

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry
Emphasis in Mission

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: INCREASING AND SUSTAINING YOUTH PARTICIPATION
IN PROGRAMS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVENTIST YOUTH
MINISTRY IN THE ABUAKWA DISTRICT OF KUMASI, GHANA**

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Youth participation involves the youth taking part or being involved in all programs and activities that concern and involve them. The Adventist Youth Ministry is the department of the church which works with, for and by the youth with the primary focus of the salvation of the youth through Jesus Christ and preparing them in various ways for service. The youth constitute the majority of the church and the community. Therefore, they can have significant roles to play both in the church and community as indicated by the biblical, theological and theoretical evidence.

A lot of concerns have been raised about the decline and apathy among the contemporary youth in the participation of church activities and programs in this era of post-modernism. This is affecting the moral and spiritual lives of the youth as well as the church as a whole. A Library research and other forms of research were used to probe into the participation of the youth in a church program that included both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including key informants interview, focus

group discussions, and administering of questionnaires and their analyses. In the four churches of the Abuakwa District of the Seventh-day Adventists, namely, Abuakwa, Maakro, Sepaase, and Tanoso, it was found that though the youth participate in church activities, from the adult and the aged there was a decline. All these necessitated the urgent need of effective intervention for improvement.

A program, with the purpose of increasing and sustaining youth participation for effective Adventist Youth Ministry, was consequently developed and implemented in these four churches of the district, to ameliorate or alleviate the problem. The benefit of the program was seen when the spiritual life and the number of the youth who involved themselves in church and youth programs increased in all four churches in the Abuakwa District. A district youth evangelistic team, ADAYOM, of 25 youths was also formed. The adults and church leadership understood and embraced the need for maximum youth participation in all church activities including leadership. In conclusion, the implementation of the intervention brought improvement in the involvement of the youth in church activities.

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A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment

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Dan Kwaku Owusu-Ansah

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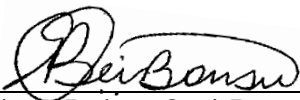
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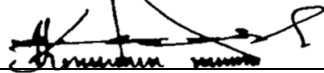
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This research work is dedicated first to Jehovah Almighty who by His grace has made me who and what I am, and also to all my Owusu-Ansah family (both nuclear and extended), most especially my wife, Doris, and my beloved four children, Mike, Grace, Betty-Dale, and Junior who have supported me in my ministry, to all loved ones, colleagues in the ministry, and the DMin program (AUA) students who have impacted my life, as well as to all who have a part to play in the Adventist Youth Ministries.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADAYOM	Abuakwa District Adventist Youth on Missions
AYM/AY	Adventist Youth Ministries
AYS	Adventist Youth Society
CGC	Central Ghana Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist
Dir.	Director
Eld.	Elder
GC	General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
MV	Missionary Volunteer Society
NGUM	Northern Ghana Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventist
NT	New Testament of the Holy Bible
OT	Old Testament of the Holy Bible
Pr.	Pastor
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist(s) or simply Adventist
SOP	Spirit of Prophecy

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has been generally asserted that the future of every society including the church of God depends on its youth it has today. It is also obvious and indisputable fact that the young people as part and parcel of their society play a major role in the societies in which they live. Yet there is some sort of apathy among others. The researcher from experience and many encounters with the young people attests to these facts. This chapter, therefore, introduces the various steps and methods that look into the problem and the possible means for increasing and sustaining youth participation in church programs especially that of the Adventist Youth Ministry.

Description of the Ministry Context

In agreement with Ellen G. White, “God does not work as men plan, or as they wish; He ‘moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.’”¹ This is also in harmony with what the Bible says in Isaiah 55:8-9, “for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” From infancy, it was not my intention to become a pastor by profession despite the fact that many people were calling me pastor; all because of my active involvement in the religious activities of the church and the schools I attended

¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 5:726.

but now I am. My calling and entrance into the gospel ministry in July 1991 attest to the above statements.

My involvement in youth ministry, both at the local church and conference level have positively affected my ministry to a great extent. The AY Motto, “For the love of Christ constrained us” and the Aim, “The advent message to the world in my generation” buoy my spirit up, motivate me and keep me ongoing. This has, therefore, necessitated my writing or compilation of articles and booklets such as *Heritage for the Adventist Youth* – a 66 page booklet predominantly used in Ghana by many of our youth.

My association with the youth has revealed to me that they are in serious crises in all aspects of church life. Youth in the twenty-first century are full of secular ideas which influence their lives and also affect their involvement in spiritual activities, especially in the church. Challenges of secularism and postmodernism affect not only the secular youth but also the youth within Christendom, including Seventh-day Adventists (SDA). Having worked as an Adventist institutional chaplain, District pastor, Conference Youth and Chaplaincy director and currently the Union Health and Youth Ministries Director, throughout my 25 years of active ministerial service, a lot has been experienced. I have come to the realization that majority of contemporary SDA youth have lost interest in church activities and therefore do not involve themselves in the Youth Ministry and other church programs.

Nonetheless, Ellen G. White admonishes; “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained”² can carry the message of the soon-coming Savior to the whole world. She adds that “in order that the work may go forward in all its branches

²Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Hagerstown, MD: Herald, 1958), 196.

God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause”³ The implication is that the church needs to work with its youth to achieve the gospel commission. We cannot leave behind the youth of the church since they are part of the church today and also the future of the church. Consequently, the role of the youth in the church is indispensable to the success and growth of the church.

This challenge has necessitated my desire and quest to find out the various causes of this phenomenon of apathy and the effective means of rekindling the lost interest and passion of the young people towards church programs and how to sustain their interest in church activities. It is hoped that if church leaders, the youth, and parents would pragmatically cooperate and embrace the means for rekindling the lost interest of the young people in the church, there would be spiritual and numerical growth in the church, especially among the youth.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a great decline in youth participation in church activities in the Central Ghana Conference of SDA Churches especially in the Abuakwa District in church programs and activities. This apathy is negatively affecting the religious and moral lives of the young people (who are part and parcel of the church today and the future) as well as the Youth Ministry program in particular. This has led to fear that the SDA faith, legacy, values, and standards may not be sustained by the contemporary youth for posterity if measures are not put in place to check their indifference towards the church and its programs and activities. This calls for an urgent need in addressing the issue by parents, church leaders, and the youth through

³ White, *Messages to Young People*, 196.

a systematic approach. The decline in youth involvement in church activities is a challenge that needs to be studied for solutions to be found, hence this study.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this in ministry dissertation is to develop, implement and evaluate efficient strategies and programs to increase and sustain the participation of the youth in church activities and programs for effective Adventist Youth Ministry in the Abuakwa District of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Justification for the Dissertation

Many church members have expressed serious concerns about the apathy towards church programs among contemporary SDA youth; yet, they do not seek for the causes and a better approach to ameliorate the issue.

The old and the young are heirs of the heavenly kingdom and are relevant to the service of God, therefore, the needs of the youth, as church members, are to be catered for by the Church as it was done by Jesus.

The youth are part of the society as well. The good and responsible youth of the church implies responsible and good citizens in the society. Hence governments show a keen interest in youth participation, especially in the welfare and better upbringing of the young people.

The Bible calls on the family, church and the nation to seek for the wellbeing and care for the youth (Exod 10:9; Deut 6:6-7; Eph 6:4).

Ellen G. White expresses much concern for the youth and their nurturing in many of her writings (e.g. *Messages to the Young People, Child Guidance, and Education* etc.).

It is the conviction of the researcher that by addressing these challenges of the youth in the church, the purpose, goals, and objectives of the Adventist Youth

Ministry for the entire SDA Church would be achieved to the benefit of the entire district, the conference and the society at large.

Delimitation of the Dissertation

The problem of the decline in interest and participation among contemporary SDA young people towards church programs is currently experienced in many churches and Conferences. This study is especially focused at the Adventist Youth Ministries in the Abuakwa District in the Central Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Kumasi, where the researcher resides and has also served as a District pastor, hence the choice of the district for this special project. However; this dissertation is limited to the four larger churches in the Abuakwa District, so that the implementation of the project may be effectively done and monitored. The focus is the youth of both gender between the ages 16-35 years through the elders and all the entire church members are not excluded from benefiting.

Description of the Dissertation Process

Library research, questionnaires, interviews, discussions, and observations with various research approaches which include both qualitative and quantitative methods would be used in this study as outlined in this following dissertation process:

Based on the Old and New Testaments, a biblical foundation for youth involvement in the service of God is established. His expectations from parents, church leaders, and the young ones are also considered. Along with this, the Spirit of Prophecy writings and the SDA Church Manual would also be investigated to gain insight. Further insight is gleaned from other writings of the SDA Church pioneers and contemporary church writers in order to explain the role of young ones during the early days of Adventism and contemporary challenges facing the youth. Other

Christian authors, contemporary authorities in youth participation and educators' writings are also consulted.

Based on the theological and theoretical research, including questionnaires verbal interviews and observations, the following are done:

The strategy of causes and means of increasing and sustaining youth participation in ministry among contemporary youth for church programs, its impact on spiritual and numerical growth is developed. The strategy is presented to the Abuakwa District and Central Ghana Conference (CGC) of SDA.

Upon passing on the information about the strategy to the CGC and the district, three churches in the district were thoroughly acquainted with the strategy. The implementation is done through workshops and sermons at church services and youth meetings in these four churches.

The results of the strategy are monitored for about six months. The data are gathered and analyzed followed by evaluation and presentation of the results to the district and the Conference for information.

All steps and results for increasing and sustaining the youth's interest for participation towards effective Adventist Youth ministry are documented as the dissertation chapters:

Chapter 1 is the introduction and overview of the dissertation. This presents (1) Description of the Ministry Context, (2) Statement of the Problem, (3) Statement of the Purpose, (4) Justification for the Dissertation, (5) Delimitations, (6) Methodology, (7) Expectations, (8) Definition of Terms and (9) Summary.

Chapter 2 provides a biblical and theological foundation for effective youth ministry. This considers issues related to the topic as found in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

Chapter 3 deals with the literature review; it discusses and analyses ideas from historical SDA literature, contemporary SDA literature, contemporary Christian literature, and literature on social studies and education that relate to youth participation (in ministry).

The following Chapter 4 deals with the project strategy design and presentation. This involves the description of youth ministry in SDA Church setting, the description of the local setting which includes the socio-cultural and economic background of the Atwima District, the historical background of the Abuakwa SDA Church and its Youth Ministries, development and distribution of questionnaires and interviews, collection and analysis of data. This is followed by designing and presentation of project strategy and evaluation and monitoring.

Chapter 5 provides a thorough description of the implementation of strategy before, during and after workshops, sermons and youth meetings, evaluation of initiatives implemented.

The final chapter gives a brief description of the final evaluation of the whole work and its summary. It also provides the summary, conclusion and the recommendations for future study. The date of completion of this dissertation is November 30, 2015.

Expectations

The expectations for this dissertation were as follows:

1. This dissertation will be used as a working tool in finding effective means of mobilizing, mentoring, nurturing and motivating SDA youth for church programs and God's work. It aims at boosting the spiritual and moral lives of the young people in order to encourage them to partake in the service of the Church.
2. Due to the pragmatic nature of this dissertation and its implementation, it will lead to an increase in the spiritual and numerical growth of the church membership.
3. It is expected that this project will enhance the mission of the church because the improved lives of the young people will have an impact on the non-SDA youth they live within the community.
4. The SDA faith legacy, standards, and values will be continuously incorporated into the lives of the youth today and for posterity.
5. This dissertation will not only enhance the knowledge of the researcher but also the readers and listeners. The benefit of a program aimed at rejuvenating youth

spirituality and involvement in church activities will not only benefit the youth of this district but also will be beneficial to other areas having the same challenge.

1. The researcher's goal of contributing to academia and the Adventist Youth Ministry (AY) for effectiveness shall be fulfilled or satisfied.

Definition of Term

Conference – is the assembly of districts put together within a larger territory of SDA church.

District – a group of the sisterhood of churches in a local area or small territory in a Conference which is usually headed by a pastor; a parish.

Participation – the act of getting involved or taking part or being part of some activity

Spirit of Prophecy – a collection of the writings especially that of Ellen G. White, a co-founder of the Adventist Church believed to be inspired by God and mostly used by Adventist as counsel.

Union – a higher organization of the church constituted by conferences in a territory.

Youth – a young person of both sexes between the stages of childhood and adulthood; and in the Adventist church between ages 6-30+years who can be regarded as a regular member of the Youth Ministries.

Youth Participation – the concept or idea of the young people taking part or getting involved in matters or decision making that involve and concern them or others. It is used synonymously with youth involvement.

Summary

From the ministerial experience as a chaplain, district and local church pastor, and youth director, as well as the concerns raised by some church members, a decline in the participation of contemporary youth in church activities especially missions has

been observed. This apathy has negatively impacted on the morality and spirituality of the youth, the Adventist Youth Ministry, and the church as a whole. Hence this study aims at finding the effective means of increasing and sustaining youth participation in church activities and programs for effective Adventist Youth Ministries especially in the Abuakwa District of the Seventh-day Adventists. The next chapter will discuss what the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy have on Youth Ministry which involves youth participation.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN MINISTRY

The Adventist Youth Ministry is seen as that unit of the church's mission operated through the youth department that is conducted for, with and by young people. Its primary focus is the salvation of the youth through our Lord Jesus, their acceptance, and involvement in the mission of the church.¹ Its mission is the proclamation of the everlasting gospel of universal salvation of God through Jesus Christ to the entire world in the context of the Three Angels' message of Revelation 14: 6-12 and Matthew 28: 18-20. The youth department, therefore, works for and through its members to reach the young people within and without the church through fellowship, nurture, worship, and mission. It also facilitates and supports the ministry of the church in winning, training, maintaining and reclaiming its youth for salvation and service.²

Although the name, or term, Youth Ministry cannot be found in the Scripture, it can be said to be bible-based or have a theological foundation. There is much support to buttress the fact that throughout the Bible, God has been making use of youth and young adults in the advancement of His cause of bringing salvation to humankind in various epochs. God made use of some people from their youthful ages to accomplish various significant roles or services like prophets, priest, kings, queens,

¹West-Central Africa Division, *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist* (Accra, Ghana: Advent, 2013), 343.

² Ibid.

deliverers, forerunners, disciples, apostles, and leaders. The idea of getting the youth involved in the service of God is what is entailed in youth ministry. Among the various meanings given for ministry from the verb ‘to minister’ by the *Collins Dictionary* is that of service—to attend to the needs (of), or to take care (of).³ The same idea of service is conveyed as “broad definition of ministry as service, the investment of self for another’s advancement, whether in relation to God or another human being.”⁴ This idea of rendering service of a certain kind is also conveyed by the *SDA Bible Dictionary*: in the OT generally the translation is from the Hebrew *sharath*, which means to serve.⁵ In the NT, ministry as service is seen in the use of the Greek words such as *diakoneo* (to serve or support), *diakonia* (service or office), *hypereteo* (serve or render service) or *leitourgeo* (voluntary service for the political or community).⁶ Hence youth ministry can be seen as getting the youth involved in the service of God for humanity.

The biblical perception of youth involvement here should not be confused or restricted with adolescence in the modern context. From the biblical viewpoint, youth denotes a state of life and it represents one’s moral, spiritual and social condition.⁷ Considering this and what is said in Prov. 20: 29 that the glory of young men is their

³ Sandra Anderson, ed. et al., *Collins Dictionary*, 2005, s.v. “minister.”

⁴ Leland Ryken, “Youth Involvement,” *Dictionary of the Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1998), 558.

⁵ Siegfried H. Horn, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary (SDABD)*, rev. ed. (1979), s.v. “Minister.”

⁶ K. Hess, “Serve, Deacon, Worship.” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (NIDNT)*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1986), 3:544.

⁷ Ryken, “Youth Involvement,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 976.

strength, it can also allude that physical strength and vigor are a distinct characteristic of the young.⁸

In view of this, the researcher in this chapter explores the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to bring into focus the various biblical renditions for the term ‘youth’ as well as dimensions where youth ministry is well featured such as involvement, training, mentorship, empowerment and motivation of the youth. Some Bible characters (as models), and the various ministries they performed to enhance God’s salvation or missionary work are also considered, in addition to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy injunctions for youth ministry.

References and Involvement of Youth in the OT: Concepts, Models, Dimensions and Injunctions

The Bible, depending on the context, synonymously makes use of various words such as young (as seen in young man or men), damsel or girl, son, boy or child and at times the word youth itself all to convey the idea that the person under consideration is not so old. “A majority of the Bible’s more than three hundred references to young or youth use the term in a neutral sense to designate age or a grouping within society.”⁹

In the Old Testament, the Poetic writers make use of the words *children* and *youth* synonymously.¹⁰ The Young’s Analytical Concordance provides about twelve Hebrew and three different Greek words in which the idea of youth is implied. The most common Hebrew ones include *neurim* used 45 times in the OT for youth and

⁸Ryken, “Youth Involvement,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 976.

⁹ Leland Ryken et al, ed. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 975.

¹⁰ Ryken, *Dictionary of the Biblical Imagery*, 975.

once for the child. The Hebrew word *naar* is used about 87 times for young person or young man, 33 times for ladies, and 4 times to designate youth. Another word of common usage is *alumim* which is used about 4 times for youth. Other Hebrew words that carry the idea of youth include; *bechuroth, ben, neuroth, noar, pirchah, shacharuth, tseirah, yaldah, and yalid*.

Generally, all the 39 books of the Old Testament are grouped into four major divisions as the Pentateuch, Historical Books, Writings (Wisdom Literature) and Prophetic Books. It is quite interesting to see that in all these divisions, the ministry of youth has been featured in various forms such as counsels to parents and the children, involvement, mobilization, training, and empowerment of the youth.

Youth Involvement in the OT: Dimensions and Models

This section of the study provides insight in the form of quotations from the OT and some sort of short comments on some of the Bible characters and the various roles they played in their youthful age. At this juncture, short biographies of some of these OT models are going to be considered to demonstrate the significance of their roles.

Youth as leaders/saviors. The OT vividly portrays God's leading and saving acts for his people. Notwithstanding, at times God has made use of human agents in achieving such functions, including young ones, as seen in the lives of Joseph, Miriam, and David.

Joseph, a model of a faithful youth savior. He was the eleventh son of Jacob and first of Rachel. In Genesis (Genesis 30, 37-50), Moses, gives an account of the life history of Joseph. The name means "may he add" from the root *yasaph*, "to

add”¹¹ or “May the Lord add to me another son” (Gen 30:24). Joseph, even at the youthful age of 17 years (Gen 37:2) has the spiritual gift of dreaming and interpreting dreams. He detested evil so much that he reported to his father the evil deeds of his brothers. He was loved by his father more than any of his brethren. The Genesis account and that of Acts by Stephen (Acts 7: 7-9) tell that the patriarchs out of jealousy sold Joseph into Egypt yet the Lord was with him.

It was in Egypt while serving as a slave in Potiphar’s house, that, “Joseph’s faithfulness and ability won the confidence of Potiphar so that he was made steward of his master’s household, however, his handsomeness created lustful feelings in the heart of the wife of his master.”¹² The greatest test of his trust and allegiance to God and His word came when he was persistently and forcefully tempted by Potiphar’s wife to lie with her or have a carnal relationship with her. Josephus describes the last episode of the temptation as; she pretended to Potiphar as though she was sick during a time of festival when the custom demanded that she should come out publicly.¹³

By so doing, Potiphar’s wife got a chance for privacy and freedom that she might entreat Joseph to lie with her. Joseph’s refusal and his remarkable statement that: “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Gen 39:9) is a matter of significance and food for thought for contemporary youth. The Bible expressed that Joseph fled. That which the most powerful man like Sampson (the strongest person who ever lived); David (the most glorious king) and Solomon (the wisest and richest king) could not flee from but succumbed to, Joseph by the grace of God and by determination overcame. He did not mess up his spirituality with sexual

¹¹ *SDABD*, s.v. “Joseph.”

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1981), 47.

lust. Though a youth and also handsome, Joseph purposed in his heart not to sin against God and do such great wickedness. Josephus claims,

Neither did pity dissuade Joseph from his chastity, nor did fear compel him to a compliance with her; but he opposed her solicitations, and did not yield to her threatenings, and was afraid to do an ill thing, and chose to undergo the sharpest punishment rather than to enjoy his present advantages by doing what his own conscience knew would justly deserve that he should die for it.¹⁴

The idea of choosing to forgo the pleasures of sin at the present but to suffer affliction is what was imitated by Moses (Heb 11: 24-26). His divine gift of dreams and interpreting dreams became manifested when he interpreted the dreams of two colleague prisoners, a butler and a baker (Gen 40). He consequently interpreted two dreams of King Pharaoh regarding the destiny of Egypt, and an impending period of seven years of abundance and seven years of famine. Joseph counseled Pharaoh that in view of the dreams and their interpretation; a thorough preparation for food storage should be made in the cities during the seven plenteous years, against the seven of famine. He also added that Pharaoh should choose a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt (Gen 41: 33) to manage, and appoint officers to supervise the collection of one-fifth of the produce of the land.

Joseph's counsel was good in the sight of Pharaoh and that of all the servants, and Pharaoh remarked that there was no man in whom was the Spirit of God and had wisdom and discernment more than Joseph. Hence Joseph was set over the land of Egypt (Gen 41: 38-41).¹⁵

As part of his investiture, Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah and was also given a wife called Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On

¹⁴ Josephus, 47.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Herald, 1890), 221.

(Gen 41:45) and a lady of the most renowned priestly families.¹⁶ Although the Bible does not give the meaning of Joseph's new name, according to the *SDABC* it may mean "The god speaks that he may live." The Bible reckons that Joseph was thirty years by this time that he stood before Pharaoh, King of Egypt (Gen 41: 46). To Josephus, "Joseph was now grown up to thirty years of age, and enjoyed great honors from the king, who called him Psothom Phanech, out of regard to his prodigious degree of wisdom; for that name denotes *the revealer of secrets*."¹⁷

An analysis of both Moses and Josephus accounts reveals commendable qualities about Joseph. He was a revealer of secrets and a youth full of discernment and wisdom, whose counsel preserved of many lives. These, show how Joseph was exalted by both God and man at a youthful age of thirty years, and without a doubt, there was a divine power with him. E. G. White, therefore, expresses, that Joseph, through his slavery in Egypt, became a savior to his people. It was not only to his own but, too many people at the time of universal catastrophe. Joseph's life experience can be illustrated with "**6Ps**" as: from **P**aternal home of comfort yet hatred by brethren to **P**it of discomfort to **P**otiphar's house of slavery, stewardship, and temptation to **P**rison of reject but opportunity, then finally to **P**haraoh's **P**alace, a place or office in high esteem, victory, and salvation for multitude of people.

White, like some commentators, in many counts compares Joseph with Jesus.¹⁸ Both of them shared certain things in common such as were (i) descendants of Abraham and Jews or Israelites, (ii) beloved sons of their father (John 3:16 and Matt

¹⁶Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary: Genesis to Deuteronomy* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1978), 1:448.

¹⁷ Josephus, 49.

¹⁸ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 239.

4:17 compared with Gen 37:3), (iii) endowed or filled with the Spirit of God and chose not to sin as seen in Luke 2:52, they increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor of God and man, (iv) envied by their brethren or siblings, (v) betrayed and sold by their own people – Joseph for 20 pieces of silver and Jesus 30 pieces, (vi) had the spirit of forgiveness for those who wronged them, (vii) falsely accused and judged yet did not open their mouth for defense, (viii) after becoming victorious from temptation, suffering and servanthood were raised to position of highest esteem (compare Gen 41:39-46 with Phil 2:6-11), and (ix) became saviors or deliverers for their people and multitude. Joseph is, therefore, a great model for all, both young and old.

David, a boy after God’s heart. According to *SDABD*, the name David is more often interpreted to mean ‘beloved’ and has also been suggested to mean ‘chieftain’ or ‘commander’ as seen on the Moabite Stone and Mari texts.¹⁹ David, the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse of Bethlehem, in Judah (1 Sam 17:12) was anointed by Samuel as king of Israel when he was but a lad. Although he was the second king, David is seen as the most celebrated and greatest king of Israel.²⁰ Much has been written in the Bible and many other books on David’s achievements as a man of pronounced courage, a leader/king, a mighty warrior/ conqueror, a prolific psalmist /musician, a Bible author and above all the man of God’s heart, anointed by God despite his imperfections as a human. For the sake of this work, however, the citations shall focus on his youthful activities.

In 1 Samuel 16: 11, Samuel asked Jesse if all the young men had been brought in. Then Jesse said; only the youngest was left and that he was, taking care of the sheep, so David was sent for. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in

¹⁹ *SDABD*, s.v. “David.”

²⁰ Young, s.v. “David.”

the midst of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day onwards.

1 Samuel 17:41 states when Goliath, the Philistine saw David; he disdained him “for he was only a youth, ruddy and good-looking.” When King Saul saw David going out to face the Philistine, Saul asked Abner, the army commander “Abner, whose son is this youth?” (1 Sam 17:55). After David had miraculously killed Goliath with a sling and smooth stone he took from the brook, chopped Goliath’s head off with Goliath’s own sword and brought the head to Jerusalem, Saul asked David the same question: “Whose son are you, young man?” after previously inquired whose son this young man is (1 Sam 17:56, 58). All these are indicative that David was a youth.

The song of the women as they danced and celebrated David’s victory stated that Saul had slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands is revealing David as a youth leader and savior of his people. All these testify to the fact that God started to make use of David right from his youth to accomplish His salvation agenda. God made use of David to change His people through the same spiritual indicators He employed in David’s life. God used David and his son Solomon as part of His plan to teach Israel about Himself and his kingdom.²¹ Despite his personal flaws, David was also described as a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam 13:14).

Youth as priests and prophets. This is seen in the lives of Samuel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Interestingly, all these three Bible characters in the OT played the combined roles of both priest and prophet from their youth. Commenting on these dual ministerial roles, Hassell Bullock expresses, “the degree to which the prophetic

²¹ Avery T. Willis and Henry T. Blackaby, *On Mission with God; Living God’s Purpose for His Glory* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 111.

and priestly roles in ancient Israel were mutually cooperative or exclusively resistant is still an open question in the OT studies. Most likely there was something of both in the history of prophecy.’²²

Samuel, the priest, and prophet.

Samuel’s name means “heard of God”²³ or as “his mother apparently intended it to mean “God has heard,”²⁴ by saying because she asked for him from the Lord (1 Sam 1: 21) for he was born as a consequence of answered prayer by the mother, Hannah and the father, Elkanah. The Bible and extra-biblical records present Samuel as a priest who replaced his master and mentor, Eli the priest, also as a prophet and as the last judge of Israel.²⁵ For the sake of this study, instances of his youthful activities shall be cited.

1 Samuel 3: 1-4 explains that the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And in those days the word of the LORD was rare; there was no widespread revelation ... that the LORD called Samuel, and he answered, “Here I am! ”

(1 Samuel 3: 10). It is also indicated that the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” and Samuel answered, “Speak, for Your servant hears”. God, therefore, revealed to the boy Samuel the incredible thing He was going to do in Israel against Eli. Josephus explains, Samuel was twelve years old when he began to prophesy; when he was asleep God called him by his name.²⁶ Though the Bible does not state the age of Samuel at the time God (LORD) called him, if

²² C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets Books* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1986), 227.

²³Young, s.v. “Samuel.”

²⁴ *SDABD*, s.v. “Samuel.”

²⁵ Young, “Samuel.”

²⁶ Josephus, 348.

Josephus's stated age of twelve years is correct, then it can be inferred that Samuel's ministry in the temple (under the tutorage of Eli) and as a prophet commenced at early youth age.

After the capture of the ark of God by the Philistines, the fatal death of Eli and his two sons (Hophni and Phinehas) and the wife of Phinehas during childbirth, all being encapsulated as Ichabod (1 Sam 6:10-22), there was the ultimate return of the ark. Although the length of the time interval is not specifically stated, 1Samuel 7 records that "And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah", and also ministered as high priest for Israel by offering sacrifices.

Ezekiel, "the son of man." His name means "God will strengthen"²⁷ or 'God is strong.'²⁸ He was another prophet whose ministry commenced at a youthful age. Ezekiel describes himself been identified by God with the title or term "the son of man" whenever he was been called (Ezek 2:1, 6; 3: 1, 17 etc.). Like Samuel and Jeremiah, 'Ezekiel exercised a double ministry'²⁹ as a priest and prophet. Ezekiel, in Ezekiel 1: 1-3 introduced himself as Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, and whilst he was among the captives in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar that the word of the Lord expressly came to him. The hand of the Lord was upon him there and that the heavens were opened and he saw visions of God. To show that this insight into his call into the prophetic ministry in addition to his priesthood occurred in his youthful age, he records that "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River

²⁷ *SDABD*, s.v. "Ezekiel."

²⁸ Young, s.v. "Ezekiel."

²⁹ John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1969), 19.

Chebar ... and I saw visions of God” (Ezek 1: 1).

Although, unlike other characters, there is no internal evidence in the chapter to specify the actual event that marks the commencement of this period, according to the SDABC, “many believe that it refers to the 30th year of his life”³⁰ based on the fact that ‘the age of 30 was significant from the point of view that at this age the Hebrew youth were considered to have reached maturity.’³¹ As evidenced in Numbers 4: 3, it was at this age that the Levites originally started their Temple or priestly functions. Taylor also asserts that, if we are veracious or correct in thinking that ‘the thirtieth year’ referred to in Ezekiel 1:1 was the thirtieth year of his age it follows that Ezekiel was a young man in his mid-twenties when the exile began, and this would allow for the considerable period over which his ministry extended.’ As a conclusion, based on these facts provided by Taylor and *SDABC*, it can be said without a doubt, that Ezekiel’s dual ministry was begun in his youthful age even amidst a period of captivity.

Youths as kings/queens. Kingship is one of the greatly recognized institutions in the biblical and contemporary eras. In spite of the fact that YAHWEH was/is seen and described as King (‘King of glory’, King of kings, etc. as in Isai 52:7; Ps 24:7-10; Dan 2:44, 4:34; Matt 6:10; Rev 17:14, 19:16), it is quite interesting and significant to see that some youth have been playing major roles in the monarchical era of the OT. This is seen in the lives of Josiah and Esther as well as many others as provided in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

Josiah, the youngest king. His name means either “Jah supports”³² or

³⁰ “Thirtieth Year,” *SDABC*, 4:574.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Young, s.v. “Josiah.”

