

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Divinity

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN THE TECHIMAN WEST DISTRICT, GHANA

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Date Completed: April 2024

This project surveyed the involvement of the youth in church leadership, especially as church elders in the Techiman West District of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. Records and observations have shown that the Techiman West District youth are not adequately recognized and included in district and local church elections for church officers. This problem stems from transferring cultural practices and beliefs into the church. In the local culture, older people traditionally lead family and community affairs. Additionally, there is a misconception among the members that young, unmarried people who are not gainfully employed cannot be elected as church elders because they lack the necessary resources, such as a spouse as well as accommodations to host overnight visitors to the church and also the young people who are not married may fall into sexual sin, which may bring reproach upon

the church. Therefore, to safeguard the good name of the church, only adults who are married are elected as church elders.

This study aimed to identify the perceived obstacles to youth involvement in church leadership, particularly as church elders. The goal was to suggest practical ways to enhance youth participation in church leadership in the Techiman West District of the Mid-North Ghana Conference of SDA. To accomplish this, the researcher employed a descriptive research method. After investigating the issue through interviews and observations, the researcher developed a questionnaire to gather people's opinions on the studied topic.

The study found out that, to improve the involvement of the youth in church leadership in Techiman West District, there is the need to establish youth churches, mentor the youth, and create room for elders and the youth to exchange ideas on the challenges of the youth. Also, the church leaders ought to strengthen Senior Youth Leadership and Master Guide clubs in the churches, train the youth in leadership programs, and empower them to lead in church programs. This will create a friendly relationship between the youth and the elders, promoting church growth and development. The study confirmed that the youth perform better when they serve as church elders than older people. Just as educated young people can lead a nation as president or king and lead in secular organizations, young professionals in the church can also serve as church elders, whether married or single if they have the spiritual qualifications.

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IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN THE TECHIMAN
WEST DISTRICT, GHANA

A project

presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Divinity

by

Maxwell Obour Boateng Awuah

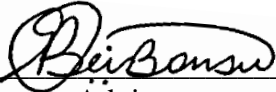
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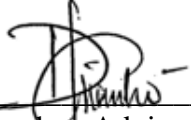
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To God be the Glory

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

An unscientific observation made in Techiman West District shows that only adults are elected as church elders both at the district and local church levels. None of the elders is a young person. The elders believe that the youth cannot lead the church. Due to that the youth are sidelined and as a result are not interested in church activities.

An interview with Elder Fosu Amponsah Ebenezer, the head district Elder of Techiman west district reveals that the district which was established in 2014 had Peter Kusi as the head district Elder from 2014-2016, then D.A. Monofie a retiree led the district from 2017 to 2020. Benjamin Afena Yeboah also led the district from 2021-2022 and finally, Fosu Amponsah ebenezer also is leading since 2023 to date. Some of the people who assisted the head elders are Thomas Tufour, (a retiree) Akomea Sakyi, Appiah-Kubi Bismark, Solomo Oduro Boakye with n, Solomon Kumah (a retiree) and Ampofo Daniel the district secretary whole alone is the young man among them.

Currently, the elders leading the district are all adults. They are adults of whom some have retired from active service and none of them knows how to use computer and therefore lack information, communication and technological ideas. The ideas, programs and plans of the leaders do not meet the expectations and interest of the youth. As a result, the youth are not interested in church activities. Few of them

show interest in marching drillings. The rest who are not interested in drilling are just hanging in there. These are going on because the adult church elders do not plan programs that impact to the youth. The youth are left to their fate.

The Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) given to the Church cannot be accomplished without the involvement of the youth. The youth in the Techiman West District constitute about sixty-five percent of the church members, according to the 2018 Conference Statistical Report. It is, therefore, not advisable to advance the Great Commission of the Church without involving the youth in the district. In the wisdom of God, the Creator, He did not use only adults for His cause and service; the youth were given roles to play. The Old Testament (OT) offers evidence of youth enlisted in the work of God and into leadership positions. Examples of such youth include Jeremiah (Jer 1:6), Samuel (1 Sam 7:15), and Josiah (2 Kgs 22: 1).

Similarly, in the New Testament, some apostles, like John (who became the Revelator), John the Baptist, and James (John's brother), were all young when the Lord called them to ministry (Luke 1:35-36). Jesus was nearly the same age as John the Baptist but six months younger than John. However, they all began their active ministry in their 30s.¹ These and many more will be seen through this research, confirming the value of the youth in church leadership. Joel 2:28 says, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” The outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh implies youth involvement of young individuals. This call to advance the gospel commission is inclusive and means that the youth have a significant role in accomplishing it.

¹Andy Reddick, *His Will and Mine: Pleasing Benefits of Joyful Service to the Lord* (Durham, England: Strategic Book Group, 2011), 67.

The need for youth involvement in leadership at the Techiman West District of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church stems from several reasons. Firstly, some older elders who have long been in leadership positions need more confidence in youth leadership. They consider the youth inexperienced, too young, and lacking in vision to plan for the Church's development. Additionally, adults feel that the youth need to be more mature to handle issues related to adults. Moreover, adults underestimate youth leadership as they believe the youth depend on them for all their needs. According to their thinking, if the youth cannot provide for their own basic needs, how can they care for the Church? The attitudes of older individuals who have served the Church in various capacities in the Techiman West District exemplify Jesus' statement that "no prophet is honored among his people" (Matt 13:57). This argument is buttressed by an incident in which an elder from Zongo Church in the Techiman West District objected to his son being nominated as elder positing that he was too young to be one of the 2019 elders. After the first reading in November 2018, the elder approached the Nominating Committee to object to the Church's decision to include his son in the Church's leadership.

Sadly, instead of the youth believing that the Lord can use them to champion the cause of His kingdom, they often look down upon themselves when it comes to accepting leadership roles in the Church. In fact, understanding leadership, particularly as it pertains to youth leadership, is maintained by the requirement for leadership development.² Some of the youth tend to behave like the Prophet Jeremiah, who saw nothing good in accepting the title prophet (Jer 1:6). At a young age, he argued that his lack of eloquence disqualified him from the prophetic ministry. He

²Temeka N. Brantley, "The Future of Leadership: A Case Study Examining the Effectiveness of Youth Leadership Development Programs in Urban Baptist Churches" (DEd. Diss., Ashland University, Ashland, OH, 2016), 2.

believed that he was unable to use appropriate language to convey his ideas.³ He was afraid and looked down upon himself. He was about 18-20 years old. Many youths today exhibit similar tendencies as Jeremiah. This paper seeks strategies to enhance youth participation and involvement in the Church's leadership role.

The Bible is replete with many instances where young people were used to accomplish enormous tasks for God correctly and successfully. God used Daniel and his three friends in captivity in a foreign land to glorify Himself. They were seen as possessing a high sense of integrity. They excelled in their duties to the glory of God. They were young, but they allowed themselves to be used by God. The Angels are ever ready to speak through our youth if only they avail themselves of leadership in God's Church.⁴

The OT eloquently describes God's guidance and actions of salvation for his people. Nevertheless, God has sometimes used human agents, including young ones, to achieve such functions, as seen in Joseph's life.⁵ Joseph led the Pharaoh to build warehouses (Gen 41:46, 56) throughout Egypt to save the lives of his nationals and others.⁶ Joshua, a young man, received the mantle of leadership from Moses (Deut 31:1-3; Josh 1:1-2), he led the people of God to the Promised Land without fear. Samuel, Jeremiah, David, and Solomon demonstrated the honesty of God's vision to get young people involved in leadership positions. These young people in the OT

³"I Cannot Speak" [Jer 1:6], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1978), 4:354.

⁴Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 297.

⁵Dan Kwaku Owusu-Ansah, "Increasing and Sustaining Youth Participation in Programs for Effective Adventist Youth Ministry in the Abankwa District of Kumasi Ghana" (DMin diss., Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 2016), 4.

⁶*Ibid.*, 7.

demonstrated God's innovative and revolutionary approach to transforming His vision into action through youth involvement.⁷

Ellen G. White asserts that until the men and women who make up our church membership come together and coordinate their efforts alongside the efforts of the ministers and church officials, God's purpose on earth will never be completed.⁸ By implication, every church member, including the youth, must advance the Gospel commission. As has been identified earlier, the youth form a more significant percentage of the Church (55.6%) of the membership.⁹ Therefore, the greater responsibility of the work in the Church rests upon them. They are the strong and energetic people of the Church, the agents to spread the gospel to all corners of the world as quickly as possible. The youth involvement in the Gospel Commission will help advance the Church's mission more quickly.

Youth participation in church programs should always be encouraged. It is also important to encourage the young women to get involved in church programs for women. Similarly, the young men must participate in programs such as leading out in Sabbath school discussions and other vital programs. If the Church's youth are encouraged to see themselves as part of the Church, they will willingly and openly use their skills to help hasten the gospel commission. Churches open to allowing young people to lead in the way God calls them to will attract youth eager to step

⁷Louise Raymonde Nocandy, "An Action Plan for Youth Involvement Leadership at François in Martinique" (DMin diss., Andrews University, 2017), 24.

⁸Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 9:117.

⁹Ghana Statistical Services, *2010 Population and Housing Census: District Analytical Report Techiman Municipality* (Accra: Ghana: Ghana Statistical Service, 2014), 5.

up.¹⁰ Involving the young people and their technological skills in the Church's leadership will help expedite the spread of the Gospel Commission given to the Remnant Church. As a testament to all people, this gospel of the kingdom will be preached worldwide until the end of time (Matt 24:14). This can only be accomplished when our leaders become transformational, ready to develop the youth to become leaders.¹¹

In the case of sending the gospel to all humanity, every person who is aware of the truth is required by God to try to convert others to the truth.¹² God did not allow Angels to proclaim the gospel for humanity's salvation but instead granted salvation through human hands. God could have commanded the angel sent to Peter through Cornelius and Philip to carry on the Church's assigned work. The angels instead spoke to the chosen to work on God's behalf.¹³ Since the Gospel commission is not restricted to any age, the youth share the truth with the unconverted world. It is imperative that the Church engages them in decision-making, evangelization, preaching, and mobilizing the support of their fellow youth to spread the gospel.¹⁴ The youth have the potential and need help from the entire Church membership.

¹⁰Karl Vaters, "Yes, Churches Are Raising Young Leaders—and Yours Can, Too," posted June 1, 2020, accessed 2 August 2020, <https://karlvaters.com/raising-young-leaders/>.

¹¹Pei Chi Hua, "The Relationship between Gender Presidential Leadership, and the Quality of Community Colleges" (DEd. Diss., University of Southern Californian 2005), 11.

¹²Hua, "The Relationship between Gender Presidential Leadership, and the Quality of Community Colleges," 103.

¹³Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 134, 109.

¹⁴Ted N. C. Wilson, "5 Ways to Encourage Youth in Total Member Involvement, More Inspiration from Our Revival and Reformation Feature," *Ministry*, June 2017, 17, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2017/06/5-ways-to-encourage-youth-in-Total-Member-Involvement>.

