioneers were a combination of teenagers, twenty and thirty-year olds and individuals well beyond middle age!

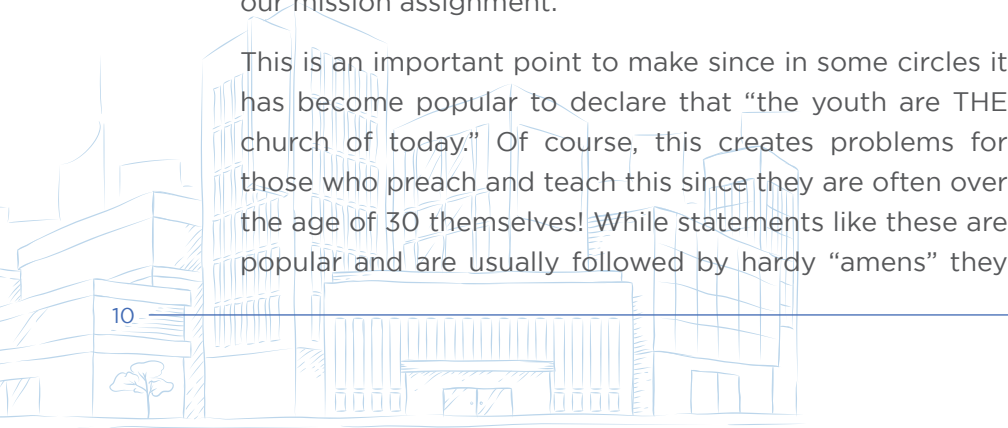
Historical Phenomena

In the book *Lessons from Battle Creek*, Delbert W. Baker makes this remarkable statement:

“God used the combination of the younger and older members working together to give the movement fresh energy, ideas and creativity... Age diversity was a historical phenomena that gave the Adventist movement a strong start. If replicated, the authentic combination of older and younger members working together will once again be the catalyst as we near the end of time” (82).

I love that quote, don't you? It reminds us that we are a “historical phenomena” as a church because of our refusal to bow to ageism and to instead include all generations in our mission assignment.

This is an important point to make since in some circles it has become popular to declare that “the youth are THE church of today.” Of course, this creates problems for those who preach and teach this since they are often over the age of 30 themselves! While statements like these are popular and are usually followed by hardy “amens” they





actually confuse the younger generation and have a belittling effect on the older generation. I heard one young man put it like this “If we are the church of today why is the older generation still leading and preaching to us?”

Youth are not THE Church

But the truth is that young people makeup an important PART of the church of today, but they are not THE Church of today! They still desperately need and even want the experience, wisdom and leadership of the older generation. Especially an older generation that follows in the footsteps of Moses, Elijah, Barnabas, Paul and even Jesus who passed on leadership to the younger generation but did not dump it on them! These exceptional youth leaders patiently walked the younger generation through the stages of observation (watch me do ministry), participation (join me as I do ministry) and activation (start your own ministry).

Having said all this, God has uniquely called our youth and young adults to the frontlines of His work. “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!” (Counsels to Teachers, Parents, and Students, p. 555). Our Adventurers, Pathfinders, Master Guides, Ambassadors, youth and Public Campus Ministry students are commanded by God to go into all the world!

WHY WILL THEY GO?

This question is essential in helping us discover what really motivates young people to go into all the world for Jesus. This motivation is embedded in our Adventist Youth Motto taken from 2 Corinthians 5:14 which says, “The love of Christ compels me.” This clearly answers the question “why will they go?” God desires all his creatures to serve and obey him out of love but notice it is not our love for

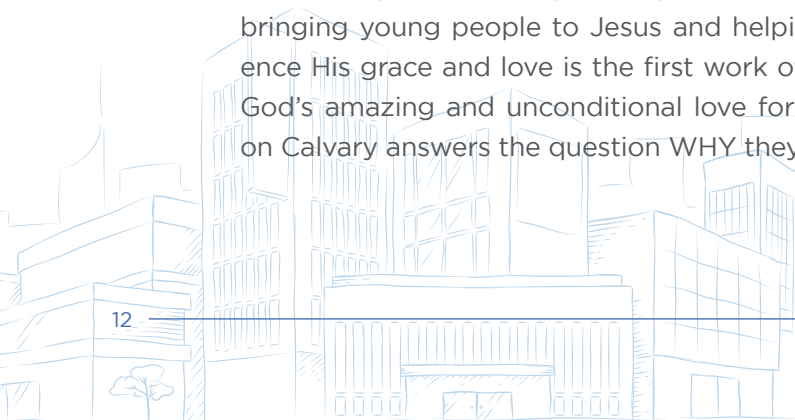
God that motivates us, but His love for us (you might want to read that again).

Because He first loved me

In 1 John 4:19 the Bible says, “we love God because He first loved us.” And where did God display his love most powerfully for us? On the cross of course! “And love consists of this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10). When young people have been taught the gospel and have experienced the grace of the Lord Jesus for themselves, they are then motivated to go as His missionaries! Ellen White put it like this “No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart” (Steps to Christ, p. 78).

The apostle John understood this very well. Six times in his gospel he referred to himself as the “disciple whom Jesus loved.” Now at first glance one might accuse John of being boastful and yes, he is boasting but not about his love for God but about God’s profound love for Him! John was simply letting us know that he was deeply loved by the Lord and this love was compelling him to go into all the world. Interestingly, of the twelve disciples it seems John was the only one that followed Christ to calvary!

Experiencing the contagious love of God is also what moves Adventist youth to do great exploits for Him! This is why bringing young people to Jesus and helping them experience His grace and love is the first work of youth ministry! God’s amazing and unconditional love for them displayed on Calvary answers the question WHY they will go!





WHERE WILL THEY GO?

As we show and tell the gospel to the younger generation, they will begin to hear the “call of the wild.” They will begin to hear God calling them to mission service. This calling may be to go across the street, or it may be to go across the sea. The role of youth ministry then is to help young people not only experience the love of God but to hear and obey God’s calling. Like priest Eli in 1 Samuel chapter 3, youth leaders are to help the Samuels under their care decipher God’s voice and follow His leading! Interestingly, after helping Samuel recognize God’s calling, Eli held him accountable to following it the next day! As youth leaders this is our dual function as well. When a young person moved by the grace of God wants to be a missionary, it is paramount that his/her youth leader quickly work to make that calling a reality.

Cities, Universities, 10/40 Window and “Digital Babylon”

There are at least four areas we at the General Conference Youth Department feel passionately about reaching. We are praying that God will raise up young people who will go reach the *cities* (Matthew 9:35-38), *Universities* (Daniel 1:4-6) and unreached areas between North Africa and Asia (*10/40 window*) where 90% of the population has never heard the gospel (Romans 15:20). It is also becoming more and more apparent to youth leaders around the world that digital missionaries are also greatly needed. An entire mission field has been opening up to us in social media and God is calling for digital missionaries! Tech savvy and Spirit-filled youth are being called to go and effectively reach souls living in what some are calling “*digital Babylon*” (Faith for Exiles, David Kinnaman and Mark Mattlock, p. 19).

Arrows in a Warrior's Hand

In Psalms 127:4 the Bible describes our youth as "...arrows in the hands of a warrior..." In other words, they were designed by God to live dangerously and to be sent into the enemy's frontlines. Jesus affirmed this when he said 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). Yes, our young people are to go strategically not stupidly into the unreached places of the earth, but they are to go!

We as youth leaders must motivate and mobilize our young armies to fly like arrows toward these targets. In fact, young people are naturally attracted to leaders who lead dangerously for the cause of Christ. Need proof? Take a few minutes to read the epic story of Jonathan and the effects his courageous leadership had not only on his armor bearer but on all the young Israelite soldiers who were either hiding in the caves or had defected to the enemy side (1 Samuel 14). One pastor put it like this, "this generation is reached by inspiration" and he is right. Leaders who courageously stand up and speak out for Jesus are attractive to this generation.

Dear youth leader, you are God's archers and what matters more than your seating capacity is your capacity to effectively send the younger generation! When the Lord of all the earth returns, may He find your quiver empty of arrows, but your enemy filled and defeated by them!

WHAT WILL THEY GO WITH?

"The Advent Message to all the world in my generation" is our official Adventist Youth Ministries aim! Seventh-day Adventist are not better than other Christians, but we have been given a greater responsibility. Seventh-day Adventist are a denomination of destiny called to give the world a



specific and urgent message. This message is the Three Angels Message described in Revelation 14 and it is to be taken quickly to all the world before Jesus returns (Revelation 14:14, Matthew 24:14).

It's 3AM!

To simplify it, this message uplifts Jesus and His righteousness which is given to us by faith. Ellen White describes it as an invitational message that calls the world “to receive the righteousness of Christ which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God” (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 91-92). The Three Angel's Message also calls people out of worldly confusion (Babylon) to the clarity of God's Word and points searching souls to God's end time people (the Church), who are patiently waiting for His return, keeping all His commandments and placing their trust in Christ and His finished work on Calvary (Revelation 14:12).

Social Justice

This amazing message also highlights a God that will one day execute justice and right all wrongs. Violence, racism, hatred and those who practice them will one day be no more. Even now, since 1844, God is judging, and he does so justly. Scripture is calling repentant hearts to “Fear God and give him glory for the hour of His judgment is come...” (Revelation 14:7). All around the world young people are hungry for this message! As they stand up and speak out in regard to social justice, they need to know that justice is coming with the soon return of Jesus who is The Judge (John 5:22). This is one reason why I believe the Three Angels Message is the most relevant message of our time! By the way, since the Three Angel's message is for “every nation, kindred, tongue and people,” it's impossible to be a racist and a true Adventist at the same time!

Ok to be SDA

It is the profound belief of the General Conference Youth Department that our young people are to be the wings of this Three Angels Message! They are called to travel at supersonic speed and when they do “...HOW SOON the message of a crucified and risen and soon coming savior might be carried to the whole world (Counsel to Teachers, Parents and Students, p. 555). Yes! Our youth are the wings of the Three Angels Message! No one should clip their “wings,” either by not teaching it or by treating it with contempt. The younger generation needs to know that they are part of a denomination of destiny and its more than “Ok to be SDA!”

HOW WILL THEY GO?

Every Adventist young person who knows Jesus as their Lord and Savior, is a missionary and should be prepared for their mission in this world. This does not mean that every young person is called to be a pastor or an “evangelist” in the traditional sense but all of them regardless of their occupation, are to be missionaries for Christ (Acts 1:8). A missionary is simply someone sent on a mission for God.

Toxic missionaries

Unfortunately, Jesus warned that some missionaries are toxic and unsafe to send. In Matthew 23:15 Jesus said “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.” Ironically The scribes and the Pharisees were out doing “missionary work” but they had rejected Jesus, His grace and salvation. Imagine the type of disciples they were making—insecure, fearful, legalistic, judgmental, unconverted etc. It is very important that we take the time to “rightly train” our young people for their calling as gospel



missionaries. There are three experiences that qualify young people for mission service.

Our young people need to be...

Redeemed—Every Adventist young person needs to know that they are redeemed (purchased) by the blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 5:13). Without this personal experience with the life transforming grace of God, our youth really have nothing redemptive to share with the world! They are not really compelled by His love like the apostle John was. Adventist doctrines point to Jesus and are windows into the gospel, to the unredeemed, but sometimes they sadly become substitutes for Jesus and a mythical stairway to heaven. The apostle John made it clear that Jesus IS the stairway to heaven (John 1:51) and to know him as your Savior is life eternal (John 17:3). While our doctrines provide important safeguards from deception and highlight what it means to live in a God honoring way, they are also beautiful snapshots of Jesus our Lord and Savior! Our young people need to know our doctrines and experience the redemptive message found in each.

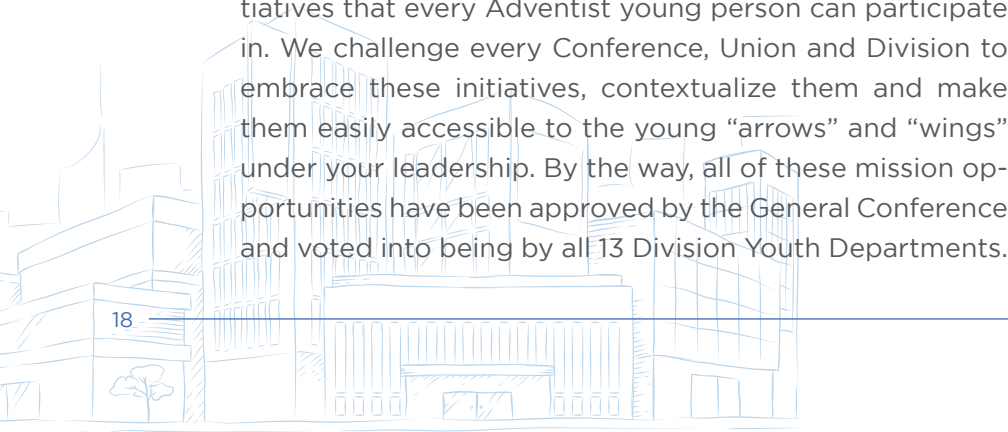
Revived—Every Adventist young person is called to “be” a Spirit-filled witness for Jesus (Acts 1:8). This is the supernatural result of prayer and personal Bible study. This also includes the study of Spirit of Prophecy. In Ezekiel 37 we read a vision of a valley filled with the bones of young people. We know this because these bones belonged to a massive army that had perished there. Even today, young people make up the largest percentage of soldiers in any battle. But notice when the Spirit of God was poured out on them, they came to life and became an “exceeding great army” (10). What an encouragement to our youth and youth leaders! What a vision of what will happen when our youth experience spiritual revival! As youth leaders, we must lead them there!

Rightly Trained—Every Adventist young person should get the training, resources, mentoring and opportunities they need to make an impact for Jesus in their local communities and world. They need to be trained in apologetics (creation vs evolution), evangelism (public and personal), church planting, social media outreach etc. Providing them with global and local mission opportunities should be a big part of the training they receive at congresses, camporees, rallies etc. Infrastructure should also be in place so that young people can be incorporated into mission initiatives right away. Here is where we must keep from “dropping the ball.” If we tell our young people about the great initiatives we have locally and globally but do not have simple functional structures in place to help them actually participate, we demoralize them and make it much more difficult to inspire them in the future.

Remember it’s not your seating capacity at congresses, rallies, club meetings and youth groups but your sending capacity that matters most. Who cares if you have a large, young and well trained army if it never steps on the battlefield and engages the enemy in battle. Some have become experts at inspiring and even rightly training Adventist youth but when it comes to actually involving them in missions to the cities, universities, digital Babylon or the 10/40 Window they fall short.

Global Mission Initiatives

Thankfully we have the following outstanding mission initiatives that every Adventist young person can participate in. We challenge every Conference, Union and Division to embrace these initiatives, contextualize them and make them easily accessible to the young “arrows” and “wings” under your leadership. By the way, all of these mission opportunities have been approved by the General Conference and voted into being by all 13 Division Youth Departments.





In other words, they are legit and have the full support of our global youth community.

- Global Youth Day
- Total Youth Evangelism
- Mission Caleb
- Public Campus Ministries
- One Year in Mission

Interestingly, each of these initiatives in the order above represent a deepening level of commitment to mission service. You can learn more about these initiatives by going to gcyouthministries.org or by checking out your Division Youth Department's website. Here is a very brief description of each.

Global Youth Day

Happens one day a year (3rd Sabbath in March). Young people are encouraged to "Be the Sermon" in their local communities. This is usually a group activity and is designed to encourage a lifestyle of being "the hands and feet of Jesus."

Total Youth Evangelism

Young people hold their own 1-2 week evangelistic series either in their local church, community, home, dorm, school or online. They do this in teams anytime during the year but always in collaboration with their local church.

Mission Caleb

This "Spring Break" alternative brings young people together throughout their conference, union or division to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of people living in a particular community. This initiative often includes

components of both Global Youth Day and Total Youth Evangelism.

Public Campus Ministries

Some estimate that 90% of Adventist Youth attend secular universities so this ministry provides care and comradely for them. Also, PCM is designed to be a platform from which our students can minister to their fellow colleagues who do not know Jesus, or His final message found in Revelation 14.

One Year in Mission

OYiM is for young people who want to dedicate an entire year of their life either after High School or College to join other young people in reaching a city for Jesus with their gifts, talents and skills. Through this ministry churches are often planted, and local Adventist congregations revived!

WHEN WILL THEY GO?

Young people ages 4-30 who have been stirred by the Gospel and moved by The Holy Spirit should start their mission service right away...NOW! Even if they have not yet been baptized (because they are too young) they should be given work to do in harmony with their maturity, talents, interest, parental permission and Spiritual gifts. Youth leaders must have a strategy that accommodates these young arrows and quickly provides training and opportunities for them. The fact is, that young people are often called randomly by the Lord and not all at the same time. Youth leaders need to discern this calling and help their young missionary obey it immediately. What a testimony to a youth leader's gospel ministry when young people are not only attracted to Jesus as a result but inspired to make him known to others!

CONCLUSION

Satan will never be able to tame the Seventh-day Adventist Church IF we keep our focus on the great mission we've been given. What a wonderful opportunity we have to lead the younger generation in this great work. It is now a fact that 51% of this world's population is 25 and under.

This means that no matter your position in the church, you must be a youth leader! In other words, you cannot pass this responsibility on to anyone else unless you have decided to greatly limit your ministry. Like Joshua you are called to lead the younger generation across the Jordan and into this fallen and lost world. Yes, there will be massive walls, powerful giants, challenges, obstacles and enemies at every turn, but with Jesus as our commander, we know the war is already won! The question remains, will we courageously and faithfully lead the younger generation? Youth Leader, will you, with the gospel sword drawn, be the first to shout, "I WILL GO?"

Gary Blanchard
Youth Director
General Conference





Prologue

The book you have in your hands is of great significance. Since it emphasizes the relevance to accept God's call to our young people, as Seventh-day Adventists, to be messengers of mercy, eternal gospel end-times representatives.



Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has formally dispatched thousands of missionaries throughout her history, so many young people, men and women, who were ready to sacrifice their lives in order to take the love of God to others, there is still a need for missionaries in many places of the world. Our mission is still unfinished.