“Yahweh heals.”³³ He was the son of Amon, king of Judah. Josiah was “the 16th ruler of the kingdom of Judah, who reigned for 31 years (c. 640- c.609 B. C.).”³⁴ Comay also asserts that Josiah was the sixteenth king of Judah after the monarchy split and was the son of king Amon of Judah and of Jedida, daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.³⁵ Josiah was enthroned as a king at a very young age of eight years (2 Chr 34: 1) after his father, Amon had been assassinated through conspiracy by his own servants in his own house although the conspirators were executed too by the people of the land (2 Chr 33:21-25).

Amon even was twenty-two years old when he succeeded his father, Manasseh (2 Chr 33: 18-21). He reigned only two years in Jerusalem and did evil in the sight of the Lord and unlike the father, did not humble himself before the Lord. Hence it can be said that King Amon died as a youth. Coming back to King Josiah, he is seen as a great reformer and a youth king who brought about great reformation in religious activities and sanity in Judah. 2 Chronicle 34: 3 indicates that in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, Josiah began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places.

Josiah’s greatest achievement occurred in his 18th regnal year (at about age 26 years) when he ordered for the repair of the house of the Lord his God which led to the discovery of the scroll of the Law of Moses in the Temple by Hilkiyah and to be read to the king. The *SDABD* expresses that a great national revival commenced and Josiah put in all his efforts to weed off idolatry and paganism from the kingdom and

³³ *SDABD*, s.v. “Josiah.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Joan Comay, *Who’s Who in the Old Testament* (London, UK: Routledge, 2002), 215.

led the country to enter into an earnest covenant with God.³⁶ 2 Kings 23: 1-25
exposits that Josiah restored true worship and celebrated the Passover so splendidly in
a way that it had been said of him that before him there was no king like him, who
turned to the LORD with all his heart, soul, and all his might, according to all the Law
of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him. Josiah indeed remembered his creator
in his youth, even as a king.

Esther, the young queen. The name is thought to be Persian which means star
which she adopted probably when entered the Persian court, but her original Hebrew
name was Hadassah which means myrtle.³⁷ The writer of the book of Esther was
written by either Ezra or Mordecai,³⁸ in Esther 2:5- describes Esther as Hadassah, and
that she was the orphan daughter of Mordecai's uncle and therefore was related to
him.

She was taken as a daughter by Mordecai, a Jew, and a Benjamite when her
father and mother died. Both Mordecai and Hadassah were living in Shushan the
citadel of the kingdom during the reign of King Ahasuerus also known as King
Xerxes.³⁹ Esther is again been described as a lovely and beautiful young woman (v.7).
Josephus describes Esther by saying she was a wife of a Jewish descent and was of
the royal family.⁴⁰

The *SDABD* describes Esther as a Jewish queen of King Ahasuerus and
heroine or principal character of the Bible book bearing her name. She “was a

³⁶ *SDABD*, s.v. “Josiah.”

³⁷ *SDABD*, s.v. “Esther.”

³⁸ “The Book of Esther, Authorship,” *SDABC* 3: 458.

³⁹ “Ahasuerus,” *SDABC* 3: 463.

⁴⁰ Josephus, 237.

remarkably beautiful young lady whose tact earned for her royal approval and the title of queen, when her predecessor fell into disrepute in the 7th year (about 478 B.C.) of the King.⁴¹ It is through her involvement and orchestration, described as “a supreme act of bravery equaled only by her infinite tact,”⁴² although cautioned by Mordecai, that God wrought deliverance to the Jews from the evil machination of total extermination and the confiscation of their property by Haman (Esth 3: 7-15).

Esther found something she could die for and went to the king against the law to put her supplication before the king for the deliverance of her people. This led to the establishment and celebration of the festal period of Purim meaning “Lots” in the month of Adar (Adar 13). By this, the Jews honor Queen Esther and in remembrance of her spirit of bravery and dedication, which God used as an avenue of bringing deliverance to His people throughout the borders of the Persian Empire (Esth 4-9). In effect, Esther is not just a young beautiful queen or a heroine of a Bible book, but a lady instrument of salvation who risked her life for the deliverance of her and God’s people in captivity. For the rest of all about Esther and her deeds are seen in the book of Esther.

Youth as agents of missions/witnessing. Though categorical command for witnessing or being on missions for God is not specified in the OT, unlike the NT, witnessing God among heathens is seen among people including youth. Example is seen in the life of the unnamed Hebrew maiden in the house of Naaman. 2 Kings 5: 1 describes Naaman as the commander of the Syrian army, a mighty man of valor, a great and honorable man in the sight of the king, and through him or military prowess the Lord had given victory to Syria.

⁴¹ *SDABD*, s. v. “Esther.”

⁴² *Ibid.*

Despite all these good qualities, he was having leprosy, a chronic infectious disease that according to OT law of hygiene (Lev 13:45-59; Num 12: 14) called for ostracism. 2 Kings 5: 2-3 tells that, one time the Syrians went out on raids and brought back a captive a young girl from the land of Israel who waited on Naaman's wife. Then she said to her mistress, that if only the master went to the prophet who was in Samaria he would be healed of his leprosy. This is all that was said about the young girl. When Naaman complied and did what this young slave girl suggested and that of the prophet by bathing in Jordan seven times he was healed.

Though her statement seems short and straight forward the implication is heavy and impregnated with elements of faith. The outcome of her witnessing or testimony brought salvation. God's saving grace was made known in a heathen land and could be spread across borders. The *SDABC* expresses that recalling the wonderful works of the prophet Elisha in her homeland, she was optimistic and had faith that her master Naaman could be healed of his leprosy. She believed that what God had wrought through His servants the prophets in Samaria or Israel; He could also do for others of an alien race like her masters.⁴³

Youth as heroes of faith/ model of "unit" system. The book of Daniel written by the prophet Daniel himself describes a group of four Hebrew young men in the persons of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah among the group of youth taken into captivity in Babylon. Having been singled out indicates that, they were special among the others. Daniel 1 exposit, in the third year⁴⁴ of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and

⁴³ "With the Prophet," *SDABC* 2:875.

⁴⁴ The "third year of the reign of Jehoakim varies with various commentators but *SDABC* 2: 755 has it as the fall of 606 and ended in the fall of 605 B. c. by Jewish civil year.

besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God (Dan 1: 1-2). Besides the items, king Nebuchadnezzar ordered his chief eunuch Ashpenaz to bring some children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles.

Analyzing with reference to Dan 1: 2-7, the qualities for the selection apart from being youth or young men also include (1) king's descendants or nobles, (2) there was no blemish, (3) good-looking, (4) gifted in all wisdom, (5) possessing knowledge, (6) quick to understand, and (7) having the ability to serve in the king's palace. Those selected were (1) to be taught the language and literature of the Chaldeans (2) to be served a daily provision of the king's delicacies and wine he drinks, and possibly (3) have their Hebrew names changed for Chaldean ones (as to be seen in Dan 1:7). The program of training was time-bound – lasting for three years. The ultimate result was that at the end of that period they might serve before the king.

Among those selected from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Daniel at this time did not hide their identity possibly because it was part of the requirement for selection. Being 'sons of Judah' means they were from the tribe of Judah and royals or king's descendants and family members of King David. From Dan 1: 7, their Hebrew names which give them their identity were changed by the chief eunuch as Daniel, whose name means "God is my judge" was named Belteshazzar meaning "Bel protect his {the king's} life." Hananiah, whose name means "Yahweh is gracious," was named Shadrach with meaning difficult to be explained. Mishael, meaning "who belongs to God?" was renamed Meshach with no satisfactory Babylonian meaning found. To Azariah which means "Yahweh helps"

was given Abed-Nego which stands for ‘Ebed-Nebo, “servant of (the god) Nabu.”⁴⁵ About the giving of new names, it is expressed that; the custom is indicated Hebrew youth signified their adoption into the Babylonian court.”⁴⁶

Josephus explains that it was even the king of Babylon who changed their names and commanded that they should make use of other names.⁴⁷ These other names refer to the new names he has given them. It is possible that although the change and the command came from the king, for without his consent nothing of that sort could be done, yet, it was the chief eunuch who told them or made the pronouncement.

The first test of their faith came when according to the instruction of the king they were to be served with the king’s delicacies and drinks – a test on food or diet. In Daniel 1: 8, it is expressed, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine. He, therefore, requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Looking at this text alone, there is the likelihood for one to be tempted to presuppose that it was Daniel alone who purposed that he would not defile himself. But, that is not the case. What Daniel asked the steward in- charge to do for them in Daniel 1: 12 that “Please test you servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink” testifies that all the four were in agreement and working as a group towards a common goal of not to defile themselves.

⁴⁵ The meanings of the various Hebrew and Babylonian names of Daniel and his three friends are from *SDABC* 4:759-760.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Josephus, 222.

The spirit of teamwork (unit system in the Adventist Youth Ministries) as a band of devoted young men or simply put a youth band or “unit” is manifested here. Josephus supports this idea by saying “Now Daniel and his kinsmen had resolved ... and to abstain from those kinds of which came from the king’s table, and entirely to forbear to eat of all living creatures.”⁴⁸ It might be that it was Daniel who was the spokesman or the leader of the group of the four or because he wrote the narrations, he chose to record his part.

The result was that they passed the test and is recorded: “As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Dan 1:17). When all the selected youth were finally brought before king Nebuchadnezzar, he found out that none was like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah and therefore they served before the king. It was also found out that the four were ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in the king’s realm.

The second test was the showing and interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s forgotten dream of the metallic image which was troubling him as recorded in Daniel 2. When the king realized that all his magicians, astrologers, and the sorcerers have failed in showing the dream and the interpretation thereof, with anger and furiousness,

He commanded for the slaying of all the wise men of Babylon that might include Daniel and his three friends. Here again, Daniel took the lead and wisely counseled Arioch the king’s captain on the issue and this made Daniel go and request the king for time to interpret the dream. Daniel 2: 17-19 states that Daniel then went home and made the matter known to his three companions that “they might seek

⁴⁸ Josephus, 222.

mercies from God of heaven concerning this secret so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. It was a dream about the rise and fall of nations and kingdoms culminating to the establishment of the everlasting kingdom of God. Nebuchadnezzar's quest was answered. Daniel's God was acknowledged and magnified even by the king as "God of gods," "Lord of kings" and a "revealer of secrets." Consequently, Daniel was promoted and he unselfishly petitioned the king to do same for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego and the king did (Dan 2: 45-49).

Here too the spirit of teamwork – the "Unit system" in youth ministry is demonstrated. Daniel did not hide the information to himself nor did he alone seek for God's mercies. They did everything as a group or unit of four for a common purpose. It is commented that: "Daniel and his companion could approach God with strong faith and implicit confidence because, to the best of their knowledge and ability, they were living up to His will."⁴⁹ In addition, they were of the awareness that God wanted them to be in that place for a purpose.

The third test of faith as recorded in Daniel 3 was about the bowing to and worshipping the huge golden image erected at the plain of Dura by king Nebuchadnezzar. The consequential punishment for refusal to do this at the hearing of the sound of some musical instruments in symphony with all kinds of music is: and whoever does not prostrate and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace (Dan 3: 6). This time too, though Daniel was not included (the reason for not being included is not stated in the narration, any attempt might be an

⁴⁹ "Desire Mercies," *SDABC*, 4:769.

assumption), Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego wanting to remain loyal to their God, bluntly refused to pay homage to an image. Josephus explains this by: “because they would not transgress the law of their country.”⁵⁰ Here too, it can be said that the three Hebrew youth purposed in their hearts that they will not defile themselves by falling down and worshipping a golden image.

Their persistent act of insubordination and stubbornness to the king’s decree was reported to Nebuchadnezzar who called and interrogated them. He gave them one more chance as stated in Daniel 3:12-15 (perhaps because of the love for them and also to redeem respect), yet of no avail. It is recorded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered: “If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the golden image which you have set up.” (Dan 3: 17-18). This statement testifies the kind of implicit faith these youth had in God as a savior. In the final analysis, though they were thrown into the fire all right as decreed, they were miraculously delivered as if without any encounter with fire at all. Josephus remarks that “but were saved by Divine Providence, and after a surprising manner escaped death; for the fire did not touch them.”⁵¹

Their deliverance is in conformity with Psalm 34: 7 which reads “The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.” Here too, in conclusion, Nebuchadnezzar and all the people recognized the supremacy and saving acts of God as well as the unwavering faith of these Hebrew youth and the king again promoted them. E. G. White comments that “Daniel and his companions had been

⁵⁰ Josephus, 224.

⁵¹ Ibid.

faithfully instructed in the principles of the word of God. They had learned to sacrifice the earthly to the spiritual, to seek the highest good. And they reaped the reward.”⁵² The youthful lives and activities of Daniel, Hananiah, Michael and Azariah even in captivity are full of spiritual heroism and are models worthy of emulation indeed for Adventist youth ministry.

OT Injunctions on Youth Ministry

Apart from the fact that the OT provides narrations about how some young men and maidens were involved in various roles, it also provides counsels and injunctions to both aged/parents and the youth in various aspects of ministering to the youth. These include:

Mobilizing the youth. Ministering to the youth involves assembling and getting them along in various endeavors. When Moses and Aaron were asked by King Pharaoh concerning those who were to leave Egypt, Moses rightly informed the King “We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD” (Exod 10: 9). From this text it can be rightly inferred that Moses made mention of and considered young ones first before adults and also to show emphasis, he mentions again ‘our sons and daughters’ for the purpose of holding a feast to the LORD.

The prophet Jeremiah also in considering the need of mobilizing the youth as well for God’s assignment records that “Lift up your eyes and see those who come from the north. Where is the flock that was given to you, your beautiful sheep?” (Jer 13:20). The *SDABC* explains that the flock represents the inhabitants of Judah⁵³ in the

⁵² Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1952), 55.

⁵³ “Where is the Flock?” *SDABC*, 4: 411.

immediate context, but adds that “The same searching question is directed at parents, teachers, and spiritual leaders God has entrusted precious souls to their care.”⁵⁴ And these precious souls include the youth.

Teaching/training the young ones or children. Teaching and giving training to the young ones is a biblical mandate. God talking about Abraham when journeying to destroy Sodom said in Genesis 18:19 that “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.” The expression ‘he may command’ refers to training ‘not by dictatorial methods, but by clear precept and consistent example.’⁵⁵ In Deuteronomy 4: 9 it is stated: “Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself ... And teach them to your children and your grandchildren.” In Deuteronomy chapter 6 Moses reminded the Israelites of the commandments, statutes, and the judgments which the LORD God commanded to teach them and said:

Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. (Deut 6: 4-7)

This is what is entailed in what is called the “Shema”. The Shema is said to be “repeated by devout Jews every morning and evening. It is the first prayer learned as a child and the last repeated by the dying.”⁵⁶ The Shema was a form of identity to the Israelites as God’s own people. It is a form of covenantal relationship between God

⁵⁴ “Where is the Flock?” *SDABC*, 4: 412.

⁵⁵ “For I Know Him,” *SDABC* 1:329.

⁵⁶ Geoffrey Parrinder, *Worship in the World’s Religions* (London, UK: Faber and Faber, 1961), 176.

and his chosen people based on love. Though the Shema was told to the Israelites, it can be seen that all people including the youth, who are chosen by God and have a relationship with Him irrespective of the time should embrace and go by it. It is seen as the basis of God's commandment (compare with Exodus 20: 1-4; Matt 22:36-40 and Luke 10: 27). Proverbs 22: 6 states "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Equipping the youth for ministry. It is incumbent on parents to provide for or equip the young ones with the needed resources so that they can minister for the Lord as done by Hannah, the mother of Samuel in 1 Samuel 2: 18-19, "But Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod. Moreover, his mother used to make him a little robe, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice."

Motivating/encouraging the youth. The young ones always need encouragement and words of motivation from the more matured ones in several situations. Isaiah 35:3-4 mandates that "Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, 'Be strong, and do not fear! Behold, your God will come ... He will come and save you.'" An example of this in the OT is seen in 2 Kings 6: 8-23 where at Dothan the prophet Elisha encouraged his servant not to be afraid when they were encamped by the Syrian army. In 2 Kings 6: 15-17, it is expressed that when the servant of Elisha arose and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And the servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Elisha prayed; then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Mentoring the youth. Providing counsel and molding the life of the young ones (mentees) by experience ones (mentors) has been a Bible practice since ancient times and it is still of theological importance. During the exodus, Joshua was selected to understudy Moses and consequently became Moses aide-de-camp and successor as seen in Exodus 17: 8-16 (Num 27:18ff, Deut` 1:38; 31:23). The boy Samuel was mentored under Eli the priest (1 Sam 2:18; 3:1-19.) The prophet Elijah served as a mentor for Elisha (2 Kgs 2: 1-15). Elisha the prophet also had a number of some young men or prophet-disciples⁵⁷ including Gehazi under his tutelage as seen in 2 Kings 5:20-27; 6:1-18.

Empowering the youth. God himself through the prophet Joel promises of empowering the youth for his work through the Holy spirit that “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, ... your young men shall see visions, and on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit (Joel 2:28-29). Spiritual leaders and parents and even the youth are expected to cooperate with God towards the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Praying for and blessing the young ones. Ministering to the youth also include biblical injunction of praying and interceding for them and blessing the young ones since they are fallible and vulnerable. There are a lot of examples in this regard. In Numbers 6: 23-27, God commanded Moses to speak to Aaron and his son as to how they should bless the children of Israel and “So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them,” this has become a benedictory statement even for Christians up till today.

⁵⁷ “Servant,” *SDABC* 2:884.

Job was regularly sanctifying, interceding and even offering sacrifices to God for the reason that peradventure; his children might have sinned against God (Job 1:5). In 1 Samuel 12: 23, Samuel declared “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and right way.” It is recorded that David blessed his household (2 Sam 6:20). In the same sense, the youth should be taught that David charges all and sundry to bless the LORD almighty (Pss 96:2; 134:1-2).

OT Counsels to the Youth

There are several admonitions given to the youth in relation to their commitment to spiritual development and God’s work in the OT. God himself commands the youth that “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is given you” (Exod 20:12). David asks in Psalms 119: 9 that “How can a young man cleanse his way?” Then he answers in the same verse that, by taking heed according to the word of the Lord.

Solomon in the book of Proverbs had written profusely to counsel the youth in all aspect of life endeavors. It seems like the majority of the chapters in Proverbs speak to the youth in one way or the other. Typical examples are chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 22, and 23. More often Solomon addresses the youth as “my son.” Proverbs also has counsels for parents and instructors toward their children. The fact therefore is, Proverbs is an OT major book of counsel for the youth as far as the fear of the Lord, wisdom and life activities are concerned. It is said, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Prov 9:31) and “A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke” (Prov 13:1). To the youth, Solomon again advises in Ecclesiastes 12:1 that

“Remember now your creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them.’”

As he called and said to other youth in the OT like Jeremiah “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you, and I ordained you ...” (Jer 1: 5) therefore “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak” (Jer 1:7).

Ecclesiastes 12: 13 draws the summary that “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.”

References and Involvement of Youth in the NT: Concepts, Models, and Dimensions

Like the Old Testament, the New Testament (NT) is also generally grouped under four major divisions as 1) the Gospels, 2) the Historical book, 3) the Epistles/Letters, and 4) the Prophetic book/Apocalypse. It is also of interest to know that the idea of youth is portrayed in one way or the other or in one form or the other in all the four major divisions. The Greek words normally used in the NT as provided in the Young Analytical Concordance include *neotes* (used for youth in general), *neoteros* (to mean young younger, younger man, or young man), *neanias* (used to mean young person) and *neoterikos* (to mean youthful). In all these the idea of youth is implied.

Dimensions and Models

In the NT also, some youth had played significant roles in various areas of significance so far as God’s agenda are a concern which needs to be identified.

Youth as fore-runner and Messiah. At his youthful age, John the Baptist (born by Zachariah and Elizabeth at old age) became the herald and forerunner of the Messiah who is Christ Jesus as prophesied (Luke 1:13-17 cf Isa 40:3-5). According to

biblical records computation based on Luke 1:36, John was about six months older than Jesus in conception and perhaps by birth,⁵⁸ and both of them were relatives (for their mothers Elizabeth and Mary were related). Luke 3:22 informs that Jesus was baptized by John before He started His ministry (as also seen in Matt 3: 11-17). It was the same period of age (immediately after His baptism) that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit as stated in Luke 3:21-22 that, “it came to pass that Jesus also was; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said ‘You are My beloved Son; in You, I am well pleased.’”

Luke 3:23 also testifies that “Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph,” It then follows that both John and Jesus started their ministries as young men in their youthful ages of about thirty years though John might have started his six months earlier since he was about six older than Jesus. Remarkably, all the four Gospels testify about John and his ministry. John’s short time but great ministry can be summed up as: He as a forerunner and a herald preached of repentance of sin and nearness of the kingdom of heaven. He also baptized into repentance for the remission of sin, and witnessed about and pointed to the promised Messiah (Mark 1:4,7-9; Matt 3:1-13; Luke 3:3-14; John 1:15-36). Jesus Christ, the Messiah also had a short time earthly ministry which can be compared to none but summarized as recorded in all the Gospels (Matt 1:21; 9:35-36; Mark 1:39; Luke 4:15, 18-19; John 1:29,35; 10:10).

In Matthew 4: 23-24 it is stated, “Now Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of

⁵⁸ *SDABD*, s.v. “John.”

sickness and all kinds of disease among the people ... and those who were demon-possessed” and eventually offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice through crucifixion and resurrection for universal salvation and payment of penalty of sin. Although His life was short (as he died at the youthful age of thirty-three), the name of Jesus or Jesus Christ is found in all the books of the NT. Jesus childhood and youthful life is a model to all youth.

Young maiden of honor, Mary. Among the few women whose names are mentioned in the NT is Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. The name Mary from the Greek *Maria* and *Mariam* and the Hebrew *Miryam* might mean the beloved one.⁵⁹ The *SDABD* recognizes Mary to be the name of eight different personalities or females⁶⁰ yet none had that greatest honor and privilege of becoming the earthly mother of the Savior of mankind than that young maiden of the line of David, betrothed to Joseph (Rom 1:3). Luke 1:26-31 describes Mary as a virgin who lived in a city of Galilee called Nazareth and was visited by the angel Gabriel. The angel said to her to rejoice, for she was a highly favored one, and that the Lord was with her, and also blessed was she among women. She should not be afraid for she has found favor with God and that she will conceive and bring forth a Son to be called Jesus.

Whilst a young lady and Mary have not known any man, her virgin conception would be possible because of the work of the Holy Spirit and the one to be born will be called the Son of God. Mary’s response; “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word” tells a lot about her faith, willingness to do God’s biddings and acceptance of the responsibility to be a mother to take care, nurture and support the one who is a Son of God and Emmanuel.

⁵⁹ *SDABD*, s.v. “Mary.”

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

All this she decided even at her youthful age to do. The *SDABC* expresses about Mary that she was chosen primarily because at the appointed time (Dan. 9:24-27; Mark 1:15; Gal 4:4). Mary's character portrayed the divine ideals of motherhood than that of any other daughter of David. She was one of the chosen few who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25, 38; Mark 15:43; cf. Heb. 9:28). It was this hope that sanctified her life (cf. 1 John 3:3) and made her qualified for her sacred role as a mother of a savior.⁶¹

Youth as apostles/missionaries. The NT recognizes and makes mention of the apostolic activities of both John Mark and Timothy who as young men as they assiduously toiled with senior apostles in the missionary activities of the gospel commission. Talking about John Mark, he is seen as the author of the 2nd Gospel of the NT bearing his name and also called Marcus three times in the KJV.⁶² Acts 12:12 indicates that his mother was called Mary and their house at Jerusalem served as a meeting place for the early Christians and the apostles and even the place for the last supper/Passover (Matt 26:18; Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12; Acts 1:13; 12:12).

In Colossians 4:10 he is described as "Mark the cousin of Barnabas". His being youth or young man laboring with grown-ups alludes to the fact that Apostle Peter calls him his son (1 Pet 5:13). Acts 12:25 testifies that though young man, John Mark accompanied Barnabas and Saul (Paul) on their first missionary journey. Despite his withdrawal from them at Pamphylia (Acts 15:36-41), he never gave up his missionary assignments for he was taken along by his cousin Barnabas. Paul, later on, described him as "fellow prisoner" (Col 4:10), "fellow laborer" (Phlm 24) and a person very profitable to him for the ministry (2 Tim 4:11). According to tradition,

⁶¹ "Mary," *SDABC*, 5:281.

⁶² *SDABD*, s.v. "John Mark."

John Mark went to Egypt and founded a church at Alexandria and also indicates that, in his Gospel, he served as an interpreter for Peter.⁶³

Timothy also referred to as *Timotheus*, a name from the Greek *Timotheos*, “one who reverences or worships or honors God”⁶⁴ is another remarkable youth and agent of missions. He, with his family, is described as Paul’s convert, his traveling companion, and an assistant.⁶⁵ Timothy was a half-Jew for the mother Eunice, was a Jewess and the father a Greek (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim 1:5). Being a youth and for the fact that he was loved so much, Paul referred to him as his son (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 2:1). To testify again that he was a youth at the time Paul was writing his first pastoral epistle to him, he admonished: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim 1:12).

Paul commends him and his family for his faith and commitment that: “When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also” (2 Tim 1:5).

In order that Timothy could function efficiently in his assigned pastoral duties, Paul had no alternative but thought it expedient to write to encourage, motivate and instruct young Timothy with the Pastoral Epistles bearing his name. As a matter of fact, Timothy is a model for contemporary youth and his two epistles are also applicable and good for modern consumption.

⁶³ *SDABD*, s.v. “John Mark.”

⁶⁴ *SDABD*, s.v. “Timothy.”

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

New Testament Statements on Youth Ministry

This section takes into consideration some statements that concern the youth or young ones, especially how to deal with the young ones and attitudes expected of parents and the youth themselves as given in the NT. This is done in the light of what Jesus has said and done in the Gospels and what other Bible authors like Paul, Peter, John had expressed in their epistles or writings.

Mobilizing the youth. The youth need to be gathered together and be made aware of the fact that God has work for them to discharge. The NT provides evidence of Christ mobilizing men to be trained and assigned God's work of salvation. In John 4:34 Christ remarked that "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work". Again in John 9:4 He remarked that "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (NIV). The disciples were reminded of the fact that "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matt 9:37-38). Among the great task to be performed as far as youth ministry is that of mobilizing and organizing them effectively for the great commission which involves everyone.

Concern and care for the youth. In the Gospels Jesus showed concern and love for young ones by accepting them and blessing them and said, "Let the children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" as seen in Matt 19:13-15(cf Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17). He warns against offending young ones by saying "And whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned in... the

sea” (Matt 18:5-6). Jesus made use of children or young ones to teach moral lessons of humility and love (Matt 18:1-9; Mark 9:33-47; Luke 9:46-48).

Encouraging/motivating the youth. There is the need of encouraging or commending the youth for any good work done so to boost their morale in doing more. They need words of appreciation more than continuous rebuke. Paul, therefore, admonishes parents not to provoke their children lest they become discouraged (Col 3:21), and instead, the youth are to be brought up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4). Their interest God’s work need to be aroused and sustained.

Discipling the youth. Jesus Christ himself is the perfect example of a disciple maker as seen in all the Gospels. Through His words of invitation “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of me” he bid men to become His disciples. After a period of training and discipleship, He also charged the disciples to do same by commanding them “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 the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things” (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Those to be made disciples are also later to make disciples include the youth. Bible records show that the making of disciples was not restricted only to Jesus Christ; even John the Baptist also made disciples (Mark 2:18; John 1:35-37). Hence there is need of effective discipleship program for the contemporary youth.

Mentoring the youth. The NT provides records on some young men who were mentored by seniors and experienced apostles so that they too could carry on the work of God. As young John Mark (mentee) had Barnabas as his mentor (Acts 15:37-30), so did Timothy (mentee) have Paul as his mentor (Acts 16:1-3; 1 Tim 3:14-15; 2 Tim 2:2).

The best and greatest mentoring program that is seen in the NT is that done by Jesus Christ. He established an intimate association with the disciples to the extent that they were friends and brothers (John 15:13-14) and He shared his life with them and did everything with them (Matt 26:36-41; Mark 2:23; 10:32-33; Luke 22:10). As part of his mentoring process, He reprimanded and admonished them to become well qualified to do his biddings.

Another example is the parental mentorship which Paul talked about concerning the genuine faith of Timothy passed on to him by his mother Eunice and Grandmother Lois (2 Tim 1: 5, NKJV). Youth today needs that kind and loving mentorship of Christ.

Delegating and empowering the youth. Mentoring and making them disciples are not enough, the youth need to be assigned responsibilities in doing God's work in accordance with the type of ministry they have been called for (1 Cor 7:20). Paul in both 1 Tim 6:20 and 2 Tim 1:14 reminded Timothy to guard what has been entrusted into his care. In Acts 19:21, 22 Paul sent Timothy and Erastus who ministered to him to Macedonia as he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

When Paul went to Macedonia from Ephesus, he asked Timothy to stay behind at Ephesus as a pastor of the church there (1 Tim 1:3) and empowered with all ecclesiastical authority to preach the word, convince, rebuke, exhort and teach with all longsuffering (2 Tim 4:2). Titus too was left at Crete and empowered to pastor the church there and to set in order the things that were lacking (Titus 1:5). Jesus Christ also delegated and empowered the disciples by sending them in twos and he gave them power over unclean spirits and to preach (Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6). As Christ and Paul did for the apostles and young ministers so it is to be done for the youth.

Call for commitment. Paul, the most prolific NT epistle writer has something in all of his books for either parent (including spiritual leaders) or the youth themselves. He brought into view his youthful life as committed Pharisee by saying “My manner of life from my youth, which I spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know” (Acts 26:4). By commitment, the youth are encouraged to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim 2:3).

