

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Masters of Arts in Leadership

Adventist University of Africa

School of Postgraduate Studies

Title: A STRATEGY FOR RETAINING THE YOUTH IN BETEL
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, HUAMBO, ANGOLA

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This research has investigated and identified the dropping out of church and the low attendance of youths at Bethel Seventh-day Adventist church programs. What prompted the research were the reasons that the youth themselves gave of their low participation in church as lack of interesting programs for church members. Surveys carried out among the youth of ages 16-30 discovered possible causes were among them lack of programs that engaged and allowed youths to participate in church programs.

The church ought to realize that the future and the strength of the church is assured only if they have programs that focus on youth retention. This project set out to establish and carry out a program that involved training and equipping the youth to become responsible Christians and leaders in the church, increase their church participation and attendance. Literature from the Bible and other authors clearly indicated examples of how youth participated in spiritual matters. The Bible has

examples that include Joseph, whose childhood education and training raised him to high ranks in Egypt (Exod 40). Esther, who eventually became Queen in Persia during the time of the reign of Ahasuerus (Est 2). Daniel and his friends in Babylon are another good example. Proverbs 22:6 alludes to this when it says “train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”

The study set out a program that involved participation of the youth of ages 16-30 in the church. It included the following: teaching the youth on topics such as: Stewardship, Life Style, HIV/AIDS, Blood donation and door to door witnessing on Sabbath afternoons. This program was a success as it increased the participation of youth in church programs, created high interest in church activities and they also felt that their spiritual needs were catered for. Youth church attendance and membership increased from 50 to 78. Forty-one of them were baptized at the end of this program.

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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, HUAMBO, ANGOLA

A project

presented in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Leadership

by

Domingos Lourenco Suquina

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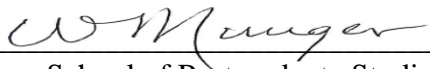
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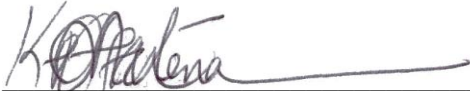
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AY	Adventist Youth
EUD	Euro Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SOP	Spirit of Prophecy
MV	Missionary Volunteers
JMV	Junior Missionary Volunteers

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Angola has been in existence since (1924) when the first missionaries arrived to accomplish what Jesus commissioned His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. The missionaries established the first mission station in Bongo, Huambo, Angola. In the Adventist church's earliest days, the number of the members was small, but now the church has grown amazingly in different areas, as the membership has grown significantly. There are three hundred and forty-two thousand three hundred eighty-seven baptized members in Angola Union Mission¹ and three hundred and thirty-five thousand, five hundred ninety-six² are young people in three different Seventh-day Adventist church youth ministry clubs.

Betel Adventist church in Huambo district is one of the nine hundred eighty-two organized churches and one thousand five hundred and twenty three companies in Angola Union Mission in Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division Territory of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Betel Seventh-day Adventist church has a membership of four hundred forty seven of which fifty percent are young people aged between sixteen and thirty. Only twenty five percent are adults

¹ According to Angola Union *Mission Executive Secretary Report*, December 2008.

² According to Angola Union *Mission Adventist Youth Report*, March 2009.

aged thirty years and above. The rest are children below sixteen years of age totalling about twenty-four percent of membership.³

Unfortunately many of the sixteen to thirty years age group are no longer attending church. They prefer to stay back home; either doing absolutely nothing or engaged in social activities, such as, games and football which many times is done on Sabbath. Some have engaged in “card” playing to keep themselves occupied. Others have completely left the church, and many of them that decide to go to church get there late. Showing very little interest in what is happening in the church. None of the adults appeared to care about the youth, and had no planned activities for them. Culturally, in Angola young people are not given a chance to suggest alternatives in changing the status quo. As a result, their needs in the church are not met.

Statement of the Problem

Betel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Angola is one of the churches that loses more youths and young adults as members compared to adults members. According to Betel member’s book fifth one percent of Betel Seventh-day Adventist church membership composing of the age of sixteen to thirty years of age have dropped their regular church attendance.⁴

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out what causes many youth and young adults (16-30 years old) to lose interest in coming to church. Secondly, working with

³ According to Betel Adventist church member’s book.

⁴ Ibid.

the church, to come up with solutions to include, such as programs that will lead to retention of this age group.

Significance of the Study

The study seeks to develop strategies to assist in the retention of the youth in Betel Seventh-day Adventist church. The study will further assist in reaching out to more youth and adults who join the Betel Seventh-day Adventist church through their evangelistic campaigns' effort, thereby, fulfilling the expectations of great commission of Matthew 28 verses 18-20.

The churches in the city of Huambo will benefit by adopting the recommendations that will be made and apply them in the retention of the youth in other churches. The Angola Union Mission will also benefit by using the suggested methods of retaining youth of this age group. The research will develop a program of training youth directors in youth retention in the local churches. The entire church in Angola will get a well-trained youth that will conduct evangelism and hasten the coming of Jesus.

Research Methodology

This study discussed how to maintain young people in a church generally and specific in Betel Seventh-day Adventist Church. It also addressed and explored ways how to have a biblical view of it. The research is both quantitative and qualitative in approach describing and evaluating collected data. The data collecting tools that are used comprised selected sections of Bible reading, both, Old and New Testament on the teaching and nurturing of youth both in the home churches and community churches.

The materials were gathered through personal interviews, surveys and several books and Internet material. Reading to include materials prepared the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church Youth Department. It also included Spirit of Prophecy materials by Ellen White on keeping and training of youth. It also included materials prepared by the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division Youth Department.

Contemporary literature was also read from both Adventist and non-Adventist writers. A survey was also conducted using questionnaire to find out the causes of the situation in Betel Seventh-day Adventist church. The validity of the method was guaranteed by the fact that the researcher had close monitoring the procedures.

Limitations

The limitation factors included the following: the Angolan culture prevents young people from contributing effectively to adult established activities. This practice prevented a number of youth who wanted to participate in church activities and seminars. The political atmosphere also limited the number of the times they wanted to meet for youth activities. There is limited library materials in Angolan literature for this kind of research is not available.

Delimitations

The study centres on how to rid the Betel Seventh-day Adventist church of spectator syndrome among the youth of sixteen to thirty age group that led them to drop out of the church. It recommends ways to involve them in the church's youth activities in order to that they are an integral part of Betel Adventist church.

Assumptions

The research assumed that:

1. The youth are both today's and tomorrow's church members and leaders
2. The youth are part of the great number that will be among the redeemed (Revelation 7: 9).
3. Jesus allowed the young people to be a part of this team, for example, the unfortunate rich Young ruler Matthew 19: 16-30.
4. The material of the research will assist in youth retention in the church.

Goals and Objectives

Goals

The study has the followings goals:

1. To find out the causes why youth and young adults lose interest in coming to church.
2. To design a program with the church to integrate youth and young adults of ages between sixteen and thirty into Betel Seventh-day Adventist church for nurturing and involving them in evangelistic programs.
3. To get rid of spectator syndrome in the Betel Seventh-day Adventist church youth and young adults of between sixteen and thirty years of age's thereby retaining them in the church.

Objectives

The immediate outcomes are to:

1. Involve the in church youth related activities that would not only keep them occupied but to reach out to youth of their age for the building of the kingdom of God.

2. Increase membership at Betel Seventh-day Adventist church.

Definition of Terms

In this paper the following words are used as follows:

1. **Youth Retain** - keeping of the youth as active and members of the Betel church
2. **Spirit of Prophecy** – the writings of Ellen G. White believed by the Seventh-day Adventist church to be inspired
3. **Youth Involvement** – it denoted a steady participation in programs from an informed understanding and form free interpersonal communication.
4. **Youth Participation** – meant taking part in activities and programs out of love and graced by a sense of responsibility and accountability.
5. **Leadership**: a) Those who bear the office of leadership b) The act of leading

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter comprises the theoretical basis of the study by looking at the biblical record concerning youth and young adults. Both, Old and New Testaments have statements that reveal that youth and young adults were an integral part of any social grouping. Theoretical part also covers material drawn from Spirit of Prophecy and from literature written by Seventh-day Adventists and non-Adventists.

Included in what this chapter presents are ways in which youth were retained in Old Testament times' role of parents, teaching as a retention method, retention through schooling, through involvement, and various other models as are addressed below.

Ways of Retaining Youth in the Old Testament

The Role of Parents in Retaining Youth

In Exodus 10:9, when the Israelites were about to leave Egypt, Pharaoh asked Moses if they were going to leave their young behind. Moses answered that they were to take with them their sons and daughters. This verse reveals that the young were an integral part of the Exodus movement that headed for the Promised Land. Any social unit should cater and include its young adults. Upon settling in Canaan Joshua challenged the Israelites to be faithful to God. He testified that he was going to be faithful he himself and his whole household. In Josh 24:15: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in

whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.” This shows how vital it is that households worship the true God, so that the youth will follow the same trend in life. Joshua is an example of parents, who made a choice for their household. Such is needed today. However, it does not mean that the youth could not make their own decisions, because God wants everybody to be a free moral agent. According to Apostle Paul “those that are leaders in the cause of God must take special care that those under their charge, particularly those in their home (1 Tim 3:4), follow in the order of righteousness.”¹ The apostle took responsibility before God for those who were under his care. This shows us that leaders today should do the same. For example, one time the lack of transferring of values to the young coming generation led Israel to apostasy in Canaan. This was after Joshua had died, (Judges 2:10-12).

Teaching as a Retention Method

Deuteronomy 6:7 contains what parents were to do for their children every time in order to form character that God expected of them. This verse is important because it gives direction in terms of child care and guidance. It reads as follows, “impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when lie down and when you get up.” The parent should first put the word of God in their own hearts, love it, embrace it and then teach it to their children. Teaching here has a profound significance “to sharpen,”² in this case youth mind for God and His work. “This call, then, is for clear, incisive teaching. Parents

¹ “My House,” (Josh 24:15) *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976-1980), 2:296.

² To repeat, [Deut 6:7] *SDABC*, 1953-57. 1:1067.

have a weighty responsibility to instruct their children in matters of duty and destiny, day by day.”³ By doing this it is possible that the youth start very early to love God and to take stand for Him.

