

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry  
Emphasis in Mission

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: A STRATEGY TO MOBILIZE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR MISSION THROUGH THE YOUTH MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN ABA EAST CONFERENCE, NIGERIA**

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church in her structure organized the Youth Ministries Department in 1907. This department is primarily responsible for working for the salvation of our youth and training them as an army for service in varied missionary lines. This department is meant to cater for the development of the young people of all age groups for the purpose of doing mission. However, there is a growing apathy among the youth (17 – 35 or young adults) of the church in Aba East Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church towards the Youth Ministry Department of the church which is positioned to mobilize them for mission.

With qualitative method of research using focus group interviews, it was discovered that the reasons for this phenomenon include lack of capable leadership for the Youth Ministries in the various churches; the discipline versus punishment misconception in the ministry; employment/unemployment challenges of this age

group; a gross oversight by the church of this age group in the Youth Ministry program of activities; the uniform versus non-uniform confusion in the Youth Ministry among others.

To address these factors responsible for the apathy of the youth towards the Youth Ministry Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Aba East Conference, an intervention program was developed putting all these factors into consideration to mobilize the young adults for mission through the Youth Ministry Department of the Church. A particular church was chosen to serve as a pilot church for the intervention. The intervention program was in two stages. The first stage included 1. Conducting orientation seminars for the church youth leaders; 2. Orientation seminar for the entire church; 3. Orientation seminars for the young adults of the church 17 – 35 years of age.

At the end of these orientation seminars, thirty-five (35) young adults filled membership cards to be enrolled as active Youth Ministry members of the church. In the second stage, these youths were now invited for a brainstorming session. Those who attended selected a leader. The decision was made concerning weekly meetings and there was the enthusiasm to begin getting involved in youth programs. This project work has the significance of mobilizing the most viable of the Church membership to do mission through the Youth Ministry Department of the Church.

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A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Wisdom Chukwuemeka Adiele

June 2016

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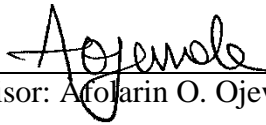
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	Aba East Conference
AYM	Adventist Youth Ministry
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Our contemporary world is being terrorized by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, ISIS in the middle East and Al- Shabab in Somalia. Who are these terrorists who have defied all the security intelligence of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and held the world to ransom? They are a group of young men who have been recruited and trained to live for a cause and die for that cause. They have been introduced to a mission to live and die for.

#### **Description of the Ministry Context**

Simply put, the ministry is all that is involved in carrying out a mission. The Church's mission is spelled out by Jesus in Matthew 28: 18-20:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Having presently spent fifteen (15) years in the field as a pastor, I have discovered the potential that ministry for and to the young people of this generation has in finishing the gospel work in our generation, which will, in turn, hasten our Lord's return. At the local church level or in our institutions, a ministry for and to the young people of our generation is needed now more than ever before if this work will be finished in our generation. This is because the majority of the Seventh-day

Adventist Church membership is made of young people.<sup>1</sup> This may be said of the society too. These young people between the ages of 13 – 31 are made up of students, professionals, businessmen and women.

More so, young people today live in a sophisticated postmodern society. To effectively do ministry that would reach the youth of our age, youth leaders and youth workers need to get professional. It is no longer about maintaining the status *quo*, and it is no longer business as usual. More than ever, there is a need for creativity, a fresh look at the objectives and action plans of the youth ministry at all levels. There will be a need for re-prioritization of the church's goals.

The religious revival and reformation, ignited in the nineteenth century which Adventism inherited, were spearheaded mainly by young people. These young people fall within the above age group of 13 – 31- Luther Warren, Harry Ferner, Ellen Gould Harmon, James White, and William Miller. It is strongly believed that if there is a simple and well-defined course for young people regarding their place in fulfilling the Church's mission, and an effective ministry is established to reach them in this age, following the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy counsels, there is bound to be another revival and revolution soon, like it happened in Acts 2.

Furthermore, the priesthood of all believers is taught in the Bible (1 Peter 2: 9). Pastors are called to inspire, train, equip and deploy ministers to do the work of ministry. These ministers are readily found among the youth of the Church.

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<sup>1</sup> Gladwin Mathews, "Urbanization and Adventist Youth Ministries," in *Getting It Right*, ed. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2005), 265.

### **Statement of Problem**

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the active membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is made up of young people 30 years below<sup>2</sup>

Surprisingly, only a few of them care to identify with the Adventist Youth Society activities of their local churches, while an overwhelming majority exhibit a disturbing apathy towards the youth programs of their churches.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the causes of the present apathy of young people towards the youth ministries of the Church. It will then develop a model program for the Youth Ministries Department to help the youth, regular and associate members, develop a keen interest in the Youth Ministries of the SDA Church. It shall also implement the program through grass root sensitizations, using lectures and workshops; and finally, evaluate the effect of this program by assessing the membership accession to the Adventist Youth Society of AEC within the research period.

### **Justification**

It has been the desire of church leaders to see the youth of their churches effectively involved in church life through the Adventist Youth Society of the church.

1. This work will help to correct some negative impression already created in the minds of the young adults and church leaders towards the Youth Ministries Department as a result of misrepresentations by the Youth Ministry Leadership.

Ellen G. White writes about the significance of mobilizing the youth for missionary service, "With such an army of workers, rightly trained, might furnish,

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<sup>2</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, *Youth First* (Silver Spring, MD: Youth Ministry Department, 2003), 4, [http://gcyouthministries.org/Portals/0/Document\\_Downloads/YouthFirst.pdf](http://gcyouthministries.org/Portals/0/Document_Downloads/YouthFirst.pdf).

how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Delimitations**

Although the Youth Ministry of the SDA Church includes youth from ages 6-35, this work will be centered on youths of ages 17– 35 in a local church in AEC of SDA Church.

### **Description of the Dissertation Process**

This is the description of the entire dissertation process. Here is set forth a step by step plan to actualize the goal of this project.

A. A theological foundation for doing youth Ministry, taken from the Old and New Testament will be proposed. Also, the writings of Ellen G. White will be investigated to gain insights in doing effective Youth Ministry focused on fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20).

B. A brief historical study will be done on Youth Ministry in the SDA Church; the Genesis, its growth, and the present picture. For this reason, SDA literature will be reviewed. In addition, other Christian author’s writings on Youth Ministry will be researched.

C. Based on the theological and theoretical research, the following will be done:

Research would be conducted to discover the reasons behind the observed apathy.

Develop a model Youth Ministry program package on mass mobilization of all the youths in AEC for mission and such that will sustain the momentum.

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<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 271.

Upon approval by the Conference, a chosen local church will be thoroughly acquainted with this program package.

The implementation of this program package will be done in the chosen local church over the period of six months using seminars and workshops.

The process of this program package will be documented.

The data will be gathered and analyzed.

The results will be evaluated and presented to the AEC for information.

All steps of the program package implementation will be recorded on paper and eventually made into a handbook and chapters for the dissertation.

D. The approximate date for completion of this dissertation process is May 2016.

### **Expectations**

Below are the expectations of this project dissertation. Some are short term and some are long term.

A. A revival of a solely Bible-based Youth Ministry is expected at the end of this research.

B. It is expected that the apathy that presently exists among the youths in Aba East Conference towards the Youth Ministry will be curbed.

C. To record a 50-60% involvement of able-bodied young people in the Church's youth ministry programs on the long run.

D. It is expected that the interest developed in the course of implementing this research program will be sustained permanently.

E. There will be a mass mobilization of youths in AEC for the purpose of finishing the gospel commission in our generation.

F. The interest of non-Adventist youths will be aroused. Consequently, there will be a mass accession of non-Adventist young people into the membership of the SDA Church.

G. This great revival ignited amongst the youth will surely hasten the second coming of our Savior Jesus Christ.

H. Finally, the researcher expects to have a better understanding, effectiveness, and efficiency in working with young people within and without the Church.

## CHAPTER 2

### FOUNDATION FOR YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE BIBLE AND E. G. WHITE WRITINGS

This chapter examines the Biblical foundation for doing a special ministry targeted towards the youth. The authenticity of any ministry should be derived from the Bible which is the basis for the Christian belief system. There are several theological foundations on which youth ministry could be built. Intuitive Theology suggests it be based on what feels right for the youth. Embedded Theology is inherited from a faith community, and then there is Deliberate Theology<sup>1</sup> which carefully examines the theological assumptions and practices. Youth ministry practices a particular kind of deliberate theology called practical theology or theological reflection on Christian action based on biblical standards. This fits into critical contextualization.

Exegesis of some Bible texts related to the subject of Youth Ministry shall be presented. In examining these Bible texts, this chapter shall address the issue of who qualifies as a “youth” in the Bible; apathy in the Bible and the cause; the ideals of youth ministry; and finally Ellen G. White’s counsels concerning the need for a special ministry for, and by the young people.

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<sup>1</sup> Chap Clark, Kenda Creasy Dean, and Dave Rahn, *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 26–39.

## Identifying Youth

When the term “youth” is used, it is expedient to know to whom it refers. There are several views as to who constitutes the youth in our society. This section examines what constitutes “youth” in the Bible.

The root word for youth most commonly used in the Old Testament (OT) is ‘*na‘ar.*’ Not all lexicographers agree that ‘*na‘ar*’ likely derives from ‘*na‘arl*’, which means *growl*. Arabic cognate covers the range, ‘grunt; cry, scream, roar, bellow, plus more active connotative ‘gush forth’, agitate. South Arabic derivative ‘*Tigri*’; language of Ethiopia yields a verb ‘instigate rebellion’, it’s noun being mischief and revolt. This sheds helpful light on the incident of Elisha’s tormentors who were attacked by bears in 2 Kings 2:23 -24 that means they were young lads who were in the age of instigating rebellion, mischief or revolt.<sup>2</sup>

1. The word ‘*na‘ar*’ has a wide range of usage from a sampling of its over two hundred occurrences.
  - a. In Exodus 2:6 it refers to the infant Moses of few months. And in 2 Sam 12:16 it refers to Bathsheba’s baby.
  - b. In 2 Sam 14: 21 and 2 Sam 18: 5 – It is used to refer to mature Absalom by His father David.
  - c. ‘*Na‘ar*’ is frequently used (singular and plural - ‘*na‘arim*’) of soldiers (1 Sam 14: 1, 6; 21: 4; 25: 5-8, 2 Sam 1: 5-6, 15). For example, Abraham’s, ‘young men’ (*ne‘arim*) were trained servants, trained men, warriors (Gen 14: 24, Gen 14: 14). The word used here is also ‘*na‘ar*’ – *ne‘arim*’ (Plural). According to Strong, the youthful age is from infancy to adolescence.<sup>3</sup>
  - d. ‘*na‘ara*’ is the feminine of ‘*na‘ar*’ – meaning girls, maidens or young woman. This *noun* usually refers to marriageable but unmarried girls,

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<sup>2</sup> R Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr, and Bruce K. Waltke, “Youth,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> James Strong, “Young,” *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible in Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible, 1986), 104.

emphasizing the youthfulness of the girls (2Kings 5: 2).<sup>4</sup> However, it could be used for young married women like in Ruth 2: 5; 4: 12.

- e. *'nah' ar'* - means a sense of tossing about, a wanderer – young one as in Psalm 88: 15.
  - f. *'nē 'urim'* translated youth lays stress in the early immature but vigorous trainable stage of life most often in the phrase 'from one's youth up' ( ref. Gen 8: 21; 1 Sam 17: 13; 1 Kings 18: 12; Job 31: 18)
2. Another word used for young man in Hebrew is *'bachur'* which denotes a young man, no longer a mere youth, but liable to military service. References include Deut. 32: 25, Judges 14: 10, Isaiah 8: 16, and 2 Kings 8: 12. Num 11: 28 talks of Joshua the servant of Moses – one of his young men (*bechurim*).<sup>5</sup> Usually, in Israel, a young man was legible for military service from the age of twenty (20) and above (Num 1: 45, 46).
  3. Another word is *'aluwm'* pronounced *'awloom'*. This means adolescences as a figure of youth as found in Job 20: 11.
  4. *'yaldoth'* - boyhood (or girlhood ), childhood, youth as in Psalm 103: 5, Eccl 11: 9.
  5. *'Shakh –ar – ooth'* – a dawning that is figurative of Juvenes and youth as in Eccl 11:10.
  6. *"neotes"* from *"veos"* a Greek adjective that denote time, originally belonging to the present moment. It combines the meanings a.) "new," "fresh," "not previously there," and b.) "young," "youthful." The only instance of "young" is in Titus 2:4 ("young women"), but we find the comparative in Titus 2:6; 1 Peter 5:5; 1 Tim 5:1-2 (also Luke 15:12-13), i.e., younger people (or the younger son).<sup>6</sup> In sense b.) *"veos"* denotes the age of a child or young man (up to 30 at most). In the grouping of citizens in Hellenistic cities or in relation to societies, it becomes a designation for men over 20 as a group or body.<sup>7</sup>
  7. *"neotes"* is a Greek root word used of grown up military age, extending to the 40<sup>th</sup> year as found in 1 Timothy 4: 12. Timothy was urged to conduct himself in

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<sup>4</sup> R. Laird Harris, "Na'ar," in *Theological Work Book of the Old Testament*, vol. Logos Library System, Computer Data base (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> W. C. Walker, "Youth," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, computer Data Base, PC Study Bible {CD-ROM} (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., "Young," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol IV* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, June 21, 1967), 896, 897.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

such a way that no one would look down in a condescending way in his youthfulness. Timothy was probably about thirty years old at this time.<sup>8</sup>

8. “*paidion*”- Which means children, infant, young child, and can also mean a mature child as in Mark 10: 15.

Summarily, the discovery from this study shows that in the usage of the two Hebrew root words used for youth, youth covers a wide range from infancy up to manhood as in being in service as a soldier which implies from 20 years of age all through one’s active service years, which is not clear yet from the scriptures. The only clue we have concerning active service years from the scriptures is that of the sons of Kohath that were to enter the work in the tabernacle at age 30 and retire at age 50 (Num 4:3).

### **Spiritual Apathy in the Scriptures**

The word “apathy” generally means a lack of interest or feeling.<sup>9</sup> In this case, it is a lack of interest or enthusiasm towards spiritual things. Literally, the Greek root word *apatheia* means “without feeling.” Other words used to describe this condition are, indifference and spiritlessness. In the Bible, we can find traits of apathy displayed in certain situations. There is an example in Matthew 13: 25, “But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.” The Greek root word for “slept” in this text is *καθευδω* (kath-yoo'-do) which has these array of meaning: 1) to fall asleep, drop off to sleep 2) to sleep 2a) to sleep normally 2b)

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<sup>8</sup> Frank Ely Gaebelein, ed., “1 Timothy 4: 12,” vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 374.

<sup>9</sup> Dorling Kindersley, *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (New York, NY: Dorling Kindersley, 1998) "apathy."

euphemistically, to be dead 2c) metaphorically. 2c1) to yield to sloth and sin 2c2) to be indifferent to one's salvation.<sup>10</sup>

This text is from a set of parables told by Jesus about the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God is likened to a man which sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. Christ explains this parable in verses 36-39 that He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the angels are the reapers. The lesson of this parable in the context of this work is that to be indifferent to spiritual things or one's salvation would give room for the enemy of our soul –the devil to sow “tares” of evil thoughts, words, action, and habits in the life and the missionary work.

Another text is Hosea 13: 6, “According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.” The word “filled” in this text comes from the Hebrew word *saba* {saw-bah} or *sabea* {saw-bay'-ah} which means, to be satisfied, be sated, be fulfilled, or be surfeited.<sup>11</sup> This meaning can be applied to different contexts. However, it applies more in the spiritual context here. There is spiritual danger in material abundance-it leads to a spirit of independence. Moses warned the people of Israel before they got into Canaan to beware lest they forgot the Lord when their houses are full (Deut 6:11, 12; cf. Deut 8: 10), and the Lord predicts that they will fall into this trap (Deut 31: 20). Agur

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<sup>10</sup> James Strong, “A Concise Dictionary of the Words in Greek/New Testament with Renderings in the King James Version (1890),” in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible, 1986), 50 “Slept.”

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

reflecting on the dangers fraught with riches, prayed to God for enough for the day lest he is full, and deny the Lord (Prov 30: 9).<sup>12</sup>

God through Hosea passed a judgment of doom on Ephraim. Among the reasons, God gave why Ephraim turned their back on Him and worshiped other gods/idols was because Ephraim became filled with their possessions. They nurtured a sense of false satisfaction and fulfillment which excluded God. They became complacent which led to indifference towards God. Hence the statement about Ephraim, “Ephraim *is* joined to idols: let him alone” (Hosea 4:17).

From this text, the lesson of the cause of apathy is drawn. When people begin to increase in goods, there is the tendency to develop a kind of carnal security that would eventually exclude God. This may be material or even spiritual. When this dangerous sense of satisfaction or fulfillment sets in; complacency follows and the sad consequence is spiritual apathy. This is the condition that attracted Christ’s rebuke to the Church of the Laodicea with the proffered solution (Rev 3: 14-19).

### **Youth Apathy**

The scriptures record some traces of youth apathy playing out. This section shall examine few situations in the scriptures that reveal such, beginning with Judges 2: 7-10.

The writer of the book of Judges is unknown. The question of its authorship is complicated by the tripartite structure of the book. The main author may have been an associate of Samuel. And the purpose of the book is to show that Israel’s spiritual

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<sup>12</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr, and Bruce K. Waltke, “Filled,” *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody, October 1, 2003).

condition determined its political and material situation.<sup>13</sup> It is one of the historical books of the Bible that reveals the condition of Israel after they had settled down in Canaan. At this time Joshua was dead and also all those elders who labored with him. A serious crisis set in among the Israelites. That era was characterized by a sentence found frequently in the book of Judges, “In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes” (Judges 17: 6). We read in Judges 2: 7 - 10:

And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten. And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-Heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers, and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

God through Joshua had made Israel settled in the land of promise – Canaan. All the tribes had their land allocations. God allowed Joshua to die including all the elders that served with him. That entire generation was gone, and then another generation emerged. This generation, the account records, as a generation that did not know the LORD.

The word “know” in verse 10 comes from the Hebrew root word *yada*. This root occurs a total of 944 times<sup>14</sup> and is used in every stem and expresses a multiple of shades of knowledge gained by the senses. *Yada* has varied meanings depending on the context. For example, *yada* as found in Exodus 5: 2: “And Pharaoh said, Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither

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<sup>13</sup> Frank Ely Gaebelin, “Judges,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 377, 378.

<sup>14</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, “Know,” *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2003).

will I let Israel go.” *Yada* in this text means ‘acquaintance’ or ‘to have knowledge of.’ Pharaoh was yet to know the LORD and recognize His supremacy. This kind of usage is also found in Exodus 10: 2: “And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I *am* the LORD.” Egypt as a whole was supposed to get acquainted with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the miraculous signs in form of plagues on Egypt. More so, doubtful Israelites were supposed to be strengthened in the faith as to who their God is.

*Yada* is also found in 1 Samuel 2: 12 which says, “Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.” It is used here to express acquaintance with a person of the most intimate kind. For instance, what God said about Moses – “I know thee by name” (Exod 33: 17). The LORD knew Moses face to face (Deut 34: 10). This is the same *yada* used to describe Adam’s knowledge of his wife Eve that gave birth to Cain their son (Gen 4: 1).

Then comes to focus another meaning of *yada* which is to acknowledge or to recognize or admit into one’s mind. The closest synonyms to this word *yada* are *bin* to discern and *nakar* – to recognize. *Yada* in our text of study would most likely mean an acknowledgment of God or recognition of God’s relevance in all our situations.

Proverbs 3: 6 says, “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Therefore, from the study so far, we can conclude that the generation that emerged after the demise of Joshua and his surviving elders were acquainted with God as a man is acquainted with his fellow man but they refused to acknowledge and recognize His role in their past, present and future history. That generation pushed their knowledge of the God of their fathers to the side. Hence, became devoid of the intimate knowledge of God.

However, the question is, what led that generation to that situation? There are two possibilities. First, the children grew up and chose not to acknowledge God in their history but forsook God and in turn chose to worship Baalim and other gods. Joshua had earlier on in Joshua 24: 15 charged them before his demise: “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” This is possible since they did not see those mighty acts of God for themselves their fathers spoke about both in Egypt and in the wilderness. Faith is not inherited. It is by choice.

Second, it is possible the parents were too busy doing the LORD’s services that they spared no time for their children to inculcate real faith in the God of their fathers. They may have had a mental knowledge of who God is but they lacked the experiential knowledge. Nichol states:

This was a generation that had grown up in the land of Canaan subject to the corrupting influences of social and religious association with the idolatrous people of the land. They did not know from experience the mighty working of God, and their environment, with its corrupting influences, had not developed in them, independent strength of character. Joshua and the elders of the former day had served as buttresses for their weak faith. When those buttresses were taken away by death, the people stumbled and fell because they had no strong religious foundation.<sup>15</sup>

Summarily, it is obvious from the experience of the Israelites that God’s instruction in Deuteronomy concerning passing on the ‘torch of faith’ to their children was not followed to the letter. Their method of faith transmission from the older generation to the younger became faulty. The evidence is seen in the fact that the next generation was described as a generation that did not know the LORD. It seems there

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<sup>15</sup> Francis D. Nichol, ed., “Judge 2:10,” in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1976), 318.

was no effort at discipling the younger generation for God. And if there was, it was faulty and lacked discipline. Because they did not know this God their fathers worshiped experientially, they developed apathy towards the faith of their fathers.

An experiential knowledge of God is expedient for a sustained relationship but the generation following Joshua and Caleb did not know God by personal experience as Deliverer, Leader, and Conqueror.<sup>16</sup> This knowledge of God is expedient for the children in order to become strong proponents of their father's faith.

From the foregoing, it is possible certain needs of these young people were not met. Such needs include the need of nurture and intergenerational mentoring in the faith. These unmet needs might have created a disconnection between them and the God/ faith of their fathers. When these needs are met, there would be a certain transmission of the father's faith to the emerging generation. In other words, youth apathy can be caused by lack of mentoring by the elderly in an intergenerational relationship. This can lead to spiritual lethargy and backsliding in the youth. This does not dismiss the fact that the youth can grow up to choose to worship or not to worship the God of their fathers regardless of whatever kind of mentoring they may have received as they grew up. However, in most cases, such decisions are precipitated by some other remote factors of which lack of intentional mentoring is one.

### **Youth Mobilization in the Scripture**

The goal of having a ministry for the youth is to ensure that the torch of faith is effectively being passed on from generation to generation. As we search the scriptures, we discover some ideas in seeking to mobilize the youth for mission.

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<sup>16</sup> George F. Moore, "Judges 2: 10," in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T Clark, 1966), 67.

## **Giving the Youth Attention**

The scriptures reveal that in order to mobilize the Youth for mission, special interest and attention should be given the youth. This can be in the form of caring, mentoring or empowerment.

For the next study is Malachi 4: 5, 6, “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. And he will restore the heart of the fathers to their children and the heart of the children to their fathers.”

It is God’s plan that before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD, there would be a revived interest in family ministries; especially as it has to do with the children having the attention of their parents in order to discipline them for eternity. The instrument through which this mission will be accomplished will be Elijah.

Who is this Elijah? There is a need to identify this Elijah God promises to use to accomplish a revival before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. *Elijah* means my God is Jehovah. When Jesus asked the disciples at a time for what people are saying about Him, they responded, some say you are John the Baptist, some Elias, which is Elijah ...” (Matthew 16:14). In the angelic annunciation to Zachariah, we see the interpretation of Malachi prophecy foreshadowed (Luke 1:17). That John the Baptist should do the work of another Elijah, is given on the authority of Jesus Himself (Matthew 11: 14). Jesus by this identifies the Elijah of Malachi with John the Baptist. Not in person, however, but in character of ministry.

In other words, the Elijah that was promised in Malachi 4:5 is figurative. He would be a spokesperson for God that ministers after the manner of Elijah the Tishbite of 1 Kings 17 -19 and he would come before the coming of the great and dreadful day

of the LORD. The ministry of this Elijah would be family-centered. It would be a ministry that drives parents to give more attention to their Children and children towards their parents. No other time in the history of man is such ministry needed most as these last days. Here we find a prophecy concerning an interest that must be awakened in the last days of earth's history by a type of Elijah. This interest would be that of attention towards the children/youth. A failure to take the youth into account by family, leaders in the church or society is to court disaster.<sup>17</sup>

Another text for examination is Mark 10: 13-16, "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them" (Mark 10: 13-16).

In the immediate context of this passage under study, mothers brought their young ones to Jesus as he was teaching/doing ministry at a certain place. As these mothers came, the disciples tried to prevent them from reaching Jesus. But Jesus showing his displeasure towards the disciple's attitude towards the children asserted to the contrary, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

Careful attention should be given to the youth. If we could catch a glimpse of the afterlife of those children blessed that day by Jesus, we would see their mothers reminding them of how Jesus blessed them and the words of life He spoke.

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<sup>17</sup> A. B. C. Chiegboka and K. L. Nwadiolor, "Crisis Management in Youth Leadership: An Evaluation of Paul's Teaching in 1 Tim 4: 12," *Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 1, no. 3 (2010): 130.

And we would see how those messages kept those children from straying from Jesus.<sup>18</sup> This is to say that attention given to a young person is never forgotten all through life. Again, the servant of the Lord asserts,

Why should not this labor for the youth in our borders be regarded as the highest kind of missionary work? It will require the most delicate tact, the most thoughtful consideration, the most earnest prayer that heavenly wisdom may be imparted. The youth are the objects of Satan's special attacks; but kindness, courtesy, that tender sympathy that flows from a heart filled with love to Jesus, will give you access to them. You may win their confidence so that they will listen to your words, and thus be saved from many a snare of the enemy.<sup>19</sup>

Labor for the youth should be regarded as the highest kind of missionary work. There should be a special ministry attention on the youth because the youths are the objects of Satan's attacks. This special ministry for them would prepare them adequately to confront the enemy's 'arsenals' that come in form of trials and temptations. "If we wish to know what things Jesus cared deeply about, one sure clue is to be found in the things that roused his indignation. And one of such is the neglect and negative attitude of adults towards the children."<sup>20</sup> And again, "the child, as an authentic heir to the kingdom, must be recognized as such even by those who are in point of age, his seniors."<sup>21</sup>

The Greek word used for children here is '*pahee-dee'-on*' which means a young child, a little boy/girl, children, little ones, an infant, and a more advanced child; of a mature child. The Greek root word translated suffer is '*af-ee'-ay-mee*'

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<sup>18</sup> George Arthur Buttrick, ed., "Mark 10:13-16," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 7 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979), 1096.9.

<sup>19</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 279.1.

<sup>20</sup> Buttrick, "Mark 10:13-16," 799.

<sup>21</sup> Duncan M. Derrett, "Why Jesus Blessed the Children (Mk 10: 13-16)," *Novum Testamentum* 25, no. 1 (1983): 7.

which also means to “send away to.” The implication is that parents ought not to merely allow their children to come to Jesus if they would, rather parents and guardians are under obligation to bring the children – “send them away to” Jesus.

Here Christ sets childlikeness as a standard for passage into the kingdom of God. What does childlikeness entail? In the larger context, this passage of Mark 10 is bounded by two accounts that give us insight into what a childlike disposition is. Childlikeness in these passages suggests humility. The invitation to humility in Mk 10: 13-16 is a call to recognize one’s plea, not to a type of psychological self-flagellation in some modern sense. Rather it is a call particularly for the sake of identifying with the “little” or “weak ones” in the Christian community (cf. Matt 18: 1-4).<sup>22</sup> The youth could be regarded as the “little” or the “weak” of the society, hence the need to identify with the youth around us.

### **Education and Training**

Another need of the youth is education and training. This training must be comprehensive and holistic. This training should be able to develop them wholly – physically, spiritually, socially, and mentally which constitutes the major areas of man’s need.

**Christ’s infancy: a model.** “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” (Luke 2:52). The development of Jesus as a child/youth was holistic as presented by this text. The parents ensured that Christ developed mentally (in wisdom), physically (in stature), socially (in favor with man), and spiritually (in favor with God). These are the areas of growth/development every child/youth must be helped to grow in.

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<sup>22</sup> James L. Bailey, “Experiencing the Kingdom as a Little Child: A Rereading of Mark 10: 13-16,” *Word and World* 15, no. 1 (1995): 65.

The Greek word used for increased *prokopto* {prok-op'-to} metaphorically means to go forward or to make progress. Christ made progress in *sophia*. Not knowledge but wisdom which includes knowledge. Jesus was capable of learning. Christ also made progress in *helikia* which means in stature. His intellectual and his physical growth were perfect. Christ made progress in *charis* which means grace, favor, or goodwill with God and with men. That he advanced in favor with God plainly indicates that there was a moral and spiritual growth. And with men would also indicate social growth in which He had the goodwill of men.<sup>23</sup>

According to the Jewish customary law, Jesus attended the first Passover feast at the age of twelve (12) years old. This was the age a child in the Jewish society becomes responsible to the laws. This showed a sign of growth or development in the life of the young man. The above description about the growth of Jesus in these four-dimensional areas of one's life is very significant. To experience a holistic growth or development in a child/youth, the young one must be trained for development in these four pivotal areas of a man's life.

In defining education, Ellen G. White asserts, "It has to do with the whole being and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come."<sup>24</sup>

**Discipline in education.** "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Proverbs 29: 17). The word translated "correct" is

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<sup>23</sup> Alfred Plummer, "Luke 2:52," in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke: The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1964), 76.

<sup>24</sup> White, *Education*, 13.

from the Hebrew root word *yacar* {yaw-sar'} which also means discipline, chasten and instruct. Another Hebrew word for discipline is *musar*. In Middle English, it gives the sense of scourging oneself. Via old French from Latin discipline has the idea of instruction and knowledge from the Latin word *discipulus* which means learner and *discere* which means to learn. From the usage and parallels in the Old Testament, one must conclude that *yasar* and *musar* denote correction which results in education.<sup>25</sup>

In the study of Proverb 22: 15 which says that “Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child but the rod of correction would cure it,” the reason behind discipline can be understood. There are two considerations from contemplating this passage:

1. Corruption is woven into our natures, sin is foolishness. That was the reason behind Paul’s Lamentation in Roman 7:19, 21 “For the good that I will do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice ... O wretched man that I man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (NKJV). Sin is in the heart; there is an inward inclination to sin, to speak and act foolishly. The children come to life with this nature.<sup>26</sup>
2. Correction or Discipline is necessary to the cure of it. It will not be got out by fair means and gentle methods; there must be structures and severity and that which will cause grief. Children need to be corrected and kept under discipline by their parents. And for God to rid us (His people) of the foolishness of sin, we all need to be corrected by our heavenly Father.<sup>27</sup>

More so, according to Proverb 3: 11, 12 discipline gives assurance of sonship.<sup>28</sup> Our Father in Heaven corrects us because he sees us as his children. It is this correction of his and our positive attitude towards it that makes us legitimate sons and daughters of God (Heb 12: 5, 6).

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<sup>25</sup> R. Laird Harris, “Discipline,” *Theological Wordbook of Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Mathew Henry, “Proverbs 22:15,” in *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, ed. Mathew Henry and Leslie F. Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1961).

<sup>27</sup> Mathew Henry, “Gen 18:19,” in *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, ed. Mathew Henry and Leslie F. Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1961).

<sup>28</sup> Harris, “Discipline.”

## **Discipline**

From the study of discipline in the scriptures, we find two dimensions or two methods in which discipline could be administered. The first is the best and preferred. The second can be explored only after the first must have been faithfully done.

**Instructive/constructive.** This is the discipline that is aimed at preventing a child from straying into forbidding paths. This is done through instructions, and provisions for that child. Proverb 3: 11 -12 says “My Son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD, or loathe His reproof” for whom the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father, the son in whom he delights’ (NAS). The root words *musar* and *tokahat*, which means reproof and correction respectively come from *Yahweh*. For whom He loves (*'ahab*) he reproves (*yakah*). *Musah* primarily points to a God-centered way of life. Proverb 1: 7 couples *musar* with the ‘fear of Yahweh’ and Proverb 1: 8 with *Tora*, instruction, and teaching.<sup>29</sup> *Musar* most often refers to oral instruction. Hence the close association with the Torah.

Moreover, of the 51 uses of *musar* in the Old Testament, it is used 20 times as instruction. Proverbs and other wisdom literature speak of discipline with emphasis on instruction. Again, we see another picture of discipline in Deuteronomy 8: 2-5. Here, God is seen to be the one who led the Israelites through their 40 years wilderness experience. He provided them with Manna, cared for their welfare such that they lacked nothing. Deuteronomy 8:5 says that God did all this for the purpose that in their hearts they were to know that God was disciplining them. He was grooming them to walk in His ways. Here we see a picture of hardship balanced by miraculous provisions. In other words, provisions for the subject are a kind of discipline. God’s providence in life’s experiences lends credence to His disciplinary measures towards

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<sup>29</sup> Harris, “Discipline.”

humanity. But when this type of discipline is not welcomed by the recipients, the situation attracts the second type of discipline - redemptive.

**Redemptive discipline.** When Israel went astray after other gods, God had to use a strong punitive disciplinary measure to seek to awaken their conscience to return to Him the true God. Proverb 22:15 speaks of “the rod of correction.”

In Job 5:17, when he urged Job not to “Despise the discipline of the Almighty,” Eliphaz shows insight concerning the means which God may use to discipline his children; pain and wounds, famine and war.

Amos would add drought, mildew, locust, epidemics and earthquake (Amos 4: 6-11). The severity of the exile in Babylon for seventy years must be thus understood. The root word ‘*yasar*’ also means discipline, chasten and admonish. But in this context, it is used as chastening.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, we read from Proverb 22: 15, “foolishness is bound in the heart of a child (but) the rod of discipline will remove it and cure him (NAS).

The root word for ‘rod’ is ‘*shebet*’ which means, rod, staff, scepter, or tribe depending on the context. It commonly denotes a rod and it was used for beating cumin as we read in Isaiah 28:27. It was also as a weapon with reference to 2 Samuel 23:21. The rod was used as a shepherd’s implement in order to muster or count sheep (Lev 27:32; Ezek. 20:27), or to protect them (Ps. 23: 4; Micah 7: 14). The Rod was also used as an instrument for either remedial or penal punishment.

In Proverbs, the rod is the symbol of discipline and failure to use the preventive discipline of verbal instruction, rebuke and the corrective discipline of physical punishment will end in the child’s death. Metaphorically, God used Assyria

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<sup>30</sup> Harris, “Discipline.”

as his instrument to correct Israel (Isaiah 10:5) and the nations to correct his wayward king (2 Sam. 7:14; Micah 5:1).

To sum up, from the O.T we can understand that discipline is a process of training a child/youth to be aligned to following God's way in life considering the fact that he/she was born and shaped in iniquity. This makes discipline necessary. If left to himself/herself, the child would naturally be inclined towards evil. The discipline that would affect the expected reformation in the life of that child includes verbal instructions or teaching the '*tora*' (law), the verbal rebuke of correction when he or she goes wrong, then physical punishment when there is persistent incline towards evil or rebellion. Therefore, true education has discipline as a by-product.

