

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology Project

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTHS IN CHURCH ACTIVITIES IN THE
ATEBUBU DISTRICT OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS, GHANA

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Date Completed: June 2014

Youth involvement means allowing the youth to participate in all church programs and activities to ensure church growth. If the youth remain idle in the church spiritual growth will not take place in the church. The youth are the majority in the church and therefore ignoring their participation will affect the church's growth in many ways.

After researching into the low involvement of the youth in church activities in Atebubu district of Seventh-day Adventists, it was found that there were some inhibiting factors that have caused the youth to stay behind while the elders will be leading all church programs and activities. A program was developed and implemented to solve the problem of minimal involvement of the youth in church activities. After the implementation of the program, there was massive improvement in the involvement of the youth in church activities. The benefit of the program was seen when the number of the youth who always involved themselves increased in all the three churches in the Atebubu town.

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IN THE ATEBUBU DISTRICT OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS, GHANA

A project

presented in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by

Osei Kofi

June 2014

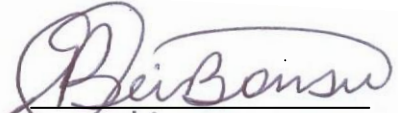
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To God is the glory.

I dedicate this research work to my wife

Mrs. Dorcas Osei for being a loving supporting life-partner

God has graciously given me in my ministry, also

Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church,

and to all youth workers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	4
The Significance of the Study	5
Methodology	6
Delimitation	7
2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION	8
The Bible	8
Joseph	8
Joshua	9
David	10
Josiah	11
Jeremiah	12
The Disciples of Jesus	13
Timothy	13
Youth in the Spirit of Prophecy	14
Youth Involvement in the History of Seventh-day Adventist	20
James White (1821- 1881)	20
Ellen G. Harmond (1827- 1915)	21
Uriah Smith (1832- 1903)	22
Youth in the World History	25
Alexander the Great (536- 323 B. C.)	25
Napoleon Bonapart (1769- 1821)	25
Isaac Newton (1642- 1727)	26
William Miller (1782- 1849)	26
John Calvin (1509- 1564)	27
Other Christian Literature	28
3. DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING	30
Brisf History	30
The Atebubu District	30

History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Atebubu District	32
Pre- Program Survey and Interview	37
Inhabitation Factors Affecting Youth Involvement	41
4. PROGRAMME DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION	48
Program Objectives	48
Program Design, Preparation and Implementation	49
The Setting of the Program	49
Phase One.....	50
Phase Two	52
Youth Week of Revival	53
Phase Three	53
Youth Evangelism.....	53
Phase Four.....	54
Weekend Retreat.....	54
Program Evaluation.....	54
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	59
Summary	59
Conclusion	61
Recommendations	62
Appendices	64
A. LETTER.....	64
B. PROGRAM OUTLINE.....	66
C. LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP HANDOUT	67
D. QUESTIONNAIRE.....	74
BIBLIOGRAPHY	78
VITA	81

LIST OF TABLES

1. Number of Youth and Adults in Atebubu Districts	36
2. Youth Involvement in Atebubu Central Church.....	38
3. Youth Involvement in Atebubu New Town Seventh-day Adventist Church	39
4. Youth Involvement in the West Seventh-day Adventist Church.....	40
5. Youth Involvement Before and After Program Implementation	56

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research work would not have been written without the contribution of the Central Ghana Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church. They have done a lot in sponsoring me for this MA program. May God bless the authorities who decided to sponsor me for this program. I also acknowledge the contributions of the following people; Elder Matthew Adjei, Elder Samuel Frimpong, Mr. Victor Dannyansah, Elder Thomas Ayeh, Elder Dickson Adjei, Elder Jacob Osei, Elder Agyemang Badu Charles and Elder Emmanuel Adjei, all in Atebubu; who provided me with the information needed for this research. And finally, to my roommates Pastors Adjare Bernard and Edward Nyarkoh for helping me with ideas needed to come out with this paper.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The impact of the youth on other youth is great in and outside the church. The youth “have an influence for good or for evil on the minds and characters of others.”¹ Nonetheless, it has been observed that the youth in the Atebubu District of the Seventh-day Adventist church are not giving their best to ensure the growth of the church in the locality as expected. The involvement of the youth of the Atebubu district of Seventh-day Adventist church in the church’s activities is minimal. However, Ellen G. White indicates that “in order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage.”² It is a fact that when the youth are strengthened and empowered to give their best in any organization, it improves its growth and productivity.

The same is true about the church, when the youth are strengthened, equipped and empowered to play meaningful role in the church; it will enhance church growth both spiritually and numerically. The *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual* makes it clear that, “the goal of the Adventist Youth society should be to involve all youth in

¹ E.G. White, *Appeal to the Young* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 2002), 4.

² E.G White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Heralds Publ. Association, 2002), 67.

activities that will tie them closer to the church and train them for Christian service.”¹

Ellen White, one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist church holds that it is possible for the youth to gain spiritual strength for the growth of the church today. She continues by saying that; the youth are a “spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. By their determined effort to be true and righteous, laying their foundation secure in faith may be able to bring both the old and young to love and good work”.² “A church without youth ministry is a church without a future.”³ When the youth of the church are well trained and equipped to do ministry, they have the potential to reach many for Christ.

In the Atebubu district, it seems that the nurturing and growth of the churches have been left in the hands of adults while the youth are only seeking personal interest. From the parable of the householder, it is clear that when the householder was leaving, he gave his servants some work to do, none of them was left idling (Matt 25:14-18). In the same sense, if the youth are not trained and involved in the ministries of the church, and the adults who are currently involved are no more, there will be no one to fill the vacuum that will be created in the church. When the youth in the church are trained and strengthened for service, the church will see a significant change in its growth. There is therefore, the need to revive youth involvement in church activities again in the Atebubu district.

¹General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2010), 100, 101.

² Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People*, (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2002), 10.

³ Baraka Muganda, class notes for CHMN 634 *Youth Ministry*, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, July, 2011.

According to Gane, “as we look at the role of young people in the Bible, it’s clear that youth were never intended to be spectators, sitting on the side-lines while the adults do God’s work.”¹ God needs the young people to work for Him in His vineyard since they have the strength and energy to do more service for the Lord. According to Ellen White, “the Lord has appointed the youth to be His helping hand.”² The leadership of the church should give the youth the training required to enable them represent the truth at any place.

The time is ripe for the leadership of the church to make the young people aware that they are part of the church and that they should work towards its growth and also in fulfilling the “great commission”. As indicated by the prophet Joel, in the last days, God will pour out His spirit on all flesh and the young men will see visions (Joel 2:28). This is an indication that God is interested in the participation of the youth in the activities of church.

Statement of the Problem

According to church records, young people between the ages of 15 and 30 comprise about 68 to 75 per cent of the Seventh-day Adventist church membership in the Atebubu district. However, unless the church is able to mobilize such a vast youthful army of the Lord and involve them, the global mission of the church will never be accomplished and the church will not grow. The question we need to ask is has the youth been actively involved in the growth of the church in the past? If they have been involved in the past, why do they fail to get involved and participate in church activities

¹ Barry Gane, *Getting it Right*, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Youth Department (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005), 145.

² Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), 30.

today? How do we as a church involve these young men and women today in the mission of the church to ensure spiritual growth in our churches? One thing we need to know is that, as the youth grow to become adults, their roles never remains the same: instead of always being led by others, they learn to lead themselves and learn leadership responsibilities.

It has been observed that the youth in the church today are not actively playing their role well in the growth of the church both physically and spiritually. This is a problem that is affecting the growth and expansion of the church in the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Based on personal observation, I could see that no study has been done and no concern has been shown to deal with the problem of youth involvement in church growth activities. The mission of the youth ministry is gradually fading out and giving way to entertainment and physical activities. In view of this, there is the need to find out the inhibiting factors of low youth involvement in church activities and programs and find out the solutions to them. When we know the causes of minimal youth participation and involvement in the church, it will enable the leaders to find out solutions to them. What will happen in the church if the youth are trained and equipped to participate in church growth activities? These are some of the concerns that this research work aims at addressing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to look at the reasons why the youth are not actively involved in the spiritual and physical growth of the church, and to find out solutions to the problem of their non-participation. It is also the purpose of this study to train the youth in the Atebubu district to be actively involved in church activities to ensure spiritual growth among the youth in the church. Ellen G. White states that “the future of

society is indexed by the youth of today.”¹ It is true that for the future of the church to be secured, it is imperative to strengthen the role of the youth in the church to enable them develop interest in the church and its activities.

Training the youth to be involved in church growth activities will help the youth to know their God’s-given potentials and use them to improve the ministry by bringing others to Christ. The youth will understand their role in the growth of the church through personal involvement. It is also the purpose of this study to help youth leaders focus on the aim of Adventist youth ministry; “preparing youth for service in God’s work.”² The study further aims at integrating spiritual activities in the youth programs that will strengthen and empower the youth to be involved in the growth of the church. This will enable the youth to be equipped in order to play their roles well in reaching out to other young people with the Adventist message to ensure church growth in the Atebubu District of the Seventh-day Adventist. The study also aims at encouraging the youth who are currently not involved in the church to be encouraged to join the church and participate in evangelizing other young people.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to assist church pastors, elders, youth leaders and parents know and understand the role of the youth in the church to ensure its physical and spiritual growth. This study will help church leaders find a strategy that will help them to train and involve the young people in the church’s activities and through them others will also come to the knowledge of the truth. The study will help increase the number of young people who are involved in church growth activities. This

¹ Ellen G White, *Mind, Character and Personality* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 2002), 1.

² Gane,, 33.

study is significant because it aims at ensuring that the youth in the District are strengthened and fully equipped for the service in the church to ensure growth in the Atebubu district.

Methodology

This study employs program development method to design a program that will strengthen the involvement of the youth in church growth activities. The introductory section presents the general plan of the study. This section includes the statement of the problem, the purpose of study, significance of the study, and methodology of the study. Chapter two employs literature review to identify how the church can grow if young people are strengthened and equipped to play meaningful roles in the district. The focus of the literature review will be on the Bible, Ellen G. White writings and other christian literatures, as they relate and apply to the youth of today especially those in the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church. This work will assist in designing a program to improve the involvement of the youth in church growth in the Atebubu district of Seventh-day Adventist.

For in-depth study, the quantitative and qualitative surveys, interviews, questionnaires and personal observations will be conducted to know how the youth can help in church growth if they are strengthened to know their role and play them well. Chapter four takes care of program development that will enable the youth to be empowered and effectively play their roles to ensure church growth. There will be implementation of the program developed to ensure youth participation in church growth activities. The program will be evaluated to see its effectiveness. The fifth chapter summarizes all the findings of the study including conclusions based on findings and observations of the research, and recommendations will be made known to all the churches in the Atebubu district and to the administrators of the Central Ghana

Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church to ensure that the youth in the various churches are strengthened and empowered for church growth.

Delimitation

The Atebubu district has sixteen churches and companies, but for the purpose of time and space, this study will be conducted in three churches in the Atebubu town, namely; Atebubu Central, Atebubu New Town, and Atebubu West. These three churches have been chosen as the centers for this research work due to the fact that they have the larger population of the youth in the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Also most of the youth in the church live in Atebubu town. Besides these, Atebubu is the district headquarters where access to information from the elders and church members is not difficult to come by. It is hoped that when the youth in these three churches are strengthened and equipped for church involvement, its effect will spread to the other churches in the district. The involvement of the youth in church activities will spark the zeal of other youth to get involved in church activities.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This section of the study explores literature on the involvement of the youth from the Bible, Ellen G. White, church history and other christian literatures. The study explores first the biblical background of youth involvement; it proceeds to look at youth involvement in the writings of Ellen G. White, church history and other christian literatures; and its summary and reflection.

The Bible

When we talk of youth involvement, the bible cannot be left out since it has a lot of youth whose involvement in God's dealings with Israel were significant in their time and today. There are many youth in the bible whose involvement in God's work has brought changes in other young peoples' lives; but for the purpose of this study, few of them are mentioned since time and space will not permit the study to explore all of them. In both the Old and New Testaments, there are some youth who never gave up when it comes to remaining faithful to the Lord. This study discusses the impact of young people such as Joseph, Joshua and Caleb, David, Josiah, Jeremiah, the Disciples of Jesus and Timothy.