Another verse carrying a similar notion is Deuteronomy 11:19. This verse says “teach them to your children, talking about them you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

When the Israelites were about to cross the Jordan they were reminded about the law. For example Deuteronomy 31:13 tells us how the parent was to be regarded in terms of bringing up children in emphasizing that, “their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the Lord your God as long you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”

Proverbs 22:6 emphasises that “train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not return from it.” The above Bible texts show that the young were a concern of the home. Although there were no structures for the youth such as, A Y, Pathfinders, Ambassadors or Adventures and so on, active concern there, and was practical. The youth were not left to wander about on their own. The home and the community were concerned about them. Children did not learn life skills from “the street.” They were taught moral lessons and responsibility at home. They were taught the fear of the Lord; they were expected to learn and practise trade skills and even salvation histories. It was the responsibility of the adults to avail constructive instruction to the youth.

³ Receive the Kingdom, [Mk 10:17-21], *SDABC*, 5:458.

Adult Orientation as a Retention Method

When young people are left to get “street education” and advice from their peers, they make blunders that disturb the social fabric. The Old Testament has an example of blunder that king Rehoboam did. He consulted the young who ill advised him resulting in the division of the kingdom (I Kings 12:8). The needs the adults guidance they cannot just do it alone. Churches need to guide the youth.

Proverbs 7:7 alludes to the idea that young people need help from the adults if they are to judge intelligently. The verse says: “I saw among the simple, a young man who lacked judgement.” Many times young people lack mature judgement, they need the presence of concerned parents who care. Guidance from adults is essential in nurturing the youth.

Retention through Schooling

The Old Testament also shows that there was a School Education System, which was commonly referred to as school of the prophets (1 Samuel 10:5; 2 Kings 2:15; 2Kings 4:38). According to the Bible, the prophet Samuel started this school system. In Old Testament times, many youth were sent to these schools to obtain an education. Children and youth were kept occupied and were involved even in manual work. 2 Kings 6:1-6 is a relevant example as in the time of the prophet Elisha when one of the students lost his axe when it fell into the river. As a lesson to youth, Elisha performed a miracle and got it floating. These schools produced many graduates. It was not only the adults who were to be accountable for nurturing the youth but the youth also were to take responsibility of receiving such an education (1 Sam 10:5). They were given a chance to choose whether to obey or to disobey (Eccl12:14; Jer2:35); because God will bring everyone to judgement. Solomon put it well when he said “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before days of trouble come

and the years approach when you will say, ‘I find no pleasure in them.’ “Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all this things God will bring you to judgement” (Eccl 12:9).

There are numerous examples in Old Testament where young adults and youth were put in situations that demanded them to use the education they had received from both at home and at school. Our first example is that of a slave girl in 2 Kings 5:1-19. It seems that the girl learned about God at home with the parents and it must have been the lesson she learnt from home that made her testify of God when in foreign land family and the people of Syria. In Ester 4:14, there is another relevant example. Queen Esther, her knowledge of and trust in God was revealed when she called her friends to prayer. Such faith and trust in God saved Israel from execution. This shows that the young should be taught and be involved in salvific issues. Although these two girls mentioned above were far away from their homes, they continued to serve and to obey God. This means, been far from home should not necessarily mean to be far from God.

Another example is in Daniel 3:16-18 that of Daniel and his companions. They never needed the second chance that Nebuchadnezzar was offering them to worship his image. They said:

O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image, which thou hast set up.

The passage shows that Young people can stand for what is right once they are properly taught and involved in relevant activities. The home, the school and the church are some of the social agents to work for the young people. Although the

Babylonians young and old bowed before the image for the fear of being killed, the three young Hebrews did not bow to worship the image of Nebuchadnezzar. They did not give up their faith even when put under pressure. They had been taught God's commandments at home. One can only conclude that, after they were trained and taught to love God, they kept their faith as long as they lived. They are good examples of God fearing youth, and their experience is a good example of youth retention.

Retention through Involvement in the Old Testament

According to the Old Testament prophecy of the prophet Joel God will involve young people in the program in the last days.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. (Joel 2:28)

This means, young people in the church are to be involved in church activities as preparation for what is indicated in Joel's prophecy. There should be reconciliation between the adults and the young. In Malachi 4:5-6 we read that:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

From the two prophecies above, is a revelation that God spoke about His future program and the responsibility that the youth will be expected to carry. They will have visions that will enable them to guide the church. It is clear then that God made it plain that the youth have a vital role to play in doing His work on earth. According to scripture (Eccl 10:18; 11:6), God does not expect the youth to be idle with nothing to do in His work. The energies of the youth are to be channelled in the

right direction. This make it true that, if youth are not occupied, the devil will occupy them, or misdirect them.

We have another striking example of the youth being used by God. The call of Jeremiah is an example that reminds the church that the young people can be used by God. The conversation that went between Jeremiah and God is quite interesting. In Jeremiah 1:6-7, God could not accept the excuse that Jeremiah put forward saying, “Ah, Lord Jehovah! Behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child. But Jehovah said unto me, say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak.”

God empowered Jeremiah for the work appointed him. The same God can empower today’s youth to do their part in the proclamation of the Gospel in the garb of the three angel’s message. The youth need to be involved.

Retaining Youth in the New Testament

The New Testament has an ideal that young people were taught not only at home but also in church. Let us look at John 7:15 which says that Jews marvelled at the wisdom of Jesus Christ “...How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” In this verse the Jews were surprised that Christ was knowledgeable of the scriptures despite attending the schools of the rabbis. In the same verse is revealed the idea that rabbis taught in their schools. The church in Jesus’ time had the rabbis teaching the law called the torah from the first five books of the Bible. This means the church even during crises’ times had a program for youth.

Jesus' Model of Youth Retention

Discipling as a Retention Strategy

Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler Matt 19:16-30 reveals that Jesus Himself was interested in the youth. "That the young man came 'running' reflects youthful eagerness, and that 'knelt' indicate sincerity (Mark 10:17),"⁴ and Jesus knew it. By pointing him to the commandments Jesus wanted to show the young man how important love, care, and service for the neighbour were. The fact that Jesus invited him to come shows how much love Jesus had for young people. The positive or negative answer is up to this youth. Jesus asked the young ruler to go to sell then come to follow him. It is then clear that Jesus has space for young people if they could give up the pleasures and the riches of the world and then come and follow Him. The church may not do less. The young people are to be given chance to give up worldliness to serve Jesus.

Sending out as a Retention Strategy

The mandate to "go and make disciples of all the nations" in Matthew 28:18-20 includes young people. The instruction says "all." Youth are included in this great commission. Youth are to be incorporated in church programs. Among His disciples Jesus had called John the beloved, a young adult, showing that young people have a role to play.⁵

The Gospel of John, though the first of his writings was written long after the death of Christ and even after the other 3 accepted gospels (he pointedly avoids repeating what they already contain). The epistles are estimated to have

⁴ Ibid., 5:458.

⁵ Lisa Shea, "John the Youngest Disciple: The Last Supper," accessed 23 July 2009, <http://www.lisashea.com/hobbies/art/john.html>.

been written then, sometime around AD 92-93 which means a good 60 years had passed since Christ died and John (considering the life expectancy of that time) couldn't have been much older than 20-25 and some would argue he had to have been more like 15 or so to have lived to AD 93.”⁶

Matthew 28:18-20 clearly states,

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

All should be baptized and taught what Jesus said. In other words this commission challenges the youth too to become missionaries and to win other young people. Therefore the youth are not exempted from outreach programs.

Participation: Paul's Youth Retention Method

The apostle Paul is one of the people who showed that the young are to be taught, given work in the vineyard of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the beginning Paul was not a good example about on how to treat young people. A good example is the story of John Mark, Barnabas' cousin (Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:38; 2 Tim 4:11), who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey but turned back out of discouragement. Paul refused to accept him when John Mark wanted to joint them on the second missionary journey. Only Barnabas was committed to him by giving him a second chance. Later on Paul was committed to youth, as it will be seen with the young Timothy (Acts 16:1-5; 1 Tim 1:1, 2; 2 Tim 1:1, 2, 5). Paul's contemporaries, Peter, John and others had similar ideas about inclusiveness of youth in ministry. Below are some texts that confirm what Paul and other apostles recorded.

The apostle Paul was concerned about the young people. He reveals this in two verses that follow: 1 Timothy 4:12 says: “Let no man despise thy youth; but be

⁶ Ibid.

thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity.” In 1 Timothy 5:1, the apostle advises Timothy not to “Rebuke an elder, but exhort him as a father; the younger men as brethren.”

For Paul, this was in line with what he himself underwent. Paul sat at the feet of the great rabbi of his time Gamaliel the great teacher who produced learned students of whom Paul, known as Saul was one of them. Paul had included Timothy in the service he went to the extent of circumcising him so that he could be accepted into the Jews synagogues. Betel Seventh-day Adventist church in Angola should not do less today.

Advice from the Elders as a Retention Tool

The Bible refers to youth very often in various situations specifically. It talks about indoctrination from the adults to the youth when they are still young, so that when they get old do not forget what they have learned (Prov 22:6). The Bible also gives counsel about how the young people should respect the old (Eph 6:1-2). A promise is given to those who respect their parents. In 1 Peter 5:5 the apostle Peter says “Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisted the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” It is important to discover that the Bible is speaking here about interaction between the groups.

Encouragement as a Retention Tool

The apostle John has something for the youth. In 1 John 2; 14, he says “I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abided in you, and ye have overcome the evil one.” Both Peter and John have left us the above

records that show that the youth are to be part and parcel of the church activities that God has given to the church for the salvation of the humanity.

From the above Bible texts drawn from the Old and New Testament it is clear that the young are to be incorporated into the programs of today's church for their development and the church edification. What follows is what the young reformers did during that time.

The Reformers

The Young Martin Luther

The reformers changed the world church, as Wikipedia shows, when they were still young as they realized that many things in the church were not being done correctly. Among them are Young people like Martin Luther (1483-1546) who changed the course of the Western Civilization by initiating the Protestant Reformation. As a young priest and theology professor, he confronted indulgence salesmen with his ninety five Theses in 1517. Luther strongly disputed their claim that freedom from God's punishment of sin could be purchased with Money. His refusal to retract all of his writings at demand f Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms meeting in 1521 resulted in his excommunication by the Pope and condemnation as an outlaw by the emperor.⁷

The Wikipedia, free internet encyclopaedia says that as faithful young people to God "Luther and all the other reformers saw themselves as returning Christianity to its roots, they believed that they were setting clock back; in reality, their ideas

⁷ Richard Hooker, "Martin Luther," accessed January 2009, <http://richard-hooker.com/sites/worldcultures/Reform/Luther.htm>.

irreparably changed the world and pushed it kicking and screaming, not into some ideal past, but into modern era.”⁸ In a way, when given a chance, and properly oriented, young people can make a marked contribution to the church.