Their unique character influenced by divine truth can impact their peers as they relate to non-believers. Youths allowed in church leadership will feel responsible for carrying out their mission. The Church will make plans and programs to advance the Gospel Commission. Our youth are unique and strong and would never be ready to take up the mantle if only their involvement in church activities were recognized and encouraged. Indeed, if given the right guidance and support, our army of young people today can accomplish a great deal.¹⁵ Nonetheless, more work needs to be done to foster leadership, namely in the areas of primary, secondary, and preschool/kindergarten education. Thus, to equip and give ways to the young to accept a leadership role at any level, Josiah's appointment as king of Israel must be a lesson to all Church leaders.¹⁶

Statement of the Problem

The SDA Church in the Techiman West District is encountering a significant challenge as young people are not allowed to take up leadership roles, including eldership. This situation is problematic as it deprives the church of potential future leaders who possess innate skills and talents bestowed by God. Additionally, it discourages youth from actively participating in church activities. Young individuals gain valuable leadership experiences through school and other affiliations, which help them develop essential leadership skills. The prevention of young people from assuming leadership roles dampens their enthusiasm for leadership and church work, thus hindering the progress of the Gospel Commission in the Techiman West District.

¹⁵*General Conference Bulletin*, January 29, 30, 1893, 24, quoted in Kabwata Seventh-day Adventist Church, "A Word to the Youth," accessed 2 August 2020, https://kabwatasdachurch-lusaka.adventisthost.org/adventist-youth?_=1743088364632.5247.

¹⁶Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy, "The State of Adventist Education Report," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 79, no. 3 (April-June 2017): 11-15, <https://jae.adventist.org/en/2017.3.3>.

Although some long-serving elders believe that young people are too immature to be church leaders, it is crucial to explore the factors that hinder youth involvement in the district and develop strategies to improve the situation.

Purpose of the Study

This study explores the obstacles that hinder young people from engaging in church leadership in the Techiman West District. Additionally, the study intends to assess the potential of youth in leadership positions. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To present the background information of the study.
2. To identify the factors that discourage youth from assuming church leadership positions
3. To propose adequate methods for increasing youth involvement in church leadership.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to raise awareness and appreciation for youth leadership within the Techiman West District. Shedding light on this important aspect of the Church can create new opportunities for young people to participate in church leadership and ministry. This increased involvement can contribute to a more vibrant and inclusive church community, empowering and inspiring young and older members.

Delimitation of the Study

This study will focus on implementing initiatives to enhance young people's active engagement in church leadership roles within the Techiman West District. It will encompass a comprehensive analysis of youth participation in church activities,

emphasizing identifying opportunities to foster their involvement. While the study will primarily concentrate on the Techiman West District, the broader goal is to identify strategies that can be applied to other districts.

Methodology and Procedure of the Study

This study utilizes a quantitative research methodology involving the collection of numerical data and its statistical analysis. The primary data collection method will be a structured questionnaire designed to gather insights from respondents. By analyzing the responses and data collected, the study aims to develop effective strategies to enhance the involvement of young individuals in church leadership within the Techiman West district of the SDA Church.

Chapter One introduces and describes the paper. Chapter Two examines the biblical and Theological foundations, and Chapter Three is a Literature Review. Chapter Four describes the local context, demonstrating the work's validity with evidence. The sixth chapter (last) summarizes and concludes the paper.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

The most crucial component in every organization is leadership. An organization's leadership significantly impacts its success, development, and effectiveness. The Church, the body of Christ, needs leaders who are committed, have a clear vision, and are eager to follow God's plan rather than their own. According to statistician and church expert George Barna, leading is still one of the Church's most apparent requirements. Though most people are open to God's vision, they are often not exposed to authentic leadership or vision.¹ Given George Barna's claim, the Church must be open enough to permit dedicated members to be active in leadership, regardless of age, particularly church eldership. When church leaders commit to upholding God's will, they work in a way that will help the church advance, expand, and successfully carry out the Great Commission (Matt 28).

The Old Testament Foundation

The word "elder" is not frequently used in the OT. However, in Numbers 11:16–30, God commands Moses to choose 70 elders to help him rule the Israelites. Although the ages of these elders were not given, they were likely paired with individuals their age. As a result, the group's younger members were responsible for

¹John C. Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, 2nd ed (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007).

looking after the youth. If the youth of that era could govern their contemporaries as elders, today's youth could be chosen as church elders.

The OT lists young people, including prophets, priests, judges, and kings. According to reports, Daniel was 17 years old, probably even younger, when he was captive to Babylon.² He reportedly served several kings during the 70 years when the Jews were in captivity. Inferred from this is that even in their prime, the kings recognized some potential in Daniel and his contemporaries. The Babylonian monarchy took over Jerusalem. To serve the king in Babylon, several of the most intelligent and powerful young men were taken away from their families in Jerusalem. Daniel and his friends were among these young men. They were selected to serve as the king's wise men and work in his court (Dan 2).

According to Jeremiah 1:4-8, Jeremiah was around 17 when God asked him to serve the people of Judah. Judah had fallen into a grievous sin against God at the time of Jeremiah's call. They had abandoned God, worshiped Baal's idols, and sacrificed their children to him by burning them. God had, therefore, taken away His blessings from them as a result. Any committed young person today can be used by the God who used Jeremiah to minister to the nation of Judah during its time of evil to minister to His Church in these final days. The study emphasizes that, with God's guidance, eldership in the Church should not only be reserved for adults. Young people should also be encouraged and given the chance to showcase the gifts that God has given them.

God has employed people of all ages, including youth, to further His cause. We learn that the Prophet Samuel appointed David, the youngest of his siblings, as

²Amanda Bible Williams, "Daniel's Captivity in Babylon," accessed 19 July 2023, <https://shereadstruth.com/daniels-captivity-in-babylon/>.

Israel's future king in 1 Samuel 16. Prophet Samuel anointed David, the youngest among his brothers, as the future king of Israel. The prophet informed Jesse that "The Lord has not chosen these" after the prophet had seen Jesse's seven senior sons. So, he asked Jesse if there was a further one. Jesse responded, "There is still the youngest, but he is tending the sheep." David's father may have believed he was too young to become king, as evidenced by the fact that he was not invited to be considered among his siblings for the anointing. It is believed that David was around 15 years old when the Prophet Samuel made him king among his brothers.³

David was reportedly sent to the battle by Jesse to check on his siblings while he was between the ages of 15 and 19.⁴ David's older brother Eliab scolded him for showing up at the fighting field. "I am aware of your arrogance and pride" (1 Sam 17:28). Eliab's usage of language in the text gives the impression that he was conversing with a much younger person than himself. It might also imply that David was too young to be present, and Eliab did not anticipate his showing up on the battlefield. Despite the realities above, God delivered the Philippians to Israel via David. In light of this, the study holds that God does not consider age when executing his will. God's mission will be hindered if the youth are not allowed to take leadership positions, especially eldership, due to their youth.

After his father, King Amon, died, Josiah, the sixteenth king of Judah, took the kingdom at the age of eight (8). The reign of Josiah lasted from 640 to 609 BCE. According to the Hebrew Bible, he brought about important changes in religion by

³Lyndon Stimeling, "David, The Shepherd Boy," posted July 13, 2019, accessed 2 October 2023, <https://www.lewistownsentinel.com/news/religion/2019/07/david-the-shepherd-boy/>.

⁴Stimeling, "David, The Shepherd Boy."

making it illegal to worship any other gods save Yahweh.⁵ Most biblical historians accord Josiah credit for compiling or creating substantial portions of the Hebrew Scriptures during the “Deuteronomic reform” that most likely took place under his authority. Josiah's example shows that age is not a significant factor in church leadership. The leader’s devotion to God and compliance with heavenly instructions matter. There should be no reason why young individuals in the Church today who are devoted to God and prepared to accept His appointment cannot be appointed as elders. God can still govern the Church today by using young people as elders if He could use Josiah to rule the nation of Judah.

At the young age of 30 in Egypt, Joseph was appointed Pharaoh’s Prime Minister (Genesis 41:46). It was Pharaoh’s testimony that he was clever and prudent (Genesis 42:37), as evidenced by the fact that he brought Benjamin to Egypt and then revealed himself to his brothers afterward. A careful reading of Genesis 45:4-7 reveals the qualities that made Joseph such an empowering leader:

- a) A strong sense of security. “Please come near to me” (vs.4)
- b) A strong sense of identity. “I am Joseph, your brother” (vs.4)
- c) A strong sense of empathy. “Do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves (vs.4)
- d) A strong sense of purpose. “For God sent me before you to preserve life” (vs.5)
- e) A strong sense of perspective. “There are still five years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth” (vs. 6, 7).⁶

⁵“Josiah,” Wikipedia, accessed 5 October 2023, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josiah>.

⁶Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, 45.

Today's Church is a whole of young people who, like Joseph, are in the prime of their lives and whom God may equally utilize as elders to further the interests of His kingdom.

The New Testament Foundation

The New Testament contains instances of young individuals holding elder positions in churches. Timothy and John Mark were two of those youthful leaders. In the book of Ephesians, believers get spiritual gifts at any age. It simply denotes an all-inclusive approach to empowering individual Christians for the expansion of the Church. As a result, leadership is distributed by the Holy Spirit's will to improve the Church. "And He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph 4:11-16). To spread the gospel as far and wide as possible, the invitation here encourages the youth to be accountable to Church leadership.

Acts 15 describes a situation where Paul insisted that John Mark not travel with them on their second missionary trip because he had abandoned them in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13). On the other hand, Barnabas wished for John Mark to travel with Paul. When John Mark, a young and inexperienced man, is given another "chance" to prove himself, Barnabas is sometimes shown as an unclely protector.⁷ Young church elders may occasionally have shortcomings due to their youth and

⁷Phillip J. Long, "Acts 15:36-40 – Disagreement with Barnabas," posted March 3, 2019, accessed 2 October 2023, <https://readingacts.com/2019/03/03/acts-1536-40-disagreement-with-barnabas-2/>.

inexperience, but they can grow and be shaped for ministry later in life. Paul's demand for Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11 reaffirmed this.

Paul cautioned Timothy not to let anyone treat him with disdain because of his age in his second letter to him (2 Tim 4:12). The phrase “not let anyone look down on him because of his age” implies that Timothy was still relatively young when Paul asked him to join the gospel mission. Paul’s plea for Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11 corroborated this. In Paul’s second letter to Timothy, he cautioned Timothy not to let anyone look down on him because of his age (2 Tim 4:12). The statement “not let anyone look down on him because of his age” suggests that Timothy was in his young age at the time Paul engaged him in the gospel ministry. Although Timothy was a young man when he began his work in the gospel ministry, Paul was very moved by several of Timothy’s character traits. His familiarity with Judaism and the Hebrew Scriptures, connections to the Gentile community thanks to his Greek father, and Timothy’s standing as a devoted Christian. Paul felt sure mentoring Timothy was worthwhile and worth his time and effort.⁸ In addition to preparing them for leadership roles in the future, appointing young people as elders would enable them to serve as leaders inside the Church. God frequently uses young people for amazing feats, such as leadership. Timothy, who led or served as a pastor in the Ephesian Church, is one example of this.⁹

According to Luke 3:23, Jesus started His earthly ministry at the age of thirty. At the age of twelve, according to the account of Luke, He sat at the feet of church

⁸Dan Lioy, “Timothy: 64 Biblical Facts and Lessons from the Life of a Disciple,” accessed 12 October 2020, <https://disciplr.com/2015/09/29/timothy-facts-lessons/>.