Today, as in the past, God wants to capture our attention to reveal himself to us and commission us for the fulfillment of His Mission. We must all be involved in the fulfillment of it, but God has a special interest in the strength of youth. He wants all the Youth to be involved in proclaiming the eternal gospel. Ellen White said, “Were every one of you a living missionary, the message for this time would speedily be proclaimed in all countries, to every people and nation and tongue” (Testimonies for the Church, 6:438).

Today, as in the past He did with Isaiah, God wants to capture your attention, reveal himself to you, and purify your life so that you are a witness of his greatness and mercy. When the Lord said, “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Isaiah answered, “Here am I! Send me.”

Our grateful reaction to God’s grace must be the decision to serve Him, as Isaiah did. To serve God is not a mandatory action. We must serve Him because He saved us. Because only when we do so, with gratitude, is it that we can serve Him with joy, and with the willingness to go wherever He sends us.

Have you heard the Steve Green song “I Will Go”? I have heard it many times and I love it. Let me share with you some of its phrases.

The first sentence says:

“Give me ears to hear Your Spirit

Give me feet to follow through

Give me hands to touch the hurting And the faith to follow
You.”

As I ponder on this phrase, it makes me think about the importance of prayer for the Holy spirit, the only One who can open our ears to hear the Lord’s Called, and who is able to enable us with the kind of faith that is ready to follow Jesus’ example to touch the hurting.

God is calling young men and women to give Him the strength of their youth to reach the world with the three angels’ message, to save others from sin, by leading them to Jesus’ feet. Yes, we all need to ask God, as Steve Green song says: “Give me grace to be a servant, give me mercy for the lost, give me passion for Your glory, give me passion for the cross.” But I really believe that youth, especially, has been chosen by God to aid in the advancement of His cause in these last days.

The last sentence of this song says,

“I’ll let go of my ambition

Cut the roots that run too deep

I will learn to give away

What I cannot really keep.”

Many times, our daily life circumstances or our personal ambitions can block our vision of God. But often, God finds the way and the moment to interrupt the routine of our ordinary days, and when he wants to capture our attention, he does it without being hindered by nothing. We need to pray and ask the Lord, with Steve Green words, “Help me see with eyes of faith. Give me strength to run this race.”

The phrase that serves as the chorus of this song is really significant. It says:

“And I will go where there are no easy roads



Leave the comforts that I know

I will go and let this journey be my home

I will go.

I will go Lord where Your glory is unknown

I will live for You alone

I will go because my life is not my own

I will go”

The material in this book is intended to inspire our youth to discover and develop their Seventh-day Adventist identity as messengers of mercy and eternal gospel end-times representatives. Each theme, in each chapter of this book, seeks to motivate you to get involved in the fulfillment of the mission that God has entrusted to us. It is the intention of the authors of this book to pave the way for the exercise of responsible and helpful youth leadership, who may be fully committed to continuing to expand the kingdom of God, with the certainty that Christ is coming soon.

Young people started the Adventist movement, and young people shall finish the work. We pray that God may help our young people to see beyond the present circumstances. That they, like Isaiah, may grasp the vision of God. That by hearing the call of God “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” They can answer, “Here am I! Send me.” It is our prayer that this volume may fulfill its purpose in your life, and that you are ready to say the Lord, I will Go.

With brotherly love,



Abner De los Santos

*GC Vice-President,
Youth Department Adviser*



Designed for Danger

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. 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.

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. 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? I believe we need to highlight the importance of passing on identity, mission and leadership to the younger generation 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 wildlife. 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 a 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 pastor 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 Jonathan 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 a 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!

“

QUOTE

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!

”



The Key Holder

Saneliso Moyo

As I drove to the venue of the meeting, one thought kept going through my mind, “How will you get these papers to him?” You see my boss had requested I drop off some documents that were needed for the executive meeting that takes place twice a year.



I always wondered what they discussed in these meetings. The only thing I was sure of was that I was not supposed to be in there. Forget the fact that I knew I was just doing my job. My worry was those few eyes that would look at me with slight disapproval saying, “What is she doing in here?”

As I raised my handbrake, I found myself muttering, “Ok, here it goes.” When I got to the entrance, my first instinct was to peep through the glass panels that were on the side. I hoped that somebody was standing close by so that they would notice me and step out. Nothing. “Well, he’s waiting so you better go in,” I thought. Clutching the box with one hand, I adjusted my spectacles and prepared to make a spectacle of myself. Pulling down the door handle I switched my smile to, “Look I’m just dropping these off and will be out of here... ok!”

Fortunately, or unfortunately, as I stepped in I heard, “Let’s pray.” They were about to break for lunch. I quickly made a mental note of where I had spotted my boss sitting so that I would not lose track of him when they all came out. “Amen.” I quickly positioned myself as tightly to the wall as I possibly could, while standing on my tiptoes to see my boss. “Sany, it’s good to see you,” someone said. Then those who knew me by my home name, “Hawu Mamo, kanti lawe ulapha?” (Literally translated to, “Mamo, you are also here?”) “Yes, yes I just need to give these documents to my boss or one of the financial officers,” I said as I shook hands, and hugged one or two people. To be fair I think most, well maybe most is pushing it, I think some of them genuinely liked me. Then my favorite, “Sanini, how are you my daughter?” He was a gentleman from Angola, and I loved the way he took his time when speaking. Out of the corner of my eye I could see my boss getting closer to me, but somebody had beat him to it. One of the officers. He too was from Zimbabwe, my home country, so he called me by the name that my parents use when all is

well. “Unjani Mamo?” (How are you Mamo?) “Ngiyaphila.” (I am fine.). “One day you will also sit in here.” I managed an awkward smile.

I was 25 years old at that time. Having started serving in the church when I was 21, I was actually surprised that I was still here. That wasn’t the plan. The plan was after about 2 years or so I would go back to school, full time. But the bug caught. I actually liked working in this organization. I felt at peace. Of course, there were a few unpleasant moments but overall, this was home. Being a pastor’s kid, I was familiar with the lingo and culture. There was no way I could go elsewhere. I loved my work and I played the behind-the-scenes role quite well. But this is the catch, when you play behind-the-scenes long enough, at some point you start wishing your behind-the-scenes role was the type of position that actually had a significant impact on day to day activities. The type that actually influenced and participated in decision making. I knew I had brilliant ideas and could vouch for it for the simple reason that when I moved to a different post in what was considered a “promotion,” a significant difference could be seen in that department. Creative space was my niche. I loved it and some would say I lived for it.

When it came time to share what the future of that particular department was and to discuss the budget, I was not invited to the table. This is how the conversation usually went.

“Just give us the points and we will share them with the board.”

“But how are you able to talk about something you are not actively involved in? Don’t you find it strange that I am not able to participate in a meeting that discusses my job description—to set a budget that maps a way forward for the following year?”



“I’m not the one who decides who attends these committees.”

“I understand that, I just feel that I... it’s ok I understand.” I was 27 years old.

Then came the catch phrase, “Give them the keys.” An evangelistic endeavor aimed at giving the youth the keys in mission and leadership. The memo went out but that is all it was, a memo. Each time I sat down with some young people in various countries, the feeling was the same. They too did not feel like they belonged. They too did not feel like they had a place in this church. I dare not generalize and say this is how they ALL felt, but I can confidently state that, more often than not, we shared the same views.

I am now 30 years old. So, Mr. President, Executive Officers, Departmental Directors, Youth Directors, Church Pastors, Church Elders, all protocol is observed. I appreciate the fact that I have had the chance to serve at the local church in the Pathfinder department. I appreciate the fact that I have had the chance to serve in my college church as a deaconess and head deaconess. I appreciate the chance that I have had an opportunity to serve as a College Youth Council President. I appreciate the fact that my brain has been part of the process that creates Christian content for viewers all over the world. I appreciate the fact that I have been given all these opportunities. But why do I still get the sinking feeling that there is a lack of trust between us?

I’m a millennial and, trust me, we are not as bad as they say. We are not all self-absorbed. We are not all rude. We do not all have a sense of entitlement. We do not all lack work ethic. We are not all just interested in living artificially on social media and on and on and on. This is the reality. We want the same things that you want for this church organization. We may have different ways of expressing this and have different ways to achieve the end result but believe

me, we love this church as much as you do. How could we not? This is all we know.

If you look close enough this is what you will see.

AGE IS NOTHING BUT A NUMBER

We believe that age is nothing but a number simply because we take the following advice literally, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12, NIV). We do not believe that leading or being entrusted with a task has anything to do with age. We rush to any place that will give us the chance to actively participate in the forefront. Do not assume that our age means we lack wisdom because we have been paying attention to everything that you taught us. Show us that you believe in your own teachings and trust us enough to know it was not in vain. Don’t give us a title while holding on to the actual job at hand.

COME LET US REASON TOGETHER

We do not believe in the “because I said so” stance. If you reason with us, you will find that most of the time we understand and once in a while you may find that you may have been wrong as well. Talk to us as you would a fellow adult because, in reality, we are actually adults who thrive on open conversation.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

We don’t always come forward with our many gifts and talents—sometimes for fear of being rejected. Have an eye that spots such individuals and help them up the steps until they are able to voluntarily participate and initiate. We may not always be aware of our spiritual gifts and sometimes



we are unsure. Identify these gifts. Reaffirm us. Help us to grow them.

RECOGNIZE THAT “WE CAN!”

Outside the church, at the local level, and as an organization some of us actually own companies, we are heads of departments, we spear head projects and see them to full completion. The corporate world and government believes in us and encourages us by creating programs that will ensure we grow in the different fields we have chosen. Given the chance, we believe this expertise would bring a decent level of valuable contribution to the church, while impacting the community directly.

IT’S OK NOT TO KNOW

When you do not know, it’s ok to say, “I don’t know.” We don’t expect you to have all the answers, but the moment you stray from the truth, we see through it and accepting anything you say after that becomes a challenge. We are big on being honest and frank.

TRANSPARENCY IS NOT OVERRATED

Transparency will always be key. We fail to understand why items that are public knowledge should be a kept secret to church members. While we respect the due processes of the organization, we would like to be privy to information that actually concerns us and needs our attention. For example, in a church business meeting, when we ask, “What happened to the funds that we have been collecting for church building over the last 10 years?” the last answer we expect in return is, “The committee will look into it.”

SOCIAL MEDIA IS AS CHRISTIAN AS YOU MAKE IT

We do not believe that social media and the use of it is all evil. It can be used for various projects within the church. When our leaders are open to it and make an effort to use it, we can hardly wait to share that information. So please go ahead and tell us about that new project, that upcoming camp, and while you're at it feel free to share a sermon or words of encouragement on various social media platforms. We believe that we can flood the internet with positive change and find individuals who are willing to create and share content. Challenge us by coming up with projects that need to be developed or shared on public forums and we will participate. We are capable of making anything we feel connected to trends. The key is to involve us.

THOU SHALT BE NICE TO US

Don't completely ignore us at the mall and still expect a wide smile when you say "Happy Sabbath" by the door after service. We appreciate real relationships and flee from pretense. Make an effort to have authentic relationships with the millennials, be it as a group or as individuals. Show us that you actually care about our lives. Show us that you are open to listening and advising. When you ask, "How are you?", make an effort to actually wait for the full answer. For us, it's all about connecting.

WE ARE MORE THAN CAPABLE

Youth can actually lead youth. As much as we still acknowledge the need for someone older for the sake of guidance and wisdom that comes with age, we would love to get in a space where we see our peers also leading us. "Why", you may ask. Well, millennials tend to follow and want to emulate those who are doing well in their age range as we find this inspiring. It's a mentality of "if he/she can do it, so



can I.” Believe it or not most times we actually give each other sound advice. In short, perhaps it’s time to accept that church departments at any level could benefit from incorporating millennials into leadership roles.

WE HAVE A VOICE

We want to make a difference and do not feel that we can adequately do so from the outside. We believe that “If you do not have a seat at the table, you’re probably on the menu,” and NO, we do not want to be on the menu. We want to lend our voices and give input towards the growth of this church. We want to get first-hand information and learn where necessary. We want to feel like we are part of the change and make a difference no matter how small it may be.

INTENTIONAL MENTORSHIP

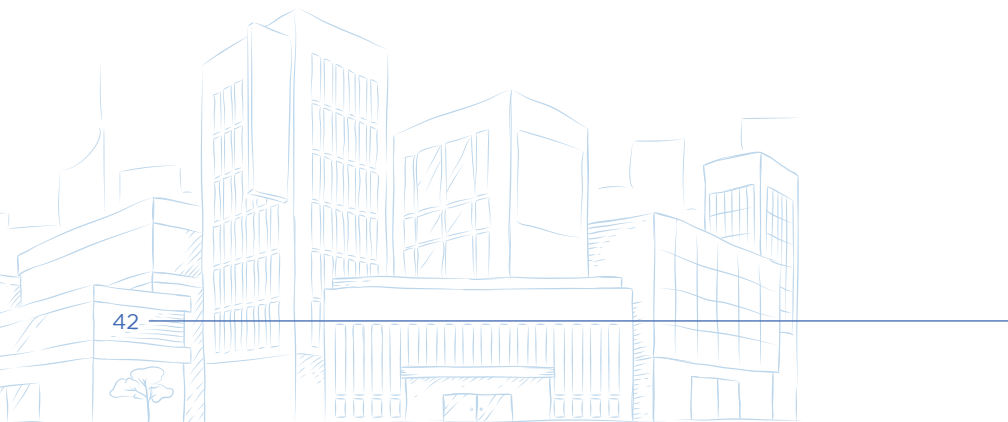
If indeed we are to receive the keys at some point in time, then surely, we need to be mentored and prepared for those roles. Nobody is born a deacon or deaconess, nobody is born an elder, nobody is born a youth leader. By now you get where I am going with this. Sometimes learning on the job can prove to be quite disastrous. Prepare us for these roles in anticipation of our willingness to serve in various capacities. Have intentional meetings just for this purpose and plan to assign actual mentors to groups or individuals. We do want to learn but don’t always know how to approach the leaders that we look up to. Open that door and watch how many will walk through it.

SIMPLY ASK

Make time, be it annually or after every five years, to sit down in an organized meeting and ask us what we feel or think. Perhaps there are instances where indeed we

are wrong. Perhaps you have something to share that you feel would help us see things differently. Perhaps you will learn something from us as well. If small families benefit from talking things over, imagine what would happen if the church at large applied the same principle. There is always so much to learn, but we will never know until that line of communication is opened. Let's talk.

I'm 30 years old and now have a "boss" who was willing to "Give Me The Keys" after I had been working with the key holder for close to a decade. He lost nothing because we share the same key with one purpose, to spread the gospel to every kindred and nation. Isn't that what it's all about? Try it. You have absolutely nothing to lose but everything to gain because "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!" (Education, p. 271.2)







Mentors for the New Generations

Carlos Campitelli

Every generation has
its own characteristics
but having someone to
follow is a need of all
people in every time
and place.



I was born in an Adventist home. Actually, I represent the sixth generation of Adventists in my family. It is because of that history, and because I'm a church leader, I often think about today's Adventism. Whenever I do that, my mind goes straight to the stories I used to hear from my ancestors and the experiences I had as a child, teenager, and young adult at church. In that "movie" that crosses my mind, there is a strong memory of the impact that my leaders – pastors, elders, and adult members – had on my development.

Their influence was really significant, and it will not vanish. How could I forget some of them who helped us, on Sundays afternoon, to clean and paint the youth center at church, or those who played volleyball or ping pong with us every Saturday night? I acknowledge those who offered me a friendly word at the right time and that tight hug that made me feel unique and special. How could I forget to thank those pastors and elders who walked beside the Pathfinder Club, who were always, always with us at camp meetings or those who visited our home during difficult times?

I need to be honest and say that of all the sermons I heard during that time, I only remember one: the one where an elder asked me to help him with the illustration of the message. On the other hand, I remember the support, the laughter and the counsels the leaders gave me. I felt they trusted us and that there was always someone to remind the church committee of our importance.

Why am I sharing these experiences with you? In order to highlight that, even though every generation has its own characteristics, the youth in every generation seem to share similar needs. A church that takes care of the younger members is a community that is involved in the salvation of the new generations.

STOP AND LISTEN

I believe that much can be done for the discipleship of the new generations with a simple, but hard attitude: to listen more to those we want to mentor. In a general way, adults presuppose they know what the youth want, think and what their vision of the church is. However, we are fooling ourselves if we think that way. I invite you, someone who is looking with concern, to dedicate more time to listen to the new generations and to build a healthy dialogue with the youth.

At the South American church headquarters in Brasilia, Brazil, we have been doing that for a couple of months. We invited some young representatives from different regions of our subcontinent to talk openly about some topics such as church relevance and the relationship between the youth and the leaders. Here are some of the ideas they presented:

1. They consider that the church is relevant if it takes care of them. This means a genuine interest for the youth and the construction of a friendly environment. In their opinion, evangelism and baptisms are the consequences of that relevant process.
2. They see the church as an updated institution that uses technology, but they also understand that is secondary. What they expect the most is to be heard, to have a place for dialogue and to be part of a community that works as a discipleship network.
3. In terms of their relationship with the leadership, they consider that the influence of a church pastor or elder is proportional to their closeness and friendship with the people they are leading.
4. They also believe that the church tends to emphasize the use of Christ's method in evangelism—which

involves mingling, meeting the needs and gaining people's confidence—but that it forgets about it when it comes to dealing with its own members.

5. The youth expect that adult members do not limit their creativity or underestimate the abilities of the youngest members; they also want the members to have coherence between what they say and what they do. They also expect to be considered as allies in the process of turning the church into a warmer, more united and more relevant place for the community.