The Young Ulrich Zwingli

Then there are two other important reformers who stood for God’s truth when they were still young. Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and John Calvin (1509-1564). As a youth adult and believing in the Bible “Zwingli rose through the ranks of the Catholic church until he was appointed People’s Priest in 1519, the most powerful ecclesiastical position in the city. However, by 1519 he had bought into Luther’s reform program and began to steadily shift the city over to practices of the new Protest church.”⁹

The Young John Calvin

John Calvin (11509-1564) perhaps even more than Martin Luther, “created the patterns and thought that would dominate Western culture throughout the modern period. He was dedicated to the reform of the church and he got his chance to build a reformed church when the citizens of Geneva revolted against their rulers in the 1520.”¹⁰

The reformers had shaken the main church when they were still young and discovered the errors the church was making. They realized how far the church from God’s word, was and challenged it to come back to the truth. Some of their views

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Richard Hooker, “Ulrich Zwingli,” accessed January 2009.

¹⁰ Richard Hooker, “John Calvin,” accessed January 2009.

contributed much to the building a foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As will be seen in the next paragraph the Spirit of Prophecy had much to say regarding youth involvement in the church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Pioneers

Among those who founded the Seventh-day Adventist church were young people. Some of these emerged from the disappointment. This was a group who the second coming of Lord Jesus Christ in 1844, October 22, but He did not come. After the disappointment they began to study more and realized what was wrong about that hoped for event. As a result of that study they established the Seventh-day Adventist church 1863. Most of them who played a leading role were young people, who were consecrated to the Lord.

In *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia*, Lynette Frantzen confirms this as follows:

Many of the Adventist pioneers first began their work when they were teenagers. When the Seventh-day Adventist Church was newly formed, it was teenagers and young adults who held many leadership positions and helped to build up the church. Pioneers such as Ellen Harmon White, John Loughborough, J. N. Andrews, and Uriah Smith were teenagers and young adults when they began making an impact in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, many starting even before in the Advent movement started by William Miller.¹¹

Ellen Harmon (1827 –1915) was seventeen years old when she got her first vision. “From 1844 to 1863 White experienced between hundred to two hundred

¹¹ Lynette Frantzen, “Adventist Pioneers,” in *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, accessed January 2009, <http://www.en.wikipedia.org>.

visions, typically in public places and meeting halls. In later life, the visions occurred at home during the night.”¹²

John Norton Loughborough was an early Seventh-day Adventist minister. He first heard the present truth preached by J. N. Andrews in September 1852 at Rochester, New York, and was immediately convinced of the seventh-day Sabbath. He took a public position to keep the Sabbath in October 1852 and immediately began to proclaim his new belief.

Loughborough was involved in the Seventh-day Adventist movement from its early days, having been called to preach by Ellen White in 1852. He was ordained in 1854, and for several years conducted evangelistic work in Pennsylvania, New York State, and the Middle West. He pioneered the selling of Adventist literature in quantity when in 1854 he began selling it at 35 cents a packet at one of his tent meetings in Michigan. He worked for the church in New England, Michigan, Ohio, Great Britain, and California. As a result of a serious illness brought on by overwork (1865), he became deeply interested in health reform and wrote a book called *Hand Book of Health; or a Brief Treatise on Physiology and Hygiene* (1868).¹³

Uriah Smith (May 3, 1832 – March 6, 1903) was a Seventh-day Adventist author and editor who worked for the *Review and Herald* (now the *Adventist Review*) for fifty years. His book *Daniel and Revelation* became the classic text on Adventist end-time beliefs.

His family was Millerite Adventists so at the age of twelve he went through the 1844 disappointment. Around 1852, he became involved in the early Seventh-day Adventist Church and became a Sabbath keeping Adventist; then the next year he joined James and Ellen White in the publishing work in Rochester, New York. In 1853, he published his first contribution- a 35 000 word poem entitled “The Warning Voice of Time Prophecy.” Uriah became the editor of *Review* (now the *Adventist Review*) in 1855 at age 23 and served for almost 50 yrs as editor or editorial staff. He taught Bible at Battle Creek

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

College and also served as the secretary of General Conference when it started in 1963.¹⁴

The Review and Herald Publishing, 1905 quoted by Wikipedia states that he made the main contribution to Adventist theology when he wrote the commentary on the prophetic Biblical books of Daniel and the Revelation, but he also wrote extensively on conditional immortality and other topics. He advocated religious liberty, the abolition of slavery, and noncombatancy for Adventists.¹⁵

Ellen White's Writings

Ellen G. White attaches importance in the training of youth as a means of keeping them in the church and to prepare them for the work that God has for them. In one of her writings she points out that:

I have a deep interest in the youth, and I greatly desire to see them striving to perfect Christian characters, seeking by diligent study and earnest prayer to gain the training essential for acceptable service in the cause of God. I long to see them helping one another to reach a higher plane of Christian experience.¹⁶

Ellen White's desire had its fulfilment in 1879 when two young people came up with a youth program that aimed at winning the youth to Christ and keeping them in the church. The two were Luther Warren and Henry Fanner. Ellen White believed that if the young people were properly trained to do the work, they would be like a well-trained army that loses no battle. She asserts that "With such an army of workers, as our youth, properly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ White, *Message to Young People* (Nashville TN: Southern, 1930), 21.

and soon coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world.”¹⁷ When young people are well trained much work can be done.

Counselling as a Retention Tool

Ellen White’s books have space for counsel to the youth. Her counsel about youth ministry are found in books such as *Education, Counsel to Parents and Teachers, Message to Young People, Gospel Workers* and so on. In her counsel she emphasizes the relationship between parents and children. A positive relationship between the parents and the children nurtures and retains the youth in the church. The retention program should not just have them to go door to door or house to house, distributing literature or singing and doing all religious activities. They should participate in social activities. These could be street cleaning, gardening, planting, donating blood and so on.

When our young people grow up participating in social activities they develop social consciousness and may be tender and loving towards their fellow beings. Once they develop such nature they may be useful especially when there is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They would be of help in assisting both the infected and the affected, and other related programs.

Involvement as E. G. White Retention Strategy

The church then can make use of the young people in accomplishing the God given work of caring for the widows, orphans, the bereaved, and even those attached by the epidemic and pandemic that scourges our planet. Well trained youth constitute a powerful group. Ellen White notes that youth have a powerful influence when she

¹⁷ Ibid., 196.

asserts that “Preachers or layman advanced in years cannot have one half the influence upon young that the youth, devoted to God, can have upon their associates.”¹⁸ That is why Ellen White said that there are things that old people cannot do, it is too much for their age. She confirms also the power of the youth by saying: “carry light wherever you go; show that you have strength of purpose, that you are not a person of indecision, easily swayed by the persuasions of evil associates. Do not yield a ready assent to the suggestions of those who dishonour God, but rather seek to reform, reclaim, and rescue souls from the evil.”¹⁹

This is why God wants the youth in His work, and to face situations like this. Ellen White goes on to say, “Preachers, or layman advanced in years, cannot have one half of the influence upon the young that the youth, devoted to God, can have upon their associates.”²⁰

Youth are a powerful tool given by God for the accomplishment of His work. Ellen White does not hesitate to tell us that “the Church is languishing for the help of young men [and young women] who will bear a courageous testimony, who will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God’s people, and so increase the power of the church in the world.”²¹

¹⁸ Ibid., 204.

¹⁹ Ibid., 23.

²⁰ Ibid., 204.

²¹ Ibid., 25.

Interaction as a Retaining Strategy

Church should not fear to use the young people. They are not to add wrong things to the church's efforts in doing God's work. Ellen White's counsel about working with youth goes as far as how the leadership and those especially chosen to work moulding the character of the youth thus Ellen White commands the work by saying "He, who co-operates with the divine purpose in imparting to the youth knowledge of God, and molding the character into harmony with His, does a high and noble work."²² The youth would then grow spiritually, physically and mentally as did Jesus (Luke 2:52). Both, the young and the old need each other.

The young need the old people's experiences and the old people need the young people's strength. They complement each other. Ellen White declares that:

Let those older in experience watch over the younger ones; and when they see them tempted, take them aside, and pray with them and for them. The Lord would have us recognize the great sacrifice of Christ for us by showing an interest in salvation of those He came to save. If the youth will seek Christ, He will make their effort effectual.²³

Commitment as a Retaining Strategy

On the education commitment to church and practices in courtship Ellen White has important counsel that both, the church and the youth may rewardingly make use of.

On education she asserts that God wants the youth to become men of earnest mind, to be prepared for action in His noble work, and fitted to bear responsibilities. "God calls for young men with hearts uncorrupted, strong and brave, and determined

²² White, *Education*, 19.

²³ White, *Messages to Young People*, 18.

to fight manfully in the struggle before them, that they may glorify God, and bless humanity.”²⁴

On commitment to the Lord’s work she points out that the youth should not hesitate to work for the Lord because they think they can do but little. They should do little with fidelity; for God will work with their efforts. He will write their name in the book of life as one worthy to enter into the joy of the Lord. “Let us earnestly entreat the Lord that labourers may be raised up, for the field are white to the harvest; the harvest is great, and the labourers are few”²⁵ she further persuades the youth to be committed by emphasizing that:

I entreat of you, careless, reckless youth of today, be converted, and become labourers with God. Let it be the study of your life to bless and to save others. If you seek help from God, His power working in you will bring to naught all opposing powers, and you will become sanctified through the truth. Sin is alarmingly prevalent among the youth of today, but let it be your purpose to do what you can to rescue souls from the power of Satan.²⁶

On courtship she admonishes the youth as she points out that “the habit of sitting late at night is customary, but it is not pleasing to God, even if you are both Christians. These untimely hours injure health, unfit the mind for the next day’s duties, and have an appearance of evil.”²⁷

The advices given above cover all areas that would produce positive character in the youth today and result in them being retain in the church. Since the youth are valuable, as Ellen White has explained, the current church cannot do otherwise. The

²⁴ Ibid., 21.