Another powerful admonition given by Apostle Paul to the youth is stated in 2 Timothy 3: 14 -17. Verse 15 states, “and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (NKJV). To the youth, it is again said: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct in love” (1 Tim 4: 12, NKJV).

Inasmuch as they are to be taught how to be committed to the call, the youth are to be reminded of the advice from Peter that “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders... Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” (1 Pet 5:5-7). The youth are to be cautioned of the impending day of accountability no one can dodge. Whether young or old, all will appear before the celestial judgment seat (Rev 20:11-12).

Youth Participation in the Spirit of Prophecy

Ellen G. White has extensively written volumes on and for youth participation in ministry as guided by the Spirit. Many messages of instruction, sympathy, reproof, and encouragement have come from her pen addressed directly to the young people⁶⁶ and at times to parents, teachers and the entire church. She expressed her profound

⁶⁶ Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Hagerstown, MD: Herald, 1930), 7.

interest in the youth and greatly desired to see them endeavoring to perfect Christian characters, gain the training essential for satisfactory service in God's cause and to reach a higher level of Christian experience.⁶⁷ This section, therefore, has as its focus, the going through some of the Spirit of Prophecy books to bring into view what have been said about ministering to the youth, and the role the youth should play in God's work as counsels to the church.

Despite the fact that in 1852, the Youth Instructor was published with Elder James White as its first editor, and, in 1879 the first Young People's Society was begun in Hazelton, Michigan by teenagers Luther Warren and Harry Fenner,⁶⁸ "A call from the Spirit of Prophecy for the church to do something for its youth was written from Melbourne, Australia on December 19, 1892."⁶⁹ It is said that it was the servant of God, E. G. White who called for the formation of a youth organization in each local church and expressed what kind of organization it should be.⁷⁰

On the urgent need for mobilization and organization of the youth by the church, it was written "We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged, we want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth."⁷¹ The Spirit of Prophecy expresses further that "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified,

⁶⁷ White, *Messages to Young People*, 15.

⁶⁸ R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1979), 631.

⁶⁹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Youth Ministries Dept., *Youth Ministry Handbook and Leadership Training Manual* (Loma Linda, CA: College Press, 2005), 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷¹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *General Conference Bulletin*, January 29, 30, 1893, 24.

risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world.”⁷² It is worth saying that every young person or youth has some work to do to honor God and for the uplifting of humanity.⁷³

In other that the youth will not say that there is nothing that we can do or the work of God is for the adults, E.G White exposted that she saw that God has a work for young men and young women to do; hence they are to take their cross and follow Christ else they are unworthy of Him.⁷⁴ About where to work, she answers “Let those who desire to work for God begin at home, in their own household, in their neighborhood, among their own friends. Hence, they will find favorable missionary fields.”⁷⁵ Indeed there are more youth in the church in this twenty-first century as compared to 1893 that the messages or injunctions were given, and if they are harkened to, it will go a long in accomplishing the gospel commission.

Another issue of significance that is brought to display in the above injunctions is that of training the youth. In compliance with the Bible statements that require the teaching/training of the child (Deut 6: 7; Prov 22:6; 2 Tim 3:16) the Spirit of Prophecy mentions again that the youth need to be educated holistically so that they too can help other youth, and in seeking to do this, it is remarked: “The churches in different localities should feel that a solemn responsibility rests upon them to train youth and educate talent to engage in missionary work. ... There is excellent ability in the churches that needs to be brought into service.”⁷⁶

⁷² Ellen G White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1913), 555.

⁷³ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1952), 58.

⁷⁴ White, *Messages to Young People*, 206.

⁷⁵ White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1901), 6:428.

⁷⁶ White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 69.

About the urgent need of educating the young ones, “educate” has been stressed three times in three of her books: “Train the youth, mold the character, educate, educate, educate for the future, immortal life.”⁷⁷ She adds “We have a work to do. Educate, educate, and educate young men to give themselves to the ministry of the word.”⁷⁸ The other one is that which concerns the simplicity in Christ which is iterated, “Having received our commission from the highest authority, we are to educate, educate, educate in the simplicity of Christ.”⁷⁹

Due to the fact that the youth because of their youthful strength and vigor, are therefore targets of Satan’s attack, they need to be prayed for. Elucidating on the needs of the young people, it is iterated, our youth need more than a casual notice and sporadic words of encouragement but also conscientious, prayerful and careful labor.⁸⁰

To encourage the youth, she writes that young men and women are to take up the work to which God calls them and Christ Jesus will teach them to use their abilities to good purpose. She adds that as they get “the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, and seek to teach others,” their minds will be refreshed and they can present words that are new and extraordinarily attractive to the hearer.⁸¹

As a call and challenge to the youth for God’s work, the Spirit of Prophecy expresses that “Christ is calling for volunteers to enlist under his standard and bear the banner of the cross before the world. The church is languishing for the help of young

⁷⁷ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:590.

⁷⁸ Ellen G White, *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1953), 19.

⁷⁹ Ellen White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1932), 78, 79.

⁸⁰ White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 208.

⁸¹ White, *Messages to Young People*, 217, 218.

men.”⁸² To the youth a challenge is thrown, “God calls for you, young men. He calls for whole armies of young men who are large-hearted and large-minded and who have a deep love for Christ and the truth.”⁸³ The youth are called to a high destiny, to be light bearers, to cherish broad ideas and for essential elements of character, and for complete consecration and surrender.

Summary

As a summary of this chapter, in the final analysis, it can be said that the Youth Ministry concept has biblical and theological bases, and both the OT and NT provide evidence for this. It is explicitly provided that some of the Bible characters and authors started their diverse ministries such as leaders, priests, prophets, kings/queens and missionaries at their youthful ages. There are also various statements or injunctions from the OT and NT which promote the idea of youth involvement in God’s salvation or mission agenda. The same idea is supported extensively by the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

⁸² White, *Messages to Young People*, 24, 25.

⁸³ White, *Testimonies*, 6: 411.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR INCREASING AND SUSTAINING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN MINISTRY

The importance of youth participation in ministry in this era of post-modernism is of universal concern and consequently, cannot be underestimated or overlooked. Due to the significance attached to this, many scholars have written on the issue from diverse backgrounds. There is the need to review relevant literature on the concept and principles of youth participation in ministry as well as the effective methods involved. This will help to establish a theoretical foundation for Adventist Youth Ministry, thence the increasing and sustaining of the participation of youth in church activities and programs.

As some scholars have discussed the issue of youth participation in ministry in one way or the other, a look will also be made into how contemporary non-Adventist scholars have expressed their views or concern on this issue. In view of this, the review of literature is done by considering information provided in SDA Literature (both historical and contemporary), Contemporary Christian Literature, and Literature in Social Studies and Education as also made available in the electronic media. This is discussed under the various dimensions or principles of youth participation as seen in chapter two of this paper.

Concept of Youth Participation

The idea of youth getting involved in many issues is a matter of universal concern and embracement, both in religious and secular arenas. There is the need, therefore, at this juncture to review the concept of youth participation in general in these two areas. Often, youth participation and youth involvement are used interchangeably or synonymously to mean the same thing. Nwankaire, Nweke, and Nwanko express that the National Commission on Resources for Youth defines youth participation as “involving of youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunities for planning and /or decision-making affecting others in an activity whose impact or consequence is essential to others.”¹

This definition is of wider application since youth participation is not only secular but also seen more in the religious arena. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, since its inception, has always promoted youth participation. This is supported by the fact that the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were in their youth when they established the church by God’s leading. James White was 21 years old when he started his ministry. Ellen G. Harmon was 17 years; John N. Andrews at 21; and Uriah Smith was 20 years old. The development of the SDA Church in the past clearly indicates that the youth involvement or participation cannot be ignored. God is still in the business of calling young people with exceptional talents to lives of service through various church programs and activities. Total involvement of SDA youth will

¹ Onuzuruike N Onuzuruike, Nweke Prince, and Nwanko Benedict C, “Factors That Influence Youth Participation in Community Development Projects,” n.d., accessed June 4, 2016, www.academia.edu/. /FACTORS_THAT_INFLUENCE_YOUTH_PARTICIPATION_IN_COMMUNITY_DEVELOPMENT.

accomplish far more than we can even imagine. The youth wish to be given the responsibility and to participate in various church offices.²

Youth Participation in the Secular Arena

As stated earlier, the issue of youth participation is also highly of secular concern. This is evident in what Nwankaire, Nweke, and Nwanko express. They say that

Youth participation, also known as youth involvement, has been used by many government agencies and people, to mean the active engagement of young people in areas like government, civil society, community development, schools, sports, and economic activity.³

In a similar vein, David Driskell in collaboration with members of the Growing Up in Cities Project expresses the need of getting the youth involved as partners in the community process and making the value of young people's lives. Similarly, the quality of the places where they live should be made better. Additionally, he iterates that young people are valuable members of the community, both now and in the future; and also young people compose an important fraction or perhaps the majority of the urban population. Hence any investments made in the development of the knowledge, skills as well as social obligations of the young people are the best investments that can be made towards producing a better future for them and the society at large.⁴

In the secular arena, there are various organizations and setups which have taken upon themselves the responsibilities of promoting and fostering youth

² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries, accessed August 20 2015, http://gcyouthministries.org/Portals/0/Document_Downloads/YouthFirst.pdf.

³ Nwankaire, Nweke and Nwanko, "Factors that Influence Youth Participation."

⁴ David Driskell, *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth: A Manual for Participation* (Paris, France: UNESCO, 2002), 22.

participation in some communities or societies. Typical examples to be considered in this section include the Boys and Girls Scout as well as the Youth Council.

Scouting. In 1908, the Boy Scout movement was founded in Great Britain by Lieutenant General Robert S.S. (later Lord) Baden-Powell, a then cavalry officer, with the aim of developing, in boys, good citizenship, chivalrous behavior, and skill in various outdoor activities. Baden-Powell had written a book called *Scouting for Boys* (1908) to describe many games and contests that he had used to train cavalry troops in scouting, and this book was admired reading among the boys of Great Britain.⁵ Baden-Powell's idea was that boys should organize themselves into small subgroups of six or seven under a boy leader—the patrol and patrol leader. Their training would include such things as tracking and reconnaissance, outdoor camping skills and mapping. It was expected that to be a scout, a boy would pledge to be loyal to his country, help other people, and in general obey the scout law.

Although at the initial stage the Boy Scout movement was intended for boys 11 to 14 or 15, yet it soon became evident that there was the need of programs for younger and older boys. In view of this, Baden-Powell in 1916 founded a parallel organization for younger boys, the Wolf Cubs which is known in some countries as Cub Scout. Programs have been developed for even younger boys (Beaver Scouts in the U.K. for ages 6 to 8, Tiger Cubs in the U.S. for age 7). In the USA, programs are open to boys 14 through 17 and for young men and women of 14 through 20 (16 to 20 in the U.K.). Late in 1967, the word Boy was removed from the name of the British

⁵ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Boys Scout," accessed August 22, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Boy-Scouts>.

organization, and in the 1980s girls were allowed to join at the Cub level and upward as Girls Scout or Guild.⁶

The scouting activities in the USA known and called Boy Scout of America are very prominent or popular to the extent that some churches like the Presbyterian Church have in cooperated it in their youth ministry.⁷ The Scout has a motto which reads “Be Prepared” which means that a scout is always in a state of readiness in mind and body to do his/her duty. The Scout Oath or Promise also reads “On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and obey the Scout law, to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.” These motto and promise are very similar in motive to that of the Adventist Youth Ministry. Though the Scout is a secular organization, yet it prepares the young people for readiness to duty (to God and humanity or the country). A lesson of relevance should be learned from this for application in the Adventist Youth Ministry which aims to get people prepared for the Second Advent of Jesus Christ as well as preparing the young people for salvation and service to God and humanity.

The youth councils. There is another entity in the secular arena or many countries known as Youth Council that also seeks to promote youth participation. In most nations, it is called National Youth Council or Organization. A youth council is an organization composed of young people that serve as a consultative or advocacy entity to government or donor agencies. More often than not, its role is to recognize priorities, make policies that support these priorities, and contribute to the execution

⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. “Boys Scout,” accessed August 22, 2014 <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Boy-Scouts>.

⁷ Boy Scouts of America, “Scouting for Presbyterian Youth” (Marketing & Communications Division, 2006), accessed August 22, 2014, http://www.scouting.org/About/FactSheets/operating_orgs/Presbyterian.aspx.

of these policies through public services. Its functions may also include public outreach and advocacy.⁸

Information indicates that young people are progressively more identified as important agents in the community and national development. Throughout the world, hundreds of thousands of youth are leading positive social change – leading community initiatives, performing small businesses, and re-shaping political processes. Among the several reasons for which supporting and including the youth in development, processes are very crucial are the fact, that youth have expertise that is distinct to their situation which enables them to provide insight and perspectives on development that adults are unable.

Furthermore, in many communities, youth form the majority of the population; consequently, the voice of the youth voices can be important expressions of the entire needs of the community. In the light of such situation such, the youth council is a means that allows youth to acquire such expertise while concurrently changing their communities.⁹

The role youth councils play cannot be underrated in many countries. In some countries like Ghana, it is compulsory that for any youth society, whether religious or secular, to be officially recognized by the state it must register with the national Youth Council. Hence, there is no doubt that the Adventist Youth Ministry, through the Church, is duly registered with the National Youth Council of Ghana.

⁸ USAID, “Youth Councils: An Effective Way to Promote Youth Participation,” 2009, accessed August 22, 2015, www.equip123.net/docs/e3-youthcouncils.pdf.

⁹ Ibid.

Youth Participation in Other Christian Denominations

Many religious entities like Christians also express regard for youth participation in ministry. This section, therefore, visits the concept of youth participation in ministry has made available in other Christian denominations such as the Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. It is not the writer's main intention at this juncture to compare and contrast the approaches or methods employed by these churches. Contrarily it is to bring into focus the idea that other Christian denominations embrace and support the concept of getting youth involved in the participation of programs and as such paying attention and planning for them.

To answer the question about what the Youth Ministry is to the Catholic Church, it is purported that, "Youth ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community."¹⁰

To show the comprehensiveness and the serious regard attached to the Youth Ministry by the Catholic Church, it is again expressed that youth ministry is much more than just programs. Youth Ministry is about reaching out in connection to the young people in the community and giving them opportunities to use their gifts within their society. Youth ministry is goal-driven, rather than program driven. All ministries with youth must be geared toward presenting the Good News of Christ to the young ones and bidding them become his disciples. (CMD—Celebrate Youth!).¹¹

In order to renew their vision of their Youth Ministry, the bishops have identified three interdependent and equally important goals that are to serve as a guide

¹⁰Catholic Diocese of Wichita, "What Is Catholic Youth Ministry," n.d., accessed August 20, 2014, <http://catholicdioceseofwichita.org/faith-training-and-formation/home/16803>.

¹¹ Ibid.

for the Catholic ministry for young people; these goals are empowerment, participation, and growth.¹²

Similarly, the Methodist Church also supports the concept of youth participating in ministry and have drawn strategic plan; a Youth Participation Plan (YPS) for the ministry. Extract of the Youth Participation Plan explains that

The Youth Participation Strategy (YPS) is there to involve young people with the Methodist Church in all its forms and at all levels. It exists essentially to occupy young people with God and the Christian Gospel. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that the youth will work together with adults, in both making and being disciples in the communities they live. Additionally, the Youth Participation Strategy ensures that programs, such as spiritual retreats, worship events, sports ministry, creative are going on and children and young people are equipped.¹³

Based on this information provided, it can be seen that the Methodist church also has put in place extensive mechanism or strategy towards the achievement of its goal and objectives in ensuring that their young people participate in the activities and programs of the church.

Addition to the above Christian denominations is that of the Presbyterian Church. In the Presbyterian Church, there are many forms of youth organizations. There is the Presbyterian Youth Ministry (PYM) whose headquarters is in New Zealand. PYM's vision is to make Jesus known; and it exists to support youth leaders, youth workers and the entire youth in the nation and beyond through networking, resourcing, training, and advocacy.¹⁴ In the United States, there is also Presbyterian Youth Connection.

¹² "The Catholic Diocese of Wichita," n.d., <http://catholicdioceseofwichita.org>.

¹³The Methodist Church in Britain, "Youth Participation Strategy – Report for Conference," n.d., accessed August 20, 2015, <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf10a-16-yps-160211.pdf>.

¹⁴ "Presbyterian Youth Ministry," n.d., accessed May 20, 2015, <http://www.pym.org.nz>.

The five main intentions of the Presbyterian Youth Connection are: to call young people to be disciples of Jesus Christ; to respond to the needs and the interests of young people; to work together, youth and adults, in partnership; to be connected to the whole church, community, and the world; to include all young people, reaching out, and inviting them to belong to the community of faith.¹⁵

As stated earlier, the Presbyterian Church bodies in the U. S. A. also work with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). This is done to develop and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with the BSA; foster a regard for Scouting as a resource for ministry and assist congregations that operate Scouting units to use them as effective ministry tools; encourages and supports Presbyterian church members and their ministries with youth in using the program of the Boy Scouts of America.¹⁶

The youth ministry activities of the Presbyterian Church are not restricted to only the United States. In Ghana, where this research is done, the Presbyterian Church (Ghana) has Young Peoples Guild (YPG) as an organization to administer the philosophy of Presbyterian youth ministry.

In the nutshell, it can be expressed, that although the aims, activities, and methods employed by the various examples of secular and Christian entities that show concern for youth participation are not the same with that of the Adventists, there are more similarities. At least the basic principles of not neglecting the youth but getting the youth involved in decision-making and other activities for the betterment of the youth and the community permeates through all. This also attests to the fact that the

¹⁵ First Presbyterian Church, "PYC Presbyterian Youth Connection," n.d., accessed May 20, 2015, www.fpcroy.org/youth.html.

¹⁶ Boy Scouts of America, "Scouting for Presbyterian Youth" (Marketing & Communications Division, 2006), accessed August 22, 2015, http://www.scouting.org/About/FactSheets/operating_orgs/Presbyterian.aspx.

issue of youth participation is of universal concern hence Adventist should not downplay it but pay greater attention to it for the betterment of the church.

Brief History and Development of the SDA Youth Organization

The desire for an organization for and of our youth to form a band of Christian soldiers had been expressed by many of the pioneers of the church. Indeed, the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were in their youth when they founded the church by God's leading.¹⁷ Ellen G. White wrote prolifically in the *Spirit of Prophecies* on this. She called for the establishment of a youth organization in each church and expressed "Let there be a company formed somewhat after the order of the Christian Endeavor Society." She adds that there should be companies formed in every congregation to perform this work.¹⁸

The Adventist Youth Society is an abbreviated name for the full official name "Seventh-day Adventist Youth Society"¹⁹ also having the acronym AYS. The AYS has had many names since its establishment and has undergone through many metamorphosis or transitions, yet its philosophy, aims, and goals remain. Before 1979, it was even called Missionary Volunteers Society.

The formation of the youth band in the Adventist Church is credited to the pioneering work of Luther Warren and Harry Fenner (both were American boys from Hazelton, Michigan). In the summer of 1879, 14-year-old Luther Warren and 17-year-

¹⁷Youth Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Youth First: Involving Youth in Church Life* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists), 10.

¹⁸Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1983.

¹⁹*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 1990 ed., 84.

old Harry Fenner, believing that Jesus Christ was coming soon began to discuss how they might help their less-spiritual friends organized meeting in Hazelton.

Their first meetings were held in Warren's bedroom. As a result, a band of about six to nine boys, the first youth organization in a local Seventh-day Adventist Church began. "The purpose of this little band of youth was to promote missionary work, raise money for missionary literature, and further the cause of temperance."²⁰ Hence a club or band, a Boys Missionary Society was thus formed in 1879 in Hazelton.

The Boys' Missionary band was accepted and joined by other friends. Their meeting became regular, and before long some of the female counterparts in their local church wished to join. Consequently, the society extended to include girls too although in the 1870s it was deemed inappropriate for a mixed group of boys and girls to meet together. Very appropriately too, the Boys' Missionary Band or society was changed and the name Young People's Society had to be adopted.

The period 1890s saw remarkable progression in the development of the young people's activities by other people in other places. In 1891, Meade Macguire (another Adventist young man) also formed a similar group in Antigo, Wisconsin. In 1892, A.G. Daniells (GC President for 1901-1922) organized a band in Adelaide, Australia. M. E. Kern in 1893 formed a similar group at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. During this period (1894), Luther Warren who by this time had grown up and become a dynamic and spirited young evangelist again organized sunshine bands in several local churches in the Dakotas.

²⁰Youth Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Youth Ministry Handbook and Training Manual* (Loma Linda, CA: College Press, 2005), 5.

The first Conference –wide youth organization was created at the Ohio camp-meeting in 1899. The Ohio youth called themselves Christian Volunteers.²¹

Other continuous developments went on at various places in the 1901-1920s. Most prominent one is that which happened in 1907; the General Conference at a leaders meeting held in Gland, Switzerland, created a Young People’s Department with the name “Seventh-day Adventist Society of Missionary Volunteers (YPMV) which simply became Missionary Volunteers. Milton E. Kern was named the first director with Matilda Erickson as the secretary.

Later the name Missionary Volunteers came to be identified with the letters MV, and through the years it came to be known as MV Department and the local youth meetings called MV meeting.²² At that same convention, 3 major aims for the new department were spelled out as the development in the youth: a solid devotional life, missionary endeavor, and educational activities. In other actions, an aim, motto, and pledge were adopted for the new society and *The Youth’s Instructor* as its official magazine²³ and many other things.

In 1909, as a result of the successes in the Missionary Volunteer program, the GC delegates called for the development of a similar program for the needs of the younger children in the church. Through the 1920s the JMV progressive classes and honor programs were developed. By the end of the 1920s, the MV department had developed a youth leadership course that resulted in the investment of Master Comrades (later changed to Master Guides). During the early 1950s, the World

²¹ R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979), 386. Nathaniel Krum, *The MV Story* (Washington DC: Review & Herald, 1963), 112-113.

²² Youth Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Youth Ministry Handbook and Training Manual*, 9.

²³ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 386-387.

Church adopted the Pathfinder Club program and Laurence A. Skinner became the World Pathfinder Director from 1950 to 1963.

In 1972, the name was changed to Youth Department of Missionary Volunteers and the conference MV secretaries were given the title youth directors. 1979 is another historical year. In that year, the names Adventist Youth Society (AYS) and Adventist Junior Youth were adopted to replace the MV and JMV respectively. Whilst the AYS is for senior youth, the AJY, Pathfinder (PF) and the Adventurer clubs were designated for the junior youth. In 2005, at the General Conference in St. Louis delegates voted to change the name to Youth Ministries Department to reflect the emphasis given to the various ministries in the whole department, encompassing, Adventurer club, Pathfinder club, and Senior (Young Adult) Youth Society.²⁴

Youth Ministry in the Adventist Church has gone through several phases. “This evolution has taken the church from the early beginnings when youth work was blended with Sabbath School to this day when youth ministry is divided into clearly defined areas of interest but pursues the same goals.”²⁵

Based on the General Conference Youth Ministries Department, the current structure of the Adventist Youth Ministries depicts two main divisions as Junior Youth and Senior Youth ministries. The Junior Youth takes care of the Adventurers (children of ages 6 – 9 years old) and the Pathfinders (youth of ages 10 – 15 years old). The Senior Youth ministries take care of the Ambassadors (youth of ages 16 – 21 years old) and the Young Adult (youth of ages 22 – 30+ years old). Both the

²⁴ Youth Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, *Youth Ministry Handbook and Training Manual*, 10.

²⁵Ibid, iii.

Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs are also divided into classes based on age; with each class having a specific curriculum of studies. The Master Guide specializes in training and providing leadership for the youth. A new development in the pipeline called Youth Leadership Master will provide leadership training for the senior youth.²⁶

Modules for Adventist Youth Ministry

Concerning the current situation of the Adventist youth, Jeffrey Rosario remarked, “I believe that my generation of Adventists is increasing an endangered species.”²⁷ He, borrowing from others, provided the statistics that there is a 50 percent chance that a teenager who gets baptized in his or her mid-teens will leave the Adventist Church completely by the time he or she is 25. Also, one in every five Adventist Churches in North America does not have a single child, teenager, or young adult.

He, considering the results of various Barna Research Group polls, added that, this generation of youth and young adults (including Adventists) read the Bible less than the previous generation; spend less time in prayer and are less likely to attend church.²⁸ S. J. Kidder, a lecturer in Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University commented on the top 10 challenges faced by the contemporary Church. This list of challenges includes apathy, shallowness, worldliness, failure to give, pastoral burnout, teenage dropout and fear of evangelism. The others include flabby self-discipline, maxed-out schedules and a persistent lack of strong and

²⁶ Gilbert Cangy, Jonatan Tejel, and Pako E Mokgwane, Directors of Youth Ministries Department of the General Conference of SDA Church, Workshop for WAD Youth Advisory Meeting, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, May 8-12, 2016.

²⁷ Jeffrey Rosario, “Let the Rebelution Begin,” *Adventist Review* (February 2011), 14.

²⁸ Ibid.

committed individuals.²⁹ Indeed, these problems are not faced by the church alone; they also prevail in the youth ministry.

It is in the light of all these that the General Conference is leaving no stone unturned to intensify the activities of the Youth Department. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist's *Youth Ministry Handbook and Leadership Training Manual* provides eight modules for the youth program with each module dealing with a different aspect of senior youth leadership. These eight modules are an organization, leadership, commitment, discipleship, witnessing, worship, fellowship, and empowering youth.³⁰ Many activities and programs are packaged or provided in each of these modules in such a way that if followed, the Adventist Youth Ministries can achieve its purpose of the establishment.

It is also expressed that "Youth ministry is not something that exists alongside the ministry of the church but it is an integral part of the church and it is a ministry."³¹ This viewpoint is based on the same foundational principles that support the ministry of the whole church. According to the manual, the four independent powers that kept the life of the early church and still provide inspiration for the church to grow today are the same dynamics seen in all successful youth ministry. The four forces as found in Acts 2: 42-47 are fellowship, nurture, worship, and mission.³²

One cannot dispute the fact that all these are very cardinal and loaded. Nevertheless, considering the socio-cultural and other factors, as far as ministering to

²⁹ S. Joseph Kidder, *The Big Four: Secrets to a Thriving Church Family* (Hagerstown, MD: Herald, 2011), 82.

³⁰ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Youth Ministries Department, *Youth Ministry Handbook and Leadership Training Manual* (Loma Linda Campus, CA: College Press, 2005), vii-viii.

³¹ *Ibid.*, xiv.

³² *Ibid.*

the needs of the youth and youth participation in ministry are concerned, another perspective can be looked into.

Principles to Increase and Sustain Youth Participation

The eight modules and the four forces provided in the manual are not negated or condemned. Yet, for the scope and benefit of this project, there are some dimensions or principles that need to be strongly considered or put in place to help in making the youth to effectively participate in church activities. By so doing the purpose and objectives for the establishment of the Adventist youth ministry will be achieved. These principles include that of mobilization, teaching/training, involvement, equipping, nurturing, mentorship/discipleship, empowerment, and motivation, loyalty, and commitment, integration and strategy development.

Principle of Mobilization

The youth are to be mobilized for ministry or missions of God. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, mobilization is “the act of mobilizing” or “the state of being mobilized” whilst mobilize as a verb is defined as “to bring (people) together for action, to come together for action, to make (soldiers, an army etc.) ready for war. In a similar note, the Free Dictionary defines mobilize as “to assemble, prepare, or put into active service; to assemble, marshal, or coordinate for a purpose; If both dictionaries’ definitions are considered and put together, it can be inferred that mobilization involves bringing or assembling (people or army) together and making them ready for a service or task.

E. G. White wrote regarding the need to mobilize the youth thus: “we have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged, we want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be

so trained that they may rightly represent the truth”³³ She adds, “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.”³⁴

This implies that there is first, a task or service to be performed which necessitates assembling of people to perform that task. The task according to White is training the youth to carry out the message of a crucified, risen and soon-coming Savior to the entire world. The people to be assembled or mobilized in this context are the youth. This means that the youth are to be mobilized and made ready for the task of the Great Commission of Matt 28: 18 -20 and the Three Angels Message of Rev 14: 6-12. This is what the youth ministry which aims at salvation and service of the youth is about.

To support the idea that the youth are talented and have the potential to do something for God, Don Boyer says “Everyone is good at doing something; most are good at a number of things.”³⁵ Don N. Howell, also sees the need for mobilization and how it is done in leadership.

He cites Nehemiah as an example and describes “Nehemiah: Motivator and Mobilizer.”³⁶ Howell continues that, Nehemiah set forth the task with clearness to and mobilizes the various groups of Jewish civic and religious leaders with a call to: “Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” He explains Nehemiah’s strategy by saying that Nehemiah defied the tactics of coercion. His

³³ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, General Conference Bulletin, January 29, 30, 1893, 24.

³⁴ White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 555.

³⁵ Don Boyer, *The Power of Mentorship for 21st Century* (Whittier, CA: Real Life Teaching, 2006), 24.

³⁶ Don Howell, *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 123.

success in mobilizing such a working force came from his fervent articulation of the operation, his ability as an organizer, and his concern for the wellbeing of the city and people. As a prototype of mobilization, Howell presents that Jesus when on this earth for mission started to mobilize a group of people in whom to pour his life and bequeath his heritage; and adds that Jesus continues to gather his various team of core disciples.³⁷

Principle of Teaching/Training

The youth need to be taught and trained in all aspects of life. King Solomon attests: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Prov 22:6). Based on this, it can be strongly argued that what a person is, is a product of what he/she has been taught and has learned either formally or informally. Despite the fact that there are Bible as well as the Spirit of Prophecy mandate for the training of the young ones, the society, governments and great scholars place great emphasis on this. Teaching believers including the youth to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded are part of the Great Commission (Matt 28: 20) that needs greater attention.

Training the youth is as equally important as their development and it is a holistic affair. All along, the Adventist Church based on the admonition of Ellen G. White has been advocating for a holistic approach to the training of the youth. She reiterates

True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. 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.

³⁷ Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 133.