INDIVIDUAL TASK

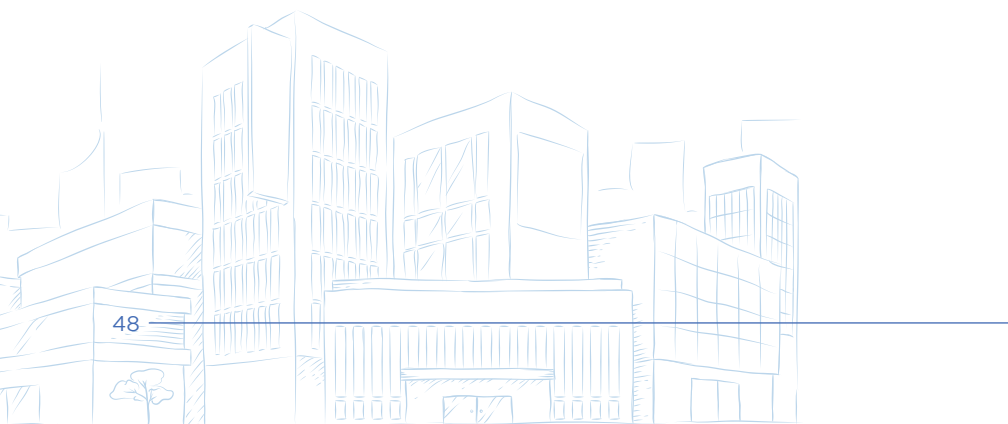
Every time I analyze this *feedback*, I always think about how healthy it would be if we could build a dialogue culture with the youth. It would be good for them, for us, and for the whole church. As that dialogue matures, it is necessary to change thoughts into actions and decisions that may be crucial in favor of the generations that await their place and that have so much to offer. We are in front of a challenge and an opportunity that can encourage growth for everyone.

High levels of apostasy among the youth are a reality in the Adventist context all around the world. A global survey carried out by the church showed that the main cause for leaving the Adventist Church is the lack of friends to support the spiritual journey (41%). The next two main reasons have to do with relationships as well. For me, that indicator shows what needs to be the emphasis in our work to teenagers and youth.

To do so, the discipleship towards the new generations cannot be addressed as a merely institutional task. It is a collective church challenge, but it goes even further than that: it is a personal and individual responsibility. Discipleship is handmade and personal. It cannot be taken as a

package, or as a law or a document. It involves few people. I have experienced that with the discipleship of a young boy in particular. I promised God I would take care of that teenager, that I would love him and share my spiritual experiences with him. I encourage you to do the same on your scope of influence.

I believe that the best characteristic of a disciple is love (John 13:35). And when that gift of God is manifested in someone's life, it reaches others. For that reason, discipleship to new generations will only be effective when our love for children, teenagers, and the youth is bigger than our own interests. I would be very happy if someday in the future the youth look back in time and remember the positive influence I had on them. What about you?







The Gospel in Genesis 3: The Foundation of Soul-Winning

Petronio M. Genebago



When one talks about the gospel, the golden text of John 3:16 comes to mind. It is probably the most memorized text of the Bible from children to adult in Christian churches and families.

The reason may be because this text contains the love of God expressed in giving His begotten Son to save the world and “that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” However, the same love was expressed in Genesis 3 as soon as Adam and Eve sinned.

Genesis 3, which is a narrative genre,¹ is crucial to one’s understanding of the Bible as a whole. Sufficient textual support² contradicts that this chapter is a myth or a legend.³ If the gospels are foundational to the understanding of the entire NT; and the Pentateuch is foundational to the understanding of not only the Old Testament but the entire Bible;⁴ Genesis 3, therefore, is foundational to the understanding not only of the gospel in the Scriptures but of the “painful stories of lives ruined as a result of the fall.”⁵ W.H. Griffith Thomas emphasized, “it is hardly too much to say that this chapter is the pivot of the Bible, for if we take it away the rest of Scripture becomes meaningless.”⁶ David Atkinson recognizes that the gospel begins in this chapter. He said, “it is to the gospel we must turn once more—a

- 1 Key to understanding this chapter is to know its genre, form and style. According to Afolarin Olutunde Ojewole, “Genesis 3 is of a narrative genre cast into numerous direct speeches and addresses. The writing is presented in a manner like historical record of literal events. The stories of the origin of the cosmos and humanity are present ‘genealogically.’ Genesis 1-2:4 contains the history/genealogy of heaven and earth, while that of Adam is in Genesis 2:5-5:2.” See Afolarin Olutunde Ojewole, “The Seed in Genesis 3:15: An Exegetical and Intertextual Study” (PhD dissertation, Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2002), 75-76.
- 2 Although some scholars consider this chapter as myth or legend, the following verses from the New Testament support the historicity of Genesis 1-11: Matthew 19:4-5; 24:37-39; Mark 10:6; Luke 3:38; 17:26-27; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 6:16; 11:8-9, 12; 15:21-22, 45; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:31; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:4-6; James 3:9; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11, 14; and Revelation 14:7. See Ojewole, “The Seed,” 75-77.
- 3 Brevard S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, Studies in Biblical Theology, 27 (London: SCM, 1962), 31-50.
- 4 Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 18.
- 5 Ronald A. Beers, ed., *Life Application Study Bible*, New International Version (Grand Rapids: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2005), 11.
- 6 W. H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), 46.

gospel story which begins, to be sure, here in Genesis, but which comes to its fullness in Christ.”⁷

In this article, I will present *why the gospel is needed* in the contexts of the fall and its consequences, *how the gospel is acted* revealed in the response of man and God to the sin problem, and *expose the gospel as promised and illustrated* by God Himself in Genesis 3, which shows that “as soon there was sin there was a Saviour.”⁸ Frank Breaden expressed it in this manner, “on the very day man sinned, God announced the coming Saviour, who would ‘bruise the serpent’s head’ (Genesis 3:15).”⁹

THE GOSPEL AS NEEDED

Genesis 3:2-6 contains the narrative on the serpent’s deception to Eve and Adam and their fall. Despite the clear instruction from God Himself in Genesis 2:16-17, despite the privilege of working as partners with God to tend and keep the garden and the abundant provision given to the couple, they still chose to disobey God. This command is recorded in Genesis 2:16-17 which says,

*Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*¹⁰

7 David Atkinson, *The Message of Genesis 1-11, The Old Testament Series*, ed. J.A. Motyer (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 96.
8 General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist, *Review and Herald*, (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, March 12, 1901).
9 Frank Breaden, *Instruction Manual for the New Pictorial*, (Australia: Signs Publishing Company, 1995), 168.
10 Genesis 2:16-17, New King James Version

This command was made clear to them. J. R. W. Stott outlined it this way: (a) a permission to eat of every tree in the garden; (b) a prohibition not to eat from one tree; and (c) a penalty for disobedience.¹¹ As a result, this defiance against God's clear command brought several consequences in which we will discuss next.

Among the consequences of sin, the following are mentioned in Genesis 3:16-19, 24: sorrow, pain, toil, thorns and thistles, and death. After disobeying God, "Adam and Eve felt guilt and embarrassment over their nakedness. Their guilty feelings made them try to hide from God."¹² God banished them from the Garden of Eden, where the tree of life was, which was also protected by the Cherubim.

Death, as one of the results of sin, would not only be limited to the serpent, to Adam, Eve, and their descendants but would extend to both plants and animals. Death, however, does not stop there but it would even "bruise the Seed of the woman" representing the death of Christ to save the world from sin.¹³

THE GOSPEL AS ACTED

The Response of Man

In the careful reading of the account of the fall, one will not fail to see the response of man (Adam and Eve) to their conscious disobedience to God's word. Genesis 2:7b states, "they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves covering." So the first solution of the couple after sin was to cover each one's nakedness. This solution to

11 J.R.W. Stott, *The Subtlety of Satan* (Christianity Today 9, 1965), 741.

12 Ronald A. Beers, ed., *Life Application Study Bible*, New International Version (Grand Rapids: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2005), 10.

13 "Between thy seed and her seed" [Gen 3:15], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976-1980), 1:233.

sin problem is carried even today. The response of people when they sin is to cover up even to the point of killing fellowmen to save them from facing the consequences of sin.

Next, Genesis 3:8b gives us another response that the couple made after sin. When they heard the voice of God walking in the garden, they “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.” To hide was the next response of the couple to get rid of their disobedience to God. “Before he sinned, Adam loved to hear the voice of the Lord; after he sinned, that same voice made him afraid and prompted him to try to hide himself.”¹⁴ The garden, which “once a place of joy and fellowship with God, became a place of fear and of hiding from God.”¹⁵ Hiding is another characteristic the people today run into to get rid of the consequences of sin. In here, we can see how the response of Adam and Eve transcends their time and situation.

The third and the last resort they had according to the narrative is implicitly recorded in Genesis 3:11-13 when the man responded to God’s inquiry on why he ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam replied, “The woman whom you gave me to be with me...” And when God turned to Eve, Eve responded, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” The third response is passing the blame. There is no indication of accepting the responsibility for their action. Blaming others is another trait we inherit from them. Today, we hear these words, “I did that because of him, because of my parents, because of my teacher” and so on. “How easy it is to excuse our sins by blaming someone else or circumstances.”¹⁶ Adam even indirectly blamed

14 Charles F. Stanley, *Life Principles Bible*, New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2005), 7.

15 Kenneth Barker, ed., *Zondervan NASB Study Bible*, New American Standard Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 8.

16 *Ibid.*, 11.

God when he said, “The woman whom YOU gave me...”¹⁷ In this discourse, one could sense the broken relationship of man with God and with his wife¹⁸ and with the serpent.¹⁹

In summary, the man’s responses to solve the sin problem are the following: Covering, Hiding, and Blaming. Victor Hamilton summed it up briefly with this statement, “shame (v.7), guilt (vv. 8-11), and looking for a scapegoat (vv. 12-13).”²⁰ Understanding this clearly in this narrative prepares the reader’s mind to appreciate the beauty of God’s response to the situation the couple had chosen.

The Response of God

Let us now turn to God’s response to what happened in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:8-9 contains the response of God to solve the issue. His initial response was enveloped in his question, “Where are you?” This question is not “only a word of judgment; it is primarily a word of love.”²¹ It is a “call to fellowship.”²² It is a “call of Divine justice, which cannot overlook sin,” “a call of Divine sorrow, which grieves over the sinner,” and “a call of Divine love, which offers redemption for sin.”²³ They hid, but God sought them. This reminded me of the purpose statement of Christ recorded in Luke 19:10, which says, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

God sought Adam whom He formed from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life

17 Jon L. Dybdahl, ed., *Andrews Study Bible*, New King James Version (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2010), 10.

18 Stanley, *Life Principles Bible*, 7.

19 James MacKeown, *Genesis*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 37.

20 Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982), 48.

21 Atkinson, *The Message*, 91.

22 Ibid., 96.

23 W. H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), 52.

(Genesis 2:7). He sought the woman, whom He created from Adam's rib (Genesis 2:22), and of whom Adam exclaimed, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." We have here a loving God seeking for his wayward children. In this narrative it is distinctly implied that it was God who made the first move in redemption. It was God who sought them first. What the couple did was to cover, hid, and blame each other, even blaming the One who created them. Before seeing God's as a judge, the narrative paints a picture of God as a Shepherd or a Savior looking after His lost sheep. God came to the couple that day to hear them not as "Elohim," a transcendent God but as "Yahweh Elohim,"²⁴ an immanent God, a personal side of God, which communicates personal relationship with Adam and Eve.²⁵

I believe with what Bruce Cameron said, "God does not rush to judgment. Even though He is God and knows the answers, He still investigates matters and lets us attempt to explain what we have done."²⁶ So in here, we see a personal God who seeks, listens, and judges justly. After searching Adam and Eve, He investigated the matter and pronounced them His judgment. We need to remember that in the Bible, "Judgment is always for God's people and against His enemies."²⁷ Angel Manuel Rodriguez added, "God revealed Himself in the Garden not only as Judge but also as Redeemer."²⁸ Later in this article we will see

24 "In fact, the narrator uses the name 'Yahweh Elohim' more often (20 times) in this one narrative (2:4-3:24) than it is the rest of the Old Testament (16 times)." - Sydney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Genesis: Foundation for Expository Sermons*, (Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), p. 63.

25 Mathilde Frey, class notes for OTST 660 Pentateuch, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, June 2014.

26 Bruce Cameron, "The Pre-Advent Judgment," accessed July 12, 2014, <http://www.sabbathschoollessons.com/archive/108-pre-advent-judgment.htm#copyright>

27 Dybdahl, ed., *Andrews Study Bible*, 1124.

28 Angel Manuel Rodriguez, "Eden and the Israelites Sanctuary," *Biblical*

the proclamation of the gospel, as part of God's response to save Adam and Eve, amid the seemingly hopelessness awaiting the first couple.

THE GOSPEL AS PROMISED

Christians had known Genesis 3:15 for centuries as “pro-toevangelium” or “first good news,”²⁹ or the “first proclamation of the gospel of redemption.”³⁰ Thomas called it “primeval promise which is taken up again and again henceforward in the Scripture, until He comes Who destroys him that has the power of death, and casts him into the lake of fire.”³¹ It is interesting to note that the chiasmic structure of Genesis 3 shows that verses 14-15 is the climax showing that the message of “these verses is central in the context.”³²

This passage states “so the Lord God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.’”³³ Having this in mind, the writer needs to consider the keywords in understanding this passage. We will study the word “Serpent,” and the “Seed of the Woman” briefly. Later we will consider the fulfillment of this promised in the New Testament. Genesis

Research Institute of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, accessed July 7, 2014, https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/eden%20%26%20israelite%20sanctuary_0.pdf.

29 Angel Manuel Rodriguez, “Genesis 3:15,” *Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists*, accessed July 7, 2014, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-ot-texts/genesis-315>.

30 Alan Richardson, “*Genesis 1-11*,” (London: SCM Press LTD, 1974), 75.

31 Thomas, *Genesis*, 51.

32 Ojewole, “The Seed,” 98.

33 Genesis 3:14-15, New King James Version

3:14-15 “has been interpreted as a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, through whom the serpent, Satan, was to be destroyed.”³⁴

The Serpent

The serpent in Genesis 3 is a “symbol of evil and rebellion against God.”³⁵ A careful reading of the chapter clearly indicates that this serpent contradicted the Word of God. This creature even twisted God’s word and lied to deceive Adam and Eve. “This power is identified in the New Testament as Christ’s archenemy, Satan (Rev. 12:9).”³⁶

The Seed of the Woman

About to the Seed of the woman, Rodriguez pointed out that:

The Hebrew noun zera is usually employed as a collective noun to designate “offspring, posterity” in the sense of descendants as a single group. However, it can be used to refer to a single descendant (e.g., 2 Sam. 7:12, 13). In Genesis 3:15 we find both usages present. We read about the descendants of the woman and the descendants of the serpent/Satan, but at the same time mention is made of a male descendant of the woman (hû) who will crush “your [singular] head,” that is to say, the serpent’s head. Whenever “seed” denotes a particular descendant, the pronoun that follows it is in the singular. The Greek translation of

³⁴ Rodriguez, “Genesis 3:15.”

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

the Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), suggests that the translators understood the passage to be a promise of a future descendant. In this particular case they understood “seed” not in its collective sense but rather as designating a single descendant. Some have found in the LXX, rather than in Irenaeus, the first Messianic interpretation of Genesis 3:15.³⁷

In here, we can see that the Seed in Genesis 3:15 is a reference to Jesus Christ. The promise of the gospel was proclaimed in this passage, giving hope to the couple.

The Fulfillment of the Promise

The fulfillment of the promised Seed in Genesis 3:15 is found in Jesus Christ. The New Testament proclaims that He is the promised Messiah. However, the fulfillment of the struggle between Jesus and Satan, between Jesus’ followers and Satan’s is continuing until the Serpent’s head is finally crushed. Rodrigues describes:

There are at least two allusions to Genesis 3:15 in the New Testament. The first one is Revelation 12. There we find similar terminology and the concept of a conflict between the woman and the dragon and her child and the dragon. The dragon is explicitly identified with the “ancient serpent” (NIV), an obvious reference to Genesis 3. The “seed” of the woman defeats the serpent, determining its future extinction (Rev. 20). According to Revelation 12, what was announced in Genesis 3:15 is now being fulfilled in the

37 Rodrigues, “Genesis 3:15.”

flow of history. The seed of the woman has crushed the head of the serpent and the consummation of that victory is rapidly approaching. The victory of the descendant of the woman assures the future victory of her descendants over the dragon. This is what Romans 16:20, the second allusion to Genesis 3:15, states: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (NIV). This wonderful hope was first announced to the human race in the Garden of Eden.³⁸

Ojewole concluded his study on this topic this way:

The woman of Genesis is Eve. The Serpent represents Satan. Their seed are among human beings, depending on who has their allegiance between God and Satan. The divinely instituted enmity is perpetual until Satan is vanquished.³⁹

THE GOSPEL AS ILLUSTRATED

We have seen how the gospel as promised in Genesis 3:14-15 was fulfilled in Jesus and how the great controversy will reach its final end. Now, let us see how God illustrated this gospel vividly from the same chapter. Genesis 3:21 records, "And also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them." The redemption of man "is not only promised in word, it is also pictured in deed."⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ojewole, "The Seed," 429.

⁴⁰ Thomas, *Genesis*, 51.

The Garments of Skin

To some this clothing is seen plainly as protection of Adam and Eve from the hostile world outside the garden.⁴¹ Others see this covering of garments of skin as showing “God’s grace,” revealing that He will “deal with the problem of sin.”⁴² Still, others see “clothing, besides its obvious protective function, is one of the most pervasive of human symbols through which a person’s position and role in society is signaled.”⁴³

To the writer, this “garments of skin” goes beyond the stated reasons above. It answers the question of why Adam and Eve did not die that day. That day the couple did not die because an animal died on their behalf. Rodriguez pointed out, “The ultimate death of Adam and Eve was not put into effect because Christ is ‘the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.’”⁴⁴ He further stated, “The death of Adam and Eve should have occurred immediately (Gen 2:16). The death penalty was not exhausted when God said to Adam, ‘you are dust, and to dust, you shall return’ (3:19, NAS). This death undoubtedly belongs to the penalty of sin; but Genesis 2:17 describes something beyond it. This divine warning ‘was not “on that day you will become mortal” but rather “you will die.” But that did not happen at all. Their lives were extended because ‘God allowed grace to prevail.’”⁴⁵ He further explained,

When we place Genesis 3:21 within its theological context the implicit death of the animal becomes indeed a sacrificial act. First, Adam and Eve were expected

41 Greidanus, *Preaching Christ*, 83.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Rodriguez, “Eden and the Israelites Sanctuary.”