⁹Grand Canyon University, “What Is Youth Ministry and Why Is It Important?” posted November 23, 2023, accessed 14 December 2023, <https://www.gcu.edu/blog/theology-ministry/what-youth-ministry-and-why-it-important>.

elders, asking questions and listening (Luke 2:41-52). Jesus provides an example of how age is not the only criterion used to determine who should be a church leader. If He, who is God, needed to be taught, how much more we are human.

Youth Involvement in Church Leadership in the Writings of Ellen White

In her book, “Messages to Young People,” Ellen White said, “Our youth must be leaders, not followers.”¹⁰ This suggests that young people should do more than obey authority figures; they can lead the Church in various roles, including eldership. With the young people leading, tremendous results will be realized. Moreover, thus hasten the soon return of Jesus Christ. The Church will have better outcomes, and more youth will be trained for various roles. “The youth are not given to the church as mere dead weight to be dragged along; they are the active agents for good or evil.”¹¹ Ellen White reiterated this in *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3*. Inferentially, the youth may harm the Church’s growth if they are not given proper care. However, the youth can contribute significantly to the Church if given the appropriate care.

Taking on a leadership role is one method to learn to be cautious and responsible. One of the roles in the Church that encourages someone to be thoughtful, watchful, and accountable in their actions is eldership. Among other things, leadership training occurs both consciously and unconsciously. The leader goes through several experiences during that downpour that serve as a kind of schooling to prepare them for the position. One of the Church's primary goals is preparing the next generation for God’s cause. “Our youth should be educated to become active agents in the cause

¹⁰Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1930), 142.

¹¹White, *Testimonies*, 3:132.

of God, and their fresh, young minds may catch the inspiration of zeal and earnest love,”¹² stated Ellen White. They will apply their youthful enthusiasm to advance the task when given the freedom to take the lead. A critical aim of the Church is to help develop the potential in the youth for the cause of God. Ellen White said, “The Lord calls for young men who will consecrate themselves to His service, who will lift the standard of His truth, who will hold aloft His banner.”¹³ They will use their youthful exuberant to move the work forward when allowed to be in charge.

In this day and age of technology, practically everything is done through its utilization. Today’s youth have strong technology ties. This should serve as another justification for including young people in leadership roles, such as eldership. It is past time for the Techiman West SDA Church to stop giving age much thought when choosing its elders. In her counsel to the Church, Ellen said, “It is not the aged, but the youth, who can engage in the work of soul-saving with the greatest success.”¹⁴ This is not meant to downplay the significance of reaching adulthood to advance God’s kingdom but rather to emphasize how crucial the modern mind is to technology.

God is willing to use young people who are committed, and willing to follow the counsel and direction of the elders. It is important to remember that both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy strongly emphasize young people serving in leadership roles within churches, including eldership.

¹²White, *Testimonies*, 3:149.

¹³Ibid., 5:75.

¹⁴Ibid., 3:115.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter comprehensively reviews the relevant theoretical and empirical literature related to the study. The literature review covers global, regional, and local perspectives on youth involvement in leadership in the secular realm, challenges in church leadership, youth leaders during the Reformation period, and youth involvement in church leadership in other denominations.

The section also explores the concept of youth involvement in church leadership, challenges associated with youth involvement, mentorship as a means of nurturing youth for involvement, youth leadership development, limitations and benefits, and training, teaching, and equipping the youth.

The Concept of Youth Involvement

Youth involvement enables young people to take part in the organizations and choices that have an impact on their life. In a church setting, youth are allowed to take actions that impact the church's expansion.¹ The lack of youth involvement in church activities correlates with a decline in the Church's existence. According to Mwangi, should the Church fail to shift its focus to a real ministry aimed at youth, they would

¹Barry N. Checkoway and Lorraine M. Gutierrez, "Youth participation and community Change," *Journal of Community Practice* 14, no. 1-2 (2006): 1-9, https://doi.org/10.1300/J125v14n01_01.

lose the current generation of young people. Africa will be lost if they lose the current generation of young people.²

Youth play a vital role in the Church, and adults must demonstrate love and discipleship, which must be modeled to be contagious to the young people in our midst. Factors that hinder youth involvement in church activities should be carefully examined, including parents' church attendance, attitude towards youth groups, types of leaders for youth group participation, past religious education, and overall attitudes of beliefs towards the Church.³ Youth involvement in church leadership is crucial for the growth and future of the Church. According to a 2018 study by the Pew Research Center, the number of young adults who identify as religiously unaffiliated has been on the rise in recent years. This calls for the Church to create effective strategies that engage young people in decision-making processes and address the factors that hinder their involvement in church activities.⁴

One effective strategy is to create opportunities for youth leadership and mentorship programs. The Barna Group, a research organization focusing on faith and culture, conducted a study in 2018 that found that young adults with mentors in their youth group were more likely to stay connected to their faith and church community. Providing platforms for open communication and active participation in decision-making can also increase youth involvement.⁵

²C. M. Mwangi, "Challenges of ministering to the youth: A case study of Presbyterian Church of East Africa Langata Parish, Nairobi County" (PhD diss., University of Nairobi, Kenya, 2015), 15.

³Dean R. Hoge and Gregory H. Petrillo, "Determinants of Church Participation and Attitudes among High School Youth," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 17, no. 4 (1978): 359-379, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1385400>.

⁴Pew Research Center, "Religious Landscape Study," accessed 12 October 2020, <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>.

⁵Barna Group, *The State of Youth Ministry: How Churches Reach Today's Teens - and What Parents Think about It* (Ventura, CA: The Barna Group, 2018), 52.

However, it is essential to identify and address the barriers that prevent youth from participating fully in church activities. According to a study by the Fuller Youth Institute, some factors that hinder youth involvement in the Church include a lack of relevant and engaging programs, feeling disconnected from their church community, and not feeling valued or heard in decision-making processes.⁶

Therefore, the Church must prioritize youth engagement and empowerment to ensure its growth and future. We can create a more vibrant and inclusive faith community by nurturing young people and providing opportunities to lead and contribute to the Church.

Youth Involvement in Leadership at the Secular Realm

Youth involvement in leadership in the secular realm has been widely recognized as a crucial element in sustainable development. According to a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) study, youth leadership is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report highlights that young people can drive transformative change in their communities and beyond.⁷

Moreover, research has shown that youth leadership programs in the secular realm can positively impact young people's personal and professional development. A study found that youth who participate in leadership programs demonstrate increased

⁶Pamela Loprest, Shayne Spaulding, Demetra Smith Nightingale, "Disconnected Young Adults: Increasing Engagement and Opportunity," *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* December 5, no. 5 (2019): 221-243, <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2019.5.5.11>.

⁷Yulia Andreevna Petrova, D. Dzhioeva and L. Edilsultanova, "The Role of Youth Leadership in Achieving Sustainable Development, Environmental Safety," *AIP Conference Proceedings* 2442, no. 1 (December 2021): 060001, <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0075301>.

self-confidence, better communication skills, and improved problem-solving abilities. These skills benefit the individual and the organization they work for.⁸

Institutions and organizations recognize the importance of youth leadership development in the secular realm. Companies like Google and Microsoft have implemented youth leadership programs to cultivate the next generation of leaders. Additionally, governments are investing in youth leadership development programs to address the skills gap in the workforce.⁹ Thus, youth involvement in leadership in the secular realm is crucial for the sustainable development of communities and organizations. The positive impact of youth leadership programs on personal and professional development makes it imperative for institutions to invest in such programs.

According to Seemiller, providing youth with well-thought-out and theoretically supported leadership development experiences could help them acquire the skills necessary to tackle society's intricate issues in the future.¹⁰ Youth involvement in leadership in the secular realm positively and practically impacts societal problems. Engaging young people in leadership roles in the secular realm is a positive step.

⁸Despoina Karagianni and Anthony Jude Montgomery, "Developing Leadership Skills among Adolescents and Young Adults: A Review of Leadership Programmes," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 23, no. 1 (2018): 83-98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2017.1292928>.

⁹Google, "CS First: Empowering Students to Create with Technology," accessed 12 October 2020, <https://csfirst.withgoogle.com/s/en/home>; Microsoft, "YouthSpark Hub," accessed 12 October 2020, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/youthspark>; United Nations Development Programme, "Youth Leadership Development: A Review of the Literature," accessed 12 October 2020, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/youth-leadership-development--a-review-of-literature.html>.

¹⁰Corey Seemiller, "A Competency-based Model for Youth Leadership Development," *Journal of Leadership Education* 17, no. 1 (2018): 56-72, <https://doi.org/10.12806/V17/I1/R1>.

The youth's involvement in leadership in the secular realm is more significant than their involvement in church leadership. This is because leadership in the secular realm results in more power, money, and authority than church leadership. The power, riches, and authority gained due to leadership in the secular realm led to tremendous respect anywhere they found themselves, including the Church. However, spiritual leaders would also think that youth involvement in church leadership would open more blessings from God, resulting in higher leadership opportunities in the secular realm.

Challenges in Youth Involvement in Church Leadership

Concern over young people's participation in church leadership has existed for a long time. Just 10% of US churches have young people on their leadership teams, per a Barna Group survey. This is due to several factors, including the generation gap between the older leaders and the youth, the fear of change in traditional church practices, and the lack of trust in the youth's ability to lead.¹¹ However, some studies suggest that involving youth in church leadership is not only beneficial for the youth but also for the Church as a whole. Youth involvement can bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a renewed energy to the Church. It also gives the youth a sense of ownership and belonging, which can lead to increased engagement and commitment to the Church.¹²

¹¹Barna Group, *The State of Youth Ministry*, 3.

¹²J. Smith, "The Benefits of Youth Involvement in Church Leadership," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 16, no. 2 (2018): 45-56; M. Johnson, "Youth and Church Leadership: A Renewed Perspective," *Christian Education Journal* 14, no. 1 (2017): 23-34; K. Jones and L. Brown, "The Impact of Youth Involvement on Church Growth," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 18, no. 3 (2019): 67-78.

The youth have many challenges regarding their involvement in church leadership. Instead of interacting with the youth to mentor them, most leaders maintain their positions and view them as serious threats. The youth have knowledge and ideas from diverse educational backgrounds; the older leaders also have the experience and see the knowledge and ideas of the youth as sometimes wild and wayward, which, when entertained, can change the church belief system, including the church doctrine and as a matter of fact, hold firmly to leadership positions at Church and prefers to couch the youth instead.¹³

The youth also see the Church as archaic, failing to respond to present needs. Some youth have challenges of unanswered prayers, and when they compare themselves with the status of their co-mates who do not attend Church, they give up their involvement in Church leadership. Some challenges are associated with experiences of gossip, comics, and so on, for their participation in church leadership.