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.³⁸

This holistic approach to education is not only supported by Adventists. It goes beyond the tri-partied concept of physical, mental and spiritual faculties of human development as put forward by E. G. White. Holistic Education focuses on preparing students or the youth to meet any challenges they may encounter in life and in their academic pursuit though it does not place much emphasis on spiritual development and as such is seen as more secular.

The most significant theories supporting holistic education are learning about oneself, developing health relations and helpful social behaviors, social and emotional growth, as well as the aptitude to view beauty. Furthermore, holistic education makes use of contemporary cultural effects such as the media and music and teaches younger people how to be human.³⁹

Youth ministry is about training young people to lead the cause of Christ, and also to apply Christianity to every area of life. If adults do not know that, the kids would not also know.⁴⁰ For a proper way of training the young ones, White again stressed that in order to attain to this object, attention must be paid to the physical, mental, moral, and religious education of children.⁴¹

As the youth are being trained, a major factor that needs much attention is the culture of the era or period and the worldviews that dominate our century. This era is

³⁸ White, *Education*, 13.

³⁹Technology, Inc., "What Is Holistic Education," n.d., accessed August 25, 2015, <http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/methods/holistic/>.

⁴⁰YouthPastor.Com, "What Is Youth Ministry?," n.d., accessed August 22, 2015, [http://www.youthpastor.com/youth ministry/#.VdkdvfnJYcH](http://www.youthpastor.com/youth%20ministry/#.VdkdvfnJYcH).

⁴¹ Ellen G White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1894), 5.

that of postmodernism and culture of electronics. In this postmodern world that includes skeptical interpretations and criticisms of culture and many issues, it behooves the church to make the necessary efforts to understand the mind of the postmodern youth so as to rightly train them.

It is an era of electronic culture whereby the youth is so much addicted to electronics that everything they play with, see or watch or do is electronic oriented. Electronic media is the order of the day. The youth expect that sermons preparation and delivery, as well as teaching aids, are to be technological. The same electronic gadgets they are holding in churches, homes, and school contain Bibles, hymnals and religious literature together with secular or irreligious materials and information, hence dealing with them needs critical tactics.

Haron N. Matwetwe expressed that because it is impossible to stop the young ones from the use of technology and electronic gadgets, Christian or Adventist youths are to be taught the pros and cons of these gadgets; as well as the best ways on how and when to use them and even what to watch. Pastors, church leaders, parents, and teachers need to abreast themselves with the contemporary trend of modern culture of technology in order to teach and meet the needs of the youth.⁴²

Klaus Nürnberger remarked that “because we are living in a unique era of world history, intense scrutiny and extensive re-conceptualization of our theological heritage may be called for.”⁴³ Concerning the youth, Driskell comments; “the investments made in developing their knowledge, skills and social responsibility are

⁴² Haron N. Matwetwe, class notes for MSSN 731 Seminar in Cultural and Religious Analysis, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, Babcock University Campus Ilishan, Nigeria, September, 2015.

⁴³ Klaus Nürnberger, *The Living Dead and the Living God: Christ and the Ancestors in a Changing Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Cluster, 2007), 17.

the best investment we can make towards creating a better future.”⁴⁴ The bottom line is that the youth are to be developed, taught or trained for their own livelihood, salvation in God, and, service to God and humanity. This culminates in discipleship as expressed by Christ, E. G. White, and others.

The Principle of Involvement/Empowerment

The youth should be involved in all matters of the church because they are also members or part and parcel of the church. The idea of getting the youth involved in activities has been the core issue of youth participation in both secular and religious sectors. Though not doing the theology of the Godhead and the deity of Christ, yet there is the evidence that, God the Father involves the Son in all aspect of their activities. So should parents (adults) involve their children (youth) in the activities of the church and the society?

In support of this, Driskell reiterates; “Young people should be considered as legitimate participants – along with other groups in the community – in the development process.”⁴⁵ By the word legitimate, it means that it is recognized as lawful and their right but not just a privilege given to them.

The Free Child Project in investigating youth involvement expresses that there is an equally never-ending list of reasons for involving children and youth in making the decisions that affect them personally and their communities as a whole. It has been expressed that at every time many decisions are made about the lives of young people. In sectors such as families, schools, youth programs, city councils, foundations, government agencies, employers, lawmakers the issues of youth prevail.

⁴⁴ Driskell, *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth: A Manual for Participation*, 22.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

There are numerous reasons for engaging young people in decision- makings that affect them personally and their communities at large.⁴⁶

Included among the endless list supplied on how youth are involved in activities are community-based organizations, community planning, funding grant-making and foundations, global/international activities, libraries, local government, state/provincial government media, political parties, public health, research, rights advocacy, schools, service learning, and state and national nonprofit organizations.⁴⁷

Based on this prolific list of activities, which even excludes the roles in the church, it will be more disastrous and detrimental to the church and the society as a whole if the youth are relegated. This, therefore, calls for youth empowerment.

Youth empowerment. The youth should be empowered. The Encarta dictionary explains that to empower is to give somebody power or authority. It also means make more confident or assertive: to give somebody a greater sense of confidence or self- esteem. Both meanings are very applicable in this context.

According to Uzochukwu Mike “To be a youth is good but empowering the youth is better. Empowerment can be defined as the means of encouraging or assisting somebody. What is youth empowerment? In a nutshell, youth empowerment is the means through which the youths of any country are assisted to succeed the function of the government to empower the youths.”⁴⁸

Among the importance or reasons for youth empowerment, he put forth include poverty eradication, good education standard, good governance, crime

⁴⁶Free Child Project, “Youth Involvement,” n.d., accessed September 8, 2015, <http://www.freechild.org/SIYI/index.htm>.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸ Mike Uzochukwu, “Importance of Youth Empowerment,” n.d., accessed September 8, 2015, <http://uzochukumike.hubpages.com/hub/importance-of-empowerment>.

reduction, national growth, security, technological development, and employment creation. Based on these, Uzochukwu postulates that no nation can do without empowering their youths due to the fact that the youths of today are elders of tomorrow. Therefore there is the need that all should empower the youth. Youths are to empower their fellow youths. Note that youth empowerment is every body's function. Understanding the importance of youth empowerment by both the government and the citizens will go a long way in achieving national dreams.⁴⁹

It can be seen that despite the fact that Uzochukwu has done a good job, to talk about the youth and define youth empowerment in the context of a country and government seems shallow, restricted and secular. Empowerment can be looked at in the case of a society as a whole instead of country and government. In the context of this study, the society will include the church and any stakeholder who has a role to play in promoting youth participation. The idea that the youth are also to empower other youth is also deeply embedded in E. G. White's and the Adventist's philosophy of Youth Ministry, as youth ministering to other youth, including "to train the youth to work for other youth."⁵⁰

In support of empowering the youth for active involvement, Jasper of Taize declares: "taking young people seriously also means giving them real responsibilities. We give them these tasks not only for practical reasons but as a way to show that we trust them."⁵¹ Empowerment also goes along with the delegation of duties. This means that the youth should be delegated by the adults to work.

⁴⁹ Uzochukwu Mike, "Importance of Youth Empowerment."

⁵⁰ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2010), 102.

⁵¹ Brother Jasper of Taize "Transmitting the Message of the Gospel to Youth," *International Review of Mission*, 103.2 (2014): 232.

Principle of Equipping

The youth are to be equipped. It is one thing to empower the youth and another thing to equip the youth. Empowering the youth to function is not enough until they are equipped. To equip according to the Encarta Dictionaries means to provide somebody or something with necessities: to provide somebody or something with what is needed for a particular activity or purpose, e.g. with the appropriate tools, supplies, parts or clothing. It can also mean to prepare somebody to accomplish something: to prepare somebody with the necessary education, training, or experience to succeed at a task or role in life. From this, it means that the youth needs to be provided with all the necessities or resources for them to be able to accomplish the assignment entrusted to them.

Equipping youth for service is the primary focus of the Adventist Youth Ministries Department. Hence it is included in the Mission Statement that the task of the department includes to “Equip and empower youth for a life of service within God’s church and community.”⁵² On equipping youth for ministry, it is expressed that Jesus used different methods to build his team. These include equipping on the run, equipping trips and projects, equipping retreats, equipping meetings and equipping through teaching.⁵³

It is as a result of this that Howell in no doubt describes Jesus Christ as “Equipper of Equippers.”⁵⁴ As guide for equipping the youth, John Maxwell presents the following guidelines for equipping: (1) Developing personal relationships (2)

⁵² Youth Ministries Department, “Youth First: Involving Youth in Church Life,” n.d., 3.

“Equipping Youth for Ministry,” n.d., accessed August 24, 2015, http://www.ymresourcer.com/documents/Equipping_Youth_For_Ministry.

⁵⁴ Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 129.

Sharing one's dreams (3) Asking for commitment (4) Setting goals for growth (5) Communicating the fundamental (6) Performing the five-step training process - part of the equipping process is training people to perform the specific tasks they have to do. *Step 1 - Modeling; Step 2 - Mentoring; Step 3 - Monitoring; Step 4 - Motivating; Step 5 - Multiplying.* (7) Giving the “Big Three” – responsibility, authority, and accountability (8) Giving them the tools they need (9) Checking on them periodically (10) Conducting periodic equipping meetings.⁵⁵ All these show and buttress the fact that equipping youth for participation in ministry is not only biblical but immensely essential.

Principle of Mentoring/Discipling and Nurturing

The youth must be mentored, made disciples and nurtured. Though the terms or words “mentor,” “mentoring” or “mentorship” do not occur in the Bible, its connotation does. At times it is used synonymously or interchangeably with discipling or discipleship which is biblical terminology. The word mentor has its origin from a man’s name and is closely related to paying attention, to warning or disciplining, and so on. Mentoring should be like the man Mentor who according to Greek mythology taught Telemachus (the son of his friend Odysseus) reason and thinking ability and gave him care and attention, as well as discipline.⁵⁶

Mentoring can be formal or informal, intentional or unintentional depending on the mentor and the mentee. Borrowing from Ugochukwu E., mentoring is a deliberate, exclusive, rigorous vulnerable relationship between a mentor and

⁵⁵ John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around: How to Help Others Reach Their Full Potential* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 92.

⁵⁶“Building Youth Mentoring Programs,” n.d., accessed September 8, 2015, <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/youth-mentoring/overview/main>.

mentee(s) in which the mentor seeks to train, inspire, empower, and release the mentee(s) toward accomplishing their God-given purpose for their lives and for others. Despite the fact that the word does not occur in both the Old and New Testaments, however, the idea and principles of mentoring were common among the Hebrews. The Hebrew word “talmid” (student or scholar) used in 1 Chronicles 25: 8 conveys the idea of a mentor – mentee relationship.⁵⁷

Both the OT and NT are replete with mentors and their respective mentees as well as their mode of mentorship. In the same vein discipling; training people to become followers is also the intentional act of making disciples or followers with the aim that those who have been discipled will in turn train others also to become disciples. This is the final goal of the Great Commission. In support of the paramount importance attached to discipleship. Bonhoeffer once remarked that “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”⁵⁸ And it is impossible to have Christianity without Christ for it is through and based on Christ that Christianity exists.

The mentoring process involves “a call or invitation, nurturing and empowerment or a process of release.”⁵⁹ Nurturing involves encouraging and taking care of the immature or young ones to develop. Both mentoring and discipling calls for enthusiasm, faithfulness, commitment and sacrifice from both the mentor and the mentee. It is passing on the torch. It is parents, adults or leaders passing values on to children and teens. Mentoring involves also intensive counseling and correction for

⁵⁷ Elems Ugochukwu, class notes for LEAD 703 Theology and Practice of Leadership, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, Babcock University Campus, Ilishan, Nigeria, August 2015.

⁵⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 1st edition. (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1995), 64.

⁵⁹ Ugochukwu, class notes for LEAD 703 Theology and Practice of Leadership.

ensuring that the mentee is doing what is expected. Mentorship is coaching and modeling and therefore makes application of a lot of techniques. Mentorship and discipleship can be seen as the important processes of preparation of future leaders of the current generation (youth) by present leaders. This, therefore, calls for the urgent need of an effective mentoring program for the youth.

Nurturing involves the necessary care and attention given to someone who is growing so that he can develop to expectation. On nurturing, a lot of volumes of work have been written by Christian scholars on the need to nurture young ones or new members for spiritual growth and also for them to be sustained in the faith. It has been expressed that winning of souls does not end with their baptism. It is incumbent on old church members that new members are nurtured, trained and assimilated into the church.⁶⁰

Principle of Leadership and Organization

The youth needs effective and efficient leadership with better organizational skills for active and sustainable participation or involvement. The fact still remains that leadership is ubiquitous, indispensable and unavoidable. Yet, more often than not systems, societies, nations and organizations fail and collapse as consequence of poor leadership or lack of leadership. Barna comments “In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful resources, the church is actually losing influence. The primary reason is the lack of leadership. Nothing is more important than leadership.”⁶¹

Through efficient leadership, battles and victories are won; profits and successes are made through competent and efficacious leadership. Ability to organize

⁶⁰ Vincent E. White, *The Twenty-first Century Deacon and Deaconess: Reflecting the Biblical Model* (Huntsville, AL: AAA's, 2011), 85.

⁶¹ George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1997), 18.

(arranging and coordinating systematically or orderly) people and other resources for the success of the society or system is an essential component of leadership.⁶²

Many authors and scholars from diverse perspectives have written extensively on leadership. Notwithstanding for the sake of this project, the issue will be delimited to biblical or Christian leadership although mention can be made of secular information. According to Howell, biblical leadership involves effecting growth in holiness in people's lives and fervently promoting the extension of the kingdom of God' in this world.⁶³

Thus, Howell sees biblical leadership to involve the taking the initiative to impact on others; focusing on helping people individually and the church collectively to grow in holiness and to obey God's declared agenda of extending his kingdom as well as bringing God's people in line with God's mission.⁶⁴ This is all that youth leadership involves. The people in this Howell's leadership concept may be referred to as the youth or young people.

Contrastingly, Aubrey Malphurs and W. Mancini from Christian point of view posit that a Christian leader is as a servant who uses his or her reliability and abilities in influencing people in a specific situation to follow the directions God has given them.⁶⁵ Blackaby threats spiritual leadership in the contexts of the leader's challenge; his role (what leaders do); his preparation (how God develops leaders); the leader's vision (where do leader's get it and how do they communicate it); Leader's goal

⁶² George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1997), 18.

⁶³ Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 3.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 20.

(moving people on to God's agenda); the leader's character (a life that moves others to follow); the leader's influence (how leaders lead); the leader's decision making; the leader's schedule (doing what is important); leadership and change; building effective change; the leader's pitfall, and etc.⁶⁶ Hence based on the above-expressed ideas, youth leadership can be seen as taking the initiative to influence and help the youth by moving them on to God's agenda of missions to expand his kingdom for salvation to all humankind.

With reference to Jim Feldbush and Willian Hurtado methods, the following six keys for empowering youth for leadership have been provided in the *Youth First*. These include vision, skills, incentive, resource, action plan, and results.⁶⁷ To Doug Fields, "healthy youth ministries have spiritually healthy leaders."⁶⁸ On spiritual leadership, Fields admonishes youth leaders that irrespective of the area one is called by God to serve in the youth ministry, it should be remembered that the church's youth ministry won't be strong or efficacious ones' life isn't grounded in God and his power.⁶⁹

On leadership development in the Adventist Youth Movement, G. T. Ng echoes that, "leadership development is important because youth leaders are needed today more than ever before, especially in areas where the church is 50 to 75 percent youth. ... Local church youth ministry must depend on young people themselves." He adds that "leadership development helps to eliminate the problem of burnout. ...

⁶⁶ Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People On to God's Agenda* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011), v.

⁶⁷ "Youth First: Involving Our Youth," accessed August 20, 2015, http://gcyouthministries.org/Portals/0/Document_Downloads/YouthFirst.pdf.

⁶⁸ Doug Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry: 9 Essential Foundations for Healthy Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 27.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

The success of youth ministry depends largely on quality leadership” and that God is looking for dedicated leaders. He remarked that “may commitment be the hallmark of Adventist youth leadership in this millennium.”⁷⁰

In view of the above discussions, it can be said that there is, therefore, the need to develop quality and healthy spiritual leadership as far as youth participation in ministry and the Gospel Commission are concerned. God is interested in leadership since he is the author of leadership and authority from the beginning.

Principle of Motivation and Encouragement

Both the youth and all who are stakeholders of youth participation need to be encouraged and motivated both in words and in kind. To motivate means to provide someone with a motive or reason or incentive for doing something. It also means to stimulate or influence someone’s interest in or enthusiasm for doing something by inspiring, encouraging, exciting or incentivizing.

In expressing his view on Gospel motivation, Jonathan Dodson comments; motives are indeed more significant than ones’ deeds. Nothing can be done rightly for wrong reasons. He adds that what makes Jesus disciples is that which motivates them as his followers. We become what our hearts visualize. Hence to him, thus, gospel-centered disciples are motivated by holy affection for God.⁷¹ This is in conformity with the motto of the Adventist youth ministry which says that “for the love of Christ constrains us” (2 Cor 5: 14, NKJV).

⁷⁰ G. T Ng, "Leadership in the Adventist Youth Movement," *Getting It Right: A Power Packed Resource for Adventist Youth Leaders* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 66-75.

⁷¹ Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 75-78.

Hindrances to Youth Participation in Ministry

Among the common barriers to youth participation presented by the General Conference in the *Youth First* includes the fact that the youth are not trusted by older people, lack of confidence in youth by the older people. In certain cases, getting youth involved in activities is against the cultural norms or the status quo. The attitude of the young people like low self-esteem, shyness and ridiculing other colleagues can make a barrier for others. Additionally, the sex or gender, education, and lack of experience can serve as roadblocks. Other hindrances include lack of funding from the church and parents, unwillingness to change the existing world view and status quo, the absence of enough time to address the issue of youth participation or involvement as well as barrier posed by politics.⁷²

Included in the factors militating against the youth or youth participation is what Michael Akpa, a pastor, and lecturer at Babcock University in Nigeria (of Seventh-day Adventists Church) describes as “the conflicting worlds of the contemporary African youth.”⁷³ To Akpa, the modern-day African youth are the outcome of many worlds, with each world creating its expectation on the youth. He adds that these worlds and their demands on the youth are conflicting one with another, and by so doing put the youth under undue tension from many-sided areas. He expresses that these conflicts are not necessarily the making of the youth; and that most of the times young people have no alternative since they are naturally born into these conflicting worlds. These conflicting worlds include the indigenous world, the

⁷² Youth Ministries Department, “Youth First: Involving Youth in Church Life,” n.d, 15.

⁷³ Michael O. Akpa, *The African Youth Today: A Practical Approach to the Working Effectively with the Contemporary African Young People* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Agbo Areo, 2001), 3.

Western world with its western civilization, the religious world, and the peculiar youthful world.⁷⁴

Methods and Programs to Increase and Sustain Youth Participation

There is a continual increase in the platform for youth to get involved in contemporary society and religious denominations. Scholars interested in youth ministries, and youth participation /empowerment promoters or organization like Doug Fields, Roger L. Dudley, Marc Jans and Kurt De Backer, Roger Hart, Harry Shier, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Commonwealth Youth Programs etc. have expressed the need and provided programs and methods for youth participation. These are provided in the form of models, strategies and other suggested practical ideas in this section of studies.

Models of Youth Participation

There are diverse models of youth participation put forward by scholars which can be used when trying to get young people involved with decision making or participate in issues or acting for change. Doug Fields, burrowing from Rick Warren, expresses five eternal purposes God has for a purpose-driven youth ministry. These five purposes are evangelism, worship, fellowship, discipleship and ministry; and that “a purpose-driven youth ministry will have programs and structures that reflect these purposes.”⁷⁵

He adds that these five eternal purposes do form the core components around which other nine components which all start with letter “P” revolve. These nine

⁷⁴ Akpa, *The African Youth Today*, 4.

⁷⁵ Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*, 17.

components are the power of God, purpose, potential audience, programs, process, planned values, parents, participating leaders, and perseverance. To Fields, a youth ministry which is vibrant is that which is purpose-driven.⁷⁶

Roger Hart states there are 8 steps on the “Ladder of Participation.” Hart’s Ladder of Participation is a model that can be used when developing and working on youth participation projects. It aims to enable young people to take an active part in decision making, and give them the opportunity to have a ‘voice’ in society. The eight degrees of participation—eight rungs in the ladder of youth ministry success are as shown below:

- Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making
- Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action
- Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people
- Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed
- Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed
- Rung 3: Young people tokenized*
- Rung 2: Young people are decoration*
- Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*

According to Hart, the first three steps (rungs 1, 2, and 3, which are manipulation, decoration, and tokenism), are considered not to be engaging young people in active youth participation, but instead, provide a pathway to move up onto the other stages of youth participation. The next five steps after the first three look at how to fully integrate young people into the decision-making process and how to get them actively involved.⁷⁷

Harry Shier, on the other hand, presents a five-level ladder or pathways to participation known commonly as Shier’s Pathways to Participation as presented below with level 1 as the base:

⁷⁶ Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*, 17.

⁷⁷Youth Ministries Department, “Youth First: Involving Youth in Church Life.” 17-18.

- Level 5: Young people share power and responsibility in decision-making
- Level 4: Young people are involved in decision-making process
- Level 3: Young people's views are taken into account
- Level 2: Young people are supported in expressing their views
- Level 1: Young people are listened to

Shier's Pathways to Participation model is useful in assessing organizational willingness, readiness, and commitment to youth participation.⁷⁸

Developing Strategy for Youth Participation

One other method of increasing and sustaining youth involvement in ministry is by developing a well-defined and effective strategy for the young people to achieve their goals and objectives in missions or the ministry for which they are called.

Though strategy has its roots in the field of military science and marketing, Terry and Payne by considering other scholars views see strategy as “a future orientation and a plan for process” By so doing they express that “wise strategy development involves a healthy understanding of the past and present, it moves us beyond history to future actions and results.”⁷⁹ This, therefore, calls for strategic planning or strategy development. Which to them “is a prayerfully discerned, Spirit-guided process of preparation, development, implementation, and evaluation of the necessary steps involved in missionary endeavors.”⁸⁰

Other Suggested Practical Ideas

A lot of practical ideas to increase and sustain youth involvement have been expressed by concerned organizations and resource centers but due to space, only a

⁷⁸ “Shier's Pathway,” n.d, accessed August 12, 2015, <http://www.myd.govt.nz/documents/engagement/shier.pdf>.

⁷⁹John M. Terry and J. D. Payne, *Developing A Strategy for Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Cultural Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 3.

⁸⁰Ibid, 13.

few are considered. Among the list of “50 Ways to Strengthen Ministry with Youth” from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership include: Honor the spirituality of youth, Equip parents to nurture their children’s faith, “Get real” with Christian Education for youth, Provide excellent adult leadership for youth activities, Make worship meaningful for young persons, Create a sense of belonging for youth, Cultivate competence in youth, and Strive for effective Youth Fellowship.⁸¹

The Youth Ministries Department of the GC of Seventh-day Adventists has also suggested some practical ideas on how to involve youth getting youth for participation in church activities. These include: holding spiritual gifts seminars to help young people in discovering and developing their gifts. The young people should be empowered for leadership by identifying what spiritual gifts and natural abilities each has as well as training them to employ those gifts in church leadership. There is also the need for the provision of the relevant resources, expertise, and support to do the job well and then step back and allow them to do it.

There is also the need of holding seminars for the entire churches on youth involvement, as well as choosing mentors for youth involvement purposes by making sure that the appointed mentors have adequate time and energy to motivate the youth.

Decision-making authority in the church should be shared to include the youth. Young people should be trained in the areas such as communication, leadership, preaching skills, and others. Older church members may help. Strong volunteer system should be promoted.⁸²

⁸¹ Church leadership, “Resources: 50 Ways Series,” n.d., accessed August 9, 2015, <http://www.churchleadership.com/50ways/Youth.html>.

⁸² Youth Ministries Department, “Youth First: Involving Youth in Church Life,” 19.

Summary

This chapter provides indicates that the importance of youth participation in ministry in this era of post-modernism is of universal concern. Young people are progressively more identified as important agents in religious, community and national development.

Involving young people in activities is embraced in both secular and religious arenas. There are principles to increase and sustain youth participation which includes mobilization, teaching/training, mentoring/nurturing involvement/integrating, empowerment, equipping, and leadership.

There are diverse methods and models of youth participation which can be used when trying to get young people involved with decision making or participate in issues or ministry. A lot of common barriers to youth participation as well as practical ideas to increase and sustain it are also diagnosed. The next chapter will provide the detail information on the designing of strategy including questionnaires for the survey as based on the knowledge gleaned from this literature reviewed and the theological foundation.

CHAPTER 4

STRATEGY FOR INCREASING AND SUSTAINING PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN MINISTRY

The theological foundation and literature review analyzed necessitated the need for active and maximum youth involvement in activities and mission. Yet, critical observations expressed concerns and personal involvement in the youth ministry as a pastor attest to the fact, that there has been a great decline in participation of church activities among contemporary youth. Hence this chapter seeks to develop for implementation the efficient strategies and programs to increase and sustain the participation of the youth in church activities and programs for effective Adventist Youth Ministry in the Abuakwa District of Central Ghana Conference.

This Chapter, therefore, deals with the description of the project setting, pre-program survey/interview and questionnaires, strategy design and presentation, reporting, evaluation, and monitoring. This involves the description of the local setting which includes the socio-cultural and economic background of the Atwima district, the historical background of the Abuakwa SDA Church, Abuakwa District and its Youth Ministries. There are also the development and distribution of questionnaires and interviews, collection, and analysis of data. This is followed by the designing and presentation of project strategy and evaluation and monitoring.

Presentation of the Project Context

This section of the paper looks at the brief description of the historical and local settings. It surveys the description of the local setting which includes the socio-cultural and economic background of the Atwima District where Abuakwa is located, the historical background of Adventism in Abuakwa and its Youth Ministries as well as the Abuakwa District of SDA Church.

The Macro Context

As the background of this chapter, this section will first have a look into the local setting of Abuakwa and for that matter Atwima Nwabiagya District. For the purpose of this study, information on Abuakwa town and Abuakwa District of the Seventh-day Adventists will be considered in the light of Atwima area since traditionally all of the churches under survey are within the Atwima area.

The location. The Abuakwa District is located in the Atwima Nwabiagya District Assembly which is also part of the Atwima area, formerly known as Atwima District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. This vast Atwima area is now divided into three district assemblies as Atwima Nwabiagya, Atwima Kwanwoma, and Atwima Mponua. Atwima Nwabiagya District is among the largest districts in the Ashanti Region of the Akan ethnic tribe of Ghana.

The Atwima Nwabiagya District is one of the 27 political and administrative Districts in Ashanti Region. The district is situated in the western part of the region and shares common boundaries with Ahafo Ano South and Atwima Mponua Districts (to the West), Offinso Municipal to the North, Amansie–West and Bosomtwe–Atwima Kwanwoma Districts to the South, Kumasi Metropolis and Kwabre Districts to the

East. It covers an estimated area of 294.84 sq km. The district capital is Nkawie.

There are about 126 settlements in the district.¹

Demography of Atwima Nwabiagya. About population size, structure and composition, the population of the Atwima Nwabiagya District is 149,025 with the majority (68.5%) of the population living in rural localities. Females constitute more than half (51.7%) of the populace of the district. The analysis shows that the district has a high youth population with the population less than 15 years constituting more than one-third (38.8%) of the total population. Due to the high percentage of the young people in the district, the dependency ratio is high. The majority (96.2%) of the residents in the district are Ghanaians by birth. Non-Ghanaians form less than two percent of the population of the District.²

Economic activities. The economy of Atwima Nwabiagya District is classified under four broad groups namely agriculture, industry, trading and services. The service industry employs 31.7 percent of the labor force, followed by trade/commerce, agriculture, and lastly industry. Most of the settlements in the district are closer to the urban areas hence residents are mostly engaged in services and trade activities.

The main types of agricultural activities in the district are crop farming and livestock rearing. Fishing is also done but on a small scale. The agricultural economy provides the food and nutrient needs of the population, hence it holds a great potential in the district. The district's manufacturing sector (mostly micro and small-scale enterprises) is mostly of dressmaking, carpentry, metal fabrication, distillation of local

¹“Atwima Nwabiagya District Assembly,” accessed May 10, 2015, <http://atwimanwabiagya.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/>, accessed May 10, 2015.

²Ibid.

alcoholic beverages, leather works, ceramics, quarrying, baking, wood processing (saw mill) and batik/tie and dye making. As regards trade and commerce, about 23 percent of the working population in the district is engaged in trading/commercial activities (buying and selling). Types of trading/commercial activities found in the district include trading in foodstuffs, provisions, alcoholic and non-traders are small scale retailers.

The 3 main markets in the district are located at Barekese, Abuakwa, and Nkawie. These commercial activities sometimes attract children of school going age making them attach little importance to schooling.³ Most of the traders are small scale retailers.

Socio-cultural activities. Information provided by the 2010 Population and Housing Census—District Analytical Reports for these three district assemblies indicate that the major occupation in the Atwimaland includes agriculture, forestry, fishery, craft and related trade whilst very few are engaged as managers, professionals, and technicians and the unemployment rate is high.

The main cultural practice in the Atwima area is the Asante culture of the Akan ethnic tribe. Culturally, the Akans are religious (especially the belief in the Akan God of Saturday and supernatural powers) and they are noted for their hospitality. To the Akan, religion forms an integral part of culture. The principal language spoken in the district is Asante-Twi although the English language is the lingua franca of Ghana as a nation. The most staple diet is fufu. It is prepared with cassava and plantain or cocoyam and it is served with soup. Other kinds of food and foodstuffs are also eaten by various populates in the area. The cloth is the main

³ 2010 Population & Housing Census, District Analytic Report, Atwima Nwabiagya District.

traditional attire and it is worn by both male and female to social gatherings like funerals, church, festivals, wedding and naming ceremonies.

The main cultural dance includes Adowa, Kete, and Nwomkro. There are traditional groups in the district, which perform (sing and dance) during occasional celebrations. Important cultural practices of the people in the district include celebrations of funerals, puberty rites, marriages, and festivals such as Akwasidae and Awukudae. The Akwasidae and Awukudae festivals are celebrated every fourth night. The main sacred days of the people in the district are Tuesdays and Fridays. These days in certain cases offer opportunities for the promotion of self-help development activities often called communal labor in the rural communities of the district.