45 Ibid.

*to experience ultimate death (2:17). Surprisingly, their life was preserved. But it is precisely in that life-threatening context that the death of an animal takes place. The death penalty is not executed on them but an animal dies. Second, the death of the animal is not an accidental detail in the narrative; it provides what Adam and Eve needed in order to restore their relationship with the Lord. Out of death comes hope and restoration for them.*⁴⁶

The Review and Herald also explains why God did not enforce the death penalty at once:

*Adam listened to the words of the tempter, and yielding to his insinuations, fell into sin. Why was not the death penalty enforced in his case? —Because a ransom was found. God's only begotten Son volunteered to take the sin of man upon Himself, and to make an atonement for the fallen race. There could have been no pardon for sin had this atonement not been made. Had God pardoned Adam's sin without an atonement, sin would have been immortalized, and would have been perpetuated with boldness that would have been without restraint.*⁴⁷

Warren Austin Gage, describes his point regarding Genesis 3:21 this way:

⁴⁶ Ibid.
⁴⁷ Review and Herald April 23, 1901.

It is fitting that the Lord God, who was to make the last sacrifice (Hebrew 9:26), should make the first; to furnish the first Adam with robe of righteousness, the last Adam would suffer nakedness and shame (Psalm 22:18; Matthew 27:35). This slaughter is the first sermon, and there is much gospel in it. Here the Lord provides the skins of the innocent to ‘cover’ the shame of the guilty. In this offering of the animals, the earth first taste innocent blood and Adam first savors unmerited favor.⁴⁸

Edwin Reiner pointed out that “At the fall Christ became at once the Mediator in fact. Had this not been so, the race would have instantly been snuffed out.”⁴⁹

The Sanctuary Service

From this first sacrifice made in Genesis 3:21 “the sacrificial service, though not specifically mentioned here, was instituted at this time.”⁵⁰ And “The universality of animal sacrifices in ancient times points to a common origin of this practice.”⁵¹ In Genesis 4 we can read the sacrificial system observed by Abel. “If God had not issued regulations concerning sacrifices, His approval of Abel’s offering and His disapproval of Cain’s would have been arbitrary.”⁵²

48 Warren Austin Gage, *“The Gospel of Genesis,”* (Carpenter Books, 1984), 102.

49 Edwin Reiner, *The Covenants* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1967), 33.

50 Ellen White, “Patriarchs and Prophets,” p. 68.

51 “Coats of skins” [Gen 3:8], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976-1980), 1:236.

52 Ibid., 235.

So here, we can see how the sanctuary service started “to illustrate the precise manner in which the Saviour would do his work—and the enormous cost that would be involved—God took the lives of innocent animals and used their skins to provide garments for Adam and Eve, in their nakedness and shame (Genesis 3:21).”⁵³

Frank Breaden continued to explain:

By that graphic action, God established the principle of ‘substitution’—the innocent dying in place of the guilty—as the key-principle of salvation, and dramatized the essential elements of the whole plan of Redemption. By the first sacrifice in Eden, He laid the foundation of the whole Sanctuary Service, and foreshadowed the death of Christ—when God, for love’s sake, would take the full responsibility for man’s sin, and—in His own Person—would bear the full penalty!

*The Sanctuary Service, as later elaborated in the Book of Exodus, picks up the principle of substitution from Genesis 3, and builds it into a system of worship—centered on the sacrificial lamb, and pointing forward to Christ—that would last for 1000 years!*⁵⁴

THE GOSPEL AS UNDERSTOOD

Did Adam, the recipient of the protoevangelium, understand the promise that God proclaimed in Genesis 3:15? After hearing the righteous judgment of God upon the

⁵³ Breaden, *Instruction Manual*, 168.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

serpent, upon his wife, and upon him, what was his response? Did he hear what God say, “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return?”⁵⁵ His following action is summarized in these words, “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.”⁵⁶ Adam appreciated the chance given them by the life-giver to live and procreate, and through that the coming of the Seed.

Adam giving his wife the name Eve demonstrates that “he believe the promise with regard to the woman’s seed and manifested this faith in the name that he now gave to his wife.”⁵⁷ He gave this name “Eve,” which means “the living one” as a sign of his faith “seeing her as ‘mother of all living’ at a time when his death sentence had just been pronounced,”⁵⁸ instead of calling her “the mother of all doomed.” Further, “he looked beyond the grave and saw in the seed promised to his wife the One who would restore to him and his descendants the immortality they had forfeited that day.”⁵⁹ Through this proclamation of the gospel and through the garments provided them both, Adam and Eve witnessed the love and mercy of the LORD.⁶⁰

SUMMARY

In this study, one can see how God initiated, proclaimed, promised and illustrated the gospel clearly and graphically in Genesis 3 after Adam and Eve sinned. Indeed, as

55 Genesis 3:19, NKJV.

56 Genesis 3:20, KJV.

57 “Adam called his wife’s name Eve” [Gen 3:15], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976-1980), 1:235.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2006), 154.

soon there was sin there was a Saviour. When the couple sinned, they cover themselves, they hid, and they passed the blame to others even to God who created them.

God in his mercy, justice, and love responded. He sought them when they hid themselves. He clothed them when they found themselves naked. And He accepted the responsibility by symbolically dying to save them from death penalty through the death of the animal/s in Genesis 3:21 and literally by Jesus Christ dying on the cross not only for them but for us all in John 3:16.

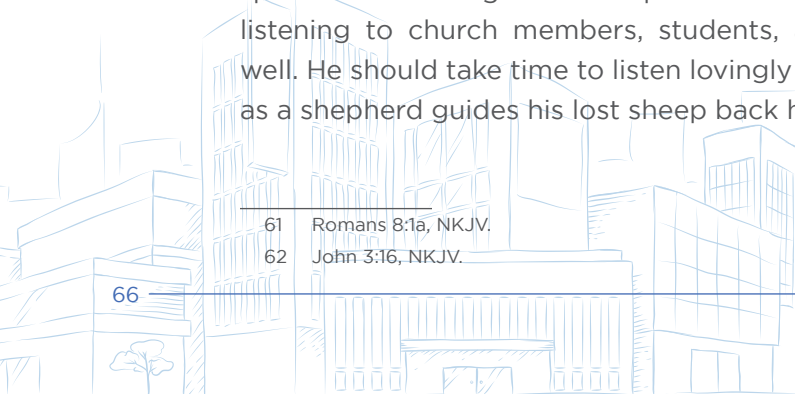
It was shown in God's response that it was Him who made the first moved to save humanity from sin. He did not condone sin, but He took the condemnation that was justly for Adam and Eve. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."⁶¹ Understanding the gospel in Genesis 3 can lead one to deeply love and powerfully proclaim, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."⁶²

This study brought several insights in one's understanding of God's love and of His ways in dealing with Adam and Eve. These insights will directly affect the ministry of a pastor, a teacher, a father and mother, husband and wife.

First, in dealing with wayward church members, a pastor or an elder should not rush into judgment, as God did not rush into judgment when He dealt with Adam and Eve. Although He knew everything that happened that day, he spent time listening to the couple. One needs to take time listening to church members, students, and children as well. He should take time to listen lovingly and guide them as a shepherd guides his lost sheep back home.

⁶¹ Romans 8:1a, NKJV.

⁶² John 3:16, NKJV.



Second, in sharing the gospel, God's justice and love should be presented clearly. One should not focus on the love of God at the expense of God's justice. In here, the gospel is best seen in the light of God's justice. In Genesis 3, I have seen how justice and mercy have met each other. As Soul-winner, God is Christ-centered.

Third, the presentation of the gospel does not start in the New Testament but in the Old Testament, specifically in Genesis 3. Using this chapter as a foundation and jumping board, one can move on throughout the Scriptures exposing God's plan of redemption through Jesus Christ—the Promised Seed, the Messiah, the Savior, the Judge and the coming King, who will make all things new one day from the Eden lost to Eden restored. Genesis 3, indeed, proclaims the gospel. It reveals God as the lover of lost souls and founder of soul-winning.

“ QUOTE

Before he sinned, Adam loved to hear the voice of the Lord; after he sinned, that same voice made him afraid and prompted him to try to hide himself.

”



Jesus' Prayer Life

Essential elements
of Jesus' prayer life

Andrés J. Peralta

While here on earth Jesus gave us an example to follow regarding prayer. He maintained a prayer routine. "Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him.



When He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed” (Luke 22:39-41 NKJV). Christ had an active prayer life and He encouraged His disciples in the habit of prayer. He would start and finish his day in intense prayer; sometimes he would spend the entire night praying.

“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place, and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35, ESV). “Immediately he made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the crowd. And after He had taken leave of them, He went up on the mountain to pray” (Mark 6:45, 46, ESV). “In these days, He went out to the mountain to pray, and all night He continued in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12, ESV). Not only does the Bible give us many examples of Jesus’ prayer life, but Ellen White also highlights it.

“From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others. His words were given Him fresh from the heavenly courts, words that He might speak in season to the weary and oppressed” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 139).

Jesus’ life of prayer was contagious, He prayed in such a manner that others desired to pray also. “Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1, ESV). He remained steadfast in His prayer life throughout His life. The crises in His life did not give way to his life of prayer, instead, it intensified it. “And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became

like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44, ESV).

The special moments and events of His ministry occurred “while” He prayed or in His time of prayer. *At His baptism by the Holy Spirit:* “While He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended” (Luke 3:21-22, NKJV). *On the mount of transfiguration:* “And [He] went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening” (Luke 9:28, 29, NKJV). *Before selecting His disciples:* “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles” (Luke 6:12, 13, NKJV).

His recognition as “the Christ” by His disciples: “And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” (Luke 9:18, NKJV). *He confronted anguish in prayer:* “When He came to the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’ And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:40-42, NKJV). *Jesus died praying:* “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, ‘Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.’” Having said this, He breathed His last” (Luke 23:46, NKJV).

In reality, the major agony for Jesus on the cross was in looking for His Father’s face and not being able to find it (Matthew 27:46). The words: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” only has meaning when we are aware that the person who said them lived an intense life of prayer and communion with God. To pray is to enter the divine sphere. We position ourselves “in the heavenly



places” to receive “every spiritual blessing” (Ephesians 1:3). These actions of Jesus were His special work for us, and they occurred during prayer. The Pharisee and the tax collector were rejected or forgiven “while praying.” In reality, we receive all spiritual blessings from God during prayer or as a response to prayer.

Jesus was particular about where he prayed. Although He was continually connected with God, Jesus would “withdraw” to pray in the mountain, in the desert or any solitary place. “He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35, NKJV). “He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed” (Luke 5:16, NKJV). “As He was alone praying...” (Luke 9:18, NKJV). “He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there” (Matthew 14:23, NKJV). “In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to turn aside from ceaseless activity and contact with human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 58). *For Jesus, prayer provided stability amid the pressures of His surroundings.* “However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So, He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed” (Luke 5:15, 16, NKJV).

SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

The prayer life of Jesus was not only a model for His disciples but for the church as well. Luke affirms this. A glance at the references above shows that of the Gospels, Luke emphasizes Jesus’ life of prayer most. We note also that Luke documented the majority of Jesus’ warnings regarding prayer (Luke 11:1-13). He was the only one who registered Jesus’ phrase: “I have prayed for you” (Luke 22:32, NKJV). He was the only one who documented the parable of the

Pharisee and the tax collector that “went up to the temple to pray” (Luke 18:9-14, NKJV), and of the unjust judge and the widow, to illustrate “that men always ought to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1-8). When Luke speaks of a worthy person, he describes that one of their characteristics is prayer (Luke 2:36-38; Acts 10:2).

Luke authored two volumes: The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles (Luke 1:1, 2; Acts 1:1). In reality, the Gospel (the life of Jesus) presented the basis for the behavior of the church (the Acts of the Apostles). Thus, Luke depicts the people outside of the temple “praying” (Luke 1:10), and the primitive church “continuing steadfastly in prayer” (Acts 1:14; 2:42). He speaks of the “elect who cry out day and night to Him [God]” (Luke 18:7). Peter and John are portrayed “going up together to the temple at the hour of prayer” (Acts 3:1); and Peter looking for an isolated place, on the housetop, “to pray” (Acts 10:9). When he narrates the anguish of the church for the prosecutions, he adds: “but constant prayer was offered to God by the church” (Acts 12:5, NKJV). Luke believed the church should continue the prayer life demonstrated by Jesus.

Matthew also emphasized prayer in the work of Jesus on “the mountain.” He delivered the sermon of Matthew 5-7 on the mountain, often went to the mountain to pray (Matt 14:23), and the sick were sometimes brought to him while he was on the mountain (Matt 15:29). Note that it *doesn't* say “a mountain”, instead “the mountain.” Although not identified, this is a defined place. Notice that, although Jesus only told them that after his death they would meet “in Galilee” (Matthew 26:32), they clearly knew that Jesus was referring to the defined mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16). In the Old Testament, “the mountain” is the place where God manifests himself (Exodus 3:1, 2). In the same way, Jesus instructed His disciples that after the crisis of His death they would meet with Him again “on the



mountain” (Matthew 26:32; 28:16), God instructed Moses that after the crisis and liberation in Egypt they would find Him on the mountain: “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God *on this mountain*” (Exodus 3:12, NKJV). “The mountain”, then, is the permanent or established place where surely a child of God can find Him after a crisis. When Elijah felt threatened and didn’t know what to do, when he lost his faith, he fled “to the mountain” where he was sure he would have an encounter with God. “So, he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God” (1 Kings 19:8, NKJV). That’s why it’s interesting to know that “He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray” (Matthew 14:23, NKJV). “The mountain” wasn’t only an isolated place, but a place where He was sure to encounter God.

Mark also captures aspects of Jesus’ prayer life. He emphasizes that the prayer of Jesus was done early in the morning. “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35, NKJV). This meant that Jesus sought God before all else for the day.

In the Old Testament, it’s clear that one who seeks God with the hope of finding Him should seek Him in the morning. “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me” (Proverbs 8:17, KJV). “My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning, I will direct it to You, and I will look up” (Psalm 5:3, KJV). The Hebrew verb used here also means “to look or seek diligently” as well as “early” “morning.” According to Isaiah, the promised Messiah would be characterized as having an encounter with God in “the morning.” “The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens

me morning by morning, He awakens my ear to hear as the learned” (Isaiah 50:4, NKJV). As such, Jesus sought God “in the morning” because that was precisely the time that God had established; the time when surely, He could encounter God, according to the promise.

Although we should pray “at all times” and in all places, it would be useful to prepare a place and a time where regularly we retire to encounter God. This place and time frame will provide us with a point of daily equilibrium and stability amid the contingencies of life. “All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 58). It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation” (The Desire of Ages, p. 83).

John made emphasis, not so much on the prayer life of Jesus, but on the assumptions that make it possible. Jesus would consider himself “God-sent” (John 17:3). He was sure that he had a precise mission (John 17:4). These two concepts obliged him to maintain constant communion with God. He would perceive himself as if He was “in heaven” (John 17:11), in the atmosphere of “above” (John 3:31-35). Jesus had a high sense of what’s important. He had a clear idea of the work of the Father, the one He had to imitate: “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working... the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do” (John 5:17, 19). He had absolute control of His time (John 7:1-10). He had a clear idea of who He was and His future. “For I know where I came from and where I am going” (John 8:14).

CONCLUSION: WHAT WILL YOU DO?

In coming to Earth, Jesus performed the critical task of restoring the communication breach between God and man.



As a result of His work we now have a new communication frequency in the form of prayer. Not only did Jesus restore the frequency but He demonstrated valuable lessons as documented in the Gospels of how prayer works. There are various examples in the Old Testament of encounters with God, but Jesus' example leaves no doubt about prayer.

Prayer puts the human race in direct communication with God. It is a frequency that is always open and available through Jesus Christ. Prayer is optimal when done consistently, early in the morning and in a specific place alone with God. It is recommended at all stages of life and for every decision. The decision is yours today to make Jesus your example, to utilize His special communication frequency and to live a life of prayer. What will you do?

“

QUOTE

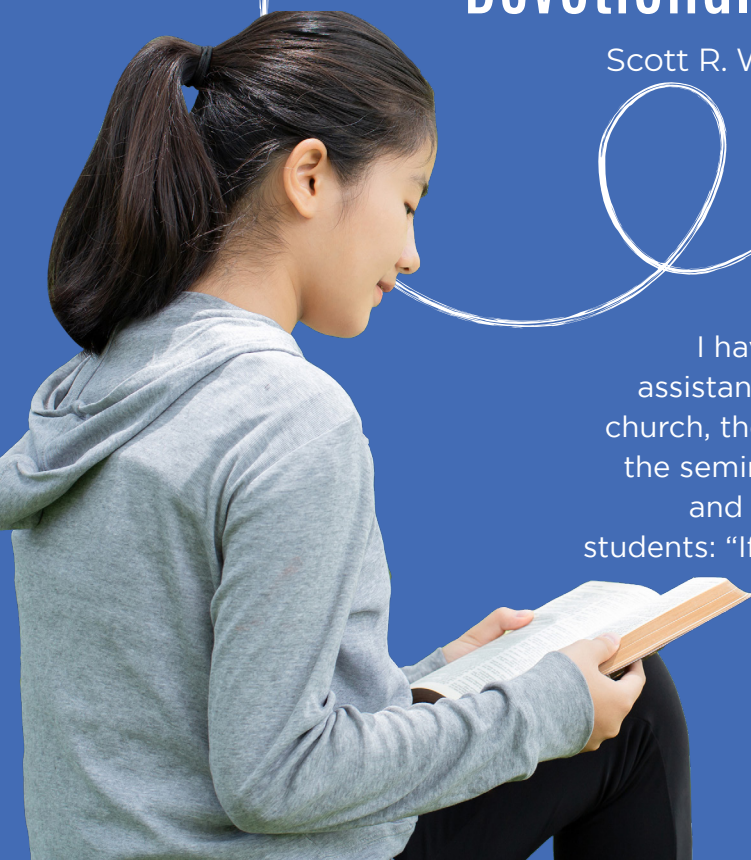
Although He was continually connected with God, Jesus would “withdraw” to pray in the mountain, in the desert or any solitary place.