Joseph

Joseph is known for maintaining his integrity when he was a slave in Egypt. In bondage he made sure nobody look down upon him because he was young. Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelite merchants at the age of seventeen (Gen 37:2), but God through him brought changes in the lives of many people who met him. In Potiphar's house, his

life was a living testimony to every youth who wants to follow God in truth and who wants to get involve in God's work. Joseph knew God from infancy and was committed to God in every situation (Gen 41:12 - 57).

Joseph showed a sense of integrity while in Potiphar's house. When Potiphar's wife wanted him to go to bed with her, he refused because he did not want to do anything against the will of God and his master. After interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Joseph gave the king a plan that would sustain and survive them for the next fourteen years of plenty and famine in Egypt. This young man's plan helped Egypt throughout the fourteen years of plenty and famine; even the surrounding areas also benefited from his plan. This is an indication that if church leaders and members involve the youth in decision making in the church, it will go a long way to benefit the church in diverse ways.

Joshua and Caleb

Joshua and Caleb, the two young men believed that the people of God could take possession of the land God had promised them. When the adults were dealing with the majority votes, these young men proved to them that majority opinion is not always an accurate measurement of right and wrong. They demonstrated that truth cannot be measured by numbers (Num. 14:6-9). Joshua and Caleb believed in the promises of God and revived the hope of God's people, when the adults saw that they were like grasshoppers when compared to the inhabitants of the Promised Land. They encouraged the people to act on God's promise and move ahead into the land and take possession of it.¹

¹ Patterson and Herman J Autel, *Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 4: 286.

After the death of Moses, God appointed Joshua who was a youth by then to continue from where Moses had left the Israelites. He was told to be strong and courageous in the performance of his duties (Deut. 31: 7, 8). Joshua subjected himself completely to the order of God which made him successful in leading the people of God, even though he was a youth.¹ Through the leadership of Joshua, God gave Israel the Promised Land. This happened because Moses involved Joshua when he was his personal aid for forty years. He received his training from Moses for all these years when he served as the personal assistant to Moses. Pastors and church leaders should not ignore their role in the training of the youth to assist in the work of the church. The youth can be vessels of honor when we spend time with them to give them training that will equip them to do ministry to ensure that the church grows. We should remember that, as it were in the days of Joshua and Caleb, God is still in the business of using the youth of today to assume leadership positions in His church. If the leadership of the church would grant the youth the opportunity to lead church programs, they will know how God can use the youth of today to accomplish His purpose for the church.

David

In 2 Sam 17, we read the account of the battle between Israel and the Philistines and the contribution of the young David. When Goliath brought fear and terror on the people of Israel, the young David stood in brave and fought for the people of God. His attitude of braveness relieved God's people from the constant insinuation of this mighty giant, Goliath. The elders who had been trained and armed for war were afraid to go and deal with the mighty Goliath.

¹ Francis D. Nichol, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington DC: Review and Herald , 1976), 2: 174.

Yet, the young man David who had not armed himself with either sword or shield; but with only sling and some small stones, disposed off the giant and brought victory to the camp of God's people.

Criticism could not stop this young boy from what he wanted to do for God. While the rest were afraid and stood around, David knew the importance of taking action. He knew God could fight the battle for His people. He stood as a brave young man and won the battle to the Glory of God. This happened because of the training he had from his father as he took care of the father's sheep. We should not discourage the youth from what they can do for God. There is the need to train the youth to exercise their faith in God like David. Never should we think the youth can do nothing in God's work. It is incumbent upon pastors, parents and church leaders to train and involve the youth of today in church activities since God is still in the business of using ordinary young people to accomplish extraordinary things for the Lord. The youth should get involve and take action to bring victory in the camp of God.

Josiah

Josiah became a king at the age of eight (2 Kings 22:1), and, even though his forefathers did not rule according to God's law, he did what was right before God. Josiah had close relationship with God, and he ruled according to God's will. He became a passionate reformer who made valiant effort to lead the people of Judah back to God. At that young age, Josiah already knew that there was spiritual sickness in his land. He made sure all the idols were destroyed in his quest to bring the people back to God. He exposed the people of Judah to the true worship and the holiness of God. If we lead the youth of our day to have a very good and close personal relationship with God, they can do much in the church to bring revival and reformation in the youth.

God did not believe that Josiah was too young to become a king and rule such a nation as Israel. At times we try to create barriers before young people who want to give their best in the service of God. This young boy Josiah was considered as the most obedient king who eliminated sinful practices and attacked the causes of sin. The bible says “neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did – with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses” (2 Kings 23:25). As young men and women, if we allow God to use us through or be obedient to His commandments, we can do much to bring revival and reformation in the church of God. God can use the children of our day to do incredible things in the world as He used Josiah.

Jeremiah

When God called Jeremiah, he wanted to turn it down due to his age and his inability to speak in public. He forgot the fact that; “God never makes a mistake in choosing His servants. He empowers all He calls and provides the encouragement and help they need. Moreover, God’s promise of His presence would dispel Jeremiah’s fear, another source of his hesitation.”¹ God reassured him that, He will put words in his mouth and protect him when people oppose him in exercising his duties. God is still calling the youth today despite the fact that they have their short comings.

The Lord will protect the youth from the attacks of the enemy and provide the moral courage that they need to stand for Him to bring revival among His people. God can use the youth of today to bring many changes in the lives of other youth. It the responsibility of the church leaders to train the youth to become confident so that they can use whatever talent that God has given them to serve others. Some, like Jeremiah

¹ *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 1: 1157.

may have the fear that they can do nothing, such persons need to be encouraged and motivated to be bold as they do God's work.

The Disciples of Jesus

The bible does not state the ages of the disciples when they were called by Christ to do ministry; it is true that some of them were called in their youth. John and James were sometimes described as youth disciples who contributed to the progress of the church. Most of the people Jesus called were fishermen (Matt 4:18 – 20), indicating their strength and youthfulness. They followed Jesus everywhere he went to do ministry for God. Since they were young, they were able to continue the ministry even after Jesus had left them (Acts 5:28, 29, 32). Young people have a place in the ministry of the church and can help to progress the work of God. The youth of today are being called upon to a special ministry, to save themselves and others. Titus and Timothy were chosen to be ministers of God's church in their youthful age (1 Tim 4:12; Ti 1:5). Youth today must be trained and encouraged to get involved in the church's activities and programs.

Timothy

The faithfulness and activeness of the young Timothy compelled the apostle Paul to choose him as his companion in ministry (1Thes 3:2; 2 Tim 1:6, 7). Timothy was a mere youth when God through Paul chose him to be a teacher. Timothy served the church with a sincere heart and with christian meekness. His mentor, Paul, saw something good in him beyond what he saw in himself, "don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." Paul continues, "Until I come, devote your time to public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you"

(1 Tim 4:12-14 NIV). Timothy and Titus worked as elders in the church at their youthful age.

To sum this section up, in the Bible, there are many young people whom God used in ministry. God will continue to use the youth of today to assume leadership responsibilities in his church. The caution is that “youth is no barrier to a rich spiritual fellowship with God. Men according to Paul are to be judged by their sanctified lives and abilities and not by arbitrary standards such as age.”¹ Age should not be a barrier for any young person who wants God to use him or her in His vineyard. From the biblical point of view, what God requires of us is our availability and He will use us to His own glory. Ministry is the lot of all, both young and old.

Youth in the Spirit of Prophecy

The Spirit of Prophecy devotes much time talking about the importance of involving youth in the activities of the church and the impact they have on other youth. God revealed to Ellen White the impact of youth in the church when they are involved in church activities. Here are some insights of youth involvement and the impact they can have in the church as recorded in the Spirit of Prophecy. Ellen White says; “there are many christian youth that can do a good work if they will learn lessons in the school of Christ from the great Teacher. Even though pastors, evangelists, and teachers should neglect the seeking of the lost, let not the children and youth neglect to be doers of the word.”² There is a clear indication that, God is happy when the youth get involve in His work because their influence on other youth is much more than that of the adults. Adults

¹ Francis D. Nichol, *Seventh - day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald ., 1980), 7: 306.

² Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald , 2002), 6.

may choose to ignore the work of seeking the lost, but the youth must continue without weary. Youth are part of the work in seeking to bring the lost back into the fold. The strength of the youth is needed today more than ever, to bring revival and reformation in the church.

The trend that the church is moving now requires the involvement of the youth to enable it reach out to other youth. That is why Ellen White has said; “there is need of young men and women who will not be swayed by circumstances, which walk with God, who pray much, and who put forth earnest efforts to gather all the light they can.”¹ The circumstances around us today are influencing our youth, making them feel like they are not part of the church affairs. Meanwhile, their involvement in church programs and activities will have a significant effect in the church and its growth. For this to become a reality, we must spend time with them to give the training that is needed to equip them to get involve. The youth are the majority in the church today but few are involved in church activities.² We should train them well and assign them the responsibility to go out and work for other souls. When the youth are well trained, there will be spiritual growth among the youth and the ministry of the church will move faster.

The youth should not stay aloof in the church while the adults are doing the work of soul winning. The church should assign the youth some responsibilities in the church and they will know that their involvement will make an impact in the work of God. “Let not the youth be ignored; let them share in the labor and responsibility. Let

¹ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 69.

² Baraka Muganda, class notes for CHMN 634 *Youth Ministries*, Nairobi, Kenya, July, 2011.

them feel that they have a part to act in helping and blessing others.”¹ When it comes to soul winning everyone must play a role, no one should stay idle. Young men and women are to wake up from their slumber and lift up the cross of Christ higher for all humanity to come to the knowledge of salvation. The training of the youth to take part in the work of God must be the priority of the church today to enable the young men and women fully prepared to get involved in whatever activity that may go on in the church to win others into God’s kingdom. Ellen White makes this clear when she said; “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!”² It is true that the youth are the majority in the Seventy-day Adventist church and when they are allowed to play their part in God’s work they will do much to bring other youth to Christ in order to be saved. The church must train the youth so that they can partner the adults to confidently work as God wants them to work.

The church should train the youth and work with them, monitor them as they engage in the work of God, and empower them to work alone. As indicate by Ellen White, the church has at its disposal “an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth.”³ Ellen White places much emphasis on the importance of youth involvement in the church. She called them “an army of youth.” She made it clear to pastors and church leaders that they should “educate the youth to help the youth; and in seeking to do this work each will gain experience that will qualify him to

¹Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 1.

² Ellen G. White, *Education* (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald, 1948, 2002), 271.

³Ibid.

be a consecrated worker in a large sphere.”¹ It will take a young person to bring another young person to Christ; and when they come, they will also get involve in bringing other youth to Christ. Ellen White says the youth must take the Bible as their guide, and stand like a rock for principle, and they can aspire to any height of attainment. ²

None should underrate the importance of youth involvement in the work of God. The youth have the zeal and energy to go to anywhere and work for God when duty demands. “In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause.”³ If the leadership of the church fails to train the youth it will affect the present and the future of the church. Train up the youth today to get involved and when they are grown they will also see the need to involve other youth in God’s work. When the youth give their best in God’s work, they become instruments in the hands of God to be used for the purpose of saving others, since “the Lord has appointed the youth to be His helping hand.” When the youth see the need to work as God’s helping hand in bringing others to Christ, it will ensure church growth numerically and spiritually. As they work for God in the church, the youth will become vessels of honor to God like Timothy, Titus and many others who have given their best for the progress of the church. To the youth of today, as surely as to Timothy, are spoken the words, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth [2 Tim. 2: 15 KJV]." "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace [2 Tim. 2: 22 KJV]." "Be thou an example of the

¹Ibid., 203.

² Ellen G. White, *Guiding Principles for the Young* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 6.

³ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 67.

believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity [1Tim. 4: 12 KJV]."¹

Ellen G. White indicates “that many souls might be saved if the young were where they ought to be, devoted to God and to the truth.”² God needs “young men and women who will not be swayed by circumstances, who walk with God, who pray much, and who put forth earnest effort to gather all the light they can”³ to help bring others to experience the saving grace of God. The Lord has a lot of work for the youth of today. It is the responsibility of the leadership of the church to assist them in choosing to use their God given talents and use them to improve the work of God. No circumstance should prevent the youth from getting involve in God’s work since they are God’s helping hand in leading other youth to Christ. Ellen White makes it clear when she talks about how we should train the minds of our young people. She says, “The future of society is indexed by the youth of today.”⁵ Since the present and the future of the church depends on the youth of today, it is important to train the youth now and involve them in church programs as we prepare them for the future. If the leadership of the church gives the youth the opportunity to be involved in the church’s activities, they will become confident to hold responsible positions in the future which is now. The church leadership should not ignore the youth in the church; instead, they should be entrusted with the work of God and share responsibility with them. When this is done, the youth will not fear to do God’s work whenever they are called to participate in any church program.

¹Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 69.

² Ibid., 206.

³Ibid., 70.

There should be a conscious training of the youth to make them ready to serve God and work for the salvation of others. The church “needs to make use of the youth who will cultivate honest industry, who are not afraid to put themselves to the task. Such youth will find a position anywhere, because they falter not by the way; in mind and soul they bear the divine similitude.”¹ When the youth know well what they are in the sight of God, they will do their best in the church to help bring other youth to the knowledge of the truth. It is the responsibility of pastors and leaders of the church to see to it that the youth are educated in the Scriptures. For if the youth know the scriptures well it will lead them unto salvation and they too will lead their colleagues to know God.² The youth have a lot of work to do for the work of God to improve in all angles.

To sum this section, Ellen White indicates that “the highest of all work is ministry in its various lines, and it should be kept before the youth that there is no work more blessed of God than that of the gospel minister.”³ Involvement in ministry is the recommendation of Ellen White to the youth of the church. If the youth cannot be gospel ministers, they should be encouraged to get involved in the ministry of the church in any way possible wherever they may find themselves. There are more blessings in doing God’s work which should be made known to the young men and women in the church today. The youth need to know and experience the blessings of God as they give themselves to the services of God for their own salvation and that of

¹ Ellen G. White, *An Appeal for Missions* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2002), 19.

² *Ibid.*, 23

³ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald., 2002), 63.

those they will reach out to be assured. The youth must be trained to know God and to get involved in leading other youth to know Him and serve Him.

Youth Involvement in the History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The history of the Seventh-day Adventist church reveals that, the pioneers of the church were all in their youth when God through them established the church. The pioneers were young men and women who had devoted their lives to God and God was able to use them to establish His church on earth. They were led by God even though they were young men and women. This shows that God is interested in the youth who are devoted to Him and His work. Such youth can be used for the services of God and through them others will come to know the truths in God's word. This section looks at some of the young pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist and their roles in the formation of the church.

James White (1821-1881)

James White was twenty one years old when he started preaching about the second coming of Christ. His preaching brought a lot of changes in many people's lives and aided in the spread of Second Advent message. James White continued his preaching of the gospel about the second coming until he was ordained as gospel minister.

James White was ordained to the ministry at age twenty two (22) "at the hands of the ministers of the christian church at Palmyra in the spring of 1843, at the close of his winter's labor. During the summer and the next winter he labored here and there among the small towns and country churches in Maine. In the spring of 1844 he, like

the other advent believers, suffered disappointment.”¹ James White continues to serve as a Millerite preacher and continue to preach after the great disappointment in 1844. James White is considered as one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist church. He played great role in the formative years of the Seventh-day Adventist church as a young man.²

Ellen G. Harmon (1827-1915)

Ellen G. White was only seventeen years old when she started her prophetic ministry in the formative years of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Ellen White a co-founder of the SDA church was born on 26 Nov., 1827 in a Methodist Episcopal family.³ Together with her family she became a member of the Millerite Movement. She survived the disappointment of Oct. 22, 1844. Through her, God gave visions that strengthened the infant church/movement. Two years after the disappointment, she married James S. White a young Millerite preacher and they had four children in which only two survived.

Together with her husband, they worked tireless to nurture the infant church to growth. The husband died in 1881 but she continued to work in America, Europe, Africa and Australia. She died in 1915 at the age of eighty-seven. She was a good public speaker and a prolific writer. She has to her credit “over four thousand articles to various denominational publications. She authored several dozen books on a wide

¹ Everett N. Dick, *Founders of the message* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald., 1938), 32.

² C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell It to The World: The Story of Seventh-day Adventist*, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1977); R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979).

³ Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1993), 50.

range of topics, and she conducted a vigorous correspondence with people all over the world.”¹

God through her writings has made known to the Adventist church and many people the truths in the bible. Ellen White and few others formed a nucleus that later became known as the Seventh-day Adventist church.² Adventists hold that the ministry of Ellen White is the fulfilment of (Rev 12:17; 19:10) and the manifestation of the gift of prophecy. She received a lot of visions about the truths concerning the church of God. Her contribution has helped the church in many ways to know and understand many of God’s word.

Uriah Smith (1832-1903)

Uriah Smith became a Sabbath-keeping Adventist in the year 1852. He was twenty years (20) by then and joined James and Ellen White in the publishing ministry of the church the next year. The *Review and Herald* published his first contribution entitled, “the Warning Voice of the Time and Prophecy” in 1853. He joined the ministry at age twenty (20) and as a youth his contribution to the spread of the advent message was great. At age twenty three (23), he was chosen as the editor of the *Review and Herald*. His contribution to the Adventist church as a youth was well noted and it led to his assuming a very respectable and responsible position in the church. He was chosen as the first General Conference secretary in 1863. This happened as a result of his

¹Richard Rice, *The Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology from a Seventh-day Adventists Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1985), 195. See also Zoltán Szolos-Farkas, “The Rise and Development of Seventh-day Adventists Spirituality: The Impact of the Charismatic Guidance of Ellen G. White,” (Ph.D. diss., 2004, King’s College, University of Aberdeen, Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Adventists, 2005), 19-22.

² R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979), *Seventh-day Adventists Minister’s Handbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 69.

youthful zeal and involvement in the growth and expansion activities of the church. The youth can do a lot if we train and give them the opportunity to be involved in church growth activities in and outside the church. ¹

To sum this section up, the progress of the Adventist church in the past is evidence that the involvement of the youth cannot be underestimated. According to the *Youth Ministry Handbook and Leadership Manual*, “the youth are to be trained to become independent in performing church programs.”² This will not be accomplished unless they are given responsibilities to perform in the church. The youth therefore, “must be given the opportunity to develop their identity by participating in the week to week operation of the local church. Youth leaders must have the ability to search for places in the church where youth can participate in the life of the congregation.”³ The youth should be given the chance to serve on the church Board and other committees of the church. The youth should be involved in the “planning and act of worship, not only to fill in blank slot in the traditional worship order, but also to play a role in shaping the service so modern style of worship and ministry are welcome as well.”⁴ It is better to guide them at first but as they become experienced, the supervision can be minimized. A sense of involvement was created for the youth in the early days of the Adventist church and they did their best in those times. That is why many young men and women gave themselves to the work of God. They were encouraged to study the word of God

¹Ellen White Estate, Pathway of the Pioneers, accessed May 23, 2012
<http://www.whiteestate.org/pathway/smith.asp>

² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist church, *Youth Ministry Handbook and leadership training manual* (New York: Review and Herald), 161.

³ Ibid., 159.

⁴ Ibid., 160.

and with their dedicated lives; God used them to reach others who had not known the truth.

Gane has stated that, Adventist youth ministry always intended to be – “a means of training young people to take their own place in God’s work now, not in the nebulous future.” He continues by saying; sometimes one will wonder if Ellen White’s vision of an “army of youth” is still alive today. This is because when you visit our local churches today the involvement of the youth is minimal since they have not been trained and encouraged to play any active role in the church.¹

The Seventh-day Adventist church depends on its youth in carrying and lifting the gospel banner higher around the globe. It is for this reason that every conference organization has a youth ministry department attached. It is incumbent upon the youth department to lend guidance to the energies of its youth, with the chief objective to help the young person develop into a mature Christian adult, prepared to make a useful contribution to the society and the church.” Some are rewarded with the “Master Guide” honors upon completion of rigorous requirements to enable the person go out and minister to others.² “While the task of saving Adventist youth is essentially the responsibility of the church,” it is also important to train the youth to be soul winners.³ God still expects the youth to be used in His church today as it were in the past. Youth involvement will lead to spiritual and numerical growth in our churches as the youth takes the three angels message and preaches to everyone. We must develop an

¹ Gane, 145.

² David Mitchell, *Seventh-day Adventist Faith in Action* (New York: Vantage Press, 1939), 85.

³ Nathaniel Krum, *The MV Story* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1963), 112, 113.

environment where young people will be encouraged to take leadership responsibilities in the church to ensure growth.¹

Youth in World History

Apart from the bible, the Spirit of Prophecy and church history, there are other youth in world history who also have demonstrated in their lives the need to involve the youth. Their lives and achievements are demonstration of what young men and women can do when given the chance.

Alexander the Great (536-323 B.C.)

Against overwhelming odds, Alexander (334-331 B.C) led his army to victories across the Persian territories of Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt without suffering a single defeat. The young king of Macedonia, leader of the Greeks, overlord of Asia Minor and Pharaoh of Egypt became a “great king” of Persia at the age of twenty five (25). He was a very young man but he became a mighty warrior during his time indicating that when the youth are given the chance they will prove their ability to do mighty things.²

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 - 1821)

Napoleon was one of the greatest military leaders in world history, and emperor of France who conquered much of Europe. He defeated the Austrians at Marengo at age thirty-one (31).³ As a young boy, Napoleon Bonaparte organized and led intricate

¹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Youth First* (Youth Ministries Department, Silver Spring, MD: 2004), 8.

² Robert Wilde, *European History: Biography of Napoleon Bonaparte*, BBC History, accessed May 16, 2012, <http://www.europeanhistory.about.com>.

³ *Ibid.*, May 16, 2012.

battles with his schoolmates.¹ In his attempt to unite Europe, he married Louise of Austria and organized the battle of Waterloo of which he was defeated in 1815. After his defeat in this battle, Napoleon said “God Almighty is too much for me.” Though a young man, his age did not stop him from achieving his aim and mission in life. Napoleon worked hard to write history of him that will motivate other youth to do their best.

Isaac Newton (1642 –1727)

The contributions of Isaac Newton in the field of science and mathematics are great. He formulated the law of gravity at the age of twenty-three (23) and made a lot of discoveries before he reached age twenty-five (25). In 1669, at the age of Twenty Seven, he was ranked as second Lucasian Professor of mathematics at the Trinity College.² He discovered many theories in science and mathematics such as the “binomical theorem, new methods for expansion of infinite series, and his direct inverse method of fluxion.”³ He latter contributed to Christianity when he wrote books on Daniel and Revelation. All these contributions were made in his youthful age.

William Miller (1782-1849)

At the age of twenty-one (21), William Miller was well accepted in his community, serving it as a constable, justice of peace, and deputy sheriff. Shortly before

¹ Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Moving People on to God’s Agenda, Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publ., 2001), 33.

² Richard S. Westfall, *The Life of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge, MT: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 17, 23.

³ BBC History, Biography of Isaac Newtown: accessed, May 30, 2012 <http://www.bbc.uk/history/historic>.

the outbreak of the war of 1812 he became a lieutenant in the State militia; during the war he was promoted to a captain in the regular army. At this youthful age he never relented in his effort to serve in the duties that was assigned him. In all the offices Miller served, he appeared to have rendered given satisfactory service and to have exhibited an impeachable character. Furthermore, it was through the influence of the Millerite movement which he foundered with other colleagues that the Seventh-day Adventist Church came into being.¹

John Calvin (1509-1564)

John Calvin started his reform work in 1536 at the age of twenty-seven (27). Calvin became an influential French theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation. He became a prominent figure in the development of a system of christian theology which later became known as Calvinism or Reform. Calvin was “originally trained as a humanist lawyer, he broke from the Roman Catholic church around 1530. After religious tensions provoked a violent uprising against Protestants in France, Calvin fled to Basel, Switzerland,” where he published the first edition of his seminal work *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536.²

To sum this section up, a careful survey of people who have made significant contributions in diverse ways in history reveals clearly that most of them were young. They made their contributions and achievements when they were in their youthful age. This means that the youth of today can contribute a lot if they will give themselves to studies about the great men in history. There is lots of work for the youth of our day to

¹ Dick N. Everett, *William Miller and the Advent Crises* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1994), 3.