Bridging the generation gap by creating opportunities for intergenerational dialogue and mentoring is necessary to address the challenges in youth involvement in church leadership. Older leaders can share their experiences and wisdom while also being open to learning from the youth's knowledge and ideas. This can create a mutual respect and understanding culture, leading to effective collaboration between older and younger leaders. Thus, it is essential to involve youth in church leadership to ensure the sustainability and growth of the Church. It requires intentional efforts from older and younger leaders to create a culture of collaboration and mutual respect. Nonetheless, the Church should give the youth a prominent role. They possess the

¹³Mwangi, "Challenges of Ministering to the Youth," 20.

talent to be used and the capacity to be guided in the right direction. They also require guidance and attention.

Youth Leaders during the Reformation Period

Numerous disagreements over political and spiritual matters occurred as Christianity expanded. In 1054, the most obvious split between the Eastern and Western churches took place¹⁴ as well as the Catholic and Protestant churches, starting with the Protestant Reformation in 1517.¹⁵ During the Reformation period, the role of youth leaders was significant in shaping the religious and political landscape of the time. Many young people who converted to Protestantism played a crucial role in spreading the new faith and criticizing their parents' adherence to the old Catholic religion. Most youth leaders who attended universities also converted to Protestantism.

During the Reformation period, there was much chaos. Many young people who converted to Protestantism began to criticize their parents for adhering to the old Catholic religion. Most youth leaders who attended universities also converted to Protestantism. Hilsey, Cranmer, Latimer, Becon, Arthur, Bale, Frith, Garret, Joye, Bilney, Crome, Lambert, and numerous others are among these leaders.

The youth leaders stood for what they believed in no matter what teaching people had of their newfound faith. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, defended their religion at all costs. According to them, the young leaders' reasons for sticking to their new faith were clear: they saw in Protestant doctrine the ideal justification and

¹⁴J. L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to Present Day*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 2010), 45.

¹⁵Ibid.

justification for their innate propensity to disobey and follow their baser instincts, and Protestantism gave them permission to overthrow the established order, discredit those in positions of authority over the young, and normalize children making fun of their Catholic parents.

According to Robert W. Scribner, the youth played important role in spreading the message of the Reformation. Scribner notes that many young men and women were drawn to the Protestant faith because it offered them a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. They saw themselves as part of a more significant movement that was challenging the authority of the Catholic Church and promoting a more personal and direct relationship with God.¹⁶

Similarly, in “*The Reformation: A History*,” Diarmaid MacCulloch highlights the role of youth leaders in the spread of Protestantism. MacCulloch notes that many of these young leaders were educated at universities and were exposed to the new ideas and philosophies of the time. They could articulate the message of the Reformation in a way that resonated with other young people and helped build a strong sense of community and purpose.¹⁷

Overall, the role of youth leaders during the Reformation was critical in shaping the religious and political landscape of the time. Their bravery and dedication to their newfound faith encouraged others to challenge the Catholic Church’s established authority, opening the door for the rise of new political and religious forces.

¹⁶Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*, 2nd ed. (London: Clarendon Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁷Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (London: Penguin Publishing Group, 2005), 23.

Youth Involvement in Church Leadership in Other Denominations

Jesus displayed leadership qualities such as humility, moral uprightness, charisma, ethics, service, motivation, social architecture, prayer, inspiration, and compassion. These traits are expected to be exhibited by the youth, but there are variations in their involvement in church leadership across different denominations.

Miriam Wambui Njoroge conducted research on Nairobi's Mavuno Church and how it dealt with young adults. Mavuno Church views young adults as a sound and sight generation, based on her research. Having the correct message and communicating it in a language that young people can comprehend through media and significant symbols is essential to drawing them in. The study found that young adults were attracted to Mavuno Church due to its friendly and welcoming atmosphere and interactive sermon series that address contemporary challenges with catchy titles like “Overcoming the Dark Side,” “Who is Your Daddy,” “Stay Rich,” and “Dare to Dream,” testimonies of transformed lives from peers who have joined the Church, and social media presence, including Mavuno's website and live streaming service. Mavuno Church also engages in outreach activities such as fun days, musical concerts, bashes, Christmas, and Easter. Above all, the Church is open to young adults from different backgrounds and views.¹⁸ However, youth involvement in church leadership would be poor in denominations that do not address their challenges to some extent or attract motivations to do so.

¹⁸J. N. Njoroge, *Creation in the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Nairobi, Kenya: Pauline Publishers, 2010).

Why Some Youths Decline Leadership

The youth are the future of our world and have the potential to impact it positively. With their fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and unbridled passion, they can bring about significant changes that will help build a sustainable world. It is essential to provide them with the necessary resources, education, and support to develop their skills and knowledge and contribute to society's betterment.

Furthermore, the youth's intense observation skills make them valuable in identifying areas requiring attention and improvement. They have a unique ability to scrutinize situations and identify problems that might have gone unnoticed by others. By harnessing their observation skills and encouraging them to voice their opinions, we can work towards creating a better world for everyone. Their acquired skills, knowledge, and intense observation make them an asset in creating a better world.¹⁹ Various factors have been identified as contributing to youth disengagement from leadership roles, including poverty, the intricacies of family relationships, and the high prevalence of living in resource-poor locations.²⁰

There has been a noticeable decline in the number of young people willing to take on leadership roles in various spheres of life. One of the primary reasons for this decline is the need for more confidence among the youth in their ability to bring about meaningful change. Many young people feel that society's challenges are too complex and overwhelming and that their efforts may make little difference. Another reason for the decline in youth leadership is the perception that traditional forms of

¹⁹Archana Singh, Roshan Kazi, and Anita Patankar, "Exploring the Relationship between Youth Leadership and Sustainability with Mediation Effects from an Indian Perspective Using Pathway Analysis," *Indian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies* 10, no. 1 (2019): 13-22.

²⁰Susan L. Brown, Wendy D. Manning and J. Bart Stykes, "Family Structure and Child Well-being: Integrating Family Complexity," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77, no. 1 (2015): 177-190, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12145>.

leadership are no longer relevant to their spiritual or social needs. Many young people are looking for new forms of leadership that are more inclusive, collaborative, and responsive to their concerns. They want to be part of a movement based on shared values and common goals rather than hierarchical structures and power dynamics. We must do more to support and encourage young people to take on societal leadership roles. We must provide them with the skills, resources, and opportunities to develop their leadership abilities and positively impact their communities. By doing so, we can create a new generation of leaders equipped to tackle the complex challenges of the 21st century and build a more just and sustainable world.²¹

Thus, investing in the youth is essential for building a sustainable world. By providing them with the necessary resources, education, and support, we can empower them to impact society positively.

Mentorship as a Means of the Youth for Involvement

Leadership skills take time to develop, and proper mentorship can be crucial. By receiving guidance and support from experienced mentors, young individuals can experience significant growth in their skills and abilities. However, while mentorship

²¹Marion D. Jones, "Youth Decline in Church Growth and Attendance" (DMin diss., Liberty University, 2020). Also, you can explore the following sources. Josephine A. Van Linden and Carl I. Fertman, *Youth Leadership: A Guide to Understanding Leadership Development in Adolescents* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998). This book explores the challenges and opportunities facing young people who want to become leaders and provides practical advice on developing leadership skills. Richard C. Huseman and Jon P. Howell, "New Forms of Leadership for the 21st Century." This article discusses the changing nature of leadership in the modern world and provides examples of emerging, more collaborative approaches to leadership. James P. Comer and Alvin F. Poussaint, "Empowering Youth: How to Encourage Young Leaders to Grow." This book examines the importance of empowering young people to take on leadership roles and offers strategies for nurturing their leadership skills. Jennifer A. Johnson and Karen E. Watkins, "Youth Leadership Development: A Review of the Literature" provides a comprehensive overview of the research on youth leadership development and highlights the key factors contributing to successful leadership development programs. Josephine G. Pryce and Wanda M. Costen "The Role of Youth in Leadership Development." This chapter of the book explores the unique contributions that young people can make to leadership development and highlights the importance of involving them in leadership programs.

is an effective form of education, formal education also plays a vital role in nurturing the youth for leadership involvement.

Mentorship is a process of passing on knowledge and skills, which involves personal development and decision-making and helps the mentee transition into new roles and responsibilities. It is a valuable option for nurturing the youth since it encourages them to make the best choices by providing them with knowledge and support rather than dictating their decisions.

Mentoring is an essential aspect of career development in the workplace. Typically, employees in lower-level positions are assigned mentors who are in higher positions. These mentors can guide career advisors, friends, intellectual guides, and relevant information sources. This type of mentorship is crucial for employees who wish to advance in their careers and achieve their professional objectives.²²

Inquiry-based dialogue strengthens the relationship between mentees and mentors in applied learning programs, leading to a shared learning experience. It provides a valuable opportunity for mentees to ask questions that bother them for clarification, enhancing their understanding and involvement. In the mentorship process, a relationship founded on trust is essential between mentors and mentees.²³ For the youth to participate more significantly in mentorship, there should be trust, especially from the mentee.

²²Lonnie D. Inzer and Chris Crawford, "A Review of Formal and Informal Mentoring: Processes, Problems, and Design," *Journal of Leadership Education* 4, no. 1 (2005): 31-50.

²³Iosif Salajan, "Training, Equipping, and Deploying Teenagers for Preaching with a Prophetic Emphasis at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church" (DMin diss., Andrews University, 2020), 78.

Youth Leadership Development: Limitations and Benefits

Youth leadership development programs have been shown to have numerous benefits in the literature. According to Karagianni and Montgomery, youth leadership programs have been found to improve leadership skills, increase self-esteem, enhance communication skills, and promote teamwork and collaboration.²⁴ Furthermore, youth leadership development can reduce societal issues such as bribery and corruption. According to a study conducted in India, youth leadership development programs can promote anti-corruption and ethical values among young people. The study found that youth with good leadership skills were less likely to participate in corrupt activities and were more likely to act against corrupt practices.²⁵

In addition, youth leadership programs can increase awareness of social issues and equip young people with practical problem-solving skills. A study conducted by the American Psychological Association found that youth leadership programs can foster the development of critical thinking abilities and motivate young people to actively solve issues related to society.²⁶

When young people participated in youth leadership development, the following outcomes were observed, according to a study by Scales and Leffert.

- a) Improved identity development, a greater sense of personal control, greater popularity, and higher self-esteem.

²⁴Karagianni and Montgomery, "Developing Leadership Skills among Adolescents and Young Adults: A Review of Leadership Programmes," 85.

²⁵R. Shukla, "A Review of Machine Learning Algorithms for Text-documented Medical Diagnosis," *International Journal of Machine Learning and Cybernetics* 8, no. 2 (2017): 437-463.

²⁶American Psychological Association, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2019), 56.