”



Developing an Authentic Devotional Life

Scott R. Ward



I have always told my assistant youth leaders at church, the youth leaders in the seminars I have taught and now my seminary students: "If you have a great devotional life, ministry is much easier."



You will never need to worry about being unprepared for an impromptu devotional thought or sermon—all you have to do is talk about what you experienced with Jesus that day or week in your devotional time with Him.”

In addition to that, young people can spot fake people from a mile away. They can tell very easily if what you are sharing is a “prepared study” or if it’s something that you are actually living out in a relevant way in your life. Based on my experience working in youth and young adult ministry for 27 years, (including 8 years as North American Division public high school ministries coordinator) high school aged teens are not struggling so much with doctrine as they are trying to decide if they want to be a Christian or not. Teenagers are in that phase where they are deciding if they will personally accept the religion they have been taught all their lives. They are determining if they will take that knowledge and use it to become truly spiritual people, with their own personal relationships with Jesus. I believe that the best way to lead youth and show them how to live life out of their devotional time is by modeling and teaching devotional life every opportunity you get, just like we are told in Deuteronomy 6:

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God,
the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God
with all your heart and with all your soul
and with all your strength. These com-
mandments that I give you today are to
be on your hearts. Impress them on your
children. Talk about them when you sit
at home and when you walk along the
road, when you lie down and when you
get up. Tie them as symbols on your
hands and bind them on your foreheads.*

Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 NIV).

My favorite way to teach about devotional life is through applying Psalm 23 to my personal life every day and challenging others, including teenagers, to do the same (The following is adapted from Authentic, pp. 79-84).

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

At first hearing, I suppose, to many people this is a very poetic introduction with all its imagery of the good shepherd watching his sheep. It's very idyllic and many are happy with the comfort of the familiarity of it. But this phrase is far more than soothing—it is the very foundation of the Christian life. For David, it was true—the Lord was his shepherd. There is overwhelming evidence of this throughout the Old Testament. David followed the Lord faithfully. He learned to follow His Lord as a young shepherd on the hillside tending his sheep writing and singing hymns to Him. Spending his time writing songs and praises to God is evidence that God was on David's mind and heart constantly. But what about me?

Every day I must ask myself if I am allowing the Lord to be my Shepherd. It is a choice. We do not have to follow God. We are often like the sheep that intentionally or unintentionally strays. We all know the story of the lost sheep. The sheep make a choice and we must as well. It is foundational in my relationship with Jesus to ask myself each morning if I am committed to making Jesus “my” shepherd for the day. Every day the choice is new. As I pray about this, I think through the choices I have been making and I ask myself where my choices are taking me—to the Shepherd or away from Him. My goal is to pray, “Dear Lord, be my shepherd today. Guide my actions and choices and help



me to follow You and Your ways.” “The Lord is my shepherd” is not a given—it’s a choice!

I SHALL NOT WANT

This is the promise that comes with the choice. When David first chose to follow the Lord, he still remained a poor shepherd boy for many years. Then he became a fugitive hunted like an animal for even longer. As one intimately committed to God, he definitely did not have everything his heart could desire—but he never “wanted” for the basic necessities of life. Through it all, David remained faithful to his Lord and eventually became king. Scripture promises that if we are faithful through the difficulties of our own lives as David was in his, we will reign with Christ in heaven (Revelation 20:6) just as David reigned as Christ’s anointed king on earth. “I shall not want” is a promise for now and eternity when Jesus is our choice.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul...

Part of choosing Jesus as your shepherd is to choose to spend time with Him listening for His voice and observing His ways in nature. Obviously, we hear His voice in scripture—that is why we memorize and dwell on the 23rd Psalm—but we can also personally hear the “still small voice” that Elijah heard so many years ago.

The best way to hear God’s voice is to unplug the technology, disengage other people and commitments and escape to nature. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1 NKJV). Sabbath is time away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and commitments. We take a literal Sabbath every week to spend time with God, friends and family at church, but we also need to take personal Sabbath breaks with God every day and at other regularly scheduled times as

well. The concept of Sabbath is what personal devotional time is all about and engaging devotional practices is a key part of making the most of this time together with God.

Every morning I take time in a quiet place with God—sometimes out in nature and sometimes in my office where I have paintings and photographs of nature scenes. I also love going to the prayer chapel at my church where there is a painting of Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane. Using nature and reproductions of nature to remind us of God's love and care for us is critically important in reminding us of our Creator and His plans for our lives and His desire to live with us forever.

I also enjoy spending a half day of prayer monthly in a local Japanese garden where I can listen to the rushing water, see the variety of beautiful plants, trees and fish in the Koi pond while I breathe in the refreshing fragrance of a well-watered garden in full bloom. It is truly nourishing to the soul to sit in this environment contemplating scripture, crying out to God and listening for His voice. These times of refreshing are the central part of a devotional life that helps us to continually dwell in His presence and be filled with His peace and they lead to a truly restored soul that is filled with His Spirit.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Jonah was sent to Nineveh to tell the people there about God because they didn't know their right hand from their left. When we don't know God, we don't know His will, and we don't have any clue which path to follow either. This Psalm builds on itself. When we choose God and make Him number one in our lives by spending time with Him regularly, He not only provides for us physically, but He gives purpose to our lives as well. Paths of righteousness are the missions God sends us on because of the desire He gives



us to reach out to others both physically and spiritually. Every day as I pray this part of the 23rd Psalm I ask God where He wants me to go and what He wants me to do. As a pastor, I have many missions I'm engaged in at any one time and I ask God if I'm focusing on His mission rather than my mission and pray for guidance on what to do more of and what to turn away from. I ask for God's blessing on all my activities praying that my activity will be a part of His activity in the world. To be working in our own power instead of God's is the surest way to burn out and fail. Jesus wants us to be like the 70 disciples He sent out with His power to preach, heal and cast out demons. "Christ in you," is the hope of glory—for us and for the world around us (Colossians 1:27).

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

This is a promise that hard times will come our way just as surely as they came David's way. Not that God wills it but because He knows the nature of the Devil and his evil desire to destroy us—often by the hand of others who are strangers to the voice of God. The Great Controversy is very real. So, the question is not if we will walk through the valley of the shadow of death, but when and how often. We need to learn to expect and even anticipate trials as they come. Not in a welcoming anticipation but in a preparatory anticipation that reminds us to always be connected to God and filled with His Spirit so that we can be victorious in the battle against evil. Just as surely as trials will come, they will also send us down one path or another in the Great Controversy. If we are unprepared to meet them, trials can fill us with bitterness towards God and others. But when we are engaged in an active and committed relationship with Jesus, God can use the trials to help us grow in our dependence on Him and His word, which leads to

greater peace and joy. Yes, more trouble can bring more joy! As James said,

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So, let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing” (James 1:2-4, NLT).

It is a comfort to know that God is always with us in times of trouble protecting and defending us.

This brings us to the rod and the staff. God has two tools to use as He walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death. The rod is for the enemies. The rod symbolizes God’s protective care that doesn’t allow us to endure any more than we can handle (1 Corinthians 10:13). God uses this rod far more than any of us realize. It won’t be until we get to heaven that we hear all the stories of the countless times God has protected us so well we didn’t even know we were in trouble!

The staff, on the other hand, is for God to use on us. The staff has a hook on the end and is what God uses to pull the straying sheep back on the path. This takes shape in God’s disciplining activity in our lives. Sometimes we have to endure hard lessons before we change our ways. But just as a loving parent hates to discipline their child yet they know that without discipline the child’s sinful nature will take over their whole lives—so, God is willing to use tough love to teach us lessons just as He did when He had to kick Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden helping them learn about the consequences of sin.

As I pray through this portion of the Psalm, I keep all these things in mind and ask God to guide and protect me



through the trials I am in the midst of and the ones I see coming. I also try to remember to thank Him for the ones he's seen me through remembering what a great and loving personal God He is. His name is surely to be praised!

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil

When you are worn out and tired, when you feel like your prayers aren't getting past the ceiling, when trials have you so beaten down that you wonder if you ever really did have a connection with God, you must remember that God hasn't forgotten about you. Enemies can be very distracting and disheartening but Jesus always loves you. This phrase of the Psalm is so amazing! It is a promise that eventually—one day—God will lift you up and prepare a banquet just for you right in the face of those who hate you and plot against you.

This is also an assurance that if you have enemies you are not alone. Jesus Himself had so many enemies that they eventually overcame Him and won the battle against Him—or so it seemed for a while. David was hunted down like a wild animal for years and he was mistreated and disrespected by his own wife and children at times—yet he was exalted to the position of king of Israel. Jesus was mocked, beaten and killed—yet He reigns as King of the universe even now. Trials and enemies may pursue and prosecute us now, but we have the promise that those who choose Jesus as their shepherd will be anointed princes and princesses of His kingdom and will reign with Him forever and ever amen (Revelation 20:6)!

My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Keeping this in mind on a daily basis will help us to be constantly aware of our true identity and help us to act

like princes and princesses of God's kingdom in all situations. This mindset will help us to approach life with an attitude that will help us to see that our cups are indeed full and running over with blessings. It will also continue to run over throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity, if we daily choose to make the Lord our Shepherd and King.

If we are to be connected with Christ personally, we must stop merely using scripture to prove doctrine or read about other people's relationships with Jesus. We must start using scripture as a guide for nurturing our own intimate connection with our Lord. We have seen here how scripture calls out to us from the 23rd Psalm inviting us to dwell on who the Lord is, to contemplate His loving deeds in the lives of Bible heroes and in our lives as well.

The invitation is to choose and follow the Lord our God, and make choices in accordance with His will, as revealed in scripture throughout our days as David did. Some days will be good, and others will contain mistakes but just like David, we can always recommit and start again. The invitation is to bask in the knowledge and experience that God will provide and protect us and to remember to rest in nature to hear His voice and experience His leading. This scripture calls us to remember that we are children of the King of the universe and that He is calling for us to join Him for an eternity of joyful communion, love and peace. This is what a devotional, scriptural relationship with Jesus can bring to our lives.

For me, Psalm 23 has been life changing as I have prayed it thousands of times over that past 7-8 years and as I have taught it to teens and adults. It has nurtured and directed my life and has helped me to live prayerfully and has helped me to always "be prepared to share the faith that is in me" with those whom I find around me. I hope and pray that this Psalm will be a greater blessing than ever before

in your life as well—especially as you lead, challenge and nurture the youths within your sphere of influence as they are in the process of deciding what role Jesus will play in their personal lives for the rest of their lives.

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“ QUOTE

The best way to hear God’s voice is to unplug the technology, disengage other people and commitments and escape to nature.

”



Journey to Forgiveness

Andrés J. Peralta



Throughout my ministry,
I have seen many youth,
young adults and pastors
struggling with many
battles in their lives.
One of the most difficult
battles is forgiveness.

A young girl came up to me and said, “Pastor Peralta, I cannot forgive my mother; she hates me, and she abandoned me.” A youth from the state of Michigan once said, “I hate my father for being unfaithful to my mother.” I remember on another occasion after I finished preaching to thousands at a youth retreat, a church elder told me that he can’t forgive his son for the horrible things he has done to his family. A pastor approached me and said, “I cannot forgive what my administrator did to me.” At one time or another we have been wronged by someone or someone has hurt us. The question is, “What is forgiveness? How can we forgive when it hurts so much?” The Bible says, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32). The Bible is clear when it states that we need to “forgive each other,” but how and where do we begin?

WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

Forgiveness means dismissing a debt. Forgiveness is the act of pardoning an offender. In the New Testament, forgiveness denotes a dismissal or release of penalty when someone has wronged you. In other words, when you grant forgiveness, you dismiss the debt owed to you. June Hunt suggested that forgiveness is dismissing the demand that others owe you something, especially when they fail to meet your expectations, fail to keep a promise, or fail to treat you justly. Additionally, I say that forgiveness is to extend love and mercy; to give a gift of grace and compassion. Forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment, bitterness and thoughts of retribution. You might think that forgiveness is excusing the wrongdoer, but it is acknowledging that unjust behavior is without excuse, while still pardoning the offender.

HOW CAN WE FORGIVE WHEN IT HURTS SO MUCH?

One thing to remember is that unforgiveness will add more pain to your wounds. When you refuse to forgive you become stagnant and you are drained emotionally. A pattern of unforgiveness will dominate and harden your spirit. It's important to note that forgiveness is a journey: the deeper the wound, the longer the journey, but the deeper your relationship with God, the quicker this journey can become. So, begin your journey with God. Ask God to do in you what you cannot do for yourself. Ask for the healing power of the Holy Spirit. Allow the Spirit to start a healing process in you. And "recognize the benefits of forgiving." Someone once said, "When we forgive, we set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner we set free is us." Forgiveness is not something we do for others; we do it for ourselves. Mary Karen's last words in her journal entry before her death in the Virginia Tech shooting was, "When deep injury is done to us, we never recover until we forgive; forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future."

CONCLUSION

Almost everyone has been hurt in life by actions, words and attitudes. Perhaps your father mistreated you, your parents' divorce hurt you, your classmate offended you, a teacher dispraised you, a relative violated your trust, your mother criticized you or you've experienced other offenses. These wounds can leave you with long-lasting feelings of anger, bitterness or even revenge, but if you don't forgive, you might be the one who pays the most. I encourage you to pray for a feeling of forgiveness towards those who have hurt you. Forgiveness is a supernatural response empowered by God. It takes time, that's why it's a journey. But when you let go, you become free. Let's embrace forgiveness, hope and love.



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Career and Mission Have Kissed

Petronio M. Genebago

Learn how a minister can
guide the youth to have a
mission-oriented and gift-
based career choice.

In choosing one's career, many based their decisions on financial rewards.¹ Others based their choice on parents' decisions. Peers, to some, swayed them as to what career they will pursue.² This article explores the biblical and Spirit of Prophecy guidelines on choosing a life career. Both of these sources take into account mission in the career choice of our youth. Thus, it is necessary for parents, pastors, and teachers to help our young people not only to have an intelligent decision on their future but also to have a biblical mission-oriented and gift-based career choice. This article argues that young people need to choose their careers in light of the commission of God and the gifts God has given them. In dealing with this, the article will address three questions: What is the career choice happening in the world today? Do Christians face the same ordeal? How do mission-oriented and gift-based career choice look like?

CAREER CHOICE IN TODAY'S WORLD

"I'm 19 years old, male and a second-year nursing student. My problem is that I don't like the course I'm taking and don't see myself as a nurse, ever. I'm taking this course because my parents and my eldest sister who is financing my studies are putting pressure on me to become a nurse because they want me to work in the United States and earn plenty of money."³ The concern of this "bewildered" student is a typical picture of the struggle of students in choosing a life career. His parents and sister pressured him to take nursing. It is clear that it was never his choice. There are other students or workers today who have the same flight with this "bewildered" student, students and workers who are forced not by their choice but by choice

1 Josie O. Santamaria, *Ask Your Career Counselor* (Inquirer Books, 2013), 401.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

of someone else. Whiston and Keller confirm “that many studies have documented that young people perceive parents as influencing their career choices.”⁴

Gallup International, also, made a study, which covers one million professionals. The study reveals that “only 28% of the global workforce considered themselves ‘engaged’ or ‘connected’ with their work!”⁵ Seventy-two percent of the surveyed population “are either partly engaged or actively disengaged.”⁶ This situation indeed would affect the companies where these people are. Not only that, according to the study, adolescence suffered “inherent dangers and frustrations” when they find themselves in the “wrong occupations.”⁷

In the Philippines, and maybe in other countries also, it is common among the parents to make career choices for their children. They do this “as a means to improve the family’s social status and financial condition. On the other hand, children who are confused and undecided on what career to choose, open themselves to being influenced, if not controlled by, their parents, and sometimes by their *barkada*.”⁸ Even those students who made their conscious decision to what career they should take have the same purpose as Josie O. Santamaria described.

The situation narrated above shows how the world of our young people is influencing them by force or willingly by choice in choosing their life career. They are “passive career choice decision makers.” It means that the career

4 S.C. Whiston and B.K. Keller, “The Influences of the Family of Origin on Career Development: a Review and Analysis,” *The Counseling Psychologist*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (2004): 493-568.

5 Anthony N. Pangilinan, *Designed for Success! Discover Who You Are and What You Do Best!* (The Master’s Workhouse Inc., 2010), 11.

6 Ibid.

7 H. I., Alika, “Career Choice in Engineering: The Influence of Peers and Parents Implication for Counseling,” *College Student Journal*, 46 (2012): 537-542.

8 Santamaria, *Ask Your Career Counselor*, 401.



they do have and will be having is not their choice, but the choice their loved ones made, or the choice influenced by friends. If students are guided and given the opportunity to choose their career actively, they could be “active career choice decision makers.” It means they proactively choose their careers based on their interests and aptitude. Thomas D. Andres writes it this way, “Make a conscious decision about your career.”⁹ So in the discussion above, parents or loved ones, peers, economic pursuit, and others influence the youth in their career choice. These characterized most of the career choice in today’s world.

CAREER CHOICE IN THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

The Christians are not exempted with the struggles others are experiencing in choosing a life career. Kevin Brennfleck and Kay Marie Brennfleck, certified career counselors, assert that “Many Christians struggle with making career decisions at various points in their lives.”¹⁰ Some think that they need to be in “full-time Christian ministry” to serve God “most fully.”¹¹ It would be easy for Christians to decide what career they should take if God talks to them directly. But that is not the case. According to Brennfleck, in which I do agree, that “Nowhere in Scripture will you find a verse that will specify whether you should become an accountant or an engineer. Nor will you find detailed instructions on how to choose a career when confronted with multiple possibilities.”¹² Since this is the case in the Christian world, I believe that there is a dire need to guide young people in choosing their career.

