



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH



ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRY

SEMINAR 1

INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH MINISTRY

DECEMBER 9, 2022

ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRY

Printed by Clinton Mbaso

INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH MINISTRY

Understanding the History, Philosophy, Vision, Objectives and Structure of Adventist Youth Ministry

1. INTRODUCTION

As a Senior Youth Leader, working with our youth can be the greatest source of joy and satisfaction as we see them grow in Jesus and become disciples of His. “The greatest sense of achievement in ministry comes when a youth leader sees young people enter onto a life-long relationship with God by inviting Jesus Christ to be Lord of their lives” (GC Youth Ministry Handbook 2005, p xiii). As the church continues to fulfill its prophetic divine mission from the Bible, the youth leader as well as the youth of the church need a clear understanding of the Adventist mission as it relates to being a prophetic church in these last days. Only then can the senior youth leader understand the prophetic role the youth department plays, in the work and mission of the church, and its prophetic existence in these last days.

2. SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

This module of study will look at the organizational structure of the Adventist church as a prophetic movement in these last days, and learn the role of the Adventist Youth Society in assisting the church to accomplish its mission. We will learn the history, philosophy, mission, objectives, and structure of the Adventist Youth Society. As a Senior youth leader, it is imperative for you and the youth of the church to understand why we exist as a department, how the department came into existence, and the role of the Adventist Youth Society in assisting the church to fulfill its mission.

3. HISTORY AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The Seventh-day Adventist church, firmly rooted in Revelation 14, is a prophetic movement called out by God in earth’s last days to prepare a people for the coming of Jesus Christ. In the 1850s, the embryonic denomination wrestled with the concept of how the church should be organized, and in 1861, prayerfully came up with the basic structure we have today, as shown by the diagram below.

4. ORGANIZATION OF THE ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

The Adventist Youth Department in a very real sense is also a prophetic movement within the church as can be seen in the church’s early history—most of the early pioneers and founders of the church were themselves young; Ellen Harmon was only 17 when she began receiving visions from God, and only 34 when the church was organized. The prophecy of Malachi 4, where the hearts of the fathers are to be turned to their children and the children’s hearts to their parents, can be seen being fulfilled within the youth department. Ellen White made a strong plea from Australia, December 19, 1892 to the church at large to begin having separate spiritual meetings for the boys and girls in their local churches. It read:

“We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed by God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth, giving them reason of the hope that is within them, and honoring God in any branch of the work, where they are qualified to labor”

(General Conference Bulletin, January 29, 30, 1893, p. 24).

5. HISTORY OF ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES

The first youth organization in the local Seventh-day Adventist church began in 1879 when two young boys, Harry Fenner, (16 years) and Luther Warren, (14 years) saw a need to plan missionary work, raise money for literature, and promote temperance in daily living. These meetings took place in Hazelton, Michigan, USA. Soon the girls pleaded to be included in the spiritual meetings and thus began the first Adventist youth organization, which was blessed by the local church. The parents of Luther Warren played an active role in molding and counseling this small group to meet their objectives.

From 1893-1901 youth societies sprung up around the USA, and in 1901 the General Conference officially voted into existence the young people's organization, under the Sabbath school department. At the 1907 General Conference Council at Gland, Switzerland, the church approved the formation of a Youth Department within the General Conference where elder M. E. Kern was elected the first GC Youth Director.

Within the same year (1907) a group of church workers met to select a name for the department and draw up basic guidelines. The name finally agreed upon was "Seventh-day Adventist Young People's Department of Missionary Volunteers." Over the next two decades, passionate youth leaders developed the Junior Missionary Volunteer (JMV) programs and guidelines and youth camp philosophy, which encouraged handicrafts, woodcraft, trailing and camping as strong activities where the young people would connect with nature and spiritual truths from Bible. For more on the history of Adventist Youth Ministries please read the 2005 edition of the GC Youth Ministry Handbook, pages 5-10.

(This whole section below was taken verbatim from the Senior Youth Ministries Handbook (p.124) as it did a great job capturing this section).

HISTORY OF THE JMV CLASSES

JMV classes were introduced within the department in 1922.

...The first North American Division youth congress, held in San Francisco in 1947 with E. W. Dunbar as world youth director, drew thousands of youth. In 1969 the first World Youth Congress was held in Zurich, Switzerland, with Theodore Lucas as world youth director.