### **Family-Oriented Youth Ministry**

For education and training of the youth to be effective, the family must be put in the right perspective in the whole process and highly involved as presented in the following study. There are three main learning institutions that contribute remarkably to the development of every child: the home, the church (or religious institution), and the formal educational institution. Of these three, the home is primary.

**Abraham's home (Genesis 18: 19).** "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen 18: 19).

The name "Genesis" is a transliteration of the Greek word *genesis* which means beginning. Genesis contains no statement as to who its author was. Yet conventionally, it is held that Moses wrote Genesis as well as the rest of the Pentateuch, except Deuteronomy 34 which is believed to have been written by

Joshua.<sup>31</sup> Moses was schooled in all the wisdom of Egypt (Acts 7: 22). This includes writing. His Egyptian education equipped him to play this role. The purpose of Genesis is to relate how Israel was elected from among nations of the world and became God's chosen people through Abraham.<sup>32</sup>

In the midst of a wicked and idolatrous generation, God called Abram (Gen 12). He was charged with the responsibility of raising a family, and a nation that would eventually influence his generation unto godliness. Abram was to father a people that would be altogether different in lifestyle from what had hitherto been. According to White, "After the dispersion from Babel, idolatry again became well-nigh universal, and the Lord finally left the hardened transgressors to follow their evil ways, while He chose Abraham, of the line of Shem, and made him the keeper of His law for future generations."<sup>33</sup>

The purpose of Abraham's elections was the establishment of the true religion which would be made possible through carrying the children and household along.<sup>34</sup> As Abram responded to God's call to leave Haran, Abraham went with his household including Lot, his brother's son, and his household. God blessed Abraham with great wealth which included many cattle. God blessed Lot too. They were so blessed that their riches posed a threat to their relationship (Gen 13: 5-7).

Consequently, Abram and Lot separated. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain of Jordan and pitched his tent even as far as

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<sup>31</sup> H. C. Leupold, "Genesis," in *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Wartburgh, 1942).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 125.

<sup>34</sup> John Skinner, "Genesis 18:19," in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1969), 304.

Sodom. But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD. As God came down to destroy these twin cities, He passed through Abraham's home in the land of Canaan.

Abraham was chosen by God basically to raise a people to prevent the condition that brought Sodom and Gomorrah to the point of destruction. This became evident from God's personal reflection as He thought of revealing to Abraham His mission to Sodom. Hence, the text under study, "I have chosen him so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then the LORD will give to Abraham what he promised him" (Gen 18: 19, New English Translation).

The word 'command' in verse 19 comes from a Hebrew root *tsavah* {*tsaw-vaw'*} which also means to charge, give orders, appoint, ordain, or direct. The command is used for the instruction of a father to a son, a farmer to his laborers, and a king to his servants. It reflects a firmly structured society in which people were responsible for their own right to rule by God's command.<sup>35</sup>

In order to be able to transmit from generation to generation the true knowledge and worship of God, it is essential that they who would command these children and teach them to follow God should understand themselves the workings of God both in the present and in the future. In this matter, Abraham is highly commended by God as one who will assuredly be faithful in this work of the godly training and godly discipline of his house.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> R. Laird Harris, "Command," in *Theological Wordbook of Old Testament*, vol. Computer Database, PC Study Bible Version 5{CD-ROM} (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Robert S. Candlish, *Studies in Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 1979), 302.

From the text under study, it can be deduced that the choosing of Abraham by God to spearhead a movement that is to call the world back to the worship of the true God was contingent on the following: That Abraham cared for his family and looked well after the affairs of his household; that he had his whole family and household (which included his servants) under his control; and that Abraham cared enough for his family that he led them to know the true God and to serve Him.<sup>37</sup>

The purpose for which God chose Abraham and made a covenant with him can be found in the phrase, “for I have chosen him in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD.” God was interested in a man who cared so much about posterity that he invested his today for the future. God found in Abraham that man. A man who so much kept his household under his control that even in his absence they would still follow the LORD.

The keen interest exhibited by Abraham in discipling his family for the LORD, in making sure the younger generation grow up to follow the LORD and worship Him, was a determining factor in God’s choice for Abraham to be the father of the faithful.

God calls in this text under study for parents and Church leaders who would take a special interest in the mentoring responsibility of the emerging generation. This is the basic need of this generation. The fear and the knowledge of God can be retained on earth only as the succeeding generations are thus trained.

**God’s instruction to Israel.** At the verge of entering the land of Canaan, God reminded Israel of His foremost concern for them – the preservation of their religious

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<sup>37</sup> Henry, “Gen 18:19.”

heritage through posterity. The secret lay in taking heed to the following instruction found in the *shema* (Deut 6: 4-7):

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

For forty years, Israel wandered in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses. And just before they entered Canaan, God through Moses reminded them of His commandments and instructions. "*Deuteronomy*" means the second reading of the law. He instructed them concerning how to live in the Promised Land and experience His blessings to the full. Foremost in these instructions to Israel just before they stepped into Canaan was the instructions regarding care for their spiritual lives and that of their children and household.

To ensure that Israel, the nation of God, would continue to be God's own people, the younger generation must be introduced to God and His ways. Conscientious effort must be taken to ensure that posterity retains God in their knowledge and lifestyle. Hence, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shall teach them diligently unto thy children..." (Deut 6: 6, 7). This text is called the *shema* - an announcement from God that calls all to hear/listen. This text is regarded by an average Jew as of great import that it is memorized and recited at least twice a day. Before giving further instructions and reminding them of the ones already given, God set this need to teach and disciple the younger generation in the way of the LORD as a priority for Israel to survive as a nation in the Promised Land.

The word "teach" in Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7 is derived from the Hebrew word *daba* which could also mean to speak, declare, converse, command, promise, warn,

threaten or sing. The word translated “diligently” is derived from the Hebrew word *shanan* which means to repeat. Essentially it means to engrave.

According to Charles Isbell,

The examination of “*shinnantam*” from “*shanan*” in Deuteronomy 6: 7, and within its larger context of the whole book, emphasizes its unique and distinct literary function. It is not calling for mere repetition as the only appropriate method for inter-generational transmission of Jewish tradition. . . . The methods suggested throughout Deuteronomy are multi-faceted: stories and illustrations, music and poetry, historical examples, predictions of results for experiments performed under defined and controlled conditions, questions and answers, debate, attempts to update and improve classical formulations.<sup>38</sup>

This means there is no one method of teaching/passing the faith heritage on to the emerging generation. The varied methods as mentioned by Isbell are all inclusive. Wisdom comes in knowing when and how to apply each and to whom.

Therefore, considering the varied meanings of these Hebrew words, it can be said that parents are charged with the responsibility of repeatedly speaking to and declaring to their children God’s commands and promises by way of conversations, warnings, sometimes through threats and sometimes through singing, etc. This repetitious mode of teaching with these varied methodologies helps to engrave or drill the lessons into the mind of the children.

The task of drilling these precepts of the LORD into the children when rising up in the morning (morning devotion), when lying down at night (evening devotion), when walking along the road (or travels), when sitting at the dining table, can only be effectively carried out by parents.

Therefore, it is worthy of note then that any strategy or process of discipling our children for God which does not involve parents as the primary disciplers is faulty. Apostle Paul writing to Timothy hinted on the import of home training on the

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<sup>38</sup> Charles Isbell, “Deuteronomy’s Definition of Jewish Learning,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2003): 115.

youth, “You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3: 14-15, NAS).

Timothy’s faith in God was shaped from childhood: the seed of truth and faith were planted early in his life. According to 2 Timothy 1: 5, the instrument through which this was made possible was Timothy’s grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice. These women of faith intentionally modeled a life of faith for their youth to copy. It was from these women that Timothy caught the fire of faith and faithfulness in his life and ministry

It is an indisputable fact that parental influence has a lot to do in shaping the spiritual life of their children/youth. This then brings into question the kind of influence parents have over their young ones. Like that of Eunice and Lois, parents are hereby challenged to wield positive influence over their children.

### **Engaging the Youth**

In training the youth, the Bible reveals the need to engage them in meaningful activities that would prepare them to become strong disciples now and leaders in the future. This engagement may include enlisting them for service, or hands-on-training, that is, learning while doing service in an intergenerational mentoring kind of relationship.

God called youths in the Old Testament and engaged them in mission because that was the best time they could be used for mission. The wise man in Ecclesiastes says, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth when the evil days have not yet come when you would say I have no pleasure in them” (Eccl 12: 1). God called people like youthful Joseph to represent Him in Egypt from being a faithful

slave to a prime minister. Joseph was 17 years old when he entered Egypt. God called Samuel as a youth in the house of Eli to become a priest, judge and prophet in Israel in the midst of the corruption and recklessness of Eli's children. God called Jeremiah to be His mouthpiece at about the age 25 years. God called Daniel at age 17 years, with his three young friends, to be His mouthpieces in heathen Babylon. An excellent spirit was found in them (Dan 6: 3).

In the New Testament, we find Timothy a young man being called by God as a pastor through his mentor Paul. The life of this youth was modeled by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. This highlights the role of the family in the training of the youth from childhood to become responsible in life. Apostle Paul took the young man up and engaged him in an intergenerational mentoring relationship, which prepared the young Timothy for ministry as a pastor.

Young John Mark was called by God. Paul and Barnabas had initially taken the young John Mark with them on their missionary journey. At a point where the journey appeared challenging and tough, John Mark left these veterans. He went back to Jerusalem. After a while, as they continued their journey, Barnabas suggested to Paul the idea of going to call back John Mark to continue the journey.

Paul's refusal brought division between the two missionaries to the point that Paul decided to part ways with Barnabas and take Silas as his next companion. Barnabas decided to go for the young John Mark and both of them became a team of gospel workers. It was this second chance that Barnabas gave to John Mark and thereafter mentored him in an intergenerational relationship that turned John Mark to become so useful in the ministry. Later in Paul's life, after realizing his mistake, Paul called for the assistance of John Mark during Paul's time of need (2 Tim 4: 11).

**Study of Jeremiah 1:6.** “Then I said, ‘Alas, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak because I am a youth.’ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, I am a youth, ‘Because everywhere I send you shall go and all that I command you, you shall speak.”

According to Jeremiah 1: 1-3, the book is accorded to Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah. He is identified as one of the priests who lived in Anathoth in Benjamite territory. The book presents the downfall of the kingdom of Judah and the city of Jerusalem in the sixth century BCE.

The word translated to mean youth in Jeremiah 1: 6 comes from the Hebrew root word “na’ar” which also means child servant as earlier revealed. It is supposed that at the call of Jeremiah by God he was at least under 25 years of age (a young adult).<sup>39</sup>

The word translated as *send* comes from the Hebrew word *shalach* which also means to stretch out or to shoot out. God is often depicted as sending men on an official mission as His envoys or representative. In this business of sending prophets, God involves the youth, here in the person of Jeremiah.

God called Jeremiah and revealed the purpose of his existence to him – to be a prophet to the nations. Before he was born, God had ordained him for that purpose. He did not need to be confused as to what his purpose in life was. In the same vein, God created every youth for a purpose. God’s statement of purpose for every youth is found in Genesis 1: 26, 27, “And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” God created humanity to reflect the image of

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<sup>39</sup> Robert D. D. Jamieson, Andrew A. M. Fausset, and David Brown, “Jere 1:3-6,” in *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).

God. Every other work engaged in, in life, is a pre-text to this singular purpose of reflecting the image of God. Else there is no reason for the existence of humanity.

At the fall, this image was marred and well-nigh obliterated, yet not altogether lost. The coming of Christ; His life death and resurrection is Heaven's rescue plan to restore the image of God in humanity. That is why apostle Peter could say in 1 Peter 2: 9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." The plan of redemption contemplates humanity's total recovery from sin so as to show forth or reflect the praises or excellences of Christ. By inference, therefore, this is the purpose of the existence of every youth.

**Study of Acts 2:17.** "And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams;" In this text we hear Peter on the day of Pentecost quoting Joel 2: 28. He by quoting this text refers to the experience of Pentecost to be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel.

However, biblical scholarship reveals that that experience was only a partial/initial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. This is because, considering the other aspect of the prophecy from verses 29-30, reference is made to signs that must be seen before the great and terrible day of the Lord which refers to the second coming of Christ. In other words, the complete fulfillment of Joel's prophecy would be in the last days of earth's history just before the second coming of Jesus Christ. Hence, it is a prophecy that speaks of contemporary time.

The Greek word translated "young men" here is, *neaniskos*, which means a youth. The Greek word for prophesy here is *propheteuo* which means to foretell, tell

forth, or prophesy. Its equivalent in the Hebrew is *nabi* meaning ‘for tell’ or ‘tell forth’- speak for God. By the word prophesy, God meant the rare and singular gift of understanding the scriptures/His Word by the young people and proclaiming it.<sup>40</sup>

There is a promise of God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh – young and old. God has a work for all in these last days and the youths are not left out. God is ready to pour His Spirit upon young people. They would receive from the LORD and they would speak forth for God declaring clearly His commands. This prophecy can be fulfilled in this generation only when intentional efforts to disciple the youth to be followers of Jesus are made. This comes about as the youth are intentionally engaged in ministry.

This intentionality to engage the youth in ministry can be effectively achieved in an intergenerational mentoring relationship between the young and old. This kind of relationship is seen in the Old Testament of the Scriptures between Moses and Joshua; Elijah and Elisha; and in the New Testament Jesus and His disciples; Barnabas and Paul; Barnabas and John Mark; Paul and Timothy; Paul and Titus.

Summarily, it is clear from the foregoing that “youth” can mean infant Moses, child Samuel, youth Jeremiah, Daniel in Babylon, Joseph in Egypt, Joshua as a soldier, Ruth as a married woman, etc. Spiritual apathy is seen in the Bible as a state of complacency. It is a lack of enthusiasm which comes as a result of a sense of the pride of acquisition either of material things or of knowledge and the lack of an effective intergenerational mentoring relationship between the young and old. It was spiritual apathy among the youth in Israel that caused it to be recorded that the

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<sup>40</sup> John Calvin, ed., “Prophesy,” in *Commentary on the Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 86.

generation that survived Joshua and the elders that worked with Joshua died and there arose a generation that knows not God.

However, this condition can be prevented and rescued only as youth ministry is patterned after the Biblical ideals for mobilizing the youth for mission which include: giving attention to the youth, training/educating the youth, doing a family-based youth ministry and then engaging them in service through an intergenerational mentoring relationship. In the intergenerational mentoring relationship, training or education can take place at the same time. This is referred to as training on the job. This last section examines what Ellen White wrote about youth mobilization.

### **Ellen G. White and Youth Mobilization**

There are 589 hits on Youth in the E. G. White search database. Out of this number, 124 of talks about the need for youth work and the how to go about the special work for the Youth. “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come--the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!”<sup>41</sup>

Thus, if this gospel of the kingdom must be preached in every nook and cranny of our world before Jesus returns, it would be done only as the youths take their position in the Great Commission (Matt 28: 19, 20). We have an army of youth, she observes, if rightly trained would aid in finishing the work of the gospel in the entire world. In other words, if the gospel commission must be finished the people that really matter – the youth, must be positioned to finish the work – they must be rightly trained. Again, she notes:

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<sup>41</sup> Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 196.

In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with a clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men.<sup>42</sup>

### **Youth Called to God's Service**

In her writings, E. G. White reveals the fact that God calls Youth into His service at different times and in different ways. The enormous task of sending the gospel of the Kingdom (Matt 24: 14) to the uttermost part of the earth is a work that must be accomplished. And to aid in accomplishing this task, God has chosen the youth to act a crucial part with their youthful vigor. The youth have been called to play roles which the elderly cannot play.

To mobilize the young people to fulfill their role in the Great commission, provision was made for their training. This brought about the establishment of educational institutions. These institutions were to provide training mentally, physically, and spiritually.

It was as a means ordained of God to educate young men and women for the various departments of missionary labor that colleges were established among us. It is God's will that they send forth not merely a few, but many laborers.<sup>43</sup>

In other words, our educational institutions were established for the purpose of equipping our youth with varied skills that would be useful in missionary endeavors. From these institutions, men and women are to be sent into the world to serve as missionaries as they engage in various lines of work.

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<sup>42</sup> White, *Gospel Workers*, 16.

<sup>43</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 390.

She goes further to counsel, “Aim for mental discipline and the formation of right moral sentiments and habits. Studies should generally be few and well chosen, and those who attend our colleges are to have a different training from that of the common schools of the day.”<sup>44</sup> In training our youth in our colleges, we should have in mind that it must be different from that of the common schools of the day. This difference must be evident as we seek to pursue the goal for the establishment of our institutions which is to get our youth educated enough to become skilled missionaries for Christ wherever they find themselves.

### **Training the Youth**

Because of God’s need of the strength and vigor of the youth in missionary endeavors, there arises the need to train them for this cause.

We must labor far more for our children and for the youth; for God will accept them to do great things in His name in teaching the truth to those in foreign lands, to those who are in the darkness of error and superstition.<sup>45</sup>

God’s plan is to use our youth to do missionary work, especially in foreign lands. This is because of the youthful vigor and ardor which cannot be found in the elderly. The youth are more fitted physically, and mentally to endure the strain and stretch of a foreign missionary endeavor than the elderly. However, for these youths to be really fitted—spiritually for such a mission, they need the mentoring of the elderly. That is why the servant of God solicits for more labor to be exerted towards training our youth.

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<sup>44</sup> Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 114.3.

<sup>45</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, vol. 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 318.

This intergenerational mentoring of the youth must be bible-based. “As our youth are trained for service in the cause of God, the Bible must lie at the foundation of their education. The principles of truth contained in the word of God will be a safeguard against the evil influences of the world.”<sup>46</sup> The youth can be exposed to all manner of knowledge in preparation to encounter his or her world. But the Bible must lie at the foundation of such knowledge. And the youth thus trained may grow up into noble men and women in the midst of the moral pollution of our land.<sup>47</sup>

### **Disciplining the Youth**

The kind of training described above requires discipline. “There must be a work done to discipline the youth for a higher sphere of service.”<sup>48</sup> Discipline here is discussed in the context of holistic education which lends credence to the fact that true education leads to discipline. “Many souls will be eternally lost because of the neglect of parents to properly discipline their children, and to teach them submission to authority in their youth.”<sup>49</sup>

The counsel to parents and all leaders of the young to be taken into serious consideration when it comes to discipline in all ramifications is to apply Jesus’ rule that has come to be known as the golden rule, “As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luke 6:31). The humbling thought that he or she

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<sup>46</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels for Parents, Teachers and Guardians*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 204.1.

<sup>47</sup> White, *Messages to Young People*, 369.

<sup>48</sup> Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Release*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, vol. 11, 883 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 196.1.

<sup>49</sup> Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 176.2.

errs also even on a daily basis should help the leader develop a more redemptive measure of disciplining the youth under his/her care who has erred.

### **Characteristics of the Youth**

It is the unique characteristics of the youth that necessitates a special ministry targeted towards them. The youth are receptive, fresh, ardent, and hopeful. When once they have tasted the blessedness of self-sacrifice, they will not be satisfied unless they are constantly learning from the Great Teacher.<sup>50</sup>

And again,

the powers of imitation are strong; and in childhood and youth, when this faculty is most active, a perfect pattern should be set before the young. Children should have confidence in their parents, and thus take in the lessons they would inculcate.<sup>51</sup>

The youth are disposed to learn fast and be receptive to whatever ideas are presented to them by those they consider to be role models in their lives. This, therefore, lays a heavy responsibility on the parents and youth leaders/teachers to ensure that the right principles and molds are laid before these young minds for imitation.

In addition, the young people naturally desire activity<sup>52</sup> This is because youthful age is a time of activity, the training/ education of the young must include major practical dimensions. These practical dimensions must be aimed at empowering the youth to live a life of economic independence. If the youth are not so gainfully engaged at an early stage in life, they would find an outlet for their juvenility and in most cases, it is always in the negative.

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<sup>50</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, vol. 6 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 471.2.

<sup>51</sup> White, *Child Guidance*, 215.3.

<sup>52</sup> White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 72.3.

It is an indisputable fact that it is in the youth that the mold of one's life is formed. What happens during the middle age and late adulthood is to a great degree predetermined by the mold formed during the youth age.<sup>53</sup> "Youth is the sowing time. It determines the character of the harvest, for this life and for the life to come."<sup>54</sup> That is why guiding the youth to sow rightly is a grave responsibility that rests upon parents and church adult family members.

White writes about the young worthies of the scriptures: "The characters of Joseph and Daniel are good models for them to follow, and in the life of the Savior they have a perfect pattern."<sup>55</sup> Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold into Egypt as a slave. Daniel was also a teenager with his friends when they were carried into captivity to Babylon and Jesus was twelve years old when He got engaged in biblical discussions with the church leaders of His time. Nevertheless, when the parents came for Him, He respected them and followed them home.

### **Justification for Doing Youth Ministry**

The ministry of the church is to spread the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ to the entire world, and as many as believe in Him, baptize them in the name of the father, Son and Holy Spirit; Teaching them to observe all things God commanded in His law (Matt 28: 19, 20). This ministry is to the young and the old. Why should there be a special ministry in the first place for the youth? Why not allow the all-inclusive ministry of the church address the challenges of the youth?

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<sup>53</sup> White, *Messages to Young People*, 233.4.

<sup>54</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 101.1.

<sup>55</sup> White, *Counsels for Parents, Teachers and Guardians*, 537.1.

The servant of God asserts that there must be more study given to the problem of how to deal with the youth, more earnest prayer for the wisdom that is needed in dealing with minds.<sup>56</sup>

The youth need more than a casual notice, more than an occasional word of encouragement. They need painstaking, prayerful, careful labor. . . . Often those whom we pass by with indifference because we judge them from outward appearance, have in them the best material for workers and will repay all the efforts bestowed on them.<sup>57</sup>

In other words, neglecting ministry to the youth and by the youth means neglecting the means God has provided for accomplishing mission. Furthermore, being in a world of sin and temptation, youths are perishing out of Christ all around, and God wants His church to labor for the youth in every conceivable way that she can.<sup>58</sup> This is a cause for mission.

White writes, “As we minister to the youth we should help them to the extent that they, in turn, can help their fellow youth.” This is what discipleship is all about.

Finally, White hints that as work is being done for and with the youth, the children too should not be neglected.<sup>59</sup> This is because right impressions are better made to stick and last in the childhood years.

In conclusion, Youth in the Bible and Ellen White writings span a wide range from childhood to up to 40 years of age. To mobilize the young people for service, the following should be considered: Giving them attention, education/training, discipline, family-based youth ministry, and engaging them in the service of God. A special work is needed for the young people because they have peculiar needs. Any work

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<sup>56</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 208.

<sup>57</sup> Ellen G. White, *God’s Amazing Grace* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 269.4.

<sup>58</sup> Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 247.

<sup>59</sup> Ellen G. White, *Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008).

done for the youth that put the above into consideration would result in reclaiming them for a fruitful work.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review the available literary sources that have contributed and are contributing in one way or the other to the development of the Youth Work. This shall be addressed in three ways. First, there would be a review of the literature on the historical development of the youth work from Europe to America and then its beginnings in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The contributions of notable figures like Arthur Sweatman, Bryan Reed, James Butterworth, Leonard Barnett, and Fred Milson shall be reviewed.

Secondly, some issues arising from Youth Ministry shall also be discussed in a topical format. Among these is the definition of youth. It has been a long debate about what the criteria should be in determining who is a youth. The problems encountered by this people group shall also be discussed such as lack of adequate preparation to face life; lack of quality education which leads to the unemployment saga; the issue of family decadence which is a major problem factor for young people; Christian apathy and its relation to the Christian youth. Finally, principles and suitable models for mobilizing the youth for mission in the twenty-first century will be suggested.

#### **Historical Development of Youth Ministry**

Before the church began a special ministry for, and by the youth, youth ministry had existed in Europe, and America. There are notable figures in the history of the development of the youth ministry worldwide some of which shall be discussed here.

## Development of Youth Ministry in Europe

It is interesting to note that the earliest work with and for the young people began in Europe. First and foremost is Robert Raikes who according to Ronald, founded the Sunday School Movement in 1780 in Gloucester, England. His purpose was literacy training for children, but also included elements of Christian education.<sup>1</sup>

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was established in 1844 in London, United Kingdom by George Williams. Presently it has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland with more than 57 million beneficiaries from 125 national associations. It was established in response to unhealthy social conditions arising in the big cities at the end of the Industrial Revolution (around 1750-1850). As young men migrated to the cities from the rural areas, they needed housing and jobs. YMCA provided an answer<sup>2</sup>

Arthur Sweatman in 1863 introduced the idea of formation of the boys' clubs.<sup>3</sup> James Butterworth came up with the idea of establishing the clubland; "a house for friendship for boys and girls outside any church."<sup>4</sup> Butterworth had an emphasis on a parliamentary style of governance.

However, Leonard Barnett and others were against this clubland using the following points: The pattern could not be easily replicated elsewhere; the work of

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald G Mars, "Understanding the Lived Experience of Novice Youth Ministers With Evangelical Protestant Tradition" (Ph.D Thesis in Education Studies, Faculty of Talbot School of Theology, 2012), 3, accessed July 28, 2015, [http://www.westernseminary.edu/files/document/faculty/marrs/Marrs%20Dissertation%20Final%20April%202015\\_2012.pdf](http://www.westernseminary.edu/files/document/faculty/marrs/Marrs%20Dissertation%20Final%20April%202015_2012.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Marsh Field Area YMCA, "Youth and Family," *The YMCA*, accessed June 15, 2016, [http://www.mfldymca.org/youth\\_family/](http://www.mfldymca.org/youth_family/).

<sup>3</sup>M. K. Smith, "Arthur Sweatman and the idea of the club", <http://infed.org/mobi/arthur-sweatman-and-the-idea-of-the-club/> accessed-27/07/2015

<sup>4</sup> M. K. Smith, "James Butterworth, Christian Youth Work and Clubland," *Infed*, last modified 2002, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://infed.org/mobi/james-butterworth-christian-youth-work-and-clubland>.

training the children should be accomplished nearer home, and the success of the clubland was attached to the personality of James Butterworth and no longer about Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

William Alexander Smith established the first Boys' Brigade unit in 1883 as a way of making Sabbath School both, more attractive to boys and young men, and of giving a structure to the work. This unit had as its motto "Sure and Steadfast" (taken from Hebrews 6: 19 "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast"). The object of the Brigade was the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys and the promotion of habits of reverence, discipline, self-respect, and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness. The Boy's Brigade was characterized by military drills, uniform, and discipline. There is the transfer of a military pattern.<sup>6</sup>

Bryan H. Reed's most remembered work was a research work titled *Eighty Thousand Adolescents*. The research provided a comprehensive picture of the leisure and educational activities of young people. He concluded by suggesting that two phrases, "the creation of faith in purposive living" and "the creation of faith in democracy" may suggest the direction in which youth workers should be looking as a motif to their activities. For Reed, young people needed the association of a worshipping community of both young and old in order to gain a well-rounded development, as against a detached kind of community as was the idea of the 'clubland.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> B. S. Frost, *Pioneers of Social Passion: London's Cosmopolitan Methodism* (Peterborough, NH: Methodist, 2006), 67.

<sup>6</sup> D. M. McFarlan, *First for Boys: The Story of the Boys Brigade 1883-1983* (Glasgow, Scotland: Collins, 1982), 37.

<sup>7</sup> The Staff and Students of Westhill Training College and Bryan H. Reed, *Eighty Thousand Adolescents: A Study of Young People in the City of Birmingham* (London, UK: George Allen & Unwin, 1950), 186.

Summarily, the information above gives us a picture of the Youth Work already in existence in Europe before the Adventist Youth Ministry Department was organized. In the following section, youth ministry and its development in America shall be examined.

### **Development of Youth Ministry in America**

In the United States, the formation of Sunday Schools was done by the American Sunday School Union which was formed in 1824. The history of youth ministries in America includes organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association (1844), Christian Endeavor (1881), The Miracle Club (1993), Young Life (1941), and Youth for Christ (1950).<sup>8</sup>

In summary, the critics of youth ministries report that youth work should seek real youth participation, liberation and youth empowerment. Youth ministry is historically said to focus on voluntary participation and relationship; a commitment to association by youth and adults; friendly and informal atmospheres, and acting with integrity.

### **History of Seventh-day Adventist Church Youth Work**

The Seventh-day Adventist youth ministry has a story behind it. This story would be rehearsed in terms of her early beginnings, the purpose of her ministry, development through the years as evidenced in her name, membership structure, and the content of her package.

**Beginnings.** Tradition traces the youth ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to 14-year-old Luther Warren and 17-year-old Harry Ferner in the year 1879.

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<sup>8</sup> Mars, "Understanding the Lived Experience of Novice Youth Ministers With Evangelical Protestant Tradition," 4.

Returning from a church prayer meeting, they discussed the issue of their fellow youth spiritual backsliding and apostasy. Consequently, they felt a burden on their heart that made them kneel under a tree by the roadside in their hometown of Hazelton, Michigan. There they asked God for guidance on how to win other young people to Christ.<sup>9</sup>

Hitherto, in the earliest days of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) before its organization in 1860, and even after, there was no specific ministry targeted at the youth. However, records show that young people have always been active and involved in the work of the church. James White began his preaching at 21; Ellen White received her first vision at age 17; John Loughborough began preaching at age 17, among others.<sup>10</sup>

In the passage of time leadership was transferred from the young to the old in the church, and the young people began to feel left behind. This is what led James White to publish the Youth's Instructor in 1852; it was to help fill the void the young people had begun to experience. This was also followed by a magazine for the younger set *Our Little Friend* in 1890, with W. N. Glenn as editor.<sup>11</sup>

**The purpose of the youth movement.** Right from its beginnings, the one main purpose of the youth movement has been to share the gospel of Jesus Christ to win back fellow young people to Christ. This was the motivation of Luther Warren and Harry Ferner.

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<sup>9</sup>Trudy J. Morgan-Cole in "A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministry" in *Getting it Right* by General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church Youth Department (Hagerstown, MD, Review and Herald, 2005), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Holbrook, *Our Beginnings, The AY Story* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Youth Ministries, 2005), 1, 2.

At the General Conference Session of 1901, the Seventh-day Adventist Church took the first step towards organizing its youth ministry. The stated purpose of its official organization was “for more effectual missionary service.” This resolution was preceded by an impassioned speech by Luther Warren in which he quoted Ellen White. The quote reads:

Young men and young women can you not form companies, and as soldiers of Christ enlist in the work, putting all your tact and skill and talents into the master’s services, that you may save souls from ruin? Let there be companies organized in every church to do this work. Young men and women, come to work in the name of Jesus... unite together upon some plan and order of action.<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, a recommendation was passed to organize young people’s societies and form a committee to plan their organization.<sup>13</sup> Then at the General Conference Session of 1907 a resolution was spelled out and voted:

Resolved, that, in order that this work may be properly developed, and this army of workers be properly developed, and thus an army of workers be properly trained for service, a special department with the necessary officers, be created, the same to be known as the young people’s Department of the General Conference.<sup>14</sup>

Following this decision, M.E. Kern was elected to be the first director of the youth work at the General Conference the same year 1907. Two months later in the same year 1907, at the Sabbath school and young people’s convention in Mount Vernon, Ohio, the name “Seventh-day Adventist Young People’s Society of Missionary Volunteers” was chosen for the new Youth Department of the General Conference, usually shortened to “Missionary Volunteers or simply “MV.”

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<sup>12</sup> Holbrook, *Our Beginnings, The AY Story*, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Trudy J Morgan-cole, “Biblical Models for Youth Ministry,” in *Getting It Right: A Power-Packed Resource for Adventist Youth Leaders*, ed. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Youth Department (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 31.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

From that meeting came the resolution that “the primary object of the young people’s societies is the salvation and development of our youth by means of prayer, study, and personal missionary effort.”<sup>15</sup> The government of Ireland agrees with this resolution in their Youth Work Act of 2001,

Youth work means a planned program of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which (a) complements their formal, academic, or vocational education and training; and (b) is provided primarily by voluntary youth work organizations.<sup>16</sup>

One phrase both statements have in common concerning the purpose of the youth ministry is the development of the youth. This development must be in the areas of spiritual life in working for their salvation and the salvation of others; academic achievements; vocational education and training; and the personal and social development as they voluntarily participate in the programs

**Youth ministry development to the present.** Over the years, the Seventh-day Adventist Church Youth Ministries Department has gone through various developments.

***Name and membership.*** The youth of the church had since their early years been known as missionary volunteers. Not too long after the formal organization of the Youth Department at the General Conference level, the Juniors (ages 10 -15/16) were given special attention. They were called the Junior Missionary Volunteers (JMV). Later, programs were developed for the ages 6-9, which was known as Pre-JMV. In 1979, the General Conference Youth Department selected the term Adventist Youth (AY) and Adventist Junior Youth (AJY) to replace the former official

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<sup>15</sup> Trudy J Morgan-cole, “Biblical Models for Youth Ministry,” in *Getting It Right: A Power-Packed Resource for Adventist Youth Leaders*, ed. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Youth Department (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 31.

<sup>16</sup> Government of Ireland, *Irish Statute Book*, 2004.

reference –MV and JMV respectively to their young people and any organization stemming from them.<sup>17</sup>

This change was precipitated by socio-political issues arising from countries around the globe that were ruled by colonial masters. When they began to fight and got independence, they decided to do away with everything about these colonial masters which in their estimation included missionaries. Thus, any local organization that had the name missionary attached to it faced difficulties in their transactions with the government then. The General Conference of the SDA Church learning of these difficulties moved for the change of name to accommodate the sister organizations around the world.

With these developments, the Youth Ministry was organized into three levels namely: Pre-AJY which became known as the Adventurers; AJY which became known as the Pathfinders and the AY which is referred to as the Senior Youths.

**Content.** The curriculum of the ministry was organized around inculcating leadership skills, nurturing of the youth, evangelistic outreach, strengthening of friendship bonds, and social activities aimed at inviting non-Adventist friends to youth meetings.<sup>18</sup> The thirty members of McGuire’s Wisconsin Youth Society focused on hymn-singing, testimonies, scripture study, and intercessory prayer for their peers.<sup>19</sup>

The Young People’s Society of Christian Service organized in College View Nebraska – 1893, focused on securing increased spirituality in the young people and

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<sup>17</sup> Holbrook, *Our Beginnings, The AY Story*, 73.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Meade Macguire, “Early Experiences in Young People’s Work,” *The Youth’s Instructor*, April 24, 1917, 4, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/YI/YI19171009-V65-41.pdf>.

missionary activities. At the same time, the young women's Dorcas society emerged in Battle Creek, Michigan. They focused on outreach to the poor and marginalized, along with prayer. Then in 1894, Luther Warren organized the Sunshine Bands meant to direct young people in missionary work.<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, resource materials were developed to assist in developing youth for effectual service. These focused on the areas of prayer life, daily study of God's Word, and daily work for others. The JMV class curriculum was structured around spiritual development, fitness, hobbies, and adventure.<sup>21</sup> The drills and uniform nature of the JMV may have been imbibed from the Boy's Brigade that was already in existence before the organization of the Adventist Youth Work.

In summary, the Youth Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church began with teenagers, adolescents, and young adults. Later attention was shifted to the juniors in a way of Junior Missionary Volunteers (Pathfinders) and then pre-JMV (Adventurers). Resource materials were produced to minister to the Adventurers and the Pathfinders. Later, with the passing of time, without a curriculum produced particularly for the Adventist Youth or Senior Youth (older than Pathfinder age), there was a drop in the engagement of the adolescents and young adults in the 'Youth Ministry' of the Church.