² John Calvin – “Christian Classics Ethereal Library:” accessed May 30, 2012 <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin>.

accomplish; it is incumbent upon the leaders to empower them in order for them to serve the church and the world better.

Other Christian Literature

Here are some views expressed by other christian authors on the need to involve young men and women in any activity to prepare them to be independent when they are given responsibilities. According to President Hoover, “adults should not always lead the young men and women, but rather train and challenge them to develop ways to do things on their own. He says it is the youth who will mold the character of the coming generation.”¹ For that matter churches should put in place programs suitable for the young people and give them the opportunity to participate in running such programs. As they participate, they will develop interest in involving themselves when they are called upon to serve. The leadership of the church should impress upon the young people that they can do something for God’s work to progress. As the youth are given the opportunity to serve in the church, they should see it as opportunity to learn leadership skills to serve the church and to help it grow. The word of God should be made meaningful in the life of the young people and it should be impressed upon their heart that God wants them to be part of the church’s activities to ensure growth.² It is true that “putting youth in leadership role with clear guidelines brings out the best in them. Automatically they become cooperative” in whatever task they will be asked to involve themselves in.³

¹ President Hoover, *White House Conference on Child Health and Protection* (New York: Century Publ., 1931), 250.

² Charles F. Kemp, *The Church: The Gifted and the Retarded Child* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1957), 75-78.

³ John Gray, *Children are from Heaven* (New York: Harper Collins Publications, 1999), 63.

To effectively involve the youth, there is the need to give them the required guidelines to perform whatever task they may be asked to perform. We are called to interact with the youth and to train them to use their God given potential to lead other youth to know God to ensure growth in the church. When the leadership of the church approaches the youth in this manner, they will not draw back when they have to move forward. The mistake that adults sometimes make is that, after planning with the youth, we do not allow them to participate in the presentation of the event; instead, the adults take over. The youth should be involved in the planning as well as in the presentations to enable them exercise their gifts. God has given the youth gifts as well as the adults; therefore, let the opportunity be given to them to practicalize their gifts to help make a difference in the church and the society.¹

To engage the youth, there is the need for adults to know and understand the valuable impact of youth involvement and participation in the church. When the issue of allowing youth participation in the program and activities of the church are discussed, it also calls for respect and understanding from the adults. The leadership of the church is also expected to be abreast with the prevailing youth culture, also, getting them to participate in all levels of church life, cherishing and respecting their valuable contributions to the church and the society.

¹Christian Network of Uta, Youth involvement magazine, accessed, May 22, 2012 <http://www.christianyouthnetwork.blogspot.com/2008>.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING

This section of the paper looks at the description of the local setting. It surveys the history of the Atebubu district of the SDA church, the geographical situation prevailing in the church field. The study also looks at the pre-program interviews and questionnaire administered, factors affecting youth involvement and personal observation.

Brief History

This section of the study gives a brief history of the Atebubu district of the SDA church. It also surveys the political, geographical and economic activities of the people in the area.

The Atebubu District (Political, Geographical, and Economics)

The Atebubu district where this research work is based forms part of the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana which shares borders with the Ashanti region on the South, Northern region on the north, Volta region in the east, and western region and La Cote D'Ivoire in the west. "The district covers a land area of 1,996 km² with an estimated population of 82,109 in 2009. It is bordered at the north by the East Gonja district in the Northern Region, the Pru district and to the south by the Ejura-Sekyeredumasi district in the Ashanti Region. To the east, it shares boundaries with the Sene district

and to the west with Kintampo and Nkoranza districts, all in the Brong-Ahafo region.”¹

It is one of the oldest districts in the Brong Ahafo region yet undeveloped.

It is not only the Brong and Ahafo tribes who live in this town; there are lots of people from all the other regions of Ghana who live in Atebubu. Most of these people migrated from the three northern regions of Ghana. The common languages for the people living in Atebubu are “Brong Twi” and Hausa.

Economically, the cost of living in Atebubu is low yet the poverty level is very high since most of the people living there have no white color jobs apart from farming. Since their farm produce does not last all year round; they suffer poverty making live unbearable for most of them. Commercially, it has a big market and the market days are Monday and Tuesday. People from all corners of the country come to trade on these days. The town is noted for food stuffs such as grains, tubers of yam, and garden eggs. The market reaches its apex on Tuesday when it is usually filled with all people from different cultures and background.

About 60% of the people living in Atebubu are mostly farmers of which about 35% migrated from the northern regions of Ghana. The district is described as one of the most deprived in Ghana thereby making the level of formal education very low. About 30% of the people living in this area are muslims, christians form about 65% of the overall population and about 5% are neither muslims nor christians and may be described as animist.²

¹ Ghana Brong Ahafo Region, History of Atebubu Amantin District, accessed January, 2012 <http://www.atebubuamantin.ghanadistricts.gov.gh>, 2009.

² Ibid.

History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Atebubu District

Most of the people living in this area are Adventists church members because it is the oldest Christian denomination in the district. The Seventh-day Adventists church makes up about 50% of the overall christian population in the Atebubu district. A visit to some areas such as Mem, Old Konkrompe and Watro, indicates that about 90% of the people living there are Seventh– day Adventists. History has it that in 1939, one Elder Paul Arthur, a native of Mem traveled to Adutwam in the Ashanti region and was converted to the Adventist faith. When he returned to Mem the same year, he organized some family members and friends, and preach the new faith to them. He succeeded in converting people into the Adventist faith and later established a church in October, 1939 and a primary school in September, 1940 at Mem. With the assistance of Mr. Aniboeye, a teacher at Mem SDA Primary School who resided at Old Konkrompe many people were converted to Adventist faith. Two years later in 1941, Mr. Aniboeye and church members who come for worship at Mem from Old Konkrompe began to organize themselves for worship at Old Konkrompe.¹

Information has it that in 1949 a group of young men at Nwowam namely: Simon Kwaah, Peter Kwaah and Daniel Kwaah paid a visit to Praprabon, a farming family village in Atebubu. It was during this visit that they got insight about the Anglican faith. On their return to Nwowam, they gave serious attention to the study of Twi and for that matter the Twi Bible. They were assisted by Elder Emmanuel Oduro from Atebubu in the study of the word of God. Soon afterwards, one Matthew Owusu from Nwowam in Atebubu traveled to Tintare in 1950 where he met a yam seller named Maame Adwoa Poomaa, from Ashanti Region. In the course of their interaction, she

¹ Adjei Matthew, *History of Atebubu Seventh-day Adventist Church and Its Environs*. (Asafo Kumasi, Ghana: Elbenken Printing Press, 2011) 3, 5.

preached the Adventist message to Elder Matthew Owusu, Elder S. K. Donkor and Elder Solomon K. Owusu. By the grace of God, they got converted. Elder Solomon Owusu came back and started bible studies with his acquaintances at Nwowam especially those who were converted to the Anglican faith. These brothers in Nwowam accepted the Adventist message and started meeting every Sabbath at Nwowam. However, the Nwowam meetings were short lived due to antagonistic confrontation between the new converts and the heathen worshippers namely; Opanin Bio and Asare. The new converts were alleged to have flouted the orders of the village by destroying their shrines “Nyomo” and “Abudjo”. The late Peter Kwaah, leader and Thomas Ayeh, the Secretary were said to be the most stubborn among the group. They were summoned before the Atebubu Traditional Court presided by a white judge from Mampong. The charge was not only flouting the orders of the shrines but for destroying the shrines. It was considered grave and could attract severest penalty if found guilty. The presiding judge ruled that the shrines be made to exercise their powers by causing the victims to die. All the people who worshiped at Nwowam left to join their fellows at Mem and Old Konkrompe where they all met every Sabbath for worship till today. Following their victory in the court case, they were able to start a new church in Atebubu town in 1950.¹

The Seventh– day Adventist church is the only denomination that has survived in these two towns up to date. No other christian denomination is able to survive in these communities apart from the Seventh–day Adventist church. From 1939 to 1950, there was no resident pastor to take care of the churches in Mem and Old Konkrompe. Encouragement from the late Pastor Asare who operated from Kete Krachi in the Volta Region helped the converts in these two churches to spread the Adventist message to

¹ Matthew Adjei, . Interview by the author, Atebubu, December, 2012 .

the surrounding villages. Pastor Asare who operated from Krachi in the Volta Region organized Bible lessons for the new converts at Mem, Nwowam, Atebubu and Old Konkrompe. The Bible lessons yielded good results and on 28th October, 1950, about thirty converts were baptized in River Nyomo near Nwowam. This small group constituted the nucleus of the Seventh-Day Adventist church in Atebubu. Pastor James, the White President of the then Ghana Conference of SDA church in Kumasi officiated at the baptismal ceremony assisted by Pastor C. B. Mensah who later became the first Ghanaian President of the Ghana Conference. The distance from Kete Krachi where Pastor Asare was operating to the Atebubu district, made it very difficult for him to visit them regularly. In view of this the Conference authorities asked these churches to join the Agona district of SDA church in 1951.

It is on record that until 1957, the Atebubu district was part of the Agona district of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The rate of growth among the churches in the Atebubu and Mampong areas led to the authorities of the Central Ghana Conference creating two districts out of the then Agona district. The two new districts that were created out of the Agona district were Atebubu and Mampong districts. The leadership of the Conference chose Atebubu and Mampong as the district headquarters. The district was headed by the Atebubu Church hence the name Atebubu district of Seventh-day Adventist church. At the time the Atebubu district was created, there was only one Church in the Atebubu Town.

The then Atebubu district comprised of, Atebubu church (now Atebubu Central), Kwamedanso church, Mem church, Komfourkrom, Abaase, Bantama, Lemu, Lasi, Old Konkrompe, Akyeremade, Menko, Kofijan, Kyeamekrom, Kajaji, Premuase, and Nyankonkyere churches. The late Pastor Boadi was the first gospel minister who was posted to take care of the new district from 1957 to 1962. Since 1957, seventeen

pastors have served in the district as district Pastors to ensure its growth. With the period under consideration, the youth gave their best to ensure the growth and the expansion of the churches in Atebubu and its environs. Through the efforts of the youth, churches like Komfourkrom, Abaase, Zambrama, and Parambo 1 were opened.

Transportation was a major problem in the 1980s in the Atebubu area but the youth did all they could in the church to spread the gospel in the Atebubu area. It is worthy of note that the Atebubu district has given birth to two new ones; namely Kwamedanso district (1995), and Yeji district (2005). Everyone participated in the growth and expansion of the church in the Atebubu area including the youth.

Table 1 shows the percentage number of youth as against the percentage number of adults in all the sixteen churches in the Atebubu district, and the number of elders in charge of these churches. It shows the percentage of the adult members and the youth in all the churches in the Atebubu district. The adult membership of the district constitute 32.70% and 67.30% of them are the youth. Considering the number of youth in the district, one would wonder why the adults still handle most of the activities in the churches. It could be that the adults have failed in their duties to train the youth or maybe the youth themselves are not willing to give up their best in church to ensure its growth. It could also be that the elders who are taken care of this large population of both youth and adults are not enough as shown on the data provide above. Instead of using their youthful vigor to get involved in most of the churches activities, the case here is different; few elders are in-charge of such a large population.

Table 1. Number of Youth and Adults in Atebubu District

Church	Total Membership	Number of Elders	Number of Adults	%	Number of Youth	%
Atebubu Central	220	4	65	29.5%	155	70.5%
Atebubu New Town	165	4	42	25.5%	123	74.5%
Atebubu West	110	2	33	30.0%	77	70.0%
Mem	170	4	73	42.9%	97	57.1%
New Konkrompe	125	4	45	36.0%	80	64%
Old Konkrompe	87	2	37	42.5%	50	57.5%
Watro	83	2	30	36.1%	53	63.9%
Akokoa	62	2	8	12.9%	54	87%
Jato Zongo	74	2	22	29.7%	52	70.3%
Anyinofi	134	2	60	44.8%	74	55.22%
Kumfia	20	2	7	25.0%	13	65.0%
Fakwasi	35	2	3	8.6%	32	91.4%
Kokofu	19	1	4	31.6%	15	79%
Atebubu Victory	45	2	12	27.0%	33	63.0%
Nyomoase	21	1	6	28.6%	15	71.4%
TOTAL	1370	48	448	32.7%	923	67.30%

Pre-Program Survey and Interview

Before the program was developed to solve the problem of minimal youth involvement in the three churches in the Atebubu town, a letter was sent to all the churches in the Atebubu district to sensitize them about the program. The interviews and questionnaires were conducted from 23rd to 27th January, 2013 to know the present condition of youth involvement in the church and the problem of low involvement and participation of the youth in church activities. Individuals who were given the questionnaires were asked to provide the following demographic information; gender, age group, current position in church, marital status, and education background.