The Character Classics Reading Plan (later changed to Encounter) was adopted in 1946. John Hancock organized the first conference-sponsored Pathfinder Club in Southeastern California Conference at Riverside, California in 1946. From 1947 to 1950 the Pathfinder program continued to develop in the Pacific Union Conference under the direction of J. R. Nelson, union youth director. Finally, the General Conference adopted the Pathfinder Club organization in 1950. (Senior Youth Ministry Handbook, also known as Foundations for Senior Youth Ministries (GCSYMH), 2013, p.124)

(This whole section below was taken verbatim from the Senior Youth Ministries Handbook (p.125) as it did a great job capturing this section).

HISTORY OF THE AY/AJY CLASSWORK

As youth engaged in JMV Society activities, some leaders felt the need to help them develop strong Christian characters and prepare for effective witnessing, so they would know how to do missionary work. The leaders studied the possibilities, including many helpful suggestions in the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

A system of classes developed from that study and through observation of similar organizations emerging at that time. Class requirements included Bible and nature study, homemaking skills, outdoor activities, first aid, personal and home health, physical fitness, community service, and many different avenues of witnessing. These meaningful activities helped youth to find true happiness.

Leaders envisioned an army of youth with talents and energies committed to Christ, an army with ranks filled by those whose hands would be ready to grasp any emergency and turn it to the glory of the great Master Guide.

During the General Conference session in San Francisco, California in the spring of 1922, the work of the Junior Missionary Volunteer Society was greatly strengthened by the addition of what had become known as “progressive classwork.” Two classes were provided at that time, and youth leaders returned to their respective posts throughout the world, bringing new inspiration to the youth of many lands where the program had already spread.

The 1927 General Conference Autumn Council in Chattanooga, Tennessee enlarged the Progressive Classwork to include three classes, Friend, Companion and Comrade, for junior youth and one class for senior youth and adults. C. Lester Bond joined the General Conference MV Department in 1928, and two major programs evolved that year: MV Honors and the Master Comrade Class—developed for senior youth and adults “who desired to prepare for junior leadership.” The first Master Comrade (later called Master Guide) was invested in 1931.

The MV/JMV Classwork (later AY/AJY), designed to help youth physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially, proved to be a definite factor in character building, and has become a blessing in the lives of thousands. The formation of the MV Society and JMV Society was the beginning of the church’s answer to the inspired call to “do something for youth.” It was also an answer to the need of youth for involvement in spiritually stimulating church activities. (GCSYMH, 2013, p.125)

NAME CHANGES

Over the years, the name of the young peoples’ department underwent various changes as the church saw the need to keep current with our youth who are ever changing in the outlook, goals, needs and values of their present generation. What began in 1907 as “Seventh-day Adventist Young People’s Department” (known as MV – Missionary Volunteers), changed to “Youth Department of Missionary Volunteers” in 1972. In 1978 the department name changed to “Adventist Youth” commonly known as AY department. Delegates at the 2005 General Conference Session voted the name, “Youth Ministries Department” which encompassed all the three age levels of youth ministry (e.g. Adventure Club, Pathfinder Club, and Senior (Young Adult) Youth Society. The 2015 General Conference session further adopted a name change to “Adventist Youth Ministries” (AYM).

6. PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION OF ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES (AYM)

PHILOSOPHY

The basic philosophy of AYM is securely grounded in the Biblical revelation of who Jesus Christ is. The Bible reveals a loving God who created humanity in His own image, to have a loving personal relationship with Him. The fall of man brought a broken relationship, not only between humanity and God, but also between each other. God took the initiative to remedy the situation and sent His only Son to die in our place so that we might have a chance to see Him face-to-face again. Through His Son Jesus Christ, who



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visited earth as a human so that we could see more clearly, we can understand God's love to us (Heb. 1:1-3).

Jesus gave a clear picture of God and sent out His disciples to follow after His example, meeting lost sinners where they are, showing them a better life in the Father's love and then making disciples of them to go and do the same, to hasten the soon return of Jesus Christ. Not only did Jesus show the Father's immense love for humanity through "servant leadership" (Jn. 13:1-17), but He also showed them how to receive power to overcome sin in this world through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus showed His disciples how to live a life in the Spirit and become disciples of the Kingdom of God in a sinful world. (Gane: 51-52) (Building Youth Ministries-A Foundational Guide). This is emphasized in the AY mission statement that seeks "to lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to discipleship". (p.132) "GCSYMH". 2013)