From this historical overview, the following are descriptive of an ideal youth ministry.

1. The education of young people in the home, church school, and conventional school setting. This education must help the youth develop the spiritual, mental, and vocational spheres of their life. The spiritual connects them with their Creator as they seek to work for their salvation and the salvation of others, the mental

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<sup>20</sup> Matilda Erickson, *Missionary Volunteers and Their Work* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1955), 13, 14.

<sup>21</sup> Holbrook, *Our Beginnings, The AY Story*, 19, 20.

equips them with knowledge and the vocational prepares them to face the future materially independent.

2. Conduct programs that foster social relationships that meet biblical standards among the youth people through clubs and camp outs. And programs that encourage intergenerational mentoring between the young and old.
3. Conduct programs that involve the youth in service for God and to humanity. Such programs include evangelistic outreach in all its forms, community service and welfare ministries.

### **Topical Issues in Youth Ministry**

Several issues arise when discussing youth matters that need to be well understood. This section shall be defining some terms and discussing issues that relate to Youth Ministry.

#### **Definition of Youth**

Technically, adolescence is a time of transition that extends from age 12 to 25 in men and 21 in women. It is a period that stretches from the beginning of puberty, through a long process of education, until the person is able to take his or her place as a responsible individual in the adult world. For Richards youth is synonymous to adolescence.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, the adolescent age is a period of transition. It is a critical time when values and attitudes are being transmitted from parents and the society to the young and they form theirs. The transmission of culture for the youth involves the interception of their expanding mental, social and physiological capacities with the challenges they face in growing up.<sup>23</sup> In legal usage, the term adolescence is frequently applied to the period prior to full legal ages, characterized by emotional

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<sup>22</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, *Youth Ministry: Its Renewal in the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 17.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

instability on one hand, and emergent emotional and mental maturity in the other. It is ages 14-21 in males, and 12-18 in females, marked by the maturation of reproductive organs and by rapid growth, especially in the skeletal and muscular system and in certain vascular tissues.<sup>24</sup>

Contemporary characteristics of adolescence include peer pressure, popular culture, and identity crisis. In the past, it was not difficult for adolescents to take decisions, guided by adults, role models or parents, however, presently, there is confusion, and difficulty, because of the influence of peer pressure.<sup>25</sup>

From a biological perspective, adolescence should be the best time of life. Most physical and mental functions as speed, strength, reaction time and memory are at their peak during the teenage years. New radical and divergent ideas can make the most impact on the imagination at this stage.<sup>26</sup> It is, therefore, expedient that intentional effort is exerted to plant that which is intended to remain in them at this age.

Before the 1800's, adults did not make important distinctions among children of different ages. However, new patterns of work and family life came with industrialization in the 1800's. Work shifted away from farming and became less tied to the family. Young people needed a new kind of preparation for adulthood. The working class took jobs in mines and factories, apprentices to craft workers to learn a trade and the middle class went to school. As a result of this development, peers

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<sup>24</sup> Leon L. Bram, Norma H. Dickey, and Robert S. Philips, "Adolescence," *Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia* (New York, NY: Funk and Wagnalls, 1971), 176.

<sup>25</sup> Leon L. Bram, "Adolescence," *The World Book Encyclopedia* (Chicago, IL: World Bank, 2003), 61.

<sup>26</sup> Dale H. Horberg, "Adolescence," *Britannica Global Edition* (Chicago, IL: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011), 127.

became teachers though economically dependent on parents. By 1900 adolescence in some societies and some social and economic classes had become a lengthy period of preparation for adulthood.<sup>27</sup>

In the 1950s, youth, was the age of trial and error in various areas of life until one could settle down for something meaningful. Presently, youth is about being in school, going for service and looking for a job. One is still considered a youth because of unemployment and not by chronological age until he/she settles down with a meaningful vocation and a family<sup>28</sup> Mkamdawire wrote that,

In many African Societies, especially rural Africa, the status of adulthood is largely determined by marriage. Those who are not married or are not able to do so for economic or other reasons, as many young people in Sub-Sahara Africa currently are, will still be regarded as ‘children’, whatever their chronological age. Hence it is not uncommon to find a twelve years old, girl, who by virtue of being married, will be considered an ‘adult’, while an unmarried 40 years old man will still be dependent on the father for support.<sup>29</sup>

There are adults in their 30’s and 40’s who can’t hold a job or make a relationship work and who are still dependent financially and emotionally on their parents.<sup>30</sup> According to United Nations (UN), youth is defined as those between 18-24 years of age. Common Wealth places its limit at 24.<sup>31</sup> In other words, with the foregoing, it appears, there is no consensus as to the age bracket that makes up the “youth”. The broad spectrum can be further divided into two categories: those within

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<sup>27</sup> Bram, “Adolescence,” 60.

<sup>28</sup> Horberg, “Adolescence,” 128.

<sup>29</sup> R. M. Mkamdawire, *Experiences in Youth Policy and Programme in Commonwealth Africa* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization, 2005), 2.

<sup>30</sup> Roger Dudley, *The Complex Religion of Teens* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2007), 26–32.

<sup>31</sup> Niji Akanni, *Policy Guide in Youth Conflict* (Abuja, Nigeria: Actions Aid Nigeria, 2009), 5.

the age bracket of 18-30 (to be seen as proper youths) and those between 30-40 (who should be seen as mature youths).”<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, per the General Conference of UNESCO,

A lot of factors determine the definition we give. Some favor youth definitions in terms of developmental age, status age/culture and then biological age. If we say generally they are young people who are dependent on parents until they gain employment that would be defining the youth in terms of developmental age. In that case, an educated 30 or 35 years old person dependent on his or her parents because of unemployment is still a youth in widely different societies. The same holds true for unemployed working class or rural youth thrown back on their own resources or dependent on their families for survival, in both industrial and developing nations. Obviously, these changes in our chronological definition of who is young, as opposed to who is a child or who is an adult, must vary with each nation and culture. Using age category, many contributors and many participants in UNESCO regional youth conference agree that the definition of youth applies to all the “young” and define being “young” as extending to age 30 or 35, depending on the national experiences’.<sup>33</sup>

“The emerging trend in some communities in Nigeria is that people in their 30s and sometimes 40s still see themselves as youths when they should normally be categorized as adults.”<sup>34</sup> And here in Nigeria, the NYSC program generally applies to graduates of thirty years and below while those above thirty years qualify to apply for an exemption letter/certificate.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, in a research consortium on education and peacebuilding, ‘youth’ is defined broadly as those within their second and third decade of life (i.e. the

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<sup>32</sup> Akanni, *Policy Guide in Youth Conflict*.

<sup>33</sup> General Conference of UNESCO, *Youth in the 1980s* (Geneva, Switzerland: United Nation, 1981), 18.

<sup>34</sup> Akanni, *Policy Guide in Youth Conflict*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> A Ade Ogunsanya and Tunji Odeyemi, *Youth’s Social Problems: By- Product of the Society* (Kware, Nigeria: Catholic Diocese of Ilorin, 1999), 14.

20s and 30s). Again, according to UNICEF, many African nations define youth as those aged between 15 and 35.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, we conclude judging from the UNESCO's definition of the 'youth,' and its application in Nigeria vis-à-vis age legibility for NYSC program that the youth age extends from late teenage to 35 years of age. Meanwhile, due to certain socio-economic factors which vary from country to country and place to place, this age extends till 40 years. This variation in not being able to pin down the exact age which would be generally accepted suggests problems facing the youth.

### **Youth Problems**

Research has shown that young people have their peculiar characteristics. They have special challenges that mount pressure on them as they are growing up. As a result, there is a need for a special ministry targeted to help them surmount these challenges. This might not be accomplished effectively without this special attention.

This section shall enumerate some of the problems youths face. These problems or challenges faced by young people shall be explored from the perspective of different writers.

Among the problems, today's youths face include first, preparation. The young people are not adequately prepared to face life and its challenges as adults. This preparation should include vocational education and training which in most cases is lacking. Second, young people tend to be in much hurry, forgetting that growth and development always take time. In some cases, parents are responsible for this by

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<sup>36</sup> M. T. A. Lopes Cardozo et al., *Literature Review: Youth Agency, Peace-Building and Education, Research Consortium Education and Peace-Building* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: University of Amsterdam, 2015), <http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/partners/research-consortium/research-outputs>.

exposing them too early and unduly to adult life. Third, is the pressure from peers to conform to be accepted.

This can have a positive or negative influence. Fourth, is the problem of adult hypocrisy. This causes disillusionment in the young people when the older people cannot live up to the standard of their profession. And finally, the problem of sin which shows up through drug abuse, alcoholic beverages, temptations to immorality, dishonesty, lack of respect for authority and forsaking God.<sup>37</sup> Sometimes, racism and/or discrimination against people of opposite gender, caste, creed or religion make them a victim of emotional disorder.<sup>38</sup>

The problems of youth today are not new. They have always been centered on the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life; though this might find a way of showing up in different generations. There are three major ones Padfield reveals in his article: Problem with friends; the problem of parents that fail to give mentoring to their children and leave them at the mercy of the media; and the problem of choosing a mate considering the high of marital divorce in the society.<sup>39</sup>

Preeti Mishra in her article enumerates 10 top challenges youths face today which include: Single parent households; substance abuse; early maturity; violence in schools; materialism; obesity; education disparity; inadequate employment opportunities; poverty; and juvenile delinquency.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> James W. Boyd, "Today's Youth Facing Today's Problems," *A Burning Fire*, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://www.aburningfire.net/home/Problems.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> Admin, "Problems Faced by the Youth Today," *DAWN*, last modified February 9, 2008, <http://www.dawn.com/news/965881/problems-faced-by-the-youth-today>.

<sup>39</sup> David Padfield, "The Problems of Youth," *Padfield.com*, last modified 2015, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://www.padfield.com/1993/youth.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Preeti Mishra, "Top 10 Challenges Youths Face Today," *Topyaps*, last modified August 3, 2013, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://topyaps.com/top-10-challenges-youths-face-today>.

Nigerian Youths face these same problems as enumerated above with the inclusion of lack of access to business support funds and migration to urban areas; overexposure to negative western cultures; distanced from cherished cultural values (Embedded in this heritage is the culture of duty, hard work, social and civic responsibility, sense of dignity in labor, productivity, honesty, transparency, respect for elders and the status quo); Over exposure to the culture of greed and corruption.<sup>41</sup>

Mary Adedokun posits that the challenges facing Youths in Nigeria include the foregoing with the following addition: Lack of quality education, where ‘quality’ means self-supporting kind of education; access to Information/Communication Technology (ICT) by all, except for the children of the rich; relegation of the Nigerian Youth to the background in the scheme of things; Technology which has altered the way people think about life. It has taken youths away from the culture of interpersonal human relations to more centered individualism. Self-serving and ego-centeredness is the order among the youth. Television, the internet, cable channels are their educators now and its negative impact is obvious.<sup>42</sup>

Studies done on stress factors reveal that persons of lower socioeconomic status are exposed to more stressors and consequently manifest more symptoms of distress. Again, stressful events are common among youths from lower parental education group.<sup>43</sup> This informs also that youth problems include health issues.

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<sup>41</sup> Kaycast Corporation, “Challenges Facing Nigerian Youth,” *Nigerian- Youth*, October 2008, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://nigerian-youth.blogspot.com/2008/10/challenges-facing-nigerian-youth.html/>.

<sup>42</sup> Mary Olufunke Adedokun and Margaret Foluke Oluwagbohunmi, “An Overview of the Challenges Facing Youths in Nigerian Society,” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciennce* 4, no. 6 (April 2014): 154–161.

<sup>43</sup> Mary Colten Ellen and Susan Gove, *Adolescent Stress: Causes and Consequences* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991), 126 – 127.

Among these numerous problems, there is one that keeps reappearing being mentioned directly and indirectly. Family decadence is a major problem of the youths. This is the subject of the next section.

### **Family Decadence**

In analyzing factors that motivate proper youth upbringing, socialization was key of which the family, church, and peers play a major role.<sup>44</sup> Vincent Obia reports in Punch News Paper the position of the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, His Grace, Alfred Martins on the factors responsible for the moral decadence in Nigeria today. On top of the list are poor family values and weakened marriages.<sup>45</sup>

Helen Ovbiagele reports startling responses in a contributory radio program with question—“Who comes first for you; your siblings, your relations or your friends especially when having some challenges?” Almost all the respondents said their friends.<sup>46</sup> This shows how fast the young people are losing the affinity to their families. However, if this would change, parents must begin giving their children enough attention and loving care which would help ensure that they regard them (the parents) and their siblings as friends.

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<sup>44</sup> Emma Chukwuemeka et al., “Youths and Career Development in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects,” *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 1, no. 10 (May 2012): 77–79.

<sup>45</sup> Vincent Obia, “Cleric Blames Moral Decadence on Poor Family Values,” *The Punch Newspaper* (Lagos, Nigeria, March 5, 2014), accessed July 27, 2015, <http://www.punchng.com/news/cleric-blames-moral-decadence-on-poor-family-values>.

<sup>46</sup> Helen Ovbiagele, “Declining Family Affinity & Decadence in the Society,” *Vanguard News*, March 31, 2013, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/03/declining-family-affinity-decadence-in-the-society>.

Parents are responsible for training their children and teaching them compassion, respect, as well as acceptable dos and donts in line with societal values and religious dictates. Unfortunately, parents have abandoned these responsibilities.<sup>47</sup>

It goes without saying that

The parents are the greatest influences on the adolescent's development. This is particularly during early adolescence. Youngsters are exposed to parental behaviors and values and as a result, they tend to have an over-riding influence on how the adolescent will develop.<sup>48</sup>

Research has consistently found that the benefits of authoritative parenting continue during adolescence.<sup>49</sup> In authoritative parenting, parents skillfully combine the instruments of law and love to maintain order in the home. As a result, children grow up with a high sense of self-discipline. They to know what they should do and why they should do it; what they should not do and why they should not do it

Unfortunately, the societal emphasis on material wealth and paper qualification now distracts parents (especially mothers) attention from giving necessary moral and religious foundation to their children. Consequently, this leaves the youth at the mercy of peer groups and the corrupt society and the media.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, the quality of any family life is responsible for the development of every child's identity in the society. Families have suffered a terrible breakdown. Parents are currently the embezzlers, murderers, cultists, dupers and plunderers of the

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<sup>47</sup> Shua`iba Ahmed Abba, "Moral Decadence Amongst Youth: Who Is to Blame?," *Daily Trust*, last modified January 9, 2015, <http://dailytrust.com.ng/daily/home-front/43911-moral-decadence-amongst-youth-who-is-to-blame>.

<sup>48</sup> Ojugo A. I., *Understanding the Adolescent* (Edo, Nigeria: UTO, 1998), 60.

<sup>49</sup> Daine E Papalia, Sally Wendkus, and Feldman Duskin, *A Child's World: Infancy Through Adolescents*, 9th ed. (Burr Ridge, IL: McGraw Hill, 2004), 414.

<sup>50</sup> Julius Obada Obieh, *Youths' Deviant Behaviours in Nigeria: Causes and Solutions* (Lagos, Nigeria: Badapat, 2002), 32 – 47.

society. Youth watch their parents and imitate them because they are in their impressionable years.<sup>51</sup>

In the same vein, Amara Uzoigwe argues that the family remains the basic cell of the society among other notable agents of moral formation. Therefore, for parents to be able to infuse moral training into their children, they must live moral lives.<sup>52</sup>

In summary, it is obvious that the problems of young people as numerous as they are tied in one way or the other to the decadence/breakdown of moral compass being experienced in many homes today. And if the condition must change for better, families have to rise up to their God-given responsibilities of training their children in the way of the Lord (Prov 22: 6).

### **Christian Apathy**

According to the *World Dictionary* definition, Christian apathy is a lack of strong feeling or of interest or concern over something. Simply put, it is indifference.<sup>53</sup>

Apathetic Christianity is a real disease infecting the body of Christ. Christians are becoming lukewarm, disinterested, and non-committal. Today there are many believers who do not participate in regular Bible studies or small groups, they do not attend the church's prayer meetings. Few are serving in the church and many talents

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<sup>51</sup> Christopher Ogudianmom, "Nigerian Family Values Amidst Security Challenges," *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 4, no. 4 (2013): 182 – 186.

<sup>52</sup> Amara M Uzoigwe, "Towards Inculcating Morality Among the Youths in Nigeria: The Holy Family Youth Village Examples," *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities* 14, no. 1 (2010): 161–184.

<sup>53</sup> Gorton Carruth and Eugene Ehrlich, eds., "Apathy," *Students's Handbook Including Webster's New World Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: South Western, 1992), 32.

in the church go unused. Something is wrong with the church and it's getting worse as each year passes.<sup>54</sup>

Apathy is the mindset of 'I don't care!' It is caring nothing about others, ministry, spiritual growth, or what God wants of us. In the fuller sense of it, it is the misconception of the magnitude of God's incredible gifts and His grace to us. And, as a result, we become lukewarm, disinterested, and non-committal!<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, enthusiasm towards the things of God is a loving response to His amazing grace.

**Causes of apathy.** Apathy can be caused by being overworked from all the stresses and struggles in life to point of given up. Because the burden feels too heavy, we become redundant and decide not to do anything anymore. Similarly, it can also be caused by being overwhelmed by the successes of life that come our way sometimes that we rest on our past laurels consequently we become apathetic. In other words, if we are too comfortable, we become apathetic, and we are not interested anymore in stretching ourselves in our personal walk with God.

Furthermore, apathy can be caused by the lack of willingness to move forward in spiritual growth. This may be due to several recorded spiritual failures encountered in the faith journey and we are tempted to give up on spiritual disciplines such as prayer, bible study, and fasting. When certain expectations we have in our faith journey are not met, we are tempted to become apathetic.

Lastly, apathy can be caused by just laziness, being a slacker, and not wanting to be convicted or have a concern because we do not want to be moved ahead or be

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<sup>54</sup> Lisa Haven, "The Spiritual Disease of Apathetic Christianity," *Reality of Christ*, last modified January 7, 2013, <http://realityofchrist.me/2013/01/07/the-spiritual-disease-of-apathetic-christianity/>.

<sup>55</sup> Richard Krejcir, *Into Thy Word Ministries* (Bloomington, IN: universe, 2005), accessed July 27, 2015, Into Thy Word Ministries.

involved. The bible warns its reader about the dangers of laziness (Prov 6: 6-11; 10:4-5).<sup>56</sup>

**Manifestations of apathy.** The New Testament Christians were a zealous Church. As Paul described the traits of one who had given himself as a living sacrifice to God, he mentioned that he was "fervent in spirit" (Rom. 12:11; Acts 4:34-37).

Spiritual apathy manifests itself in:

1. Loss of spiritual interests. The loss of zeal for the Lord is followed by a general loss of interest in spiritual things such as prayer. Prayer diminishes.
2. Becoming consumed with secular interests. As the heart turns from total love and commitment to Jesus Christ, to become more and more consumed with secular interests.
3. Hardness of heart - At any rate, as the message ceases to penetrate the recesses of the heart, the heart becomes grossed, the ears become dull, and the eyes are closed (Matt. 13:15).<sup>57</sup>

**The Christian youth and apathy.** The challenge of the Christian youth is that of temptation to become apathetic towards the church and consequently towards the youth ministry of the Church. The many problems faced by youth today can in one way or the other become causes for apathy towards the church or the Youth Ministry of the Church.

The reason behind the apathy in the church among young people towards the youth ministry of the church could be traced to the bystander effect of adults assuming that these young people (teens and young adults) know what to do or can find a way to fit into the church ministry. Consequently, no one is there to engage

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<sup>56</sup> Richard Krejcir, *Into Thy Word Ministries* (Bloomington, IN: universe, 2005), accessed July 27, 2015, Into Thy Word Ministries.

<sup>57</sup> Mike Willis, "Manifestations of Apathy," *Truth Magazine*, April 24, 1980, 278–281.

them.<sup>58</sup> No intentional effort is put in place to give this demographic group of the church guidance and direction.

“They are desperately seeking love, acceptance, and spiritual depth, yet many are disappointed with the spiritual resources they have been offered.”<sup>59</sup> Such disappointments eventually lead to apathetic feelings towards the youth ministry of the church and eventually the church itself as a movement.

The youth of today face social problems, health and physical challenges, spiritual problems, emotional and psychological challenges, and moral issues. The moral issues focus on sex, drugs, and drinking. Ludwig posits that church youth are not different from today’s youth. This is because modern psychological studies and extensive sociological surveys have indicated that values, beliefs, attitudes, and concerns of youth are remarkably consistent, irrespective of time, culture, and location.<sup>60</sup>

Be that as it may, Gane argues that “the Christian youth are not different and become apathetic because they fail to see the relevance in the religion of their parents as it makes no impact on the problems of the world in general or their own private world.”<sup>61</sup>

It goes without saying that a mission-oriented Church ought not to have apathetic youths towards the Church or her Youth Ministry. “If we have an apathy

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<sup>58</sup> Allan A Martin, “Burst the Bystander Effect: Making a Discipling Difference with Young Adults,” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 3, no. 1 (2009): 46.

<sup>59</sup> Dudley, Roger, *Why Teenagers Leave the Church. Personal Stories from 10-Years Study*. (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2000), 60.

<sup>60</sup> Frederick J. Ludwig, *YOUTH AND THE LAW: Handbook on Laws Affecting Youth* (New York, NY: Foundation Press, 1955), 45.

<sup>61</sup> Barry Gane, *Building Youth Ministry: A Fundamental Guide* (Riverside, CA: Hancock, 2005), 24.

problem,” Devries posits, “it may be that we are creating bored consumers.”<sup>62</sup> Young people develop boredom when the programs are not meeting their needs or interests.

### **Principles and Models for Mobilizing Youths for Mission**

In order to curb apathy among the young people, there is a need for mobilizing them appropriately for mission. For it is certain, the existing apathy is as a result of the absence of effective mobilization of the young people for mission. Alalade in reviewing the growth of the SDA work in the eastern Nigeria hinted on the leadership of I. Nwobia the first East Nigeria Conference (defunct) president in 1978. He underscored that one of the secrets to his success was his love and ability to mobilize the youth for mission.<sup>63</sup>

Whatever strategy we adopt to reach the youth, it must be real, rousing, relevant, and relational. This is because, “when you are real, you gain their attention. When you are relevant, you speak their language. And when you are relational, you build bridges to the next generation.”<sup>64</sup>

### **Principles and Models for Mobilizing the Youth**

From the various authors, we can discover principles that must underline work done for and with the youth. These principles would eventually be the basis for formulating fitting models for doing Youth Ministry.

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<sup>62</sup> Mark Devries, *Sustainable Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2008), 169.

<sup>63</sup> Adekunle A. Alalade, *Limiting Factors to the Success of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Agbo Areo, 2008), 61.

<sup>64</sup> Tim Celek, Dieter Zander, and Patrick Kampert, *Inside the Soul of a New Generation: Insights and Strategies for Reaching Busters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 101–108.

Randal Wisbey in his article, “Involving Young People in Mission,” underscored four things that ministry leaders should know about the youth in order to effectively work with them:

1. They are made for war. So, get them involved in service. Create the enabling environment and structure.
2. Mission experiences have a profound effect on young people such as community services or short-term mission experiences.
3. Too many Adventist young people are information rich and experience poor.
4. Young people are no longer satisfied playing church. This is good news because the church needs what young people can offer – vitality, creativity, optimism, and commitment. Likewise, the church has something the young people need – direction, focus, and in-house training opportunity to develop Christ-like leadership.<sup>65</sup>

The foregoing understanding when working with young people is suggestive of certain principles to be considered when developing a model for youth ministries. These principles include developing a youth ministries model that is need-oriented. Since they are made for war, the programs should be involving. It must include religious involvement in mission, social, mental and vocational involvement as they contemplate their life work. A model for Youth Ministries should lean towards the family which fosters the intergenerational mentoring relationship between the young and the old. These principles are examined below.

**Need-oriented youth ministry.** Adolescents and young adults have needs-spiritually, socially, mentally, and physically. One of the motivating factors for doing mission is human need and compassion.<sup>66</sup> This is evident in the life of Jesus Christ

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<sup>65</sup> Randal Wisbey, “Involving Young People in Mission,” in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century: The Joys and Challenges of Presenting Jesus to a Diverse World*, ed. Jon L. Dybdahi (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1999), 213–221.

<sup>66</sup> Ott, Craig et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 177–178.

who went about the villages and cities teaching because people needed to be taught and be set free by the truth, preaching the kingdom of God, and healing the sick. When He saw the multitude, He had compassion on them for they were scattered as sheep without a shepherd (Matt 9: 35, 36). To float an effective Youth Ministry that would be relevant to youths and hold them, it must be a need-oriented youth ministry.

Ludwig states:

A better approach to programming in the youth ministry is, to begin with, needs and not wants. When youth can be helped to identify those needs and a program is developed to meet them, then the youth ministry of any church shall continue to attract and hold the interest of youth. When needs are met, people are satisfied.<sup>67</sup>

It is important to analyze what these needs of the youth are. Then we can do a youth ministry to meet those needs. In seeking to proffer solutions to the problems/challenges facing the youth in this contemporary society enumerated earlier on, their needs would have been met. Young people in every home and society need set rules and regulations, guidelines, directives, dos and don'ts to guide them as they pursue all the virtues in life and eschew all the vices.<sup>68</sup> This would meet the challenge of leaving the youth at the mercy of media education which is unhealthy for the development of the youth.

The scriptures portray children as blessings from God and sources of joy, deserving guidance and nurture from both parents and members of the faith community.<sup>69</sup> This would help cater for the heart cry of many young people—relationship. It is obvious that what the youth need the most today is correct guidance.

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<sup>67</sup> Glenn E. Ludwig, *Creative Leadership Series* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1981), 23.

<sup>68</sup> Michael Onyedikachi, *The African Youth Today* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Agbo Areo, 2001), 69.

<sup>69</sup> Edyta Jankiewicz and Darius Jankiewicz, *Let the Little Children Come: Towards a Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Childhood*, 2nd ed., vol. 49 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2011), 217.

This guidance must be in the three major areas of grave concern for late adolescents and young adults. These include religion, the life work, and relationship.

**Religious commitment.** Adventist teenagers have their questions and answers must be given.<sup>70</sup> This is because if they don't get it right then, their late teenage and young adulthood are jeopardized. And that goes for questions about life work and relationship too. The functions of the Church as found in the book of Acts include: Doctrinal teaching (2: 42); Fellowship (2: 42); Worship (2: 42, 46); Prayer (2: 42; 4: 29-31); Benevolence (2: 44-45; 4: 34-35); Identification with the community (2: 47); Witness (4: 33; 5: 42).<sup>71</sup> This ought to be the function of the Youth Ministry Department of the Church. Erling states that,

To build a sustainable youth group, youths need to hear stories about their church, about their family heritage, about their own people's story, so that they do not feel like strangers: we ought to train them for leadership in the church for the world. Give the responsibility, treat them as leaders and relate to them as people who belong to our communities and not as outsiders.<sup>72</sup>

It is worthy of note that the spiritual formation of a child is actualized through bible-based socialization. We should read the bible together, and share its stories. Develop mentor relationships where young people can see what faithful lives look like. The kind of faith that results in the youth by associating with a role model who trains youth to wrestle with Biblical texts is highly needed by the youth.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Jane Norman and Myron W. Harris, *The Private Life of the American Teenager* (New York, NY: Rawson, Wade, 1981), 272.

<sup>71</sup> Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2006), 48.

<sup>72</sup> Maria Erling, "What America Wanted and Swedish American Youths," *Currents in Theology and Mission* (June 2012): 238.

<sup>73</sup> Elizabeth F. Caldwell, "Reading the Bible with Children and Youth," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 40, no. 4 (August 2013): 249.

Ultimately, it is the story of Jesus, the perfect leader worth following, presented in a way that would meet the longing of the youth for a cause worth committing their lives to that should become part of a youth ministry DNA.<sup>74</sup>

**Outreach.** “A healthy youth ministry shall constantly encourage students to discover their gifts and put them into practice through ministry and mission opportunities.”<sup>75</sup> This should be the focus of effective Youth Ministry. For in doing this, the church through her Youth Ministries Department would be fulfilling Christ great Commission of Matthew 28: 19-20. The youths experience satisfaction as they engage in activities of ministry which they have been gifted with. In this sense, they are personally developed spiritually, mentally and otherwise.

A ministry team that is preoccupied with the affairs of its members alone for a long period would lose its savor. For vibrancy, a youth ministry must focus in and out.”<sup>76</sup> Therefore, to revive the traditional Youth Ministries, the leader must have an outreach perspective; there must be an intentional program design; the membership must be made to own the vision for the mission; leadership must be put in place, then the program can be implemented.

Reviewing the results and conclusion from a ministry leaders’ survey, it was discovered that all children and young adult leaders consider ‘reaching the lost people’ a major or mandatory responsibility of their area of ministry.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Jen Bradbury, “Sticky Faith: What Keeps Kids Connected to Church? The Christian Century,” *The Christian Century*, May 29, 2013, 23.

<sup>75</sup> Doug Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry: 9 Essential Foundations for Healthy Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 50.

<sup>76</sup> Chuck Rosemeyer, *Outreach: How Can We Renew Traditional Church Youth Ministries? Reaching a Generation for Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1997), 334.

<sup>77</sup> Mark A. Mays, “Building Global Minded Christians: Study of Local Church Mobilization” (M.A Educational Ministeries, Huntington Graduate School of Christian Ministries, 2002), accessed August 14, 2015, [http://www.davidmays.org/Resources/Building\\_Global\\_Minded\\_Christians.pdf](http://www.davidmays.org/Resources/Building_Global_Minded_Christians.pdf).

Consequently, the goal of youth ministry based on Matthew 28: 19-20 and Eph 4: 11-13 is to produce spiritually maturing adolescents, fulfilling the Great Commission by means of a culturally acceptable vehicle, so that the body of Christ may be edified.<sup>78</sup> In the same vein, since its beginning, youth ministry was designed by the Church with clearly defined goals aimed at the growth, consolidation, and salvation of its youth and not for entertainment. The Caleb project is an evangelistic project therefore designed to engage college youths actively where they can use their vacation periods to evangelize unentered regions.<sup>79</sup>

***The life work.*** Many young people become disillusioned as to what their life work should be. There is so much unemployment among the able-bodied young people in many countries.<sup>80</sup> There are many unemployed graduates who have qualified certificates in one field or the other.<sup>81</sup> As the younger ones see this mayhem of unemployment unresolved from year to year especially in the country of Nigeria, anxiety consumes their being. When young people hear government talks in the media of their efforts to ameliorate this deplorable situation and in reality it appears little or nothing is being done to that effect, disillusionment sets in.

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<sup>78</sup> Douglas Randlett Hunter, "A Descriptive Study of Youth Ministry Models in Evangelical Churches" (Doctor of Ministry, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000), accessed August 14, 2015, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1264&context=doctoral>.

<sup>79</sup> General Conference, "General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Youth Ministries Department, 'Foreword' Mission Caleb Manual," *Florida Conference*, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://www.floridaconference.com/iym/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/GC-Mission-Caleb-Manual-Official-Original.pdf>.

<sup>80</sup> ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013: A Generation at Risk* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization, 2013).

<sup>81</sup> Admin, "Youth," *Adivoca*, accessed August 18, 2015, [adivoca.org/node/2212](http://adivoca.org/node/2212).

In this regard, young people need guidance as to how to make intelligent choices or decisions for what the life work should be Soodong Choi<sup>82</sup> explains that Jesus early childhood education is a model for early childhood development of today's child using the acronym *NEWS* which stands for N- Nature study; E - Experience of life—which includes what a man does with what happens to him; W- (*Useful*) Work; S- Scripture—One cannot think of Jewish education without the Torah.

With an emphasis on the “**W**” - the life work, Ellen White wrote:

Useful manual labor is part of the gospel plan. The great teacher ... gave directions to Israel that every youth should be thought some line of useful employment. Therefore, it was the custom of the Jews, the wealthy as well as the poor classes to teach their sons and daughters some useful trade.<sup>83</sup>

This is more expedient in this contemporary world when life's vicissitudes are so uncertain. The youth would have a means of livelihood to fall back on to do mission Even for the rich, this vocational education and training would be useful as it develops the mental as well as the physical capabilities. Moreover, no condition in life is permanent.

The best kind of employment is that which tasks one's talent and skills where creativity can be employed. Obada-Obiah writing about factors responsible for the deviant behaviors in the society states that

Industrialization, urbanization, westernizations and cultural infiltration through mass media have led to the erosion of Nigeria cultural values which includes- farming and skill labor. Societal emphasis on material wealth and paper qualification propel youths to go to any length seeking to “make it” or seeking to “arrive.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Soodong Choi, “Jewish Early Childhood Education and Jesus' Education,” *Asia – Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry* 1, no. 1 (2009): 105 – 119.

<sup>83</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents Teachers and Students* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1943), 307.

<sup>84</sup> Obieh, *Youths' Deviant Behaviours in Nigeria*, 32 – 47.

This trend has led to the gradual erosion of skilled labor. The youths are losing the taste for skilled labor that tasks talents. Talent discovery which is of great value to God is not made a priority. According to Potter, God calls all His people to ministry. They are to use their areas of professionalism to do mission.<sup>85</sup>

Youth is that period of life when skills and social potentials are acquired in preparation for the responsibilities and rewards of adult status, employment, and jobs. Acquiring skills, interest, and potentials, through family and school ought to be central to the business of any society, or religious group.<sup>86</sup>

**Relationships.** If Youth Ministry can be labeled as any one thing, it is a ministry of relationships. “Adolescents are hungry for relationships and long for people, especially adult leaders to care about them.”<sup>87</sup>

The adolescent years are years of increased interest of the young towards the opposite sex. That is why the right guidance given in matters of relationship by the elderly would be a means of mobilizing the youth for useful living especially in doing mission.

Adolescence is a time when identity development is particularly important and often linked to the social environment.<sup>88</sup> Youths are attached in friendship to their peers who appear to help them value themselves positively whether of same-sex or

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<sup>85</sup> Debbi Potter, “God’s Paint Brush,” *The Journal of Applied Leadership* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 36.

<sup>86</sup> General Conference of UNESCO, *Youth in the 1980s*, 17–18.

<sup>87</sup> Roger Dudley, *Complex Religion of Teens* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2013), 81.

<sup>88</sup> Justin W Patchia and Sameer Hindija, “Cyber Bullying: What Can You Do?,” *The Clergy Journal* 88, no. 2 (April 2011): 4.

opposite.<sup>89</sup> When they become young adults, there is then the urge to settle down in a home of theirs as husbands and wives. They need guidance.

Adegoke submits that one of the reasons young people drop out of school before graduation is a sense of loneliness—not belonging—a sense that nobody cares.<sup>90</sup> Therefore it is important during early adolescence to help the youth establish a sexual identity by giving appropriate and adequate sex education. There is a need to let them know it is normal to feel attracted to the opposite sex.<sup>91</sup>

In the parts of Africa where youth is defined as the one who is able to marry and settle down with family responsibilities, youth ministry must address the how of getting settled down in their own homes. This requires help in relationship issues as well as economic matters—life work.