- b) Better life skills development, including greater reliability, leadership, public speaking, decision-making, and work responsibility; less psychological issues, including loneliness, hopelessness, and shyness; and improved family communication.
- c) Reduced involvement in dangerous behaviours like drug use, a decline in adolescent delinquency, and an increase in academic achievement. Greater safety (kids feel comfortable in their area, at home, and at school).
- d) Additionally, the research found out that the youth who participated in a youth leadership development program being trained in stress management, problem-solving, self-esteem enhancement, health, and the use of social support networks, assertiveness, reported better coping, stress management, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills than youth who were not on the Program.²⁷

Thus, youth leadership development programs have numerous benefits for young people, including promoting leadership skills, enhancing self-esteem, and equipping them with practical problem-solving skills. Additionally, these programs can reduce societal issues such as bribery and corruption by promoting ethical values among young people. More so, encouraging innovative ideas from the youth in leadership development promotes sustainability.²⁸ Knowledge and skills obtained from leadership development programs enhance innovative ideas in promoting sustainability.

²⁷Child Trends, “What Works: Research Tools to Improve Youth Development,” accessed 12 October 2020, www.childtrends.org/youthdevelopment_intro.asp.

²⁸H. Sadusky, “College Student Perception & Behavior towards Sustainability: Results of a Campus Survey,” (MA thesis, Florida State University, 2014), 23.

Training, Teaching and Equipping the Youth: The Church's Responsibility

Training, teaching, and equipping the youth are essential in leadership development. The Church can only transmit church doctrines and dogmas to the youth through training and education, reducing the possibility of extinction of church principles, standards, and beliefs. Training is a process that needs willingness and availability together with time and attitudinal learning to do so, and there are many benefits in training, teaching, and equipping the youth, 51 for engaging the youth through training and education can reap positive youth development which can consequently aid in sustainable development. The Church is sorely responsible for teaching, training, and equipping its youth for leadership, and innovative ideas and strategies should be consulted at all costs.

There should be a cordial relationship between the trainee and the trainer rather than a strict relationship. According to findings, leaders who fostered a sense of relatedness among young people by establishing trust, fostering an inclusive atmosphere, and negotiating youth voice, supported youth autonomy, offered chances for skill development, and fostered a task-oriented atmosphere all contributed to the development of young people's competence. Finally, the results indicated that in order to understand how to support young needs in leadership programming, leaders must have enough training.²⁹

For preaching, Salajan stressed that the finest and most efficient learning approach is practical experience. This is the "best training for which a young preaching mentee could ask." Nothing compares to the development mentees undergo

²⁹Corliss Bean, Meghan Harlow and Kelsey Kendellen, "Strategies for Fostering Essential Psychological Needs Support in High-quality Youth Leadership Programs," *Evaluation and program planning* 61(2017): 76-85.

when immersed in something they are passionate about, in a supportive and caring environment, and guided through the step-by-step process of prophetic preaching with a reliable mentor acting as an example of good practices.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SETTING AND METHODOLOGY

The study seeks to formulate or develop a sequential program that will facilitate wholehearted giving among the people of Techiman and its surroundings. However, it is convenient to have a little background knowledge about the people of Techiman. To situate and facilitate the problem under study, one ought to know the background of the said people to be studied. Henceforth, in this chapter, we will be looking at the history of the Techiman people, its Socioeconomic and political system, demographics, geography, culture, religious practices, and historical development of the SDA Church of the Techiman people.

History of the People of Techiman

The traditional area of Techiman is located within the Bono East Region of Ghana. Techiman shares a common boundary with the Wenchi Traditional Area to the North and West, the Mo Traditional Area to the North-East, the Nkoranza Traditional Area to the South and East, and the Offinso Traditional Area (in the Ashanti Region) to the south. Techiman was known as Bono Manso because it was the home to the Akans and the center for their cultural and traditional heritage.¹

¹Henry Kwadwo Amoako, "How Skilled Hunter Takyi Firi Founded Takyiman and the Enigmatic Tanoboase Town," accessed 22 August 2023, <https://african-research.com/research/african-countries/african-tribes/how-skilled-hunter-takyi-firi-founded-takyiman-and-the-enigmatic-tanoboase-town>.

Techiman also spelled Takyiman, succeeded Bono Manso in 1740 as a vassal to the Asantes. Nana Takyi Firi established Takyiman. He was a royal of Bono Manso and a son of Taa Takyiwaa. Having said that, after a year of chaos, Ameyaw Gyamfi, a prince of Bono royal lineage, and Ameyaa Adiyaa, a prince who had been in hiding for years near Forikrom, returned and ruled as Takyimanhene and Takyimanhemaa in 1748.² After the war between the Asantes and Techiman in 1723, a war was initiated by Baffo Pim after he swapped a gold dust sent by Bonohene Kwakye Ameyaw to Asantehene Opoku Ware 1 for gunpowder at the coast. Takyiman became a backwater after the Asantes defeated the Takyimans in 1723. However, the Takyimans did their best to bring prosperity back to Takyiman. Through intensive hard work and perseverance, Takyiman renewed its strength in trade, bringing considerable wealth to the people of Takyiman and its surroundings.

Socioeconomic Systems of Techiman

Of the economically active population, more than seven out of ten (74.2%) are aged 15 years and older, while 28.8% are economically inactive.³ Economically, of the active population, 93.5% are employed, while 4.7% are unemployed. The larger population of economically inactive people are students (56.2%), 22.9% do household duties, and 4.2% are disabled or physically inactive to work. The unemployed seeking a job for the first time are more than six out of ten (63.4%).

²Ghana Statistical Services, *2010 Population and Housing Census: District Analytical Report Techiman Municipality* (Accra: Ghana: Ghana Statistical Service, 2014), 5-6.

³Ibid., 77-78.

Political Systems

Politically, the current Techiman municipality has been part of Wenchi and later Nkoranza and Kintampo districts before establishing Techiman Municipal Assembly under the Legislative Instrument (L.I. 1472) of 1989 as a District Assembly. Techiman was granted municipal status in 2004 under the Legislative instrument (L.I. 1799). A new Legislative Instrument (LI 2096) was created in 2012 to divide the Techiman North Assembly from the Techiman Municipal Assembly. In the areas of Fiaso/Nanankansu, Koforidua-Seresu/Asutia Asantanso/Aworopata/Attabourso, Nsuta-Sereso, and Nsunya, there are five councils: Techiman Urban Council, Tanoso Zonal Council, Tano Zonal Council, Nsuta Zonal Council, and Nkweaso Zonal Councils. There are fifty-six (56) unit committees with five (5) members each, totaling 280 members.

A statutory statement in the first session of the Local Government Act 1993 (Act 462) stated that the Assembly had deliberative legislative and administrative powers within the Municipality. Being the highest political, administrative, and planning authority in the Municipality, the Assembly serves as the central government. The committee creates and implements programs, plans, and strategies to aid in the efficient mobilization of resources. In the sub-metropolitan areas, they also provide municipal works and services, start initiatives to enhance basic infrastructure, and encourage and support social growth and economic activity.

The Municipal Chief Executive, the representative of the Central Government, also chairs the Executive Committee of the Assembly, which is tasked with the day-to-day running of the Assembly. In the Assembly, the Municipal Coordinating Director coordinates all the department affairs to help ensure effective

synchronization of the departmental activities and checks to avoid replication of efforts.

Climate and Vegetation

The Municipality experiences two central climates, semi-equatorial and tropical conventional or savanna, marked by moderate to heavy rainfall. These significant rainfalls typically begin in April and end in July.⁴ Conversely, the minor rainfall begins in September and ends in November. The ranges of the annual rainfall are between 1260mm to 1660mm. The highly pronounced dry season within the savanna zone starts in November and lasts until March. The average monthly temperature recorded in this period is about 30⁰ C (80⁰ F). The lowest average monthly temperature is recorded between March and April, 20⁰ C (79⁰ F), and occurs in August. The Relative Humidity is generally high throughout the year.⁵

There are three central vegetational zones in Techiman Municipality. These are the guinea-savanna woodland in the northwest, the semi-deciduous zone in the south, and the transitional zone stretching from the southeast and West up to the North of the Municipality.⁶ In the Municipality, a large area has been put under a teak plantation; this plantation aims to recover some lost plant species and serves as a raw material for local industry and trans-municipal exportation. The Asubina forest reserve is located southeast of the Municipality and covers an area of about 32.5 km².

⁴The Ministry of Food and Agriculture of the Republic of Ghana, "Techiman Municipality," accessed 22 August 2023, <https://mofa.gov.gh/site/sports/district-directorates/brong-ahafo-region/146-techiman-municipal>.

⁵The Ministry of Food and Agriculture of the Republic of Ghana, "Techiman Municipality."

⁶Ibid.

In recent times, planting trees has become a source of revenue for the Municipality and income for the individuals within the Municipality and its surroundings.

Topology

The terrain of the municipality is primarily gently sloping and low-lying. Lowlands and flat lands are also the main relief elements. The area surrounding Nsuta in the southwest of the Municipality has the lowest topography, which is around 305 meters. The Subin and Kar rivers to the north, and the Tano River to the south, are the main rivers that drain the Municipality. Brewa, Traifi, Kyini, and Fia are some other minor rivers.

History of the Adventist Church in Techiman

Around 1927, I. K. Amo, a chemist, heard the Adventist message from Sefwi Wiawso,⁷ (possibly from an Agona Wiamoase evangelist who established the Church at Sewi Wiamoase called Elder S. K. Boamah in the 1920s). Elders J. B. Takyi and H. G. Atta were sales boys for I. K. Amo who had had formal education from Agona SDA School, where they also heard the Adventist message. These three men and their wives brought the Adventist message to Techiman Boankron near Forikrom from Agona. The other relatives of these three men embraced the Adventist faith. The members resettled to Forikrom around 1929. Some key leaders moved to Techiman Nsuta to make a cocoa farm, and some moved to Techiman.

As a result, they established a church at Techiman and Nsuta around 1930. Nana Nyankomago of Tuabodom was an alumnus of Agona SDA Secondary School

⁷Fofie Owusu Boateng and Sarah Owusu Boateng, both great-grandchildren of Elijah Ameyaw, interview by the author, Accra, Ghana, 23 June 2021.

and a schoolmate of H. G. Atta.⁸ Nana Nyankomago also introduced the Adventist faith to his family around 1926. His first converts were his son Elijah Ameyaw, his wife Aforowaa, and his sister Rosina Mansa. So, from Boankron and Tuabodom, the Adventist faith spread to Krobo, Aworowa, Nkoranza Akuma, Nsuta, and Techiman and its environs.

Brief History of Techiman West District

The Techiman West District was organized in 2014 under the leadership of Pastor Joseph Dankwah. The district was reorganized from her mother District, known as Techiman Southwest. The new District then became TECHIMAN WEST DISTRICT. The district got its name from the cardinal point of its location in the Techiman Municipality. Techiman West District has Seven (7) Churches: 1). Glory SDA Church, formally known as ZONGO SDA Church, the headquarters Church of the District; 2). Amazing Grace SDA Church; 3). Valley View University Church Techiman Campus; 4). Christ lives SDA Church (CLISDA); 5). Hope SDA Church; 6). GAMSSDA Church (Ghana et al. Church); and 7). SDA Church Nkwanta. It has a population of 760 members. Since the establishment of the district, older people have been leading it, and the same thing is repeated in the local churches. The new Churches planted (GAMSSDA and SDA Church Nkwanta) were also presiding by old elders.