On health delivery services, the Atwima Nwabiagya district is accessible to health care facilities/services. Currently, it has only one (1) government Hospital, four (4) Health Centres, six (6) Private Maternity Homes and four (4) private clinics. The government hospital is located at Nkawie/Toase with other private hospitals at Abuakwa, Koforidua, and Afari. A military multi-complex hospital is under construction at Afari (between Afari and Nkawie). Certain rural communities have been provided with Community Health Planning Services (CHPS) compounds.

The district map is shown in Figure 1 below.⁴



Figure 1. District Map of Atwima Nwabiagya

⁴ The District Map of Atwima Nwabiagya is as provided in the 2010 Population and Housing Census, District Analytic Report, Ghana Statistical Service, accessed March 20, 2015.

Literacy and education. Concerning literacy and educational activities, statistics provided by the district shows that of the population aged 11 years and older in the District, 80.5 percent are literate. Among the literate population, the majority (67.4 %) are literate in English and Ghanaian language.

On educational facilities, there are one hundred and eighty-one (181) kindergarten/nursery schools, one hundred and eighty-three (183) primary schools, one hundred and twenty-three (123) Junior High Schools, and five (5) Senior High Schools in the district. There are also four (4) Vocational schools and one (1) Theological University in the district which is located at Abuakwa and owned by the Baptist Church. These schools comprise of both public and private educational institutions that provide human resources development opportunities for children and the youth in the district.

Political activities. On political administration and governance, by the system prevailing in Ghana, the District Assembly is the highest decision-making body at the local level. The district has two constituencies namely Atwima Nwabiagya South and Atwima Nwabiagya North. The District Assembly is composed of 8 Sub-Committees that report to an Executive Committee and to the General Assembly where major decisions are made. Under the District, Assemblies are the district Sub-structures comprising the Area Councils and Unit Committees.⁵ Although the governance of the district is invested on the district assembly by the government, yet as Akan culture demands, traditional rulers which include the chiefs, heads of stool lands and family heads have their roles to play.

⁵ Most of the information on Atwima Nwabiagya District are facts on the district as provided in the 2010 Population & Housing Census, District Analytic Report, Atwima Nwabiagya District.

Religious beliefs and affiliation. Religiously majority of the populace are Christians (83.2%) who include Pentecostal/Charismatic, Protestants, Catholics, and other Christians. Prominent Protestant churches include Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian. There is also Anglican Church. Muslims and people of other religious faith including traditionalists are also in the area.⁶ Adventism is also known in the district since Adventist Church is found in almost all the towns as well as some of the villages. As far as youth organizations are concerned, the Christians and Muslims have various forms of entities for their youth in the district. For example, The Catholics have the CYO, the Methodists have the Methodist Brigade and Presbyterians have the YPG, as well as their various youth choirs or singing groups.

Abuakwa town. As aforementioned, Abuakwa is one of the towns in the Atwima traditional area and precisely in the Atwima Nwabiagya district Assembly. It is one of the commercial and busy towns in the area due to its position as a gateway linking the major roads from Sunyani (Brong Ahafo region) and Bibiani (Western region) to Kumasi city, the current Abuakwa township is occupied by Abuakwa (number 1 and number 2), Dadease, Apemhase, Boaso, Kagyase and Asonomaso stoolands or suburbs. Traditionally, the whole land belongs to Abuakwa chieftaincy as the custodian for the Asantehene who principally owns all lands in the Asante region.⁷

The Micro Context

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Abuakwa in the Central Ghana Conference was established in the first week of September 1978 as a result of a three

⁶ Philomena Nyarko, "2010 Population & Housing Census, District Analytic Report, Atwima Nwabiagya District," accessed May 10, 2015, www.statsghana.gov.gh.

⁷ Opoku Boake and Agya Opoku, Former Church Elder of Abuakwa SDA Church and Natives of Abuakwa, interview by Author, April 15, 2015.

weeks' open air evangelistic campaign conducted and financed mostly by the youth ministries department of the then Amakom district of SDA Church.

The Ashtown District rendered some supports. Personal interview with key informants and discussion with focus groups from the Abuakwa District were conducted.⁸ It was expressed that the evangelistic campaign was meant for Tanoso, but, Elder J.E. Marfo who had been a missionary volunteer leader in his youthful age for a long time, but that time a member of Kwadaso church, persuasively insisted that it should be conducted at Abuakwa. Prominent among the evangelistic team were Teacher Quaison (of Agric Nzima church), Pastors Osei Emmanuel and Twumasi, Comrade Nyame Amaning (of Kwadaso Church), Kwaku Addo (of Bantama Church), Vera Antwi Debra and Owusu Afriyie. The mass Dorcas society and the singing band from Ashtown also participated and were transported to the evangelistic site by one Opanin Boama of Ashtown Church.

According to Elder Marfo, one of the key informants, there had been the proclamation of the Adventist message at Abuakwa earlier on in the 1950s by one Mr. Ampofo but it did not thrive. Hence there was the need of re-evangelisation.⁹ The first converts in the 1978 campaign were eight people who included Kwaku Duah (who is also known as Charles Owusu), Opoku Boakye, Elizabeth Serwaa, Agnes Serwaa, Mary Dufie, Theresa Serwaa and Kwaku Adade. All these persons were youths in their teens except Kwaku Adade who was very young. The only adult among them was Hanna Abuyaa who happened to be the mother of Theresa Serwaa.

⁸ Focus group included people like elders J. E. Marfo (85 years), Isaiah Tawiah Mensah (about 90 years), Opoku Boakye (56 years), Agya Opoku (about 83 years), Kofi Anning, Kwaku Adade, I.Y. Manu, E.Agyei Baffour and Madam Stella Afriyie, interview by the researcher, Abuakwa, April 15, 2015.

⁹ J. E. Marfo, Pioneer Church Elder of Abuakwa SDA. Church, interview by Author, April 15, 2015.

The first converts were baptized by the late Pastor S. K. Agyemang who happened to be the Central Ghana Conference Secretary. Later others like Mary Ntim and Felicia Nyarko who were also youth joined.¹⁰

The church started as a household church meeting in the parlor of the family house of Opoku Boakye. Other Adventists like the late Elder Boakye Agyemang, Agya Attah and others who were in the town but fellowshiping elsewhere joined. As the church was increasing they moved from the house and worshiped at the Roman Catholic Primary School, Abuakwa Church was organized in 1987 by the late Pastor S. E. Ampate with Elders J.E. Marfo and Kwaku Attah as the first elders and the late Isaac Nyame as the church secretary.¹¹ By the time of the commencement of the church and through its organization, Elders Isaiah Tawiah Mensah (who has also been a missionary volunteer leader for a long time) and the late I. O. Donkor (a Conference clerk) were the overseers or caretakers assisting Elder Marfo. Abuakwa Church and some others were under the Kwadaso district.

It is expressed that the youth of Abuakwa Church who started the church were seriously involved in the church programs and missionary activities to the extent that, they with the support of Elders Kojo Attah, J.E. Marfo and Isaiah Tawiah Mensah established the Atwima Esaase church.¹² It needs to be mentioned that other Christian churches like Methodist, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian in the Abuakwa town and its environ also have formidable organizations for their youth with whom the Adventist Youth Ministry can be equated and compared.

¹⁰Opoku Boakye, a key informant, interviewed by researcher, Abuakwa, April 15, 2015.

¹¹Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

The Abuakwa district. The Abuakwa District of Seventh-day Adventist Church which is headquartered at Abuakwa is under the Central Ghana Conference of the Northern Ghana Union Mission. The district was carved out of the then Kwadaso District and organized as a new district in September 2002 with Pastor Ben Appiah as its first district pastor.¹³ Pastors D.K. Owusu-Ansah, K.Agyeman-Badu and E. Osei-Yeboah have also served as district pastors. The current district pastor is Ben Adjare. The Abuakwa District since its inception has undergone some reorganizations. Currently, it consists of eight organized churches and one company church. The organized churches include Abuakwa, Maakro, Sepaase, Atwima Agogo, Dadease, Nso Nyameye, Mim, Hiawu Besease and Mim. The company church is Abakomadi. The Abuakwa, Dadease, and Abakomadi churches are all located in Abuakwa township.

Before the district was lately reorganized it included churches in Tanoso and Koforidua. It is in the light of this that Tanoso (Central) church was selected to be among the four main churches for the survey. Per the statistical report, the total baptized membership of the district excluding Tanoso is 1,320 but Tanoso Central Church has a baptized membership of 606.¹⁴ At the time of the survey, the Abuakwa District was pastored by Bernard Adjare who also happened to be the Associate Youth Director of the Conference. He attests that the district is blessed with youth who constitute the majority of the Sabbath school membership. They also play

¹³ Information found at the District Head office, Abuakwa, April 16, 2015.

¹⁴ The figures are as provided by the Secretariat Department of the Central Ghana Conference based on 3rd Quarter, 2015 Statistical Report submitted by District Pastors to the Conference.

significant roles in the district especially in the area of music and other church programs.¹⁵

The statistics on the four selected churches as provided by Appendix C show that total church membership is about 1266 as per head count. Out of the total 1301 Sabbath school membership, 803 (61.80%) are youth aged 6-35 years. Out of the total 357 church officers, 147 (41.29%) only are youth. In the church boards or leadership; out of 111 church board members, only 42 (37.83%) are youth. This serves as the baseline for the project.

Research Design

This section of the paper deals with the methodology of the research, the instrumentation (development of the questionnaires and interview questions for personal and focus group)and the collection and analysis of the data as well as the designing of the intervention

Permission Letters

Letter for permission to convey the survey in the four selected churches in the Abuakwa District was given to the Executive Secretary of the Central Ghana Conference as provided in Appendix A. Upon the permission granted as per Appendix B the survey was done and the other activities carried.

Type of Research

This research made use of the mixed method which involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approach was used to analyze data which involve figures or numbers. The questionnaires had both open-ended (whereby the

¹⁵ Ben Adjare Abuakwa, District Pastor, interview by researcher, Abuakwa, April 16, 2015.

respondent is free to express himself/herself) and close-ended (suggested answers have been already provided for the respondent to choose from) forms. The method of participant observation would also use since the researcher has the idea of mingling with the youth and the adults or leaders in order to validate the information that respondents and interviewees would give. Additionally, a normal approach method will be also used. The intervention will also involve workshop, seminar, and sermons.

Rationale for Selection

The rationale for using this mixed method stems from the nature of the project context, the intervention and how data of findings would be analyzed and evaluated. There will be the need of discussions, interviews, and statistical analyses of figures of data. Interviews and focus group discussions would be conducted especially for those who cannot or would not like to write or speak English or good. Furthermore, it would be expedient to use the personal interview in the local dialect so that they can freely and adequately explain things. Also, not all the people to be consulted will have time to sit down to answer the questionnaires. The reason for the normal approach method is to ensure that the youth or members and their activities could be studied in the normal natural context devoid of researcher's manipulation or interference.

Appropriateness to this Study

Due to the fact that the four churches though are in the same Abuakwa District of SDA Church and Atwima area, they are not in the same town. Also, coupled with the fact that they are a mixture of youth and adults, literates and illiterates, males and females, it seems more expedient to use this approach to meet them at their own level.

The Population Sample

The Abuakwa District of SDA and the Tanoso Church add up to ten churches with baptized membership of about 2000 plus non-baptized members which include children. It is because of this that four churches were selected. With the baptized membership of the selected four churches being over 1,260 with Sabbath school membership of over 1401, it was estimated that about 100 people would be contacted with the questionnaires and other 30 people could also have been contacted either in the form of focus group or interviewees.

This number of people was to include both genders, adults and youth, ordinary church members and those who hold church offices, active and non-active AY respondents through random sampling. By so doing a broader spectrum representing all the major groups in the churches will be involved. Focus group of at least six people per church was also to be also involved. Notwithstanding, the main target group to be reached was the youth within the age bracket of 16 -35 years who according to the AY membership can be classified as active youth members.

The Instrumentation

The research made use of both structure (designed questionnaires) and non-structured (that which involve interviews) instruments. At the same time too there are of both the open (respondent to supply his /her own answer) and close (suggested answers be chosen from) question type. To avoid any eventualities about 100 questionnaires were produced. The questionnaire begins with a statement of permission. The actual questions are divided into two parts as seen in Appendix B. The Part 1 with 10 questions seeks for general information about the respondent. The Part 2 with 23 questions deals with evaluation and matters concerning the topic and

the youth ministry in general. Provision was made for respondents also to provide suggestions and contributions

In order to have enough information concerning church members' views on youth participation in church activities and the Adventist Youth Ministry, a pre-project interview was conducted with especially elderly ones who cannot write good English or were not ready to spend the time to answer questionnaires. For more information about the history and background of Adventism and the youth ministry in Abuakwa Church and the district as a whole, six elderly people including a female who are also pioneers of the church were selected as a focused group in the Abuakwa Church for discussions.

In the Maakro church, a focus group of ten people which included pioneers, church officers and youth (males and females) was selected. Both formal and informal interviews were conducted and recorded when interacted with other church members who showed interest in the survey.

Distribution of the questionnaires. In all eight youth leaders who are university graduates (two from each of the four sites or churches) were selected to as research assistants. These assistants were taken through the questions so that in case any respondent finds any problem in understanding or answering the questions they would be of help. The questionnaires were given out on two Sabbath afternoons immediately after church service. Although the information had already been given through the permission letter sent to them by the Central Ghana Conference Secretary, the announcement was once again made so that out of free will, respondents voluntarily participate.

On the first Sabbath, it was done in the Abuakwa and Tanoso churches whilst all the respondents from that church were gathered. But for the Maakro and Sepaase

churches, much attention was paid on focus group interview. In all, 100 questionnaires were issued out to the four selected churches but 85 were received for the analysis. Some of the key questions in the questionnaires were used as the interview questions. Nevertheless, it was not be restricted to the structured questions alone, interviewees were allowed to express themselves and based on that other information were received.

Data collection. This section tries to look at the data collection procedure of the 100 questionnaires issued out and the 85 answered by the various respondents. As earlier said, the questionnaires were administered in the four selected churches and were received after completion. It was only the Maakro Church which because of time factor the respondents were allowed to take them home to be brought the next Sabbath. Because of the support of the assistants and for the fact that the respondents were assembled in their own local churches, it made the collection easier.

Out of the total 100 questionnaires issued out, 85 were received. Thus, 15 especially those which went to Maakro were not returned on time. They were received after the rest have been analyzed because the church clerk who collected them traveled and nobody could get access to where the questionnaires were kept till he returned some weeks later.

Analysis of Data and Presentation of Findings

As aforementioned, the analyses of the data received from the questionnaires and responses from the personal interviews received are done both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative aspects are mostly presented in either in a form of table, bar chart or pie chart as would be seen in this analyses section of the work. All the same, there are some which are presented in both tables and the other forms.

Distribution of respondents. Table 1 indicates the number of respondents according to the questionnaires received. It shows that 84 questionnaires were received from Sepaase, Tanoso, and Abuakwa but none from Maakro due to delay in returning them for analysis. Hence a focus group was selected at Maakro whereby a formal verbal interview was conducted.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Church

Church	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Sepaase	5	6.0
Tanoso	29	34.5
Abuakwa	50	59.5

Socio-demographic characteristics. Table 2 gives the breakdown of respondent socio-demographic characteristics.

Table 2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Age	16 – 20	36	42.4
	21 – 25	13	15.3
	26 – 30	15	17.6
	31 - 35	6	7.1
	36+	15	17.6
Sex	Female	36	42.4
	Male	49	57.6
Baptismal Status	Non-baptized	23	27.4
	Baptized	61	72.6
Current Status and Position	Former Church Administrator	1	1.2
	Parent	3	3.5
	AY Instructor	3	3.5
	Church Administrator	6	7.1
	Youth Leader	6	7.1
	Inactive Youth Member	6	7.1
	Active Youth Member	18	21.2
	Church Elder	8	9.4
	Church Member	15	17.6
	Former Member	12	14.1
	Other	7	8.2

Evaluation section. Concerning the evaluation of the Adventist Youth Ministry activities and the youth participation in church programs in the district (in Part 2 of the Questionnaire), based on the respondents' perception, the following responses were given:

Table 3. Respondents' Perception of Youth Activities in the District

Question	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Perception of Youth involvement in Church Activities	Bad	9	10.8
	Fair	11	13.3
	Good, needs improvement	35	42.2
	Good	16	19.3
	Excellent	12	14.5
Perception of Effectiveness of the Adventist Youth Ministries	Bad	4	5.2
	Fair	7	9.1
	Good, needs improvement	30	39.0
	Good	21	27.3
	Excellent	15	19.5
Perception of the Youth Nurturing Program	Bad	8	9.6
	Fair	17	20.5
	Good, needs improvement	15	18.1
	Good	29	34.9
	Excellent	14	16.9
Perception of Mentoring Program	Bad	14	18.4
	Fair	18	23.7
	Good, needs improvement	19	25.0
	Good	16	21.1
	Excellent	9	11.8
Perception of Disciple Making Program	Bad	10	12.5
	Fair	19	23.8
	Good, needs improvement	16	20.0
	Good	23	28.8
	Excellent	12	15.0

Respondents were further queried on the best ways of improving or increasing youth participation in their local church or the Abuakwa District. By rating, the item (method) with the smallest mean indicates the best possible method followed by the next smallest mean. The best possible method out of the lot is by teaching and training the youth. Then comes mobilization which is followed by involvement of the youth. The fourth item on the ranking list is the education of the youth and the entire Church. This was highly supported by some of the interviewees especially the youth who

commented that educating the youth and the entire church would make the adults know and it will consequently facilitate delegation and empowerment.

In the nutshell, per the respondents, the best methods for increasing the participation of youth in church activities in the District can be arranged linearly in order as:

1. Teaching/Training the Youth
2. Mobilization of the Youth
3. Involvement of the Youth in Programs
4. Educating the Youth and the Entire Church
5. Equipping the Youth
6. Empowerment and Motivation
7. Mentorship/discipleship Program for Youth
8. Loyalty and Commitment of the Youth
9. Involvement of Elders and Adults in Youth Program
10. Integration of the Youth in Church Leadership
11. Better Strategy Development.

It needs to be said that all the methods are important and can be applied but from the survey, the respondents who are mostly youth are expressing what they perceived to be the best to be done, in order of priority.

Suggestions and other Remarks

As indicated on the Questionnaire, respondents were asked to suggest possible answers to certain open questions. Among these are the following;

1. Reasons why some youth stop attending youth meetings which affect the youth ministries include unfavorable meeting time and days, lack of real understanding of the youth ministry, lack of commitment and loyalty, people staying far from their church, peer group and academic influence, laziness on the part of the youth,

parents reluctant to allow children to go out in the evening times, poor and uninteresting programs, poor youth and church leadership, prevailing educational system especially the extra classes and take home assignments

2. Reasons why some youth do not want or do not involve themselves in church activities include, lack of education by the church as a whole, hindrances from the matured adult leaders which include lack of empowerment, youth are not adequately prepared or equipped, bad behavior by youth, shyness and low esteem held by youth, youth not able to identify their spiritual gifts, lack of proper understanding of their calling, church not caring enough for the youth so to monitor them, lack of motivation, poor or inadequate mentorship program for youth and adult.
3. Suggestions given on what poses as hindrance to youth participation include lack of training or education for both youth and the entire church, lack of proper leadership; lack of encourage and motivation from parents and leadership; problems by the youth themselves for example, bad behavior/character, inferiority complex and unwillingness to involve themselves; unwillingness on the part of adult members to pass on leadership to young ones; lack of mentoring program, lack of loyalty and commitment on the part of the youth and adults, age and gender discrimination and social pressures.
4. Suggestions on how to sustain youth participation include making sure that always there are programs/ activities for or that involve the youth, youth are to be mobilized, continuous youth empowerment, continuous motivation from both parents and leaders, better mentorship and nurturing program, regular involvement of youth in church administration or leadership, involvement of adults and church leaders in youth program.
5. Suggestions on how to maintain the Adventist faith legacy in the youth include making sure that the Adventist doctrines are well taught and explained to the youth for the youth to know and understand them, continuous involvement of the youth in all aspect of church activities, integrating the youth church leadership, continuous Bible studies for the youth, conscious effort to incorporate Adventist faith and beliefs in all church programs, proper counseling strategy for the youth especially the erring ones, teaching the youth the benefits of the youth ministries, letting the youth know the history of the church and the roles some youth played, and adults being role models or living to expectations.

Response from Oral Interview and Focus Group

On the issue of how the elderly ones especially the pioneers see the contemporary youth and their involvement in church programs, Elder J.E. Marfo remarked that the youth involvement in church programs especially in missions or evangelistic activities was greater and in their time. He adds that with his experience

as a Missionary Volunteer leader and through youth activities that Abuakwa Church was established, he expects that the contemporary youth should be awakened and revived for greater participation for effective youth ministry.

At Maakro Church, the same expression was made by Elder Isaiah Tawiah Mensah who remarked that formerly and during their active time of youth and church leadership, the youth were more loyal, God-fearing and committed to God's biddings. Elder Agyei Baffour also commented that something drastic should be done especially educating the entire church before our young ones totally lost interest and leave the church. The youth who were part of the focus group by hearing the more experienced elders and former youth leaders accepted the challenge thrown to them and re-echoed for the need of putting in place mechanism to remedy the situation.

Personal interview with Pastor Aborampah Mensah, the Union (NGUM) Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Director, who happened to be around during one of the focus group discussions, threw more light on how mission- oriented activities can be inculcated into the youth participation program. These include youth forming various groups or teams of ministries as Prison Visitation Ministry, Prayer Ministry, Hospital Visitation Ministry, Helping Hand or Lend- a- hand Ministry and Music Ministry.¹⁶

Analysis of Findings

From all the tables and figures that were considered above, it could be said that majority of the respondents for which the youth between 16-30 years forms the majority perceive almost all the activities involving the youth to be good. At the same

¹⁶ E. Mensah Aborampah, interview by researcher.

time, a major fraction of this youth is saying there is the need for improvement in all these activities.

This means that youth involvement in church activities in the District is perceived to be good yet there is the need for improvement. It was also observed that there were some people who expressed that it was bad in all the case. Another issue that the analysis has shown is that there were some respondents who in most cases and for one reason or the other did not express their stance on the issues under discussion. These were the people that were indicated missing in the tables.

Per the findings from the questionnaires, further analyses could be made. It could be inferred that:

1. Many of the respondents including the youth themselves do not know or understand what the Adventist Youth Ministries is all about and for that matter, the main purpose for which it is established is also not clear to them. This was seen from the fact that many of the respondents did not answer questions 1 and 2 which talked about what the youth ministry is and its purpose; the majority of those who tried to answer them were confusing issues. If this is the case, then, how can we expect maximum participation or involvement?
2. The issue of the Church having the majority of its members being youth was evident in the membership and Sabbath School membership record in the appendix C. This was also evident in the number of the respondents.
3. Based on that record too, it was also seen that the number of youth in the church leadership was small as compared to its majority in membership. The majority of the youth who got the opportunity to serve are in the other church offices or the departments. In view of this one is tempted to say that the youth are either neglected or relegated to the background. In this case, the issue that comes to mind is: how can someone who is relegated or neglected be expected to perform?
4. Considering the fact that the youth (from 16-35years) formed the majority of the respondent (70 out of 85 people), it is possible that their answers and perception are from the angle of youth and therefore been influenced by their age.
5. Hence concerning what the youth perceived to be good, for example, the youth involvement in church programs, the adults, per the interview do not see it that way. Nevertheless, one thing is very paramount; both the youth and the adults are all in harmony as regards the need for improvement on the existing situation.

Design of the Intervention Program

Based on the findings and analysis of the survey and the literature review as discussed above, this section of the paper proposes strategy for implementation to mitigate the issues under discussion

Primary Purpose of the Program

This is to increase and sustain youth participation in church programs for effective Adventist Youth Ministries.

Program's Overall Objective

The objective is to get the maximum involvement of youth in the Church missionary programs through the Adventist Youth Ministries. In view of this, the following selected objectives or activities have been set to be achieved at the end of the program:

1. To lead the Church to know and appreciate that the concept of youth participating in God's salvation agenda is of the theological and biblical foundation and that the youth since the establishment of the SDA Church, have played various roles, therefore should be involved in the activities of the contemporary church.
2. To help the youth and the entire church to understand and appreciate the essence of the Adventist Youth Ministries in the light of their primary focus on "Salvation and service."
3. To lead leaders (including pastors) and youth to identify their spiritual giftedness so that they can participate in God's work and the mission of the church accordingly.
4. To bring to bear some hindrances in youth participation and possible ways of increasing and sustaining youth participation in church programs and activities.
5. To train and motivate the youth and leaders especially through mentoring in other that they will be ready and committed to service in and outside the Church to improve spiritual and numerical growth in the Church. That is to create an avenue for youth to be educated on how to do things with or without the presence of adults or leaders.

Resources for the Project

The resources are threefold as human, financial and material. For the human resource, 12 persons comprising four youth pastors (from the Conference), four youth elders and four youth leaders from the district but not from the same local church would be recruited and trained to assist me.

On the financial resource, request for funding as per budget would be made to the Northern Ghana Union Mission which is my sponsor for this Doctor of Ministry course. In a similar manner would Central Ghana Conference be consulted to absorb the traveling expenses of the four youth pastors. Material resources needed would include writing aids, handouts, electrical projectors, and accessories.

Expected Outcome (goals) of the Project

It was expected that:

1. At the end of the first one week, the whole church's understanding and perception of the purpose of the Adventist youth Ministry as agent for youth empowerment and participation would change and great revival would take place.
2. At the end of the first one week workshop and revival period, the spiritual standard of the whole church might have increased by at least 20%
3. Youth empowerment by the church especially the leaders shall increase by 20%
4. Involvement of the youth in church programs and activities especially missionary endeavors and church leadership shall increase by 20%
5. The numerical strength of the youth in the church and especially the Adventist Youth Ministry will increase by 20%.

Description of the Program Stages

Before the actual program, the findings and analysis of the survey and the proposed project would be shown to the Central Ghana Conference administration for discussion and permission for the project. The program would be done in three Stages as i). Preparation Stage ii). Implementation Stage and iii). Post Implementation Stage.

Stage One – Preparation Stage

This stage deals with recruitment and training of facilitators to assist in the project and the sensitization program for the district other to carry out the program effectively, a team of 12 persons as Facilitators is recruited. This team comprises four youth pastors in the Central Ghana Conference, four youth leaders and four elders in-charge of youth in the Abuakwa District of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Abuakwa Central Church premise is the venue for the one day facilitators' workshop. The facilitators in this orientation program would be taken through the survey findings and the designed program for the project.

A one-day sensitization meeting which would be attended by all local elders and youth leaders especially that of the four selected churches would be organized and held at the Abuakwa Central Church. This meeting would be chaired by the District Pastor of Abuakwa District. The meeting would commence with devotion. After this, the problem, purpose, objectives and the goal of the project together with the outline of the activities would be explained to them. The facilitators for each of the four sites would be also introduced. Time for questions and suggestions is also provided

Stage Two – Implementation Stage

This program is scheduled for one week and involves seminar, workshop, and sermons. This program would take off immediately a week after the Sensitization meeting with the district officers so that the whole district especially the four sites would be aware and prepared for the events. Each day's activities include 20 minutes of devotion, 60 minutes of studies and 10 minutes of intensive prayers. After one month of the intensive one-week program, the implementation will be continued through workshops and sermons during church services and youth meetings as follow

up. Thus, as part of the implementation process, there will be also two weekends (Friday evening through Saturday) workshops at each of the four sites to cover all the scope on the selected issues meant for the program.

Finally, in the end of September, a Weekend Youth Retreat where all the youth in the Abuakwa District would meet, the concluding part of the implementation process will be done. This time, all the 12 facilitators, the Conference President and the Conference Youth Director will be present to grace the occasion. The topics for the sermons and studies are provided in the appendix and are mostly based on the survey and the literature review of this project.

Stage Three – Post-Implementation Activities

This period lasts until the end of the six months which the final evaluation is conducted. During this stage, the sites would be periodically visited and sermons and teachings offered. Youth meetings and youth participation in church activities would be monitored. Data on the whole program would be collected and analyzed to see the effectiveness of the program.

Project Reporting

After the evaluation was done, a documentary report on the project and its outcomes were presented to the Northern Ghana Union Mission Administration: they main sponsors of the researcher. Copies of the report were given to the Central Ghana Conference and the Abuakwa District upon whose permission the project was conducted in their churches for consideration and wider implementation.

Limitations of the Project

Factors militating against the program include the problem of illiteracy whereby not all the church members could read and write good English hence the need of transcribing what they said during interviews. Another challenge is that of rainfall (for nobody can predict changes in weather conditions) since many people do not come out for programs in times of rain. There is also the issue of power outage since the whole country, Ghana is experiencing electricity problem. Insufficient financial budget by any of the sponsors would negatively affect the progress and outcome of the implementation of the project.

Summary

In summing up, the survey conducted indicated that the Abuakwa Church was established by youth, and the first 8 converts or pioneers were youth. Many of the respondents perceive the youth involvement or participation in the Abuakwa district to be good and effective but need improvement. However, in the oral interview, pioneers and the adult old members affirmed that though the youth do participate in church activities yet as they compare the contemporary situations to theirs, there is great decline. The survey indicated that many factors militate against the participation of the youth in the churches in the Abuakwa District. Various reasons and suggestions were made. Consequently, if effective mechanisms and strategy are put in place, it will go a long way to enhance youth participation and promote effective Adventist Youth Ministries and the missions of the Church. Hence the development of the strategy as discussed above which is to be implemented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT NARRATIVE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Due to many concerns raised, the Bible as well as Spirit of Prophecy injunctions regarding the participation of youth in the programs of the church, a survey was conducted at the Abuakwa District on this issue. The survey also has attested to that concerns, and therefore necessitated for the improvement in youth participation. In the light of this, a strategy which aimed at increasing and sustaining youth participation in church programs for effective Adventist Youth Ministry (which has as its primary focus “Salvation and Service”) has been developed.¹

This chapter, therefore, provides a description of the project narrative, intervention which includes project preparation and project implementation (before, during and after) through workshops, sermons, and youth meetings. This is followed by evaluation of initiatives implemented as well as the project report which deals with the presentation of data to the appropriate quarters.