A healthy youth ministry should be committed to becoming a relational youth ministry. This style of youth ministry becomes a ministry with youths rather than a program-centered ministry to youths. A program-centered ministry to youths does not care or is not sensitive to how that program impacts the youths whether positively or negatively. Programs don't develop relationships, people do. Programs, however, are important but only after relationships have been developed.<sup>92</sup>

The church as a whole and specifically parents, pastors, professors, and presidents who have been identified as key heroes in the life of the youth must build

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>90</sup> Fred Adegoke, *Adolescence in Africa: Revealing the Problems of Teenagers in a Contemporary African Society* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Hadassah, 2003), 117.

<sup>91</sup> Leon L. Bram, "The Invention of Adolescence," *The World Book Encyclopedia* (Chicago, IL: World Bank, 2003), 61.

<sup>92</sup> Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry: 9 Essential Foundations for Healthy Growth*, 195.

intentional restorative relationships with young adults. And this relationship should be characterized by authenticity, belonging, compassion and discipleship.”<sup>93</sup>

**Family-oriented youth ministry.** Youth Ministry cannot be effectively done in isolation. If youth ministry would thrive successfully, parents must be in the picture of programming. Parents are supposed to be the primary disciplers of their children. What the church and the church school do is to build on what home has done. They ought to be supportive ministries to the home ministry. And when this is the case, the transitioning from adolescence to young adulthood would be smooth and effective having received all the needed guidance and support from family, church and church schools.

Evans Chartrand affirms this by revealing that 70% of young Christians in America will either become inactive members or fall away from the faith before graduating from high school or college. And that the way to keep them in the church is to change the paradigm for teen ministry from a model that is Church-based and home-supported to a model that is home-based and Church supported.<sup>94</sup> This is because parents are the primary and the best intergeneration mentors of their children.

A study which consisted of 1, 359 adolescents and young adults between ages 14-25 in German-speaking Europe revealed that although many of the young people are leaving the church, there are some who have remained. The key factors of the faith development of those who remained, include the family and the church.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Martin, “Burst the Bystander Effect: Making a Discipling Difference with Young Adults,” 51–52.

<sup>94</sup> Evans S. Chartrand, “Rethinking Teen Ministry: A New Strategy for Keeping Teenagers in Church and in the Faith” (M.Div Thesis, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 2014), accessed July 28, 2017, [http://www.wls.wels.net/sites/default/files/Chartrand\\_0.pdf](http://www.wls.wels.net/sites/default/files/Chartrand_0.pdf).

<sup>95</sup> Alexander C. Schulze, “Postmodern Teens and Twentysomethings in German-Speaking Europe,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 68–78.

Research indicates that those adolescents who are able to develop a relationship with adult role model (parental or otherwise) are more successful than their peers in coping with the everyday stresses of life.<sup>96</sup> There is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal. Parents have no other purpose of existence than to care for, instruct, and bring up the young.<sup>97</sup>

Consequently, parents should seek to know the way youths learn. The knowledge of these styles would enable parents to communicate effectively with their young ones.<sup>98</sup> In the same vein, when we understand the personality traits of our young ones, we can better learn how to relate and work with them closely to get the best out of them. These personality traits include: Sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic.<sup>99</sup>

It is obvious that it is the home training, in most cases, that carries the young into adulthood in years after. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it? (Prov 22:6). The Christ-centered, bible-based, mission-driven model of spiritual youth leadership can be accomplished by first providing Christian role models -godly parents, pastors, elders, teachers, and

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<sup>96</sup> Alexander C. Schulze, “Postmodern Teens and Twentysomethings in German-Speaking Europe,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 129.

<sup>97</sup> Jankiewicz and Jankiewicz, *Let the Little Children Come: Towards a Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Childhood*, 49:217–224.

<sup>98</sup> Gane, *Building Youth Ministry: A Fundamental Guide*, 25–37.

<sup>99</sup> Florence Littauer, *Personality Plus for Parents: Understanding What Makes Your Child Tick*, Reprinted Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2000), 170.

chaplains. Secondly, the model must motivate programs, curricula, and movements that have a biblical basis and meets the need of the youths in question.<sup>100</sup>

According to Soodong Choi, Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7 known as the *shema* can be used as a model in developing a curriculum for youth training and development. The text provides the curricular settings:

When you sit in the house “classroom;” When you walk by the way “life experiences;” When you lie down “end of the day;” When you rise “start of the day”<sup>101</sup>

Parents are hereby mandated to train their children at every opportunity.

Parents stand out as some of the most committed, thoughtful and generous youth leaders. They have the ultimate responsibility of raising their children. Most parents want to improve their relationships with their youth and are willing to invest time in their young people’s lives. Finally, parents are best equipped to do and support others in youth ministry. This is because they feel what others feel for the young.<sup>102</sup>

The role parents and congregational leaders play in shaping the religious experience of adolescents cannot be overemphasized.<sup>103</sup> Ludwig mentions five cries of every youth: Self-hatred, psychological orphans, social protest, prejudice and joy<sup>104</sup> The important implication for doing youth ministry in the first cry is an empathetic and warm relationship with these youths which can be furnished readily and better by positive parental ties.

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<sup>100</sup> Justin Kim, “Spiritual Youth Leadership: Why It Is Desperately Needed,” *Adventist Affirm*, 2006, 72–77.

<sup>101</sup> Choi, “Jewish Early Childhood Education and Jesus’ Education,” 105 – 119.

<sup>102</sup> Fred Cornforth, *The Family and Youth Ministry: 60 Ways to Make It Happen* (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 1995), II.

<sup>103</sup> Dudley, Roger, *Why Teenagers Leave the Church. Personal Stories from 10-Years Study.*, 33.

<sup>104</sup> Ludwig, *YOUTH AND THE LAW*, 47 – 52.

Our task, therefore, is to build youth ministry not on the model of western classroom education, which is basically aimed at putting some ‘stuff’ into the head of the pupil or student, thereby emphasizing mental prowess, but on the model of culture communication, the communication of one life to another. This can lead a generation to bear the stamp of Christ.<sup>105</sup>

Therefore, Morgan-Cole proposes a youth ministry model that follows the pattern of Christ in relation with His disciples; a model which would include nurture and mentoring, teaching, missions and service, worship and fellowship.<sup>106</sup> This suggests a holistic model of youth ministry which appears to cater for the varied areas of interest to the senior youths. This model would help provide the needed spiritual nurture for the soul as worship is made a focus; in fellowship, the relationship need is taken care of; in teaching mentoring and nurture; they are equipped for service; and in missions and service they are really engaged in mission which is the goal of the youth ministry.

Roger Dudley is the director of the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University at the writing of the book, *Why Our Teenagers leave the Church: Personal Stories from a 10-year Study*. He has written so many other books that address the challenges of the young people in the Church. Roger Dudley in his book, *Why Our Teenagers leave the Church: Personal Stories from a 10-year Study*, enumerates why our teens leave the church in their own words. The findings reveal four major reasons. 1. Alienation – They feel unaccepted by their churches. 2. Irrelevance – There existed no programs targeted for this age group. 3. Intolerance – Church members fail to show love in action but instead show “extreme legalism and lack of tolerance for

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<sup>105</sup> Richards, *Youth Ministry: Its Renewal in the Local Church*, 35.

<sup>106</sup> Morgan-cole, “Biblical Models for Youth Ministry,” 91–96.

different personalities and beliefs.” 4. Convenience – Too tired by Sabbath morning because of the fast-paced life of now.<sup>107</sup>

This reveals that one of the reasons why youths leave the church is that the programs are not relevant to their needs. This might breed boredom which causes them to eventually leave. This same reason that causes the teens to leave the church could be the same reasons that cause the senior youths to be apathetic towards the youth ministry of their churches.

On the other hand, the study reveals that not all the teenagers left the church. For those who stayed in the church, the following factors contributed to their stay.

1. They had firm belief in the Adventist Truth though some expressed dissatisfaction in the way this truth is being shared with others.
2. Adventist Upbringing – Those who were raised in Adventist homes in the Adventist way, expressed satisfaction with their faith community.
3. Relationship with God – Intimate relationship with Christ was a strong reason why many who did not leave stayed. They believe the Church helped them keep that connection with God.
4. Fellowship/Friendship/Relationship – They saw their Church, generally speaking, as full of loving Christian people.<sup>108</sup>

This study reveals a logical trend among these young people that stayed. They grew up to embrace the truth of God’s word and believe it because they had a strong family foundation. Those who were raised the Adventist way grew up to embrace the church faith community. Their home training set the tone for their relationship with God. This was further strengthened by a relational church that loved and cared for

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<sup>107</sup> Dudley, Roger, *Why Teenagers Leave the Church. Personal Stories from 10-Years Study.*, 61–67.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

them through the older members. They enjoyed an intergenerational mentoring relationship in the church.

Consequently, in designing an ideal youth ministry model, it must have bible truth as foundation for its operations; it must be family-oriented in order to assist parents to fulfill their roles as primary caregivers and disciplers of the young people; it must be relational possessing deep spirituality; like a family with the intergenerational flavor; and involved in community and mission.

**Intergenerational-oriented youth ministry.** This principle is because youths would develop better in a mentoring relationship between them and the older generation. In this case, a youth ministry model that seeks to bring young and old together in an atmosphere of worship, relationship, learning, and service is best for the young people.

There is an argument for the defense of the inclusive-congregational model for ministry by showing that the ultimate problem is not the youth subculture but the intergenerational workings of the church. Both the social programs of secular postmodernism and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century reactions of evangelicalism have failed the youth of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Why does it seem that even specialized programs meant for the youth of this century fail to reach them? The solution is that effective youth ministry in this postmodern age must be in constant critical submission to a biblical covenantal worldview contextualized in culture. The biblical gospel message lived out in a body-life atmosphere, is the best answer to both the critiques of postmodernism as well as the predominant evangelical responses.<sup>109</sup> A study

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<sup>109</sup> Grey Schneeberger, "Reforming Ministry to Youth in the Postmodern Context: Archetypes, Reactions, and Solutions from a Biblical-Covenantal Perspective" (M.A. Thesis, Faculty

on suicide showed that building community with other social actors (in this case the elderly) who have similar beliefs and moral is key to preventing suicide as well as to feeling a greater purpose in life.<sup>110</sup>

Andrew root argues that the ministry to the young is primarily about encountering the living Word of God in the context of the whole Church. In other words, there need not be a separate ministry mapped out for the young. We ought to do a holistic church ministry which would take care of the need of the young ones eventually. The craze about the church of the future depending on the youth should be laid aside because the future of the church is not dependent on the youth of today but on Jesus Christ. Again, it is the task of youth not to reshape the Church, but rather to listen to the word of God; it is the task of the church not to capture the youth, but to teach and proclaim the Word of God.<sup>111</sup>

In other words, instead of spending time and resources targeted at doing a ministry to and for the youth exclusively, it is better spending it to develop a holistic church program that would eventually cater for the need of the youth.

Gillespie, in agreement with Root, reveals the long-term impact of age segregation or age-focused paradigm in ministry: The youth would have no clear understanding of the nature of church; the Church would experience a

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of Reformed Theological Seminary, 2007), accessed July 28, 2015, [https://www.rts.edu/sharedresources/documents/global/Student\\_Theses/Schneeberger-Reforming\\_Ministry\\_to\\_Youth.pdf](https://www.rts.edu/sharedresources/documents/global/Student_Theses/Schneeberger-Reforming_Ministry_to_Youth.pdf).

<sup>110</sup> Angela M. Brown, “Queer Youth Community Organization Intents and Outcomes of Youth Mobilization in LGBTQ Service Programs” (MSc. Thesis, University of Iowa, 2012), accessed July 30, 2015, <https://www.stcloudstate.edu/socialresponsibility/activities/documents/%20AngelaBrownThesis.pdf/>.

<sup>111</sup> Andrew Root, “Stop Worrying about the Millennials,” *Christianity Today*, February 2015, 32–36.

big loss of young people in transition to university and career; no peer or mentor relationship exist (identity issues, belonging and self-esteem); no experience of interaction with adults on their faith journey or adults with the journey of youth and young adults.

On the other hand, intergenerational ministries should be advocated since they are built on principles such as age integration (teaming people from different age groups), generational understanding, integration of “households,” and parental responsibility for faith development (Deut 6: 6-9).<sup>112</sup>

Gillespie seems to be saying that because of some envisioned disadvantages, it is not safe to have a special ministry targeted to and for the youth separately because such a ministry would lack the blessings and advantages of intergenerational relationship which is experienced in a holistic church ministry.

Thomas Berger argues on the contrary, that a generalized church ministry that excludes a special ministry to, for and by the youth would only weaken religious formation of youth. In other words, there is still a need for a special work for the young people.

Instead of scrapping out special ministry by, to and for the youth, congregations can be helped by building an inclusive intergenerational way of life that fosters spiritual maturity. In that way, churches full of people (old and young) who are building each other up toward spiritual maturity are the best antidote to the

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<sup>112</sup> Virgil Bailey Gillespie, “Under One Roof Multiple Communities” (Seminar Presentation, John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry, La Sierra University, School of Religion, 2004).

juvenilization<sup>113</sup> of American Christianity and also a powerful countercultural witness in a juvenilized society.<sup>114</sup>

Therefore, having a special ministry targeted towards the youth does not dispense with the need to make it intergenerational. Whatever model of Youth Ministry is considered for the church, it must be intergenerational-oriented.

Furthermore, Intergenerational-oriented youth ministry is a way of fulfilling the mission of the church which is to disciple all nations (people groups), including young people. Jesus relationship with his disciple was both rational and relational. This made them a family after three and a half years.<sup>115</sup> Any model of youth ministry adopted for discipling the youth must be such that is both rational and relational. This would create a family atmosphere where they feel belonging and secured.

There is the need for adults to enter the lives of the young people. To effectively target and access the youth, they need to be reached where they are. In this generation, the ‘physical spaces’ already frequented by youths include radio, social media, and ICT (including mobile phones and SMS messaging).<sup>116</sup>

### **Choosing a Fitting Model for Mission**

Principles that would help develop an effective youth ministry for the young people in the church should be need-oriented which was discussed in terms of religious commitment, the life work, and relationship. Second, Youth Ministry must

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<sup>113</sup>“juvenilization” means being driven by youthful agenda, desires, attitudes, virtues and also vices.

<sup>114</sup> Thomas Bergler, “When Are We Going to Grow Up? The Juvenilization of American Christianity,” *Christianity Today*, June 8, 2012, 19–24.

<sup>115</sup> Jonathan K. Dodson and Matt Chandler, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, 1 edition. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 30.

<sup>116</sup> Lopes Cardozo et al., *Literature Review: Youth Agency, Peace-Building and Education*, Research Consortium Education and Peace-Building.

be family-oriented. Finally, it must be intergenerational. And whatever models to be constructed to mobilize the youth for mission must take these principles into consideration.

In summary, from the historical development, it is discovered that the youth work had been in operation before the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church came into existence in 1860. It had its beginnings in Europe, and then it came to America. The SDA Church youth work was organized using an existing model that was on the ground. Its structure was influenced by the structure it met on ground—‘clubs’ for boys and girls.

However, one common thread runs through the purpose and activities of the youth ministry. These include focusing on young people, their needs, experiences, and contribution; voluntary participation, fostering association, relationship, and community, encouraging all to join in friendship, being friendly, accessible and responsive while acting with integrity. Workers should not only be approachable and friendly; but also, they should have faith in people; and be trying, themselves, to live good lives. In addition, look towards the education and, more broadly, the welfare of young people.

From the various authors reviewed, the problems of youths, center on media culture, relationship, family decadence which deprive them of getting the needed love, care and guidance parents ought to give young people. Media diet and peer pressure fostered by the social network tend to shape their lives negatively.

Therefore, to float a youth ministry that would be meaningful to these young people, it must seek to address the problems they face and speak to their needs. These needs include, need for positive relationship, both with peers and intergenerational for the purpose of mentorship. Another would be the need to help them with the choice of

a life work and seek to empower them to be self-supporting. Lastly, there is the need for guidance in religious matters with the goal of helping them develop a saving relationship with Christ. Consequently, a youth ministry targeted for this age group (17-35), must be need-oriented, family-oriented, and intergenerational.

## CHAPTER 4

### A STRATEGY TO MOBILIZE YOUNG ADULTS

This chapter seeks to develop a program that would mobilize more Senior Youths (17-35 years) in Aba East Conference (AEC) of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church to become active in the mission of the Adventist Youth Ministry (AYM). Because of the apparent apathy existing between the youths of the above age group and the Youth Ministry of the Church in AEC of the SDA Church, this chapter seeks to discover reasons behind this phenomenon and proffer possible solutions to the situation.

In a bid to achieve these objectives, a brief geographical description of Aba East conference would be given and a historical background of the research context. The intervention program would be designed after obtaining permission from the concerned bodies. The intervention strategy will make use of survey questionnaires to determine the approximate percentage of youths (17-35 years) in the SDA Churches in AEC; focus groups in order to discover causes of apathy, possible solutions, and the implementation strategy. Eventually, the program would be implemented. Evaluations and assessments would be conducted after the implementations and reports would be given to the appropriate bodies involved in the research.

#### **Contextual Analysis of Aba East Conference**

Aba East Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church headquarters is located in Aba Ngwa in the Abia State of Nigeria.

## **Geographical Setting**

Abia is an acronym formed from the initial letters of four groups of people, namely: Aba, Bende, Isuikwuato and Afikpo. These constituted the major groups in the state at its creation. On 27th August 1991, the Federal Military Government under General Ibrahim Babangida carved out Abia State from Imo State, bringing to thirty the number of states in Nigeria. Furthermore, in October 1996, the Federal Military Government under General Sani Abacha created six more states bringing to thirty-six the number of states in the federation.

Located in the southeastern region of Nigeria, Abia State lies within approximate latitudes  $4^{\circ} 40'$  and  $6^{\circ} 14'$  north, and longitudes  $7^{\circ} 10'$  and  $8^{\circ}$  east. The state shares common boundaries to the north with Ebonyi State; to the south and southwest with Rivers State; and to the east and southeast of the Cross River and Akwa Ibom States respectively. To the west is Imo State, and to the northwest is Anambra State. The state covers an area of about 5,243.7 sq. km which is approximately 5.8 per cent of the total land area of Nigeria. With its capital at Umuahia, it has seventeen LGAs, namely: Aba North, Aba South, Isiala Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South, Ukwa West, Ukwa East, Obingwa, Ikwuano, Bende, Arochukwu, Ohafia, Isuikwuato, Umuahia North, Umuahia South, Ugwunagbo, Osioma and Nnochi.

Abia State is inhabited by the Igbo. The Igbo language is spoken throughout the State. Abia State is richly endowed culturally. This is evident in the people's mode of dressing, dancing, arts and crafts, as well as festivals and the widely known Igbo traditional hospitality.

The people of Abia State are predominantly Christians of different denominations. There is also a good number of Muslims, with adherents of the two

religions living together peacefully. Some people in the state are animists, who believe in a Being called "Chukwu." The traditional worshippers believe in the ability of deities to exercise a strong influence on the destiny of man.

Agriculture is the major occupation of the people of Abia State. This is induced by the rich soil which stretches from the northern to the southern parts of the state. Subsistence farming is prevalent and about 70 percent of the population is engaged in it. A few farmers also produce on a large scale. Farming in the state is determined by the seasonal distribution of rainfall. Some farmers now use irrigation methods. The main food crops grown are yam, cassava, cocoyam, and maize while the cash crops include oil-palm, rubber, cocoa, banana and various types of fruits.<sup>1</sup>

Aba city, Abia state is in southern Nigeria. It lies along the west bank of the Aba River, at the intersection of roads from Port Harcourt, Owerri, Umuahia, Ikot Ekpene, and Ikot Abasi (Opobo). Aba was a traditional market town for the Igbo (Ibo) people of the tropical rainforest before the establishment of a British military post there in 1901. With the construction of the railway in 1915 from Port Harcourt (36 miles [58 km] southwest), the city became a major collecting point for agricultural produce (especially palm oil and palm kernels). By the 1930s Aba was a settled urban community, and it is now a large industrial and commercial center.

An 18.5-mile- (30-kilometre-) long pipeline from the Imo River natural-gas field provides power for Aba's industrial estate. Textiles, pharmaceuticals, soap, plastics, cement, footwear and cosmetics are manufactured in the city, and there are also a brewery and a distillery. Aba has a school of arts and science, secondary schools, a teacher-training college, and several technical and trade institutes. The city

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<sup>1</sup> Admin, "Abia Adv," *Online Nigeria*, <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/abiaadv>.

is noted for its handicrafts. Population (2006 est.) stands at 931,900.<sup>2</sup> It is the most populous among all other cities in the eastern states.

Aba is the major city of the Ngwa people (Obingwa, Osisioma, Isiala-Ngwa North, Isiala-Ngwa South). The headquarters of Aba East Conference is located at No. 1 New Umuahia Road, Umuola in Aba city. The geographical territory of Aba East Conference covers all of Obingwa Local Government and some part of Aba North Local Government and part of Aba South Local Government Areas where some of the city churches are located.

The significance of this geographical setting is seen in the fact that Aba being a commercial center, programs meant for the members should be either weekends or late evenings. If it must be on other weekdays, it must really be worth it. Since 70 percent of its population is engaged in farming in one way or the other, it means even the city dwellers are into it. This leaves them with no free time even on weekends during the rainy season. Because Aba is a predominantly Christian city, there appears to be a high level of competition among the denominations as to how to retain their membership. This is significant. If the youth of the Church does not have what keeps them glued to the church, which is what the Youth Ministry Department of the Church seeks to offer, they would leave. We stand the risk of losing them en mass to other denominations.

Since Aba is central and the most populous city in the eastern Nigeria, whatever happens there would have a significant impact on the other states of the east of Niger and beyond. And being a state of one common language, communication would be no barrier for ministry.

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<sup>2</sup> Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Aba Nigeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, last modified 9 2009, accessed June 6, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Aba-Nigeria>.

## **Historical Setting of Aba East Conference**

Aba East Conference became a Conference in 2013 from the defunct East Nigeria Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church located in Aba city. Aba East Conference (Formerly known as the East Nigeria Conference) was established in 1923 and organized in 1930. It was the first field to attain a Conference status in Nigeria even though Adventism came to the west in 1914. The Conference was reorganized in 1971, 1977, 1986, 2003; reorganized, and renamed in 2013. Statistically, there are 91 Churches; the baptized membership stands at 22,291; the population of the area stands at 1,182,243.<sup>3</sup> Aba became the center of Adventism in the eastern Nigeria and still is.

## **Youth Population in Aba East Conference**

A pre-research survey was conducted to determine the percentage of youths age 17-35 in AEC with a designed questionnaire (see Appendix B). Four hundred and fifty (450) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to four strategic churches in the Conference. They are typical of all the Churches in Aba East Conference: SDA Church, Aba Headquarters (150), Hilltop (100), Ovom Ama Asaa (100), and Mgboko-Obete (100). Aba Headquarters is an ancient church headquarters, the very first in the whole of the east of Niger.

It is situated in Aba city with a well-balanced membership. Hilltop is also in the city and predominantly a youth church. Ovom Ama Asaa is a suburban church which has a good number of young people and more of elderly members. Mgboko-Obete is a village church with its membership comprising of mostly elderly statesmen and aged members.

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<sup>3</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, "Aba East Conference," *Adventist Yearbook*, last modified 2014, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.adventistyearbook.org>.

The questionnaires were administered by the pastors in the various churches on behalf of the researcher. Below is a table showing the results.

*Table 1. Cross Section of Youth Membership in AEC*

Church	No. Administered	No. Returned	No. of Youths (17-35)	Proportion of Youths
Aba Headquarters	150	97	71	73.2
Hilltop	100	43	32	74.4
Ovom Ama A.	100	81	33	40.7
Mgboko-obete	100	53	17	32.1
Total	450	274	153	55.8%

The computation above reveals that out of the 450 questionnaires distributed only about 61% was returned and out of the 274 respondents about 56% were youths aged 17 to 35 years. This research work would make use of this percentage – 56% as the average percentage of the Senior Youths found in the churches in AEC.

Therefore, of the 22, 291 membership of the Aba East Conference, the youths of ages 17-35 are about 12, 260. And of this number, only about 255 are active in the Youth Ministry Department of the church. The majority do not attend the official Ministry designed to engage them in the church for mission. For the purpose of this research three churches would be selected from within the Aba East Conference territory. These Churches are SDA Church, Hilltop, SDA Church, Ovom Ama Asaa, and SDA Church, Mgboko-Obete.

Seventh-day Adventist Church, Hilltop has a baptized membership population of seven hundred and forty-three (743) while the Sabbath School membership<sup>4</sup> stands

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<sup>4</sup>The baptized membership comprises of members in the church who have been baptized by immersion having their names in the Church record book while the Sabbath School membership comprises of those who attend service whether baptized or not, young and old.

at one thousand and twenty-three (1, 023). The number of Youths in the Church ages 17 – 35 is about four hundred and eight (408). And the number of the senior Youths active or enrolled in the Youth Ministry Department of the Church stands at fourteen (14).

The Baptized Membership of the SDA Church at of Ovom Ama Asaa as at the time of this research is six hundred and fifty (650). The Sabbath School membership is eight hundred and twenty (820). Youths of ages 17–35 are about three hundred and fifty-seven (357). The population of the senior youths who are enrolled or active in the Youth Ministry of the church is sixty (35).

The baptized membership of SDA Church Mgboko-Obete stands at three hundred and sixty-eight (368) while the Sabbath school membership stands at six hundred and five (605). Youths 17–35 years of age are two hundred and two (202). The number of Senior Youths active or enrolled in the Youth Ministry Department of the Church is eighteen (18).

The table below seeks to show in summary the information given above.

*Table 2. Senior Youth Participation in the Churches before Intervention*

Church	S. S. Members	Baptized Members	Youths 17-35	Active S.Youths
Hilltop	1, 023	743	408	14
Ovom Ama Asaa	820	650	357	35
Mgboko-Obete	605	368	202	18

The research question is, why the apathy of the majority of these young adults towards the Youth Ministry Department of the church?

## **Research Design**

This section seeks to describe what the research to be conducted is all about. It would answer the why of the research and the how of the research.

### **Research Methodology**

This work would use the mixed method, the qualitative and the quantitative methods of research. The qualitative method of research makes use of primary data. Primary data are first-hand information which could be gotten by using a formal method of questionnaire surveys, less formal or informal methods, which include participant observation/direct observation method, structured or semi-structured interview, focus group discussion as well as case studies.<sup>5</sup>

However, this research work would make use of focus group discussion. The quantitative method would be used in the pre-research survey which is meant to reveal numerical facts about the population of youths (17-35 years old) in SDA Churches in AEC.

### **Rationale for Selection**

The quantitative method is used first to describe the approximate numerical strength of senior youths (17-35 years) that can be found in the Churches in AEC. The figures would be juxtaposed with the active senior youths in order to picture the level of apathy prevalent among the young towards the Youth Ministries of the Church.

In the qualitative method of research, researchers are interested in the reasons people give for what they do and the meanings attached to their activities.<sup>6</sup> Having

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<sup>5</sup> Tunde Agbola and et al., eds., *Contemporary Social Science Research Methods: A Practical Guide* (Ibadan, Nigeria: MURLAB Search light wisdom Educational Services, 2003), 25.

<sup>6</sup> Carol M. Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2010), 143.

observed the phenomena for quite some time, the question arose, why would the young adults not identify with the Youth Ministry of their churches meant to mobilize them for mission work? To discover the meaning of the apathy and the reasons behind it is what informed the choice of the method of research. In addition, relationship counts when dealing with young people much more than numbers. So being close enough in the focus group interview sessions would prove significant in the research findings.

### **Population and Sample**

In this work, the researcher shall conduct discussions in three local churches using focus groups of this age group (17-35) to ascertain the reasons behind the seeming withdrawal of the youths of 17–35 from the Youth Ministry of the Church. The churches are Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, Hilltop; Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ovom; and Seventh-day Adventist Church, Mgboko-Obete.

These three churches were chosen due to their locations and unique characteristics. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Hilltop is an urban Church. Her young people are students, young professionals in the working class and some applicants just out of school.

This church is being attended by all categories of young people at all the conceivable stages in their life development. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ovom Ama Asaa is a suburban Church with her youth mostly in school shuttling between the village and the city due to proximity. In other words, a good number of their youths are home-base. Those not at home are in higher institutions but often come around during holidays.

Among Ovom youths, some are students, some are artisans while others are working in the city from home. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, Mgboko-Obete is

a typical village Church. The home-base youths are mostly artisans and farmers. The students are out of the village in their various schools and the professionals are also out in the city to make a living.

Furthermore, the researcher believes the use of these three localities would make the findings of the research much more authentic than if one church is used. This is so, considering the fact that youths in each of these three localities would have their peculiar challenges. Using three Churches would help in the verification of the findings from each of the Churches.

### **Procedure for Research**

The research was carried out per the following steps:

1. Permission would be secured from the AEC administration and the local churches where the research would be conducted.
2. At the end of a given Church service for each of the Churches, the announcement would be made that the researcher wishes to see Youths 17–35 years of age. Those who wait after the service are addressed. Prayer is said. After the reason for the gathering is disclosed, the appeal is made for those willing to sign the consent form. Those who indicate would be given a copy of the consent form to sign.
3. Then the researcher would commence the questionings based on the research questions with some adjustments due to the responses received as the interview progresses.
4. After the focus group interviews, the responses would be analyzed.
5. From the analysis of the focus group responses, an intervention program would be developed with a budget proposal.
6. The program design and the budget would be presented to the Aba East Conference Administration for approval.
7. The Administration of Aba East Conference would write a permission letter to carry out the intervention program.
8. The program is carried out.

## **Criteria for Sampling Procedure**

Notice the focus groups would be formed right on the spot after the Church service. The youths of ages 17-35 would be asked to wait because this is the age group that is mainly concerned with regards to this research. The reason is that if any meeting is called for the youth on a Sabbath afternoon or evening, the mindset is that the uniformed groups are the ones needed (the Adventurers and the Pathfinders, and Master Guides); the target group would be missed. The target group is those who are not presently active in the Youth Ministry Department of the Church. And the best time to get a cream of these is on Sabbath immediately after worship service.

The youth leaders are not expected to be present. But if they come they are not excluded. The idea is to create the environment that allows the interviewees to speak up and express their opinions and reasons plainly and objectively without any bias. However, the presence of the Church Youth Leader in the session provides a useful insight to the leader as to the situation of things among the young people he or she is supposed to be leading.

Furthermore, among the young people who wait behind, only those who consent to be interviewed would be interviewed. They sign the consent form. This will determine the number at the end of the day that constitutes the focus group members for each church.

## **Instrumentation**

The researcher began by securing the needed permission from the administration of AEC and the local churches where the research was conducted.

The research methodology used in this research work is qualitative which involves focus group discussions. Consequently, structured questions for the focus group discussions were developed as the instrument of research (see appendix B.).

Because the discussion questions would require responses from individuals, a consent form was also prepared for all the discussants to fill and sign (see appendix C).

### **Data Analysis**

In this section detail of the proceedings of the research is captured with its consequent analysis.

### **Data Collection**

The discussions of the focus groups were recorded with a voice recorder. This is because all that was being said could not be captured in writing. The group members were free to discuss their opinion and make responses spontaneously without regard to any order. As one is ending the other can pick up the discussion from there. Therefore, a recorder is more appropriate.

### **Presentation and Description of Findings**

At this point the focus group research has been conducted in the three local churches - Seventh-day Adventist Church Hilltop, Seventh-day Adventist Church Ovom Ama Asaa, and Seventh-day Adventist Church Mgboko-Obete. The findings from the various focus groups are enumerated below. The preamble under every focus group gives certain information gleaned from the consent form distributed to the focus group members.

**Findings from focus group 1: SDA Church Hilltop.** Sixteen young adults participated in this focus group. Out of these sixteen (16) young people in SDA Church, Hilltop of ages 17–35, only one was directly in the Youth Ministry of the Church. Three others were engaged in the Church ministry as choristers.

It is worthy of note that four (4) out of the sixteen (16) youths that participated are converts, while twelve of them are born Adventists. In others words, 25% of the

participant youths in the focus group were converts to Adventism, while 75% of them are Adventists by birth.

**Question 1.** What are the factors that make the youths of 17–35 to shy away from the youth ministry of the Church?

**Answer.** The list below is a summary of the answers given:

1. Youths of this age have so many engagements that distract them.
2. Some go to work and they cannot meet up with the Youth Ministry time schedules. Some of the works the young people do just to earn a living keep them away from church activities. Working in firms, organizations, or corporations could be very enslaving to some.
3. If the programs are not attractive to us it would make us not to come back the next time.
4. If the foundation has not been laid early in life, it is difficult to catch up along the way easily.
5. It does appear that we lack proper information about what the Youth Ministry really has in store for youths of our age. There is a question of the relevance of the Youth Ministry of the Church to its youth especially of the age 17–35.
6. There is a lack of family motivation. Parents also seem to lack information as to the relevance of the Youth Ministry of the Church to their children and wards.
7. When a child begins to grow up he or she begins to see the ministry as a childish gathering. Hence, youths of this age group see themselves as a misfit in the midst of more junior ones. The interest of the Youth Ministry begins to wane. Getting such people involved would require extra efforts.
8. Some just do not want to be committed to any church activity. They just prefer to come to Church and at the end, they go home.
9. Considering the classes that must be passed in the pathfinder classes, if a young person has not gone through these classes and he or she wishes to join the ministry and is presented with the fact that there are a lot of outstanding requirements which needs to be covered, many such young people get discouraged from joining. How can I go to sit with these junior ones to study? Where do I begin?
10. Some believe that the Youth Ministry of the Church is a place of punishment. Leaders are seen carrying ropes to whip “defaulters”. And youths of this age group would not want to be so embarrassed, insulted or humiliated, so they stay away.
11. The inability of parents to provide the needed things for these young ones as per class requirements and various outings. When these materials are not being

provided for, the young one's participation reduces. When this continues, it can lead to withdrawal from the ministry. When there is eventually a withdrawal, it becomes so difficult to return.

12. Admission to higher institutions is a factor that serves to sever the youth from active participation in the Youth Ministry. National Association of Adventist Students (NAAS) activities take the place of youth programs in the school. Youth programs at school keep the youths away from those of their local church.
13. The leaders lack what it takes to attract youths into the Youth ministry.

**Question 2.** So, what can be done to rekindle this interest in the youth for the Youth Ministry of the Church?

**Answer.** The answers to question two are listed below:

1. The programs of the Youth Ministry should become more interesting to attract them to the Youth Ministry. We should come up with programs that would improve people's lives.
2. There is also need for laying a good foundation for the younger generation. These younger ones need adequate sponsorship from parents and from some Church financiers.
3. There is a need for Youth empowerment programs that would help create jobs and employment opportunities for the youth. If the youth become self-supporting and they are not tied to any body's employment, they would have the time to give their best in the Youth Ministry of the Church. When onlookers discover that the Youth Ministry is tangibly benefitting virtually the young people taking part in the Ministry by helping them become gainfully employed, many more would join.
4. There should be promotions in the Church services to appeal to and encourage the youth to be part of the Youth Ministry.
5. There should be proper information, orientation, and teachings to help the onlookers come abreast with what the Youth Ministry has to offer the young people of the Church.