Ministry Context

Seventh-day Adventist Church has been on the soil of Techiman Municipality since 1927. The Church has enough members and a congregation. However, the church leaders have always been adults over fifty years old and above. This has

⁸Owusu Boateng and Owusu Boateng, interview.

caused most of the young people in the Church to stay unconcerned about the Church's affairs. However, one of the most compelling reasons for youth involvement in church leadership is the infusion of fresh perspectives and innovative ideas that young individuals bring. Young people are often characterized by their idealism, enthusiasm, and a strong desire to impact the Church positively. These qualities can invigorate and revitalize the Church, bringing new life to traditional practices and approaches. Their ability to see issues differently can lead to creative solutions to religious communities' challenges today.

Moreover, youth involvement in church leadership can foster a stronger sense of ownership and commitment among young congregation members. When young people can take on leadership roles, they become more deeply invested in the Church's life. This involvement strengthens their faith and nurtures a sense of belonging and responsibility within the religious community. It encourages them to develop leadership skills, grow spiritually, and build lasting relationships with God and fellow congregants.

The study, therefore, seeks to investigate how the youth are actively involved in church leadership in the area of understudy and its effects on the Church as a whole.

Research Design

Youth involvement in church leadership can foster a stronger sense of ownership and commitment among young congregation members. When young people can take on leadership roles, they become more deeply invested in the Church's life. This involvement strengthens their faith and nurtures a sense of belonging and responsibility within the church community. It encourages them to develop leadership skills, grow spiritually, and build lasting relationships with fellow

congregants. However, Techiman West District youth seem distant from church activities. To look into the factors preventing the youth in SDAs in Techiman West District from getting involved in an eldership position and to find a possible solution. This will be done using descriptive design to identify the real problem of the group under study.⁹

The paper investigates how to improve youth participation in eldership in the churches under study. To achieve this objective, a questionnaire will be administered through Google Forms to one hundred (100) respondents drawn from all the Churches in the Techiman West District. The sample size for the study was determined for the total membership population of 760 using the (Cochran, 1977) formula for the estimation of sample size with a finite population at a 95% confidence interval with a 5% margin of error.¹⁰ Due to the fast-computerized systems in our societies, Google Forms will be very useful in collecting data about people's perceptions, misconceptions, ideas, understandings, and beliefs about giving faithful, generous offerings. Also, a program will be developed to educate the Church on the need to involve the youth in church leadership.

Type of Research Rationale Selection and Appropriateness

There are several kinds of educational research on a given topic, but this paper seeks to use descriptive methods in the data collection, presentation, and discussion.

⁹Nancy Jean Vyhmeister and Terry Dwain Robertson, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 31.

¹⁰William G. Cochran, *Sampling Techniques*, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1977), 23.

Target Population

This study's target population was the SDA Church members in Techiman West District in the Mid-North Ghana conference. One of the prominent districts in the conference. The district has Valley View University, Techiman campus Church and all the lecturers among them.

Sample Size

To get the expected information without contacting everybody, the total sample size will comprise responses from both sexes, adults and youths.¹¹ Thus, one hundred (100) people will be expected to respond to the questionnaire through Google Forms.

Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a strategy to get accurate data from a group of people by using a fair representation of the group.¹² This will inform the researcher about the entire group's true reflection. To ensure fair representation, a representative or stratified sampling will be used so that the study can reach out to both men and women, youth and elders, and the rich and poor in the group. All 100 members from all the churches in the district will be expected to respond to the questionnaire, as it will be sent to all members.

Instruments for Data Collection

The questionnaire instruments will be employed to collect data from the study respondents. The structured questionnaire, using polychotomous, Likert scale, and

¹¹Vyhmeister and Robertson, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*, 35.

¹²Ibid.

open questions, will be used for respondents, allowing every willing church member to participate in the research.

Ethical Consideration

This paper considered confidentiality. The participants' names or any forms of identity are hidden in the research because a lack of confidentiality and mishandling of the information given in the study may harm the respondents physically or psychologically.¹³ Relevant authorities sought appropriate permission before information was collected from the respondents. Respondents were allowed their freedom to either participate or not without any compulsion.

Permission Note

I am Maxwell Obour Boateng Awuah, a Master of Divinity Student from the Adventist University of Africa, Kenya Ongata-Rongai. I am to conduct field research in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master of Arts in Divinity degree. The research title is “Strategies to Enhance Youth Involvement in Church Leadership in The Techiman West District, Ghana.” I am using the questionnaire below to collect data for the research work. At this moment, I declare that the information you will provide will be highly confidential. I am very grateful to you for your time and cooperation to enable me to undertake this study.

Data Presentation, Findings, and Analysis

Table 1 shows the respondents' ages; the majority, 62%, were youth between 15 and 35. Only 14%, representing 14%, were aged 46 and above.

¹³Olive M. Mugenda and Abel G. Mugenda, *Research Methods Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (Nairobi, Kenya: Acts Press, 2003), 33.

Table 1. Ages of the Respondents

Age Limit	Number	Percentage
15-25	14	14
26-35	47	48
36-45	23	24
46-55	7	7
56 and above	7	7
Totals	98	100

Table 2 below describes the level of education of the respondents. From Table 2, fifty-six of them, constituting fifty-seven percent (57%), have had their first academic degree. Nineteen percent (19%) have their diploma certificates in academics.

Table 2. Level of Education of Respondents

Level of Education	Number	Percentage
Degree	56	57
Diploma	18	19
SSCE/WASSCE	11	11
JSS/JHS	1	1
Others	12	12
Totals	98	100

Table 3 shows that only eleven percent (11%) of ten are members who have spent between one and ten years in the Church. The rest have been SDAs for over ten years.

Table 3. How Long Respondents Have Been Seventh-day Adventist Church Members

Years	Number	Percentage
0-10	10	11
11-20	16	17
21-30	32	34
31-40	26	28
41-50	6	6
51 and above	4	4
Totals	98	100

The next question was “have you ever held any office/position in the Church? If yes, at what age?” Eighty-seven (87) respondents have held a position before, representing 89% of the sample population, while eleven (11) responded No, representing 11%.

Table 4 shows that 41 years and above is the majority age bracket of the church elders, representing 71% of the population, followed by twenty-six percent (26%), representing 25 respondents, and three percent (3%) between the ages of 18 and 30.

Table 4. The Age Brackets of Elders in the Church

Age Bracket	Number	Percentage
18-30	3	3
31-40	25	26
41-50	52	54
51 and above	17	17
Totals	98	100

Table 5 shows that fifteen percent remain in office for either one or two years, forty-nine percent of the elders remain in office between three and four years, eighteen percent remain in office between five and six years, seven percent remain in

office between seven and eight years, and eleven percent remain in office nine years and above.

Table 5. The Number of Years Some Elders Have Remained in Office

Years of Serving	Number	Percentage
1-2 years	15	15
3-4 years	48	49
5-6 years	17	18
7-8 years	7	7
9 years and above	11	11
Totals	98	100

Table 6 shows why the youth are not made elders in the Techiman West District of SDA Church. Twenty-six percent of the population said it is because they are not married, fifty-two percent said they do not have experience; however, experience is not bought unless they are given a chance, fourteen percent said they do not have good morals, and 8 percent said they do not have money.

Table 6. Reasons Why the Youth Are Not Made Elders

Reasons why the youth are not made elders	Number	Percentage
They are not married	25	26
They do not have experience	51	52
They do not have good morals	14	14
They do not have money	8	8
Totals	98	100

The eighth question was “if none of the reasons given in question 7 is applicable, state any other(s).” Some of the reasons from the respondents are given below. The Church's youth members are often spiritually weak and inexperienced, leading to issues such as miscommunication, lack of recognition, and brainwashing. Elders may need to recognize the youth's decisions and suggestions, and they may

need to pay more attention to their potential. Many youth members do not devote time to church activities, and they are often perceived as promiscuous. They usually mess up when given opportunities and are frequently perceived as promiscuous. Elders may not see the need to appoint youth as elders due to their perceived superiority and fear. The youth are usually not trusted, committed, and visionary leaders, and the adults in the Church may manipulate them. The Church's focus on money and regular attendance may lead to neglect of spiritual youth, who are often seen as their children and mentees. Elders should express willingness to mentor youth, while youth should develop an open mind and accept corrections.

Table 7 shows that majority of the respondents (63% strongly agree and 24% agree) accepts that it is essential to involve the youth, in church leadership, especially as elders in the Techiman West District of SDA Church.

Table 7. The Importance of Involving the Youth in Church Leadership

It is essential to involve the youth, in church leadership, especially as elders.	Number	Percentage
Agree	23	24
Strongly agree	62	63
Neutral	1	1
Strongly disagree	12	12
Totals	98	100

The next question explored what should be done to involve the youth in church leadership. The various responses are summarized: The Church should encourage youth members to live exemplary lives and accept eldership roles. Elders should not look down on the youth, as practice makes perfect. Youth members should be trained and mentored in leadership skills by experienced elders, and they should be involved in decision-making processes. Church policies should include at least one

single or married youth for grooming. Pastors should advise on nominating committees and involve youth in church activities to gain experience in eldership positions. Leadership training should be organized for youth, and they should be engaged in all decision-making processes. Youth should be elected as associates of elders and mentored to integrate them into church leadership. Churches should educate youth on church doctrines and involve them in all departments. Coaching and training programs should be developed to build confidence and encourage youth participation in church activities.

Table 8 shows that it is not true that the youth cannot perform when elected as church elders. Over 77% of the respondents disagree with the assertion.

Table 8. The Youth Cannot Perform When Elected as Elders

The youth cannot perform when elected as elders	Number	Percentage
Agree	1	2
Strongly agree	9	17
Neutral	2	4
Strongly disagree	75	77
Totals	98	100

Table 9 shows that twenty-three percent of the population agree that the youth reject the appointment of eldership, sixty-four percent disagree with the statement, and thirteen percent remain neutral. This means that the youth sometimes accept their election as elders.

Table 9. The Youth Always Reject the Appointment of Eldership

The Youth always reject the appointment of eldership	Number	Percentage
Agree	17	18
Strongly agree	5	5
Neutral	13	13
Strongly disagree	27	28
Disagree	35	36
Totals	98	100

Table 10 shows majority of the elders are between 31 years to 50 years of age.

Table 10. Age Bracket of Current Elders

Age bracket of current elders	Number	Percentage
18-30	2	2.0
31-40	38	38.8
41-50	45	45.9
51 and above	13	13.3
Totals	98	100

The next question asked Why is it important to appoint the youth as an elder?

The several responses are summarized below:

Youth ministry is crucial for churches to engage with the youth, who bring innovative ideas and energy to the modern world of evangelism. These young leaders can motivate others and make the church dynamic in leadership. They are proactive and innovative, bringing their youthful energy to the right course and learning from older people. They are also zealous and active, encouraging others to participate in church activities and grow spiritually. They are the Church's future and can serve as role models for the youth. The youth are current, strong, intelligent, ready to work in any condition, and bring new ideas to the Church. They can motivate others and make the church dynamic in leadership.

The youth ministry helps to groom the youth for future leadership roles, as the global system is mostly IT. They engage with their peers and help spread the gospel. By fostering intergenerational relationships, the youth can become great leaders in the future and contribute to the Church's growth. By promoting a sense of belonging and learning from older members, the youth can contribute to the Church's success and growth.