9 Thomas D. Andres, *How to be a Successful Student* (Our lady of Manaog Publishers, 1988), 47.

10 Kevin Brennfleck and Kay Marie Brennfleck, “Making Career Decisions Within God’s Will for Your Life,” *www.christianity.com* (March 2003): <http://www.christianity.com/christian-life/political-and-social-issues/making-career-decisions-within-gods-will-for-your-life-1188613.html>.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

PROPOSED MISSION-ORIENTED AND GIFT-BASED CAREER CHOICE

Since the fall of man, it was God's mission to save humanity. He did the first move in redemption reflected in Genesis 3:9, when He called Adam and said, "Where are you?" In Genesis 3:15, He preached the "first evangel in scripture. It is the gospel in Genesis."¹³ Jesus Christ Himself said He came to seek and save the lost.¹⁴ He came on earth with a mission and would go to heaven leaving this mission to His disciples.¹⁵

The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples also to be witnesses.¹⁶ In here, one can see that God is, indeed, in the mission of saving humanity. He established His church for mission. Ellen White made the purpose of the church clear in this statement, "The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world."¹⁷

Since the beginning until today, the mission of the church is to "carry the gospel to the world," reflecting Christ by words, deeds, and action. From this standpoint, there is a strong biblical and prophetic injunction that mission should influence the career choice of the youth. White made several insightful statements emphasizing the need of the students to get involved in the mission. She said that, "True education is missionary training. Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary; we are called

¹³ Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology*, (Carpenters Books, 1984), 99.

¹⁴ Luke 19:10

¹⁵ "And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20, NKJV.

¹⁶ Acts 1:8, NKJV.

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 9.

to the service of God and our fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education.”¹⁸ Let us digest the above statement. Ellen White said, “True education is missionary training.” This phrase implies that forgetting missionary training falls short of what true education is. Further, she said, “Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary....” This phrase does not necessarily mean that the youth will go to foreign countries, leave schools or colleges to be missionaries. In other parts of her writing, White wrote that the church should have missionary teachers, businessmen, and physicians who would carry the work of the gospel commission in their workplaces.

Let us consider some of her statements in connection with this. Concerning teaching ministry, she writes, “The very best talent that can be secured is needed to educate and mold the minds of the young, and to carry on successfully the many lines of work that will need to be done by the teacher in our church schools.”¹⁹ In the line of business, she said, “There is need of businessmen who will weave the grand principles of truth into all their transactions.”²⁰ In here, Ellen White cites Daniel as an example.²¹ Regarding the medical work, she notes, “There is no missionary field more important than that occupied by the faithful, God-fearing physician. There is no field where a man may accomplish greater good, or win more jewels to shine in the crown of his rejoicing.”²² About the gospel ministry, she argues, “The highest of all work is ministry in its various lines, and it should be kept before the youth that there is no work more blessed of God than that of the gospel

18 Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 395.

19 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, 200, 201.

20 Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 350, 351.

21 Ibid.

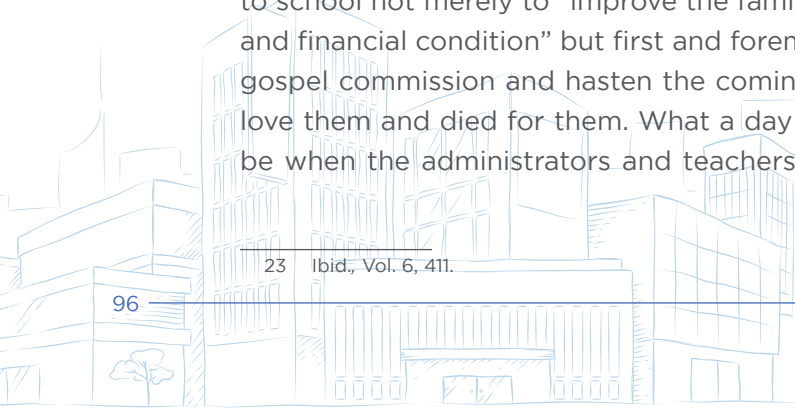
22 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 448, 449.

minister. Let not our young men be deterred from entering the ministry.”²³

The above statements illustrate that whatever careers the persons may choose, they should be missionaries using their gifts for God’s glory. When this happens, the youth will not only be fulfilled personally but spiritually as well. It is clear from the Word of God and from the writings of Ellen White that the young people need to be deeply oriented with the mission of God as they consider lifetime careers. The processes enumerated by Santamaria and the principles provided by the Brennflecks emphasize proactive decision-making. For them the students need to be active decision-makers about the career they want to have in the future; second, they both agree that the youth need to know their aptitudes and interests and their God-given gifts when they are choosing their career. But it seems they fail taking into account the gospel commission as a significant factor in choosing one’s career.

This article argues that young people need to choose their careers in light of the mission of God and the gifts God has given them. They must see their specific place in God’s over-all plan of salvation. Parent, pastors, and teachers alike need to emphasize this to the perplexed, bewildered youth of our days. The parents need to be willing to invest in the mission by allowing their children to live God’s design for them. They need to remember that they are citizens not only of this world but also of the world above. What a day indeed that will be when parents will send their children to school not merely to “improve the family’s social status and financial condition” but first and foremost to fulfill the gospel commission and hasten the coming of Jesus, who love them and died for them. What a day indeed that will be when the administrators and teachers of the colleges

23 Ibid., Vol. 6, 411.





and schools where the children of these dedicated parents will be enrolling, have hearts zealous for the mission.

With this note, let me suggest the mission-oriented and gift-based career choice guidelines for our youth. One can improve on it, or one maybe has already a better list than this, whichever the case, please consider these guidelines based on the Word of God and Spirit of Prophecy:

1. **MISSION EMPHASIS ON PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS.** Since the mission is of importance to God and the Bible is a story of how God has been on the business of fulfilling the gospel commission, it is, therefore, necessary for each family, parents, and children to consider this mission context in choosing their careers. The Bible promises that God will provide their needs if they seek Him first: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”²⁴ They will experience the blessing of God when they are committed to fulfilling God’s mission.²⁵
2. **SPIRITUAL GIFT DISCOVERY, DISCERNMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT.** The fruit of the Spirit defines who we are as Christians, and the gift of the Holy Spirit defines what we do as Christians.²⁶ Although James W. Zackrison reminded the members of the church that they should not confuse the gift of pastoring with the office of the pastor,²⁷ what would happen if the person who has the office of the pastor has the gift of pastoring? I believe there would be less complains regarding the ministers. Leslie B. Flynn emphasized, “The strong

24 Matthew 6:33, NKJV.

25 Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (OMF Literature Inc., 2003), 286.

26 James D. Berkeley, ed., *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, (Christianity Today Inc., 1994), 272.

27 James W. Zackrison, *Spiritual Gifts: Keys to Ministry*, (Silver Spring, USA, 1997), 62.

desire to become a pastor must be accompanied by the gifts necessary for that office, including an aptness to teach, and a degree of speaking ability.”²⁸ Marc Baer sums up this point this way, “Understand your gifts, and then seek work that matches them well.”²⁹

3. **PROMOTE DEPENDENCE ON GOD.** “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.”³⁰
4. **REMIND THEM OF THEIR FREEDOM TO CHOOSE.** God has given them the freedom to choose. As long as their choice is within the revealed will of God, not compromising His words and the truths revealed in the Bible, God blessings and presence will be with them.
5. **CONSULT CHRISTIAN GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AND PASTOR.** Mission-oriented guidance counselors and pastors can guide them to choose careers that are mission inspired and gift-based as well.
6. **BRING GLORY TO GOD.** Once they decided on their mission-oriented and gift-based career, they need to honor God, bring Him glory by doing their best for Him. The Bible instructs us that, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might...”³¹ “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of

28 Leslie B. Flynn, *How to Survive in the Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1992), 23.

29 Marc Baer, “Following God in Career Choices,” *InterVarsity*, (2009): <http://www.intervarsity.org/news/following-god-in-career-choices>

30 Proverbs 3:5-6, NKJV. “The verb trust is complemented by the verb to “lean.” Trusting in God is conscious dependence on God, much like leaning on a tree for support. The idea is reinforced here by the command to acknowledge Him, which means to observe Him and get to know Him in the process of living. In doing so, a person finds time and time again that God smooths out paths.” (NKJV Study Bible, *Thomas Nelson*, 2007), 967.

31 Ecclesiastes 9:10, NKJV.



the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”³² And “...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”³³

7. **SERVE GOD** with Joy in the Church, Communities, and in the Career, they have chosen under His guidance.

CONCLUSION

In choosing a career, young people need to be proactive in their decision. They need to consider the mission of God and the gifts He gave them so they can fulfill the mission of God and His church. The parents as well should take the same step in guiding their children, they as well need to be willing to allow their children to be missionaries in the field of their choice. The primary concern should not be the improvement of the families' economic status but the fulfillment of the gospel commission. The administrators, pastors, and teachers also need to set an example by words and deeds to equip the young people in this endeavor. By doing so, our young people would be proactive mission-oriented and gift-based decision makers preparing people for the coming of Jesus. Then we can say that career and mission have kissed each other.

³² Colossians 2:23-24, NKJV.

³³ 1 Corinthians 10:31



The Youth and Teamwork

Andrés J. Peralta



*"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 in a way. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have always worked together to provide and sustain the universal creation. Under the divine governance, nothing stays free by chance. The creation of man is a result of the Trinity 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 is 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.”³⁴ 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.”³⁵ 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

34 Wilkes, 1998, p. 215

35 Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 45

with a high sense of interdependence oriented towards an achievement, goal or fulfillment of a task.”³⁶

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.”³⁷ 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 contribute to the guarantee of success.³⁸ In addition, they point out that when a person does something spectacular it is because he had the support and the commitment of others.³⁹ Another author, Maxwell, considers that it is important to know that we are too small to do great things; a person cannot do anything exceptionally incredible except they do it in a group. Every important act in history always has a team of people involved.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹

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 “individualism wins trophies, but teamwork wins the approval of others.”⁴² Dungy also says something very interesting in that regard: “As a team, the ensemble has to be

36 Parker, Glenn, 2008, p. 16

37 Mead and Stowell, 2007, p. 51

38 Ibid., pp.3-4

39 Ibid., p. 7

40 Maxwell, 2009a, Kindle, u. 154-1268

41 Malphurs, 1999, p. 20

42 Maxwell, 2009a

better than the sum of each individual part.”⁴³ For his part, Butterworth believes that we should sacrifice personal glory for the collective good and support the team.⁴⁴

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 on 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.

43 Dungy, 2011, p. 16

44 Butterworth, 2007, p. 73

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 motivate 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 work⁴⁵; 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 non-negotiable principles that define a leader.⁴⁶

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.”⁴⁷ 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.⁴⁸

Before continuing, here is a brief anecdote: at an event to which I was invited to preach, a church family got together

45 Butterworth, 2007, p. 182

46 Blanchard, 2006, Kindle Edition, u. 1676 de 1971

47 Maxwell, 2008, p. 207

48 Malphurs, 1999, p. 225

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 life's circumstances 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, who 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 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.”⁴⁹ The vision defines, describes, feels and anticipates the future. It also helps answer the following questions: Where are we going? Why are we doing what we are doing?⁵⁰ Vision is the photography of the future that will give purpose and direction to the group,⁵¹ 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.⁵² 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 Malphurs affirms that “warm and definite vision has the potential of melting the most frozen heart.”⁵³ Whereas, the vision responds to the what, purpose, as we will now see, responds to the why.

49 Barna, 1995a, p. 125

50 Ibid., p. 82

51 Blanchard and Stoner, 2011, Kindle edition, u. 1710-1971

52 Malphurs, 1999, p. 20

53 Ibid. p. 31

HAVING A PURPOSE

Maxwell comments that “although the vision tells people where they need to go, purpose tells them why they should go there.”⁵⁴ Purpose helps maintain us in the right path, make adjustments, improvise and innovate, even when we find obstacles or difficulties.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ Rick Warren, for his part, thinks that purposes should be simple, clear and specific since in that way energies are focused and time is saved⁵⁷; and in addition, it allows for everyone to remember it, which is important so that they are able to transmit it later.⁵⁸

Purpose, in short, describes the reason for the mission, and in the words of Stowell and Mead, guides and motivates teamwork.⁵⁹

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.”⁶⁰

54 Maxwell, 2009a,

55 Ibid

56 Blanchard and Stoner, 2011, Kindle edition, u. 459-1971

57 Warren, Rick, 1998, p. 106

58 Ibid., p. 107

59 Stowell and Mead, 2007, p. 82

60 Maxwell, 2009a, u. 272

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.

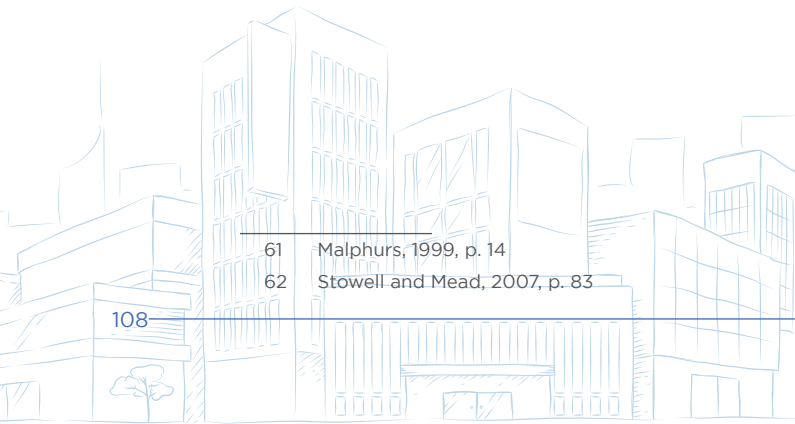
HAVING STRATEGIES

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 ministry will implement its mission and vision.⁶¹ 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.⁶²

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.

61 Malphurs, 1999, p. 14

62 Stowell and Mead, 2007, p. 83







YOUTH IN MISSION

Carlos Campitelli

“Calebs are the men
most needed in these last
days” (*Testimonies for the
Church*, Vol. 5, p. 129.2).

The project “Caleb Mission” is a missionary movement that has revolutionized the lifestyle of the Adventist youth in South America. It was born in the heart of a group of young people that were not content with using their vacation only to sleep and watch television. On the contrary, these brave youth, like you, decided to launch themselves into an adventure without limits for God. They faced obstacles, they surpassed challenges and carried out a radical and a heavenly blessed evangelism. This project surpassed the frontiers of South America and has reached the rest of the world.

By its missionary philosophy, the “Caleb Mission”, more than being an evangelism project, is also a method of initiating our youth in the process of discipleship. John Wesley, a founder of Methodism, affirmed: “The church does not change the world when they create converts, but when they create disciples.”

In this edition, we hope to demonstrate how the “Caleb Mission” is inserted in the process of discipleship, comparing it to the study by Win Arn, a high-ranking investigator in the area of Church Growth. In his studies, he mentioned eight incorporation characteristics of new members of the church.

Let’s see:

1. **FRIENDSHIPS:** Win Arn speaks about the need for all new converts to have, at least, seven friends with whom to participate and share Christianity. The “Caleb Mission” provides the participants with a strong sentiment of friendship, one of the reasons the youth want to have this missionary experience. All is carried out among friends. For the youth, friendship is something very important. In this principle, we highlight:

- a. The coexistence of the project “Caleb Mission” as a unifying action element in the young person.
 - b. The influence of a young person over another young person is most evident in the multiplication of the members of the “Caleb Mission” each year.
 - c. The contagious effect of service in the “Caleb Mission” makes a young person want to participate and demonstrate to his friend that it’s worth participating in this project.
 - d. Learning how to work as a team. The Lord delights in blessing a group of united believers that cooperates with each other with love and unity.
2. **IDENTIFICATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS:** The manner in which the “Caleb Mission” develops gifts might be the strongest point in the process of discipling a young person as a missionary in this life. In this project, the young person has the opportunity to serve in what he knows how to do best. This makes him develop his gifts and acquire new abilities for the fulfillment of the mission. Since the teams distribute responsibilities, all who are a part of the group feel motivated to develop their gifts.
3. **COMMITMENT WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH:** The spontaneous participation in the activities that the “Caleb Mission” carries out and the responsibilities that the young person assumes, fortifies the project. When the young Caleb returns to his church, in the majority of the cases, he wants to participate within his congregation of the activities that were highlighted during his vacation. In

this way, he is committed to missionary activities throughout the year.

4. **PARTICIPATION IN SMALL GROUPS:** The young person that participates in the “Caleb Mission” experiments in practice what it’s like to live in a community. It’s for that reason that many are transformed into leaders of small groups and of other team activities in the church (musical ensembles, missionary couples, etc.). The “Caleb Mission” leads the young person to be each time more dynamic in the community in which his church is present.
5. **IDEAL FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION:** The development of the financial administrative vision has been another important factor in the life of the youth that experiences the “Caleb Mission”. In addition to learning to better administer his personal resources, they end up being more competent in the practice of Christian stewardship, corresponding with fidelity to their churches in the financial system. For thirty days, at least, they need to administer the available resources and, sometimes, learn to gather resources for an evangelistic series.
6. **COMMITMENT WITH THE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS OF THE CHURCH:** When the youth participate in the “Caleb Mission”, they incorporate the missionary dreams of their churches (small groups, discipleship, evangelistic series, bible classes, etc.). They want to participate in the conquering of the objectives of the church. It is perceived that when they participate in the “Caleb Mission”, the youth reaches a clearer vision of the purpose of the mission of the church.
7. **FREQUENCY OF THE SERVICES:** There is no doubt that a young person who identifies with the church

and its mission starts to frequent with more diligence the weekly services in his congregation. In his daily life, he develops habits of devotion and of worship to God.

CYCLE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Going through this missionary experience for the first time, the young Caleb wants other youth to take an active part in the mission. This, basically, gives an opening to the cycle of discipleship, in the live wheel of the “Caleb Mission”. In this manner, others are infected by the enthusiasm, the example and the testimony of what it means to be a Caleb. Many of the youth invited to attend the talks and sermons by the youth of the “Caleb Mission” decide for baptism. Facing the example of the evangelistic youth, many recent converts want to prepare themselves to live the same evangelizing experience the following year.

“To save from sin and to guide in service” has been our objective in the Youth Ministry. The “Caleb Mission”, with the youth from your church, reaches effectively that objective. The youth experience salvation and service, transforming themselves into disciples that call other disciples.