**Question 3.** What particular activities or programs can we introduce?

**Answer.** The answers to question 3 are summarized below:

1. Youth all night prayer meetings.
2. Youth Choral groups
3. Engaging youths as a team in evangelistic outreaches. Outreach programs of various kinds appeal to youths. Ministry groups.

4. Community services also inspire the youth.
5. They can be chosen to act as interpreters at evangelistic campaigns.
6. Make existing programs lively.
7. Engage the youths at random in the youth activities of the church and the church in general.
8. There is need to organize Bible Studies session for youths of this age group.
9. There is a great need to give the needed orientation to our parents for them to be supportive of the various ministry moves of their young ones. And play their roles as the supervisors of the children following up with church announcements and programs attended by their wards.
10. Forming drama groups.

**Findings of focus group 2: SDA Church Ovom Ama Asaa.** The findings revealed here are derived from the information given by the focus group members in the consent form. The focus group was made up of nineteen (19) young people of ages 17–35. Out of these, seven (7) had an office in the Youth Ministry Department of the Church. This amounts to approximately 37% of the group members who are active in the Youth Ministry of the Church. However, the majority were not involved and also not active in any other Church engagements, though three (3) of them indicated nominal membership in the Young Adventist Women Ministries (YAWM) of the Church.

Moreover, the records reveal that all the young people that participated in the focus group discussion were born Adventists which may be one of the factors responsible for the high percentage (37%) of the group members being active in the Youth Ministry Department of the Church. This is when compared with the previous Focus Group.

**Question 1.** It is observed that majority young people by the age of 18 upwards do not associate with the Youth Ministry Department of the Church. This is especially so when leaving the secondary school and entering into tertiary institutions.

What could be responsible for young people not identifying with the Youth Ministry of the Church at some stage in their life?

*Answer.* The answers to question one are listed below:

1. The time factor. Due to the nature of their job, they do not have the time to come for Youth Ministry activities.
2. Leadership – Many leaders lack the creativity to present programs that can appeal to youths and hold youths.
3. Many of the leaders are confused on the issue of punishment versus discipline. This punishment factor scares many young people away from the ministry. No one wants to be embarrassed, insulted or humiliated. Many of the leaders do not have a good relationship with these youths.
4. Many of them lack the foundation for this ministry from childhood as a result, they find it difficult to cope or find their footing in the ministry. This is a function of home training.
5. Many are not given the opportunity to participate in programs or activities. Some leaders or participants are recycled yearly.
6. The leaders do not get them involved because they do not have Youth uniform. As a result, the youths themselves stay away from the Youth Ministry since they would not be allowed to participate without the uniform. For some of these young people, the uniform issue is a forgotten matter. Do not even mention: if Youth Ministry means the uniform, forget it.
7. Many of the young people of this age group believe the Youth Ministry as it is now is a children affair.
8. The peer pressure influences many. When a young person begins to consider joining the Youth Ministry, he/she may be deterred by the derogatory remarks from a peer.
9. Many see themselves marking time for a long time in one place and for that reason, they tend to drop out. For example, being in Voyager class or Guide class for a long time. If they are not making progress to become Master Guides, they tend to become discouraged and drop from the Youth Ministry.
10. Certain embarrassments given to young people by some of the leaders is a factor that demoralizes these young people and gets them out of the Ministry and makes some refuse to get close and identify with the Ministry.

*Question 2.* What can be done to get these young people involved or interested in the Youth Ministry of the Church?

*Answer.* The answers to question two are listed below:

11. Get them involved in all activities of the Church especially in well-organized Youth programs, with or without uniforms.
12. There is a need for proper orientation for the youth of this age group and the entire Church about what the youth Ministry of the Church is all about.
13. There is need to bring creativity into the programs of the Youth Ministry. Share your faith and community services are programs that appeal to young people of 17-35 years of age.
14. There should be intentionality in getting associate members into the Youth Ministry. Their presence adds a spark to the atmosphere of the Church Youth programs. The associate members are the non-Adventist young people who develop an interest in the Youth Ministry of the Church and decide to associate with the Ministry.
15. Existing Youth Leaders who are Master Guides seem to shy away from the training of the younger ones either as a result of lack of interest or lack of the knowledge to impact. There is need to encourage and enlist all the Master Guides in the church.

*Question 3.* Suggest specific programs that can be run to get young people of this age on board.

*Answer.* The answers to question three are listed below:

1. Track and trail
2. Youth rally
3. Workshops/seminars for youths and the Church
4. Singing groups
5. Forming ministry bands in the Church such as literature ministry bands, prayer bands, singing bands, evangelism (door to door) bands, etc.

**Findings of focus group 3: SDA Church, Mgboko-Obete.** The findings in the preamble of this section are derived from the information given by the focus group members in their consent forms. Nine (9) young people within the age range of 17–30 participated in the focus group. Out of these nine, only one of them was in the Youth Ministry of the Church. Four of the group members were involved in other Church

ministries. Two of them were Deacons and two were Sabbath School secretaries. The record also reveals that the young people that participated are all Adventists by birth.

**Question 1.** Whereas it is observed that most youth 17–35 years of age have withdrawn from the Youth Ministry of the Church. What percentage of this age group do you see active in the Youth Ministry of the Church?

**Answer.** About 10%.

**Question 2.** Do you think there is a need for them to really be involved in the Ministry of the Church especially the Youth Ministry?

**Answer.** Yes. Why?

Because of posterity. If these youths do not get involved now, the Church would lack leaders especially for the younger ones in the future.

**Question 3.** What could be the possible reasons behind their withdrawal from the Youth Ministry of the Church especially this age group?

1. Many feel the Youth Ministry is a childish thing. So they do not want to mingle with children in this regard.
2. No early orientation in life with the Youth Ministry. The foundation was not laid on time.
3. The character of the ones presently in the ministry tends to put the prospective members off.
4. Lack of motivation from parents.
5. Lack of interest in the ministry.
6. One can be trained from childhood in the youth Ministry and still grows up to lose interest in the Ministry due to peer pressure.
7. A young person may have the interest to belong and participate in the activities of the Youth Ministry but the kind of job or employment the youth is involved in can deter the youth from participation.
8. Leaders are insensitive to complaints of the young people.

**Question 4.** What can be done to rekindle the needed interest for the Youth Ministry of the Church among the young people of this age group?

**Answer.** The responses to question four are listed below:

1. There is a need for orientation for the youths. There is a need for teachers of the young people.
2. You cannot give what you do not have. There is a need for knowledgeable leaders who can really impact the yearning heart of the youth.
3. The punishment mentality in handling perceived misconduct has scared many young people from the ministry. The one respondent who is in the youth Ministry now confessed that considering what his conception about the Ministry was with regards to the punishment he would not have rejoined. He actually came to tough it out with the leaders; “if they do me I would do them.”
4. Bringing the leadership down to the grass root to reach all the young ones would go a long way to motivate the young people at the various local Churches to be actively involved in the ministry.
5. A well-packaged program is a good motivation.
6. There is a need to de-emphasize the issue of uniform for this age group, to begin with, and focus on quality program and activities.

**Question 5.** Give me some specific programs we would need, to begin with, to get these young people on board.

**Answer.** The responses to question five are listed below:

1. Begin by gathering all the young people in the local Church within this age group and give them the appropriate orientation.
2. The parents should be called together and given similar orientation.
3. Then the entire Church should be involved.

### **Analysis of Focus Group Findings**

From the three focus groups, it can be observed that there are common denominators which cut across in the three locations. The findings reveal that less than 10% of the youth membership of any given church is really active in the Youth Ministry of that church. What could be the possible reasons behind the apathy which

exists among the young people of the age group in review (17–35) towards the Youth Ministry of the Adventist Church and what could be done to remedy the situation?

The answers include the following crucial points:

**Lack of foundation for the youth ministry from childhood.** This answer suggests that if young people are not exposed early enough to the Youth Ministry in their childhood, chances are that when they grow older, they may not have that interest in the Ministry. Also, if they knew about the Youth Ministry in their childhood and never got to join and become active in participation for whatever reason, it might lead to a familiarity that breeds contempt.

This may be due to lack of effective supervision by parents and the needed tutelage. When the young people lack this foundation, it tends to be difficult to fit into the Youth Ministry lifestyle when they grow up. This is supported by the scripture, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22: 6). This is where parents are needed as partners in progress when it comes to the Churches’ part in training the children God has given to us. Any plan for the development of the child that leaves out the parent’s contribution is incomplete and ineffective.

On this note, parents would be encouraged to take up the responsibility of sponsoring their children and youths to young people’s activities and gatherings. This helps to sustain the interest of young people in the Youth Ministry of the Church.

However, there are young people who come into the Church as converts or through family relations. These ones would have to be integrated into the Youth Ministry of the Church by some other intentional strategy.

**Time constraints due to employment.** This factor hinges on the fact that when young people get employed into corporations, they are there to earn a living.

Though they may have the desire to participate in the Youth Ministry activities of the Church, yet this desire is hindered by the workplace. Where the time for Youth activities begin to compete with the time at workplace, obviously, the youth would want to secure the job that helps him/her put food on the table.

To handle this challenge, there would be a need to orient the young people of the need to begin to think of economic independence. Entrepreneurship campaign targeted towards the youth would be in order here. If youths are empowered to own their businesses, it would go a long way to ease off this challenge of lack of time engendered by 'job enslavement.'

**The punishment versus discipline misconception.** Many of the young people stay away from the Youth Ministry because of the misrepresentation of what Youth leadership really is by many Youth leaders. Many Youth leaders see their position as a license to molest fellow youths, subjugate, humiliate, and show their positional superiority over others by how much they can punish other youths. This punishment can come in form of flogging, commanding to kneel, verbal insults, etc. Youth, especially in today's world, cannot stand this order of things. So, to avoid getting into conflict with such leaders, they just stay away.

Consequently, there is a dire need for re-orientation among Youth leaders to understand the difference between discipline which is what we uphold and stand for and punishment which is alien to the Youth Ministry. In addition, there is a need for the relationship that exists between the leader and the follower to be cordial for effective learning to take place. Leaders need to be taught how to command respect and not demand it.

Furthermore, in the leadership grooming, issues that border on creativity in programming, innovativeness, and intelligence are essential qualifications in order to

be able to lead effectively young adults. The leader should be knowledgeable in the Youth Ministry enough to be able to confidently impart knowledge and give needed direction to these senior youths. Where these are lacking, young adults would lose interest in the Youth Ministry of the Church.

Consequently, special re-orientation workshops are needed for the Youth leaders of the various Churches in order to come abreast with the technical know-how of handling the young adults in their Churches. Moreover, many of them are in the tertiary institutions or have graduated and hold university degrees and the local Church youth leader, in most cases, has not attained as much education. A special skill is needed by the Youth leader to manage this group of young people in the Church.

**Admission to higher institutions.** This much awaited and welcome development among the young people many a time has proved to be a factor that disconnects them from the Youth Ministry they have grown up to love and cherish. This is in part due to the absence of the Youth Ministry program in our public institutions. If it exists in any of the institutions attended by the young person, it is often times of a different nature compared to what was known to exist at home.

Now coming back home, either during holidays or after graduation, home Youth Ministry does appear like children affair that has lost its relevance to the young adult. On this note, Youth Ministry programs targeted at the senior youths (17–35) must be such that addresses their needs and aspirations at this stage in their life journey. Anything short of this is irrelevant.

**The uniform and non-uniform youth ministry confusion.** Most, if not all, of the Youth leaders, believe and still hold the opinion that a youth without a youth uniform should not be part of the youth ministry. Thus, when youth programs are

being done in the local church it is exclusively limited to only uniformed youth. For instance, during Youth Sabbath day only uniformed Youth members are allowed to officiate. One of the Church youth leaders during the focus group interviews was noted to comment that “it looks somehow to allow them to officiate without uniform.”

This keeps these young adults at bay, who do not know how to get integrated into the system considering the fact that they are no longer of the pathfinder age (i.e. junior youths 10 – 15), nor are they Master Guides to put on Master Guide Uniform. They are therefore left at a loss as to where they belong. When no one seems to care to answer this question of theirs satisfactorily, they withdraw.

**Lack of proper orientation.** It appears there is a general lack of proper orientation for all young people home and abroad as to what the Youth Ministry package for the local church is really all about. That is the reason that the Church leadership downplay the Youth Ministry agenda of the Church; the Young adults see Youth Ministry as a Children’s Ministry; Church Youth leaders exclude the non-uniform youths from their Youth list, and the non-uniformed youths feel unwelcome into the midst of the uniformed youths.

There is the need for a massive orientation campaign on Youth Ministry of the Church. This orientation would be given to the Church at large, to the Young people in focus (senior youths or young adults), and the Church Youth Leaders. This orientation would cover several areas of the Youth Ministry as it affects each of the groups to be addressed.

**Lack of interest or commitment.** It was noted that while some may have a good upbringing with regards to the Youth Ministry of the Church, they could grow up to detest the Ministry. This might be due to spiritual backsliding occasioned by

peer pressure and environmental influences which the youth finds difficult to handle either at school or workplace.

This situation requires a spiritual revival that presents the gospel in its beauty. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3: 16). Jesus says I gave you my all when I gave my life for you on the cross, what have you done for me. The powerful appeal of the gospel can restore the backslidden.

**Lack of interesting programs.** It is because, in the various programs organized by the Youth Ministry Department of the Church, the needs of the senior youths are not put into consideration that we find them missing in action. Interesting programs to senior youths should include programs that border on, relationships, career life or economic independence, and of course, fulfilling service to God which hinges on the discovery and use of their spiritual gifts effectively for the glory of God and a blessing to humanity. For young adults, any program that does not address one or two of these issues is not interesting. When church youth ministry programs repeatedly omit these areas of interest, the young adults tune off.

Consequently, experts in these various areas of young adult’s interest should be invited regularly to our Churches’ Youth Ministry programs to re-awaken the interest of the young adults in the Youth Ministry of the Church. To take it further, missionary activities are of major interest to senior youths. To understand the reason, knowledge of the Youth Ministry Department of the SDA Church in relation to mission is expedient.

In summary, the analysis of the focus group interviews reveals the reasons behind the apathy of the young adults towards the Youth Ministry of the Church. Some of the factors include: Lack of Foundation for the Youth Ministry from

Childhood; Time Constraints due to Employment; The Punishment versus Discipline Misconception which includes the lack of proper grooming of the Youth leadership; Admission to Higher Institution; Lack of Interesting Programs; The Uniform and Non-Uniform Youth Ministry Confusion; Lack of Proper Orientation; and Lack of Interest or Commitment.

Consequently, any program to be developed to curb the apathy of the young adults towards the Youth Ministry of the Church and thereby mobilize them for effective service for their salvation and the salvation of others must seek to address these reasons and issues raised by the responses of the focus groups.

### **Program Development**

To develop a program to deal with the challenge of apathy of the young adult towards the Youth Ministry Department of the Church, certain considerations should be made. These include cost effectiveness, relevance to the factors causing the apathy as enumerated above, and reproducibility from church to church. It should be noted that a viable mission strategy must be able to reproduce itself.<sup>7</sup> In other words, if it is church planting, it must be able to reproduce other churches at the long run. If not, the mission has not been successful. If it is a strategy to mobilize the youth for mission, the strategy in place must keep mobilizing the youth in the larger circles long time after the missionary is gone.

Strategy is the picture of a future orientation after having considered what is in the past, and in the present and the plan for the process.<sup>8</sup> This section of the chapter

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<sup>7</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2010), 376.

<sup>8</sup> J. D. Payne and John Mark Terry, *Developing a Strategy for Missions (Encountering Mission): A Biblical, Historical, and Cultural Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 1–5.

seeks to develop a program intervention that would be used to effectively mobilize the youth (young adults) in Hilltop Church for effective participation in the Youth Ministry program of the Church. This would be conducted in two stages.

The first stage of the program design would use orientation seminars for three categories of people of significance to the mobilization of young adults for mission. These people include the Church Youth leaders, the Church in session, and the young adults. The second stage would be to involve the young adults in planning the work for the Senior Youth Ministry of the church; administering spiritual gift inventory; analyzing the inventory; forming ministry bands because of the inventory analysis, and training the various bands in their ministry areas.

However, before going into the intervention proper, a brief knowledge about the youth ministry department of SDA Church as it relates to the mission of the SDA Church is expedient here.

### **The Youth Ministry Department of SDA Church and Mission**

The mission of the Youth Ministry Department of the SDA Church is revealed in the aim of the organization: “The Advent message to all the world in my generation.” This aim is based on one of the signs and conditions of His second coming found in Matthew 24: 14, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come, NKJV). Again, this mission focus is also reflected in the Senior Youth pledge which says, “Loving the Lord Jesus, I promise to take an active part in the work of the Adventist Youth Ministry. Doing what I can to help others and to finish the work of the gospel in all the world.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has the duty of reaching the whole world with the Three Angels Messages (found in Rev 14: 6-12) before the second coming of Jesus. This is the gospel that constitutes the gospel of the kingdom. It is this same mission that the Youth Ministries Department exists to fulfill.

**Youth ministries department strategy to fulfill the mission.** The Youth Ministries Department developed a strategy that would enable her to fulfill her mission because the main focus for the establishment of this organization is mission. It was mission that motivated Luther Warren and Harry Ferner. Coming through the developmental stages of the ministry, the ministry grew to have four distinct levels to cater for the needs of the various age groups of the Youth Ministry. The chart below summarizes the various levels, the age groups, and the curriculum requirements.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Youth Ministries Department, *AYM Curriculum* (Abidjan, Cote d` Ivoire: WAD, 2011).

Table 3. Adventist Youth Ministries Curriculum Track

Junior Youth		Senior Youth		
ADVENTURER CLUB (6-9 YRS)	PATHFINDER CLUB (10-15)		AMBASSADOR CLUB (16-21 YRS)	ADVENTIST YOUTH SOCIETY (22-35 YRS)
	JUNIOR CLUB (10-12 YRS)	TEEN CLUB (13-15 YRS)		
Basic Requirements		General Requirements		
My God	Bible Study	Spiritual Discovery	Spiritual Development	You and God
My Self	Health and Fitness	Personal Growth	Character and Personality Development	
		Outdoor Living	Life Enrichment Development	
	Camping and Survival Skill	Health and Fitness	Lifestyle Vocational Career Development	Friendship Skills Development
My Family	Church Heritage	Historical Perspective	Leadership Development	You and Youth
		Church Life		You and Church
My World	Nature Study	Community Outreach		You and the Community
	Serving Others			

Source: WAD Youth Ministries Department of SDA Church

The above curriculum is strategically planned to engage the youth at all levels to fulfill the mission of the Church. The pre-Junior Youth which is the Adventurers (6-9 years) is the age of nurture. These little ones are to be taught about God, their selves, their family and their world. This learning is supposed to take place at home first using the *shema* module by Soodong Choi found in Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7 (see

pages 74 and 75). This is an informal setting. This is where real mentoring ought to take place.

This learning would also take place in the Church Sabbath School setting. The Church setting is a semi-formal setting in the sense that it is classroom like, though no exams are taken at the end of the day. Then the conventional school setting is supposed to reinforce the previous two forms of learning. The Adventurers level (ages 6-9) has four class levels that are used to discuss the curriculum. These classes are structured according to the ages of the children. The materials for each class are prepared considering what can be assimilated by each age group.

From the Adventurers, the next stage is the Pathfinders. These are youths within ages 10 -15. Their curriculum expands on what the Adventurers must have learned at their level. The Pathfinder club is further sub-divided into two namely Junior and Teen clubs.

For the Junior Club (10-12), under My God, they are introduced to simple Bible studies at their level. Under Myself, they are exposed to how to live a healthy life and be fit. The anatomy and physiology are explained to them in simple terms. Camping and survival skills are introduced here. In delivering the module for My Family, primary lessons on home life is discussed with the youth and the Church family is introduced to the child. Then under My World, nature study is introduced. The Youth is led to see the Creative power of God in nature. Then the Youth is given orientation in service, i.e. how to serve others selflessly.

For the teen club (13-15), in their knowledge of God begins the journey on the path towards spiritual discovery. Through this discovery personal spiritual growth is envisaged. This growth is in the area of personal devotional life primarily and then physical fitness. Survival skills that would enable the Youth to survive outdoors are

being mastered at this stage. That is why some of the programs organized for them in this stage include hiking, and track and trail. In handling the module under My Family, the story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from a historical perspective would be rehearsed. The local church family is also described. Under the topic My World, the youth is introduced to community outreach. This involves different ways of witnessing the love of Jesus in the neighborhood.

At this point, it is expected that the youth who grew up in the Church with the privilege of being involved in the Youth Ministry activities that afford the benefits just described is ready for mission involvement. The classes during the developmental years are meant to be a training school to prepare the youth for involvement in active mission.

At the Senior Youth Level, it goes beyond the discovery of spiritual gifts to emphasize spiritual development. The Ambassadors are expected to develop their spiritual gifts at this stage. This would involve putting to use their spiritual gifts in mission. At the same time, character and personality development are envisaged. The youth at this stage is expected to develop a lifestyle vocational career to ensure a self-support system when engaged in mission. Friendship skills are developed at this stage. With regards to the church family, the youth is being groomed to occupy leadership positions in the church. At this stage, there is a commitment to reaching the community with the good news through the various spiritual gifts discovered.

Under the senior youth ministry, it is expected that the Youth has developed sufficient skills necessary to embark on mission with little supervision. The young adults organize themselves into ministry bands through which mission are accomplished. Such bands include sunshine bands (evangelism), literature bands, visitation bands, singing bands, prayer bands, welfare bands, health and wellness

bands, etc. At this stage, the youth establishes a firm relationship between himself and God, the Youth Ministry Department of the church as a leader of the junior youth. The youth has established his place in the church which is the body of Christ and the community.

**The present situation.** The Seventh-day Adventist Young People's Society of Missionary Volunteers was organized after the above order. The young adults were organized to minister in bands. And it was in these bands that the youth of ages 16-35 found the space and opportunity to do active missionary endeavors. However, this missionary characteristic in various ministry bands of the senior youths was neglected, lost sight of, and altogether stopped as far as Aba East Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned. This left the senior youths with little or nothing to do as it concerns the Youth Ministry Department of their various churches.

This accounts for one of the reasons among others for the apathy of the senior youths in the church towards the Youth Ministry Department of the Church. The chart above designed by the West-Central Africa Division Youth Department is a ploy to get back to the mission focus program of the senior youth of the Church using ministry bands. This has not been easy to achieve. It is this gap in the Youth Ministry Department of the Church that has contributed to the apathy of the Young people towards the AYM Department of the Church that the following program intervention seeks to bridge.

### **Orientation Seminars**

**Seminar for all church youth leaders.** Friday, May 27, 2016: The three major tasks of mission include, planting new churches, nurturing new Christians and training leaders. Christian leaders are servants (Mark 10: 45), shepherds (Isa 40: 11)

and stewards (1 Tim 6: 20).<sup>10</sup> These are also the major tasks of any youth work.

Organize youth group, nurture the group and then train leaders. The training of the leaders is so pertinent as to ensure reproducibility of the three major tasks in the absence of the missionary.

The Youth leaders of the pilot Church (Hilltop) would be invited to a seminar session at the church. This session with the Youth leaders would be the most intensive of the three sessions. This is because these are the ones to replicate this program in other churches and see to it that it is sustained.

**Seminar for the entire church membership.** Sabbath, May 28, 2016: This orientation seminar for the Church is meant to take place in any approved full gathering of the church. This would be the opportunity to address the parents on the need to begin early with the Children and the need to support the young adults in their present plights.

**Seminar for all senior youths or young adults 17 – 35.** This was tagged “Senior Youths Forum.” The date for this was Sunday, May 29, 2016. This would take place in a local Church. For this reason, SDA Church, Hilltop has been chosen as the pilot Church for this. This is the session meant to address the young adults themselves and hear from them.

### **Objectives and Expected Outcomes of the Seminars**

The objectives and the expected outcome for each of the seminar sessions are discussed in this section of the chapter.

**The objective of the seminar session for youth leaders.** The objectives of this seminar are listed below:

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<sup>10</sup> Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies: Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 147–165.

1. To awaken the leaders' need, to seek after holiness and righteousness as the primary qualification for being a spiritual leader of the young people.
2. To get the Youth leaders in the local Church to know what it takes to lead young adults effectively in the local church. Make them knowledgeable.
3. To correct certain wrong impressions and misconceptions about the Ministry that must have been held over the years.
4. To equip the leaders with the technical know-how of handling young adults in the local churches.

**Expected outcome.** The expected outcomes are listed below:

5. Participants will show evidence of having understood the dynamics of Youth Ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church vis-à-vis running the young adult ministry. They would also possess sound knowledge of the place of the Youth Ministry in the mission of the SDA Church.
6. Participants would Show evidence of a better understanding of the place of Youth uniform in the Youth Ministry of the Church. They would be able to properly differentiate the difference between punishment and discipline and to apply discipline confidently and effectively as they lead the youth.
7. Participants would be equipped with the needed resource materials for effective leadership of the senior youth/ young adult ministry in the local church such as the spiritual gift inventory and its usage.
8. Participants will experience a deepened relationship with God and continue to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

**Objectives of the entire church seminar session.**

The objectives of the seminar session held for the entire church are listed below:

1. To give the Church at large, which includes the parents of these youths, good orientation of what the Youth Ministry of the Church is really all about and its relevance to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Hilltop.
2. To give the Church leaders the opportunity to ask necessary questions bugging their minds about the Youth Ministry long unspoken. Thereby their minds would be prepared to welcome upcoming programs as organized by the young adult ministry of the Church.
3. To gain the support of the Church in carrying out the Young adults' ministry via the Youth Ministry of the Church. Without such understanding, the later might be viewed to be in competition with the former.

4. To recruit more adult volunteer sponsors for the Youth Ministry of the Church.

**Expected outcome.** The expected outcomes of the seminar session for the entire church are listed below:

1. The entire Church would be waiting and expectant of the Youth Ministry programs that would follow.
2. More volunteer sponsors for the Youth would be obtained from the membership of the Church.
3. A greater percentage of parents would become glad to sponsor their wards to Youth Ministry programs.
4. The Church administration would become intentionally strategic in doing Youth Ministry in the Church.

**Objectives of the young adults' seminar session.** The objectives of the young adults' seminar session are listed below:

1. To get the youth understand their place in God's ministry plan of His Church.
2. To awaken the Youth to take their rightful place (at the battle front) in the Great Commission of Matt 28: 18-20 given to the Church. By this, more young adults would be mobilized for efficient and effective service for God and humanity in fulfilling the Great Commission.
3. To equip the youth in handling the day to day exigencies of life to bring glory to God.
4. This seminar would equip the youth with the skill to sustain a saving relationship with Christ; learn how to relate decently with a prospective future life partner, and learn the secrets of economic independence/entrepreneurship.

**Expected outcomes.** The expected outcomes of the young adults' seminar are listed below:

1. The youth would fully understand their role in God's ministry plan for His Church and awaken with an urgency that senses a need to begin to do something now.
2. The youth would become competent through the study of God's Word in handling life's exigencies as a stranger in this world in the light of the Great Controversy.
3. The youth would be equipped with the skill to sustain a saving relationship with Christ; resolved to maintain only decent relationships with the opposite sex, and be willing to strive for economic independence by learning entrepreneurial skills.

4. To have more young adults enrolled into the Adventist Youth Ministries of SDA Church Hilltop.

### **Outlines of the Lectures**

**Outline of lectures for youth leaders' session.** The outline of the youth leaders' session is listed below:

*Biblical and spirit of prophecy background for doing youth ministry.* This course exposes the youth leader to the biblical reason for doing Youth Ministry in the Church. It restores the confidence in the leader that what he does is authentic ministry.

*Brief historical background of the youth work—secular and church.* This course highlights the youth ministry then and now. It brings to the fore, the main objectives for beginning a Youth Ministry in the Church. This course challenges the leader to evaluate the present Youth Ministry to see if the vision is still aflame. This course also highlights some of the practices that were picked up from the secular Youth Work that existed before the Church Youth Work started. Leaders would be challenged to reevaluate their essence in the Church Youth Work.

*The levels of the youth ministry, membership, classes and uniform issues.* This course brings to the fore the various age groups in the Youth Ministry and the Church's program to cater for the various age groups of the Youth. It would be discovered that the church has really treated the senior Youths/young adults with passive abandon. It would be revealed how the ministry bands meant for the senior youth (AYS) have been lost sight of and therefore not operative. It would be clear that the issue of uniform concerns basically the Adventurers and the Pathfinders. The senior youths who eventually strive to become Master Guides also have their uniforms. In this case, stressing on the uniform for these young adults appears out of place.

*The youth ministry department of SDA Church and mission.* (Use the material on pages 117-121 of this research work).

*The young adult/senior youth curriculum— a proposal.* This course would demonstrate that the curriculum for these young adults and their mode of operation should center around: Service to God (evangelism) and Service to Humanity (Community service) (Josh 24: 15); Empowerment/entrepreneurship (Eccl 9: 10); and Premarital and marital counseling (1 Cor 10: 31).

*Discipline in youth ministry.* The term “discipline” would be well defined. The difference between discipline and punishment would be made plain in this course. The discipline which is encouraged in the Scriptures and ensuring the holistic development of a person would be recommended as a way of life for the ministry.

*Developing leaders (2 Tim 2: 2). Qualification of a youth leader.* This course shows that the basic qualification for being an effective youth leader is spiritual. The leader must possess the fruits of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that make leadership effective.

*Responsibilities of a youth leader.* The Youth leader has specific roles to play in the Church and among the young people to be an effective leader.

**Outline of lectures for the entire church membership orientation.** The lectures for the entire church membership are outlined below.

*The youth and the church.* The Church would be made to understand that the Youth (6 – 35) are an integral part of the Church and a most important part of the church family.

*Youth ministry and church growth.* The Church would be shown how an effective young adult ministry in the Church would bring about Church growth naturally.

***Parent's commitment and role.*** Parents would be challenged to lend their unflinching support to the course of these young members of God's Church family.

***Appeal for volunteer youth sponsors.*** Older members of the Church family who may have or may not have children in this age group would be requested to act as sponsors to the various programs of the young adult's ministry.

***Outline of the lectures for the young adults' seminar session.*** The outline of the lectures of the young adults' seminar session is given below.

***Your place in God's vineyard.*** The young people would be made to see that, in God's ministry plan, they have a role to play and how God expects them to play that role. It would also be made clear that refusal to stand up to responsibility can cost one eternal life since there is no place for spectator Christian among Christ's followers.

***You and the church youth ministry.*** This course introduces to the youth the opportunities that being in the Youth Ministry of the Church affords. If the structure that ensures effective participation of the young adults in the Youth Ministry of the Church is not in place, we need to put it in place. That is the essence of this course. It allows participants to come up with ideas of ministry plan.

***The Adventist youth in the world.*** This course helps the young adult to learn the skill for managing the societal pressures on the young people so as to avoid fatal compromises. The pressures of get-rich-quick; popularity; illicit relationships; materialism; addiction; and religious instability, politics, etc. shall be discussed so as to empower the youth for victory and service.

***The significance of the youth ministry in your life. Relationship with God.*** The Youth would be taught how to maintain a saving relationship with God and be engaged in mission.

*Future life partner.* The youth would be taught how to relate safely with the member of the opposite sex until marriage is consummated.

*Life career/livelihood.* The youth would be taught how to create a means of livelihood, make a regular source of income, manage money and invest in the kingdom of God.

***The youth ministry department of SDA Church and mission.*** (Use the material on pages 117-121 of this research work).

### **Participation Stage**

This stage would have initial and on-going participation activities. In the initial stage, the young adults would be gathered together after one week of the orientation seminars to participate in drawing the plan of work for the senior youth/young adults' ministry of the church. The volunteer sponsors would be invited to be part of this meeting so as to begin to appreciate the ministry challenge ahead. The agenda of the meeting would include; electing the leaders for the new ministry; agree on a day in the week for weekly meetings considering already existing statutory meetings; give ideas for monthly features in church, quarterly ministry programs; and yearly ministry programs which would include conventions and public evangelistic campaigns where they would be both the planners and the speakers.

At the next meeting in the on-going participation activity, a spiritual gift inventory would be administered. It would be analyzed. With the result of the spiritual gift inventory analysis, ministry bands would be formed. Orientation seminars would be scheduled for the various ministry bands after which they would be dedicated before beginning their ministries.

The researcher believes that these orientation seminars would revive the Church including parents to her responsibility towards her youth. It would wake up

youth leaders to see and understand the magnitude of the responsibility that rests on their shoulders in the mentoring of the younger generation. Finally, it would arouse the youth to the realization of what they ought to have been doing which is not being done. This would eventually challenge the young people to dare to have something in life to live for and be ready to die for which is the role of the participation stage. The Youth Ministry Department of the Church would hereby be on her way back to life.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of the research process are listed below:

1. Doing this research in the church where the researcher is pastoring even though it would make for effective monitoring for this pilot program might influence the results.
2. The first set of leaders for proper orientation about the Senior Youth Ministry would be trained in this program. This lays the burden of all the training sessions on the researcher alone.
3. The researcher would have preferred starting the project work with the envisioned curriculum for the senior youths in hand; and an already trained team. However, this would not be possible due to the official process it should go through before its publication and time constraint.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION NARRATIVE

The chapter is a narration of the intervention implementation based on the program design discussed in the previous chapter. The story of how the program was implemented would be told and its results would be evaluated. Some factors affecting the results of the program implementation would also be highlighted.

Following the approved budget for the project work, some preparations were made. These preparations include: Giving money to the head deaconess of the church to prepare lunch for the various sessions. The seminar materials were printed and photocopied. Evaluation instruments were provided for in the preparations.

The program took place at Seventh-day Adventist Church, Hilltop only. The reason is for close and effective monitoring, project time management, coupled with the fact that *ab initio* in the dissertation process it was proposed that one church would be used as a pilot for the implementation of the intervention strategy.

A letter was written to the administration of Aba East Conference for permission to implement the intervention program. In the reply, the administration gave a letter of approval.

#### **Orientation Seminars Presentation**

These orientation seminars were planned to hold for three days: For church youth leaders on Friday, for the entire church during Sabbath worship time and for the young adults on Sunday from 8 am – 1 pm. However, the session for the youth leaders concluded on Sabbath afternoon and exams were taken on Sunday morning.

## **Orientation Seminars for the Church Youth Leaders**

Announcement for the session with the Youth Leaders was made two weeks before the meeting day. The meeting began on Friday evening May 27, 2016, and was concluded immediately Sabbath afternoon after service May 28, 2016. Six lectures were delivered to the Youth leaders. Each participant received a copy of the lectures. Ten (10) of Youth leaders were present. The six lectures include:

1. Youth Mobilization in the Scriptures
2. Historical Development of Youth Ministry
3. Youth Ministry Levels/Classes Breakdown
4. The Youth Ministry Department of SDA Church and Mission
5. Senior Youth Curriculum: Proposed
6. Study on Discipline
7. A Biblical Theology of Leadership

At the end of these presentations, a comprehensive exam was given to the participants to ascertain how well they understood the given materials.

## **Orientation for the Entire Church**

The orientation seminar for the entire church was meant to inform the Church about what the Youth Ministry department of the Church stands for and consequently appeal for youth sponsors who would key into the vision of the Youth Ministry Department of the Church. This was conducted on Sabbath May 28, 2016. The message was given and an appeal was made. Seven adults indicated interest through a membership paper slip to serve as volunteer sponsors in the Youth Ministries Department of the Church. Following this response, the sponsors were invited to be part of the young adult's session the following day.

