

Seminar 3: Current Issues

The Need for Specialized Youth Ministry



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1-INTRODUCTION

- **Youth ministry today will never be the same as it were yesterday...** This statement might sound radical; however, one must consider it as the starting point of a complete rethinking of how we see youth ministry developing and what kind of activities we promote in our churches today.



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1-INTRODUCTION

- We need to ask the question of efficiency in reaching our goal with the youth under our care. What could we do differently to **help our youth connect with God and develop strong faith-based convictions?**



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2-SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

- Create an awareness among leaders to: improve their ministry and mobilize their youth in service.
- Maintain a specific ministry adapted to the needs of Ambassador age group and Young adults.
- Outline strategies to help face the 21st century challenges, develop a strong “faith maturity” and a close relationship with God.



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3-Biblical basis for specialized youth ministry

- The first one is to “**Love the Lord Your God...**” (Deut 6: 5) as a foundational element of personal spiritual growth. It was to be taught in Israel by parents to their children from birth until adulthood. In the NT (Mat 22:37,38) “**love your neighbor**” as being the greatest commandment



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3-Biblical basis for specialized youth ministry

- The second element is found in **1 Cor 12:12-26** where the Apostle Paul highlights the importance and value of every part of the human body, describing the church as the body of Christ. He uses this metaphor to indicate that there is a need for **diversity in the body**, a need for **interdependence** among the members and that all **members are important to the proper function of the body**.



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4-Specialized youth ministry

- The leadership of the Adventist church in North America has come up with a study that was carried by the BARNA GROUP and that we must take seriously into consideration.
- **They estimate that 80 percent of those reared in the church will be "disengaged" by the time they are 29**



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4-Specialized youth ministry

How can we make the youth ministry more relevant to our young people today?

- **(1)** seek to address expressed needs of young people in their own environment and respond to them as they are, and **(2)** incorporate them into the fellowship of the church being a caring Christian community



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4-Specialized youth ministry

Consider the millennial grievances and address them openly

- *These grievances hold that the church is intolerant of doubt, elitist in its relationships, anti-science in its beliefs, overprotective of its members, shallow in its teachings, and repressive of differences.*



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4-Specialized youth ministry

Youth Ministry should be a place of choice to engage the youth into conversation - debate and open study, to tackle those issues and help them see how they can connect their faith in Christ to the reality they live daily.

Our youth need a safe haven where they can voice their concerns and challenges, express their doubts and questionings without the fear of being judged or rejected.



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4-Specialized youth ministry

“Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought.” Education p.17



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4-Specialized youth ministry

- It is important that youth leaders do not limit themselves to a unique way of doing ministry but **explore different avenues and approaches more adapted to the Millennials.**
- They need to understand the characteristics of the EPIC generation and react accordingly



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EPIC GENERATION

- ***E---Experiential-*** Millennials are experiential in their learning they aren't looking for a polished and professional speaker...
- ***P---Participatory*** - When millennials can see how their action affects an outcome, they get fired up and motivated to make the outcome even better!



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EPIC GENERATION

- ***I---Image rich-*** Between Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat, millennials have images every time they look at their phone. Special attention should be placed on that specific trend that has become a vital part of millennials lifestyle. As leaders, if we are not on social media, we are missing out on a connection with the largest generation in communities today



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EPIC GENERATION

- ***C---Connected-*** With their cell phones, they have a constant connection with the world around us and their circle of friends. These generations understand the immense power of connection. They know that with one tweet or one snapchat they could go viral. Anything they say or do could be viewed by millions upon millions of people across the globe.



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5-Integrated or Segregated Specialized Youth Ministry

- We should be intentional in integrating every specific group within our church family.
- The word family is pivotal in our understanding of Christian faith. As a family the focus should be on developing healthful relationships amongst the different generations that are intermingled in the composition of our community



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5-Integrated Specialized Youth Ministry

- It is urgent for our leaders to **pray and seek God's guidance** to be deliberate in **creating bridges between the youth and the adults** that will help pass on experience, knowledge and expertise
- we must initiate an **authentic intergenerational dialogue**, give them room to **express creativity** and facilitate access to leadership position within our communities in a meaningful way.



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5-Integrated Specialized Youth Ministry

- The outcome for our youth would be a greater sense of belonging and ownership of their community
- and taking an active part in the great commission.



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Gospel Workers

- *“In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, **God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage.** He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. **To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hands,** demands fresh, uncrippled energies.*
- *Young men and women are invited to **give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers,** through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow-men.” page 67*



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5 Areas to Help Young Adults stay Connected to Their Communities.

- Make room for meaningful relationships
- Teach cultural discernment
- Make reverse mentoring a priority:
- Embrace the potency of vocational discipleship
- Facilitate connection with Jesus



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Youth Leaders Should See That

- Young people **should be involved more often in intergenerational activities** that are **intentionally inclusive and participative**
- **Always keep in mind the essential needs of youth** in your strategic planning
- **Empower them and meet them where they are** in terms of their personal issues and spiritual growth



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Youth Leaders Should See that

- **Create opportunities to mobilize their skills** in useful projects for their local communities as well as abroad.
- **Encourage interaction between generation**, it will help create **synergy**, mutual enrichment and ***spiritual fellowship***



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3 Positive Fields Identified in a Study

1-Intergenerational relationships. For most respondent, relationship with the church was determined by their relationship with older members.

2-Forgiveness and acceptance. Nothing drives teenagers and young adults from the church faster than being rejected, and nothing draws them in faster than being accepted



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3 Positive Fields Identified in a Study

3-Platforms for sharing.

- There is a power in **experiencing God's love** and strength.
- There is a power in **sharing that experience** with others.
- And there is a power in **hearing the story** of another **person's encounter with God.**



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6-CONCLUSION

- In spite of the significant number of youth leaving the Church, **youth ministry is still relevant today** and can play a decisive role in their spiritual growth.
- Leaders should be open to address the issues and the needs of the youth from **an intentional inclusive intergenerational perspective.**



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6-CONCLUSION

- This generation need to be embraced through **authentic relationships, generous mentoring** and with a **strong connection with Jesus**.
- **Youth leaders should initiate diligently a conversation** with the leadership of their churches to create an awareness that is **paramount** to the development of our youth ministry.



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7-ACTIVITY

- **Individual:** Name and explain the acronym used to define this Generation
- **Group:** Discuss how youth ministry leaders can engage their youth in networking with other youth across the globe using social media to impact the world with the Gospel.



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8-RESOURCES

- Visit our website: youth.adventist.org for mentoring, devotional, and other resources.



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