

Link2Uth

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*Almost all religious groups
in the United States have lost ground:*

LESSONS FOR THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRY

Recent results of the American Religious Identification Survey (AEIS) revealed that there was a significant drop, more than 11% in a generation, in the number of Americans who call themselves Christian. As a youth leader I read these findings with a painful eye.

If the survey results are to be believed, then we are in big trouble.

Is the Seventh-day Adventist Church immune to this problem?

Are the young people who we lead safe from this declining trend?

As youth workers, what lessons can we learn from this disturbing finding?

As a youth leader interested in the salvation of youth, one of the reasons Michael Spencer attributes to this collapse of religion among the American Evangelical churches in his article, "The Coming Evangelical Collapse"—The Christian Science Monitor, is the fact that many churches that call themselves Evangelicals have failed to instill in young people the solid, foundational truths that will take root, grow, and endure through the pressures of secular culture.

Spencer makes a disturbing point. Many Christians today love to talk about general social issues, and "hot potato" issues such as gay marriage and abortion, and that is where many Christians stop. There is no deep yearning after basic, fundamental, faith related principles and teachings.

The other day I read about a Christian couple who walked with their son to a pastor's office because he had several questions to ask the pastor. When they got seated the son asked the father, "Daddy what is that person doing hanging on to the plus sign?" To this boy the cross was just a plus sign. Are churches producing bankrupt Christian youth? Young people who go to church programs and come out with empty knowledge about the Bible?

The survey also states that "It is common for young adults to drift away from the faith group of their youth. Some never return. The large liberal and mainline Christian denominations seem to lose large numbers in this way."

These findings may seem discouraging, but as youth workers here are some lessons we can learn from this survey (cont'd p. 2):

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- Youth Ministry must continue to be a Bible based program (ministry). The Bible must be the basis of all we do in every activity award with Adventurers, going on mission trips with Ambassadors, or having devotion with young adults. Let us talk Bible, teach Bible, memorize Bible, and sing songs that glorify the Lord. We are to teach them to love and fear God.

- We should not be ashamed of lifting up the Bible before our youth! The Word of God should be the lamp in the path in which our youth travel (Psalm 119:105).

- Challenge youth to have a reason why they are Seventh-day Adventists. A reason why they believe in God. A reason why do they still believe in the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of our church. Why as Seventh-day Adventist youth they should believe the Bible is true. Our youth should be well equipped to treasure Jesus Christ and Adventism. We should not apologize to be Seventh-day Adventists (Be always ready to give an answer for your reason of your hope. 1 Peter 3:15, AKJ).

- Youth Ministry should pass on the values of the Bible from one generation to the next. What happened to memorizing the Sabbath School Memory verses? I remember when I was growing up as a young person I could memorize the 13 memory verses we studied each

quarter—imagine the rich bank of Bible knowledge that was installed in my life within just a year. That Bible knowledge even today is being shared to my children.

- How about music! Music tells a lot about the kind of youth we are producing. Music is the language of young people. What kind of music do you sing during youth programs? Today we have to be selective of the right music to use in our worship and youth programs, music that will bring us closer to God; music that is not only excites us to feel good, but challenges us to be more like Jesus Christ. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has put in place a philosophy for Christian Music, read and implement these principles in your youth meetings. This information can be found on our website, www.gcyouthministries.org.

Today, as I travel around the world, I notice some young people have shallow knowledge of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They do not have a single idea of who the founders of this movement were. They do not know today's church leaders because they have no appreciation of their own rich church history. They feel no ownership of their church. Without history and ownership people will not know why they should be proud of being Seventh-day Adventists. In Joshua 4:21-23(AKJ) we are reminded that it is our responsibility to train them by

telling them about the words and works of God. We MUST teach them to FEAR GOD, and like the Israelites before, praise the loving-kindness of our God. We must teach them to acknowledge God's goodness, and protection from dangers, known and unknown.

In her book, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 31.1, look at what Ellen White has to say, "In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us."