### **Orientation for the Senior Youths (17–35)**

The Young Adult's session, tagged "Senior Youth Forum" was conducted on Sunday, May 29, 2016. It was attended by about forty (40) young adults. The session began with a song service led by a volunteer young adult and a devotional by the assisting minister, Pastor Chiemela Nelson. The devotional highlighted the need for the young people to see themselves as lights meant to shine in the darkness of this world. There was an interlude of hymn-singing and prayer.

Four major lectures prepared for the sensitization of the young adults towards the Youth Ministry Department of the Church were delivered. The lectures include:

1. Adventist Youth in the World
2. Your Place in God's vineyard
3. Your Place in the Youth Ministry
4. The significance of your membership in the Youth Ministry Department; Choosing whom to Serve; The essence of choosing Jesus; Choosing whom to marry; Relationship Matters; and Choosing what to do – Earning a living
5. The Youth Ministry Department of SDA Church and Mission.

A session of prayer was conducted at the end of the third presentation. This prayer session was conducted in groups of threes. Questions and contributions were entertained. At the end of all the presentations, appeal for membership was made to do mission through the Adventist Youth Ministry Department of the Church. Thirty-five (35) young adults filled the membership card to identify with the Youth Ministry of the Church out of the forty present.

This session was ended with prayer and lunch for all who attended. The understanding at the end of the session was to look forward to a follow-up meeting soon for the planning of senior youth activities for Seventh-day Adventist Church Hilltop.

## **Analysis of Orientation Seminars and Presentation**

The orientation seminars had intended objectives. This section discusses to what extent the objectives were achieved.

### **Orientation Seminar for Youth Leaders**

The first lecture on ideals of youth ministry in the Bible aimed at re-instilling confidence in the youth leaders, helping them realize that they have made an excellent decision by joining the Youth Ministry Department. This established the fact that doing youth ministry is biblical.

The second lecture on the historical development of the youth work exposed the youth leaders to the fact that youth work has been in existence among non-Adventists before the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863 and the organization of the Youth Ministry Department in 1901. They realized some of the current practices in the Youth Ministry that were borrowed from what had been in existence before the organization of the Adventist Youth work. The youth leaders learned how to put such practices in perspective. Examples of such practices include the club system of the pathfinders that was established by Arthur Sweatman in 1863. Another is the characteristic military drills, uniforms, and discipline borrowed from the Boy's Brigade established by William Alexander Smith in 1883.

The third lecture on Youth Ministry levels helped to bring to the fore, the challenge of negligence towards young adults' ministry in our local churches. Whereas there exists curriculum for the Adventurer and Pathfinder levels of the ministry, there appears to be none provided for the senior youths/young adults. They are the non-uniform section of the Youth Ministry. The questions arose: "what should be done?" and "how do we begin?"

These questions logically introduced the next lecture on Senior Youth Curriculum. The three focal areas were discussed in brief: Worship, Relationship, and Career. The rationale behind making these three areas the focus, though not limited to these areas, was understood.

The fifth lecture on discipline challenged the status quo being practiced by the youth leaders as they relate with the junior youths. Leaders understood the difference between discipline and punishment.

Finally, the lecture on leadership discussed spiritual leadership as a leadership directed by the Holy Spirit. It was made clear that when leadership is directed by the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the spirit would be evident in the leader. The leader would possess the spiritual gifts associated with leadership. In addition, the leader would seek to be guided by the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy writings, church manual, and other policy books of the Church and the Youth Ministry Department.

The comprehensive exam conducted covered all the materials discussed. Out of the ten that attended, only seven of them took the exam. Out of the seven that took the exam, only four had a score above average.

### **Orientation Seminar for the Entire Church**

This was conducted during church service on Sabbath, between Sabbath School and divine service. There were about six hundred (600) members in attendance. The presentation titled: "Passing on the Touch," discussed how youths are an integral part of church life and how well trained youths can impart church growth positively. The presentation emphasized the need for the church to intentionally invest in the training and empowering of her youth, for the sake of her mission and its sustainability.

Appeals were made at the end for volunteer sponsors of the Youth Ministry Department programs. Seven working class adult members of the church responded. A slip of paper was given to each to write their names and phone numbers. This was done and returned to the deacons for collection. Another name came later after we had left the platform and from all indications, more sponsors would join.

### **Orientation Seminars for the Senior Youths (17–35 Years)**

In attendance were about forty (40) young adults, the Church Children's Ministries coordinator who is a parent, the head elder and his wife. The session was started with a devotional which introduced the first lecture titled: "The Adventist Youth in the World." Young people came to understand that they are strangers in the world. Though in the world, we are not of the world (John 17: 6-11). Youths are faced with pressures such as "make it quick syndrome," worldliness, and pleasure. The Bible gives answers and antidote to all these pressures.

The second lecture, "Your Place in God's Vineyard" revealed God's intention to engage every young person in mission following the examples of Jeremiah and Timothy.

The third lecture was: "The place of the Senior Youths or young adults in the Youth Ministry Department of the Church." They are supposed to be at the forefront of mission and be tutors to the junior youths coming after them. This is the time for them to take up their place in God's order of things in His church.

The fourth lecture gives a bird's eye view of the three major areas the Senior Youth curriculum should be centered as suggested by the researcher. These areas include Spiritual foundation for academic and professional excellence; dating, courtship and marriage, and empowering for mission/entrepreneurship. These would

be discussed in details as the second stage of the intervention program becomes operative.

This orientation seminar yielded the commitment of thirty-five (35) new young adults for the Youth Ministry Department through the filling of commitment cards; in addition to the previous fourteen (14) already on the enrollment. Table 4 below shows a clear picture of what the increased enrollments into the Senior Youth class, after the orientation seminars is.

*Table 4. Impact of Orientation Seminar on Youth Enrollment at Hilltop Church*

Sabbath School Membership	Baptized Membership	Youths 17-35 yrs	Active Youths (17-35 years) Before Intervention	Active Youths (17-35) After Intervention
1,023	766	408	14	49

Note: The number 49 is the number of the current enrolled or active Senior Youths in the Church.

### **Evaluation of the Orientation Seminars**

Using the SWOT analysis, the orientation seminars are evaluated in this section. This evaluation is to ascertain the strength, weakness, opportunities, and the threats encountered in the course of implementing this program intervention. This evaluation was done by the researcher.

#### **Strengths**

1. The leadership of the local church Youth Ministry Department was benefitted by the lectures. The youth leaders felt more confident and gladdened by the fact that their pastor had such interest in what they are doing enough to call for such seminars. This was reflected in the prayer of one of the leaders – “thank you, father, for inspiring our pastor to think about us.” The class interactions and the written exams reveal they have been impacted. From the four that scored above

average, it shows they have learned a lot of new things that would help them improve their ministry in the Youth Department.

2. The church was enlightened about the importance and role of the Youth Ministry Department in the church ministry structure. The seven volunteer sponsors is an indication of this. This is what reveals that the orientation seminar was worthwhile.
3. After the lectures and prayer sessions, the young adults eagerly filled the membership cards following the appeal that was made. This indicates that they have been waiting to be introduced to an organization for mission for a long time. Of great interest was the lecture highlight on entrepreneurship. If mission is to be accomplished by these young adults, they must strive towards economic independence. They look forward to being thus empowered for mission.

### **Weaknesses**

1. The time schedule for the session was not respected by the participants. That caused the leader's session to be extended to Sabbath afternoon. As a result, it appeared as if too many materials than they had time to digest, were given out to these leaders at the same time.
2. The written exam was not sufficient in evaluating the impact of the sessions on the Youth leaders. Some could not express themselves on paper as they could have done verbally or through activities.
3. In the orientation seminar for the parents and entire church, there was no room for questions and answers or interactions. These would have been very useful in the process of mobilizing the entire church to invest more in the Youth Ministry Department of the church.
4. For the young adult's session, the number of youths that attended grossly misrepresents the population of youths that make up the church. Out of a youth membership of 408, only 40 were in attendance. This, however, reveals the prevalent apathy towards the Youth Ministry Department of the Church.
5. The expected outcome of this project work is to record 60 – 80% of the young adults of the church enrolled into active participation in the Youth Ministries activities. But the outcome is a far cry from the expectation. However, considering the fact that 35 out of the 40 that were present enrolled to be active members, it shows that if more young adults were present, more would have enrolled. Thirty-five out of forty that attended is about 85%.

### **Opportunities**

1. With the cream of enlightened leaders, if well trained, the young adult ministry would not only blossom, the Youth Ministry Department would be revived.
2. Among the members, more volunteer sponsors are likely to sign up as the promotions are done repeatedly.

3. Considering the interest exhibited by the young adult participants in the senior youth forum, if well organized, workers for the waiting harvest are ready to be sent. Indeed “with such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come, the end of suffering and sorrow and sin.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Threats**

1. There is the threat of leadership change at the turn of the year especially if the researcher is posted out of this present church or district. For sustainability of this project, there is a need for leadership continuity at least for the next two years.
2. Indecency in the morals of the leaders can be a threat to the advancement of the young adult ministry of the church devolving into a social club or meeting of young people is a threat to watch out for.

### **Participation Stage Report**

This section reports the participation stage of the program intervention. This is the stage where the young adults were given the opportunity to take decisions on their own that affect church ministry in which they would spearhead. In this stage, there are the initial participation and the on-going participation that goes beyond the time limits of this dissertation writing.

### **Initial Participation**

One week after the orientation seminars, the senior youths who registered/enrolled were invited for a meeting. This meeting was held on Sunday, June 5 at 4 pm. In that meeting, the leader, the assistant leader and a secretary of the young adult ministry were chosen. The process used was the Adventist Church election procedure.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1930), 196.

<sup>2</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Church, *Church Manual*, 18th ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010), 106–111, accessed March 14, 2017, <http://www.adventistbookcenter.com/seventh-day-adventist-church-manual-18th-edition-ebook.html>.

After the leaders emerged, decisions were taken with regards to weekly meetings, and the monthly, quarterly and yearly special programs. These meetings shall be on-going and continuous. These decisions were collectively taken by the seventeen (17) young adults in attendance chaired by the Church youth leader.

### **On-Going Participation**

These are activities for the senior youths which are hoped would be continuous after this project work. It would be evaluated regularly to ascertain the successes and failings of this intervention.

**Weekly meetings.** It was agreed that the weekly meeting period for the young adults/senior youths of the church shall be Thursdays from 3.30pm. This weekly meeting time would be a Bible study class for the youths to deal with several contemporary issues in the light of scripture. Subjects to be covered include Doctrinal beliefs, spiritual gifts discovery, work/business/entrepreneurship in relation to the Bible, relationships, health, leadership (for both church and junior youth). In addition to this indoor Bible class for study, outdoor Bible studies in a small group setting would be organized in different strategic locations in collaboration with the church's personal ministry leader.

**Spiritual gift inventory administration.** A week after the initial participation meeting, the senior youths are called together again to take a spiritual gift inventory exercise. The inventory is collated and analyzed. Ministry bands are formed from the inventory analysis. Training is giving to each band according to their ministry areas.

**Monthly special features.** This special feature would be each third Sabbath of the month during Sabbath School or Sabbath sundown service or both. The whole church will be invited to be blessed by the ministry of the young people. The young adults decide what kind of program is suitable through the monthly youth council.

**Quarterly programs.** This quarterly program could feature community outreach such as door to door evangelism weekend, community service, or health clinics. These quarterly programs are meant to keep-in-touch with the neighborhood so that they would feel the impact of the Church's presence.

**Yearly programs.** These programs would come in form of senior youth conventions and public evangelistic campaigns. These could be held together or in an alternate manner. If held together with the youths' camp in a place while at the same time having night evangelistic meetings. This would afford the opportunity for hands training of the young adults in evangelism and would bring souls into the church.

Eventually, this program schedule would be presented to the church board for ratification. This is to make it an integral part of the church program. When thus voted, under the auspices of the Youth Ministry Department, then all these programs can take off in earnest.

### **Evaluating the Initial Participation Stage**

This section evaluates only the initial participation stage. As time goes on, the on-going participation would be evaluated on a quarterly basis to ascertain the impact of this intervention on the mobilization of many more young adults for mission through the Youth Ministry Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Hilltop.

#### **Strengths**

1. Having been informed of the agenda of the meeting beforehand, the attendance to this session was with greater enthusiasm. This is because; young people love to be where they can participate freely in what goes on.
2. Because the leaders were selected by them, it is most likely that there would be a high level of cooperation given to these leaders.
3. The decision to meet every week was unanimous and this would make attendance easier. It was their agreement.

4. Everyone would be eager to ensure the success of the ministry programs since they were part of the decision process from the beginning.

### **Weaknesses**

1. Left without guidance, they may choose leaders by other standards that are not biblical.
2. Since the number of young adults gathered to take these decisions was few compared to the young adults in the church, it might not represent the voice of the senior youths of the church especially when more of them begin to join.

### **Opportunities**

1. Left to organize programs and execute, these young adults are able with little guidance.
2. Once they get to know what to do, the work would be done. They possess the needed zeal and vigor.
3. As the membership increases, there would be a constant need of meetings to review the decisions earlier made to represent the voice of the majority.

### **Threats**

1. Church administrative protocols can pose a threat to the actualization of this program intervention especially as it would be proposed as an integral part of the church life.
2. An unsuccessful outing at the initial stage could kill the zeal of the members or prospective members. Hence the need to spend quality and quantity time indoors during the weekly meetings planning and preparing.
3. Trying to replicate this intervention in the village setting might meet the challenge of illiteracy. In this case, a more proactive strategy would be developed to ascertain its success in that setting.

In summary, the activities in this stage would be on-going. Quarterly evaluations would be conducted to ascertain the number of accessions into the senior youth/adult ministry of the church and the consequent engagement in mission due to this intervention.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### **Summary**

From the Biblical perspective, youths need to be given special attention. This was the reason Jesus rebuked the disciples who tried to prevent the mothers from bringing their children to Jesus. “And said let the little children come to me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Mark 10: 13).

A special ministry is expedient for the youth. This is because they have special challenges. They have peculiar needs and challenges adults may not have. Only a ministry targeted towards the youths can come close enough to help them through those challenges. They go through the challenge of an identity crisis, pressures to make it in life, relationship matters, and career choice confusion.

Furthermore, God needs the vigor and zeal of the youth in order to fulfill mission. Worth repeating is this quote by Ellen White:

In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with a clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men.<sup>1</sup>

The youths being referred to, in the context of this research work, fall between the ages 17-35. They are full of youthful vigor. Whatever they are convinced about

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<sup>1</sup> White, *Gospel Workers*, 67.

and they decide to do, they do it with enthusiasm. This is the kind of spirit needed in order to finish the work and Christ would come and take His people home.

Furthermore, from the various literature reviewed, it is obvious that effective youth ministry models meant to mobilize youths for mission must be: intergenerational, family-oriented, relationship based, mission focused and mission driven, and empowering in the sense that it must help the youth to become self-supporting in economic and financial matters.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a department in her structure, meant to nurture, train and mobilize these young people into action to do ministry in order to fulfill mission. Unfortunately, the young people/young adults of the church do not identify with this department of the church and to a large extent the mission of the church as a whole. There is a growing apathy among the young adults of the church towards the Youth Ministry Department of the church.

This research work discovered that the reasons behind this apathy include, but not limited to:

1. Lack of orientation for leaders of the church Youth Ministry Department
2. Lack of interesting programs
3. Employment/job constraints and unemployment challenges
4. Lack of orientation for the young adults to know where they fit in
5. The careless attitude of the parents and, invariably, the church towards the Youth Ministry. There seems to be no intentional effort on the part of the church to mobilize and engage these young adults in mission.

These and other reasons in this work were discovered to be the reasons behind the growing apathy among the young adults towards the Youth Ministry of the Church. In fact, in Seventh-day Adventist Church Hilltop with a youth population of about 408, only 14 are enrolled or active in the Youth Ministry of the Church.

The main burden of this work was to develop an intervention that would proffer solution to this challenge and increase the number of young adults involved in mission through the Youth Ministry Department of the Church. This intervention program was in two stages.

The first was to give orientation seminars to the three major groups that emerged from the research that needed to understand what the Youth Ministry Department of the church stands for. The second stage of this intervention was to call together the young adults who responded to the appeal for enrolment into the Youth Ministry Department of the church for a meeting to discuss their plan of work for the rest of the year. Of the foremost in the subsequent meetings would be the administration of the spiritual gift inventory to help the youths know their spiritual giftedness. After which ministry bands would be formed according to their areas of giftedness.

From this intervention program, it is observed that a fresh zeal towards the Youth Ministry Department of the church has been kindled/re-kindled. Apart from the thirty-five that enrolled at the Senior Youth Forum, there is a likelihood that many more youths would join as they see these first fruits begin to follow a line of organized action. More so, for the young adults, it matters a lot what their peers have done, or are doing. They would sooner or later identify.

### **Final Evaluation**

From this research work so far, it is clear that what is needed to mobilize the young people (the senior youths) for mission through the Youth Ministry Department of the Church is to place before them a well-organized plan of action with capable leadership. Whatever plan is being laid before them for service, it must also speak to their felt needs as revealed by this research work.

It was discovered before the intervention that lack of orientation on what the Youth Ministry is all about making the young adults apprehensive in attending its meetings. This intervention has begun to solve that problem by the attendance to the participation stage meeting. When the senior youths sense they would be meaningfully engaged in any gathering they would love to attend. It was also revealed that it does appear the leaders do not know what to do with this Senior Youths in the Church. But with the help of this intervention, the church Youth leader was able to chair a meeting of the Young adults successfully in the absence of the researcher and gave reports with enthusiasm.

### **Lessons Learned**

1. Qualified leaders for the Youth Ministry Department in the local churches are very scarce, especially for the young adult/senior youths.
2. When leaders are chosen to lead, it must never be assumed that they know what they have been called to do and how they are to do the assignment.
3. A conscious effort must be made to train and equip them with the needed resources in order to function effectively.
4. This training should be conducted with intentionality on regular basis.
5. There must be criteria for the selection of those who lead the Youth Ministry Department of the church especially the Young Adult Ministry/Senior Youths.
6. The church has not given enough attention to the Youth Ministry Department of the church and the plight of our young adults. No intentional efforts to get the next generation integrated into church leadership which is found among these young adults. The best way to remedy this is through this intervention program.
7. Many adult members of the church are willing to volunteer sponsorship for the Youth Ministries of the church if they know exactly its *raison d'être*. More so, if they see the impact of the Youth Ministry in the church and their community, more adults would volunteer as sponsors.
8. What members need is to be carried along in whatever direction the church is going. They would key in.
9. Young adults are indeed a ready-made army of Christ's church, to be engaged anytime and anywhere for mission. All we need is to give the trumpet a certain

sound and the youth would enlist for service. The youth need to be guided in what to do and they would do it.

10. When young adults gather together, they are more ready to exert energy in volunteer service than when in the midst of the larger church body. At the young adults' session, it was one of them that volunteered to lead the song service. No one had hitherto been chosen to do that but a song leader emerged.
11. When leaders show attention towards the life, welfare, and state of the youth's spiritual life by coming closer in such seminar settings, they are encouraged to share their worries and the challenges they are going through. This was the experience of this researcher at the close of the young adults' session.
12. Young adults need ears to listen to them. They have a desire to be engaged in the service of God if they are given the opportunity and they find an organization meant for them an opportunity to be all they have desired to be for God.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. To reduce the apathy of the young adults towards the Youth Ministry Department of the church in Aba East Conference, and mobilize them for mission, this program intervention should be replicated all through the local churches in the Conference.
2. Before this intervention program is carried out anywhere else, a team should be properly trained by the researcher to be able to conduct the seminars as effectively as should. Then on implementation, the researcher supervises the presentations of the team members. Then when their capabilities are ascertained they can be left to operate with less supervision but with regular reports.
3. The spiritual gift inventory should be administered as part of the initial participation activity in this intervention program. This is in order to re-channel the senior youths' energies and focus to mission immediately.
4. Every local church pastor ought to have this orientation in order to understand how to handle youth ministry matters in the local churches. It is only when the pastor is knowledgeable that he/she is able to check excesses and correct wrongs and guide right. The young people can take advantage of the ignorance of the pastor.
5. A standard curriculum should be developed by a committee approved by the Conference Administration coordinated by the researcher for the Senior Youths/young Adult ministry. This would be circulated to all local churches after being voted into use. Included in this curriculum would be an entrepreneurship skills acquisition module.

6. When this curriculum is set for use, it should be recommended for use by the Adventist Students in secular campuses with adaptation. In this way, they would be able to easily reconnect with their counterparts whenever they visit home.
7. When the curriculum has become operational in many of the local churches, a convention of Senior Youths/young adults should be organized to reiterate, in a wider circle, what is expected to be going on in all the local churches.
8. Youth Sponsors are better when they are volunteers or when their consent is sought for before appointment, and or pronouncement.
9. The youth sponsors should always be invited to be with the youths whenever they are scheduled to gather to encourage the intergenerational mentoring relationship.
10. Parents are to be made an integral part of the Youth Ministry Department to ensure the church begins early to train and orient the youths in the Youth Ministry Department of the Church.
11. As part of the orientation for the youth adults in all the churches, the session should be organized in form of a revival, spread over a couple of days. This would make for proper digestion of the messages given each day. More so, it would create more allowance for more young adults to resurface knowing it is their program.
12. Converts into the church should be integrated immediately into the senior youth/young adults' ministry of the church. Non-Adventists should be encouraged to join. While uniform for this group should be deemphasized, since they have no official one in the first place, there should be an identifying mark that connects all the senior youths such as a membership card, or an insignia, badge, name tag, neckerchief or pin.
13. When the young adult ministry begins to blossom in all the churches, it would be wise to subsume all the other off-shut organizations for the young people that are detractors to the Youth Ministry Department of the church back into the mainstream Youth Ministry department of the church. Such organizations include Young Adventist Women Ministries, Children's Ministries, and the like. Sometimes these organizations appear to have a clash of interests. Sometimes they appear to be in competition or working at cross purposes with the Youth Ministry department. On the other hand, the relationship to exist between them should be made clear. If not, their existence would prove to be counterproductive.
14. Whatever package has been developed for the Children's Ministries would be very useful for the Adventurer and Pathfinder arm of the Youth Ministries Department of the church. This is important in order to avoid certain unnecessary clashes of interest between the leaders of these various departments.
15. More studies should be done in contextualizing the Adventurers and Pathfinder classes to fit into the *shema* training module and NEWS training module of Soodong Choi. If the youths are nurtured from childhood with these modules, the researcher believes that at the senior youth age there would be a dogged zeal for

mission. Recruitment for missionary endeavors would become more remarkably efficient.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
CORRESPONDENCE

**Letter to the Conference to Conduct Research**

Sept. 17, 2015

The Administration  
Aba East Conference of  
Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Aba

Sir,

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I use this medium to write for permission to conduct a field research project as part of the requirements for completion of the program Doctor of Ministry. My research topic is "A STRATEGY TO MOBILIZE YOUTHS FOR MISSION THROUGH THE YOUTH MINISTRY DEPARTMENT OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN ABA EAST CONFERENCE."

It is observed that in the Youth Ministry activities of the various Churches, Youths of ages 19-35 are rarely involved. In some churches the Ministry has been relegated to Adventurer and Pathfinder affair.

The purpose of this research is to discover the reason behind the apathy amongst the real senior youths of the church towards youth ministry activities and then seek to proffer solution to the challenge.

I hope to select focus groups for interview and brain storming from three strategic churches in the Conference – one in the city, one in the sub-urban, and one in a typical rural area. Consequently, the following Churches have been suggested – Hilltop, Ovom/Umuagu, and Itungwa/Osaa-Ukwu.

I hope to hear from you soon. Thanks and God bless.

Yours faithfully



Pastor W. C. Adiele

cc: The President  
The Treasurer

## Letter of Approval from Conference to Conduct Research



### SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

*Aba East Conference  
Headquarters*

No 1 New Umuahia Road  
Ogbor-Hill,  
P.M.B. 7115, Aba.  
Abia State, Nigeria

Tel:

E-Mail: [aecaba@infoweb.abs.net](mailto:aecaba@infoweb.abs.net)  
[aecaba@yahoo.com](mailto:aecaba@yahoo.com)

13th October, 2015.

Pastor W.C.Adiele  
Education/ Youth/ Children's Ministries Director  
Aba East Conference.

Sir,

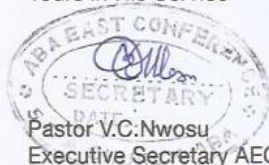
#### RE-APPLICATION TO CONDUCT D'Min RESEARCH IN SOME CHURCHES WITHIN ABA EAST CONFERENCE

I am directed by the administration of Aba East Conference on her meeting of 13th October 2015, to inform you that your application is granted to research for your D'Min project in the churches of your choice within the Conference.

It is our sincere desire that the good lord will grant you the favour as you meet with the required group in the church with the right information that will enrich your project and make it pass the taste of time and demand of the University.

Congrats and God bless.

Yours in His Service

  
Pastor V.C.Nwosu  
Executive Secretary AEC.

XC AEC Officers

## **A Copy of the Letter of Permission to the Churches to Conduct Research**

Oct. 15, 2015

The Church Board  
Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Hilltop, Aba

Dear Brethren,

### **Request for Permission to Conduct Research**

I use this medium to write for permission to conduct a field research project as part of the requirements for completion of the program Doctor of Ministry. My research topic is "A STRATEGY TO MOBILIZE YOUTHS FOR MISSION THROUGH THE YOUTH MINISTRY DEPARTMENT OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN ABA EAST CONFERENCE."

It is observed that in the Youth Ministry activities of the various Churches, Youths of ages 19-35 are rarely involved and in some places few 16 – 18 years. In some churches the Ministry has been relegated to Adventurer and Pathfinder affair.

The purpose of this research is to discover the reason behind the apathy amongst the Senior Youths of the church towards youth ministry activities and then seek to proffer solution to the challenge.

I hope to select a focus group for interview and brain storming from this Church and two others in the conference.

Anticipating your favorable response, I thank you now in advance.

Yours faithfully



Pastor W. C. Adiele

## Letter of Approval from Mgboko-Obete District



SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST CHURCH

MGBOKO-OBETE DISTRICT HQRS.  
OBINGWA L.G.A.  
P.M.B. 7115, ABA,  
ABIA STATE, NIGERIA.

6<sup>th</sup> March, 2016

Pastor W.C Adiele  
Aba East Conference Youth Director  
P.M.B 7115  
Aba


Dear Sir,

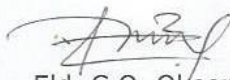
### LETTER OF APPROVAL FOR A RESEARCH WORK


Calvary Greeting in the Name of, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

Sequel to your request to conduct a research work with the youth of the church, the Board after careful consideration has approved and recommended maximum co-operation from the youth for a successful exercise.

Wishing you all the best in your endeavour.

  
Eld. S.O Nwankwo  
Church Clerk

  
Eld. C.O. Okeorji  
Head Elder

  
Pst. C.I. Nelson  
District Leader

Letter of Approval from Ovom Ama Assa



Revelation 14:6-10

# Seventh Day Adventist Church

## OVOM AMA ASAA

### OVOM DISTRICT

P.M.B. 7115, Aba  
Abia - State, Nigeria.

Our Ref: ..... Your Ref: ..... Date: 17-10-2015

Pastor W. C. Adiele  
Youth Director  
Aba East Conference

Sir,

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

With reference to your letter dated Oct 14, 2015 on the above subject matter, I am directed to inform you that the above church <sup>Board</sup> has approved your permission to conduct a field research project for the youths from the ages of 16-18, 19-35 years

We sincerely acknowledge your interest in the selection of a focus group for interview and brain storming from this church and two others in the Conference. Please be informed that our Sabbath School membership is 520, Senior Youth 60, while baptised members are 650. Thanks for Compliance.

*[Signature]*  
Nwanzie E. Nwanzie  
Church Clerk

"..... Go throughout the whole world and preach and preach the gospel to all mankind."

Mark 16:15

(TEV)

## Letter of Approval from Hilltop



SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST CHURCH  
In Nigeria

Hill Top Church  
Ebenma  
Aba Headquarters District  
Aba, Abia State, Nigeria  
26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.

Post-W.C. Adiele  
District leader  
S D # Church  
Hill-Top.

Sir,

### Approval for research work

With reference to your application to the church board dated 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2015, requesting for approval to use our church hall and members of the youth department for your academic research work, the board in her regular meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 approves your request and mandated me to communicate you in writing. The board also informs that the facilities be treated with utmost care, praying that our good God will grant you success in your academic pursuit.

Remain blessed

B. O. Ibendigwu  
(Head Elder).

## Letter of Permission to Implement Intervention Program

May 25, 2016

The Administration  
Aba East Conference of  
Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Aba.

Sir,

### Permission to Implement Intervention Program

Sequel to your permission for me to conduct a field research in three churches in Aba East Conference to ascertain the reason behind the apathy of the young adults towards the Youth Ministries Department of the Church, I write to inform you that the research has been completed.

The findings of the research have been analyzed. From the analysis, an intervention program has been developed to proffer solution to the challenges revealed by the findings.

I hereby ask for permission to implement the program intervention in one of the churches, precisely, SDA Church Hilltop for now.

Attached are the program Design and the proposed budget to carry it out.

Thanks for your co-operation

Yours faithfully



Wisdom C. Adiele

xc: The President  
The Treasurer

## Approval from Conference to Implement Intervention Program



SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST CHURCH

*Aba East Conference  
Headquarters*

No. 1 New Umuahia Road  
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[aecaba@yahoo.com](mailto:aecaba@yahoo.com)

27/05/2016

Pastor W.C. Adiele  
Education Director  
Aba East Conference

Sir,

**AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT INTERVENTION PROGRAMME, AT HILLTOP SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**

I am directed by the administration of Aba East Conference to inform you that your request to conduct an intervention programme at SDA Church Hilltop from May 27<sup>th</sup> to May 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 is granted.

You are by this letter empowered to meet with the membership of that local church that fits into the group that will satisfy your research requirement without any hindrance.

I am praying the Lord to guide and lead you as you embark on this great task in Jesus name - Amen.

Yours in His service



Pastor V.C. Nwosu  
AEC Executive Secretary

AEC Officers

## APPENDIX B

### DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

#### Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to know by statistics actually the percentage of the various age groups in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Aba East Conference and their religious backgrounds and interests.

Please underline appropriately.

#### A. Bio-data

1. Sex..... Male/Female
2. Religious Background.....Born Adventist/ Convert
3. Age Group.....10-15; 16-21; 22-35; 36-49; 50+
4. Year Baptized.....\_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of years as baptized Seventh-day Adventist\_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Area of Local Church Ministry Interest

13.

14. Note: You can underline more than one of these if that is the case

1. Personal Ministries      2. Adventist Women Ministries (AWM)
3. Young AWM              4. Adventist Youth Ministries
5. Children's Ministries    6. Family Life
7. Sabbath School Teacher
8. Choir/ Music              9. Chaplaincy/Encouragement
10. Others\_\_\_\_\_

## **Structured Questions for Focus Group Discussion**

### Question 1 – Discover the Why of Apathy

1. What ministries are you engaged in as a church member in the Church?
2. What would you say is the extent of participation of the young people of your age in the youth Ministry of the Church?
3. Do you think there is a need for young people of your age to be much more involved in the mission of the Church than it is at present?
4. Why are so many young people not involved in Youth Ministries activities of your Church?
5. What are some things that keep youth from participating?

### Question 2 – Discover the possible solutions.

1. What do you think should be done to get more youth engaged in the Youth Ministry of the Church?
2. Is it possible to get all youths of your age in your Church thus engaged?
3. What are some types of programs or activities that would be more interesting and appealing?

### Question 3 – Discover how best to implement the suggested solutions.

15. Let's make a list of possible solutions that would encourage greater participation.

APPENDIX C  
CONSENT FORM

I understand this is a research meant to mobilize more young people for the mission of the Church through the Adventist Youth Ministry Department of the Church. I, therefore, give my consent to be interviewed accordingly.

Name:.....

Phone Number.....

Age.....

Occupation.....

Name of Local Church.....

Membership Status (Baptized or Not).....

Adventist by Birth.....Convert.....

Ministry Role in Church.....

Signature.....

Date.....

## APPENDIX D

### SEMINAR MATERIALS

#### **Youth Mobilization in the Scripture**

The goal of having a ministry for the youth is to ensure that the torch of faith is effectively being passed on from generation to generation. As we search the scriptures, we discover some ideals in seeking to mobilize the youth for mission.

#### **Giving the Youth Attention**

Malachi 4: 5, 6; Mark 10: 13-16

Why should not this labor for the youth in our borders be regarded as the highest kind of missionary work? It will require the most delicate tact, the most thoughtful consideration, the most earnest prayer that heavenly wisdom may be imparted. The youth are the objects of Satan's special attacks; but kindness, courtesy, that tender sympathy that flows from a heart filled with love to Jesus, will give you access to them. You may win their confidence so that they will listen to your words, and thus be saved from many a snare of the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Education and Training**

*Christ's Infancy: A Model. Luke 2: 52*

*Discipline of Education. Proverbs 29: 17; 22: 15; 3: 11, 12*

Corruption is woven into our natures, sin is foolishness.

Correction or Discipline is necessary to the cure of it.

*Discipline.*

*Instructive - Proverbs 3: 11, 12; Deut 8: 2-5*

*Redemptive - Prov 22: 15*

#### **Family-Oriented Youth Ministry**

*Abraham's Home (Genesis 18: 19).*

*God's Instruction to Israel (Deuteronomy 6: 4-7).*

#### **Engaging the Youth**

**God engages. Jeremiah 1: 6; Eccl 12: 1; Acts 2:17- Joseph, Samuel, Jeremiah, Daniel, Timothy.**

**Intergenerational Ministry.** Moses and Joshua; Elijah and Elisha; and in the New Testament Jesus and His disciples; Barnabas and Paul; Barnabas and John Mark; Paul and Timothy; Paul and Titus.

#### **Ellen G. White and Youth Mobilization**

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the

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<sup>1</sup> White, *Gospel Workers*, (Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2008), 279.1.

whole world! How soon might the end come--the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!"<sup>2</sup>

### **Youth Called to God's Service**

"In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with a clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men."<sup>3</sup>

### **Training the Youth**

"As our youth are trained for service in the cause of God, the Bible must lie at the foundation of their education. The principles of truth contained in the word of God will be a safeguard against the evil influences of the world."<sup>4</sup>

### **Disciplining the Youth**

"There must be a work done to discipline the youth for a higher sphere of service..."<sup>5</sup> Discipline here is discussed in the context of holistic education which lends credence to the fact that true education leads to discipline. "Many souls will be eternally lost because of the neglect of parents to properly discipline their children, and to teach them submission to authority in their youth."<sup>6</sup>

### **Characteristics of the Youth**

"The young naturally desire activity..."<sup>7</sup>

### **Justification for doing Youth Ministry**

There must be more study given to the problem of how to deal with the youth, more earnest prayer for the wisdom that is needed in dealing with minds.<sup>8</sup> "The youth need more than a casual notice, more than an occasional word of encouragement. They need painstaking, prayerful, careful labor... Often those whom we pass by with indifference because we judge them from outward appearance, have in them the best material for workers, and will repay all the efforts bestowed on them."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>White, *Messages to Young People* (Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2008)196.