²⁵ Ibid., 23.

²⁶ Ibid.,22-23.

²⁷ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 44.

ideas presented above, if taken seriously, taught and practiced would retain our youth in the church.

From what Ellen White, the Bible, both, the Old and the New Testament we see how the youth and the old people were able to represent their God faithfully, for, they were taught and nurtured accordingly. Today's youth may attain to such if taught, resulting in them forming churches like of Joseph, David, Samuel, and Moses.

It is in this context then that the Betel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Angola should consider a program for the youth if it has to produce Samuels, Josephs, Daniels, Timothy's of today. Such will be representatives of the current church and be retained in the church. Ellen White summed it all up saying "We should educate the youth to help the youth; and as they seek to do this work they will gain an experience that will qualify them to become consecrated workers in a large sphere."²⁸

It is good to look at the pioneers of the Adventist Youth Ministry.

Adventist Youth Pioneers

Most of the Adventist Youth pioneers were driven by the wish to evangelize their own friends and peers in and outside the church, to let them know about the soon coming of Jesus. The meetings that they had were not for entertainment. They were looking for meaning in the church. They wanted to be God's servant and friends to man.' They were led by the Holy Spirit in such a way that the only thing that they thought of was to give themselves to God and let God do what He wanted them to do. They wanted to continue to do what other youth in Old and New Testament did told about Jesus first and second coming.

²⁸ Ibid., 115.

Cindy Tutsch points out that “Although primary source material is limited, historical consensus gives the teenagers Luther Warren (14) and Henry Fenner (17) the honour of originating the first Adventist Young people’s society in 1879, conceived from the desire their young friends experience spiritual birth or revival.”²⁹

Involvement as a Pioneers Retention Method

Their primary purpose was *salvation* and *service*. The aim of forming College View (US) was for salvation and service too. Cindy Tutsch explains that “the College View Group met for the purpose of securing increased spirituality in the young people and enlisting the in missionary activity. The dual focus of the young Women’s Dorcas Society was outreach to the poor and the marginalized, along with seeking the Lord in prayer.”³⁰

Outreach groups called Sunshine Bands were formed for the same purpose, salvation and service. Cindy Tutsch continues to explain that; “the purpose [of sunshine bands] was to direct young people in missionary work.”³¹

The youth societies were growing all over the world but “from the first they were characterized by careful observance of parliamentary procedure and evangelistic fervency, including the expectation that all faithful members of the youth societies would sign temperance and mission pledges.”³²

²⁹ Cindy Tutsch, SDA General Conference Youth Ministry, “Our Beginnings,” accessed 19 January 2009, <http://www.gcyouthministry.org>.

³⁰ Ibid., 4.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 6.

Recognition and Integration as a Retention Method

When societies, as indicated above continued to do well, many people were reached. The General Conference in 1907 in Switzerland voted to for a properly structured youth department. The action reads –

“Resolved, that, in order that this work may be properly developed, and thus an army of workers be properly trained for service, a special department, with the necessary officers, be created, the same to be known as the Young People’s Department of the General Conference.”³³

The action taken by the General Conference reveals that a good work was going on by and through the young people. The young people were happy about the action that was taken. This was the moment that they were waiting for. One of the youth at the time, Luther Warren commending on this issue said: “I have expected that the time would come when our leading brethren would lay aside other burdens and responsibilities and give special time to study of this work for our young people.”³⁴

Leadership Training as a Retaining Strategy

Elder M. E. Kern, one of the first General Conference Youth Departmental directors said that the work was new, and they had to train young people in the field. It seems that the question of training leadership was one of the greatest questions confronting them at that time in all departments, and especially in the Missionary Volunteer Department.³⁵

³³ Ibid., 10.

³⁴ Ibid., 12.

³⁵ Ibid., 25.

Many changes in politics and social world took place in Western society and it affected the church too, even though some people continued to support the youth department ministry by offer the young people opportunities to grow spiritually. God worked for the youth trough such leaders. It was important to train young people to face the changes to come. According to Tutsch, Missionary Volunteer and Junior Missionary Volunteer were provided positive nourishment for the youth, for their devotional growth, educational enrichment, outreach opportunities and fellowship.³⁶

Despite what Tutsch said, the natural changes impacted the church upon the programming of the youth ministry. The ministry could not be spared by what was taking place, thus Cindy points out that:

According to Tutsch, Major changes began to take place in Western society during the late fifties and early sixties. These changes were, quite naturally, reflected within the church as well. Materialism and its demand on a person's time spent at work; role changes with mothers entering the work force in ever increasing numbers; changes in understanding of vocation and use of free time; all impacted the church membership sometimes positively but most often negatively. These changes were soon reflected in the time available for dedication to the various activities of the M.V. Societies. The programming was there for whoever wished to avail themselves of it. The structural concept of societies being composed of specialized small groups of youth who enjoyed specific types of outreach activities and other unifying interest was still there.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid., 57.

³⁷ Ibid., 57.

The Response of the Youth as Challenge for Today's Church

Cindy Tutsch notes that most of the founding members of the church were young people. She pointed out that after the 1844 disappointment, as the church was coming up to find out what had really happened, a number of young people were called up by God. Ellen G. White, who was Ellen Harmon was as young person in her teens while both Uriah and Anne Smith were in their early twenties. James White himself was in his early twenties too. This shows that young people can do Lord's work if properly guided.

Denominational and Contemporary Information

Let us begin by looking at what the General Conference Adventist church Youth Mission Statement says. The statement was formed in recognition of the great work that is to be done for and by young people. It has this as its content:

The mission statement of the General Conference was also adopted through our division says: "The primary focus of Youth Ministry is the salvation of the youth through Jesus Christ. We understand the youth ministry to be that work of the church that is conducted for, with and by young people."³⁸

The task is to lead to understand their individual worth and to discover their spiritual gifts and abilities and to integrate them into the church life. The accomplishment of the task was to be done through the Biblical dynamics of fellowship nurture, worship and mission.³⁹

The focus is *salvation* and *service* for the youth. The programs are for the youth by the youth, and for the empowerment and retention of the youth. If the church maintains such direction many young people may be retained in the church. Trudy J. Morgan-Cole states that "As we look at the role of the young people in the Bible; it's that young were never intended to be spectators, sitting on the sidelines while adults do God's work. From Naaman's slave girl

³⁸ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Pastor's & Elders Handbook for Youth Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2002), 11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

to Samuel, from the boy Jesus in the temple to the youth Timothy working beside Paul, young people and even children were a part of God's plan.⁴⁰

Contemporary Retention Ways

One point to note is "Let's talk" General Conference President Jan Paulsen of the Seventh-day Adventist church (2005-2010) attempt to retain youth in the church.

The president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church recognizing the need of keeping the youth in the church, and that there are many questions that are not answered because of the complexity of it, he takes time to listen to youth concerns and talk to them, showing them that they belong to the same family of God.

American Baptist Church Retention Method

Music as a Retaining Tool

A survey was conducted by American Baptist Church Mission Centre Online and their report has this to contribute: "Based on responses of more than 4,200 young people and adults, the survey found that those aged 5 to 13 have a 32 percent probability of accepting Christ, those aged 14 to 18 only have a four percent likelihood of doing so, and those of 19 and older only 6 percent. The findings confirm earlier surveys which established that a large majority of Christians accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour before age 18."⁴¹

George Barna, the research firm's president, said that ongoing data has consistently shown that between the ages of 18 and 24 we lose a very large percentage of young people who had been regulars at church. He adds "Recognizing the phases of faith maturity that kids go through and developing the content of our ministry to kids in light of those stages might improve the

⁴⁰ Trudy J. Morgan-Cole, *Getting it Right* (Review and Herald, Publishing Association, 2005), 145.

⁴¹ Goerge Barna, "Baptist Church Mission Center Online," accessed January 2009, <http://www.abc-usa.org>.

ability of churches to retain young people, rather than have to win them back once they enter parenthood.⁴²

From what has been said above by George Barna, there is evidence that youth can accept Christ at the ages described there by retaining them in the church. The American Baptist Church uses music to keep the youth in the church. Music is a powerful way of winning and retaining young people. Music changes people and keeps them fired up. The Betel church can do the same. It is important to note that the stuff taught should not be childish as we have it from the American Baptist church that “I think for us was more important that the youth decided that they were too old for things like secondary School, but didn’t really understand what was happening in the main service.”⁴³ They just left, for irrelevance. One gives the reasons why they are losing the youth. They simply wanted a break from the church, or they left for college or had work responsibilities, others do not feel connected to the people there, they disagreed with the church’s stance on political or social issues, or they decided to spend more time with friends outside the church.

According to George Barna the youth here left because of childish programs and irrelevant matters. When the content is irrelevant the youth leave the church just to break the boredom and connect with friends out there for they would feel unconnected with people in the church. This should be avoided.

Community Building as Retention Strategy

The young people should be catered for even, when they are at college or at university. The local church can follow them up by constant contact. Technology has

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

made this work far easier. The communication department or church clerk, or whoever may be tasked, should have constant contact with those at college or university by email or send messages monthly. This may retain them. Benjamin L. Corey has this to share in tackling the drop out challenge of the young people. Let us follow what Benjamin L. Corey says, “This is one of those reasons where it can serve as a reason why people come to church in the first place, and also becomes a reason why they leave— people want community... This should be a central goal of churches— building community.”⁴⁴ For that he gave the reasons: “When people can’t find community, can’t plug-in or access meaningful relationships, they split in hopes they’ll find it somewhere else.”⁴⁵ This reason shows that church was not needs to build community otherwise they depart. It means that you have got to build a sense of community in your church to keep them in. If you don’t have a sense of community, people won’t feel connected and won’t be part of the process.⁴⁶ Young people like to have this live giving experience. The church does not have to sacrifice what it stands for by lowering the standards. The statement from *Our Beginnings* by Cindy Tutsch states that:

With the fear of losing the youth of the church, some church will be tempted to introduce into the Youth Ministry entertaining approaches to hold youth in the church and not rock the boat too much. This fear will create dangerous inroads into the Youth Ministry that this church has enjoyed in the last 100 years. In the future Youth Ministry must not be seen as an entertaining ministry or babysitting. Youth Ministry in the future should continue to challenge youth to be like Jesus.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Benjamin L. Corey, “10 Reasons Why People Leave Chhurch,” accessed 6 October 2014, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/formerlyfundie>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Tutsch.