Project Narrative

The theological foundations, the literature review and the survey done principally formed the bedrock of this project which tries to increase and sustain youth participation in church activities. The Youth ministry concept has theological bases, and both the OT and NT provide evidences for this. The Bible is replete with

¹ “Salvation and Service” is a common slogan used in the Adventist Youth Ministries to indicate the primary focus which reads: Salvation of youth through Jesus Christ and Equipping youth for service.

stories of young people and their various roles they played. It is explicitly provided that some of the Bible characters and authors started their diverse ministries at their youthful stages. There are also various statements or injunctions from the OT and NT which promote the idea of youth involvement in God's salvation or mission agenda. The Spirit of Prophecy also supports this.

It is expressed on the involvement of young people in the church's life that it should "become the DNA of our treatment of them. Our actions, our support must reflect this God-ordained duty. Our young people are tired of hearing speech after speech pontificating how important they are. Our youth want *action*, not mere words."²Ellen G. White expresses that God has chosen the youth to be helping hand.³ She adds, "Educate the youth to help the youth; and in seeking to do this work each will gain experience that will qualify him to be a consecrated worker in a larger sphere."⁴

The literature review done in Chapter Three provided information which indicates that the importance of youth participation in ministry in this era of post-modernism is of universal concern. Young people are progressively more identified as important agents in religious, community and national development. Involving young people in activities is embraced in both religious and secular arena. There are assorted methods and models of youth participation which can be used when trying to get young people involved with decision making or participate in issues or ministry. A lot

²Youth Ministries Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, *Youth First: Involving Youth in Church Life*, 5.

³White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1902), 7:64.

⁴White, *Messages to Young People*, 203.

of common barriers to youth participation as well as practical ideas to increase and sustain have been also diagnosed.

Findings from the Survey

Findings from the survey also attest to that. The survey (through questionnaires and personal interviews) was conducted in four churches in the former Abuakwa District as Abuakwa, Maakro, Sepaase and Tanoso. The findings indicated that Abuakwa Church was established by youth, and each of the four churches' initial converts or pioneers included more youth. Many of the respondents for the 85 questionnaires were youth: 16-25 years = 49; 26-35 years =21; with adults above 35 years = 15. Baptized members were 61 forming about 71.8% of the total respondent. More than half of the respondents perceived the youth involvement or participation in the Abuakwa district to be good and effective but needs improvement.

However, in the oral interview, pioneers and the adult old members affirmed that though the youth do participate in church activities yet as they compare the contemporary situations to theirs, there is a great decline. The survey indicated that many factors militate against the participation of the youth in the churches in the Abuakwa District. Various reasons and suggestions were made as provided in chapter 4 and these are part of the handout materials.

Consequently, the necessity of effective intervention or strategy that will go a long way to enhance youth participation and promote effective Adventist Youth Ministries and the missions of the Church was developed and put into action. Based on the survey findings and the analysis, it follows from the table below that the best possible method out of the lot is by teaching and training the youth. After this is the method of mobilization. The next after this is involvement of the youth. It needs to be said that all the methods are important and can be applied:

1. Teaching/Training the Youth
2. Mobilization of the Youth
3. Involvement of the Youth in Programs
4. Educating the Youth and the Entire Church
5. Equipping the Youth
6. Empowerment and Motivation
7. Mentorship/discipleship Program for Youth
8. Loyalty and Commitment of the Youth
9. Involvement of Elders and Adults in Youth Program
10. Integration of the Youth in Church Leadership
11. Better Strategy Development.

It was based on this finding that the researcher chose to apply principally the method of teaching and training (studies) as in workshops and seminar for this implementation process of the project. The other methods were also applied in the implementation process especially in the follow-up meetings.

Target Group

It needs to be iterated that although the program of this sort is good for all young people irrespective of age, gender, academic status and other things, for easy monitoring and evaluation the target group as seen in the questionnaires is the youth of ages 16 – 35 years. This is also the age group of the Youth Ministry who is with much vigor and is trained for leadership roles although the other youth members like the Pathfinders (of ages 10-15 years) need the same information or studies.

Project Context

The places where the project was carried out are principally the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Abuakwa, Maakro Sepaase and Tanoso (Central) in Atwima

area, although now political administratively Tanoso is under Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly of Ashanti Region of Ghana. These are churches with high youth population or membership and the researcher has served there for at least three years as district pastor and also three years as their Conference Youth Director.

Before the commencement of the implementation, because the researcher has served as a district pastor when all the four churches were within one district as Abuakwa District it was decided to fellowship with them and preach. The advantage was therefore made of that to conscientize the church members on the need for maximum youth involvement in all church programs including leadership, therefore, the necessity of the project. Sermon title was “The Youth, Agents for God’s Agenda” and the key Bible texts were Ecclesiastes 12: 1 and Joel 2: 28-29.

Activities involving the implementation of strategies such as this are time bound. In view of this, a timeline showing how things were done was developed to serve as a guide and a reminder of activities to be performed. The timeline of the project is provided in appendix E.

The Stages of the Project

The whole project and every aspect of its activities were grouped into three stages or phases as (i) Preparation Stage (ii) Implementation Stage and (iii) Post Implementation Stage.

Preparation Stage

This stage involved the period and activities that were performed before the actual project took off. It commenced with the writing of the letter for permission from the Central Ghana Conference. The letter was received on April 2015.

Resource for the project. Immediately the nod was given as per the permission letter provided in Appendix B, resources for the project were sought for.

Concerning the funding, a budget was made as provided in Appendix F and a request was made to the Northern Ghana Union Mission administration for onward presentation to the executive committee which sponsored the researcher's Doctor of Ministry program. The budget was accepted and approved by the Union so it released funds upon any request or expenses that were submitted. Similar the request put before the Administration of the Central Ghana Conference to absorb the travel expenses of the four youth pastors from their field to assist as facilitators were also accepted.

Hence the pastors were reimbursed for any travel expense made in the cause of the project. Concerning the resource materials, handouts were printed, 14 flash drives containing soft copies of some of the materials in the handout and extra ones in videos were acquired. Other logistics like writing aids, four banners and Adventist literature (booklets and pamphlets) to be used as gifts to those who deserved them were secured. Most of the handout materials are from the literature review and General Conference Youth Ministries Department resources including *Youth First*.

Mobilizing and training of facilitators. A team of 12 persons as facilitators comprising four youth pastors in the Central Ghana Conference, four youth leaders and four elders in-charge of youth in the Abuakwa district was mobilized. A one-day workshop of orientation held on June 07, 2015 at the Abuakwa SDA Church was organized. In this workshop, the project, and outcome of the survey were explained to the facilitators who were also given the handouts and flash drives for the power point presentation. In other to portray that the program was a youth one and also to promote the wearing of the youth uniform, the facilitators were admonished to dress as such or at least put on their scarf. The names of recruited facilitators as grouped are as follows:

Table 4. Group Facilitators by Church

Group	Church	Facilitators
Group 1	Abuakwa	Pr. M. Boateng, Eld. James, Dir. Simon Keremateng
Group 2	Maakro	Pr. Dennis Wereko, Eld. Oppong-Brenya, Dir. John Kusi
Group 3	Sepaase	Pr. Adu Kwadwo, Eld Kwaku Adade, Dir. Amankwah Yeboah
Group 4	Tanoso	Pr. Ben Appiah, Eld. Agyei Baffour, Dir. S. Ohene-Boateng

District sensitization program. A special district meeting chaired by the district pastor was held on June 09, 2015 at Abuakwa Church was attended by district officer, all local elders and youth leaders especially that of the four selected churches in the district. About 25 people attended. The main purpose of the meeting was to sensitize the entire district on the impending project on youth participation as approved by the Union and the Conference.

The meeting was commenced with a devotion which was made by the researcher based on Exodus 10: 7- 10; with “Adults Serving the Lord with Our Youth” as the topic. After this, the problem, purpose, objectives and the goal of the project together with the outline of the activities were explained to them. The facilitators for each of the four sites were also introduced. Time for questions and suggestions was allotted so that participants could understand very well and contribute. The date for the one-week seminar was given.

Stage Two – Implementation Stage

Boakye Kwanin remarked that developing strategy is not the final stage of any project. The ultimate stage is to implement it.⁵ He adds “Implementation, however,

⁵ Kwame Boakye, President of Northern Ghana Union Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist, interview by the researcher, Kumasi, June 10, 2015.

does not happen by chance; it is the result of concern, commitment, and discipline to carry out the various ideas and concepts in practical terms.”⁶

Aubrey Malphurs in support of this also asserts “the greatest problem in developing an overall ministry strategy is implementation. Church [workers] can catalyze and articulate a fresh innovative, powerful strategy, but somehow may never get around to implementing it. They fail to follow through.”⁷ Kwanin Boakye, therefore, stresses “It is, therefore, imperative to be proactive to make the vision of the project become a reality.”⁸

The one week program. The first phase of the implementation program was scheduled for one week and involves sermon, and seminar/ workshop (teaching and training). The program performed in each of the four sites was mainly done by each group of the team of prepared or trained facilitators. The researcher’s duty was to go round and monitor or see how each site was doing. This program took off a week after the Sensitization meeting with the district officers so that the whole district especially the four sites became aware and prepared for the events. A banner of this sort was made for each church as provided in the Appendix G.

Though the program was scheduled between 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm, there was playing of gospel soul reviving music and showing of videos on youth activities as a prelude to entertain people who came earlier before the beginning of the main program. There was also special prayer session. Each day’s activities included 20

⁶ Kwame Boakye Kwanin, “Developing a Mentoring as well as Community Relations Program for Pastors in the South Central Ghana Conference” (DMin dissertation, Andrews University, Babcock University Campus, Ilishan, Nigeria, 2011), 104.

⁷ Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* (Benin City, Nigeria: Joint Heirs, 1998), 292.

⁸ Boakye, interview by researcher.

minutes of devotion, 60 minutes of studies and 10 minutes of intensive prayers. The opening and closing prayers were offered by the youth elder; the sermon or devotion was by the youth pastor whilst the actual objectives set in the strategy or studies were done by the youth leader. The topics for the sermons and the studies for each day were based on the primary objectives set and the findings from the survey.

The workshop lessons which included pictures were made available in powerpoint and in printed form as hard copies. All the hard copy materials also formed part of the workshop handouts which were given to every facilitator which could be photocopied by anyone who needed it. Table 4 shows the outline of events for the one week program.

Table 5. Daily Program Outline for the 1 Week Section

Time	Event
6:00 pm – 7:00pm	Song Service, AY in Action (Video) and Special Prayers
7:00 pm – 7:05 pm	Opening Song/Hymn Led by Song Leader
7:06 pm – 7:10	Opening Prayer by Youth Elder
7:11pm – 7:21 pm	Sermon by Youth Pastor
7:22pm – 8:15pm	Studies & Questions
8:16 pm – 8:22 pm	Gift Time
8:23 pm – 8:28 pm	Closing Announcement
8:28 pm – 8: 30 pm	Benediction by Youth Elder

Daily devotional topics and objectives. 1st Day: - Devotion: The Youth, An Agent of God’s Salvation Agenda (Joel 2: 28, 29; Acts 2: 17-18; Eccl 12: 1);
 Workshop: - the Theological foundation of Youth Ministry and Youth Participation.
 Objective- To lead the Church to know and understand that the concept of youth participating in God’s salvation agenda is of theological and biblical foundation and that the youth since the establishment of the SDA Church, have played various roles, therefore should be involved in the activities of the Church.

2nd Day: - Devotion - Adults Serving the Lord With Our Youth (Exod 10: 7 - 10; Workshop - Being Youth of Influence; Objective - To help the youth and the entire church to understand and appreciate the essence of the Adventist Youth Ministries in the light of their primary focus on “Salvation and service.” Reference to various Bible characters being youth.

3rd Day: - Devotion - What is in Your Hand (Exod 4; 1-4; and John 6: 9); Workshop – Identifying One's Spiritual Gift (1 Cor 12: 1- 27-31; Ephe 4: 11-14); Objective - To lead leaders and youth to know and appreciate the fact that every person is endowed with a talent and a gift, and, also to identify their spiritual giftedness so that they can participate in God’s work accordingly.

4th Day: - Devotion - Obstacles of God’s Business (Matt 18:4-6); Workshop – Hindrances and Methods for Increasing Youth Participation (as per literature review and survey findings); Objective - To bring to bear hindrances in youth participation and possible ways of increasing and sustaining youth participation in church programs and activities

5th Day: - Devotion – Passing on the Torch, Moses’ Example (Exod 17: 8, 9,14); Workshop – Youth Mentoring and Empowerment; Objective - To let leaders understand and know the need of mentoring and empowering the youth for leadership so that they will be ready and committed to service in and outside the Church to improve spiritual and numerical growth in the Church. That is to create an avenue to educate young ones on how to do things on their own.

6th Day: - Devotion – Salvation and Service: Saved to Serve (1Pet 2: 9-11; Rev 14: 6-12); Workshop – Engaging Youth in Missions; Objective – To remind the entire members of the mission of the church as per our Mission Statement and to aim for the total involvement of young people in missions and the Global Youth Day.

7th Day – Divine – Protecting My Inheritance / Heritage (2 Tim 2: 1-5; 1: 5; Case Studies: 1) Israel and the “Shema” as in Deut 6: 1-7; 2) Naboth and Ahab as in 1Kings 21; 3) Joshua’s Valediction as in Josh 24: 14-15, 19-23; Afternoon Workshop: Maintaining our Adventist Faith Legacy in our children; Objective:- To let the church understand and appreciate the urgent need of inculcating and maintaining Adventist faith legacy or heritage in our contemporary youth of this era of post-modernism.

There are other important topics or issues of significance which were treated in the course of the implementation program through the sermons and workshops based on the findings of the baseline survey. Since the program was meant for the entire church, done in the churches and it involved prayers, it was not only the young people who were expected to come. Certain adults who thought they needed prayer attended. Some adults who are very interested in matters related to young people also came. As the program was going on the attendance of the youth and church leaders were being recorded and monitored on every site. That was to know and observe the participation of the youth themselves in their own programs as well as the involvement of adults in youth programs.

As usual with youth programs scheduled for evening and from personal experience the researcher did not expect full but maximum attendance of church members. This was put in the mind of the facilitators so that in case it happens that way they become discouraged. Surely it did happen especially on the first and second days but it improved a little as the days went by. Some of the youth who stay very far, as usual, could not attend, notwithstanding, some more serious ones came.

Every day it was made sure that the researcher’s and his wife (who is an honorary master guide and an instructor) in their youth uniform, would drive to and

monitor proceedings in all the four sites. The last place to be visited was the place stopped and offered the benediction and remarks which included words of motivation. Normally it happened that the wife was the one who prayed and the researcher gave the remarks.

The last day or Sabbath programs were the most encouraging. This was due to the fact that all the youth were told to be in their uniforms. The majority did, and at least those who did not wore youth “T” shirts of some kind. The appeal was made after the sermon to recruit new youth into the ministries as well as matured adults who were willing to help the youth in various portfolios such as patrons, sponsors and even any kind of assistance. The Afternoon session was also encouraging since it involved questions and answers and contributions.

Ushers and Recorders for the Program: to apply the principle of total youth involvement in all programs four of the youth two males and two females were appointed as ushers, as well as two persons as recorders for every site and for each day. These ushers and recorders were identified by the youth dress or at least the AY scarf (neck kerchief).

Post Seminar Facilitators Meeting

A day after the 1 Week Seminar/Retreat, thus on Sunday, June 28, 2015, a meeting with the facilitators together with the district pastor and few of his elders was held at the Abuakwa Church. The meeting was attended by 18 persons. The main purpose of the meeting was to receive reports on the One Week Seminar/Revival Program held. By so doing a miniature evaluation was made specifically on the one week program. A word of motivation in the form of gratitude and encouragement was given to all the attendees for what God has done through them especially for availing themselves for such a sacrificial assignment.

For a farewell, the meeting was used as an opportunity for me to inform them of my imminent return to Babcock University on July 17 through September 13, 2015. Therefore they were delegated to monitor and nourish the implementation process started.

The follow-ups. The implementation program did not end with the one-week seminar/revival session. After the intensive one-week program, the implementation was continued through workshops and sermons during church. Thus, as part of the implementation process, there were also two weekends (Friday evening through Saturday) workshop and visit at each of the four sites to cover all the scope on the selected issues meant for the program. The researcher, being assisted by the wife and at times their graduate daughter who is also in the youth ministry did these weekend programs as follow-ups. Notwithstanding, there were at times the facilitators visited their respective churches.

Finally, on 25th and 26th September, a Weekend (Friday evening through Saturday) Youth Retreat for all the youth in the Abuakwa District for the concluding part of the implementation process was organized. The Friday evening's program was held at Abuakwa Church but the Saturday's was held at Tweneboah Koduah School Park since it was massively attended. Fully dressed in the youth directors' regalia, the researcher delivered the sermon. The theme was "Increasing and Sustaining Youth Participation in God's Agenda." The key text was John 9: 4 which reads "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work."

Additionally, the aim motto and the pledge of the Adventist Youth Society were used to buttress the text. This time, all the 12 facilitators, the district pastor together with some of his district officers and the Conference Youth Director present

to grace the occasion, but for some reasons, the Conference President could not come. The facilitators were honored and commended. The opportunity was made to appeal and mobilize some 25 youth members of both genders for the establishment of the District youth missionary/evangelistic team named Abuakwa District Adventist Youth on Missions (ADAYOM). Also, appeal for baptism was made and was responded by ten people. With this, the first three months' session was concluded leading to the Post-implementation stage.

The Post Implementation Stage

The post-implementation process lasted for another three months till the whole six months were consummated for the final evaluation of the entire program.

Monitoring

The monitoring aspect was done from the beginning until the end of the six months. Though from July 17 to September 13, the researcher went to Babcock to continue the DMin program, the district pastor, district youth leaders, and even the facilitators were told or delegated to monitor the activities at the various churches from time to time.

Post Program Interview and Analysis of the Post-Project Survey

One of the activities that were of critical attention as far as analysis of the project is concerned is to see the impact of the various programs conducted for the entire church and the Youth in particular as far as the intervention implementation is concerned. Under the impact, three areas that needed for consideration are the participants, the youth and the church as a whole. This was done by interviewing some members especially those who formed part of the focus group when the initial survey was conducted.

Evaluation

A program such as this would never be complete without being assessed. The success or failure is determined by the purpose, objectives set and the expected outcomes. Also, the perception of the participants or the particular people for whom the project was meant for comes to play. In the African Desk of the General Conference Secretariat, G. T. Ng who is the Executive Secretary of the General Conference writes: “There is a reason why the Seventh –day Adventist Church and its varied organizations cannot be the best-run organization in the world.” He adds, “This will not happen unless very deliberate and sustained attention is given to implementing a Strategic Plan.”⁹

Initial Evaluation

Immediately after the one week program, the evaluation process was started. For the impact on the participants, a sample of church members (at least three from each of these four churches) were interrogated to see how the program conducted in their churches have impacted their lives and perception of the principle of youth participation as championed by the Adventist Youth Ministries. It is great joy to hear that almost everybody contacted gave positive response especially that of the one-week programs. Elder Isaiah Tawiah Mensah who was part of the focus group that was interviewed during the survey remarked: “Pastor, thank you for this spirit reviving and educative program. You see that what I told you in the first interview

⁹ G. T. Ng, “A Strategic Plan in Support of the General Conference Reach the World Initiative” (African Desk, 2015-2020), 2.

that the whole church but not the youth alone should be taught. Keep on doing this and the youth will be recognized.”¹⁰

On how the program has impacted the church life, Elders K. Owusu-Yeboah who is the Regional Manager/ Educational Director of SDA Schools commended the project. He commented on the need of continuously educating the church and mentoring the youth. To him, this is long overdue for the program would provide a human resource for the Church leadership and other departments. ¹¹

Similar comments and commendations were given by Elders P.A. Gyamfi of Abuakwa Church, Stephen Nketsia of Tanoso Church, Madam Stella Afriyie who was one of the youths who joined the Abuakwa Church at the time of its establishment was made to pass her encouraging comment on how she felt about the whole program.¹²

Concerning the impact on the youth, the youth leaders who were part of the team of facilitators were asked of what the youth were expressing on the impact of the project on them. Likewise, the impact of the program on their own youth ministry life as leaders and as youth members, in particular, was also sought for

All the facilitators testified that their perceptions to issues pertaining to the Adventist Youth ministries have now been changed. They have been positively influenced to the extent that it will go a long way to increase and sustain youth participation in the district. According to Ohene Boateng, “Though, I am among the

¹⁰ Isaiah Tawiah Mensa (aged 90 years, a former seasoned M. V. Leader and Church Elder, now at Maakro), interview by researcher, Abuakwa Maakro, July 4, 2015.

¹¹ Kwaku Owusu-Yeboah, Church Elder at Auakwa and Education Director of the NGUM, interview by researcher, Abuakwa, July 4, 2015.

¹² P. A. Gyamfi (Abuakwa District Secretary), Stephen NKetsia (Associate Treasurer of NGUM and Tanoso Church Elder) and Stella Afriyie (a renowned foundation member of Abuakwa Church) are among the respondents and interviewees, interviewed by researcher, Abuakwa and Tanoso, July 11, 2015.

team as a speaker, the program has broadened my youth leadership horizon and I am going to make sure to mentor many young ones as much as they are willing to ensure that Maakro Church never lacks youth leaders.”¹³

Second Phase of Evaluation

After the Annual Youth Camp in December 2015, another phase of the evaluation was done by considering the outcomes of the program. About 12 church members (three from each church made up of a youth, adult and both genders) apart from the facilitators were interviewed. Responses were qualitatively analyzed as and evaluated as per the data below:

1. General knowledge, understanding, and perception of Adventist Youth Ministries vis- a-vis youth participation – almost all the interviewees testified that personally there has been an improvement in these areas and they perceived it to be general also.
2. Spiritual Growth—majority asserted that there is increase in spiritual growth among youth indicated by increase in attendance to church and youth meetings
3. Involvement of youth in activities—some of the youth who were not involving themselves have now started to do so; some elders’ bad attitudes towards this especially towards preaching by young people have subsided.
4. Involvement of youth and adults in youth programs –some of the youth and adults who had no interest in youth programs have started showing interest hence increasing their involvement.
5. Involvement of Youth in church leadership and administration – the youth through the workshop were for leadership subject to good Christian behavior, their baptism and the elders also accepted the challenge of mentorship and delegation.
6. Involvement of Youth in missions—there had been an increase in the understanding and willingness among the youth in getting involved in mission activities of the church hence the formation of a district evangelism team.
7. Numerical growth of youth—there has been about 10 % increase in (i) Adventist Youth Ministries membership as seen in Youth fellowship and Camps as well as Youth Choirs membership and (ii) Church membership; example the baptism of 10 youth at the day of fellowship in September 2015. More youth are now

¹³ S. Ohene Boateng (a young graduate teacher and a former district youth leader), interviewed by researcher, Abuakwa, July 4, 2015.

showing more interest in getting baptized so to be full members of the church and participate in the ordinance of communion service.

8. Mentoring and nurturing of the youth—elders and youth have embraced the need of improvement in the mentoring (intentional or unintentional) and proper nurturing of the youth. Some have started doing them.
9. The effectiveness of youth programs—with improvement or increase in all the above indicators, it implies that there is also an improvement in the effectiveness of the youth ministries and its programs.

Budget or cost analysis sheet showing the details of the expenditure totaling to the amount of four thousand, four hundred and eighty Ghana cedis (equivalent to approximately one thousand two hundred US dollars) is also provided in appendix F.

Reiterating the objective and goals set for the projects, thus

1. To lead the Church to know and understand that the concept of youth participating in God's salvation agenda is of theological and biblical foundation; and, that the youth since the establishment of the SDA Church, have played various roles, therefore should be involved in the activities of the Church.
2. To help the youth and the entire church to understand and appreciate the essence of the Adventist Youth Ministries in the light of their primary focus on "Salvation and service."
3. To lead leaders (including pastors) and youth identify their spiritual giftedness so that they can participate in God's work accordingly.
4. To bring to bear hindrances in youth participation and possible ways of increasing and sustaining youth participation in church programs and activities.
5. To train and motivate the youth especially through mentoring in other that they will be ready and committed to service in and outside the Church to improve spiritual and numerical growth in the Church. That is to create an avenue for youth to be educated on how to do things with or without the presence of adults or leaders.

Considering the fact that these entire objectives were treated and dealt with in the sermon and workshop presentations it can be said that the objectives of the program were to a greater extent achieved. Concerning the goals or outcomes, from the baseline information, it was expected that:

1. At the end of the first one week, the entire church's understanding and perception of the purpose of the Adventist Youth Ministry as agent for youth empowerment and participation would change and great revival would take place. Per the interview held with members and the facilitators, this was achieved.
2. At the end of the first one week workshop and revival period, the spiritual standard of the whole church might have increased by at least 20%. Though it was not all the church members and all the youth who participated in the program those who came realized genuine spiritual revival poised to work for the Lord and pursue better spiritual or godly living.
3. Youth empowerment by the church especially the leaders shall increase by 20%. On this, because church officers are appointed through due processes of church election through nominating committee at the end of the year, the churches agreed that this matter would be given the due consideration.
4. Involvement of the youth in church programs and activities especially missionary endeavors and church leadership shall increase by 20%. Youth involvement which according to the survey was good but needed improvement started taking off as the youth realized the obligations put on them by God and the Spirit of Prophecy. The missionary spirit rekindled as many promised at the September youth fellowship that they would be on fire for Christ especially coupled with the formation of the district youth evangelistic team of 25 vibrant young people with almost all of them being literates.
5. The numerical strength of the youth in the church and especially the Adventist Youth Ministry will increase by 20%. Though at the end of the six months, this figure was not cumulatively achieved on the church level, there was an increase in the numerical membership of the Adventist Youth Ministries in the four churches at least by the 20%. Verbal reports received indicated many of the youth are now participating in both the youth ministries and church programs. And with the setting up of the evangelistic team it is hoped that with the interest in evangelism activities been rekindled, there will be consequential growth. With the baptism of 10 young people, it is also a credit to the program for the numerical growth through baptism.
6. With all these said and done, it could be expressed that as far as the goal and objectives set are concerned the intervention program as a whole was effective and successful in spite of some minor inconvenience which need be tabled now and reserved for the next chapter.

Reporting

A documentary report on the project and its outcome were presented to the Northern Ghana Union Mission Administration who is the main sponsor. Copies of the report were given to the Central Ghana Conference and the Abuakwa District upon whose permission the project was conducted in their churches for consideration

and wider implementation. It was not a matter of just handing in of a report. In fact, a meeting for discussion was done with all the parties. The district pastor and his executives were met on the day of submitting the report so that the sustainability of the entire intervention would be effective. An expression of gratitude and appreciation was made to all these entities of our church organization for their permission and support towards the success of the program although some inconveniences might have been created somewhere along the line.

Summary

As a summary, all along the purpose of this project is to develop and implement efficient strategies and programs to increase and sustain the participation of the youth in church activities and programs for effective Adventist Youth Ministry in the Abuakwa District. This is due to many concerns that were raised, that there has been a great decline in youth participation in church activities particularly in the Abuakwa District.

Based on the analysis of the findings received through questionnaires, personal interview with focus group and individuals as well as literature reviewed, a strategy was developed and implemented with the assistance of facilitators. The implemented intervention through its various stages lasted for six months. Analysis and evaluations have indicated that this strategy has had a positive impact on the participants especially the youth who were the target group and the church itself. Consequently, it can be inferred that the intervention was effective in helping solve or alleviate the problem.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, EVALUATION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter of the study gives a brief description of the summary, evaluation of the whole work, lessons learned in the survey and implementation of the intervention. It also provides the conclusion and the recommendations to buttress what has been done and for future studies.

The apathy among contemporary youth in this world of postmodernism coupled with a decline in youth participation in church activities pose a serious challenge that needs to be studied and solutions found soon to ameliorate the problem, hence this study. Consequently, the purpose of this in ministry dissertation is to develop and implement efficient strategies and programs to increase and sustain the participation of the youth in church activities and programs for effective Adventist Youth Ministries in the Abuakwa District of Central Ghana Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Kumasi, Ghana.

The problem of apathy and decline in interest and participation among contemporary SDA young people towards church programs is being experienced in many churches and Conferences. However; this dissertation is limited to four bigger churches, namely, Abuakwa, Atwima Maakro, Sepaase and Tanoso in the Abuakwa District, Kumasi, so that the implementation of the program could be effectively managed and monitored. The target group was the youth between 16-35 years though the entire church membership was not excluded since it would be profitable to the entire church.

Summary of the Dissertation

On the theological foundation for the Adventist Youth Ministries and as such youth participating in ministry, it could be said that the concept of Youth Ministry has theological bases; supported by both the OT and NT. It is explicitly provided that some of the Bible characters and authors like Samuel, David, Ezekiel, Josiah, Esther, Joseph the son of Jacob, Mary the mother of Jesus, John the Baptist, Timothy and above all Jesus Christ started their diverse ministries at their youthful ages to accomplish significant roles like prophets, priest, kings, queens, leaders, deliverers, forerunners, apostles, and a savior. There are also various statements or injunctions from the OT and NT which promote the idea of youth involvement in God's mission agenda. The same idea is iterated and supported by the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

The literature reviewed provided superfluous information that indicates that the importance of youth participation in ministry in this era of the twenty-first century is of universal concern. Young people are progressively more identified as important agents in religious, community and national development. Hence involving young people in activities is embraced in both secular and religious arenas.

The history of the Adventist Church and that of the Adventist Youth Organization indicated that the young ones played magnificent roles in the establishment of the church. Though many, the identified principles to increase and sustain youth participation in ministry include mobilization, teaching, and training, involvement and integrating, empowerment, equipping, nurturing, mentorship/discipling, leadership and organization, motivation as well as strategy development. There are diverse methods and models of youth participation which can be used when trying to get young people involved with decision making or participate in issues or ministry. A lot of common barriers or hindrances to youth participation as

well as practical ideas to increase and sustain it are also diagnosed in the main work. On a similar note, means of maintaining the Adventist faith legacy in our youth are brought to focus on alleviating the challenges of dropout and apostasy.