Interviews through questionnaires were conducted to find out youth members who are regularly, often, sometimes, scarcely, and never involved in church activities and the inhibiting factors of youth involvement.

The tables below indicates the total population of the churches and the number of youth, who are actively involved in church activities such as evangelism, distribution of tracts, leading programs in church, giving bible studies in and outside the church.

Youth Involvement in the Atebubu Central Seventh-day Adventist Church

Total church membership = 220

Ages 15 – 35 = 155

Ages 36 and above = 65

Table 2 shows that in the Atebubu Central Seventh-day Adventist church, 28 youth which represent 18.10% are regularly involved in church programs and activities, 41 youth representing 26.50% often participate, 44 youth group representing 28.40% sometimes participate, 19 youth representing 12.26% are scarcely involved, and 23 members representing 14.80% are never involved in any church programs and activities. This implies that the youth ministry has a problem, and if care is not taken to train the young people in the church for their participation, it will affect the growth of the church. The leaders of the church must be charged to find a lasting solution to this problem to make the church vibrant with the youth participating fully in the church to ensure its growth. The youth are the majority in the church but do not participate in church programs. It is clear from this data that the youth in this church are not involved in the running of the church.

Table 2. Youth Involvement in Atebubu Central Church

Youth Involvement	Number of Youth Involved in Church	Percentage (%) of Youth Involvement
Regularly	28	18.10%
Often	41	26.50%
Sometimes	44	28.40%
Scarcely	19	12.26%
Never	23	14.8%

Youth Involvement in the Atebubu New Town Seventh-day Adventist Church

Total church membership = 165

Ages 15 – 35 = 123

Ages 36 and above = 42

Table 3 indicates that in the Atebubu New Town Seventh-day Adventist church, 30 youth representing 24.4% are regularly involved in church activities, 26 youth members representing 21.10% often participate in church, 27 youth representing 22% sometimes are involved, 22 youth representing 17.9% scarcely participate, and 18 youth members representing 14.6% never participate in church. Looking at the figures above one will observe that the youth participation is low and will ask what is the leadership doing to improve youth participation in this church. The argument is that if the church is aware of this, what they are doing to win the interest of the youth in the church to also get involved. There is an emergent need for the training of the youth in the church to contribute their quota in the church to ensure church growth. The few that are been engaged in church activities are doing their best. This should serve as a sign that when the others who are idling in the church are trained they can contribute much to the growth of the church.

Table 3. Youth Involvement in Atebubu New Town Church

Youth Involvement	Number of Youth Involved in Church	Percentage (%) of Youth Involvement
Regularly	30	24.40%
Often	26	21.10%
Sometimes	27	22.00%
Scarcely	22	17.9%
Never	18	14.6%

Youth Involvement in Atebubu West Seventh-day Adventist Church

Total Church membership = 110

Ages 15 – 35 = 87

Ages 36 and above = 37

Table 4 demonstrates that in the Atebubu West church, 23 youth representing 26.4% are regularly involved in church activities, 21 youth representing 24.1% often involve themselves, 20 youth representing 23% sometimes participate in church activities, 12 youth representing 13.8% scarcely involved, and 11 youth representing 12.6% never involve themselves in church activities.

Observing the number of youth in this church one can say Atebubu West church is a youth church but the same time will wonder why their participation in church programs and activities are low. Can this be attributed to the fact the people think only the adults have to do the work in the church?

Table 4. Youth Involvement in Atebubu West Church

Youth Involvement	Number of Youth Involved in Church	Percentage (%) of Youth Involvement
Regularly	23	26.4%
Often	21	24.1%
Sometimes	20	23%
Scarcely	12	13.8%
Never	11	12.6%

All the tables above show that the participation and involvement of the youth in church activities is low in all these churches. From personal observations, interviews and questionnaires administered it is clear that the youth in the church are not usually involved in the programs of the church. There is every indication that the services of the youth are not being utilized by the Atebubu churches and this can have negative impact on the spiritual growth of the entire district. The total membership of Seventh - day Adventist church in Atebubu district is thousand three hundred and seventy (1370) according to 2011 church records. The youth constitute nine hundred and twenty three (923) representing 67.3% of the overall population. Few of these youth are being utilized in the church's activities during the week. This has contributed to the minimal participation and involvement of the youth in the church, hence affecting the growth of the church physically and spiritually. Even though some of the young people in the church are sometimes given the chance to take part in the church's programs and activities, the percentage of youth involvement is low. If Ten (10) people have to officiate in church programs in a week, you will find only one youth being involved.

Inhibiting Factors Affecting Youth Involvement

This minimal participation and involvement of the youth in the church has been attributed to so many factors from personal observations, interviews and questionnaires administered. Upon critical observations I could see that some of the youth have the desire to get involved in the church's activities but they are not given the opportunity to do so. Most of the youth who participated in answering the questionnaire sent to them made it clear that apart from youth week celebrations where the church allows them to lead, you would hardly find the youth on the church's weekly program and activities. The following were identified as the inhibiting factors affecting youth involvement in the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church:

1. Lack of Training

For somebody to perform well in anything, the person must pass through some training that will prepare him/ her to performance. Lack of training of the youth in the district has been one of the inhibiting factors of youth involvement in the churches programs and activities. According to the bible, we are to train our children the way they should go, so that when they are grown they will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6). Failure on the part of church leadership to train the youth to enable them participate fully in the activities of the church can be blamed for this problem. In view of this the church must make sure proper training of the youth is done regularly to prepare them for participation in church activities. Church elders and officers must make this a fixed program on the yearly calendar of the events in the church so that it will equip the youth with the necessary skills that will make them always ready to work. Sometimes when the conference organizes training programs, it does not last long enough to equip the youth with the needed skills to prepare them for involvement in church activities. Moreover, the distance from the local churches to Kumasi (the Conference

Headquarters) for these training also makes it very difficult for more people to attend such trainings. The few people who may be able to attend youth leadership training are the only ones who are sometimes given the chance to work in the church. If the youth are to be active in the church, it calls for conscious leadership skills training to equip them to serve better in the church. When the youth are trained to function in the local churches, they will not find it difficulty giving their best to help the growth of the church both physically and spiritually.

2. Lack of Proper Leadership

The activities of the youth department have been almost ignored by the churches. This is evident in the type of leaders the church chooses for the youth department in the local church. Some of the leaders in the youth department do not qualify to lead the youth. They have not caught the vision for the youth department, they lack experience, they are not wholeheartedly devoted to the cause of Christ and they lack qualities needed to lead young people in the church. These factors make them unsuccessful in their ministry to the youth which also affects the youth in their preparation for service in the church. This sometimes makes it very difficult for the youth to be fully prepared for church involvement. If the leaders are not qualified to lead the youth, how can they be fully and adequately prepared for the church to use them? It is impossible unless they are trained to know what youth ministry is about. As the adage goes, “if a blind man leads a blind man, both of them will fall into a pit.” The same thing applies to the youth, when the leadership is not good enough to prepare them for full participation in the church; it goes a long way to affect the church at the long round. Proper leadership is lacking in the church especially in the youth department and that is why youth involvement has been minimal in the church.

3. Lack of Encouragement and Motivation

Often times, the elders of the church do not attend youth programs to give them encouragement and moral support. Instead of encouraging the youth, some leaders are on the lookout for the mistakes of the youth so that they can take actions against them. During youth week of prayers, hardly would you see more adults in attendance. This is an indication that, the adults do not show interest in the activities and the participation of the youth in the church. Instead of the elders participating fully in the activities of the youth to know the strength and weakness of the youth, they only show off only on Sabbath when the program is ending which does not serve as encouragement for the youth. People who are given the opportunity to participate in the activities of the youth do not receive encouragement and motivation from the leadership of the church. For this reason, the other youth are not willing to get involve in church activities.

4. Lack of Delegation

Delegating authority and responsibility is one of the ways to prepare young people for involvement in the church. One of the biggest problems militating against youth involvement and participation in the Atebubu churches is the failure on the part of the leaders to delegate responsibility. Some youth leaders find it very difficult to share or delegate responsibility to others especially the youth they lead. This is because of the fear that the youth will not perform well since they have not been trained. Some leaders have make themselves “jack of all trades, but master of none”. They will always want to be seen participating in church activities and as such they find it difficult to tell others to perform or do something on their behalf. Others think they may lose their office if those they delegate responsibilities to perform better than they do. When the youth are empowered and given the opportunity to serve in the church, there will never be a time that the church will lack the services of the youth. Some youth leaders fail to learn a

lessons from Moses' father-in-law's advice to him to share responsibility to the people he was leading according to their abilities (Exd. 18:21 – 26). Moses was successful when he shared and delegated some of his responsibilities.

5. Lack of Education

Most of the youth in the Atebubu churches have not had formal education and thereby finding it uncomfortable to lead church programs. They find it difficult to read and write, since most of the youth materials are written in the english language and needs to be interpreted. When the few who have the opportunity to go through formal education leave for school or for work outside Atebubu, the churches loose the services of the youth since the rest may not be able to read or write.

6. Social Pressures

The pressures associated with the end time as described in the bible (2Tim. 3:1, 2) are affecting the participation of the young people in the Atebubu churches. What they read from television, newspapers, magazines and the happenings around them sometimes put pressure on the youth thereby affecting their lives in the church. The influences of their friends and colleagues outside the church make it difficult for the youth to make themselves available for church involvement. The youth in our churches today wants to behave like their colleagues who are not in the church due to peer pressure. The way their peers dress, what they read, and those they move with do not compel them to get involve in whatever is taking place in the church.

7. Lack of Commitment

It was discovered through the interviews and questionnaires administered that the commitment level of the youth to participate in church programs is low. This was making it difficult for the adult members to use the youth in the church. When they are

given the chance to participate in church programs, some of them do not show any commitment at all making it difficult for the church to involve them.

8. Age Discrimination

The elders in the church feel reluctant to use the youth in the church due to the fact that they consider them to be young. Being young does not mean one cannot participate in church program. Many people who participated in the survey conducted spoke against this act of discrimination. When the services of the youth are neglected for the fact that they are young, it will be very difficult for them to be used in church activities. Jesus Christ in choosing his disciples did not show partiality. Jesus called the common people in the society who were willing to take the task of discipleship and trained them for that purpose (Matt 4:18-22). Through this means, the common people were prepared for the work they were asked to do. The same process should be considered in preparing the youth for ministry today. Every young man in the church should be considered important in the church for God needs the services of every man.

9. Lack of Monitoring

It was observed that the activities of the youth are not monitored by the church leadership and therefore, they do not have control on whatever is going on among the youth. From personal observations, you could see that the church does not show interest in youth activities. On Mondays and Fridays, activities of the youth are attended and conducted only by the youth. The elders do not attend youth activities to monitor their performance to know how the future of the church looks like because the youth of today are the future of the church. Since the activities of the youth are not monitored, they are tempted to do what seems right in their own eyes. They center most of their programs on entertainment at the expense of spiritual matters. To involve the youth in

the church, there is the need to monitor their activities to see how the church can improve them to function effectively in the church.

10. Unwillingness of Adult Members to Lead the Youth

When the youth meet for studies on Mondays, they find it very difficult to divide the classes according to their age groups because there are no teachers to lead. Most of the time, what the youth leaders do is to combine all the ages and teach them together which makes understanding difficult. To combine those in the lower grades with those in the higher grades is not feasible since their ages are different, and they understand things differently. This problem is affecting the preparation that one needs to go through to be able to fully participate in church activities. The elders who can lead progressive classes do not attend youth meetings and this is making transmission of knowledge and doctrines very difficult.