<sup>3</sup>White, *Gospel Workers* (Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2008), 67.

<sup>4</sup> White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Guardians* (Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2008), 204.1.

<sup>5</sup>White, *Manuscript Release* vol. 11, No. 883 (Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2008), 196.1.

<sup>6</sup>White, *Child Guidance* (Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2008), 176.2.

<sup>7</sup>White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2008), 72.3.

<sup>8</sup>White, *Gospel Workers*, 208.

<sup>9</sup>White, *God's Amazing Grace* (Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2008), 269.4.

We are in a world of sin and temptation, and youth are perishing out of Christ all around us, and He wants you to labor for the youth in every conceivable way that you can.<sup>10</sup>

### **Historical Development of Youth Ministry**

Before the church began a special ministry for, and by the youth, youth ministry had existed in Europe, and America. There are notable figures in the history of the development of the youth ministry worldwide some of which shall be discussed here.

#### **Development of Youth Ministry in Europe**

**Robert Raikes.** 1780 in Gloucester, England. His purpose was literacy training for children, but also included elements of **Christian education.**

**Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)** was established in 1844. Social needs.

**Arthur Sweatman** in 1863 introduced the idea of formation of the boys' clubs.

**William Alexander Smith** established the first Boys' Brigade unit in 1883 as a way of making Sunday School both, more attractive.

**Bryan H. Reed's.** Advocated the need of the association of a worshipping community of both young and old.

#### **Development of Youth Ministry in America**

American Sunday School Union which was formed in 1824.

Young Men's Christian Association (1844),

Christian Endeavor (1881),

The Miracle Club (1993),

Young Life (1941), and Youth for Christ (1950).

#### **History of Seventh-day Adventist Church Youth Work**

**Beginnings. Luther Warren and Harry Ferner in 1879.** Hitherto, in the earliest days of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) before its organization in 1860, and even after, there was no specific ministry targeted at the youth. However, records show that young people have always been active and involved in the work of the church. James White began his preaching at 21; Ellen White received her first vision at age 17; John Loughborough began preaching at age 17, among others.

**The purpose of the Youth Movement. In 1907,** at the Sabbath school and young people's convention in Mount Vernon, Ohio, the name "Seventh-day Adventist Young People's Society of Missionary Volunteers" was chosen for the new Youth Department of the General Conference, usually shortened to "Missionary Volunteers or simply "MV". From that meeting came the resolution that "**the primary object of the young people's societies is the salvation and *development* of our youth by means of prayer, study and personal missionary effort.**

The curriculum for the youth must be for holistic development of mental, social, physical and spiritual capabilities of the youth.

#### **Youth Ministry Development to the Present**

##### ***Name and Membership.***

##### ***Content.***

In summary, the Youth Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church began with teenagers, adolescents, and young adults. Later attention was shifted to the juniors in a way of Junior Missionary Volunteers (Pathfinders) and then pre-JMV (Adventurers). Resource materials were produced to minister to the Adventurers and the Pathfinders. Later, with the passing of time, without a curriculum produced particularly for the

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<sup>10</sup>Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ* (Ellen G. White Writings Comprehensive Research Edition, 2008), 247.

Adventist Youth or Senior Youth (older than Pathfinder age), there was a drop in the engagement of the adolescents and young adults in the ‘Youth Ministry’ of the Church. From this historical overview, the following are descriptive of an ideal youth ministry.

1. The education of young people in the home, church, school, and conventional school setting.
2. This education must help the youth develop the spiritual, mental, and vocational spheres of their life. The spiritual connects them with their Creator, the mental equips them with knowledge and the vocational prepares them to face the future materially independent.
3. Conduct programs that foster a social relationship that meets biblical standards among the youth people through clubs and camp outs. And programs that encourage intergenerational mentoring between the young and old.
4. Conduct programs that involve the youth in service for God and to humanity. Such programs include evangelistic outreach in all its forms and welfare ministries.

#### **Adventist Youth Ministry Levels/Classes Breakdown**

Adventurers – 6 – 9 years of age

Pathfinders 10 -15 years of age

Senior Youth – 16 – 30/35 years of age

Can become a master to qualify to lead junior and senior youths

Be in various band ministries

#### **Uniforms**

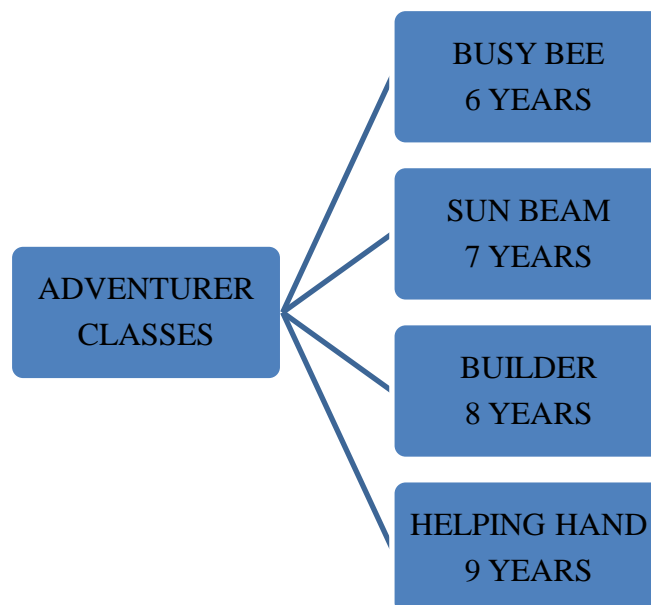
Adventurers have their uniform.

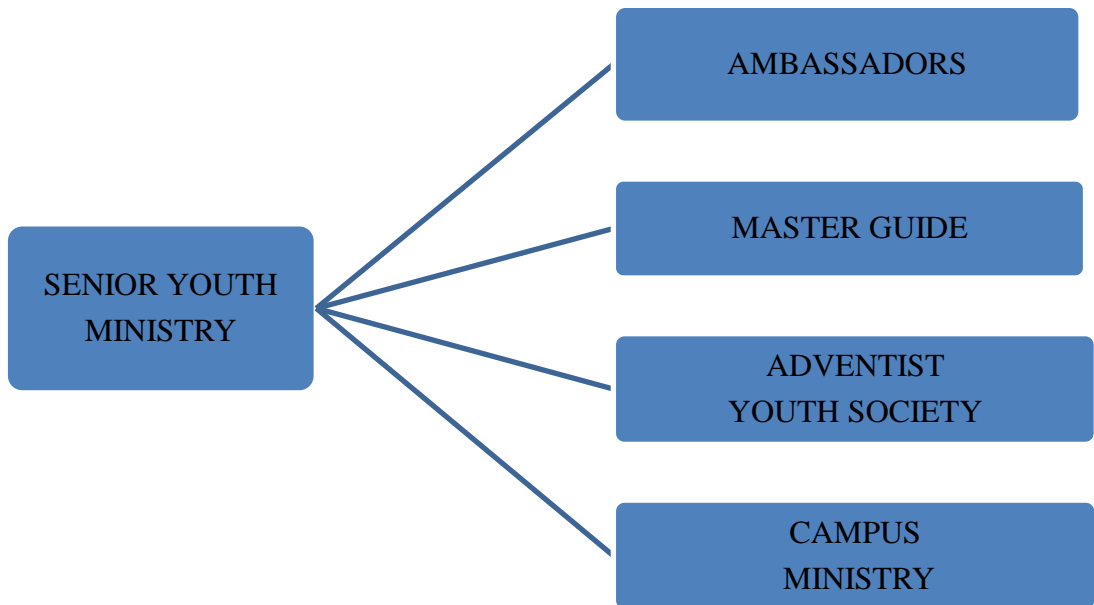
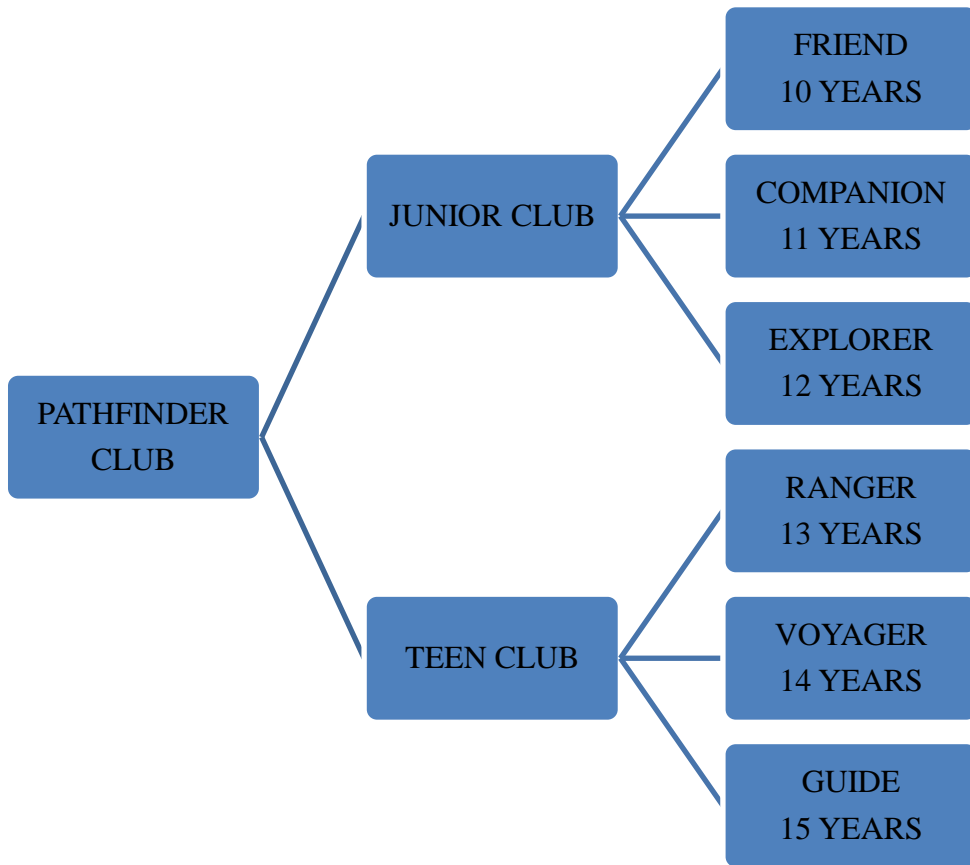
Pathfinders also have their uniform.

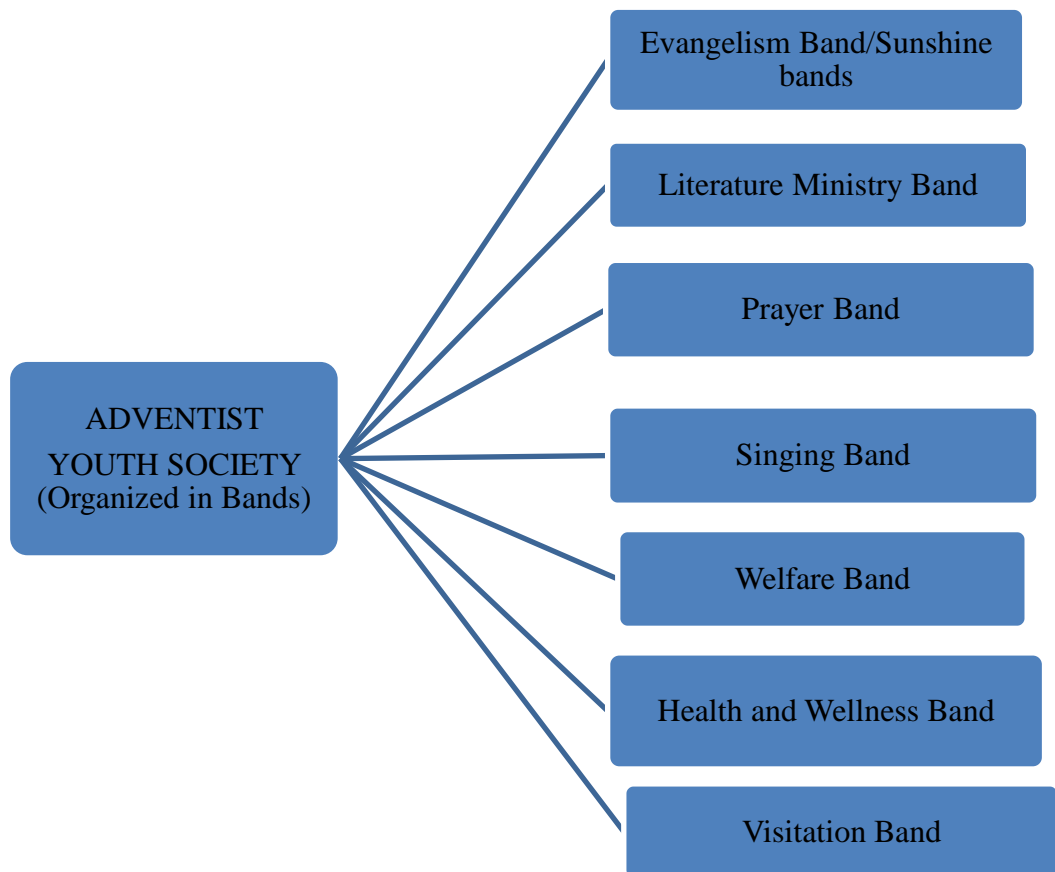
No official uniform for the senior youth except the Master Guides.

So it is a mistake to keep stressing uniform issues when you are in the midst of this age group.

#### **Breakdown of the Youth Ministry Classes namely – Adventurer, Pathfinder, and Senior Youth.**







**Note:** From these charts, it can be observed that there are four possible areas the senior youth can minister in depending on his situation. If in school, the campus ministry provides the opportunity. At home, the AYS structured into ministry bands creates the opportunity. The senior youth could decide to study to be a master so as to become a leader to the junior youth or serve as an ambassador for that period of time.

### **Senior Youth Curriculum -Proposed**

The Senior Youth Curriculum among other concerns has 3 major areas/pillars upon which all its program of activities ought to be organized.

1. Choosing Whom to Serve. Joshua 24: 15. Joshua challenged the children of Israel before his demise to choose, i.e. make an intelligent choice as to whom they would serve or worship. A time comes in the life of young adults when they must take a decision what to do in life as to who to worship, how to worship and why. For without this decision, there would be a sure and certain frustration that would leave such soul an apostate and rebel against God and His commandments.
2. After the death of Joshua and Caleb, there arose another generation in Israel that did not know the LORD (See Judges 2: 8-10). What went wrong? Obviously, the youth as at the time these general were still alive had not been mentored to make intelligent decisions as to whom to worship, how and why of worship. This is the urgent need of our generation.
3. Choosing a life partner. Effective Youth Ministry must have a relational undertone that guides the young people through decent relationships. I Cor 10: 31 says in whatever you do, including relationships, do all to the glory of God.
4. Choosing a life Career. This is about being self- supporting. How to get established in life early. Learning of some skill is expedient for the youth of this generation more than any other. This does not rule out certificate education, rather it qualifies it and makes it more useful. Labor is commanded in the scriptures (Gen 3: 15; 2 Thess 3: 10 -12).
  - There is need to tailor programs toward empowerment
  - Invite entrepreneurs to cast a vision for the youth.
  - Train youths in specialized skills.

## STUDY ON DISCIPLINE (Part 1)

What is Discipline?  
Why Discipline?  
When to Discipline  
How to Discipline

### What is Discipline?

From Hebrew root *Yasah* – discipline, chasten instruct and *Pasar* - Discipline

- Middle English (in the sense (mortification by scouring oneself) via Old French from Latin Discipline instruction, knowledge ‘, from Discipline.

- Latin – Discipline – learner *discere* – learn.

From the usage and parallel, the OT, one most conclude that *Yasar* and *Musar* demote correction which results in education (TWOT)

### Why Discipline?

The theoretical basis for discipline is grounded in the covenant relationship which Yahweh established with his people. God has promised to be with Israel, God has chosen Israel as His peculiar treasures He desires the best for His people as the apple of His eyes. Moreover, According to **Proverb 22: 15** “**Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child but rod of correction would cure it**”

There are two considerations from contemplating this passage:

Corruption: woven into our natures, sin is foolishness; it is contrary to both to our right reason and to our true interest. That was the reason behind Paul’s Lamentation in **Roman 7:19, 21** “**For the good that I will do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice ... O wretched man that I man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**” (NKJV). Sin is in the heart; there is an inward inclination to sin, to speak and acts foolishly. This is in the heart of children; they bring it into the world with them; it is what they were shaped and conceived in. Sin is not only found in the heart, it is bound there. Vicious dispositions cleave closely to the soul. There is a knot tied between the soul and sin, a true lover’s knot; they two become one flesh. It is true of ourselves it true of our children, whom we have begotten in our own likeness.

Correction or Discipline is necessary to the cure of it. It will not be got out by fair means and gentle methods; there must be structures and severity and that which will cause grief. Children need to be corrected and kept under discipline by their parents. And for God to rid us (His people) of the foolishness of sin, we all need to be corrected by our heavenly Father, (Matthew Henry’s Bible comment)

More so, according to **proverb 3: 11, 12** disciplines give assurance of sonship (TWOT)

### How is Discipline?

From the study, if discipline in the scripture we find two dimensions or two methods in which discipline could be administered.

Instructive/constructive. This is the discipline that is aimed at preventing a child from straying into forbidding paths. This is done through instructions, and provisions for that child. **Proverb 3: 11 -12** says “**My Son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD, or loathe His reproof**” for whom in the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father, the son in whom he delights’ (NAS). The root words *Musar* all to *Kahat*, “reproof and correction’ come from Yahweh” for whom He loves (ahub) he reproves to a God – centered way of life. **Proverb 1:7** tuples *Musar* with the ‘fear of Yahweh and **Proverb 1:8** with “Tora”. Instruction, teaching (TWOT) ‘Thy mother’s teaching’ Proverbs and other wisdom Literature speaks of discipline with emphasis on the instruction. Again, we see another picture of discipline in **Duet. 8:2 – 5** here God is seen to be the one who

led the Israel through their 40 years wilderness apparently provide them with Manna, cared for their welfare such that they lacked nothing. Duet. 8:5 says in their hands they were to know that God was disciplining them. Grooming to walk in the way. Here we see a picture of hardship balanced by miraculous provisions.

Hence, the theological basis for an earthly father “discipline over his son is in the covenant relationship with God. He bears the image of his covenant Lord and as such the stands in a parallel relationship with his children chastening, correcting, instructing and providing – which are expensive of an interpersonal relationship of love.

But when this type of discipline is not welcomed by this people, they detail the second type comes in the Redemptive.

### **Redemptive**

When Israel went astray after other gods, God had to use a strong punitive discipline measure to seek t awaken them conscience to return to Him the true God.

**Proverb 22:15 “Speak of the rod of correction” in Job 5:17**, when he urge Job not to “Despise the discipline if the Almighty,” Ehpaz shows the insight of concerning the means in which God may use to discipline his children; Pain and wound, famine and war, Amos would add drought, mildew, locust, epidemics and earthquake (Amos 4:6 - 11). The severity of the exile = Babylon for seventy years must be thus understood. “Wherever they go, I will spread my net on them, I will bring them down according to what their congregation has heard (Hosea. 7:12) the root word ‘Yasar’ also means discipline, chasten ladmish but this context it is used as chastening.

Once again we read **Proverb 22:15 “foolishness is bound in the heart of a child (but) the rod of discipline will remove it and cure it from him (NAS).**

The root word for ‘Rod’ is (Shebet) which means, Rod, Staff, Scepter, Tribe.

It commonly denotes a rod it was used for beauty cumin as we read in **Isaiah 28:27** it was also as a weapon as found in **2 Samuel 23:21**. The rod was used as a shepherd’s implement in order to muster or count sheep (**Lev 27:32; Ezek. 20:27**), or protect them (**Ps. 23:4; Micah 7:14**), the Rod was also as an instrument for either remedial or penal punishment.

As a corrective instrument, it was used for slaves (**Exodus 21:20**), a fool (**Proverb 10:13; Proverb 26:3**) as a son (**Proverb 13:24; Proverb 22:1; Proverb 23:13 – 14; Proverb 24: 15**) in Proverb, Rod is the symbol of discipline and failure to use the preventive discipline of verbal instruction and rebuke and the correction discipline of physical punishment will end in the child’s death.

Metaphorically, the used Assyria as his instrument to correct Israel (**Isaiah 10:5**) and the nations to correct his wayward king (**2 Sam. 7:14; Micah 5:1**)

In summary, from the O.T we can understand that discipline is a process of training a child/youth to be aligned to following God’s way in life considering the fact that He/She was born and shaped in iniquity. This makes discipline necessary if left to himself, the child would naturally be inclined towards evil. The discipline that would affect the expected reformation in the life of that child includes verbal instructions or teaching the tora (**Law**), verbal rebuke of correction when he or she goes wrong, then physical punishment when there is persistent incline towards evil acting rebellious for redemptive purposes.

## **Difference between Discipline and Punishment<sup>11</sup>**

Discipline teaches a child how to act. Discipline should make sense to a child. It should have something to do with what he has done wrong. Discipline helps a child feel good about himself. It gives him the chance to correct his mistakes. It puts him in charge of his actions.

Punishment only tells a child that she is bad. It does not tell a child what she should do instead. So punishment may not make sense to the child. Punishment usually has nothing to do with what the child did wrong.

Here are some examples of what a child can do wrong. Some types of punishment and discipline are given. Can you see how they are different?

**Example 1:** A three-year-old throws his crayons on the floor.

**Punishment:** Tell him he is a bad boy and slap his fingers.

**Discipline:** Tell him to pick up the crayons. Explain that they could get broken or mark up the floor. Put them out of the child's reach until the next day.

**Example 2:** A two-year-old empties a wastebasket.

**Punishment:** Spank him and send him to his room.

**Discipline:** Explain he may not play with the wastebasket. Give him something he may dump and fill.

## **What Kind of Discipline is Right for My Child's Age?**

1. Small babies do not need discipline. They do not act badly on purpose. They are not trying to make you angry or control you by crying. Babies who cry usually need something. They might be hungry, wet, tired, in pain, or need to be held. A baby cannot be spoiled for the first six months. Babies who are picked up when they cry, learn that they are safe and can depend on the world. Usually, they will cry less later on. As soon as they can talk, they will use words to tell you what they need.
2. Crawlers often get into things. Remember to baby-proof the house. Use distraction when the child does something you do not like. Use "stop" and "don't" and tell the child the rules. Give the child the chance to explore safely in at least one room in the house.
3. Walkers can reach higher things. They are learning to climb. Baby-proof the house. Use distraction as a discipline. Tell them the rules. Start using short time-out periods. Use a chair in the same room for the time-out spot.
4. Runners, jumpers, and climbers are talking more now. You can explain things to them. Also, listen to what they have to say. Use rewards whenever you can. Claps,

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<sup>11</sup>Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, "A Child in Your Life"

extra hugs, and praise are very good to use. Use time-out if necessary. You could put them in a room away from you for their time-out spot.

## **Discipline (Part 2)**

### **(From Pathfinder, Administrative Manual by GC of SDA)**

Our goal in disciplining the members of our Pathfinder Clubs ought to be to guide them as sons and daughters of God; to show them our love and understanding; to teach them God's character as revealed in the order and discipline seen throughout the universe; to make them useful members of the church and their country; and to help them respect their leaders and their parents.

As you work for the salvation of your Pathfinders, seek the Lord for wisdom and guidance. As they join the ranks of a successful Pathfinder Club, they should feel that they are being born into a new experience. They must learn that they are being loved by the kind of correction and discipline they receive. They must learn to discipline their desires in accordance with God's law.

In a Pathfinder Club, good discipline provides an environment that is conducive to cheerful attitudes and cooperative behavior. It emphasizes guidance rather than restraint; is constructive rather than destructive. It is not crippling, it is enabling. It encourages self-control and purposeful activity. The best kind of discipline is present but not seen. It teaches the child to do the right thing at the right time in the right way. Good discipline prevents trouble.

A well-planned program will avoid many problems and mistakes. Order and system inspire confidence. Pathfinders learn by the example of their leaders that God is a God of order. In a well-disciplined club, the program starts on time, the whole staff is there on time, and the program runs smoothly to its conclusion.

#### **Balanced Discipline**

- \_ Establish rules and regulations and a point system
  - \_ Inform the Pathfinders of the rules, your expectations, and methods of enforcement.
  - \_ "Rules should be few and well considered; and when once made, they should be enforced. Whatever is found impossible to change, the mind learns to recognize and adapt itself to."
- *Education*, p. 290.
- \_ Present devotional on discipline, explaining the Pledge and Law.
  - \_ Consistently and diligently apply training discipline.
  - \_ Counsel with guilty youth before disciplinary action and pray with them.
- When they understand, they normally cooperate.

#### **Proper and Improper Administration of Discipline**

The **wrong** way is to crush or break the spirit by using strict force. The crushed spirit will develop distrust, evasiveness, and hatred for authority.

The **correct** way to administer discipline is to inspire that which is right and orderly by love, kindness, and discipline. Win confidence of the youth. Show them you love them by kindness, and that you expect their loyal cooperation. This correct way develops trust, compliance, cooperation, and love.

#### **Prevention of Discipline Problem**

- \_ Plan an extensive program of activities.
- \_ Never go to meetings unprepared.
- \_ Be friendly, caring, and approachable at all times.
- \_ Cultivate a sense of humor
- \_ Don't use sarcasm or ridicule.

- \_ Don't be a "faultfinder".
- \_ Be fair and impartial—don't have favorites.
- \_ Show self-control and be patient, even under pressure.
- \_ Watch the use of your voice—speak clearly and with authority, but don't shout!
- \_ Give clear, precise instructions and commands.
- \_ Watch mannerisms that could lead to ridicule and avoid slang and colloquialisms.

#### Methods of Discipline

##### **Personal Counsel**

In this counseling be master of the situation. Point out exactly what the Pathfinder was doing that was wrong and ask him/her to explain his behavior. The Pathfinder may even suggest a solution. Conduct these councils on a friendly basis, but have the member leave with the understanding that you will mean business.

##### **Use Group Judgment**

Make an effort to build up the ideals of behavior to the point where any violation is unacceptable to the standard of the group.

##### **Take Care of Individual Differences**

In planning discipline, remember that Pathfinders are all different. Take into consideration their background, their physical and mental makeup, and the seriousness of the offense.

##### **Expel if Necessary**

When a Pathfinder continues to disbelieve, he must face the realization that he is either going to have to meet the standard of behavior or leave the group.

#### **Don't**

- \_ Punish in anger
- \_ Use threats and warnings that can't be carried out.
- \_ Forced apologies in public.

Few children ever consider themselves entirely to blame, and they are probably not.

- \_ Detain after the club meeting. A rather poor policy because It causes the Pathfinder to dislike the club; and it is an unnecessary demand on the counselor's time.
- \_ Assign extra tasks

Probably the cause of the trouble is that the Pathfinder already cannot keep up with the tasks that he has.

##### \_ **Dunce-Cap Discipline**

This is a relic of the past. This type of punishment only causes rebellion or a thing to laugh at. Some Pathfinders enjoy the recognition it gives.

##### \_ **Use corporal punishment**

Because of the many difficulties that arise from its use, it would be best to leave this method to the parents.

#### **Punishable Offenses**

1. Cases of clear and unjustifiable insubordination.
2. Cases where tendencies and activities are considered serious offenses, or behavior problems, such as:

- Indecency
- Impudence to counselor
- Offensive language
- Injuring property

- Cheating and stealing

#### Discipline Procedures

1. If a Pathfinder is not obedient and cooperative:
  - \_ The counselor should tactfully speak to the Pathfinder.
  - \_ The counselor should explain what is expected of the Pathfinder as a member of the club.
  - \_ The counselor should have a private visit and pray with the Pathfinder.
2. If the Pathfinder continues to be disobedient and uncooperative the counselor should solicit the help of the deputy director in charge of club discipline.
  - \_ They will privately counsel together with the Pathfinder.
  - \_ They should earnestly solicit cooperation.
  - \_ They should pray with him.
3. If it should be necessary to approach the Pathfinder on a third occasion, the counselor, deputy director, and director should meet with the Pathfinder privately.
  - \_ Counsel with the Pathfinder and explain how important it is to have unity, cooperation, and an understanding spirit among club members.
  - \_ Attempt to convey to him the seriousness of the matter in the light of his not doing his "honest part."
  - \_ Prayer together.
  - \_ Make an appointment to visit the home and counsel with the parents and the Pathfinder together.
4. If, after this round of counsel and a visit to the home, the Pathfinder proceeds to be disobedient and uncooperative, the counselor should have a private visit and prayer with the Pathfinder.
5. If misbehavior continues the counselor, deputy director, director and Pathfinder should have another meeting together.
  - \_ The case will be referred to the disciplinary committee for further study.

The \_ Disciplinary committee consists of the director, deputy directors, the counselor of the Pathfinder, and a Pathfinder boy and girl chosen from the club.

  - \_ The Pathfinder's parents should be notified, and the Pathfinder will be given a one-month vacation from the club.
  - \_ He should be visited at his home by the counselor during the period of his absence.



In the Old Testament, God told Moses I have specially gifted Bezalel for the work of craftsmanship for the Temple (Exod 31: 2, NKJV). In the obscurity as a shepherd boy, God prepared equipped David to be a king after his own heart over his household.

Israel

The Holy Spirit must equip the leader with particular leadership skills and abilities in order to be able to function in the leadership capacity given. Some of this leadership skills and abilities include:

Imaginative (creative, innovative, curious)

Independent (self-confident, able to take decisions unwaveringly)

Competent (skilled, productive)

Inspiring (uplifting, enthusiastic, cheerful, positive about the future)

Cooperative (friendly, team player, available, reflective)

Intelligent (bright, thoughtful, intellectual, responsive)

Courageous (daring, stands up for own beliefs)

Loyal (obedient, dutiful, respectful, Committed to organization)

Dependable (reliable, conscientious, responsible)

Mature (experienced, wise, has depth)

Determined (hard-working, persistent, purposeful, steadfast)

Fair-minded (objective, forgiving, willing to pardon others, consistent)

Straightforward (direct, candid, forthright)

Forward-looking (visionary, foresighted, with a sense of direction)

Supportive (understanding, helpful)

God told Jeremiah, “Before you were born, while you were in the womb. I had chosen you and ordained you to be a prophet to my people (Jer 1: 5). This raises another issue in leadership.

### **The Making of the Leader**

It is commonly asked are leaders born or made. Those who argue that leaders are born to cite the above text as a reference. They argue that Jeremiah was made a prophet to guide Israel in spiritual matters before he was born. Sampson, Samuel, and John the Baptist, fall in the same category. Others who argue that Leadership is learned/made would cite people like Moses, Joshua, Elisha, Paul, and Timothy as examples. Meaning, they became leaders through various circumstances of life, by the training of an older leader like Paul and Timothy; Elijah and Elisha; and by choice like Isaiah answering to God’s clarion call, “Whom shall I send, who will go for us”. Isaiah responded, here am I, send me:

Consequently, we observe that from the biblical standpoint, leaders are both born and made. However, in either case, the leader has the freedom to choose, either to accept the responsibility and make his/her calling and election sure or not.

### **Fruits of the Spirit**

Jesus says “By their fruit, you shall know them” (Matt 7:20). In Galatians 5: 22, 23 we read “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control against such there is no law.”

- Love – for God (knows Him personally) and man (with no favoritism)
- Joy – Always chooses to live on the sunny side of life in the midst of storm
- Peace – As a result of reconciliation with God
- Long Suffering – patience, selfless

- Kindness – Caring (sensitive, appreciative, concerned, loving).
- Goodness – beneficence, benefits others
- Faithfulness – A person of faith and prayer, Honest (Truthful, has integrity, Trustworthy, has character).
- Gentleness – meek and humble
- Self-control - (restrained, self-disciplined)

It is by the evident fruits of the Holy Spirit in the life of a leader that authenticates his/her leadership as from God. It is not enough to have the gifts which make the leader competent in filling a position of responsibility. It is not about just being efficient, there is a need for effectiveness. The effectiveness of a Spiritual leader is that the led are edified and being equipped to fulfill their own ministries, and made holy unto perfection (Eph 4:12-13). And this is made possible by the fruits of the Holy Spirit seen in the leader.

According to Henry Blackaby – spiritual leadership is leading the people unto God's agenda.

God has an agenda for his people/church. This agenda is encapsulated in what we term the great commission found in Matt. 28:18-20, "Go ye and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age".

It requires all the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this and those who would lead out in the various sphere of the work must be made competent through the spiritual gifts the holy spirit bestows. But much more than that they must bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit as evident that it is God leading through them. This is because; Satan too can counterfeit the gifts, but would never bear those fruits. This is what distinguishes the ministers of darkness disguising as ministers of light and the true ministers of light.

### **Guidance**

Jesus in his last words to this disciple, who were to be the first human leaders of the Christian New Testament church, said "However, when he, the spirit of truth, has come. He will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority."(John 16: 13).

Jesus made it plain that the leader was to depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit who will lead to the truth. Jesus in John 17:17, further reveals that the truth is the word of God.

The spiritual leader must depend on the guidance of the bible on spiritual matters to be able to lead unto God's own agenda.

The Psalmist declares, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Ps.119:105). That is what the bible ought to be to the spiritual leader - a light to illuminate his pathway and a compass to show the direction as he navigates the ocean, seas, and rivers of leadership challenges. Added to the guidance given by the Bible is the guidance given by other church policy books such as the testimonies, church manual, and the working policies.

Summarily, Paul is giving the qualifications of a church leader (Elder Pastor Deacon, Deaconess, etc.) in 1 Tim 3: 1- 13.

In these qualifications, we find teaching as a qualification of competence. This is the function of the spiritual gifts. Self-control is a qualification of effectiveness. This is the function of the fruits of the spirit, so forth and so on.

### **Responsibilities of Leadership**

Once a person has been called to a leadership position at any level or places certain responsibilities begins to revolve around him/her. Or on the other hand, once a person assumes a leadership responsibility by virtue of age, influence, social status, he/she is bound to bear these responsibilities.

How the leader bears these responsibilities determines the outcome of such leadership whether born or made.

### **The Leader as a Model**

Paul admonishes leader Titus in Tit 2:7, “In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverent incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, the one which is an opponent may be ashamed having nothing evil to say of you”

Because leadership is an influence, it behooves on the leader to show a positive/good example in lifestyle so that his/her influence on the led would be positive such that would make them effective followers unto God’s agenda.

Leaders must never underestimate the power of example in leadership. It is what you desire your followers to be that you ought to be. Paul said, “Imitate me, as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor 11: 1). A spiritual leader should be worthy of imitation.

This example must cover all areas of life:

Health – Lives a healthy lifestyle

Family – Has a stable home with children all include him/her

Finances – Exemplary in giving to God and the poor. A leader should be liberal.

In Speech – Words full of grace and seasoned with salt.

In doctrine – Biblically sound. Sola Scriptura

In Dressing – Modest and neat

In morality – Clean and decent (1 Thess 4: 3)

### **The Leader and Service**

Jesus declared to his disciples, “He, who would be the leader, must be a servant”. For the son of man did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister. In other words, a spiritual leader must do service to God and to men. In no time must a leader wait to be ministered to if there is the opportunity to minister.