Building as stated above is very important. Once this is done the youth will feel part and parcel of the church. Their self-worth and the sense of belonging will be nurtured. It would not help if the church fed and clothed the youth but let the higher needs of humanity according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs unmet. The needs of belonging and self-worth including that of self-actualization are to be met too.

Conclusion

In conclusion of literature study, a look at the differences between what the Adventist Youth society did during the days of the pioneer and what current Adventist youth societies are doing as put forth by Adventist General Conference home page. In the early years of Adventism, youth work was often initiated by youth for the purpose of sharing Christ with their friends, first in their own communities and extending on to the world. The societies' emphasis on personal revival, combined with regular missionary activity buoyed the members, providing a strong sense of purpose, structure, and community.

Today's youth programs and ministries are usually adult-initiated and administered. Although there is still an underlying aim of evangelism, that focus is usually centred on evangelizing the youth of the church, rather than for the conversion of non-Adventist youth. In addition, the methodology of achieving the salvation of Adventist youth is more entertainment oriented than it is organizing with a purpose of providing opportunities for to sustained, systematic evangelism.⁴⁸

The church should avoid adult-oriented activities. The statement continues to say that youth societies in the early Adventist sprang up as youth-initiated and youth-

⁴⁸ Ibid., 115.

managed organizations in response to Christ's clear mandate to evangelize the world. (Matt 28:18-20). Although the response to the call to witness and save souls was strengthened, perhaps awakened, by adults in Adventist congregations who share this passion for the lost and by Ellen White's messages on youth organization, early Adventist Societies were largely the outgrowth of youth commitment.⁴⁹

The same situation is happening in Betel Seventh-day Adventist church in Angola where adults are taking over the youth department, and it does not help the retaining of youth in the church. The retention of the young people is an important issue. The Betel Seventh-day Adventist church has to have programs that are alive, youth oriented, and youth involving. This will retain them.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING

In this chapter is described the local setting. The description includes the steps the study carried out. The population, the social demographics and a brief history of AY in Angola and administration of the questionnaires (see appendix 2) and interview are also reflected in this same chapter. Included in this chapter is how data was collected and analysed. This includes strength, weakness, opportunities and threats are included in this chapter too.

Location of Betel Church

Betel Seventh-day Adventist church is located in the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division territory of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church organization. It is in the central field of Angola Union Mission, which, politically, is in Huambo province. The Angola Union and the central field are situated there. Another feature of interest in the location is the Theological Seminary (Faculty) of Angola in Huambo province where the church is found. Angola is in the SADC region.

Social Demographics

Origin of the People

Betel Seventh-day Adventist church is situated at the trade centre of the city of Huambo. It was organized in 1995 after being a company of Huambo Central church. It is one of the churches out of twenty that were administered by one pastor, who

pastored five districts. Often times the pastor could not render the assistance the church needed, because of the vast territory he had to cover. However, in the past five years the church has been assigned its own pastor. Despite that, the church has the majority of its members as young people, as is the case with all the churches in Angola.

Socio-Economic Status

The majority of the members of the church are self-employed. They have shops, green vegetables markets, flea markets among other sources of employment. Others are employed by the city council as secretaries and workers of the botanical gardens of the city. Some have relatives working in neighbouring Namibia and South Africa. These were spared by God from the civil war that raged twenty seven years in the country. At the moment of this study their physiological needs were well met. The government is also appealing to those outside the country to come back home.

Education

The civil war disrupted the education of the children, but now young people are beginning to go to school. Some are doing well while others in the age group concerned feel that they are grown up and cannot go back to school. The parents got education during the colonial era but between 1975 and 2002 the educational system was disrupted by the civil war, only a few received schooling.

Target Population

During the time of this study the church had a membership of four hundred forty seven, while Sabbath school members totalled nine hundred twenty eight. The age group of between sixteen to thirty years old numbered three hundred thirteen from which fifty of them form the sample that the researcher worked with.

Research Methodology

In March 2008 the researcher met the field secretary of the Association as per the appointment the intention was to show what he wants to do, (see the letter Appendix 1) further the researcher asked him for the possibility of the executive committee to allow him to work with the church on such project. He was very happy about that and helped to ensure that the executive committee of Association authorized the project in their next meeting which was scheduled for the 21st April of 2008. The following day the researcher met the church pastor as per the appointment. The pastor was happy by the request and said he would wait to hear from the field. The pastor and the researcher waited for the authorization from the central field. On the 24st April 2008 the pastor and the researcher got the letters authorizing them to execute the study.

The first meeting was with the local leadership of the church on the 30st of April who later met with their church board on the same day as was arranged. Both meetings were successful. The next meeting with the researcher was on Sunday the 5st of May with the church members. They promised to support the project by whatever means they had, including attending meetings and the preaching that were to be scheduled.

The young people of this church were very much excited because they saw the study as a unique opportunity to participate and get all the learning that they had always wanted. They were also thrilled by the fact that they would work directly with the researcher since he was the Union Youth Director. They were ready to participate in the exercise. Both, youth and researcher were surprised by the hearty welcome and acceptance received. The warm climate that received gave the researcher courage to prepare thoroughly for the project.

The researcher then met the youth on Sabbath afternoon in the forest of May 2008 years of what was to be done and to do sampling. There was a large gathering that was encouraging. The researcher explained his intentions and the allowed the youth to contribute constructively. In Angola young people are not allowed to freely to contribute to discussions where there are adults. So, the young people were thrilled to have this opportunity especially to meet with the researcher coming from the Union office, their headquarters.

The meeting came up with fifty young people from age sixteen to thirty age group through random sampling. Most of those who were selected volunteered to be in the group that was to be involved in the next few months. All were satisfied with the way the sampling was done. The local church youth director, the elder in charge of the youth and the sponsor were present and were happy about the proceedings. The next step is to look briefly at the youth ministry in Angola.

Adventist Youth in Angola

Youth ministry in Angola started in a humble way and faced many difficulties until it reached the point where we are now. There is need to thank those who always trusted the youth. There is not many records about how it started in Angola Union Mission, and who was responsible for the very first time, even to the time when the youth ministry belonged to Church Ministries. It means that youth ministry grew up as the church was growing as well. All the students who came to Bongo to be train as pastors took Adventist Youth classes (including Pathfinder classes) so that when they were deployed to the field, accommodated the youth in the churches they pastored.

Those who were more skilled for the youth succeeded in that area. The opposite was true for those who were not trained as well. Thus the youth ministry philosophy, Missionary Volunteer entered in Angola and spread all over the country.

At the very beginning it was just one group, Adventist Youth, there was no distinction between the ages, it accommodated everyone. Part of the pathfinder classes they had, did much missionary work, to win other young people to Christ. The older ones did the work with the younger ones gave support to them.

The youth directors in the local churches were not knowledgeable in the role of youth department. They were not chosen because of their skills to deal with the youth, but were chosen just because they were good people in the church. After they were chosen no one was there to give them some orientation on how to do the new job for which they were chosen. Only those who lived in the places where the youth department was functional could imitate what they saw, otherwise empirical work was done. They wanted to work, but there was no orientation or training. Even pastors who were elected to a departmental director had little information on how the youth ministry works. They just knew about pathfinder classes and it was all that they could do for the church.

There was a challenge on how to get uniform and other materials such as youth ministry, so that they could learn. Those leaders and youth who were more inquisitive were the ones who had more information and material. They could run their youth groups well. The researcher was told by pastor Herculano Jose, a former Union Youth Departmental Director (1991-1995), that things about uniform, were so bad that he himself thought to create a uniform for the youth to identify the Adventist youth army. They took them together as one group. In 1993 they started to form classes in the youth ministry at three levels, Adventures (6-9), Pathfinders (10-15), and seniors (16-35), but the uniform was the same for all classes. The seniors took over the whole youth ministry, but not taking care of the younger ones. They attended

the pathfinder classes designed and made it difficult for the real pathfinders and adventures to have their own program.

Pastor John Grass, the former Euro-Africa division youth departmental director contributed much in organizing the youth department in Angola. He empowered youth leaders by given seminars in the different fields of our Union. Pastor Figols is another Euro-Africa youth director who helped the youth department in Angola to grow.

It was very difficult to reach the position of master guide because the pathfinders had to have some years to improve their leadership skills. So, leadership became a position that everyone wanted to reach, though they did not accomplish that what they were trained for.

The leaders were empowered to lead the pathfinders, but the intended goals were not fulfilled in most of the cases. It might be related to Angolan mind set of “Chieftdom.” Each one wanted to be called a chief even failing to do what they were chosen for. The leadership was an end on itself. There were few leaders who made a difference where they did their job, and until today their names are still remembered for the good time.

As the church was growing and the youth ministry was growing the fields happened to have youth departmental directors in order to promote the Adventist youth philosophy in their particular areas. The field began to have youth congresses especially in the north field when there were many camporees. The youth began to feel as part of the church and were well attended to because they realized that the church was concerned about their life.

The organization of the first pathfinders club goes back to the coming of one Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) worker form Brazil, Adriano

Aureliano 1993-1996. As master guide in Brazil, he wanted to spread the idea of youth ministry in the true sense of the word; he started to lead seminars for leadership to those who were interested in it and had already formed pathfinder classes. They were not in the normal pathfinder ages.

Many of them were thirty years of age and above. So, they manipulated everything, in order to safeguard their positions. Adriano travelled all over Angola to train Master Guides and to show the philosophy of clubs wherever he went to.

The first pathfinder club in Angola was Palanca Negra, from Luanda Central Church, formed 1993. It is the most well-known club in Angola. After that, many other clubs were formed but they did not continue to follow the rules of how clubs should run. The Angolans still remember the good times they lived together with the master guide Adriano.

Following is a look at how the project was actually implemented, although it shall be preceded by an analysis the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that existed.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The youth program of the Adventist church forms one of the strengths that the group had, in addition to the existence of all other departments in the church. Although the new pastor is a lecturer of the Theological Seminary, he has space and time for the youth and he supports them very much. The officers in charge of the youth in 2008 were quite supportive. The parents, after talking to them, were supportive too and were willing allow their children to participate in the activities. They even wished their children to receive Adventist education.