11. Lack of Involvement

Lack of training for the youth in the Atebubu churches has led to their minimal involvement in church activities. The leaders of the Atebubu district do not give the youth the opportunity to participate in most of the church's activities or programs. There is an indication that whenever the youth are given the opportunity to lead church programs the impact is always high; but the problem is that the church does not always give the youth the opportunity to be involved in most of the church's programs and activities. If the church fails to use the services of its youth, it affects the overall involvement of the youth in the church. The youth are part of the church in ensuring its growth, but if the elders do not allow them, they cannot force their way through to participate in the church. Since the youth have not been involved in most of the church's activities, it makes the work of the nominating committee difficult. This is because they constitute the majority of the church's membership and therefore they are

needed no matter what. To neglect the services of the youth will put the future of the church in danger because the youth will take over when the adults are no more. The low involvement of the youth today is a treat to the spiritual development of the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

12. Lack of Programs

The survey conducted revealed that the activity of the youth in the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church does not follow any organized program. This has been one of the pitfalls on youth involvement in the district. All youth programs have become entertainment having no impact on the spirituality of the youth in the church. This has affected the growth and spirituality of the youth, leading to their low participation. Since the activities are not programmed, it has become a one way activity, hence affecting youth attendance also.

13. Inferiority Complex

Some of the youth do not believe in their ability to function well in the church to further its growth. This attitude affects most of the youth and their involvement in church activities and programs. They think other people are better-off than them and therefore are not actively participating in most of the church's programs and activities. The next chapter surveys relevant programs developed to solve the problem of minimal youth involvement in the three churches in the Atebubu town.

To sum this section up, it can be said that many factors militate against the involvement of the youth in the churches in the Atebubu. Nonetheless, if the youth are empowered and encouraged to participate in the activities of these churches, there is hope that they will do their best for the betterment of the church. The involvement of the youth in the activities of the church will go a long way to enhance and promote the mission of the church.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAMME DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The problem of youth involvement in church activities needs to be solved to enhance the spiritual growth of the church. This problem has been in Atebubu for many years but that does not mean that there cannot be solutions to them. Based on the responses of the people to questionnaire administered to them, and personal observations, the following programs were designed and implemented to solve the problem of low involvement of the youth in the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Program Objectives

The following objectives were set to be achieved at the end of the program.

1. To help the church know that the youth are part of the church and therefore should be involved in the activities of the church.
2. To train and encourage the youth to know how to lead church programs to ensure maximum involvement in church activities and also to strengthen and encourage the youth to show commitment in whatever activity they are asked to do in the church.
3. To train the youth in order that they will be ready and committed for service in and outside the church to improve spiritual growth in the church. That is to create an avenue for youth to be educated on how to perform programs in the church when they are given the opportunity.
4. To train the youth leadership team on how to plan their activities and programs in such a way that those who have no interest in youth activities will be attracted by the

way programs are planned and conducted. This will enable the youth set goals for any activity that will take place in the church so that it will help the youth develop interest in church activities. This will enhance youth involvement and participation in church programs and activities.

Program Design, Preparation and Implementation

Before the program, a district meeting was organized and all local elders and youth leaders were invited to attend the meeting. At the meeting the purpose for which the assembly was conveyed was introduced to the 116 people who attended the meeting. The leadership was glad that such a program was going to take place in the three churches in Atebubu to revive the involvement of the youth in church's activities. It was agreed that the Atebubu Central church host the training program since they have the facilities to host the program. The following programs were developed and implemented to deal with the problem of the minimal youth involvement in the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

1. Leadership Training and Workshop
2. Youth revival week
3. Youth evangelism
4. Week-end camping

The Setting of the Program

The program was conducted solely in the three churches in the Atebubu town namely; Atebubu Central, New Town, and West churches. The Atebubu Central church was the venue for all the programs because it is in the center of the town and all the facilities needed for the program was available there. Among the three churches selected for this project, the Atebubu Central church has the largest number of youth. Apart from the youth in these three churches, some of the youth from the nearby

churches live in Atebubu. Finally, the program was opened to everyone who wanted to participate to attend and the Central church is easier to locate. The program was outlined in such a way that it benefited everyone who attended (see Appendix B).

The Implementation of the Program

The program was implemented in five phases.

Phase One:

One Day Leadership Training Workshop

The survey conducted revealed that one the causes of minimal involvement of the youth in these three churches is lack of training for the youth; both leaders and members. As part of the measures to train the youth and prepare them for involvement, a day's workshop was organized on February 2, 2013 for the youth leaders and elders' in-charge of youth in the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Atebubu Central church premise was the venue for the one day workshop. Youth leaders, pathfinder leaders and their assistance from all the churches in the district attended this leadership workshop with the aim to train and educate the participants on how to do effective youth ministry. The workshop was also attended by the district youth leader and his assistants. Furthermore, the district pathfinder leader and his assistant were invited to attend the workshop. All the elders from each of the churches in the Atebubu district of the Seventh-day Adventist church were invited to attend this one day training workshop to educate them on the importance of training the youth for service. It was also to serve as bases for further workshops and training for the youth. Besides those that were officially invited to the workshop, it was also opened to all church members who were willing to attend and is interested in youth ministry. The participants at the workshop were made up of eighteen (18) elders from all the churches,

twenty two (22) church officers, forty-four (44) youth members, and forty-five (45) selected church members.

The theme for the workshop was “The Role of the Leader in Youth Involvement.” The under listed topics were considered at the workshop:

1. Devotion topic, “Do Not Let Any One Look down on you” (1Tim 4:12)
2. Functions of the Youth Leader in the Local Church
3. Planning and Programming
4. Importance of Youth Involvement
5. Delegation and Youth Involvement
6. Youth Involvement and Small Group Ministry
7. Youth and Evangelism

Copies of the program outline were given to the individuals who attended the workshop one week before they attended the workshop. This was to give them foreknowledge of what would take place at the workshop (see Appendix C). At the end of the one day workshop, written copies of the materials used for the workshop were made for every individual who attended the workshop to be used in their local churches to train other youth members. (See Appendix D).

The program was conducted as planned and the outline was followed accordingly. Hand outs were printed for all who attended the program to serve as guide and reference for them and also to be used in training other youth members. The success of the program was testified by some elders and church members who attended the workshop. The youth leaders and members who were present at the workshop requested for regular trainings to prepare more youth for leadership and other responsibilities in the church.

Phase Two

Youth Week of Revival

One week of revival was organized from February 17-23, 2013 as part of the program to encourage and motivate the youth to get involve in church activities and to take away inferiority complex in some of the youth. The theme for the week was; “My Place in God’s Work”. The venue of the program was the Atebubu Central church. All activities during the week were led by the youth from the three churches in Atebubu. A member of the youth group was chosen as the speaker for the week. Each night, the speaker was accompanied by two young people, one served as the coordinator and scripture reader, while the other one offers the opening prayer.

Under the above theme, the following topics were treated during the Week of Revival to prepare the youth for active involvement in church activities.

First night: “When He calls Me” – 1Sam 3:5-10

Second night: “Youth and Integrity, Joseph” – Gen 41:38

Third night: “The Fight of Faith” – 1Sam 17:45

Fourth night: “Be Strong and of Good Courage” – Jos1:5-8

Fifth night: Far from Home, Close to God – Dan 1:4-8

Sixth night: Quiz competition. Two youth members from each of the three churches in Atebubu were selected to context in the quiz competition. Questions were chosen from 1Sam 1-6. After the quiz competition, the youth from Atebubu Central Church emerged as the winners for the day. Four Good News Bibles were presented to them as their award for emerging winners on the occasion.

Divine service: “My Place in God’s Work” – Naaman’s slave girl – 2Kings 5:1-14.

On the final day, all the youth in the three churches were invited for fellowship under the same theme; “My Place in God’s Work”. Almost all the youth in these three

churches attended the fellowship program. All the youth from the three churches were happy and were committed to return to their various churches ready to serve the church.

This program was conducted to train, encourage, motivate and educate the young people in the church to do their best to ensure church growth. It aimed at making the youth committed for church work by looking at the examples of youth in the bible, spirit of prophecy and from history.

Phase Three

Youth Evangelism

This time the youth were given the opportunity to move out for witnessing to other youth outside the church. The youth from the three churches in the Atebubu town were grouped into smaller units (small groups). Each group had eight youth members made up of two leaders and six members. In all twenty-five (25) small groups were organized for witnessing activity for this phase of the project. This program was organized to encourage the youth to make themselves available for church involvement and to take away inferiority complex in some of them. Before the groups were sent out, one hour was used to remind them of what they had studied on small group during the workshop. They were reminded of the importance of small group activities in the church and among the youth. After short revision, they were sent out to their various assigned places for witnessing. The youth were engaged for witnessing in small groups for three continuous days. Through the combined effort of the twenty-five (25) groups with the help of God, eleven (11) backsliding youth came back into the church. The youth came to realize that when they are motivated through regular training and equipped for involvement, souls will be won to Christ.

Phase Four

Weekend Retreat

One weekend retreat was organized from April 19-21, 2013 for all the youth in the Atebubu district at the Atebubu Central church aside the three churches that were used as the sample for the research. The theme for the retreat was, “How Can I Be Ready for Church Involvement.”

On arrival at 5:00pm, an opening ceremony was conducted in which all the youth attended in their uniforms. The purpose of the retreat was made known to the youth who attended, in all sixty-five (65) were present. The attendees were made up of twenty-five (25) pathfinders and forty (40) Adventist Youth Society members. At the opening ceremony, camp rules and regulations were read to them followed by a short devotion from 8:15pm – 8:45pm. At exactly 9:00pm, all campers had gone to bed. The following areas were given attention during our studies at the retreat; *Church Heritage, (particularly how the church came about and history of the Adventist Youth Society); The Importance of Retreats and Camps; Youth Leadership; and Youth Evangelism* (appendix). The youth were trained on how to get involved in church activities to ensure church growth. On the Sabbath, the theme for the retreat was used as the topic for the divine service. On Sunday April 21, at 5:30am a consecration service was conducted and the youth were dispersed afterward to their various places.

Program Evaluation

After the implementation of the program, an evaluation was conducted on the program to find out if the program has made any impact on the attitude of the youth towards church programs and activities. To ascertain whether the purpose of the program has been achieved and the problem of minimal youth involvement has reduced,

another survey was conducted to evaluate the program from August 9 – 11, 2013 in the three churches where the research was conducted. This was done through questionnaires and interviews. The evaluation of the program proved that there has been significant improvement in youth involvement in church activities in all the three churches in Atebubu. The comparative analysis of the survey conducted through questionnaire has proved that the youth ministry after the implementation of the program is different. Different in the sense that, youth involvement level as it used to be before program implementations have risen in all the three churches.

The program was evaluated to compare the involvement of the youth before the and after the implementation of the program developed. The following concerns were raised and considered during the evaluation:

1. Has the concerns about the young people's minimal involvement in church activities been addressed?
2. Are the youth learning the basic faith that they can impart to other youth?
3. Have the youth been trained and challenged to get involved in church programs and activities?
4. Have the youth been fully prepared for involvement in the church?
5. Have the youth gain the knowledge needed for them to be prepared for reaching unbelievers and are they committed for service?

Table 5 shows a comparative study of youth involvement before and after the implementation of the program. Table 5 shows a comparative study and analysis of the interviews through questionnaire before and after the workshop and program implementation. Before program development and implementation, the youth who were involved in church activities were very low due to so many factors. There was an indication that the elderly in the church were not paying attention to the training of the youth. Clearly, it is evidence through observation of the analysis that, there has been a real change in youth involvement in all the three churches selected for the project.

Table 5. Youth Involvement Before and After Program Implementation

Church	Youth Involvement Before Program	Youth Involvement After Program	Youth Not Involved Before Program	Youth Not Involved After Program
Atebubu Central	28 (18.10%)	89 (57.00%)	23 (14.80%)	5 (3.22%)
Atebubu New Town	30 (24.40%)	67 (54.50%)	18 (14.60%)	6 (4.90%)
Atebubu West	23 (26.40%)	52 (59.80%)	11 (12.60%)	0%

Before the workshop and the implementation of the program the percentage of youth involvement in all the three churches were very low. Youth members who were actively involved in church activities and programs stood at 28 youth members who represented 18.10% and the youth who were never involved were 23 representing 14.80% in the Central church. In the Atebubu New Town church youth members who were involved regularly in church activities stood at 30 youth which represents 24.40% and youth who were never involved stood at 18 representing 14.60% on table seven above. Finally at the Atebubu West church there were 23 youth members who represent 26.40% who were involved in church activities regularly and 8 youth members representing 12.60% were never involved.