These are just some of the lessons we as youth leaders can learn from the survey, and at the same time, stop the spiritual hemorrhage which, as a church, we are not immune to.

The challenge is there, but with God we will say, like Moses, "Pharaoh we will go with our children..."

by Baraka G. Muganda, World Youth Director

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Sexuality

EXAMINE THE ISSUES

The Bible says “...love is the fulfillment of the law.” To many young people this mean sexual intimacy is right as long as they love each other.

This issue examines topics from lesbianism and homosexuality, to God’s call for people of all ages to a life of mutual respect, commitment, and sharing, where sexual intimacy is restricted to the most committed of all LOVE relationships, marriage.

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<http://www.gcyouthministries.org/MediaPublications/tabid/62/Default.aspx>

the **NEW** youth songbook

The General Conference Youth Ministries Department is continuing the process of producing a new youth songbook for our church. This new songbook will include worship songs and hymns that will help keep our youth connected to God, the church, and the teachings of the Bible.

Here are the 10 guidelines used in evaluating songs:

- 1. USE.** Songs will be used for congregational singing, corporate, and collective worship. They will be unrehearsed, unrecorded, and unperfected and sung by trained and untrained, musicians and novices.
- 2. ENRICHMENT.** The songs should enrich both the individual and collective worship experience.
- 3. SINGABILITY.** Songs should have a vibrant tempo! Pay special attention to the tempo, melody, pitch, rhythm and meter, its phrase structure, and musical character.
- 4. HARMONIC ACCOMPANIMENT.** Will chord frequency need to be simplified or lessened for congregational singing? Songs should be composed so that the people singing have the opportunity to be energetic in their song!
- 5. ACCOMPANIMENT SHOULD BE OPTIONAL.** The songs should be able to sound good without accompaniments.
- 6. INTELLIGENCE.** Songs should be intelligible. The lyrics must convey a meaningful message that is a

reminder of God or passages of Holy Scripture. Avoid boredom! The nature of congregational song is often strophic; the tune is repeated to different verses. Is the composer creative with the verses? Does the song offer opportunity for male and female parts?

- 7. IMPROMPTU.** People can basically sing without instruments. Songs should be able to be sung a cappella with a vital tempo; they'll keep both pitch and rhythm just fine.
- 8. MELODY.** Make sure the people have a clear melody they can hear and see. Even non-musical people can intuitively follow the little dots moving up and down the staff.
- 9. EMPHASIS.** Are the punctuations at the right place, on the important words?
- 10. INSPIRATION.** Songs should be inspirational and melodic.

So far, we have close to 250 songs to be included in the new song book. The plan is to make this song book be ready by the end of 2009.

It is our hope that this new song book will help our young people to maintain a living connection with God and His church and will become a source of inspiration for them to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus.

by Hiskia Missah, Associate Youth Director

South Central American Union Conference

After being elected Youth Director of the South Central American Union Conference Pastor Earnal Scott Peterkin decided that one of his first goals would be to strengthen the work of the Adventurers and pathfinders in the union. Under the banner, "Growing with Jesus", the Union's first Pathfinder Camporee, held a few weeks ago, April 7-11, at the Adventist Camp in Orotina, Costa Rica was a step in that direction. With almost 2000 Pathfinders and staff in attendance, Bernardo Rodriguez, Inter-American Division Youth Director, and a good friend of mine, and myself spent the week there.

During the camporee I conducted a 3-day seminar on leadership. It was truly a blessing to see that although it is not always easy to work with young people, youth leaders are still thirsty for evangelism and have a great desire to serve others.

On Sabbath morning we baptized almost 50 Pathfinders. For me, this was one of the most enjoyable moments of the event. I am always



**1st Pathfinder Camporee
April 7-11, 2009
Orotina, Costa Rica**

happy when someone comes to Jesus, and to have the experience of witnessing, not one, but almost 50 youth being baptized, that was an absolute joy for me.

May God continue to bless all of you, and it's my prayer that we all enjoy some day the best camporee ever, in heaven, with our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I was asked to have a seminar on leadership for all of the leaders of those three countries. It was truly a blessing to see that local leaders are thirsty for evangelism and the need of serving others in spite of many difficulties.