CALEB MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP

- **SALVATION AND SERVICE, COMMUNION AND MISSION.** In the project “Caleb Mission”, the young person learns that without communion the mission would be empty and without results. That experience makes the young person develop a love for the daily communion with God.
- **BIBLE, PRAYER, AND TESTIMONY.** It's the tripod that sustains an Adventist youth. The “Caleb Mission” offers that to the youth, in its various forms.

- **DISCIPLESHIP.** The importance of relying on strong leaders in the implementation of the project “Caleb Mission” will make the process of discipleship more interesting. If the Caleb has the possibility of returning to the place, to assist in the realization of the evangelism of Easter Week or during the Youth Week of Prayer, he will continue to help other youths transform into disciples.
- **PASTORAL VOCATION.** In the “Caleb Mission”, the process of discipleship is also observed in the decision that many youths make of transforming themselves into pastors. Many are awakened to procure a degree in Theology or another department, with the goal of serving the church as pastors or as workers in other areas of the organization.
- **PROJECT “DREAMING HIGH”.** Many youths, after participating actively in the “Caleb Mission”, join the colportage, in order to generate resources to pay for their studies in the Adventist schools.

“

QUOTE

By its missionary philosophy, the “Caleb Mission”, more than being an evangelism project, is also a method of initiating our youth in the process of discipleship.

”



A Formidable Force for Literature Ministry

Ugochukwu Elems



We live today in an age that defies any definite and concrete definition.

The several attempts to do so have resulted in many divergent opinions.



Yet, the endeavor to understand the times is imperative if we must effectively fulfill the gospel commission. Therefore, attempts will be made to highlight some prevailing trends and cultures of the present era. As the title suggests, the role of the youth in the work of the Adventist Publishing Ministry will also be emphasized.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT ERA

This generation has been influenced by several previous generations over the centuries and still bears some imprints of these earlier generations. However, this generation exhibits some peculiar characteristics that are uniquely its own. Here is a typical example of a product of this generation:

Chris Lowe, 22, rarely reads his email. He has Gmail and Hotmail accounts for website subscriptions and special offers and a school account. His first email address now overflows with spam, junk mail and jokes his dad forwards, and he doesn't use any account for regular communication.

Instead, he types out text and instant messages to friends and family. He can talk to several people at once in class, at work or at home and get an immediate response.

"It's so much better than waiting around to see if they got my message," he said. "Plus, I can have an entire conversation in the time it takes me to even sign into one of my email accounts."⁶³

"Millennials are more global, more tolerant, more diverse, more educated, more connected, and bigger than any generation before them. They embrace change. They are defined by their willingness to try new things, to adapt, and

63 Header Riggs, "Fast pace defines 'Millennial Generation'" at <http://www.gainesville.com/news/20080428/fast-pace-defines-millennial-generation>

to bootstrap...”⁶⁴ They seem to possess a better experience of the ‘then’ and ‘now’ world than any other generation. And more than ever, the future is advancing in rapid succession with an unspeakable change in every ramification of life beyond comprehension.⁶⁵ We now exist in a culture of change and speed. Whether it is an automobile, computer, TV, mobile phone, home, environment, and so on, we cannot help but embrace the rapid changes that confront us daily. Unfortunately, this “Change is fast and constant.... our culture, institutions, governments, our citizens don’t always have time to catch up with these tsunamis of reinvention, so they are often left dizzy, surprised, or angry.”⁶⁶

Obviously, SPEED, powered by technological advancement and the internet is a common language and culture of this generation irrespective of race and geographical location. Let us consider the following realities of this generation:

1. **ATTENTION SPAN** – A recent research (2015) on human attention span reveals that the average attention span of a human being stands at about 8.5 seconds.⁶⁷
2. **TRAVEL TIME** – The first flown aircraft by Wilbur Wright in 1903 flew at a speed of 10.98 km/h. Today, we have a plane that flies 21,245 km/h.⁶⁸
3. **VISUAL DOMINANCE** – Here are some fascinating facts on the impact of visual technology (YouTube⁶⁹ as a case study) on human beings today:

64 David D. Burstein (author of *Fast Future: How Millennial Generation is Shaping Our World*), Question and Answer Session. See <http://davidburstein.com/fast-future/> for detail.

65 Ibid.

66 David B. Burstein, *Fast Future: How Millennial Generation is Shaping Our World*, 2013, xv.

67 For more information on the reduced human attention span visit www.statisticbrain.com/attention-span and www.telegraph.co.uk/science for detail.

68 Visit https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flight_airspeed_record for more detail.

69 Visit <http://fortunelords.com/27-mind-blowing-youtube-facts-figures-and->



- Total number of people who use YouTube – 1,3 millions.
- 300 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute!
- Almost 5 billion videos are watched on YouTube every single day.
- The total number of hours of video watched on YouTube each month is 900 million.
- 10,113 YouTube videos generated over 1 billion views.
- 80% of YouTube’s views are from outside the U.S.

It can be rightly said that we are living on the verge of visual dominance more than any previous generation on the planet earth. Visual aids have dominated our learning spaces from cradle to tertiary levels. In fact, you can hardly communicate effectively in any human setting today without visual aids.

This generation is on the edge of speed. We want almost everything instantly—fast food, high speed internet, instant weight loss, touch screen, smartphones, smart TV, express trains, one click shopping and even rapid answers from God to our prayers and other spiritual needs.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ADVENTIST PUBLISHING MINISTRY

The Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Ministry essentially began with the effort of young people inspired by the Holy Spirit. In 1848 when Ellen G. White received the vision⁷⁰ that will lead to the birth of the Adventist Publishing Ministry, she was only 21 years old.⁷¹ Her husband James White who championed the course was 27 years old at that time.⁷²

statistics-backed-by-data for more details.

70 Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 125.

71 R. W. Coon, *The Gift of Light* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998), p.25.

72 D. F. Neufield, “White, James Springer” in *Seventh-day Adventist*

When the publishing house moved to Michigan, a young man, Uriah Smith was chosen to serve as the editor at the age of 23.⁷³

THE URGENCY OF THE PUBLISHING MINISTRY

Isolated on the isle of Patmos, John received solemn messages for his time and for all believers in succeeding ages including this generation. And here is an astonishing insight: “Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time”⁷⁴ (Rev 12:12). Ellen G. White adds a voice: “We are fast approaching the end. The printing and circulation of the books and papers that contain the truth for this time are to be our work.”⁷⁵ Time is fast running out; the end is ever nearer by the moment and our “Publications must be multiplied, and scattered like the leaves of autumn,”⁷⁶ so that even in the remotest and restricted places, the word of life may be received.

PUBLISHING MINISTRY AND THE FULFILLMENT OF THE GOSPEL COMMISSION

The Publishing Ministry has a great role to play in the finishing of the gospel commission. Ellen White comments: The press is a powerful means to move the minds and hearts of the people. The men of this world seize the press and make the most of every opportunity to get poisonous literature

Encyclopedia (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996c), 890-891.

73 See <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/history/article/go/2013-04-10/publishing-work-was-central-to-early-adventist-church-1> for detail.

74 Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture references are taken from the New King James version of the Holy Bible.

75 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* Volume 8 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2002), 89.

76 Ellen G. White, *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1953), 5.



before the people. If men, under the influence of the spirit of the world and of Satan, are earnest to circulate books, tracts, and papers of a corrupting nature, you should be more earnest to get reading matter of an elevating and saving character before the people.⁷⁷

God's ambassadors must take every advantage of the press via the Literature Ministry to spread the message of hope and salvation to a dying world. "The canvassing work, properly conducted, is missionary work of the highest order, and it is as good and successful a method as can be employed for placing before the people the important truths for this time."⁷⁸ There can be no greater task given to the human race than the call to bear the everlasting gospel to the world. "Canvassing for our publications is an important and most profitable line of evangelistic work. Our publications can go to places where meetings cannot be held. In such places the faithful evangelistic canvasser takes the place of the living preacher."⁷⁹ The role of a faithful literature evangelist cannot be replaced otherwise. Ellen White is convinced that "It is an excellent school for those who are qualifying themselves to enter the ministry,"⁸⁰ because in the Literature Ministry they can develop both spiritual and social skills that they may never gain from any other line of ministry. The ministry and the books are divinely instituted for the salvation of souls and therefore able "to prepare a people to meet God."⁸¹ And because we must "reach all classes, we must meet them where they are."⁸²

77 E. G. White, *The Publishing Ministry* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1983), 44.

78 *Ibid.*, 6.

79 E. G. White, *Review and Herald* October 7, 1902.

80 E. G. White, *Colporteur Ministry*, 31.

81 *Ibid.*, 3.

82 E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 152.

Hence, the work of the Literature Evangelist is second to none in that it leads people to the Scriptures.⁸³

THE NEED FOR INNOVATIONS IN THE PUBLISHING MINISTRY

We cannot continue to do ministry the same old way in an ever-changing world. Ellen White reiterates: “The Third Angel’s message is to be given through this medium and through the living teacher. It is your duty now to bring in *all the means possible* (italics supplied) to help those who understand the truth to proclaim it.”⁸⁴ In this age of speed and change, the Literature Ministry must be open to new innovations, technology and marketing skills. It should also tap into the strength and vigor of the youth to increase the harvest. Otherwise, the ministry will become irrelevant and unfruitful.

THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN THE PUBLISHING MINISTRY

God is seeking and calling on young people with sanctified minds and energetic bodies to fulfill the purpose of the Publishing Ministries. The Scripture declares: “For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”⁸⁵ Ellen White states: We have work to do. Educate, educate, educate young men to give themselves to the ministry of the word. Educate them to become canvassers, to sell those books which the Lord by His Holy Spirit has stirred minds to write. This reading matter will thus be given to a large class of people who

⁸³ E. G. White, *The Colporteur Evangelist* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1920), 80.

⁸⁴ E. G. White, *Colporteur Ministry*, 4.

⁸⁵ 1 Cor 6:19

would never hear the truth unless it was brought to their doors. This is the work of the evangelist.⁸⁶

Ellen White contends that young people can do better work if trained.⁸⁷ “When young men take up the canvassing work filled with an intense longing to save their fellow men, they will see souls converted. From their work a harvest for the Lord will be reaped.”⁸⁸ The opportunities and privileges for our young people to impact lives for eternity through the Publishing Ministries are enormous.

INVOLVING THE YOUTH IN THE LITERATURE MINISTRY

Here are some suggestions on how young people can be involved in the Literature Ministry:

Ensure that Publishing Ministries Coordinator is elected in every Local Church as provided in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*.

Make the Literature Ministry more young people friendly and relevant to the time. Explore avenues and opportunities for technology and the internet to enhance the ministry.

Establish Literature Ministry Club in all Local Churches. The Literature Ministries can thrive in every context.

They may begin in some little way and grow gradually, to avoid discouragement. It could begin by simply pairing them in twos and have them go from door to door, offer to pray with the people and hand them simple tract at no cost.

86 E. G. White, *Colporteur Ministry*, 19

87 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* Volume 8 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2002), 405-459

88 E. G. White, *Christian Service* (Mountain View, CA: Review and Herald, 1925), 153.

The GLOW Ministry can be another avenue of engagement of the young people.

The publishing department and the youth department of the church can collaborate at all levels of the church organization to explore and implement better ways of involving the young people in the work of the Literature Ministry.

Establish a more attractive and viable reward system than presently available.

A WISE CAUTION

Much has been said on the role of the young people in the Literature Ministry, yet NOT every youth may be fitted as career Literature Evangelists. Ellen White cautions: “Everyone is not fitted for this work. Those of the best talent and ability, who will take hold of the work understandingly and systematically, and carry it forward with persevering energy, are the ones who should be selected.”⁸⁹ God deserves and always seeks for the best—those who are humble at heart and teachable.

CONCLUSION

The young people of the church are crying for the opportunity to be involved in the life, mission and leadership process of the church. While they cannot all be elders or hold church offices, they can all be involved in communicating the gospel through the printed pages.⁹⁰ They possess the vigor, initiative, and speed needed for the Literature Ministry of this generation and therefore it is imperative for the church and leaders in the Publishing Ministries to involve the young people.

89 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* Volume 4. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2002), 390.

90 George Verwer, *Literature Evangelism*. (Bromerly, Kent, England: Send The Light, 1985), 21-29.

To succeed in the Literature Ministries of today, we cannot but understand the time in which we exist, else we shall be actively and painstakingly doing ministry that is irrelevant to its intended audience. Albert Einstein once said, “The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”⁹¹ This statement is true and applicable to the Adventist Publishing Ministry.

We live in the age of SPEED, SPEED, and SPEED. We live today in a world of CHANGE, CHANGE, and CHANGE. It is not until and only when this reality is understood, internalized and implemented, that we can be certain of successful ministry to this generation.

Q U O T E

Ellen G. White adds a voice:
“We are fast approaching the end. The printing and circulation of the books and papers that contain the truth for this time are to be our work.”

91 Albert Einstein quoted in <http://pstecaudiosource.org/4121/embracing-change>



Winning with Young People

Five Things Every Pastor Should
~~Know~~ Do

Pako E. Mokgwane



I grew up playing soccer.

In every open space,
my budding soccer star
friends beckoned me to
play the sport we loved.
Even a five-minute break
at school saw us kicking
the ball.



Some of my friends had all the gear needed to play, while others did not. Ironically, those who could afford the right cleats, shin guards, and the leather ball did not possess the skills. In soccer, the only thing that matters at the end of the day was the score—can you put the ball in the goal? A team may have dribbling wizards and skillful players who dominate possession of the ball, but if they do not put the ball in the net, it all counts for nothing.

In soccer, players score in a myriad of ways. Some score by volleying the ball into the net; others head-butt it in; some direct it with their chest; some use the back of their heel; while yet others opt for the spectacular, acrobatic finish that leaves the crowd in disbelief. It really does not matter how the ball reaches the back of the net. All that matters is that it gets there.

OF YOUTH MINISTRY AND SOCCER

Ministering to youth in today's constantly changing world is a lot like improvising on the soccer field. The goal is clear: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, NIV). Ever-morphing sociological trends require those who work with youth and young adults to continually assess and evaluate the strategies used to minister to them. The principles that guide the effort are changeless, but methods can and must be changed and improved. Youth ministry is dynamic. Societal values, and cultural norms acutely impact the pace and manner in which youth ministry can be done in a given area. While each context varies, the local church presents a perfect opportunity for nurturing young people. The local church is the spiritual home of our young people; their membership is there.

Three institutions responsible for nurturing the youth are the family, the Christian school, and the local church. The family forms the primary sphere of spiritual nurturing (personal and internal), and the school and church provide a secondary sphere (communal and external). Through these institutions, youth learn to follow Jesus, embrace His call to discipleship, and find their place in God's service. While many of our youth make decisions to follow Christ during wider church events, the location where they are mentored to become devoted followers of Jesus and live out their Christian experience is the local church. With regard to local church leadership, I concur with "Growing Young Adventists" that our duty is not to just make the youth survive but to make them thrive.¹

FOCUSING ON THE CORE

We have all heard the studies chronicling the great depletion of youth from Adventist churches, especially young adults. These young people are not leaving the General Conference, divisions, unions, or conferences; they leave the local church. So, pastors in the local church, and the teams they lead, play a pivotal role in shaping how the church ministers to youth.

Therefore, in 2016 the General Conference Youth Ministries Advisory took an action that was long overdue: *to make the local church the hub of youth ministry*. "As part of its ongoing re-visioning of youth ministry, [it] 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

¹ Growing Young Adventists, growingyoungadventists.com, accessed April 30, 2018.



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.”²

The decision to focus on youth in the local church context dovetails perfectly with the Total Member Involvement (TMI) wave currently sweeping the globe. TMI has brought energy and synergy to youth ministry. TMI translates to Total Youth Involvement (TYI) when we focus specifically on the contribution that youth can make. Therefore, the pastor, elders, youth sponsors, and youth leaders are not the only ones who are integral to the success of youth ministry. All departments, all adults, all mentors, all supporters are called to *equip, engage and empower* young people if we hope to arrest youth attrition. TMI will be possible when TDI (Total Department Involvement) is in pursuit of TYI. Youth ministry is not a field for lone rangers. Collaboration is vital.

One of the indicators of pastoral success is the retention of youth. We must invest in these young minds. It is time to act! The prophecies tell us that the youth will finish the work. We must believe it and prepare for it to happen in a big way, so that we may expedite the coming of the Lord. The following are some ways in which pastors and elders can facilitate youth ministry:

1. CONNECT WITH THEM. Young minds are interested in knowing that leadership is normal. They want to see whether you do normal things like laugh, greet, and smile. Do you have other interests outside of your spiritual calling? Are you normal enough to go camping? Hiking? These are critical questions for most young people, even though they may not be for you. Participating in social media is a good start. The first language of many millennials and Generation Z is not Spanish, French, Portuguese, or Setswana but

2 General Conference Youth Ministries Advisory minutes, February 2016.

social media. Youth are found on social media. However, digital presence should never substitute for physical presence. Rather than ignore the reality of social media, it is critically important to harness its potential for mobilizing youth, advertising youth programs, and eventually fulfilling the supreme cause of mission. Know the young people by name. A database of the youth will help you to memorize their names. Barna and Kinnaman assert that connecting with young people opens up ineffable prospects for spiritual leadership.³

2. RELATE TO THEM. Relationships are symbiotic. All parties in the relationship are important. In any relationship, there is a difference of opinion. This must not be viewed as a threat but as an opportunity for understanding and growth. When young people question you, it is in part because they are “checking you out” to see whether you are real. Are you genuine? Are you caring? Are you honest? One of the things that irks young people is inconsistency and partiality. Treat everyone the same. It is OK to say “I don’t know” when you have no answer to a particular question. The youth will respect you for your honesty, and they will, in turn, trust you with the personal things of their lives. Maintain confidentiality when they open up to you. Authentic relationships enhance the pastor’s or elder’s ability to help young people identify and develop their spiritual gifts.

3. EMPOWER THEM. The empowerment process starts with teaching. Rivet the youth in the truth. It will help them find their identity in Jesus, and it is why the church exists (Matt. 28:19, 20). Then, mentor them. Moses mentored Joshua. He was patient with Joshua, and Joshua was cooperative. Moses did not wait until he was too old to mentor Joshua. In

³ George Barna and David Kinnaman, eds., *Churchless: Understanding Today’s Unchurched and How to Connect With Them* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014).



his quest to be the best he could be for Joshua, he availed himself. It takes great patience to work with young minds.