However the aftermath of the program implementation survey indicates massive change and significant improvement in the youth involved in church activities in all the three churches. After the implementation of the program developed, the number of youth member who are regularly involved in the church's activities increased from 18.10% to 57% at the Atebubu Central church. This showed clearly that the problem of low youth involvement in the Atebubu Central church has somehow been solved. At the Atebubu New town church, the number of youth members who are always involved after the program implementation rose from 24.40% to 54.50% and the youth who were never involved decreased from 18.60% to 4.90%. Finally, at the Atebubu West church, the number of youth who were always involved increased from 26.40% to 59.80% and the youth members who were never involved came to zero (0%).

At the end of the program, two elders, two members and one youth member from each of the three churches were interviewed through questionnaire after the program to find out whether the program has made any impact on the youth and the churches. In all fifteen people were interviewed, six elders, six church members and three youth members. They affirmed to the fact that at least something has happened among the youth in the churches that have increased their level of involvement. They were all happy that such a program for the youth has taken place in the churches to strengthen the youth to be actively involved in whatever activity taking place in the church. They all suggested that programs such as this for the youth must be sustained in the district and extend to other youth members in other districts. Two of them expressed their views this way; "I have seen that the low involvement of the youth in church activities can be attributed to the fact that, most of the youth did not know how to participate in the church since they had been educated and trained for that purpose, the elders were not paying attention to the youth ministry and spiritual needs of the youth.

The programs have opened my eyes to what I have to do as elder to make the youth in my church ready for service in the church.” Another elder on the other hand said; “this program should not end here rather it must be replicated in all the churches in the district and the conference as a whole. In so doing I am convinced that our young men and women in the church will not remain idle when they are supposed to do something in the church. Pastor may God bless you for giving us insight into the spiritual needs our youth in the church today.” One the youth also expressed his view this way; “pastor thank you for this program that I think has enlighten all of us in what we are supposed to do for the work of God to progress. Thank God that most of our elders were here to study and witness what we can do as youth to improve the spirituality of the youth in the church. From today I promise to do my part in all church activities to improve the spirituality of the church.” All these testimonies indicate that the program implementation went well and the church members are convinced that it is a good program which needs to be duplicated in churches where the youth are not given the opportunity to serve.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the findings of the research through questionnaire, interviews and personal observations; draw conclusions and make recommendations on the findings.

Summary

The youth in the church can be effective only when they have been educated and trained for service in and outside the church. For the work of God to move on from strength to strength, there is the need to include everyone in the church, both the young and old. In these last days God calls for every member in the church to do his or her honest part to hasten the second coming of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Every member in the church is called to duty, the youth also are included. In the Great Commission, there is a call to everyone in the church to make disciples of every nation. In Rev14:6, 7, both adults and the youth are called upon to proclaim the good news to every nation, tribe, language and people. The involvement of the youth is needed in these last days in every department of the church to prepare them for salvation and service. From the study, we can say that the youth were not involved in church activities for many reasons. The youth were not trained, powers were no delegated to them, they were discriminated by their age, not encouraged and motivated for involvement, and many others.

We have seen from this study that the youth are part of the church and therefore, cannot be excluded from the church's activities and programs. It is evidence from the

spirit of prophesy that; Youthful talent, well organized and well trained, is needed in our churches. The youth will do something with their overflowing energies. Unless these energies are directed into right channels, they will be used by the youth in a way that will hurt their own spirituality, and prove an injury to those with whom they associate.¹

We need to involve the youth in all church activities so that when the adults are no more they would be assured that the church is being taken good care of. We have seen that the youth have a place in the work of God but for them to be involved fully there is the need to take into consideration their training also. We are to give them the necessary training that will prepare them for ministering to their colleagues so that they can win them for Christ. When they are fully trained, they can be involved in every activity of the church. The Spirit of prophesy makes it clear that if the youth are rightly trained, they will carry the message of a crucified, risen, and soon coming Savior and might enter all corners of the world.² The strength of the youth must be utilized by the leaders of the church to carry out the last warning message to everyone on earth.

For the youth to be actively involved in church activities there is the need to encourage the youth in the church by delegating authority to them in whatever they do to help the growth of the church everywhere. Such encouragement will motivate the youth to do their possible best to uplift the image of God and the church wherever they go and in whatever they do. The youth will be willing to serve the church with all their heart, strength, their minds and soul. The attitude of laziness will be reduced when the youth feel that they are also part of the church to contribute to its growth both physically and spiritually. The adults in the church should mentor the youth in the

¹Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*,(Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 330, 331.

²Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2002), 271.

church so that they can learn the truth of God from them. As a former secondary school teacher puts it, “delegation does not mean abdication” that is to say after delegating authority to the youth to do something there is the need to guide them as they perform. God has been using the youth to reach others with the message of salvation in every generation. It is clear that God is still in the business of using the youth in the church today in accomplishing His work. The Lord has appointed the youth to be His helping hand and it is the duty of church leaders to give them the necessary training needed to make them ready for involvement in church work. Elders and church workers should do their best to allow the youth in the church to be part of whatever program that’s taking place in and outside the church so that they will also enjoy the blessings of been involved in church programs and activities. Involving the youth will help them remain in the church since involvement help them to feel that the church needs them. The leadership of the church has to keep the youth in small groups as they prepare them for involvement in church activities and programs since the youth learn best when they are in small groups.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the youth are not spectators in the church who will always be sitting in the pew to watch adults perform all activities in the church. The time has come for the church to remove all barriers preventing the youth in the church from being actively involved in the church. When it comes to church activities, age discrimination should be avoided so that everybody in the church will have the opportunity to give out his or her best to promote church growth. It is time for the church to pay attention to youth activities so that it will not focus only on entertainment but spiritual growth also. Most of the youth are leaving the church for the fact that they are not recognized in the church. In order for the church to keep the young people in the

church there is the need to involve them in church activities and programs. For more young people to be effectively involved in church activities and programs the following are recommended.

Recommendations

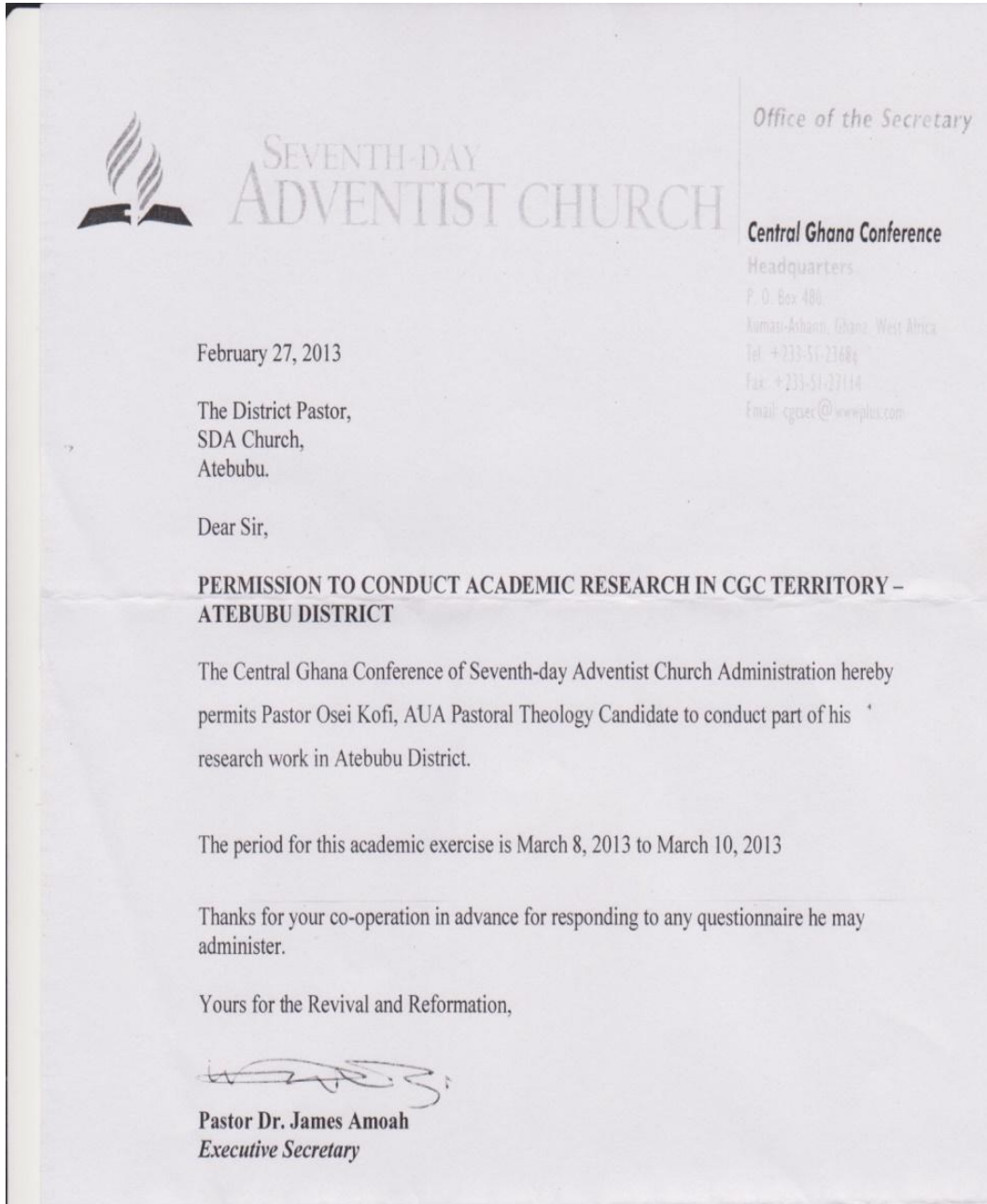
To solve the problem of low involvement of the youth in the Atebubu district and the church everywhere, the following suggested principles are recommended for consideration of pastors, elders, youth directors, and church members:

1. Pastors, elders, youth directors should consider that the involvement of the youth is needed in the church more than ever to ensure growth.
2. Every youth member should consider him or herself as an instrument that God can use for His purpose in and outside the church to ensure that the churches grow from strength to strength.
3. For the youth to be actively involved in church activities there must be regular training programs for youth leaders as well as the youth members in the church to prepare them for active service and involvement. This training must include workshops at both conference and district levels for all youth leaders.
4. The activities and programs of the youth must be properly planned and implemented. Programs that will prepare the youth for active involvement in the church's activities must be included in youth programs.
5. Youth activities should not focus only on the physical aspects (marching, games and others) but must include spiritual programs also. Apart from youth week of prayers, the youth must be given the opportunity to participate in other church programs.
6. Pastors and elders should delegate some responsibilities to the youth and monitor them as they do it. This will prepare them for involvement in church programs and activities.

7. The youth must be given the opportunity to be part of the running of the church; leading Sabbath School classes, serving on the church board, reading of scriptures during divine service, conducting bible studies, leading Wednesday prayer services and vesper services. Preparing the youth for future involvement should be the priority of pastors, elders, youth leaders and church members.

8. Any leader appointed for the youth should have the interest of the youth at heart and work towards the development of the youth to honor God.

APPENDIX A





SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH
CENTRAL GHANA CONFERENCE

ATEBUBU DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 3, ATEBUBU, B/A, GHANA W/AFRICA

Our Ref.: _____ Your Ref.: _____ Date _____

January 15, 2013

All churches, Atebubu district

Brethren,

INVITATION TO ONE DAY YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING WORKSHOP IN
ATEBUBU CENTRAL CHURCH

I have been directed by the district pastor to write this as an invitation to all youth leaders, elders, pathfinder leaders, and interested church members to attend a one day workshop taken place on February 2, 13 in Atebubu Central church. This is to enable our immediate past district pastor (Pr. Osei Kofi), in his MA Pastoral theology research project on the youth in Atebubu district. Please, make it a point to attend without fail.