In the project setting, the location, socio-cultural and economic background of the Atwima Nwabiagya District Assembly where Abuakwa is located were discussed. Additionally, a brief history of Adventism in Abuakwa and the Abuakwa District of SDA Church was narrated. The survey conducted indicated that the Abuakwa Church, and some other churches in the District, like the Seventh-day Adventist Church itself, were established by and with the youth.

Many of the respondents perceived the youth involvement or participation in the Abuakwa District to be good and effective but need improvement. However, in the oral interviews, pioneers and the adult old members affirmed that the youth do participate in church activities, but as they compare the contemporary situations to theirs, there is a great decline. The survey indicated also that many factors militate against the participation of the youth in the Abuakwa District. Various reasons and suggestions to solve them were made.

Based on the analyses of the findings received through the questionnaires, interviews, and discussions with focus groups and individuals as well as the literature reviewed, a strategy or intervention was developed. The intervention was implemented with the assistance of a team of 12 facilitators at Abuakwa, Maakro, Sepaase and Tanoso churches of the district. The implementation, through its various stages, lasted for six months. It was analyzed and assessed and found out that the strategy has had a positive impact on the participants especially the youth who were the main target group, and the church itself. It, therefore, implies that the strategy was effective in helping solve or alleviate the problem in question.

Final Evaluation

Based on the biblical and theological foundations, literature review, questionnaires and interview questions were developed for respondents and interviewees which included focus group in four churches in the Abuakwa district; namely, Abuakwa, Maakro, Sepaase, and Tanoso. From the analyses of the survey conducted, the program for the strategy was developed and implemented in these four churches. A program such as this would never be complete without being analyzed and assessed. The success or failure is determined by the set purpose, objectives and the expected outcomes. Also, the perception of the participants or the particular people for whom the project was meant comes to play. The fact remains that the entire objectives were treated and dealt with in the sermons and workshops presentations, as well as teaching and training were given to the youth and at times to the entire church in the implementation process of the strategy.

Responses to outcomes of the intervention were qualitatively analyzed in the light of (a) General knowledge, understanding and perception of Adventist Youth Ministries vis- a-vis youth participation (b) Spiritual Growth (c) Involvement of youth in church activities (d) Involvement of youth and adults in youth programs (e) Involvement of Youth in church leadership and administration (f) Involvement of Youth in missions (g) Numerical growth of youth in (1) Adventist Youth Membership as seen in youth fellowship and youth camp as well as youth choirs membership and (2) Church membership with the number of youth being baptized (h) Mentoring and nurturing of the youth and (i) Effectiveness of youth Programs. Consequently, it could be said that the objectives of the program were achieved. Responses from the interviews indicated that there have been improvements in all these parameters. Based on this it could be also inferred that as far as the purpose and expected outcomes and

the goals set are concerned, the intervention program as a whole was effective and successful in dealing with the problem in spite of some minor inconveniences that might have occurred. Among this is the inability to fully achieve the goals.

Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned during the project implementation:

1. The project implementation was successfully carried out with the assistance from the team of trained facilitators, the support from the leadership of the district and the four local churches, the Conference, the Union and the cooperation of the entire membership, particularly the respondents and interviewees. All this proving that with unity and cooperation, there is the possibility.
2. As a student in Missions program, to the researcher, the whole project was seen as mission-driven. This is due to the fact that the Adventist Youth Ministries Department and the entire Church exist for missions. And, as the young ones are revived, taught and trained, empowered and participate in church programs and missions, the church is poised for missions as the strategy has proved.

Notwithstanding, some challenges were observed and learned which include:

1. Though the objectives set were met through the sermons, seminar/workshop and attending youth meetings for teaching and training, yet not all the set figures for the goals could be reached, making it seemed to be higher and unrealistic or unachievable.
2. The implementation and post implementation periods which covered six months coincided with the time (July-September) the researcher came to Babcock University, Nigeria, to continue with the DMin program. This affected the continuity of the monitoring and other post-implementation activities. Hence it has been learned that next time one has to be thoughtful and careful in considering fixing dates for important programs such as this.
3. Due to a lot of unforeseen eventualities which could not be surmounted, the period set for the whole dissertation journey did not materialize and consequently prolonged.
4. Though not disappointed, it was expected that almost every member, most especially all the youth of the target group would attend and participate in the one-week seminar and revival program yet that did could not happen. This seems to imply that the battle is not yet over and more is to be done though it may take time.
5. The issue of writing everything in English language but not in the local dialect was seen to be a challenge for many people who could have answered the

questionnaires and that was the reason why oral interview was used a lot for the adults in the focus group, it took time for some of the responses in the questionnaires to be clearly understood for analyses.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident from this project that there are both theological and theoretical foundation for the concept of youth participating in God's salvation agenda and for that matter the Adventist Youth Ministries which aims in winning , recruiting, training and reclaiming the youth for salvation and service. The research done has testified that all along the youth have played major roles in both religious and secular arenas yet there are lots of hindrances.

The studies conducted in the Abuakwa District of Seventh-day Adventist Church indicated that though there is the participation of the youth in the district all right, there is the need for improvement since there is a sort of decline. The efficient strategy and programs to increase and sustain the participation of youth in ministry include teaching and training, mobilization of the youth, involving the youth, educating the youth and the entire church, equipping and empowering the youth, motivation, mentoring/discipleship, creating better and interesting programs, involvement of adults in youth programs, loyalty and commitment to both youth and adults. But to the researcher, more emphasis should be placed on teaching/training and mentorship in relation to Christ's model of ministry since Christ is the perfect example of all things.

Recommendations

To solve or alleviate the problem of decline in youth participating in the church's mission agenda and other activities in the Abuakwa District and other churches everywhere, the following suggested principles are highly recommended to pastors, elders, youth leaders, and church members for consideration and application.

1. Everybody should understand and embrace the concept of youth participation whether in religious or secular arena for it has both theological foundation and theoretical bases. Hence the youth should be empowered to be involved in God's salvation agenda which needs not to be thwarted.
2. The Adventist Youth Ministries department which works for and through its youth to reach the youth in the church and those outside the church through fellowship, nurture, worship, and mission should be effectively promoted and supported for the implementation of its outlined activities/programs .
3. Every youth should consider him or herself as an instrument or agent that God has endowed with spiritual gifts to use for His purpose in and outside the church to ensure that the churches grow from strength to strength.
4. The Youth leaders, pastors, and elders should make use of the best principles for increasing and sustaining youth participating in activities which is the comprehensive approach (Christ's model.) This includes mobilization, teaching/training, involvement, equipping, nurturing, mentorship/discipleship, empowerment and motivation, loyalty and commitment, and integration and strategy development. Nevertheless, more emphasis should be on intentional mentoring and training/teaching of our doctrines, beliefs as well as our reason for existence and history.
5. For the youth to be actively involved in church activities there must be regular education and training programs for church leaders (including pastors), youth leaders as well as the youth members in the church to prepare them for active service and involvement. This training must include workshops and seminar at all levels of the church.
6. The activities and programs of the youth must be properly planned and implemented with the support and involvement of adults and church leadership. Programs that will prepare the youth for active involvement in the church's activities and leadership must be included in youth programs. Youth activities should not focus only on the physical aspects (marching, games, and others) but must include spiritual programs also (a holistic approach). Apart from youth week of prayers and youth days, the youth must be given the opportunity to participate in other church programs.
7. Pastors, elders, and adults should as matter of urgency, be willing and ready to delegate some responsibilities including leadership and membership of decision-making committees to the youth and monitor them.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is recommended that more research should be conducted in this area of studies as future researchers diligently consider the shortcomings and challenges faced as provided in the lessons learned. It is hoped that with this humble beginning in

the Abuakwa District if further studies and strategies are done and implemented successfully there will be greater achievements for the Youth Ministries and the church as a whole in many dimensions.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
NORTHERN GHANA UNION MISSION
P. O. BOX 17564
ADUM-KUMASI

APRIL 08, 2015

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
CENTRAL GHANA CONFERENCE
P. O. BOX 480
KUMASI

Dear Sir,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN ABUAKWA DISTRICT FOR
MY DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DISSERTATION PROJECT

I am a candidate for Doctor of Ministry Program at Adventist University of Africa (AUA), Babcock Campus, Ilishan, Nigeria. And I have chosen to carry out a research work with Abuakwa, Tanoso, Maakro, and Sepaase Churches in the Abuakwa District of your Conference as my Focus Groups.

Sir, I would like to ask for permission as a requirement to conduct the research on the topic INCREASING AND SUSTAINING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE ABUAKWA DISTRICT OF KUMASI, GHANA for my dissertation from June to December 2015.

I am very grateful for your candid consideration to grant me the due permission for the above exercise.

Looking forward to your usual maximum cooperation and assistance.

Thanks in anticipation.

Yours faithfully,

Pastor Dan Kwaku Owusu-Ansah
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY CANDIDATE

XC: The Officers, Central Ghana Conference
The District Pastor, Abuakwa District of SDA Church
The Church Clerks, Abuakwa, Tanoso, Maakro, and Sepaase Churches

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER FROM CGC TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

Office of the Secretary

Central Ghana Conference

Headquarters

P. O. Box 480,
Kumasi-Ashanti, Ghana, West Africa.
Tel: +233-3220-23686
Fax: +233-3220-27114
Email: cgcadventistchurch@yahoo.com

April 15, 2015

**THE DISTRICT PASTOR
ABUAKWA
CGC**

**THE DISTRICT PASTOR
TANOSO
CGC**

Dear in Christ,

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
PROJECT – PASTOR DAN KWAKU OWUSU-ANSAH**

Central Ghana Conference Administration has granted the permission to Pastor Dan Kwaku Owusu-Ansah, a candidate of Doctor of Ministry Program at Adventist University of Africa (A.U.A) to carry out his academic research work in the following churches in your Districts.

Abuakwa –
Abuakwa
Abuakwa Maakro
Sepaase

Tanoso –
Tanoso

His topic is Increasing and Sustaining Youth Participation in Programmes for Effective Adventist Youth Ministry in the Abuakwa District of Kumasi, Ghana.

Counting on your usual cooperation in this project.

Thank very much in advance

Sincerely in His Service,

**PASTOR DR. JAMES AMOAH
SECRETARY**

Cc: The Officers, CGC
Pastor Dan Kwaku Owusu-Ansah
The Church Clerks, Abuakwa, Tanoso, Abuakwa Maakro, Sepaase Churches

APPENDIX C

STATISTICS OF MEMBERSHIP TO YOUTH RATIO ON THE 4 SELECTED CHURCHES

Table 6. Membership to Youth Ratio in the 4 Selected Churches

	Abuakwa	Maakro	Sepaase	Tanoso	Total
Total Membership (Baptized members)	677	176	139	606	1,508
Sabbath School members (all who came to church)	548	165	120	468	1,301
No. of youth; 6-15 yrs.;	150	50	40	107	347
16-35 yrs.	200	40	30	186	456
Total No. of Church officers	142	57	53	105	357
No. of Youth as Church officers	37	33	32	45	147
Membership of Church Board	36	24	21	30	111
No. of Youth in Church Board	10	16	8	8	42
Youth involvement in Church Programs and leadership	Good but few in the Board	Good and okay on the Board	Good but few on the Board	Good but few in the Board	Good but not fair on Board

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

**ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA, KENYA
(BABCOCK UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, NIGERIA)
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL AND FOCUS GROUPS
STATEMENT OF PERMISSION**

I am a Doctor of Ministry Candidate of the above University doing research on the topic INCREASING AND SUSTAINING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE ABUAKWA DISTRICT OF KUMASI, GHANA. Your permission is being sought to please give frank and truthful answers to the following questions to improve this research. Your privacy and confidentiality are 100% assured.

Thank you

PART 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name: (optional and won't be included in the report)
.....
.....
2. Age: 16 – 20 [] 21 – 25 [] 26-30 [] 31-35 [] 36+ []
3. Sex: Male [] Female []
4. Marital Status: Married [] Single [] Divorced [] Widow(er) []
5. Church:
.....
6. Baptized by: When:
.....
7. Status (Current position in the local Church/District), Indicate all applicable ones:
Church administrator [] Former Church administrator [] Church Elder [] Parent []
AY Instructor [] Youth leader [] Active Youth Ministries Member [] Former member [] Youth Member but not active [] Only Church member [] Other (s) []
8. Previous position/office in the local Church.....
9. Years involved in the Adventist Youth Ministries (if a member /had been a member).....
10. Educational status:

PART 2 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by Adventist Youth Ministries?
.....
.....

2. What is the purpose of the Youth Ministries?
.....
.....
3. What motivates you to be in the Adventist Youth Ministries (if a member)?
.....
.....
4. What discourages you from being a member of the Youth Ministries (if not a member)?
.....
.....
5. What do you enjoy most about Youth Activities in the Adventist Church as a whole?
.....
.....
6. What do you enjoy most about Youth Activities in your district/ local church?
.....
.....
7. What is boring in Youth activities in general?
.....
.....
8. What is boring in Youth programs/activities in your district/local church?
.....
.....
9. Why do some young people stop attending youth meetings and programs?
.....
.....
10. What type of activities would you like to see developed or improved?
.....
.....
11. How do you see the effectiveness of the Adventist Youth Ministries as compared to any youth organization (name it) that you know?
Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Bad [] Good but needs improvement []
Name of the compared youth organization is
.....
.....
Kindly suggest how this can be improved.
.....
.....
12. How do you see the youth involvement in church activities/ programs these days?
Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Bad [] Good but needs improvement []
Kindly suggest how this can be improved.
.....
.....
13. How do you see the youth leadership activities in the SDA Church in general?
Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Bad [] Good but needs improvement []
Kindly suggest how this can be improved.
.....
.....
14. How do you see the youth mentorship program in your District/Local Church?

Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Bad [] Good but needs improvement []
 Kindly suggest how this can be improved.

15. How do you see the way the youth get involved in the church programs?
 Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Bad [] Good but needs improvement []
 Kindly suggest how this can be improved.

16. How do you see and rate the nurturing program of the youth in your church/district?
 Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Bad [] Good but needs improvement
 Kindly suggest how this can be improved.

17. How do you see the spirit of loyalty and commitment on the part of church leadership to the development of the youth?
 Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Bad [] Good but needs improvement []
 Kindly suggest how this can be improved.

18. How do you see the spirit of loyalty and commitment on the part of youth in leadership to the development of the youth?
 Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Bad [] Good but needs improvement []
 Kindly suggest how this can be improved.

19. How do you see the disciple-making program for our youth by the church and its leadership?
 Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Bad [] Good but needs improvement []
 Kindly suggest how this can be improved.

20. What are some of the common barriers/hindrances to youth participation in your church/district?

21. From your own experience or perspective rate each of the following items [from “1, 2, 3 up to 11,” with 1 being the best] the best possible ways for increasing youth participation in your church or district

ITEM	RATING
a. Mobilization of the youth	
b. Teaching/training	
c. Involvement of the youth in programs	
d. Equipping the youth	
e. Educating the youth and the entire church	
f. Mentorship/discipleship program for youth	
g. Empowerment and motivation	

ITEM	RATING
h. Loyalty and commitment of the youth	
i. Integration of the youth in church leadership	
j. Better Strategy development	
k. Involvement of elders and adults in youth program	

22. Kindly suggest what could be done to sustain the participation of the youth in the Adventist Youth Ministries.

.....

23. Kindly suggest possible ways of maintaining Adventist faith legacy in the youth so that the youth will remain in the faith and be involved in all aspects of church life?.....

.....

APPENDIX E

TIMELINE OF OUTLINED ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROJECT

DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE	REMARKS
April 08, 2015	Letter for Permission to CGC	Kumasi	Done
April 15, 2015,	Permission Letter Collected from	CGC, Kumasi	Done
April 18 & 25	Survey Questionnaires and Interviews	4 Churches	Done
May 25, 2015,	Bridging Courses Session	Babcock, Nigeria	Done
June 03, 2015	Session ended, Returned to Ghana		Done
June 07, 2015	Mobilization and Training of Facilitators,	Abuakwa	Done
June 09, 2015	District Sensitization Meeting	Abuakwa Church	Done
June 20, 2015,	Commencement of Implementation	All the 4 Churches	Done
June 27, 2015,	End of 1 Week Seminar/ Revival	All Churches	Done
June 28, 2015,	Post Seminar Facilitators Meeting	Abuakwa	Done
July 04 & 10	Weekend Follow-up Youth Meetings	Sepaase, Tanoso	Done
July 17, 20 15	3 rd Year DMin Cohort Session	Babcock, Nigeria	Done
Sept 13, 2015,	Return to Ghana		Done
Sept 18 & 19	Weekend Follow –up Youth Meeting	Abuakwa , Maakro	Done
Sept 26, 2015,	District Weekend Fellowship	Abuakwa	Done
Oct – Dec. 2015	Weekend Meetings/Visits	All 4 churches	Done
Dec 18, 2015,	End of 6-month implementation/ And Monitoring Program for Evaluation		Done
Dec 23, 2015,	Abuakwa Federation Youth Camp	Akomadan	Done
Dec 25, 2015,	Visit the Camp for final evaluation	Akomadan	Done
Jan 2016	Discussion and Reporting to District	Kumasi	Done
Jan 2016	Discussion and Reporting to CGC and NGUM	Kumasi	Done

APPENDIX F

BUDGET FOR THE INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Item Amount (GhS)

1. Printing of 4 banners @ GhS 150	=	600
2. Printing of 20 copies of Handouts	=	120
3. Feeding cost for the Facilitators Mobilization /Training Meeting	=	100
4. Feeding cost for the Sensitization Meeting for the district	=	200
5. Transportation Allowance for Facilitators	=	120
6. Purchase of 16 Flash drives @ GhS 25	=	400
7. Gifts (booklets, pamphlets et al)	=	400
8. Writing Aids (note pads, pens,	=	100
9. Motivation/Appreciation package for facilitators	=	1,000
10. Generator & Fuel (in case of power outage) @ GhS 60 per Church	=	240
11. Post Implementation Monitoring Expenditure for the entire project	=	800
12. Miscellaneous @ GhS 100 per Church	=	400
TOTAL	=	4,480

N/B: (a) GhS means Ghana Cedis.

(b) GhS 4.00 = US\$ 1.00

(c) In other to show their commitment to the Youth Ministries as part of their budget, the District and Local Churches were convinced to support the program as;

(i) Items 3, 4 and 6 totaling to GhS 700 was borne by the District (ii) Items 9, 10 and 11 totaling to GhS 1640 was borne by the 4 churches.

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE OF BANNER

**ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT 1 WEEK SEMINAR AND
REVIVAL PROGRAM**

THEME: “Increasing and Sustaining Youth Participation in Church Programs”

DATE: Saturday, June 20, 2015 –to – Saturday, June 27, 2015

TIME: 7:00 pm – to – 8: 30 pm (Every Evening)

VENUES: SDA Church, @ Abuakwa; Maakro; Sepaase and Tanoso

SPEAKERS: A Team of Special Facilitators to meet Your Need

All are Cordially Invited to Attend, Study and Celebrate with Us

APPENDIX H

WORKSHOP RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR THE PROGRAM

A) Daily Program Outline for the 1 Week Section (7:00pm – 8: 30pm)

6:00 pm – 7:00pm	---	Song Service, AY in Action (Video) and Special Prayers
7:00 - 7:05	---	Opening Song/Hymn Led by Song Leader
7:06 - 7:10	---	Opening Prayer by Youth Elder
7: 11 - 7: 21	---	Sermon by Youth Pastor
7: 22 - 8:15	---	Studies & Questions
8: 16 - 8:22	---	Gift Time
8: 23 - 8: 28	---	Closing Announcement
8:28 - 8: 30	---	Benediction by Youth Elder

B) Daily Devotional and Workshop Topics and Objectives

1st Day:- Devotion: The Youth, An Agent of God's Salvation Agenda (Joel 2: 28, 29; Acts 2: 17-18; Eccl 12: 1)

Workshop:- Theological foundation of Youth Ministry and Youth Participation

Objective- To lead the Church to know and understand that the concept of youth participating in God's salvation agenda is of theological and biblical foundation and that the youth since the establishment of the SDA Church, have played various roles, therefore should be involved in the activities of the Church.

2nd Day:- Devotion - Adults Serving the Lord With Our Youth (Exod 10: 7 -10;

Workshop - Being Youth of Influence

Objective - To help the youth and the entire church to understand and appreciate the essence of the Adventist Youth Ministries in the light of their primary focus of "Salvation and Service." Reference to various Bible characters being youth

3rd Day:- Devotion - What is in Your Hand (Exod 4; 1-4; and John 6: 9)

Workshop – Identifying One's Spiritual Gift (1 Cor 12: 1- 27-31; Ephe 4: 11-14)

Objective - To lead leaders and youth to know and appreciate the fact that every person is endowed with a talent and a gift, and, also to identify their spiritual giftedness so that they can participate in God's work accordingly.

4th Day:- Devotion - Obstacles of God's Business (Matt 18:4-6)

Workshop – Hindrances and Methods for Increasing Youth Participation (as per literature review and survey findings)

Objective - To bring to bear hindrances in youth participation and possible ways of increasing and sustaining youth participation in church programs and activities

5th Day:- Devotion – Passing on the Torch, Moses' Example (Exod 17: 8, 9,14.

Workshop – Youth Mentoring and Empowerment,

Objective - To let leaders understand and know the need of mentoring and empowering the youth for leadership so that they will be ready and committed to service in and outside the Church to improve spiritual and numerical growth in the

Church. That is to create an avenue to educate young ones on how to do things on their own

6th Day: - Devotion – Salvation, and Service: Saved to Serve (1Pet 2: 9-11; Rev 14: 6-12)

Workshop – Engaging Youth in Missions

Objective – To remind the entire members of the mission of the church as per our Mission Statement and to aim for the total involvement of young people in missions and the Global Youth Day.

7th Day – Divine – Protecting My Inheritance / Heritage (2 Tim 2: 1-5; 1: 5;

Case Studies: 1) Israel and the “Shema” as in Deut 6: 1-7

2) Naboth and Ahab as in 1Kings 21

3) Joshua’s Valediction as in Josh 24: 14-15, 19-23

Afternoon Workshop: Maintaining our Adventist Faith Legacy in our children.

Objective:- To let the church understand and appreciate the urgent need of inculcating and maintaining Adventist faith legacy or heritage in our contemporary youth of this era of post-modernism.

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING THE ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRY

TOPIC: More about Adventist Youth Ministry (AYM)

The Adventist Youth Ministry is seen as that work of the church operated through the youth department that is conducted for, with and by young people which has as its primary focus the salvation of the youth through our Lord Jesus, their acceptance, and involvement in the mission of the church. This mission is the proclamation of the everlasting gospel of universal salvation of God through Jesus Christ to all the world in the context of the Three Angels’ message of Revelation 14: 6-12 and Matthew 28: 18-20

West-Central Africa Division, *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist*, 2012-2013 ed. (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2013), 343.

The youth department, therefore, works for and through its youth to reach the youth in the church and those outside the church through fellowship, nurture, worship, and mission. It also facilitates and supports the ministry of the church in winning, training, maintaining and reclaiming its youth for salvation and service.

West-Central Africa Division, *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist*, 2012-2013 ed. (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2013), 343.

Purpose of Adventist Youth Ministry

The Adventist Youth Ministry is “designed to support the local church (as well as the entire church of God) and dedicated to helping Adventist youth develop to their fullest potential and to use that potential for fulfillment of the gospel commission and what God requires of them.” (Conference Youth Director’s Manual, p. 2)

Philosophy of SDA Youth Ministry

The basic philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist youth ministry is one of “Salvation and Service.” Our twin goals are to lead youth into a saving relation with Jesus Christ and to train them for service to others. Hence the goals of ministry to Adventist Youth are to organize, instruct and save. This is achieved by providing and equipping the youth comprehensively and holistically with Spiritual, Mental and Physical development.

How it began: Luther Warren & Harry Fenner started it and joined by other boys as Boys Missionary Society in Hazelton, Michigan, the USA in 1879- The Adventist Youth Society (formerly Missionary Volunteer Society till 1979) is a department of the church through which the church works for and through her youth. The Adventist Youth Ministries Department, right down from its establishment as Boys Missionary Band, has undergone a lot of metamorphosis in name and activities.

TOPIC: The Spirit of Prophecy and Youth Ministries

Ellen G. White has extensively written volumes on and for youth participation in ministry as guided by the Spirit. Many messages of instruction, sympathy, reproof, and encouragement have come from her pen addressed directly to the young people¹ and at times to parents, teachers and the entire church. She expressed her profound interest in the youth and greatly desired to see them endeavoring to perfect Christian characters, gain the training essential for satisfactory service in God's cause and to reach a higher level of Christian experience.²

Despite the fact that in 1852, the Youth Instructor was published with Elder James White as its first editor, and, in 1879 the first Young People's Society was begun in Hazelton, Michigan by teenagers Luther Warren and Harry Fenner,³ "a call from the Spirit of Prophecy for the church to do something for its youth was written from Melbourne, Australia on December 19, 1892."⁴ It is said that it was the servant of God, E. G. White who called for the formation of a youth organization in each local church and expressed what kind of organization it should be.⁵

On the urgent need for mobilization and organization of the youth by the church, it was written "We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged, we want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth...."⁶ The Spirit of Prophecy expresses further that "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."⁷ It is worth saying that every young person or youth has some work to do in order to honor God and for the uplifting of humanity.⁸

In other that the youth will not say that there is nothing that we can do or the work of God is for the adults, E.G White expositied that she saw that God has a work for young men and young women to do; hence they are to take their cross and follow

¹E. G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1930), 7.

² White, *Messages to Young People*, 15.

³ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 631.

⁴General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Youth Ministries Dept., *Youth Ministry Handbook and Leadership Training Manual* (Loma Linda, CA: College Press, 2005), 6.

⁵Ibid, 11.

⁶General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *General Conference Bulletin*, January 29, 30, 1893, 24.

⁷White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 555.

⁸White, *Education*, 58.

Christ else they are unworthy of Him.⁹ About where to work, she answers “Let those who desire to work for God begin at home, in their own household, in their neighborhood, among their own friends. Hence they will find favorable missionary fields.”¹⁰ Indeed there are many youths in the church in this twenty-first century as compared to 1893 that the messages or injunctions were given, and if they are harkened to, it will go a long in accomplishing the gospel commission.

Another issue of significance that is brought to display in the above injunctions is that of training the youth. In compliance with the Bible statements that require the teaching/training of the child (Deut 6: 7; Prov 22:6; 2 Tim 3:16) the Spirit of Prophecy mentions again that the youth need to be educated holistically so that they too can help other youth, and in seeking to do this, it is remarked: “The churches in different localities should feel that a solemn responsibility rests upon them to train youth and educate talent to engage in missionary work. . . . There is excellent ability in the churches that needs to be brought into service.”¹¹ About the urgent need of educating the young ones, “educate” has been stressed three times in three of her books: “Train the youth, mold the character, educate, educate, educate for the future, immortal life.”¹² She adds “We have a work to do. Educate, educate, educate young men to give themselves to the ministry of the word.”¹³ The other one is that which concerns the simplicity in Christ which is iterated, “Having received our commission from the highest authority, we are to educate, educate, educate in the simplicity of Christ.”¹⁴

Elucidating on the needs of the young people, it is iterated, our youth need more than a casual notice and sporadic words of encouragement but also conscientious, prayerful and careful labor.¹⁵

To encourage the youth she writes that young men and women are to take up the work to which God calls them and Christ Jesus will teach them to use their abilities to good purpose. She adds that as they get “the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, and seek to teach others,” their minds will be refreshed and they can present words that are new and extraordinarily attractive to the hearer.¹⁶

As a call and challenge to the youth for God’s work, the Spirit of Prophecy expresses that “Christ is calling for volunteers to enlist under his standard and bear the banner of the cross before the world. The church is languishing for the help of young men.”¹⁷ To the youth a challenge is thrown, “God calls for you, young men. He calls for whole armies of young men who are large-hearted and large-minded and who have a

⁹ White, *Messages to Young People*, 206.

¹⁰ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1901), 6:428.

¹¹ White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 69.

¹² White, *Testimonies*, 5:590.

¹³ White, *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1953), 19.

¹⁴ White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1932), 78, 79.

¹⁵ White, *Gospel Workers*, 208.

¹⁶ White, *Messages to Young People*, 217, 218.

¹⁷ White, *Messages to Young People*, 24, 25.

deep love for Christ and the truth.”¹⁸ The youth are called to a high destiny, to be light bearers, to cherish broad ideas and for essential elements of character, and for complete consecration and surrender.

TOPIC: Why an AY Society

The AY Society is the center of earnest, happy activity and Christian fellowship for the young people of the church. The various bands, AY Honor study groups, hobby clubs, and other groups that might otherwise lose contact with one another are bound together in the AY Society, and in the society, meetings find inspiration, fellowship, and strength. The AY Society meeting is one of the most important appointments of the week for youth. Its importance is revealed in an analysis of its purpose:

- To keep the challenge of the Aim, the Motto, and the Pledge before the Society.
- To deepen the devotional life of each AY Society member.
- To integrate the vital AY Society features and group activities into the thinking and life of the AY Society.
- To keep the young people of the church in touch with the AY movement around the world.
- To give an opportunity for each member to obtain an experience in public address and teamwork: praying together, studying together, planning together, and working together.
- To hold before the youth Christian ideals and principles for Christian living—to help young people find a positive solution to their problems.
- To study the most effective methods for doing different kinds of Christian service, and to organize the youth for successful witnessing.
- To provide a time when the members of the AY Society may have an opportunity to tell “what they have tried to do for the Saviour and what success has been theirs” and thus strengthen and inspire one another in their desire to live out the AY Society Pledge.
- To provide pleasant Christian fellowship for the young people of the church.

Ideals of the Adventist Youth

They are expressed in the Aim, Motto, Pledge, and Law, as well as in the objective and purpose for an Adventist youth organization in the church.

The Motto of Adventist Youth “The love of Christ constrains me.”

The motto is based on 2 Cor. 5:14.