Time is a precious commodity. Youth who have a mentoring *relationship* with caring adults are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.⁴ Pastors should encourage all the adults to intentionally mentor young people. If everyone got involved in this exercise, the results would be phenomenal. The church exists for mission. Without mission, the church becomes a social club. Leaders who are intentional in modeling evangelism (personal and public) will ensure that the legacy is passed on from generation to generation, thus making evangelism a lifestyle; not an event.

YOUTH ARE KEEN OBSERVERS

Adults who do what they say have great leverage over youth. Say it, do it, stay in it! Ellen White says, “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! How soon might the end come.”⁵ So, training is the key. Leaders who cheer for the youth bring the best out of them. The small efforts, the achievements and accomplishments of youth, must be celebrated. Young people are seeking honest mentors; not ones who choose to be politically correct. If you think they are not cut out for something, direct them to a vocation or ministry area that you think is more suitable for them. The idea would be for them to find God’s place for them. By so doing, we limit the work of the devil in trying to render them useless and worthless. Be a cheerleader.

4 Marilyn Price-Mitchell, “Mentoring Youth Matters: Six Qualities That Make You a Good Mentor for Teens,” *Psychology Today*, Jan. 29, 2013, psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-moment-youth/201301/mentoring-youth-matters.

5 Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), 271.

4. TRUST THEM. Pastors, pass on the baton of leadership to the youth. Contrary to popular belief, those who share power become more powerful and relevant. This is another place where all church departments have a special role. Youth Ministries alone cannot involve the youth in leadership. It is too small. Other departments can embrace the giftedness of young people. Disengagement bears a cold lethargy, and demons insinuate thoughts of quitting in the youth. Jan Paulsen, immediate past president of the General Conference, said of the young people, “We must vote them into substantive roles that bespeak a high level of trust, include them in the decision-making processes.”⁶ The world is ready to embrace young people; what about the church? If it does not, the devil will happily employ their creativity, energy, time, and resources. However, we must not toss the baton to people simply because they are young. The baton must be passed on to young people who show commitment, passion, and spiritual maturity. The youth will never be perfect. No one is perfect! All they need is a chance.

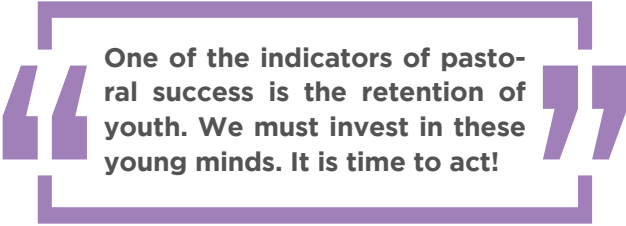
5. SUPPORT THEM. Attend programs for young people. It is advantageous for the pastors and elders to know the calendar and events of youth ministries. Show up rocking your Pathfinder uniform during Pathfinder days or young adult gear on their special days. One of the biggest initiatives of the church is Global Youth Day (GYD). GYD affords the youth an opportunity to serve their communities. Participate in this day. As you support, avoid taking over. Let them run the show. Acquaint yourself with the resources, quinquennial and annual themes, programs, curriculums, and operations of Youth Ministries.⁷

6 Jan Paulsen, “Why Do They Walk Away?,” *Adventist World*, Oct. 2009, archives.adventistworld.org/2009/october/why-do-they-walk-away.html.

7 Numerous resources, including *Pastor’s and Elder’s Handbook for Youth Ministry*, are available on the official Seventh-day Adventist Youth

One of the most effective ways to support the youth is to pray for them. Let them know you are praying for them. Attend their sporting outings, their presentations, or other special events in their lives. Support should not be limited to church activities. It should extend to other facets of their life. That's when you become "real" to them.

Change begins with leaders. Pastors are influential, and God requires much from them because of the sacred responsibility they carry. But youth ministry is not about the leaders; it is about the youth. It is about leading them into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and helping them embrace His call to discipleship. How each local church passes the ball, the strategy for scoring, and the skills of the players all remain unique. But we can never lose sight of the goal. What matters most is that the ball gets to the back of the net.



One of the indicators of pastoral success is the retention of youth. We must invest in these young minds. It is time to act!

Ministries website at youth.adventist.org.

"Winning with young people: Five things every pastor should know to do" by Pako Edson Mokgwane, published in the June 2018 issue of Ministry.

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EVERY UNION... ONE YEAR IN MISSION!

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 "ok, 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 third 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, “Your 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 its lost.

For a couple of 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 & 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.”*

Second, 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?

Third, 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 Angels 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 makes sense, since the majority of the world's population lives in 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*.

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 highschool 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 Rahab'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.

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 chord) 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 download a free copy of the manual at 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 and learn the what, when, where, how, why and who of OYiM.

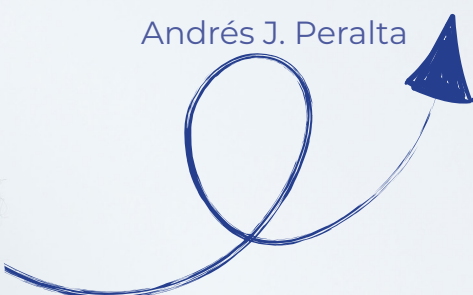
May God move in your heart to start a One Year in Mission in your Union. Just imagine the impact not only on our youth but on the men, women, boys and girls they will most certainly win for Jesus!

Can you say it with us? "EVERY union...One Year in Mission!"



Youth Evangelism according to Ellen White

Andrés J. Peralta



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"⁸ 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."⁹

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!"¹⁰

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"¹¹ 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

8 White, E., *Evangelism*, p. 432.2

9 White, E., Lt66-1901.7

10 White, E., *Messages to Young People*, p. 196.1

11 White, E. *Testimonies to the Church*, 7T 63.1

“young women and children”¹² 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.”¹³ 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.”¹⁴

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?”

12 White, E., *Messages to Young People*, p. 197.2

13 White, E., *Gospel Workers 1915*, p. 208.1

14 Ibid



Let there be companies organized in every church to do this work.”¹⁵

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.”¹⁶ 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.”¹⁷ 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.”¹⁸

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,

15 White, E., *Christian Service*, p. 34.1

16 White, E., *God’s Remnant Church*, p. 19.1

17 White, E., *Christian Service*, p. 30.5

18 White, E., *Christian Service*, p. 33.1

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"¹⁹ Of course there are exceptions. Adults with charisma exist that can attract the youth, but experience tells

¹⁹ White, E., Messages to Young People, p. 204.1

us that a youth can reach his friends with much more ease: “Educate the youth to help the youth.”²⁰

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.”²¹ 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.”²²

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.”²³ 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

20 White, E., *Messages to Young People*, p. 203.3

21 White, E. *Evangelism*, p. 478.1

22 Ibid

23 White, E. *Gospel Workers*, p. 208.1

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.”²⁴ 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.”²⁵

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.”²⁶

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

24 White, E. *Messages to Young People*, 207.2

25 White, E. *Evangelism*, p. 108.3

26 White, E., *Evangelism*, p. 24.2

youth and strength are to go into the dark places of the earth, to call perishing souls to repentance.”²⁷

For White, the joint effort of the young men of the cities against the impiety and crime could positively influence the cause of the reform: “He [God] has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with a clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men.”²⁸

“
QUOTE

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.

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²⁷ White, E., *Evangelism*, p. 23.3

²⁸ White, E., *Evangelism*, p. 478.1



Youth Leadership and Involvement

Pako E. Mokgwane

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is growing at a fast rate. In some Divisions, the youth are the majority. This reality necessitates a keen interest in the development and empowerment of the young people.



In response to the growing need of leaders, the high attrition rate of young people, the wave of technology and the focus on the local church, 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 from observation. Thus, the best training of our youth people is taught through modeling. 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

The mission of Adventist Youth Ministries is one of salvation, discipleship, and service, which is grounded deep in the biblical model of the early church's mission (Acts 2:42-47). Ellen White has written several publications to express the urgent need for the service of young people in leadership. She decorously describes some of the winsome attributes of the young people that may add flavor to the leadership of the church, "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. To plan with a clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies" (White, 1946, p. 476).

The church has reached a critical time in its existence when the urgency of the Three Angels' Messages must be delivered with high precision and at a time when young people are longing to be involved in leadership and decision-making bodies more than ever before. This need is corroborated by the Policy of the Church (2018, p. 401) which recognizes the following as one of the objectives of its arm (Youth Ministry), "To ensure the integration of youth into all aspects of church life and leadership in order that they might be full participants in the mission of the Church." Thus, as we talk of total member (youth) involvement in mission, there should be an equal emphasis on total involvement of all the church member groups (including youth) in leadership.

Both young people and adults should be involved in the life and mission of the church. In most local churches, participation is skewed towards adults making leadership an adult enterprise (Papu, 2019). The participation of young people in decision-making processes, 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 affirmation. Conferences, Unions and Divisions should be intentional in affording young people to be 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!'"

Studies reveal that the church is losing many young people. They are not leaving because of doctrinal issues but relational one (Dudley, 2000). 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 (Mitra, 2009). To keep the youth as spectators and mere consultants is to rob the mission of the much-needed youth-adult partnership. No wonder, the leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Wilson (2017) has called on pastors and leaders to embrace youth in their different endeavors so that they (youth) are involved and given a chance to lead. The leadership of the church should afford the youth who are dedicated and spiritually mature while working hard on those who are outliers.

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." 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 youthful any longer. They are the youth 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. They are expected to 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 stay germane for the local church. It is for this reason, the pastors' and elders' handbook for youth ministry has been produced.

Pastors and Elders are the gatekeepers 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 with and empower youth. This has come with delightful benefits for both the leaders and the youth and ultimately added impetus towards the church’s realization of its mission.

CONCLUSION

Fidelity to God on the part of the youth will win the trust of the leaders of the church. When the Seventh-day Adventist Church was newly formed, it was teenagers and young adults who held many leadership positions and helped to transform the church into the organization it is today. Consequently, the church should not see the youth as the hope of the future, but the indispensable catalysts of the present. The young people who started the Adventist movement are the same youth who shall finish the work. 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.

Dear Leader, mentor them, launch them into the deep, establish authentic relationships with them, pass the baton on and give them a chance.

Dear youth, be present, be available, be willing and be cooperative!



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Marks of Leadership

Carlos Campitelli



Today, as in the past,
God calls the youth to
be great leaders.

Much has been written about leadership in the last years, from the secular as well as the religious perspective. The Bible narrates stories of men and women who were great leaders. Nehemiah was one of them. From his leadership profile, we can extract principles that direct activities and projects, such as practical suggestions to deal with typical leadership situations.

THE CALL AND EXPERIENCE OF NEHEMIAH

In his book, Nehemiah tells how he led the reconstruction of the walls of the city of Jerusalem. God guided him and allowed him to be commissioned by the King Artaxerxes, of Persia, whose support was necessary for the execution of his plans. Nehemiah was in the citadel of Shushan (the ancient capital of Persia), taking care of the business of the King when God impressed him to fulfill a great work.

The call of Nehemiah was not different from ours. We also have in front of us the challenging reality of forming a new generation of Christian leaders: youths guided by God, that breathe his Word, that seek communion with him, that comprehend his will in the common daily events of their lives.

In fact, the experience of Nehemiah describes well the responsibilities of a spiritual leader.

ESSENTIAL FACTORS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS

1. **PASSION FOR THE PEOPLE:** It's one of the principal characteristics of the leader. It's necessary that he loves people and mingles with them, ministering to the needs of those he leads. Nehemiah loved his people and had compassion for the situation in which they found themselves in (Nehemiah 1:8-10).

2. **SACRIFICE:** An efficient spiritual leadership requires, many times, a high price. If someone is not willing to pay that price, he will not be prepared to practice leadership in the work of God. Nehemiah voluntarily decided to leave his function in Persia to take care of his people (Nehemiah 2:5). Also, nowadays, Christian leadership is marked by sacrifice. As a leader in the work of God, you are also called to sacrifice some things, in order to bring those you lead to a communion with God.
3. **ALL-ENCOMPASSING VISION:** An anonymous author affirmed: “The difference between a leader with vision and a leader without vision is that, even though both are in the same place, having the same perspective of something, one only sees the obvious and the other sees the horizon that goes beyond the physical.” Nehemiah carried out an investigation, and that led him to profoundly know the reality of his people. “Ye see the evil case that we are in” (2:17). He gathered the authorities, the priests, the nobles and the magistrates (see 2:16-18), and he drew the people’s attention to what was happening. Remember that leading people implies having a broad vision, and God can provide it.
4. **DISPOSITION:** The people hear and follow the voice of the leader and respond affirmatively to the challenges that he lays out. When Nehemiah presented his project with objectives, the people responded positively. He said: “Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem” (2:17), and the people understood that the work was theirs; that’s why they responded: “Let us rise up and build” (2:18). He transformed himself into an action person, as he reconstructed the city.



5. **FAITH IN GOD:** “The God of heaven, he will prosper us” (2:20). The Christian leader should direct the gaze of those he leads towards God, as the fountain of success and efficiency. He reminds them of the way in which God led their lives in the past and urges the people that surround him to have the assurance that God will never abandon his children. The leader recognizes that the work is of God, and without a doubt, the victory will occur. Nehemiah made the people see that success did not reside in human abilities, but in the power of God. This leadership characteristic of Nehemiah should be imitated by the leaders of modern times.
6. **TEAM SPIRIT:** “We his servants will arise and build” (Nehemiah 2:20). In this line of action, we find a list with many people that cooperate with him: the high priest, a perfumer, a governor of the region of Jerusalem, another governor and his daughters, the Levites, the priests (3:1-28). In Nehemiah 2:20, the pronoun “we” is very significant. The leader always goes with the group. Furthermore, he is attentive and participative; that’s why Nehemiah worked with the entire team, guiding and coordinating each task.
7. **MATURITY:** One of the challenges of the practice of leadership is confronting criticism. This is unavoidable. With Nehemiah, it wasn’t different. In Chapter 4 of his book, we see the threats that he suffered because of his conduct. Criticism is an element that impacts us emotionally; but, on the other hand, it measures the level of maturity of the leader in front of the group. However, when the group is united, the leader remains stronger in the midst of criticism.

8. **ENTHUSIASM:** The predisposition to carry out the tasks and the desire to reach the objectives are fruits of enthusiasm. “For the people had a mind to work.” (4:6). The context presupposes that there was motivation on the part of the leader. Besides that, the people counted on God’s direction.
9. **COMMUNION WITH GOD:** The habit of prayer appears with frequency in the context of Nehemiah’s leadership (4:9). Repeated times in his book, Nehemiah prayed in favor of the work that was being carried out. The Christian leader should motivate those he leads to cultivate daily habits of prayer. Over the spiritual guides of the Bible, Sanders affirms: “They were not leaders because of the brightness of their thoughts or because of counting on inexhaustible resources, or because of a magnificent culture or natural gifts, but because of the power of prayer.”
10. **VIGILANCE:** “Neither I, nor my brethren [...] put off our clothes” (4:23). It’s curious that laying down or working, they maintained their weapons by their side. We, as spiritual drivers, also need to be alert. Today, the church needs leaders that are ready to defend the Christian principles and the goals with the Word of God. We are guardians of the truth for the end time.
11. **FOCUS:** “I am doing a great work” (Nehemiah 6:3). Nehemiah prioritized the work he was carrying out. A concentration on the priorities, that is, maintaining the focus, is one of the fundamental characteristics of effective leadership. The leader needs to maintain a very clear direction to follow. In this manner, his group will also remain concentrated in the activities and the projects that should be carried out.

12. **RECOGNITION:** “For they perceived [recognized] that this work was wrought of our God” (6:16). Nehemiah seems to remember the words told in Deuteronomy 8:17 and 18; in fact, attributing to God the victories and successes is a quality that should characterize the Christian leader. “The success` attending Nehemiah’s efforts shows what prayer, faith, and wise, energetic action will accomplish. Living faith will prompt energetic action. The spirit manifested by the leader will be, to a great extent, reflected by the people” (Christian Service, p. 177).

We can, then, conclude that spiritual leaders who are guided in the purpose of God reach great victories alongside those they lead.

Dear young elder, you should also be a leader with these characteristics. The church in these last days needs your talents to finish the work.

The God of heaven will give you great success.

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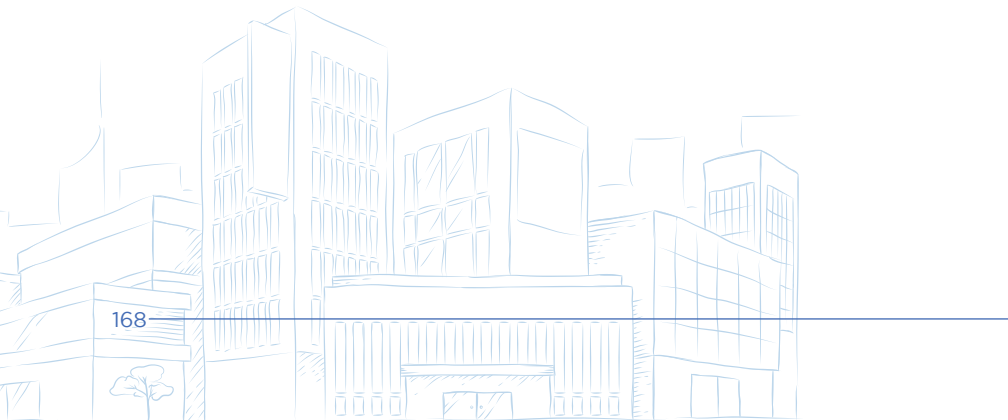
QUOTE

The call of Nehemiah was not different from ours. We also have in front of us the challenging reality of forming a new generation of Christian leaders...

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Acknowledgements:

We want to thank each and every person who contributed to the completion of this book. We are beyond grateful to have the plethora of perspectives from the various backgrounds represented in these pages. It is our commitment to put into practice the values expressed by each writer and learned by us as readers. We know that every person who reads the pages in this book will be beyond blessed. Thank you for pouring your God-given wisdom into us and inspiring us to GO for the Lord.





Seventh-day
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