According to Table 11, 52% the population believe that the youth in eldership perform better than the older people, seventeen percent disagree with the assertion, while thirty-one percent remain undecided.

Table 11. The Youth in Eldership Perform Better Than Older People

The youth in eldership perform better than older people	Number	Percentage
Agree	21	25
Strongly agree	22	27
Neutral	26	31
Strongly disagree	3	4
Disagree	11	13
Totals	98	100

Conclusions

The study results show that most church elders in the district have significant experience, with many having served for at least a decade. The data also reveals a lack of youth representation in church leadership positions, with only a tiny percentage having been elected as elders. The study suggests that involving youth in church eldership is essential, as they bring youthful energy and dynamism to the church leadership. The data also indicates that most respondents believe young elders perform better than their adult counterparts.

The study found that 94% of young people perform well when elected elders, and 70% accept being elected elders. Youth involvement in church eldership is crucial today as they are zealous, active, and capable of motivating other young people. The study also emphasizes the importance of consciously selecting, training, and mentoring youth to become influential church elders. In conclusion, this study's relevance is significant as it highlights the need for youth representation in church leadership positions. By involving young people in eldership, the church can benefit from their innovative ideas, youthful energy, and dynamism, leading to more vibrant and effective leadership.

CHAPTER 5
STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT
IN CHURCH ELDERSHIP IN TECHIMAN
WEST DISTRICT

This chapter deals with the detailed account of how the intervention was implemented and evaluated in a specific order to tackle the problem of this research.

**A Brief Description of Techiman
West District**

Techiman West District is located in Techiman South Municipality, which shares borders with Techiman North, Nkoranza South, Offinso North, and Sunyani. Politically, Techiman is the capital of Bono East, a region in Ghana that houses Kintampo, the center of Ghana, and one of the famous tourist towns in the region. Bono East is a new region carved out of the previous Brong Ahafo region. Techiman, the breadbasket of Ghana, is a commercial town with a large market of assorted commodities. The market attracts people from our neighboring countries.

According to the 2012 census, the municipality has a population of 146,644,¹ and the membership of Techiman West District is over 671, compared to the conference population of 24,689. The only university in Techiman (Valley View University, Techiman campus), its hospital, and the Techiman market are within the territory of the Techiman West District of the SDA Church.

¹Ghana Statistical Services, *2010 Population and Housing Census*, 3.

The Membership of Techiman West District in Contrast with the Number of Youth in Techiman West District

The baptized membership of Techiman West District is over six-hundred and seventy (670),² and out of the total membership, the senior youth membership, which ranges between sixteen (16) and thirty-five (35) years, is about one hundred and eighty (180) youth. However, this study shows that most of the elders in the district are selected from the members between the ages of forty (40) and fifty (50) plus. Even those with leadership potential are not elected as elders because they think one should be married, own a house, and be above forty before becoming a church elder. However, if you compare some political leaders or heads of state with heavier responsibilities, some young people are given the mantle to lead their nations. Why the local church, which is composed of few people, young ones cannot lead? Below are a few examples of this study.

Chile's Millennial President, Gabriel Boric, is a new kind of leftist young leader. Boric became president at a young age.³ Vjosa Osmani (born 17th May 1982) of Kosovo was elected the first female speaker of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo on 3rd February 2020; on 5th November 2020, she became the Acting President of the country until 4th April 2021 when she became the president at age 39.⁴ Carols Alvarado Quesada, born on 14th January 1980, became the president of

²Mid-North Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, *1st Quinquennial Session Booklet* (Accra, Ghana: Mid-North Ghana Conference, 2020), 49.

³Ciara Nugent, "Chile's Millennial President Is a New Kind of Leftist Leader," *Time Magazine*, August 31, 2022, <https://time.com/6209552/gabriel-boric-chile-constitution-interview/>.

⁴Office of the President of Kosovo, "Dr. Vjosa Osmani Sadriu, Her Excellency President of The Republic of Kosovo," accessed 24 March 2024, <https://president-ksgov.net/en/president-copy/>.

Costa Rica at age 38 from 2018 to 2022.⁵ Gabriel Attal (born on 16th March 1989) of France also, at the age of 34, served as minister of National Education and Young People between 2023 and 2024 and later became Prime Minister of France in 2024.⁶ Again, Emmanuel Jean Frederic Macron (born on 21st December 1977) became the President of France on May 14, 2017, at 40, and has remained the president till today.⁷ These and many others attest that the youth in every organization and community have a lot to offer. These tell us that if the youth in Techiman West are given the opportunity in leadership, they have more to contribute to the growth and development of the church. Then, the question is how do we involve the youth in church leadership and how do we involve the youth in the daily running of the local churches?

Strategies to Involve the Youth in Church Leadership in Techiman West District

Church Elders Multiplying Themselves in the Youth

According to Dave Ealey and Rod Dempsey, multiplication is superior to addition. Multiplication results in exponential growth, whereas addition creates incremental growth.⁸ This implies that it is good to add one youth to the church leaders, but it is better to train more youth to become leaders intentionally; that is, training trainers of leaders. Paul exemplified this in his ministry by training more

⁵Tufts University, “Carols Alvarado Quesada,” accessed 24 March 2024, <https://fletcher.tufts.edu/people/faculty/carlos-alvarado-quesada>.

⁶Roger Cohen, “Can Gabriel Attal Win Over France?” *New York Times*, February 23, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/23/world/europe/gabriel-attal-france-prime-minister.html>.

⁷Elysée, “Presidents of the Republic,” accessed 26 March 2024, <https://www.elysee.fr/en/french-presidency/the-presidents-of-the-republic>.

⁸Dave Ealey and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is... How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2013), 118.

people and exhorted Timothy to do the same in 2 Timothy 2:2. If the elders do this, it will help the churches to grow faster than we see it today, even without the involvement or presence of the elders. Jesus trained only twelve disciples, yet after his death, the church kept growing due to the power of the multiplication of leaders. Therefore, let the elders seek to multiply their leadership skills in some youth in the church.

Helping Others to Go to the Next Level

This strategy says that once the youth is in the community of believers, let the elders help them grow in Christ to become disciples through development and training so they can be sent.⁹ According to Ellen White, God desires for young people to develop into men of integrity, equipped to take on responsibility and be ready to act in His honorable task.¹⁰ The church elders are to prepare the youth for leadership and other church activities.

Formation of Young Elders or Leaders Group

This strategy demands that the elders build strong relationships with the youth to know the potential leaders among them. Then, the elders create young elders or leaders' groups to train them on the job and equip them to lead.¹¹ They only need supervision and guidance; they will perform excellent duties. According to Mark Devries, some of the most significant aspects of youth ministry take place in small

⁹Ealey and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...*, 128-129.

¹⁰Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2005), 21.

¹¹Ealey and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...*, 149-151.

groups and one-on-one talks rather than in huge gatherings.¹² This implies that consensus building through healthy one-on-one or small group relationships works well with the youth. Again, the youth enjoy recognition. They want to see their involvement count in the church.

Youth Empowerment

Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants, and our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace” (Ps 144:12). The youth can only be as grown-ups and corner pillars in the church only when they are prepared and guided to serve in a particular capacity. The youth already have the zeal and strength to work as the Apostle John posits that “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God dwells in you, and you have conquered the evil” (1 John 2:14). They only need Direction and guidance to serve. According to Ellen White, young people should not be disregarded; they should be included in the work and responsibilities. Allow them to experience the blessings and assistance of others.¹³ Through empowerment, the youth can be involved in bearing the church's responsibilities, which calls for mentoring and role models.

The church must give the youth access to the church organ and machines. The elders must allow the youth to explore and make mistakes only to correct them in love. Encourage the young people to take part in activities that will improve their physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. To increase their interest in the church, encourage and permit them to plan events such as debates, Bible quizzes, sports competitions, camps, retreats, and activities. Allow them to take charge of church

¹²Mark Devries, *Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last and What Your Church Can Do about It* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 24.

¹³White, *Testimonies*, 6:435.

programs. Assign youth to various roles inside the church and provide them with performance training. Plan public campaigns for young people. Each time they attempt, they usually do better and better.

Mentoring

A purposeful partnership between an experienced person and someone with less experience is called mentoring. Thus, the seasoned individual serves as a role model for the novice. David Clutterbuck states that a mentor is a more seasoned person who is willing to impart knowledge to a less seasoned person in a relationship based on mutual trust.¹⁴ So, the elders can mentor the youth to become influential leaders in the following ways:

- a) Social Support by helping them in healthy relationships in the church and the family.
- b) Spiritual Accompaniment by praying with them.
- c) Moral Accompaniment by helping them to live a life of commitment worthy of emulation.
- d) Physical Accompaniment through practical activities.
- e) Each elder mentors one youth for one year by giving quarterly progress reports.

The above points can be done when the church Music Director mentors the Young Musician to become a choir director in the future. The Sabbath School Superintendent can mentor a young teacher to become a Sabbath School Discussing leader, and the church elder can mentor a young elder to become an elder in the

¹⁴Brittany Larkin, "When Management Policies Collide: An Examination of How the Autonomous Intent of Charter School Laws Work with the Rigid Accountability of Idea," *Encyclopaedia of Strategic Leadership and Management* (New York: Cengage Learning, 2016), 1179.

church, which continues in other departments. This mentoring should follow a developmental relationship that is sponsored or assisted by the church to enable the church elders to pass on their leadership skills to the youth.

Formation of Master Guides or Senior Youth Clubs

Let the elders strengthen the existing Master Guides Club in the District to ensure they go through their instructional materials properly to equip them for leadership in the church. This will enable the elders to know the potential of each youth and guide them properly.

Establishment of Youth Churches

When youth churches are established in the districts, the youth get the opportunity to serve in all the offices in the church, including church elders. It gives them the room to perform, exhibit their potential, and practice what they may learn from their mentors. Youth serving in the youth church feel more relaxed and empowered when ministering to their peers. It is one of the best platforms for training youth for the ministry.

Forgiveness and Acceptance

The youth may be prone to making repeated mistakes, yet they expect to be forgiven. Communicate with them with respect and dignity without rejection or scolding through unconditional positive regard. Nothing attracts teens and young people to the church more quickly than acceptance, and nothing drives them away more quickly than rejection.

They Are Entering the Youth World

In general, young people dislike hearing about the experiences of grownups from the past. They seek out leaders who are willing to comprehend and accept them within their world and who are on their level. In this situation, the leaders ought to sympathize with the aspirations and hardships of the youth. They then need to make time to hear their tales. They might listen to your stories if you listen to theirs, which would allow you to identify pertinent details in their tales and develop the ability to narrate them “in their language.”

The following are some ways the church leadership can use to mingle with the youth: organize some discussion meetings with them on their challenges as a youth, organize informal programs or activities for them, have time for listening-based dialogue, allow them to express their feelings and emotions while tolerating their language both verbal and non-verbal as well as behavior. Also, let the church plan inter-generational activities or debates, organize forums to exchange ideas and decision-making, and allow the youth to lead or participate in programs in the church. Because when the youth see that their ideas and participation positively impact the church, they become more encouraged and motivated to do even better.