The leader must be ready to stoop low if the opportunity lends itself to do the work of a cleaner just to underscore the fact that no work/labor/service in God’s site is mean/demeaning; thereby making all spheres of service in God’s vineyard of grave importance.

### **The leader as a Trainer**

Paul counsels Timothy, his son in the ministry, “and the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2: 2). Leadership is expected to groom leadership. A leader thinks of succession and plans for it by training and equipping other leaders to take over when he is no longer on the scene.

The Biblical perspective of leadership presents a Mentor relationship system of training for successors. The leaders were intentional about this mentor-mentoree relationship. Moreover, the mentorees were committed to the training by their mentors. This made leadership succession easier. Examples of such relationships are Barnabas and Paul, Paul and Timothy, Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha among others.

Jesus spent more time alone with the twelve disciples than he spent with the crowd. This was a process of grooming them to take over when he was gone. God instructed the Israelites just before they entered the land of promise to plan for a solid and secure posterity by taking the painful effort of educating their children properly. This is the reason behind God's instruction in Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7. The training sessions of the leader would include spiritual gifts discovery, training in the various ministries possible in the church organization.

### **The Leader and Delegation with Supervision**

After training, it is expected that the trained would be giving responsibilities to test their abilities. It is also called on-the-job training. After Jesus had spent time with the disciples; he sent the twelve out two by two. At another time he sent out 70 disciples two by two. He supervised them as they went on mission; always there to take their mission stories (Matt 10, Luke 10).

In Jethro's Model of church leadership, we also see an effective style of a delegation of responsibilities. This is from the advice Jethro, Moses father-in-law, gave to him during their wilderness journey. This we find in Exodus 18: 21.

Summarily, Effective Christian Leadership is based on God's calling, God's equipping, God's vision and God's formation of the person's character.

### **“Passing on the Touch”**

Between David and Goliath, who is the Giant?

We desire to bring up our children to be

- Able to support themselves and us when they grow up
- Be known
- But the best is to know God and be a spiritual giant

Children and youth are so dear to the heart of Jesus – Matthew 18: 2-6 says, “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world” (Messages to Young People, 196).

Role of Parents – Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7

1. Do not leave this to another
  2. Provide what it takes to make this possible
- Bible
  - Hymn Book
  - Notepad
  - Church bag

Role of the Church – John 21: 15

For the church to be able to feed and care adequately for these lambs of Christ:  
Sabbath School  
Adventist Youth Ministries

- Adventurers club – 6 -9 years
- Pathfinder club – 10 -15 years
- Senior Youth – 16 – 35 years

Need for A Special work for the Youth – For Posterity

- Upholding our standards
- Transfer of Heritage
- Purity of Faith

The church needs to invest more in the training of our youth in order to avert Judges 2: 8 – 10 (Read)

#### **How?**

Provision of material resources

Availability of Human resources – The church needs men and women who have the love of the children and youth at heart. Those who have a passion for their glorious tomorrow at heart, who would dare draw closer to them to ascertain their conditions as volunteer sponsors.

#### **Appeal**

For volunteer sponsors in the Youth Ministries Department of this church. As many as the Lord impresses their minds to identify with this ministry raise hands and pick papers to volunteer.

#### **The Adventist Youth in the World**

John 15: 19 – In the World but not of the World.

The pressures of the world surround the youth.

1. The Pressure to make it quick in life – Exod 23: 2 says that no matter how the world goes about their business, we are not to follow them.
5. 1 Timothy 6: 6-10 – Godliness with contentment is great gain. Pursuit after wealth can destroy.
6. Proverbs 23: 4, 5 – Labor not to be rich
7. Proverbs 28: 20 – “...he that makes haste to be rich shall not be innocent.”
8. Proverbs 13: 11 – Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor shall increase. Do clean business and honest labor.
9. Ecclesiastes 9: 10 – Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.
2. The Pressure of worldliness – 1 John 2: 15 – 17
10. Lust of the eyes
11. Lust of the flesh – Gal 5: 19 -21, 1 Thess 4: 3
12. Pride of life – Jer 9: 23, Politics – Phil 2: 3

3. The Pressure of Pleasure - Eccl 2: 1
13. Prov 21: 17
14. Luke 8: 14
15. Heb 11: 25

Resolution – Rom 8: 35 - 37

### **Your Place in God's Vineyard**

Eccl 12: 1 – “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth...”

Eccl 12: 13-14

Matthew 28: 19 – 20 – The Great Commission is part of man's duty.

Jeremiah 1: 1 – 6: God designed your entrance into this world. Not an accident. You have been called by God for a special assignment.

Joel 2: 28 – 30 – The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. That was the early rain. This is the last days and God's spirit is being poured on His people. Yet we pray for the showers.

“In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with a clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men.” (Gospel Workers, 67).

This is a clarion call to the youth to give their youthful energy and vigor into the fulfillment of the Lord's Great Commission.

Spirit of Prophecy Reading:

- Messages to Young People, 21 – 25
- Messages to Young People, 197 - 207

### **Your Place in the Youth Ministry Department of the Church**

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is encapsulated in Matthew 28: 18-20. In a bid to fulfill the mission, the church has been structured strategically to ensure that no stone is left unturned in mobilizing everyone, both young and old to act a part in fulfilling mission.

The Youth Ministry Department of the church is positioned to mobilize the young people of the church of the varied age categories to labor for their fellow youth and in turn, work out their salvation with fear and trembling. The truth is that there is a class of people in any society only the youth of the church can reach. It is with such a potential that the youth has that God calls on the youth for such a mission. And the church has, in turn, positioned the Youth Department in her structure to mobilize these young people to fill the place in mission they only can fill.

### **Suggested Senior Youth Ministries**

**Weekly Study meetings** - These meetings are meant for the senior youth to study to show themselves approved unto God workmen and women who need not be ashamed rightly dividing the words of truth (2 Tim 2: 15). Doctrines would be studied, Biblical stands on contemporary issues, Medical missionary work, literature ministry,

denominational history, preaching, how to lead out in Bible studies, preparations for monthly church features.

**Bi-weekly/monthly church special features** - This is a special program prepared by the senior youths for the consumption of the entire church. This could be held in the third week of the Month either in the Sabbath worship service time or evening or had two times a month.

**Revival meetings/conventions** – This are revival meetings conducted by the senior youths either in the church building or designated place. It could be a week long. Where a convention is planned, it could be an avenue of revival for a weekend. Meant to keep the young on track and focused on mission.

**Empowerment workshops** – In these workshops, entrepreneurial skills are learned. The goal is to make the young people of the church self-supporting. This is the best way to equip the youth for mission.

**Evangelism** – (door to door, public): After the training acquired during the weekly meetings, the young adults are ready to plan evangelistic campaigns and preach in the series. They are ready to go give bible studies both in small groups and door to door.

**Community services**- Ministries such as hospital visitations, prison ministries, Health expos, cooking classes, etc

**Sports activities/social activities:** Because relationship issues are part of the senior youth curriculum, activities that encourage and strengthen positive relationships are featured here.

**Junior Youth Leadership** (teach junior youth classes, teach honor classes): The Senior Youth Curriculum is structured in such a way that principles of leadership are learned and applied in the leading of the Junior Youth.

### **The Foundation for Academic and Professional Excellence:**

#### **The Essence of Choosing Jesus**

✘ Excel (v) - c.1400, from Latin excellere "to rise, surpass, be eminent," from ex- "out from" (see [ex-](#)) + -cellere "rise high, tower," related to celsus "high, lofty, great," be elevated" (see [hill](#)).

✘ An outstanding feature or quality. The quality of excelling; possessing good qualities in high degree.

✘ exceptionally high quality, a quality that gives something special worth  
Ellen White on Excellence

“If the youth today would stand as Daniel stood, they must put to the stretch every spiritual nerve and muscle. The Lord does not desire that they shall remain novices. He wishes them to reach the highest point of excellence. He desires them to reach the very highest round of the ladder that they may step from it into the kingdom of God.”  
{MYP 164.1}

Jesus will strengthen the leaders of His people if they will learn of Him. God's people must strive to reach the very highest standard of excellence. (7T 127.1)

“Let the youth be taught from childhood that there is no excellence without great labor. Aspirations for eminence will not avail. Young friends, the mountain-top cannot be reached by standing still and wishing yourselves there. You can gain your object only by taking one step at a time, advancing slowly perhaps, but holding every step gained.

It is the energetic, persevering worker that will scale the Alps. Every youth should make the most of his talents, improving to the utmost present opportunities. He who will do this may reach almost any height in moral and intellectual attainments. But he must possess a brave and resolute spirit. He will need to close his ears to the voice of

pleasure; he must often refuse the solicitations of young companions. He must stand on guard continually, lest he is diverted from his purpose. . . .” {SD 333.2}

“Excellence is never an accident; it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution and the vision to see obstacles as opportunities.” Anonymous

Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness--godlikeness--is the goal to be reached. Before the student, there is opened a path of continual progress. He has an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, and pure, and noble. He will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. But his efforts will be directed to objects as much higher than mere selfish and temporal interests as the heavens are higher than the earth. {Education 18.3}

Our world is full of corruption and tending towards mediocrity. This is due to the setting aside of God's word. The only way to shun the culture of mediocrity is excellence.

### The Key to Excellence

#### The Foundation of true Academic and Professional Excellence

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid;

and for joy over it, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Matthew 13:44

**Jesus Christ is that hidden treasure. Have you found the Lord? Have you hidden Him in your heart? Are you rejoicing over your find?**

Are there things you consider more important in life than Jesus? Things we treasure so much above Christ?

In Phil. 3:1 – 11, Paul enumerates seven things he considered more important in his life until he met Christ.

There were seven things Paul boasted about, took pride in until he met Christ.

**circumcised the eighth-day# 1. Religion - Judaism – Excellent**

Many of us have religion but not Christ. For Paul, it was circumcision, for us, it could be baptism into the church. Religion may be good, but not good enough. Paul says I had religion, I considered it so important until I met Christ.

**of the stock of Israel#2. Nationality**

I am of the stock of Israel. His nationality was his pride - Some have elevated nationality and tribalism to the point where employment is affected and enrollment into school is affected. Some of us our tribe may be our pride. Paul is saying before I met Christ, my nationality was so important to me.

**of the tribe of Benjamin,#3. Social Status**

I am of the tribe of Benjamin. This may not mean so much to us. But it did mean so much to Paul. Being a Benjamite meant, he had social status.

Today, if you have money, good GPA degree you have good social status.

In Israel, there were two favorite tribes that young men and women would have wished they came from:

1. Judah - The tribe that gave birth to the Messiah.
2. Benjamin – The only tribe that was born in the Promised Land and the tribe that produced the first king in Israel.

**a Hebrew of the Hebrews;#4. Culture**

I am Hebrew of Hebrews. Hebrew (Expression of superlative) good of goods – the best, King of kings – the best king, Lord of Lords - etc. Meaning I am the best Hebrew in town. He had an excellent culture. He knew all the proverbs. Before He

met Christ these mattered so much to Paul. He says I had this, but it was not good enough.

**concerning the law, a Pharisee; #5. Education**

Touching the law, I am a Pharisee – educated. Some of us think the Pharisees were generally bad guys. They were the most educated in the Israelite society. Some of us put so much stock into our education & certificate with the exclusion of all other things. Education is good but not good enough.

**concerning zeal, persecuting the church; #6. Work Ethics**

Concerning Zeal – persecuting the church. Paul was not lazy. Had a good (excellent) work ethic which is a fundamental principle **in achieving excellence.**

**concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless #7. Morality**

He had an excellent morality

**Summary**

Paul says I boasted in these things before I met Christ - The hidden treasure.

Now I am ready to sell all these for just to gain Him.

**Seven things: 1. Religion, 2. Social status 3. Nationality 4. Culture 5. Education 6. Work ethic 7. Morality**

Paul says “I found Jesus more Excellent than things I once considered valuable.

Paul says I count all these but loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

Paul says I’m willing to sacrifice everything for just finding the hidden treasure. Not just the seven, but all things.

Paul says you’ve got to find Jesus. You’ve got to pay whatever price for the price of true excellence. You’ve got to make Jesus No. 1

Why should we Find Jesus and make Him No. 1 on our priority list?

and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings being conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup> if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Phil 3: 9-11)

“That I May Know Him.” From the Greek Ginosko, Heb – Yadah. This know connotes an intimate relationship. As in Gen. 4:1

One thing of great importance to every one of us in life is a relationship. In Christ, we can find this safe and intimate relationship.

**“and be found in Him not having my own righteousness.” Only Jesus can help us deal with the guilt in our lives.**

The time will come when we will be hit by the guilt of the lies we told, the abortions we committed and ethereal sins. Only Jesus can deliver from such guilt.

**...and the fellowship of His sufferings”** In a time of suffering, only Christ will be there with us. One of these days we will be hit with sickness, setbacks, no philosophy can help then, only Jesus.

**...if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”** Christ alone can help mortals deal with the question of death.

**Four Reasons to know the Lord and make Him Priority:**

1. Everyone needs intimacy.
2. Jesus alone can help you deal with sin and guilt.
3. To have Christ in a time of suffering, he alone can help.
4. Christ alone can help us in a time of death.

**Know Jesus and make Him a priority in your life. He is the key and the foundation of True Excellence.**

## **DATING, COURTSHIP, AND MARRIAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ADVENTIST YOUTH**

### **Introduction**

Young people are relationship conscious. It is the search for identity. To have a sense of belonging. Hence the talk about Dating, Courtship, and Marriage. What is dating? What is courtship? What is marriage? Are they important in the social life of an Adventist Youth? How important are they? Are they indispensable in our relationships? These and some others are the questions this paper has tried to answer.

### **The Need**

The thought of marriage seems to have a bewitching power upon the minds of many of the youth. Two persons become acquainted; they are infatuated with each other, and their whole attention is absorbed. Reason is blinded, and judgment is overthrown. They will not submit to any advice or control, but insist on having their own way, regardless of consequence... Perhaps, by such a union, the usefulness of one whom God would bless in His service will be crippled and destroyed; but reasoning and persuasion are alike unheeded. {MYP 456.2, 3}

Marriage affects the afterlife both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will make no plans that God cannot approve. {MH 359.1} Therefore, it is safe to state that any relationship in which God cannot be brought into is dangerous and should be quitted.

In these days of peril and corruption, the young are exposed to many trials and temptations. Many are sailing in a dangerous harbor. They need a pilot; but they scorn to accept the much-needed help, feeling that they are competent to guide their own bark, and not realizing that it is about to strike a hidden rock that may cause them to make shipwreck of faith and happiness. They are infatuated with the subject of courtship and marriage, and their principal burden is to have their own way. In this, the most important period of their lives, they need an unerring counselor and infallible guide. This they will find in the word of God. Unless they are diligent students of that word, they will make grave mistakes, which will mar their happiness and that of others, both for the present and the future life. {FE 100.1}

The Bible presents a perfect standard of character. This sacred book, inspired by God, and written by holy men, is a perfect guide under all circumstances of life. It sets forth distinctly the duties of both young and old. If made the guide of life, its teachings will lead the soul upward. It will elevate the mind, improve the character, and give peace and joy to the heart. But many of the young have chosen to be their own counselor and guide, and have taken their cases in their own hands. Such need to study more closely the teachings of the Bible. In its pages, they will find revealed their duty to their parents and to their brethren in the faith. FE 100, 101

**1. The three phases of the marital relationship;** dating, courtship, and Marriage can be understood as an acquaintance, getting serious, and commitment respectively. Before getting into the terms proper, let's go to the origin of human relationships here on earth: Gen 2: 18 -25. Where do we find the three phases in this passage?

**2. What is Dating?** From online etymology dictionary

The verb 'date' meaning to make an appointment or engagement for a particular time, usually with someone of the opposite sex, is American in origin and its usage was first noted in the 1920's. Used as a noun, 'date' means **a social activity engaged in by two people**. It may also refer to the person with whom such an appointment is made. The word itself derives from the Latin infinitive 'dare' meaning to give. The early Romans practiced the dating of their letters and from there that the time reference evolved.

"liaison," 1885, gradually evolving from the date (n.1) in its general sense of "appointment;" romantic sense by 1890s.

Why dating? To get acquainted.

Is it needed? Yes. Because we are social beings. No one is an Island.

How? In a friendly manner. This is achieved as we get together as a church youth society for recreation, participate in spiritual activities, and educational activities. As a family, we have numerous ways of getting acquainted with one another without going the worldly way which must involve a romantic liaison.

**3. What is Courtship?** From online etymology dictionary.

Court (v) –“ woo, offer homage,” as one does at court

The word 'court' evolves from the French 'cortear' to be or reside at court. The formalities required at court begot the words courtly, courteous, and courtier. From there, it wasn't much of a stretch to 'pay courteous attention to' or to try to win the affection of especially with a view toward marriage. The verb court also has the general meaning of to entice, allure or set out to win the favor of.

**Courtship** in the 1570s means behavior of a courtier from the court (n). The meaning “paying court to a woman with intention of marriage” is from the 1590s.

It can be said to be the relationship between a man and a woman just before marriage is consummated. A process by which a man woos his prospective wife to accept his marriage proposal and vice versa.

**Implication:** Courtship must be for those who are **ready for marriage**.

Why is courtship for those who are ready for marriage?

*“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he pleases” (Song 8:4).* Courtship has some measure of wooing involved. You can't handle that except ready for marriage.

**4. Definition of Readiness for Marriage**

Before assuming the responsibilities involved in marriage, young men and young women should have such an experience in practical life as will prepare them for its duties and its burdens. Early marriages are not to be encouraged. A relation so important as marriage and so far-reaching in its results should not be entered upon hastily, without sufficient preparation, and before the mental and physical powers are well developed. {MH 358.1}

Read Genesis 2: 8, 9.

Note four trees that must be in place with you before thinking / talking about marriage:

**Genesis 2:8-9** And the LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. <sup>9</sup> And out of the ground, the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- Trees Pleasant to the eyes
- Trees good for food
- Tree of life in the midst

It is only in Christ that a marriage alliance can be safely formed. Human love should draw its closest bonds from divine love. Only where Christ reigns can there be deep, true, unselfish affection. {MH 358.3}

- Tree of knowledge of Good and Evil.

The rules of this college strictly guard the association of young men and young women during the school term. Young people are sent to school by their parents to obtain an education, not to flirt with the opposite sex. The good of society, as well as the highest interest of the students, demands that they shall not attempt to select a life partner while their own character is yet undeveloped, their judgment immature, and while they are at the same time deprived of parental care and guidance. {FE 62.2}

### **5. Why Courtship?**

It is the process of knowing your *prospective* spouse spiritually/morally, intellectually, and otherwise. It is a time to make up your mind to marry or not to marry. A Broken engagement is better than broken marriage (*Letters to Young Lovers 52.1, MYP 441*).

Let those who are contemplating marriage weigh every sentiment and watch every development of character in the one with whom they think to unite their life destiny. Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God. {MH 358.5}

Things that qualify a virtuous man or woman – Proverbs 31: 10 -31

1. Hardworking (strong hand)
2. Soft tongue
3. Liberal
4. Domesticity
5. Attitude of excellence

### **6. How should we as Adventist Youths Court?**

**Wrong Ideas of Courtship and Marriage.**--The ideas of courtship have their foundation in erroneous ideas concerning marriage. They follow impulse and blind passion. The courtship is carried on in a spirit of flirtation. The parties frequently violate the rules of modesty and reserve and are guilty of indiscretion, if they do not break the law of God. The high, noble, lofty design of God in the institution of marriage is not discerned; therefore the purest affections of the heart, the noblest traits of character are not developed. {AH 55.1}

Not one word should be spoken, not one action performed, that you would not be willing the holy angels should look upon and register in the books above. You should have an eye single to the glory of God. The heart should have only pure, sanctified affection, worthy of the followers of Jesus Christ, exalted in its nature, and more heavenly than earthly. Anything different from this is debasing, degrading in courtship; and marriage cannot be holy and honorable in the sight of a pure and holy God unless it is after the exalted Scriptural principle. {AH 55.2}

The youth trust altogether too much to impulse. They should not give themselves away too easily, nor be captivated too readily by the winning exterior of the lover.

Courtship, as carried on in this age, is a scheme of deception and hypocrisy, with which the enemy of souls has far more to do than the Lord. Good common sense is needed here if anywhere; but the fact is, it has little to do with the matter.

**Keeping Late Hours.**--The the habit of sitting up late at night is customary; but it is not pleasing to God, even if you are both Christians. These untimely hours injure health, unfit the mind for the next day's duties, and have *an appearance of evil* (*1Thess 5: 22*). My brother, I hope you will have self-respect enough to shun this form of courtship. If you have an eye single to the glory of God, you will move with deliberate caution. You will not suffer lovesick sentimentalism to so blind your vision that you cannot discern the high claims that God has upon you as a Christian. {AH 56.1}

**Implication: No co-habitation. No living together before marriage is consummated.**

Satan's angels are keeping watch with those who devote a large share of the night to courting. Could they have their eyes opened, they would see an angel making a record of their words and acts. The laws of health and modesty are violated. *It would be more appropriate to let some of the hours of courtship before marriage run through the married life. But as a general thing, the marriage ends all the devotion manifested during the days of courtship.* {AH 56.2}

These hours of midnight dissipation, in this age of depravity, frequently lead to the ruin of both parties thus engaged. Satan exults and God is dishonored when men and women dishonor themselves. The good name of honor is sacrificed under the spell of this infatuation, and the marriage of such persons cannot be solemnized under the approval of God. They are married because passion moved them, and when the novelty of the affair is over, they will begin to realize what they have done. {AH 56.3}

A young man who enjoys the society and wins the friendship of a young lady unknown to her parents does not act a noble Christian part toward her or toward her parents. Through secret communications and meetings he may gain an influence over her mind, but in so doing he fails to manifest that nobility and integrity of soul which every child of God will possess. In order to accomplish their ends, they act a part that is not frank and open and according to the Bible standard, and prove themselves untrue to those who love them and try to be faithful guardians over them. Marriages contracted under such influences are not according to the word of God. He who would lead a daughter away from duty, who would confuse her ideas of God's plain and positive commands to obey and honor her parents, is not one who would be true to the marriage obligations. {MYP 445.2}

The question is asked, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and the answer is given, "By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." The young man who makes the Bible his guide, need not mistake the path of duty and of safety. That blessed book will teach him to preserve his integrity of character, to be truthful, to practice no deception. "Thou shalt not steal," was written by the finger of God upon the tables of stone; yet how much underhand stealing of affections is practiced and excused. {MYP 446.1}

A deceptive courtship is maintained, private communications are kept up, until the affections of one who is inexperienced, and knows not whereunto these things may grow, are in a measure withdrawn from her parents and placed upon him who shows by the very course he pursues that he is unworthy of her love. {MYP 446.2}

Sensuality is the sin of the age. But the religion of Jesus Christ will hold the lines of control over every species of unlawful liberty; the moral powers will hold the lines

of control over every thought, word, and action. Guile will not be found in the lips of the true Christian. Not an impure thought will be indulged in, not a word spoken that is approaching to sensuality, not an action that has the least appearance of evil. {MM 142.5} The senses will be guarded.

Evil associations are deteriorating character; the principle is being undermined. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed (Proverb 13: 20)." {4T 589.1}

### **7. Tips on Marriage Gen 2: 18 – 25**

Seven Principle Pillars that Characterize our Belief on Marriage

1. Marriage is of God
2. Marriage is for companionship
3. Marriage is heterogeneous
4. Marriage is monogamous
5. Marriage is Permanent – Idea of Oneness (Matt 19: 3-8, Mal 2: 16, Amos 3: 3, Gal 6: 2, 1 Cor 7: 2-5)
6. Agape the goal 1Cor 13: 4-8

However carefully and wisely marriage may have been entered into, few couples are completely united when the marriage ceremony is performed. The real union of the two in wedlock is the work of the after years. {MH 359.5}

7. Individual Spiritual responsibility – Rom 14: 12; 1 Cor 5: 10

Eccl 4:9, 10 gives the advantage of marriage, the uniting of two persons to assist each other in the spiritual journey. However, in the final analysis, each one will be held accountable to God.

### **EQUIPPING THE YOUTH FOR MISSION**

- Definitions:
- Equipping – To supply with the necessary [knowledge] and materials for an undertaking
- Mission - A special assignment given to a person or group  
- Lotus Reference Dictionary.

#### **WHAT IS YOUR MISSION IN LIFE?**

Three examples of Biblical Characters who lived for a Mission

- ABRAHAM – To be a Conduit through which God will bless mankind (Gen. 12: 3; 18: 18-19).
- JESUS – To Save the world from sin (Matt. 1:21).
- PAUL - To Preach the Gospel (1Cor. 9: 16).

Negative Examples of a Mission driven Lives.

- THE JESUITS – To infiltrate and destroy any targeted system that opposes the Papacy.
- THE SUICIDE BOMBERS – To destroy any system that does not believe or practice Islam their own way.
- Without a mission, there is no direction in life.

- Millions of people in the world, live and die without knowing what they lived for.
- Such a life simply flows along in the fast current of –live by what others are doing.
- Life without a Mission creates a void that cannot be filled by money, materialism, sex, drugs, etc.

A mission-driven life:

- Is FOCUSED because there is a VISION (Heb. 11: 8-10, 13).
- Is ACTIVE because there is a TASK to be ACCOMPLISHED (Acts 20:19-24).
- Is ENDURING because it does not yield to obstacles that tend to prevent it from reaching its GOAL (Heb. 12:2)

A Mission must have a Mission Statement

- The mission statement states how you intend to fulfill your Mission.
- ABRAHAM – Building an altar to God all along his trail (Gen. 12 7, 8; 26:5).
- JESUS – A Ministry of restoration (Luke 4:18)
- PAUL – Preaching the Gospel of Christ (1Cor. 2:1-2)

APPRAISAL

- When Mission is accomplished.
- ABRAHAM – Settled in the Promised Land (Gen.24:7a; 26:5; Heb. 11:8-10).
- JESUS – End of earthly Ministry (Jn. 17:4-5; Isa. 53:11).
- PAUL – End of Gospel Ministry (2Tim. 4:6-8).

SHOULD CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES DETER A MISSION DRIVEN LIFE?

ABRAHAM

- Family Conflicts
  - \* allowed Lot to chose first the land for peace to reign
  - \* pressure to send out Hagar and his son Ishmael
- Twice a victim of severe famines
  - \* refugee to Egypt
  - \* refugee to Gerar
- Involved in war
- Gen. 26:4-5; Heb. 11:15-16

JESUS

- Family conflict
- Conflict with religious leaders
- Suffered deprivations
- Isa. 53:3a; Matt. 8:20

PAUL

- Conflicts with the Jews
- Conflicts with Brethren
- Conflicts with unbelievers
- Health problems
- Family – Single adult
- 2 Cor. 11:24-28

At the peak of their challenges

- ABRAHAM: "... My son God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering;" Gen. 22:8 (KJV).
- JESUS: "... not my will, but thine be done." Luke 22:42b.

- PAUL: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans. 8:38-39

#### WHAT IS YOUR VISION?

- Unless you keep heaven and the future immortal life before you, your attainments are of no permanent value. MYP p. 176.3
- If your vision is to make heaven, then Matt. 28:19-20 becomes your mission.
- You will be passionately involved so that your aim will be “The Advent Message to all the World in my Generation” (Matt. 24:14) because the love of Christ constrains you (2Cor. 5:14).
- Your prayer will be “Thy Kingdom Come”. (Matt. 6:10)

#### MEANS TO CARRY OUT THE MISSION

- More of self-supporting ministries will be needed
- ABRAHAM – a shepherd (Gen. 13:2)
- JESUS – a carpenter (Mark. 6:1-3).
- Paul – a tent-maker (Acts 18:1-4; 1Cor. 9:13-15)

#### PRESENT SITUATION

- Economic downturn
- Too many unemployed
- Fewer employment opportunities
- Most employing organizations are restructuring or rightsizing.
- Many losing their jobs
- Many are underemployed
- (James 5:1-4)

#### WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH DO?

- God has made provisions before now so that the mission is not deterred because of means.
- Those already employed. (Ch S. p.14,13)
- Those are unemployed. (MYP. p. 177,178,180)

#### FOR THOSE WHO ARE EMPLOYED

- **To everyone who becomes a partaker of His grace, the Lord appoints a work for others. Individually we are to stand in our lot and place, saying, "Here I am; send me." Upon the minister of the word, the missionary nurse, the Christian physician, the individual Christian, whether he be merchant or farmer, professional man or mechanic, -- the responsibility rests upon all. It is our work to reveal to men the gospel of their salvation. *Every enterprise in which we engage should be a means to this end.*--The Ministry of Healing, p. 148. {ChS 13.1}**

#### FOR THE UNEMPLOYED – SCRIPTURAL ADMONITION

- “Make it your aim to live quiet and orderly lives, minding your own business and **working to earn an honest living as we have taught you to do.** This way you’ll be seen by unbelievers as being honest citizens, **and you’ll be able to take care of yourselves without depending on others 1 Thess. 4:11-12.**” (The Clear Word) – emphasis supplied.
- **“Useful manual labor is part of the gospel plan.** The great Teacher, enshrouded in the pillar of cloud, gave directions to Israel that **every youth should be taught some line of useful employment.** Therefore it was the custom of the Jews, the wealthy as well as the poorer classes, to teach their sons and daughters some useful

trade, so that, should adverse circumstances arise, **they would not be dependent on others but would be able to provide for their own necessities**(emphasis supplied).

- They might be instructed in literary lines, but they must also be trained to some craft. This was deemed an indispensable part of their education. **Now, as in the days of Israel, every youth should be instructed in the duties of practical life.**

Each should acquire a knowledge of some branch of manual labor by which, if need be, he may obtain a livelihood.

- This is essential, not only as a safeguard against the vicissitudes of life, but from its bearing upon physical, mental, and moral development. **Even if it were certain that one would never need to resort to manual labor for support, still he should be taught to work. ...Thus habits of industry will be formed and a spirit of self-reliance** encouraged, while the youth will be shielded from many evil and degrading practices that are often the result of idleness.

- And this is all in keeping with the primary object of education; for in encouraging activity, diligence, and purity, we are coming into harmony with the Creator.”-MYP pp. 177-178

#### MEDITATION

- Have you caught the Vision? (see Heb. 11:13)
- Are you involved in the Mission?
- Is your life centered around this Mission?
- How can you appraise your involvement?

BY PASTOR N. J. ENANG  
(WAD Youth Director, 2015)

APPENDIX E

YOUTH ASSESSMENT FORM

**Youth Leaders' Assessment Exam**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Office/level** \_\_\_\_\_

**Local Church:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section One: Youth Ministry Ideals in Scripture**

1. What is the main goal of having a special ministry for the Youth?

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2. Mention five scriptural passages that discuss Youth ministry ideals and a little note of their main points.

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3. Who is the Elijah of Malachi 4: 5?

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4. **True or False:** The Youth Leader is the primary trainer of the child.

5. What are some of the roles of parents in doing Youth Ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. The training of young people should be wholistic. What does this mean in the light of Luke 2: 52?

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7. Why should there be a special ministry directed towards the Young People of the church? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Section Two - The Historical development of the Youth Ministry**

1. The earliest Youth Work was done by whom where, and when?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Whose Youth group copied heavily from the military? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who introduced the ‘clubland’ idea in the history of the youth work? \_\_\_\_\_

4. **True or false:** The Youth work in the Seventh-day Adventist Church traces her beginnings to the ministry of Luther Warren and Harry Ferner in the year 1879.

5. **True or False:** Before the organization of the church and her Youth organization, work was already going in Europe and America Youth work was already going in Europe and America.

6. **True or False:** At the Sabbath School and young people’s convention in Mount Vernon, Ohio in 1907, the name Seventh-day Adventist Young People’s Society of Missionary Volunteers was chosen and was usually shortened, “Missionary Volunteers” or simply “MV”.

7. **True or False:** From the meeting at Mount Vernon, Ohio, the primary object of the young people’s societies is the salvation and development of our youth by means of prayer, Bible study and personal missionary effort.

8. What are some of the practices in the youth ministry today that may have been copied from the youth groups existing before the formal organization of the Youth Work in the SDA Church in 1901/1907? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What occasioned the change of name from “Missionary Volunteers” to “Adventist Youth”? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What do you understand created the disconnect between the young adults/senior youths and the Youth Ministry of the Church? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Section Three – Youth Ministry Levels

1. Mention the three levels of the Adventist Youth Ministry and their supposed age brackets.

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2. Why is it not reasonable to be stressing uniform for the senior Youths?

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3. What subset of the Senior Youth Ministry alone has an official uniform as of the present? \_\_\_\_\_

### Section Four – Senior Youth Ministry Curriculum

1. Mention the three major areas of interest to be considered when formulating a curriculum for the senior Youths.

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2. Explain why each of these three major areas is important when doing Youth work for and among the senior Youths or young adults?

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3. Out of the three which area do you consider to be more important and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Which other area(s) do you consider necessary to address in planning a work/curriculum for the senior Youths or Young Adults? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Section Five – Discipline

1. What is the goal in discipline? \_\_\_\_\_

2. **True or false:** Discipline must be constructive and not destructive.

3. **True or false:** Discipline must be corrective and not vindictive.

4. **True or False:** A well-planned program would avoid many problems and mistakes.

5. **True or false:** Using breaking the spirit by using strict force is the correct way to discipline.

6. Mention 5 things that can help prevent disciplinary issues in a youth group or gathering. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Mention the four methods of discipline. \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Mention 5 don'ts in administering discipline. \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Briefly outline the discipline procedure when administering. \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What is a difference between discipline and punishment? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section Six – Spiritual Leadership**

1. Why do we need leadership anywhere? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why can we conclude that leadership is influence? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What are the three major evidences of spiritual leadership which qualify one as a spiritual leader? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Mention five of the spiritual gifts and skills needed for leadership with short notes for each.

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5. Mention five of the fruit of the Spirit with short notes for each,

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6. What are some of the guiding instruments a leader needs? List in order of importance.

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7. List the four responsibilities of a leader discussed and discuss of them in details using the blank space.

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APPENDIX F

COMMITMENT CARDS

**Sponsors Commitment Card**

I voluntarily commit myself to sponsoring our young people to be fully dedicated to their roles in the vineyard of God. So help me God.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mobile**

**Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Occupation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Senior Youth Membership Card**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Local Church:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mobile Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Occupation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Baptized or**

**Not:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## VITA

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**Background:** I was born on October 26, 1975, in Ogun State, Nigeria but an indigene of Abia State in the East of Nigeria. I have six other siblings – five ladies (three of whom are older) and one younger brother. I was raised in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. My father died in 1989, but my mother is still alive. Most of my teen years were without an earthly father. I was baptized into the body of Christ and became a Seventh-day Adventist at age 12 (1987). I attended both church school and public school at the elementary level. I attended a community secondary school. Then I went to the Seminary, Adventist Seminary of West Africa (now Babcock University), –all in West Nigeria.

**Family:** I got married traditionally on December 28, 1998, to my dear wife Vivian Agwaoma Nwakalamba who is from Umuezigbe in Abia State Nigeria. We have three children, Josephine O. (Born in 2005), Joseph A. (Born in 2007) and Jochebed J. (Born in 2012).

**Education:**

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**Experience:**

2013 - Youth and Chaplaincy Director in Aba East Conference

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