Weaknesses

That young people were not allowed, by the church leadership, to freely contribute among the adults was a practice that impacted upon the youth seriously; they would not share how they could contribute meaningfully. The cultural practice was to be overcome. Another weakness is that found among the most of the youth today. Ellen White summed it all well by this admonition, “I entreat you careless, reckless youth if today, be converted, and become labourers together with God. Let it be the study of your life to bless and save others. If you seek help from God, His power working in you will bring to naught all opposing powers, and you will become sanctified through the truth. Sin is alarmingly prevalent among the youth of today, but let it be your purpose to do what you can to rescue souls from the power of Satan.”¹ Generally youth are no longer afraid of sinning publicly. They can do evil openly. Perhaps this is why adults in Angola have a practice of not allowing the youth to contribute in their gatherings because of what they do. There is generally no respect for adults although God said that children should respect their parents. This is the commandment with a promise Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:1. The youth should not be let on their own, they should be advised as Ellen White admonished.

Opportunities

The call to the youth to give themselves to Jesus and to the work is valuable opportunity that ensures that the youth do what God wants them to do. Ellen White reminds the youth that they should not “hesitate to work for the Lord because you think you can do but little. Do your little with fidelity; for God will work with your effort. He will write your name in the book of life as one worthy to enter to the joy of

¹ White, *Message to Young People*, 22-23.

the Lord. Let us earnestly entreat the Lord that labourers may be raised up, for the fields are white to harvest; the harvest is great, and the labourers are few.”²

The second opportunity was the implementation of the project, which would be a model to other churches in Huambo Province and the whole Angola. It would change the adult’s perspective to the youth programs and would meet the young people’s sense of belonging.

Threats

The greatest threat is that of general attitude towards the young people. Church leadership sees current young people as very irresponsible. They are not trusted. This should not be the case. They have to develop leaders from and among the young people. Today’s youth are tomorrow’s leaders. Young people can be a blessing when they thoroughly taught and trained. Ellen White points out that “God wants the youth to become men of earnest mind, to be prepared for action in His noble work, and fitted to bear responsibilities. God calls for young men with hearts uncorrupted, strong and brave, and determined to fight manfully in the struggle before them, that they may glorify God, and bless humanity.”³

Data Presentation

The tables below show survey results. The first part represents the doctrines. The middle part represents the percentage of those who were agreeable while the last part represents the percentage of those who were not agreeable.

Table 1 has the results from question one on doctrines. It is showing the doctrine of the Sabbath, ninety seven percent were agreeable while tree percent were

² Ibid., 23.

³ Ibid., 21.

not agreeable. On the Second Advent of Christ, ninety seven percent were agreeable while tree percent were not. Sixty seven percent accepted the doctrine of the state of the dead while thirty tree percent did not. About the Spirit of Prophecy, as inspired writings eighty six percent believed while fourteen percent not believe.

Table 1. Adventist Doctrines

Doctrine	Yes	Not
Sabbath	97%	3%
Second Advent	97%	3%
State of dead	67%	33%
SOP	84%	16%

The findings reveal that the youth appeared to be well informed and well versed with doctrines that are pillars of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Question 2 sought to discover the life style of the youth concerned. Table 2 shows, ninety five percent of youth said drug taking was bad while fife percent of them thought that taking drugs was harmless. In relation to sexual abstinence before marriage seventy four percent said abstinence before marriage was right while twenty six percent thought that there was nothing wrong in indulging in sex. In relating to rock music, ninety one percent said that that kind of music was not good for them as Christian while nine percent thought it was harmless. From the above results we note that the youth are for Adventist lifestyle.

Table 2. Adventist Lifestyle

Item	Agree	Disagree
Drugs	95%	5%
Sex before Marriage	74%	26%
Rock Music	91%	9%

Question 3 sought to find out how the youth are involved in church activities, between those who agree that they are involved and those say they are not involved.

Only twenty four percent were involved while seventy-six percent were not involved in church related activities; although the youth formed seventy percent of the whole church. The results revealed that the greater percent of the youth were not involved hence discontent and unhappy, as they become spectators.

1. Church environment. This question sought to discover how sound the relationship between the youth and adults was.

Forty six percent were happy about the church environment and social climate while fifty four percent were not happy about both the church and social environment and social climate.

The results implied that the environment and the social climate were to be improved. Adult and youth relationship were to be positive.

2. Church Programs. The fifth question sought to discover if they were content with the programs led in the church.

Twenty percent found the programs organised for them by the church quite adequate and catering for their needs while fifty nine percent were not pleased with the programs. They thought that the young people were left out and not considered adequately. Twenty-one did not respond.

The results suggested that the programs were to improve to include the majority of the young people. For other results see Appendix C.

Summary of the Findings

From the above findings it appeared that the young people were agreeable to the main doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as organization. They

thought the Sabbath was the right day of worship as given by God. The young people were positive about the Second Advent of Christ. They believed it was at hand and that they were to take this message to the whole world as the church is doing. The majority of the youth had correct views about the state of the dead and ancestral worship. They knew what magic, sorcery, witchcraft and mystical powers are and they believed that the dead are really unconscious of what happens among the living and were not afraid of the mystical powers. The young people accepted the church's teachings on the Spirit of Prophecy and that Ellen White was inspired.

On the life style of the church as measured using drugs such as alcohol, tobacco and their kind the youth accepted the church's teachings. In terms of chastity the youth highly regarded the teaching as fitting for the young people. They were against rock music adopted by the present majority of the church.

On participation in church activities, the results showed that the youth were not involved resulting in discontentment and in the spectator syndrome that existed. This revealed by the fact that seventy six percent were not directly involved in the church work while only twenty four percent were directly involved as teachers of Sabbath School, secretaries and one elder. Forty six percent were happy with the church climate while fifty four percent thought relationship were not conducive to Christian character development.

On the programs for the fifty nine percent said that they were not catered for twenty percent said that they were satisfied and the remaining twenty one percent said they were not sure. At the end of the project twenty-two young people were baptized.

From the above finding there was need for a program to include the youth in a larger scale in Betel Seventh-day church. The program was to ensure the majority of the youth were to participate meaningfully, as the General Conference statement

affirms: “We understand youth ministry to be the work of the church that conducted for, with, and by young people.”⁴ For the questionnaires and results see Appendix 2. (The program was as shown in chapter four.)

⁴ General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist, *Pastor’s & Elders Handbook for Youth Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist, 2002), 11.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter deals with the programs that were designed to meet the needs of Betel Seventh-day Adventist church youth including. These included empowerment of the youth leadership to deal with the task. The researcher looked also at some Bible examples of people who already dealt with this issue and what solutions they had. Some questions were asked so that there was understanding in depth of the general and specific situations.

Program Design

In giving the youth responsibility they could come closer to God and become His efficient servants. God wants the enthusiasm of the youth in order to accomplish His mission.

The main thought is salvation and service because they have been saved to save others. It was in this sense that the youth ministry was incorporated in the Seventh-day Adventist church Organization.

Brief Description

The target group was the youth of Betel Seventh-day Adventist church. It is an interesting group full of enthusiasm and potential that can be used for their retention, to revitalize the church and increase the membership. Because of the lack of empowering programs and confidence in the youth, they are usually left out and many leave the church and others do not attend the main service in Betel Seventh-day Adventist church. The lack of space compounds the problem.

Betel Seventh-day Adventist church has four hundred forty seven baptized members. The Sabbath School has nine hundred twenty eight members. Among them are two hundred thirty young people between sixteen and thirty years of age. Though the statistic does not have control of them, only now seventy-eight are listed in the club and are working with the church. The start was working with fifty and just after a year there were seventy-eight young people in the club, forty one of whom are baptized, seventy six are now somehow engaged in the church activities, like in the youth choir and fourteen of them have leadership roles in the church. The twenty percent who were satisfied with the programs that the church offered has increased now to ninety one percent while fifty nine percent that were not satisfied has been reduced to nine percent. The result was twenty-two baptized youth and a seventy one percent gain.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to design a program that the Betel church was to use to interact with its youth in order to develop them spiritually and retain them in the church.

The study purposed to develop a program to integrate the youth of ages sixteen to thirty and then involve them into the church's activities in order to retain them in the church and reduce their rate of leaving the church.

Goals

1. To design a program to integrate the youth of ages between sixteen and thirty into Betel church' nurturing and evangelistic programs. See appendix 3.
2. To get rid of Betel church youths of between sixteen and thirty years of age's spectator syndrome thereby retaining in the church.

3. To challenge Betel Seventh-day Adventist church to improve their acceptance of youth for more interaction and that the Betel Seventh-day Adventist youth to respond positively.

4. To empower the church leadership, to assist the youth through seminars.

See Appendix 3.

Expected Outcomes

1. Lively programs

2. Increase the number of the youth participating in the programs and in church attendance.

3. Give responsibility to the youth including all other departments.

4. The youth should be content with the church environment and programs that are led there.

Outputs

1. Renew the youth program in order to give more meaning and quality through the youth programs. The adults claim that the youth programs were not meaningful because they just wanted to sing all the time. The program should meet all the youth's needs. However they should meet Jesus in each youth program that the church should run. The youth should not be merely entertained by the programs.

2. Renew other departmental programs giving more attention to quality and involving more youth to improve in attendance. The youth claimed that the programs that the programs run by adults were boring. To keep some programs lively there was need to involve the youth in the department's activities so that the youth would give some suggestion to enliven the programs.

3. To create a collaborate program whereby youth and adults work together to improve both sides so that the youth could not be isolated from the church's activities. It was not only important that they have their own programs but that they should work together with the whole church. They were to be involved in the entire church programs. They would own the programs.

Activities

1. Assist the leadership to continue to run the program. Although the youth department director was of old age the Betel Seventh-day Adventist youth liked to work with him. He was chosen to continue to run the youth programs, with the elder in charge of youth and the youth staff.
2. To elaborate on programs order.
3. The pastor or church leadership was to train and supervise.
4. Quarterly programs setting
5. Have material for the programs.

The above activities were an integral part of the program implementation, according to the purpose, goals and objectives.