The Aim of Adventist Youth “The Advent Message to all the world in my generation.”

How universal and at the same time how definite is this Aim!

“The message” is that which the youth will take.

“To all the world” is where the youth will take the message.

“In this generation,” tells us when it will be taken.

The Aim requires an ample knowledge of the message. Therefore, Adventist youth should not only know the Adventist message—know that Jesus will soon return—but their lives must give evidence that they really believe it.

The Pledge of Adventist Youth

¹⁸White, *Testimonies*, 6:411.

“Loving the Lord Jesus, I promise to take an active part in the work of the Adventist Youth Society, doing what I can to help others and to finish the work of the gospel in all the world.”

The Law (Pathfinder Law)

The Pathfinder Law is for me to

1. Keep the Morning Watch
2. Do my honest part
3. Care for my body
4. Keep a level eye
5. Be courteous and obedient
6. Walk softly in the Sanctuary
7. Keep a song in my heart
8. Go on God's errands

The Objectives

The Spirit of Prophecy sets forth the objectives of a youth organization as follows:

1. to train the youth to work for other youth,
2. to recruit the youth to help their church and “those who profess to be Sabbath keepers”; and
3. to work “for those who are not of our faith” (*Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1893).

In seeking to reach these objectives the youth are called upon: to pray together; to study the Word together; to fellowship together in Christian social interaction ; to act together in small groups to carry out well-laid plans for witnessing; to develop tact and skill and talent in the Master's service; to encourage one another in spiritual growth.

The Objective of the Adventist Youth

“To save from sin and guide into service.” this true and only motive, so complete and impressive, was adopted during the 1926 General Conference session. To obtain the salvation of the youth it is necessary to give them every possible opportunity to participate in all Adventist youth activities. “Seeking the good of others is the way in which true happiness can be found” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 24). The enemy will not prevail against youth who are actively engaged in the things of God.

That the youth may work for:

- Other youth
- Their church
- Their fellow men

This triple purpose that God has outlined for His youth is really the second part of the objective presented in a practical sense: “guide into service.” From the time youth missionary work first began, this triple purpose has been put into practice. The goal is to save each Adventist youth who faces the battle against sin, striving to rescue more and more souls for the kingdom of God. In response to these inspired directives, the Youth Department was organized to give leadership training, and to provide resource materials and evangelistic plans for the Adventist Youth Society in the local church.

Official Levels of Youth Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Adventurer Club

The Adventurer Club is a Seventh-day Adventist Church-sponsored ministry open to all families with children in grades 1-4 who agree to keep the Adventurer Pledge and Law. The Adventurer club takes care of children of 6-9 years old in four classes as Busy Bee, Sun Beams, Builders and Helping Hand respectively.

Pathfinder Club

Members are children and teenagers aged 10-15, progressing through different ranks called Class Levels each year. Pathfinder clubs across the globe are sponsored by the local Seventh-day Adventist church. 10-15 years old.

The Pathfinder Club has a Pledge and Law, highlighting the spiritual basis on which the club is built. The club operates on a 9, 10, 11, or 12 month calendar year, with a weekly or bi-weekly program of at least 1½, 2, or 3 hours' duration. Within this 1½, 2, or 3 hour period the Pathfinders perform drill and marching, crafts and/or hobbies and games, as well as taking part in devotional activities and class work. There are six classes, with given names, which begin at 10 years of age and conclude at 15 years. Each class is represented by a chosen color as listed.

Friend - 10 years - Blue

Companion - 11 years - Red

Explorer - 12 years - Green

Ranger - 13 years - Silver

Voyager - 14 years - Burgundy

Guide - 15 years - Gold

At the completion of the class work requirements, the Pathfinder receives insignia as an award consisting of a pin, Pathfinder Class pocket stripe and chevron at a special Investiture service.

Master Guide

This is one of the most current leadership development programs for youth ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Master Guide is the foundation for youth ministry leadership, then builds two levels of continuing education that will help keep youth leaders sharp, up-to-date and focused on why we are in this business anyway.

16+ years old.

Ambassadors

The Ambassador Club is not intended as a replacement of, but instead, will strengthen the current Senior Youth/Young Adult Ministry of our Church. This new level will provide organization and structure for the 16- 21 years old, as well as encourage and empower them to become ambassadors through active involvement in their church, locally and globally. 16- 21+ years old

Adventist Youth

The story of the Adventist Youth Society began over 125 (1,879) years ago along a dusty country lane in Michigan with two young boys Luther Warren and Harry Fenner kneeling in prayer. Today that dusty lane has become a world-wide web of highways that links over 10 million Seventh-day Adventist young people in nearly every political entity on every continent of the globe. This is the story of God's leading a fascinating army down through the battles of the great overarching conflict that is life as we know it now. It is made up of Youth or young adults of 16-31+ years old.

The Pathfinder Leadership Award (PLA)

This is Part Two of the most current leadership development program for youth ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This concept uses the Master Guide as the foundation for junior youth ministry leadership, then builds two levels of continuing education which will help keep youth leaders sharp, up-to-date, and focused on why we are in this business.

Leadership Levels

Part One-- Master Guide

This continues to be the highest level of leadership within the Adventurer and Pathfinder programs of the church. It focuses on one's personal spiritual life and growth first and foremost. General leadership skills are then woven into the sharpening of those skills which are specifically geared to leading youth in God-ordained areas of development: understanding God's world of nature, outreach ministry, service to others, and a lifestyle which denotes healthy living.

Part Two-- Pathfinder Leadership Award (PLA)

Once the Master Guide level has been completed, most leaders feel they "have arrived" and now have the necessary tools to properly guide their youth through the varied programs the church has for its youth. The purpose of this level of continuing education is to 1) continue equipping people for a sharper Pathfinder ministry and 2) enable those who are finding themselves removed from reality to keep pace. Again, there is a refocus on personal spiritual growth, which must be a never-ending upward path.

Adventist Youth Ministry Programs

Pathfinder Camporee

Organized by a conference/mission, the camporee gathers Pathfinder Clubs together for a weekend or several days at an accessible, centrally located site. A specified program of activity and events provides an opportunity for everyone to participate. It is both a reward to those who have been taught camping and Pathfinder skills and a learning situation to initiate and inspire new members.

The Pathfinder Fair

Is a gala occasion for the Pathfinder Clubs of a conference/mission or designated area. Usually, these occasions take place on Sunday and extend from ten o'clock in the morning until four or five o'clock in the afternoon. The club members are invited to come in uniform, bring hobbies and exhibits, prepare various demonstrations, be prepared to march in a parade and send teams for drill demonstrations.

Youth Rally

A one-day event where all youth participate. There is usually a theme and features physical activities such as marching, and social interactions between the young people.

Youth Congress

A formal gathering of youth leaders and leaders in training as delegates, for a limited period of up to four days. The theme is specific and presentations are given including workshops aimed at improving their skills and motivating these leaders for better service.

Youth Camp

A program of the youth organized at a temporary site that may require the use of shelters such as tents or cabins. The program may include organized recreation or instruction. The period may span from one day to two weeks. There are different types of camps like; training camps, family camps, pathfinder weekend camp-outs etc.

Reference Source: *Youth Ministry Handbook Training Manual*.

Youth, Remember Your Creator! (An extract from the net)

The Seventh-day Adventist Church began like a Silicon Valley start-up—led by young people with vision and passion for a cause. People such as Ellen White, John Loughborough, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith and John Harvey Kellogg made a

significant impact on the developing Seventh-day Adventist Church while still teenagers and young adults.

Today youth continue to impact and energize the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In fact, more than half of Adventists worldwide are between the ages of 16 and 40.

The church nurtures and empowers its young members, not only at the local level but through the worldwide Youth Ministries department, which oversees ministries to specific age groups. Adventurers is a club for children ages 6 to 9, with 1 million members worldwide. Pathfinders, with 2 million members, is for young people ages 10 to 15. The Ambassador Group strives to meet the spiritual, social and lifestyle needs of those from 16 into their 20s. The Adventist Youth Society — created by youth for youth more than 125 years ago—now links 10 million youth on every continent of the globe.

The Youth Ministries department mission statement reflects its emphasis on service and its confidence in the abilities of the younger generation: “To lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to discipleship.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church focuses on youth because it is indebted to them for its beginnings and it depends on them for its future.

<http://www.adventist.org/en/vitality/youth/> accessed on July 1, 2015.

PART 2: SELECTED TOPICS ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION

TOPIC: Theological/Biblical Foundation for Youth Participation in Ministry

There are lots of evidential supports to buttress the fact that throughout the Bible, God has been making use of youth and young adults of both sexes in the advancement of His course of bringing salvation to humankind in various epochs. God made use of some people from their youth to accomplish various significant roles or services in His salvation agenda like:

1. **Prophets eg Ezekiel** (Joel 2:28, Ezek 1:1-3)
2. **Priest eg Samuel** (1 Sam 3:1-20)
3. **Kings eg David and Josiah** (1 Sam 16 and 17; 2 Kings 22:1-3,)
4. **Queens eg Esther** (Esth 2:1-18)
5. **Deliverers/Saviours**, eg Joseph and Jesus Christ (Gen 45:5; Matt 1:21)
6. **Forerunners eg John the Baptist** (Luke 3:1-18,24; John 1:19-24)
7. **Disciples/ Apostles** eg Timothy (Acts 16:1-5, 1 Tim 4: 12-16), and Titus
8. **Leaders** (Gen 41:33-41). Paul in 1 Cor 12

Founders of the Seventh - day Adventist church (Show pictures as on Powerpoint)

Youth in the Foundation Movement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church _

With reference to *YouthFirst*, a preparation by the GC Youth Ministries Department it is expressed that the pioneers of the Adventist Church were in their youth when the church was instituted by God’s leading. **James White** started his ministry at the age

of 21; **Ellen G. Harmon** at 17; **John N. Andrews** at 21; **Uriah Smith**, at 20. The development of the church in the past clearly shows that the participation of our youth cannot be ignored.

God is still in the business of calling young people with outstanding potential to lives of service through various church activities in this contemporary era. Total involvement of SDA youth will accomplish far more than we can even imagine. The desire of our youth to be given the responsibility and to participate in various church offices and committees is strong.

TOPIC: Youth of Influence – Youth in World History

In the world history, there are prolific records on young people who did various great things in their youthful ages and hence have chalked memorable fame. Though this may seem secular, great lessons can be learned from this as a form of motivation or booster as we study youth involvement or participation for emulation. Below are examples of such heroes as found in the *YouthFirst: Involving Youth in Church Life*, by General Conference Youth Ministries Department.

Victor Hugo wrote a tragedy at 15, received three prizes at the Academy, and the title of Master before he was 20. **John de Medici** became a cardinal at age 15. **Pascal** wrote a great work at 16 and died at thirty-seven and **Raphael** painted his wonderful works as a young man and died at thirty-seven.

Calvin joined the Reformation at 21 and wrote the *Institutes* at 27, thus profoundly influencing the theological thought of later centuries. **Alexander the Great** was a mere youth when he rolled back the Asiatic hordes that threatened to destroy European civilization almost at its birth and conquered the world when he was 23.

Isaac Newton was 24 when he formulated the law of gravity and made some of his greatest discoveries before 25. **McCormick** was 23 when he invented the reaper, and **Charles Dickens** wrote his *Pickwick Papers* at 24 and *Oliver Twist* at 25.

Martin Luther was a triumphant reformer at 25 and started the Reformation at 30.

Francis of Assisi was 25 when he founded the Franciscan order, and **John of Austria** won the Battle of Lepanto—the greatest battle of modern times—at age 25. **Keats**, the “divine singer,” was only a youth and died at 25. At the age of 27, **Napoleon** conquered Italy and was recognized as the foremost commander of any age; **Patrick Henry** cried, “Give me liberty or give me death;” **John Smith** staked out a colonial empire in Virginia, and the evangelist **Spurgeon** built the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London.

Columbus laid out his plans to find an ocean route to India when he was 28. At that same age, **Xavier** teamed with **Ignatius Loyola** (30) to organize the Society of Jesuits. **Roger Williams** was important enough to be banished as a heretic at 29 years old. **Cortes** was 30 when he stood to gaze at the golden treasures of Mexico. **Billy Graham** was 31 at the time of his now-famous Los Angeles crusade. **Hamilton** was 32 when he held the post of Secretary of the Treasury, and when **Maurice of Saxony** died at age 32, all of Europe recognized him to be the most profound statesman of his day.

R YouthFirst: Involving Youth in Church Life, pg 10.

TOPIC: GC of SDA Youth Ministries Department 8 Modules for Youth Programs

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist *Youth Ministry Handbook and Leadership Training Manual* provides eight modules or areas for the youth program, and with each module dealing with a different aspect of senior youth leadership. These eight modules are organization, leadership, commitment, discipleship, witnessing, worship, fellowship, and empowering youth.

TOPIC: Principles to Increase and Sustain Youth Participation

In as much as the eight modules and the four forces provided in the manual are not negated or condemned, for the scope and benefit of this project, there are some dimensions or principles that need to be considered or put in place to help in making the youth to effectively participate in church activities and programs. By so doing the purpose and objectives for the establishment of the Adventist youth ministry will be achieved. These principles include that of mobilization, teaching/training, involvement, equipping, nurturing, mentorship/discipleship, empowerment, and motivation, loyalty and commitment, integration and strategy development. This section, therefore, looks into these principles as seen in various literature of the church and elsewhere.

The Free Child Project in investigating youth involvement expresses that there is an equally never-ending list of reasons for involving children and youth in making the decisions that affect them personally and their communities as a whole.

Dozens of decisions are made about the lives of young people every day. Families, schools, youth programs, city councils, foundations, government agencies, employers, lawmakers... the list is virtually endless. There is an equally endless list of reasons why children and youth need to be engaged in making the decisions that affect them personally and their communities as a whole.

Included among the endless list supplied on how youth are involved in activities is what has been provided below:

- Community-Based Organizations - Young people participating in organizational planning, evaluation, and/or youth action councils.
- Community Planning - Young people participating in government and community-driven planning activities.
- Funding, Grant-making, and Foundations - Young people participating in philanthropy by distributing funds, evaluating grantees, and more.
- Global/International Activities - Young people participating in activities that affect the whole world, including the United Nations.
- Libraries - Young people participating in library leadership and activities.
- Local Government - Young people forming youth action councils, designing programs, participating in parks and recreation activities, etc.
- Media - Young people designing media in all forms, including news, films, and online.
- Political Parties - Young people participating in political parties, as well as political party responses to youth involvement.
- Public Health - Young people partnering with adults to raise awareness and increase the effectiveness of health promotion throughout society.

- Research - Young people identifying issues, strategizing research, and conducting data collection, analysis, reflection, assessment, and evaluations throughout their communities.
 - Rights Advocacy - Young people calling for greater rights for community organizing and systemic change.
 - Schools - Young people participating in planning, researching, teaching, evaluating, decision-making, advocacy, and activism to improve elementary, middle, and senior high schools.
 - Service Learning - Young people leading and directing projects that connect deliberate learning objectives with community service.
 - State/Provincial Government - Young people participating in boards, committees, commissions, cabinets, councils, and other avenues to affect state-level policy-making.
 - State & National Nonprofit Organizations - Young people involved in action/advisory councils and on boards of directors.
- Reference Source: Free Child Project, “Youth Involvement” Accessed September 8, 2015, <http://www.freechild.org/SIYI/index.htm>

TOPIC: Hindrances (Barriers) to Youth Participation in Ministry

Among the common barriers to youth participation presented by the General Conference in the *YouthFirst* includes:

- Older people don't trust youth.
- Older people have no confidence in youth.
- Involving youth goes against cultural norms or the established mindset.
- Young people's attitudes can create a barrier.
- Gender, education, and lack of experience can throw up roadblocks.
- Many churches give only lip service but no action.
- Adults have a lack of skills in certain areas.
- There's not enough time to tackle the challenges of youth participation.
- Funding—this is a major problem in the Seventh-day Adventist church at all levels of administration. The church needs to support youth initiatives with money, not just words.
- Leadership turnover and weak adult training at all levels of the church.
- No one wants to change the “status quo.”
- Barriers created by power and politics

TOPIC: Models of Youth Participation

There is a continual increase in platforms for youth to get involved in contemporary society and religious denominations. Scholars interested in youth ministries, and youth participation /empowerment promoters or organization like Doug Fields, Roger L. Dudley, Marc Jans and Kurt De Backer, Roger Hart, Harry Shier, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Commonwealth Youth Programs etc. have expressed the need and provided programs and methods for youth participation.

There are diverse models of youth participation which can be used when trying to get young people involved with decision making or participate in issues or acting for change.

Doug Fields, borrowing from Rick Warren, expresses five eternal purposes God has for a purpose-driven youth ministry. These five purposes are **evangelism, worship, fellowship, discipleship and ministry**; and that “a purpose-driven youth ministry will have programs and structures that reflect these purposes.” He adds that these five eternal purposes do form the core component around which other nine components which all start with letter “P” revolve. These nine components are

- (1) **Power of God** – helping passionate leaders with pure hearts to rely on God
- (2) **Purpose** – knowing why your ministry exists, writing it out and putting leadership behind it.
- (3) **Potential audience** – identifying your students and their receptivity to your purpose.
- (4) **Programs** – creating programs to fulfill the purpose and reach the potential audiences.
- (5) **Process** – showing how you intend to move your audience toward spiritual maturity
- (6) **Planned values** – identifying the beliefs and styles that will help support the purpose.
- (7) **Parents** – teaming up with the family for a stronger youth ministry.
- (8) **Participating leaders** – knowing how to bring others on board to help fulfill the purpose
- (9) **Perseverance** – knowing how to stay focused, remain focused – and stay alive.

To Fields, “a healthy youth ministry is a purpose-driven youth ministry.” Marc Jans and Kurt De Backer present the Triangle of Youth Participation. This advocates that young people will actively engage with society when presented with three specific dimensions; firstly they must have something to **challenge**. Following this, they must feel they have the **capacity** to make a difference and finally they must be able to **connect** with others in order to deal with the issue efficiently.

Roger Hart states there are 8 steps on the “Ladder of Participation”. Hart’s Ladder of Participation is a model that can be used when developing and working on youth participation projects. It aims to enable young people to take an active part in decision making, and give them the opportunity to have a 'voice' in society. The eight degrees of participation—eight rungs in the ladder of youth ministry success are as shown below:

- Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making
- Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action
- Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people
- Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed
- Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed
- Rung 3: Young people tokenized*
- Rung 2: Young people are decoration*
- Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*

According to Hart, the first three steps (rungs 1, 2, and 3, which are **manipulation, decoration, and tokenism**), are considered not be engaging young people in active youth participation, but instead, provide a pathway to move up onto the other stages of youth participation. The next five steps after the first three look at how to fully integrate young people into the decision-making process and how to get them actively involved.

Harry Shier, on the other hand, presents a five-level ladder or pathways to participation known commonly as Shier's Pathways to Participation as presented below with level 1 as the base:

Level 5: Young people share power and responsibility in decision-making

Level 4: Young people are involved in decision-making process

Level 3: Young people's views are taken into account

Level 2: Young people are supported in expressing their views

Level 1: Young people are listened to

Shier's Pathways to Participation model is useful in assessing organizational willingness, readiness, and commitment to youth participation.

Reference Sources:

Models of Youth Participation, accessed August 19, 2015,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_participation

TOPIC: Developing Strategy for Youth Participation

One other method of increasing and sustaining youth involvement in ministry is by developing well-defined and effective strategy for the young people to achieve their goals and objectives in missions or the ministry for which they are called. Though strategy has its roots in the field of military science and marketing, Terry and Payne by considering other scholars views see strategy as "a future orientation and a plan for process" By so doing they express that "wise strategy development involves a healthy understanding of the past and present, it moves us beyond history to future actions and results."¹⁹ This, therefore, calls for strategic planning or strategy development which to them "is a prayerfully discerned, Spirit-guided process of preparation, development, implementation, and evaluation of the necessary steps involved in missionary endeavors."²⁰

Other Suggested Practical Ideas from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership

A lot of practical ideas to increase and sustain youth involvement have been expressed by concerned organizations and resource centers but due to space, only a few are considered. Among the list of "50 Ways to Strengthen Ministry with Youth" from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership include: Honor the spirituality of youth, Equip parents to nurture their children's faith, "Get real" with Christian Education for youth, Provide excellent adult leadership for youth activities, Make worship meaningful for young persons, Create a sense of belonging for youth, Cultivate competence in youth, and Strive for effective Youth Fellowship. Details are as provided:

¹⁹John M. Terry and J. D. Payne, *Developing A Strategy for Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Cultural Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 3.

²⁰Ibid., 13.



1. Honor the spirituality of youth

1. Appreciate and validate youth as persons of sacred worth with legitimate spiritual needs and responses.
2. Understand young persons as participants in ministry, not objects of ministry.
3. Shake off stereotypes of youth as irreligious, rebellious and difficult.
4. Don't make young people be like you before they can be like Jesus.
5. Don't guess at young people's needs. Solicit input and feedback from teens themselves, not just parents and adults leaders. Invite them to suggest ways the church can help them grow in faith.
6. Appreciate that youth ministry is more than youth group. Encourage youth to be involved in all aspects of church life. Advocate for youth.

Equip parents to nurture their children's faith

8. Know that parental influence is the primary factor determining the religious commitment of youth, even for older teens.
9. Support faith formation in the parents of youth. Getting parents involved and serious about their own faith is the best way to get youth involved and serious.
10. Start a study group for parents of teens aimed at helping them understand how to nurture their teenagers' spirituality.
11. Provide resources for practicing and discussing faith at home — for praying together as a family, for observing Christian holidays, and conversing about faith issues.
12. Consider an intergenerational format for Christian education that has youth and parents study together.
13. Provide support groups and resources on family concerns and child-raising issues.
14. Teach parents the importance of just hanging out with their kids.

“Get real” with Christian Education for youth

15. Ask if your youth Sunday School curriculum is seriously addressing the questions kids are really asking. NB USE SABBATH SCHOOL/AYM
16. Honestly, address issues related to sexuality. Offer a first-rate program on human sexuality to which parents would want to send their kids.
17. Recognize that discussion and conversation are essential to faith formation.
18. Use current events as discussion topics.
19. Give teens permission to ask questions and talk about their doubts.
20. Empower youth to rewrite hymns and prayers in ways that are meaningful to them.
21. Get acquainted with the music kids spend their time listening to. Help youth make connections between their music and faith. Allow them to find their voice and worship God in their own musical languages and styles.

22. Articulate the basic tenets of the faith clearly and often.
23. Emphasize experience-centered learning. Faith must be experienced before it can be articulated. Experience is often more important than information about faith.
24. Provide training in spiritual disciplines — prayer, Scripture reading, acts of mercy. Emphasize the practices of faith.
25. Integrate “service learning” into Christian education to teach discipleship. Involve youth in planning and leading mission activities.

Provide excellent adult leadership for youth activities

26. Recruit adult leaders for youth activities who are knowledgeable, committed, spiritually mature, and effective in communicating with young people. Don’t assume that a young adult is necessarily best suited for the job.
27. Provide training for youth teachers and leaders, especially on discussion and listening skills.
28. Perform required background checks for volunteers and staff working with youth. Implement policies and procedures to prevent child abuse.
29. Invest in youth ministry. A meaningful commitment to reach youth must be reflected in your budget and staffing decisions and the commitment of the pastor’s time.

Make worship meaningful for young persons

30. Give youth meaningful and visible roles as worship participants.
31. Make youth worship experience-based. The elements of worship should all connect to a central message that causes the worshiper to make a connection with God.
32. Use popular songs, movie clips, or poems to connect the message with the broader culture.
33. Have youth write their own liturgies and prayers.

Create a sense of belonging for youth

34. Youth ministry is about relationships. Relationships are more important than programs. Young persons are seeking a sense of belonging.
35. Strive to integrate youth into the church as a whole. Youth programs should equip and empower youth as congregational participants, not isolate or “ghettoize” them.
36. Be present for kids. Listen.
37. Kids need and value stability, routines, and ritual, even if they don’t act like it.
38. Combat cliquishness. Reinforce inclusiveness and acceptance of peers.
39. Build group cohesiveness with retreats and mission trips providing opportunities for sustained interaction.

Cultivate competence in youth

40. Build a sense of accomplishment among young persons with challenging music, drama, or service activities. The ability to develop “competence” is one of the hooks connecting kids to church.
41. Give youth real responsibilities.
42. Extend leadership opportunities to as many youths as possible. Give them an active role in the leadership and decision-making of the church.
43. Start a youth-led worship service.

Strive for effective Youth Fellowship

44. Be consistent with your meeting times and place. Meeting at the church is often preferable to meeting in different homes because it is a well-known location and “neutral” territory.
45. Divide junior high and senior high youth if possible. Older teens will tend to fall away from groups with many younger kids.
46. Involve the youth in planning all their activities.
47. Balance recreation, study, devotion, and fellowship.
48. Schedule a “big event” every month to make it easy for youth to invite their friends.
49. Enlist parents as allies. Their support is critical.
50. Have clear policies about behavioral boundaries and discipline.

Find more resources at www.churchleadership.com
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Discover more 50 Ways tips at www.churchleadership.com/50ways.

**Resources: 50 Ways Series. Accessed August 9, 2015,
<http://www.churchleadership.com/50ways/Youth.html>**

TOPIC: GC of SDA Youth Ministries Suggested Methods/ Practical Ideas

The Youth Ministries Department of the GC of Seventh-day Adventist has also suggested in the *YouthFirst* some practical ideas on how to involve youth as provided below:

- Hold spiritual gifts seminars to assist young people in discovering and developing their gifts. Empower your young people for leadership by learning what spiritual gifts and natural abilities each has. Train them to employ those gifts in church leadership. Provide the necessary resources, skills, and support to do the job well and then step back and allow them to do it.
- Examine committees at all levels of the church to ensure that youth are represented at the decision-making committees.
- Instruct churches to develop a policy to safeguard the necessity of youth involvement in all aspects of church life.
- Support youth through mentoring and skills-building opportunities.
- Hold seminars for churches on youth involvement.

- Invite local churches to appoint mentors for youth involvement purposes. Ensure that the appointed mentors have sufficient time and energy to excite youth.
- Make sure the nominating committee will choose youth and young adults to fill real and significant roles in church life, not just “token” positions.
- Check that the finance committee will make spending on youth activities and projects a priority.
- Monitor the needs of youth and older church members.
- Examine each level of church organization to assess the current level of youth participation in that particular level.
- Instruct the church board or executive committee to clarify types of youth needed and how they will be involved in the mission of the church.
- Share decision-making power within the church.
- Provide training. Young people may need training in communication, leadership, preaching skills, and other areas. Older church members may help.
- Develop an intern program for youth.
- Promote a strong volunteer program that will be an outlet for involvement.

Tips and Suggestions from Survey for General Discussions/Open Forum

TOPIC: Come and Let Us Reason Together

Selected Bible Texts: (i) Isai 1:18 (ii) Deut 6: 1-8 (iii) Josh 2: 8-13 (iv) Prov 22: 6 (iv) Eph 6: 4 (v) 2 Tim 1: 1-5 (with emphasis on verse 5) (vi) Prov 4: 1-2

As indicated on the Questionnaire, respondents were asked to suggest possible answers to certain open questions. Among these are the following for discussion:

(A) Reasons why some youth stop attending youth meetings which affect the youth ministries include (i) unfavorable meeting time and days (ii) lack of real understanding of the youth ministry (iii) lack of commitment and loyalty (iv) people staying far from their church (v) peer group and academic influence (vi) laziness on the part of the youth (vii) parents reluctance to allow children to go out in the evening times (viii) poor and uninteresting programs (ix) poor youth and church leadership (x) prevailing educational system in the country especially the extra classes and take home assignments

(B) Reasons why some youth do not want or do not involve themselves in church activities include, (i) lack of education by the church as a whole (ii) hindrances from the matured adult leaders which include lack of empowerment (iii) youth are not adequately prepared or equipped (iv) bad behavior by youth, shyness and low esteem held by youth (v) youth not able to identify their spiritual gifts (vi) lack of proper understanding of their calling (vii) church not caring enough for the youth so to monitor them (viii) lack of motivation (ix) poor or inadequate mentorship program for youth and adult.

(C) Suggestions given on what poses as hindrance to youth participation include (i) lack of training or education for both youth and the entire church (ii) lack of proper leadership (iii) lack of encourage and motivation from parents and leadership (iv) problems by the youth themselves for example bad behavior/character, inferiority complex and unwillingness to involve themselves (v) unwillingness on the part of adult members to pass on leadership to young ones (vi) lack of mentoring program,

lack of loyalty and commitment on the part of the youth and adults (vii) age and gender discrimination (viii) social pressures.

(D) Suggestions on how to sustain youth participation include (i) making sure that always there are programs/ activities for or that involve the youth (ii) youth are to be mobilized (iii) continuous youth empowerment (iii) continuous motivation from both parents and leaders (iv) better mentorship and nurturing program (v) regular involvement of youth in church administration or leadership (vi) involvement of adults and church leaders in youth programs.

(E) Suggestions on how to maintain the Adventist faith legacy in the youth include (i) making sure that the Adventist doctrines are well taught and explained to the youth for the youth to know and understand them (ii) continuous involvement of the youth in all aspect of church activities, integrating the youth church leadership (iii) continuous Bible studies for the youth (iv) conscious effort to incorporate Adventist faith and beliefs in all church programs (v) proper counseling strategy for the youth especially the erring ones (vi) teaching the youth the benefits of the youth ministries (vii) letting the youth know the history of the church and the roles some youth played (viii) adults being role models or living to expectations.

(F) Suggestion on how mission- oriented activities can be inculcated into the youth participation program include youth forming various groups or teams of ministries as (i) Prison Visitation Ministry (ii) Prayer Ministry (iii) Hospital Visitation Ministry (iv) Helping Hand or Lend- a- hand Ministry (v) Music Ministry.

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VITA

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Family: I got married in March 1984 to Doris Oppong who also hails from Jacobu. We are blessed with a son, Captain Michael K. Owusu-Duah (of Ghana Army) and two daughters, Grace Owusu-Kwartemaa and Betty-Dale Owusu-Ansah and a foster son, Bismark (Junior).

Education:

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