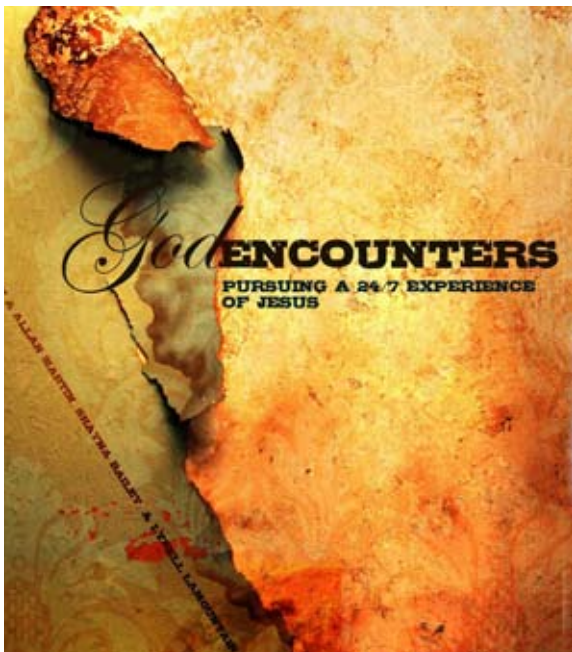
I enjoyed one of the best moments during events like these, the baptisms. Almost 50 Pathfinders were baptized on Sabbath morning.

May God continue to bless all of you, and it's my prayer that we all enjoy some day the best camporee ever, in heaven, with our savior, Jesus Christ.



by Jonatan Tejel, World Pathfinder Director

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| <h2 style="margin: 0;">Travel Plans for May</h2> | Baraka: 1 - 5: PAKISTAN, Week of Prayer 12 - 16: CUBA, Youth Congress 16 - 22: BRAZIL, Youth Advisory | |
| | Hiskia: 12 - 24: INDONESIA: Young adult camping and seminar | |
| | Jonatán: 22 - 25: ST. THOMAS, PF Congressoree | |



Looking for a discipleship guide for your young adults? Eager to deepen the devotion of new generations to Jesus? GODencounters may be just what you are looking for.

GODencounters: Pursuing a 24/7 Experience of Jesus offers new generations a holy invitation to live life in His presence. It is raw and honest about this life, offering real experiences and real encouragement from other GODfollowers. Young adults are not the only ones who will be transformed. I highly recommend GODencounters! - James Black, Director, North American Division Youth & Young Adult Ministries [YPAC]

GODencounters: Pursuing a 24/7 Experience of Jesus explores the heart of a young adult movement recklessly living for GOD's renown. Authors Lynell LaMountain, Shayna Bailey, and A. Allan Martin, anchor an eclectic constellation of heartfelt entries which share an honest hunger to live in GOD's presence continually. Just released by Pacific Press, GODencounters is now available online or at your local Adventist Book Center.

As you read GODencounters, you realize that, there is a story in each of us written on the pages of our lives, in the ink of experience. You sense that your story is a GODstory and that He has been with you all the while, leading you into a deeper place in His heart. As you read the shared everyday stories of everyday people, who have found a deeper sense of faith and life in GOD, you begin to see your own life connected to theirs. GODencounters: Pursuing a 24/7 Experience of Jesus is for anyone who is longing for more than just a routine experience of GOD. It's for those are not afraid to take faith steps into new encounters with the living GOD. - Eddie Hypolite, Associate Director, South England Conference Youth Ministries [United Kingdom]

Available for bulk orders and special pricing, GODencounters, makes a great graduation or baptismal gift. It is a provocative discipleship study guide for individuals and young adult groups. Use it as a spiritual conversation starter with new generations, especially those who have left their faith or have yet to meet Jesus. Pick up GODencounters today, <http://www.adventistbookcenter.com/GODencounters>.

For more information on bulk orders or special event pricing, contact Sharon Lewis at Pacific Press, 208-465-2544.