Program Implementation

The duration of the program in Betel Seventh-day Adventist church was 06 months, running from June 2008 to November 2008. The strategic plan is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Strategic Plan

Objectives	Subject	Action's Description	Action Performer	Action Period
To put principles for healthy courtship, and how to plan for the future together	Courtship	Visit the church to plan with the youth department about the project Debates on Doctrines Evangelism Debates on Doctrines	AY Leaders and Youth and church members	June 2008
To identify the danger of premarital sex and the responsibility to the opposite sex and the advantage of faithfulness, and not stigmatizing those who are infected	HIV/AIDS	Visiting the young people at home Debates on Doctrines Debates on Doctrines Leadership Seminar	AY Leadership and Youth and church members	July 2008
To build uncoached a relationship with God by the example of Joseph and to take advantage to have independent faith To take care of what they watch	Mystical Powers Pornography	Blood donation Debates on Doctrines Training for the Leadership Debates on life style Leadership Seminar	AY of Betel and Leadership and Church Members	August 2008
To identify major causes of using drugs (school's met, girl or boy friend), and develop defence system against it and to discover that there is a better solution for any problem, JESUS	Drugs	Street cleaning Debates on Doctrines Camporee Leadership Workshop	Leadership and Youth and Church Members	Sept 2008
To describe the 2300 Prophetic Days and evenings and the end of time	2300 Prophetic Days	Debates on Doctrines	Youth and Church Members and Leadership	October 2008
To make sound use of the good tools that we find in internet and avoid the bad part of it	Internet	End of AY classes Leadership Seminar		
To build an uncoached relationship with God by the example of Daniel and his friends in Babylon and take advantage to have a independent faith	Growing in Christ	Evangelism Exams and Investiture Debates on doctrines Leadership Seminar	AY and church members and Leadership	Nov 2008

Pilot Programs

The main program was composed of three sub programs: stewardship, life style and HIV/AIDS sections conducted on Sabbath afternoons and the two programs, blood donation and door to door witnessing conducted on Sunday morning. The sessions were about one hour ten minutes each. Many youth were participating actively, singing, coordinating and praying. The sub programs were to ensure that many youth were involved. Below are the programs.

Sub Program 1

Stewardship

Program theme:

The 4Ts, Introduction to Stewardship

- a) Talents
- b) Treasure
- c) Time
- d) Temple

At the end of the program the youth were to discover what God had given them and how they were to apply it in the church. The structure of the program was as follows:

Item	Duration
Worship time led by the youth	10 minutes
Prayer led by the youth	2 minutes
Young people as program moderators	
Youth special item	3 minutes
Presentation by Stewardship departmental Director	25 minutes
Discussion	25 minutes
Final song and prayer	6 minutes

As a result of this experience there were more young people attending the program than used to be dominated by adults. The interaction was both interesting and enriching.

Sub program

2 Lifestyle

Program theme: Courtship and sex before marriage

At the end of this presentation youth were to be able to tell how to go about healthy principles of courtship.

A married couple was invited to give counsel and to share some experiences.

Item	Duration
Worship time led by the youth	10 minutes
Prayer	2 minutes
Family Departmental Director as program moderator	
Presentation by Researcher	20 minutes
Discussion	30 minutes
Final song and prayer	6 minutes

While the youth at this special program were on their own the adults had their own family life program, the youth were fully involved. The youth felt catered for and the adults were happy to have their children taught how to live and honour God.

Sub Program 3

HIV/AIDS

Program theme: The danger of contracting HIV

At the end of this presentation, the youth were able to tell a) the danger of the premarital sex, b) the responsibility one has to respect the opposite sex and c) the advantage of faithfulness before and during marriage and the reason for not stigmatizing those who are infected and know how to encourage the affected.

A guest speaker was invited, a Christian medical doctor, to give professional advice to the youth and to discuss the issues of HIV. (Matt25:30-34)

Item	Duration
Worship time led by youth	10 minutes
Prayer	2 minutes
Departmental director of health as program moderator	
Youth choir Special Item	3 minutes
Presentation by Medical doctor	25 minutes
Discussion	20 minutes
Final song and prayer	6 minutes

In this program both adults and youth were together and there were more youth than adults. (More seminars see Appendix 3)

Program

The youth departmental director, elder in charge, one church adult member and one young person evaluated the program after six months of working together.

The program had started to work with fifty young people who came for the first meeting on the first Sabbath afternoon of May 2008. Six months later there were seventy-eight in the club, forty-one of whom are baptized, seventy six are now somehow engaged in the church activities, fourteen of them have leadership roles in the church and the rest are at least in the youth choir. The twenty percent of the youth that was satisfied has increased to ninety one percent while nine percent still need help.

The program succeeded in touching the youth's personal lives and they felt involved in church activities and that they were part of the church. If programs continue like flu's more youth will join the church and soon there will be no place to

accommodate theme in the church building. There was an additional twenty eight young people in the club some of whom previously spectators in the church. Old members were used to work for the new ones through the empowered youth who grew from strength to strength.

Outside the Sabbath programs there was another program done on Sunday, which excited the youth. The youth participated in donating blood at Huambo Central Hospital. The youth had thrilling experiences. Some of them were there for the first time giving their blood to assist the unfortunate. To them it was an experience of joy when they assisted the dying. With others, it was not the first time but they were happy to be joined by those that were doing it for the first time. The hospital administrators were appreciative and suggested that the youth have a blood bank serviced by the Betel Seventh-day Adventist youth.

Another program was witnessing for Christ. The youth had literature to give to people and they moved door to door giving short songs and distributing literature. It was exciting to them and they gained courage. This resulted in them gaining unity and purpose, and confidence in participating in the church activities; they felt they were identifying with the church.

If the programs continue, they will augment the one program suggested by the division, each year, leading the youth in the church to have programs at least three times a month. It will facilitate the empowerment and retention of the youth in the church. The Sunday's programs would take care of the skills aspects in the youth ministry.

It was positive to include the youth as was done by most of the founding members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Organization. Barry Gane said that "Ellen Harmon was called to work for God when she was a youth of seventy years of

age. James White started preaching the second coming of Christ in 1842 at the age of twenty on and when he was twenty two years he was ordained to the Christian church. John N. Andrews started writing at the age of twenty-one. When he was twenty two years they called him to publishing committee.”¹ By the time the movement saw the need to institutionalize and become a church organization, these young people, up starters, had become mature adults with rapidly growing following of young and old people scattered across the continent and around the globe.

¹ Barry Gane, *Getting it Right: Building a Youth Ministry* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 19.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

After recognizing a significant lack of youth interest in the churches in Angola, and that many youth were leaving the church, the first part of this study sought to clarify through the Bible, Ellen G. White and other authors the importance of role of the church leadership and adults in retaining the youth in the church. The first section was a theoretical framework affirming that the Bible confirmed the importance of youth ministry and how the youth were challenged to take an active part in God's work and in the society where they are part of.

Both, Old and New Testaments showed that youth were to be involved and educated. A conducive educational atmosphere was created and good schools were built (Schools of Prophets). The youth were taught at home and in the church. Many leaders were produced. It did not come by chance. There is need to continue to teach the youth.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church pioneers understood the youth ministry in the same way, of *salvation and service* by creating the Missionary Volunteers society to spread the gospel of the soon coming Jesus. When they began the church, they were very young. They challenged lives of many people because of giving themselves for God's work. Salvation and Service continue to be the way God uses to hasten Jesus' second coming.

However, many things have changed. Some cultural thinking has tried to look down upon what young people can do in the church. Betel Seventh-day Adventist Church is no exception. After getting permission from the field office and local church board a survey through questionnaire and interviewer was made, to find out why youth were leaving the church. This was followed by a 6 months program. This was run to integrate the youth with church programs in order to retain them. The following programs were run, stewardship, life style, HIV/AIDS awareness, participation in blood donation and door to door witnessing. The youth population increased from fifty to seventy-eight. Forty-one of them were baptized. Right now fourteen have leadership positions and the rest of them are now in the youth choir. A conducive relational atmosphere reigns in Betel church. The youth feel that they are part of Betel Seventh-day Adventist church. A large majority of them now attend church and come early for services. The adults are happy for what was done for the young people at Betel Seventh-day Adventist church. This is a challenge which the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Angola has to wrestle with.

Conclusions

The study reflected that there was need to involve young people in church activities, in order to nurture and retain them in the church. When young people are retained in the church there will revitalize the church for they are still strong and energetic. They will be used to reach other young people. The church will grow. God wants the young people, as we noted, to be part of His church. They are to play their role by using their God given talents and energies to do God's work. They are to respect the old people, for God is looking upon them to honour their parents as this is the only commandment with promise. They are to respond to God's call by obeying

God's statutes. When they do this God will bless them. They will prosper in all they do.

The adults in the church, at home and in the school are expected to teach other youth, guide and nurture them for God's cause. They should not be left to get a street education that will confuse and corrupt them. The parents should come close to the tempted youth to assist them closely. The home, the church and the school should work together in this important venture. If these three units of society work together the youth shall grow up in the fear of God.

The church should include the youth in all the activities and have special programs. As in the words of Ellen G. White trained youth are as a strong an army. God's work would be done quickly if all young people were drafted in His work and soon Christ would come. At the same time the youth would be retained in the church, for they are the youth today but the parents and the leaders of the church tomorrow.

Recommendations

A) To Betel Seventh-day Adventist church

1. Betel Seventh-day Adventist church should change their way of dealing with youth, and the youth are to give themselves opportunity to receive Christian education and to bear responsibilities in the church.
2. The youth must be trusted if they are to do well.
3. Betel Seventh-day Adventist church should have more time for the youth in order to retain them in the church.
4. There is need for all the departments to work together involving more the youth for they are members of one body (1 Cor12:12).
5. There should be programs organized for and with the youth.
6. Youth should carry responsibilities in the various departments.

7. The church leadership should coach the youth more.

B) To the Seventh-day Adventist church in Angola

1. Plan for inclusion of the youth in all the activities of the church.
2. Care for the youth at home, at school and in the church.
3. Trust the youth by coming closer to them.

C) When using the Program suggested above on pages [54-57].

1. Add more activities like cleaning streets, visiting orphanages, and old people's home.
2. Vary the activities according to location, situation and needs.

APPENDIX A

LETTER

Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia

União Angolana

A

Direção da Associação Centro
dos Adventistas do Sétimo dia

Assunto: SOLICITACAO

Para efeitos da minha formação na Universidade Adventista da África (AUA), campus Solusi; e para o trabalho de tese, de conclusão da formação, que estou escrevendo; e tendo em conta que exige uma solução pratica, e por ter sido aconselhado a ter uma igreja modelo para que sirva de exemplo para o resto do pais,

Tendo em vista a igreja de Betel, (já solicitada) como sendo uma que pode me ajudar nos trabalhos, devido a localização geográfica e por ter as características desejadas,

Venho através desta carta solicitar a Direção da Associação Centro dos Adventistas do Sétimo Dia que me autorize realizar os meus trabalhos práticos na referida igreja até o fim do ano 2008.