Thanks for your usual co-operation and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Dickson Adjei

District secretary

APPENDIX B
PROGRAM OUTLINE

Date	Program	Venue	Remarks
February 2, 2013	Youth leadership workshop	Atebubu Central	All youth leaders in the district to attend
February 17-23, 2013	One week revival	Atebubu Central	All program to be led by the youth
	Outreach program (witnessing)	Atebubu town	Youth small groups
April 19-21, 2013	Weekend camping	Atebubu Central church	Atebubu district youth
	Evaluation	Atebubu Central	Selected members

Time	Facilitator	Activity	Topic
8:30am – 9:00am		Song service	
9:00am – 9:45am	Pastor Osei Kofi	Devotion	“Do Not Let Any One Look Down on You” (1Tim 4:12)
9:45am – 10:00am	Eld. Samuel Frimpong	Season of prayers	
10:00am – 10:50am	Pastor Stephen Owusu-Ansah	Lecture 1	Functions of The Youth Leader
10:55am – 11:45am	Pastor Osei Kofi	Lecture 2	Planning and Programming
11:45am – 12:35pm	Eld. Agyemang Badu Charles	Lecture 3	Importance of Youth Involvement
12:40pm - 1:15pm	Break and lunch	Break and lunch	Break and Lunch
1:15pm – 2:00pm	Eld. Samuel Frimpong	Lecture 3	Delegation and Youth Involvement
2:00pm – 2:50pm	Pastor Osei Kofi	Lecture 4	Youth Involvement and Small Group
2:55pm -3:30pm	Pastor Stephen Owusu-Ansah Gyamfi	Lecture 5	Youth and Evangelism
3:30pm – 4:00pm	Pastor Osei Kofi	Closing activities, announcement and benediction	

APPENDIX C

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP HANDOUT

1. Qualities of the youth leader: before one can be chosen as a leader in any organization, there are some inner qualities that need to be considered. The leaders were taken through the following as the qualities that can help in the selection of a youth leader.

a. Love: those who can lead our young people in the church are persons who have love for the Lord and for the youth. No amount of efforts that the leader will put in can replace these basic characteristics. In order to lead the young people to Christ the leader must first have Him at the center of his life. The youth leader must demonstrate love for the youth that he is leading.

b. Integrity: they were made to know that, integrity must be a cardinal virtue for every youth leader so that people can trust you. The youth leader must demonstrate Christ-like character which is based on integrity. Without it people will find it very difficult to follow you as a leader. The youth in the church must have confidence in the leader that they can rely on as followers. When integrity is lost, no real success can be achieved by the leader.

c. Servanthood: Jesus taught, “Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave among all” (Mark 10:44, NIV). Leadership is not a position, nor a title, but it is a state of mind and being. The leader must put the interest of the youth first so that he can serve them better. Only those who lead with humility and service can enter the kingdom of God.

d. Positive attitude: the attitude of the youth leader has influence on those he or she leads. These leadership traits; optimism, hopefulness and a cheerful smile must always be found in the leader.

2. Styles of leadership: the participants were taken through the three basic leadership styles during the workshop. These are authoritarian, democratic/ participating, and laissez faire/ permissive. It was further explained in a simple way the meaning of these basic styles of leadership to the participants.

An authoritarian leadership style dictates and tells the people under him what to do, how to do and when to do. He fails to involve his group members in decision making. The participants were informed that, this style of leadership would not be convenient in youth ministry unless the church building is on fire. The democratic style of leadership accepts the fact that leadership is a function of the whole group and not just on one person and therefore knows how to delegate responsibility to group members. The democratic leader allows his group members the opportunity to be part of the decision making process of the group. All policies are discussed among the group members. The laissez faire leadership style on the other hand makes no attempt to coordinate the activities of the group. This leader permits subordinates and everything goes on their own way and causes the group to accomplish little.

3. The role of the youth leader: this was given as the definition of leadership; the ability to influence others to work towards the achievement of the organizational goals. They were made to know that as leaders they have special roles to play in order to help the youth to know what they can do in the church. The following roles were outlined as some of the youth leadership roles during the workshop to guide the youth leaders and the elders in the church;

- a. Coordinating the activities of the youth in the local church
- b. To mobilize the youth in the church for evangelism and other soul winning activities.
- c. To make sure the youth coordinating council is formed to program all the activities of the youth ministry.
- d. To present before the church board the concerns of the youth department and programs.
- e. To call regular youth coordinating council meetings so as to set goals for each program and activity of the youth ministry.
- f. To make sure an evaluation team is put in place by the youth coordinating council to evaluate the programs and activities of the youth ministry at the end of every quarter.

4. Leadership and delegation: the biggest problem for youth leaders today is how to delegate responsibility to their members. The participants were made to know at the workshop that, to be able to involve the youth in church activities, leaders must be able to delegate responsibilities to them. This will prepare them more effectively for any work they will be asked to perform in the church. This is one way of consciously building both competence and maturity in the youth group. When their competence level is high the youth will be willing to accept any responsibility in the church and be actively involved in church programs and activities. Below are the four (4) steps of delegation that I went through with the participants at the workshop;

Step one: I do it you watch (model). When an idea is conceived by the leader, he must take the initiative to call the youth group and sell the idea to them. At this point the leader must take the first step for doing something – whether you have to call a meeting of the youth and tell them about what has come to your mind or you plan for whatever

has been conceived in mind which will surely include them. When this is done you will find out that the youth will latter join you in doing it together.

Step two: I do it and you do it - we do it together (mentor). As you take the initiative in doing what has been conceived in the mind, you will soon come to this point of your program. Many of our youth today want to be involved in youth programs; they only need someone who will show them the direction to move. As leader you must make sure you involve as many youth as you can at this step. Give the youth the chance to be involved so as to create an atmosphere of learning to do something and to take leadership responsibilities. We this is done they can be left alone to do whatever you want them to do since their confidence level have been built high.

Step three: you do it and I will support and supervise (monitor). At the step, you must hand over the program to them. Know that delegation does not mean abdication; thus you need to support and supervise whatever they are doing. At this stage a lot of time is spent with the new leader and the group because youth continually need to be supported and supervised. When any program gets to this point, you are at liberty to help start a new area of involvement and youth concern. When the youth have shown that they are able to handle the program on their own, and you are confident of that, you are free to move to the fourth step with confidence.

Step four: you do it and I will spend on other areas. At this step the youth have been prepared and now they can handle the program on their own and the leader is free to do other things in different areas. But you should make sure you don't work beyond your strength or above the normal working hours. Know your time limitations and your priorities. As they do the program themselves, you can spend more time with the next group in training.

6. Leadership and planning: planning is needed in everything we do to facilitate the smooth running of it. Without planning it is very difficult for any organization to know where it is heading towards. The wise man says: “any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully keeping abreast of the facts.” Proverbs 24:3, 4 (the living bible). The leader who assesses the situation and plan strategies achieves more. Planning will give the youth leader the sense of direction. At the workshop, the participants were taken through the process of planning to enable them do well for the ministry they have been put charge. The following planning processes were discoursed during the one day workshop.

The Planning Process

1. Begin with your youth group and youth leadership team. This is where the vision is made clear by the leader to the youth.
2. Assess their needs. The leader must consider the needs of the youth to be able develop strategies that will help to meet those needs. This can be done through survey and personal interaction with youth.
3. Choose objectives to meet these needs. Once the objectives are set to meet the assessed needs of the group, it will give direction to meet those needs.
3. Develop strategies. When the objectives are set, the leader must develop strategies to meet the needs of the youth. The strategies will be progressive and take into consideration the available resources to will help meet those objectives.
4. Plan strategies. The strategies must be planned in such a way that it will create an environment for learning and involvement.
5. Schedule evaluation. The activities should be monitored in order to find out the strength and weakness of the group. These weaknesses and the strength should be

measured against the desired objectives. The evaluation will reveal whether it is necessary to start again or not.

Church Heritage

Under church heritage, we studied the history of the Seventh – day Adventist church and the history of the Adventist youth. For the history of the youth, many of them had studied them in their progressive classes but history about how the church began up to this time not all had studied it. The objective of studying these histories was to let the youth know how they can help bring others to Christ, especially their fellow youth who are not in the church. This was an exciting moment since it was the first time that such a program has been organized for the youth in the Atebubu Central church.

Importance of Camps and Retreats

According to Jim Burns in his book the youth builder, if we can take the youth out for retreats, at least two weeks in a year, we can give them “more and better Christian education than a whole years’ worth of one-hour Sunday school classes”.¹ This true because at retreats we have a lot of time with the youth in bible studies which stimulates spiritual growth; the youth come into close contact with their leaders to share their problems with them. The following points were discussed as the benefits of retreats for the youth:

- i. Retreat is an educational agency. Since many of our youth do not have the opportunity of attending Adventist schools, at camps and retreats they have the opportunity to learn more of the Adventist faith.

¹ Westerhoff, John, National Youth Workers Convention (Dallas, TX, 1982 cited by Jim Burns, The Youth Builder, p. 91.

ii. Retreats stimulate spiritual growth among the youth. At camps and retreats, they have the chance to interact with leaders who are committed to help them solve their problems. They get the opportunity learn more spiritual things.

iii. Retreat and camping fulfils some important psychological needs. All campers are made aware of the need for spiritual security, a sense of belonging both to God and to His church. Affirmation and appreciation of the youth build in them a sense of their own self-worth.

APPENDIX D
QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Survey on Youth Involvement in Church Activities

Mark [x] against the option that best describe your answer; or supply the relevant information/comment in response to questions and statements below.

- I. Age: [] 15 – 18 [] 19 – 35 [] 36 – 60 [] 61 and above
- II. Gender: [] Male [] Female
- III. Educational background: [] BECE [] SSCE [] WASSCE [] MSLC [] O' Level [] A' Level [] Undergraduate [] Graduate and above
- IV. Marital Status: [] Married [] Single [] Divorced [] Widow
- V. Status:
[] church administrator [] Former church administrator [] Minister [] church elder [] church worker [] Youth leader [] Youth member [] church member
- VI. Your current position in your local church

-
1. Have the youth been involved in the activities of the church before? [] Yes
[] No [] comment

-
2. If yes, how was the impact? If no why?

-
3. How often does the church allow the youth to participate in church activities? [] Always [] Sometimes [] Not at all

4. How is the impact of the youth involvement in church activities today? [] Low [] High [] Average [] Comment
-

5. Some people think the services of the youth are not needed in the church today and therefore there is no need to give them the chance to participate in any church activity. Agree Disagree Comment

6. The involvement of the youth will not have any impact on the spiritual growth of the church now; so let's wait till they are grown before they are allowed to participate in church growth activities. Agree Disagree Comment

7. Should the adults and the elderly work now and train the youth for the future involvement? Yes No Comment

8. Does the church need the services of the youth now since they will take over when the adults are no more. Yes No Comment

9. Does the youth have a role to play in the spiritual growth of the church now and the future as well? Yes No Comment

10. The elders do not allow the youth in the church to participate in church activities at all because they think the youth will not perform well. Yes No Comment

11. It is the youth that do not want to get involved in Church activities. Yes No Comment

12. The youth are sometimes allowed to participate in church activities but not all the time. Yes No Comment

13. The youth do not perform well when they are given the chance to work and sometimes do not turn out. Yes No Comment

14. Do you think the involvement of youth in church activities is needed today?
 Yes No Comment
-
15. Do we need to consider someone's age before involving him or her in any church activity? Yes No Comment
-
16. If yes, suggest the minimum age that one can be allowed to participate in any church activity.
-
17. The youth are to be trained and after that be given the chance to be involved in church programs and activities. Yes No comment
-
18. For the youth to be fully involved in church activities there is the need to involve them, supervise, and encourage them. Agree Disagree Comment
-
19. The youth are arrogant and disrespectful that is why the elders do not want to allow them to be involved in church activities. Yes No Comment
-
20. I think the youth will have no impact on others because they are not spiritually grown. Yes No Comment
-
21. The involvement of the youth in church activities will bring massive spiritual growth in the church. Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Comment
-
22. To effectively involve the youth, there is the need to give them the required guidelines to perform whatever they have been asked to do. Agree Disagree Comment
-
23. To engage the youth, there is the need for adults to know and understand the valuable impact of youth involvement and participation. Yes No Comment
-

24. The youth should be given the chance to serve on the church board so that they will have a sense of involvement in the church. Agree Disagree

Comment

Please add any other suggestions that could help encourage youth involvement in all church activities and programs.

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VITA

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District pastor, Atebubu: August, 2007 to February, 2012

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