Digital Ministry

Creating and managing the church's Facebook account and website has become crucial. Because the gospel can be shared through social media, promotions, and adverts can be made on social media. Generally, the youth are well versed in this field to serve the church—those who know information Technology love to serve the church in this way.

Spiritual Gifts Assessment Seminars

Most church youth do not know their Potential. They are usually jealous of others who are serving and confused about what they can also do. By running spiritual gifts assessment seminars for the youth, we help each one identify his or her gifts so that he or she can serve in that field without any difficulties.

Conclusion

Young people are strong, energetic, and full of ideas. Since they typically have free time, they can devote themselves entirely (and without expense) to the church. Young people will grow more devoted and find it more difficult to leave the church the sooner they feel important and wanted. This is how Ellen White wraps up the conversation. Our duty to the youth does not end when they turn their hearts to God. They must be inspired to recognize that the Lord expects them to do something to forward His cause and be interested in His work. Urging young people to take action and demonstrating the extent of the work that needs to be done are insufficient. They have to be trained to work for the Master. They need to be disciplined and trained in the most effective ways to win people over to Christ. Encourage them to make an effort to assist their little friends in a discrete and unassuming manner. Provide them with training and a structured outline of the various missionary endeavors they can participate in.¹⁵

A young leader who is firmly rooted in Christ, who embraces and exemplifies biblical and spiritual disciplines, who has received proper training and guidance, and who sets an honest and direct example will serve as an inspiration for young followers to follow Christ.

¹⁵Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2001), 210.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the study, draws an overall conclusion, and ends with some suggested recommendations for consideration, further action, or additional research.

Summary

Within every SDA Church, the youth are mostly found within the Adventist Youth Ministry (AYM) and Public Campus Ministry (PCM), but the PCM is a subset of AYM. So, knowing and understanding the AYM's objectives is very important in this study. Ellen G. White, in *Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1893, set forth the objectives for the AYM. They are as follows:

1. To train the youth to work for other youth,
2. To recruit the youth to help their church and “those who profess to be Sabbath-keepers.”
3. To work “for those who are not of our “faith.”¹

Under the guidance of the elders, the youth are expected to pray and study the Bible together in order to accomplish these goals. In order to foster spiritual development and leadership, the goal is to implement carefully thought-out programs for leadership and witnessing in order to cultivate tact, skill, and talent in service to

¹Ellen G. White, “Walk in the Light,” *Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1893, <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/820.11601>.

Jesus. In addition to M. E. Kern's leadership of the SDA Church's General Conference in 1907, the youth department is:

- a) to improve the youth's degree of devotional life
- b) to raise young people's attainment standards.
- c) to prepare and instruct young people for service.
- d) to offer outreach and service opportunities.
- e) to impart the values of stewardship.
- f) to guide young people in realizing their value and growing and discovering their spiritual.²

All the above points seek to guide the youth to be in tune and connected with God. The rationale is that since young people are particularly targeted by Satan, showing them love, kindness, civility, and tender sympathy will make them observe church leaders and prepare them for leadership roles.³

According to the Jewish tradition, young people aged twelve or thirteen were allowed to sit under the rabbis to learn about them. The Bible states that the Levites and the Priests were eligible to serve at the Sanctuary as interns by age twenty-five (25) and start a full-time ministry at thirty (30) years.⁴ Besides the Levites, God called some young people prophets and kings alongside the elders in ancient times in their societies. Some such people are Samuel, David, Joseph, Josiah, Jehoash, and Jeremiah. Each of them did his work perfectly.

²General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Pastor's and Elder's Handbook for Youth Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, 2002), 13.

³Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Ministerial Association of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995), 275-276.

⁴Ligon Duncan, "Lamps, Levites, and Retirement," posted April 25, 2007, accessed 22 August 2023, <https://rts.edu/resources/lamps-levites-and-retirement/>.

John the Baptist and Jesus, in compliance with the Jewish tradition, started their official ministry at thirty. Most of the apostles Jesus called were young people. Paul also mentored a lot of young people in his ministry. John Mark and Timothy are typical examples of Paul's mentees.

In most of her writings, Ellen White counsels the church to involve the youth in leadership. She explains that the youth should be seen as active agents in the church. They should be appropriately guided and directed in their service to God. The Lord expects the youth to consecrate their energies, potential, and knowledge to his service. He is ready to use the willing and ready youth to serve in his church.

The secular world also knows the need to use the youth in the working field, political leadership, and kingship. Due to that, all the European countries that seek immigrants usually grant visas only to educated and energetic youth. Because the youth are not only energetic but also innovative and productive, any organization or nation that recognizes and utilizes the energies of its youth needs to improve. The following are some examples of young people in leadership in politics. Gabriel Boric of Chile, Vjosa Osmani of Kosovo, Carols Alvarado Quesada of Costa Rica, Gabriel Attal of France, and Emmanuel Jean Frederic Macron are also from France. All these young people are serving as presidents in their respective countries.

During the Reformation era, most youth who entered universities converted from Catholicism to Protestantism. Such youth became powerful tools in God's hands to lead His church then. They played critical roles in teaching and spreading the message of the Reformation. The youth play vital roles in the churches today, too. Therefore, they must be recognized and involved in church eldership or leadership all the time, and the churches will experience exceptional growth.

Leadership itself is challenging, so when a young person is a leader, there are challenges. The challenges can be checked by mentoring the youth in a special way to groom them for leadership. Again, the elders should act as advisers to young people when they are leading, just as Joiada helped Jehoash in his reign (2 Kgs 12:2). Without mentoring and guidance, the youth may mess up in leadership.

According to the survey conducted for this paper, the number of young people who responded to the study was about 72, and they were between the ages of 26 and 45, representing 72% of the respondents. In terms of education, about 74 of them have had at least a Diploma or First Degree in academics, which means such people have the requisite education to serve as church elders. It is good to find from the study that the elders in Techiman West District are between the ages of 31 and 50. They constitute 77 of the responses, representing 80% of them. Only 17% are above 51, and 3% are between 18 and 30. Most respondents agreed that the youth perform satisfactorily when elected as elders.

The primary reasons the youth are not elected as elders are in descending order. They do not have experience, they are not married, they do not have good morals, and they do not have money (Table 6). Most of them agree that involving the youth among the elders is good. However, they believe they should be trained, mentored, guided, allowed freedom of speech and expression of their emotions or feelings, etc. The study confirmed that the young perform creditably when elected elders are elected.

In an attempt to involve the youth in leadership, the church elders should use some of the strategies below: The elders must:

1. Multiply themselves in the youth.

2. Help the youth to go to the next level from their present state.
3. Form young elders' group.
4. Empower the youth in leadership.
5. Mentor the youth
6. Strengthen Master Guides or Senior Youth Leaders Club.
7. Establish youth churches
8. Empathically forgive and accept them just as they are.
9. Enter the world of the youth by coming down to their level.
10. Establish social media Ministry
11. Run Spiritual Gifts Assessment Seminars for them.

Conclusion

Leadership is crucial in every organization, and the church is not exempt. In his wisdom, God has given us countless examples of leadership in both the Old and New Testaments. The young men in the Bible rose to leadership alongside the older adults. Some young people served as national leaders like Joseph, kings like Josiah, priests like Samuel, prophets like Elisha and Jeremiah, politicians like Daniel, and church leaders like Timothy.

However, Techiman West District elders prefer only the aged as elders. Furthermore, these elders cannot connect well with the young people in the church. Sometimes, they cannot understand some of the ideas of the youth in the church. This is affecting the churches in the district. However, these youths are full of innovative ideas and potential and are zealous to help the church if given the chance to serve. Unfortunately, the elders think that young people who are not married or gainfully employed cannot serve as church elders. Some also think that the youth do not have

good morals. Moreover, morally upright people lack the requisite experience to lead the church.

The study results indicate that most church elders in the district have served for at least a decade. The study also reveals a lack of youth involvement in church leadership. The study shows that electing young people as church elders is helpful for church growth and development. The youth are strong and energetic, and they bring dynamism to church leadership. The study also shows that most respondents believe young elders perform better than their adult counterparts in church leadership.

While some respondents expressed concerns over the youth's lack of experience, the study found that 94% of youth perform creditably when elected as elders, and 70% disagree that the youth reject their election as elders. Young elders in church eldership are active and can motivate other youth into service by bridging the gap between the elders and the young people. Also, the study points out the importance of selecting some young people for training and mentoring them to become efficient church elders.

Finally, this study shows that there is an undeniable need for young people to be included in church leadership positions. By involving youth in eldership, the Church can benefit from its innovative ideas, youthful energy and dynamism, information technology knowledge, and more vibrant and effective leadership.

Recommendations

The study could not unearth every possible strategy for young people in church leadership, especially church elders. Besides, the context may not be the same as that of Techiman North West. Therefore, further research will be needed to investigate strategies to involve the youth in church leadership in other fields of the church. The church leadership is encouraged to organize workshops or seminars based

on the strategies listed in this study for the young people to ensure a continuous leadership succession plan in the churches.

APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of the requirement for the award of Master of Arts in Divinity, the researcher is conducting field research titled “STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN THE TECHIMAN WEST DISTRICT, GHANA.” This questionnaire will, therefore, assist the researcher in collecting data to enable him to accomplish the study's objective. The researcher, therefore, declares that any information you provide will be treated as highly confidential and will be used only for this study.

The questionnaire has two parts. Part I deals with the demographic information of the respondents. Part II, on the other hand, tackles whether the youth are involved in church elders.

*Required

PART 1

Demographic Information of the Respondents

1. Age

1. 15-25
2. 26-35
3. 36-45
4. 46-55
5. 56 above

2. Level of education

- A. JSS/JHS
- B. SSCE/WASSCE
- C. Diploma
- D. Degree
- E. Others

3. How long have you been a member?

- A. 0-10
- B. 11-20
- C. 21-30
- D. 31-50
- E. 51-and above

4. Have you ever held any office/position in the church? If yes, at what age?

Part II

Are the youth allowed to serve as elders in the church?

5. What has been the age bracket of the church elders for the past five years?

- A. 18-30
- B. 31-40
- C. 41-50
- D. 51 and above

6. How many years do some elders remain in leadership positions?
 - A. 1-2
 - B. 3-4
 - C. 5-6
 - D. 7-8
 - E. 9 and above
7. The youth are not made elders in the church because
 - A. They do not have experience
 - B. They are not married
 - C. They do not have money
 - D. They do not have their own houses
 - E. They do not have good morals
8. If none of the reasons given in question 7 is applicable, state any other(s)
 - A
 - B
 - C
9. It is important to involve the youth in church leadership, especially elders.
 - A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly
10. What should be done to involve the youth in church eldership?
 - A.....
11. The youth are not able to perform when they are elected as elders.
 - A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
12. The youth always reject the appointment of eldership.
 - A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
13. How many of your current church elders are between the ages of
 - A. 18-30
 - B. 31-40
 - C. 41-50
 - D. 51and above
14. Why is it important to appoint the youth as an elder?
 - A.....
15. The Youth in the leadership position performs better than the older people.
 - A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree

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