Esperando a vossa maior compreensão e espírito de colaboração, quero desde já agradecer-vos.

Bênçãos de Deus

Vosso conservo
Domingos L. Suquina

Huambo, aos 06 de Marco de 2008

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

Betel Seventh-day Adventist Church Youth Questionnaire

Dear Youth,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain your contribution in telling the researcher how Betel SDA church operates with the youth. This will assist in identifying areas of possible improvement. Confidentiality will be maintained.

Introduction

Do not write your name.

Each of the following questions or statements is followed by one to four possible answers marked a, b, c, d. which of the possible answers describes your church?

Cycle the letter marking the answer that is correct according to your situation in Betel Seventh-day Adventist church.

1. What school are you attending?
 - a) University.
 - b) High School.
 - c) Primary School.
2. What is youth marital status?
 - a) Single
 - b) Married
3. Church Situation
 - a) Are you a Seventh-day Adventist Member?

- b) Were you once disfellowshipped?
4. Participation in the Church services
- a) Do you occupy any position in the church?
 - b) Are you a church board member?
5. Seventh-day Doctrines
- a) Do you agree with Seventh-day Adventist Doctrine of the Sabbath?
 - b) Do you agree with Seventh-day Adventist Doctrine of the Second Advent Jesus?
 - c) Do you agree with Seventh-day Adventist Doctrine of the state of the dead?
 - d) Do you agree with Seventh-day Adventist Doctrine of the Spirit of the Prophecy?
6. Life Style
- a) Do you agree with the life style of avoiding the use of drugs unnecessarily?
 - b) Do you agree with the life style of Sexual Abstinence before marriage?
 - c) Do you agree with the life style of non-participating and listening to Rock Music?
7. Devotional Practice – How is Devotional Practice to you?
- a) Very important.
 - b) Important.
 - c) Not important.
8. Spiritual Nutrition – How you study your Bible?
- a) Daily
 - b) Weekly

c) Monthly

9. Do you want to continue as a Seventh-day Adventist?

a) Always

b) Probably

c) Not sure

10. Attitude toward the Seventh-day Adventist church

a) Would you have Seventh-day Adventist children?

b) Would you send them to Seventh-day Adventist schools?

c) Would you teach them about Ellen G. White?

11. Church Environment

a) How do you feel in the church?

b) Do you identify yourself with the church?

APPENDIX C

SEMINARS FOR BETEL CHURCH AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Seminar I

The responsibility for the parents, leaders

At the end of this presentation adults and Betel Seventh-day Adventist Church Leadership were to be able to tell their responsibilities for the younger ones in the church and at home.

I Moses' Model –Deut 6:7

II Joshua's Model – Joshua 24:15

The lack of transferring the values to the coming generation led Israel in apostasy in Canaan, after Joshua was dead, that is what is found in Judges 2:10 – 12.

Paul's Model

Conclusion:

Being born into an Adventist family doesn't make conversion or baptism automatic. Our own young people need conversion and retention. Today there is an eerie sense that the youth are leaving the church. It's time to face up to the reality and take significant steps to reclaim our lost youth. Determining how many youth really leave the church is difficult. We are hesitant to drop the name of an inactive or missing person has been baptized – a decision a growing number of youth postpone until their late teens.

Seminar II

Meeting the Needs of today's Youth

Knowing youth problems

At the end of this presentation adults of Betel Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership were to be able to know youth's problems and needs and learn how to assist them better in solving problems.

Youth retention means knowing their problems to try to give proper answer to them in order to understand them. B. Gane describes some of the problems that hit youth. These are the youth's problems everywhere you go. The problems may have different approaches in different places but are the same. To think that the youth does not have problem is to take it too easy. They also crises and they are also looking for solutions, even in the church.

1. School (fee, how to excel, school material)
2. Interpersonal relationship (parents and other authorities as lecturers, church, elders, police)
3. Maturation expectation (pressure to mature)
4. Emotional highs and lows
5. Work and marriage options (Choices, decisions, for the future)
6. Sport and recreational choices
7. Acceptance of personal health and appearance
8. Ethical and moral problems
9. Religion (transcendent, superior, God...)
10. Family life (how to participate...)
11. Personal habits (good, bad, avoiding some)

12. Finances (how to have food, cloths house)¹

Today's Needs of today's youth

To meet the needs and to solve some problems of the youth we need to know some skills professionally. It is not enough to want to. The good will cannot substitute a scientific knowledge. More than food the youth needs to be understood, to be loved. One father ones said to me, talking about his son, "I give him everything." It may be truth, but perhaps the son doesn't want "everything," he wants his dad. And because of the lake of psychological development of a person he thought things can substitute love.

1. **Creativity** – is one from God given skill that is within us because we are God's image. It is the capacity and the way to make things very interesting and different, to give more quality to it. Since God himself is creative all human being is expected to be creative also. Some in order to make their program creative to retain the youth go so far that they do consider the principle of the worldwide church.
2. **Flexibility** – the question is being flexible to what? Because there are many situations and principles in the church that are unchangeable, you cannot compromise them. We have to accommodate us according to the rules of the church. But there are things that we may negotiate with the youth to get the balance.
3. **Impatience** – the youth is impatient. It wants have everything's done. But here is the attitude of the youth to some issues that they see as irrelevant to them and those things that are not interesting to

¹ B. Gane, *Getting it right*. (Review and Herald), 44.

them. They criticise and try to fight and to put down those ideas seems to be out of time. As a leader you must be aware of this situation so that you can recognise the warning signals. It can be learned.

4. **Intolerance** – tolerance can be a very danger issue if it is to deal with faith issues. But, sometimes intolerance is a signal of self-protection. Very often youth tend to be intolerant when things are going of their cost, even with among them self.
5. **Idealism**² – it is sometimes very far from the reality. To manage both of them it is not so easy because the gape can be very big. The youth like to dream and to idealize things and sometimes they think it is just possible to put it in practice. The youth becomes very sensitive to irrelevances, hypocrisy.

There are some of the skills needed for those who deal with the youth.

Because the lake to have a space to make decision by them self. And as a leaders there is a need to know about, Physical development, Emotional, development awareness to the opposite sex, Spiritual development – issues of faith and conversion, Moral development, Cognitive development to lead them well in order that they make the right decision, depending on the situation.

² Ibid., 45.

Seminar III

How do youth learn?

At the end of this presentation adults and Betel Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership were able to tell how youth learn things and how to assist them better in the church activities.

This idea is based on Barry Gane's book, Building youth Ministry. He lists a number of ways do youth learn things.

- 1. The imaginative learner** – this kind of learner doesn't like details like dates, names, but this group of learners like definitions, developing some issues. They see things in general the big picture, and not in details. They are very creative in doing things if they are given freedom to develop a theme. It means that they learn by doing things, putting them self play a role, by being involved and not just by standing without doing anything. They are very active and to keep them quiet in the church doing nothing is not easy, quite impossible. It is a leader's duty to this kind of behaviour to understand the youth and to look for different tasks to meet this group of youth also.
- 2. Analytic learner** – they like books, details to be analysed, numbers and talk. If they get information they don't take just as it comes, they analyse it and they make account if it is needed. Sometimes they are passive listener but thinking at the same time, and also they observe carefully.
- 3. The common sense learner** – this group like to be practical, because they are practical. They ask very often question if that make

sense what is told. They like to discuss to understand and to be understood also. Thus, induction and tension are good tools to them to learn even to learn the Bible. The leader must know it to be succeeding by reaching these people.

4. **The dynamic learner** – as the term suggests its kind of learner is dynamic, by doing. Theoretical things don't mean much to them. They want to prove if it is true or not. They try to have their own experiences. By doing this many of them do not come back. They learn also by using their skills and spiritual gifts serving others. This is very active group. They need occupation in the church. In Betel Seventh-day Adventist church the most who are involved in the church are the singers.

Conclusion:

Each youth leader can know about this knowledge if is really willing to excel by working with the youth. It is fundamental to facilitate the transmission of the teachings that come from above. Otherwise one will fail trying to work ignoring this. Each one of us is different to another, but if tis an original. We have to respect it to make him grow as far as possible.

Seminar IV

Why Adventist Youth Leave the Church

Objective: Meeting their needs

At the end of this presentation adults and Betel Seventh-day Adventist Church Leadership were to be able to tell how to understand youth motive of leaving church and create condition that reduces dropping youth.

- a) Physical development

- b) Emotional development awareness to the opposite sex.
- c) Spiritual development – issues of faith and conversion.
- d) Moral development
- e) Cognitive development³

Retention means knowing why they leave so that we can prevent or reduce doors to go out. In the Youth Encyclopaedia it is given to us five reasons that may cause the youth to dropout.

1. Alienation – the feeling of not being trusted or not valued,
2. Irrelevance – the feeling of not making difference, “nothing meaningful for my age,” “always the same,”
3. Intolerance – the only truth church, no love,
4. Convenience – too tired because of the work, study, during the whole week, so, there is not time for church business,
5. Minor themes – disfellowshipped because of “premarital pregnancy,” and they don’t agree with.

I added some more issues that I have realized, such as lack of commitment and relationship to God, to the word of God (Bible Knowledge, many don’t even have a Bible, do not read the Bible, perhaps only on Sabbath) and lack of commitment to the church where they belong to, and lack of sense of Mission by some.

II Why they stay

Youth retention means to understand the motives why they stay to empower them more and more.

³ Roger L. Dudley, *Why our Teenagers Leave the Church* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 27-37.

1. Believe in Adventist Truth – sound doctrine
2. Adventist Upbringing – good education system home and schools
3. Relationship with God – they are in love with God, church is God’s will, and a way to serve God and to relate to Him, to live with Him forever.
4. Fellowship, Friendship, Relationship⁴ safe and warm environment.

Conclusion: Knowing these steps by the leadership in Betel church it will help much to try to give meaningful answers to the youth for keeping them in the church.

⁴ Barry Gane, *Getting it Right: Building a Youth Ministry, A Fundamental Guide* (La Sierra University: Hancock Center Publications, 2005), 114-119.

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