It is Jesus who is our model of "incarnational ministry" (e. g. allowing the character of Jesus and the power of Holy Spirit to be revealed in the life of our young people, thus becoming true disciples of His in this generation). Ellen White endorsed this model of incarnational ministry as a model for our youth to adopt in their Christian walk with Jesus when she said:

"The youth are the objects of Satan's special attacks; but kindness, courtesy, and the sympathy which flows from a heart filled with love to Jesus, will gain their confidence, and save them from many a snare of the enemy... There must be more study given to the problem of how to deal with the youth, more earnest prayer for the wisdom that is needed in dealing with minds... We should seek to enter into the feelings of the youth, sympathizing with them in their joys and sorrows, their conflicts and victories... We must meet them where they are if we would keep them... let us remember the claim of God upon us to make the path to heaven bright and attractive. (Ellen White, Gospel Workers (Washington, D. C.: Review & Herald, 1948), 207-212, emphasis added.)

MISSION / VISION

The AYM mission statement seeks "to lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to discipleship". This mission statement has become ultimate goal of the Adventist Youth Ministries department, that seeks to win, train, hold, and commission, young people for Christ.

Barry Gane rightfully captured the very essence of the Vision/Mission of the AYM as stated in his book "Building Youth Ministries-A Foundational Guide":

"Youth ministry built on this model (life and ministry of Jesus) seeks to meet young people where they are, and to offer them pastoral care not only as spiritual guides, but also as counselors and friends, fellow pilgrims on a similar spiritual journey. With Jesus as our model we are called to ministry, a personal and relational ministry, that will involve a good deal of one to one time." (Gane: 54-55) (Building Youth Ministries-A Foundational Guide).

The AYM continues to work with the local church to fulfill God's mandate to prepare a people for the soon return of Jesus Christ. "Adventist Youth Ministry is that work of the church that is conducted for, with, and by young people." (Pastors and Elders Handbook for Youth Ministries, 2002, p. 2) We see that it is the youth themselves that need to be personally involved in fulfilling the mission of the department, displaying what our church leaders expect from every baptized member "Total Membership Involvement" in these times. In other words, the mission of Adventist Youth Ministries is basically one of: salvation, discipleship, and service, which is grounded deep in the biblical model of the early church's mission in

the book of Acts 2:42-47. There are four dynamic forces that undergirded the growth of the early church: grace, worship, community, service. These four dynamic forces are strongly interwoven into the work and mission of the youth department. It is a biblical ministry where the AYM Pledge is carried out, by the youth, to the youth, for the youth, with the youth.

OBJECTIVES OF THE AYM

As youth leaders plan the work for their youth in the local church, a clear understanding of the objectives of the AYM is of utmost importance. Ellen G. White in the late 1900s spelled out the key objectives for the department in a letter published in the Signs of the Times, May 29, 1893. Here she set forth the objectives for the department:

- a) To train the youth to work for other youth,
- b) To recruit the youth to help their church and “those who profess to be Sabbath-keepers”;
- c) To work “for those who are not of our faith”

In seeking to reach these objectives, the youth are called upon:

- a) to pray together
- b) to study the Word together
- c) to fellowship together in Christian social interaction
- d) to act together in small groups to carry out well-laid plans for witnessing
- e) to develop tact and skill and talent in service to Jesus
- f) to encourage one another in spiritual growth

In 1907, at the General Conference Council at Gland, Switzerland, M. E. Kern, the first elected youth director for the department, set out the following objectives, in harmony with those laid out above. They were:

- a) To raise the level of the devotional life of the young person
- b) To lift up the standard of attainment of the youth
- c) To educate and train youth for service
- d) To provide opportunities for outreach and service
- e) To teach the principles of stewardship
- f) To lead youth to discover their individual worth and develop and discover their spiritual gifts (GC Pastor’s and Elder’s Handbook for Youth Ministry, 2002:13)

In response to these inspired directives and M. E. Kern’s expansion of E. G. White’s objectives for the department, the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Department was also organized to give leadership training and to provide resource materials and evangelistic plans covering both the Junior Youth Ministries (JYM) and Senior Youth Ministries (SYM) in the local church. (“GCSYMH” 2013:127)

STRUCTURE OF ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES (AYM)

AYM has two broad age groups that are broken into two dedicated subsets of ministries: Junior Youth, ages 6-15, and Senior Youth, ages 16-30+. These two subsets are further broken down into the following four (aged-related) ministries within the department.

JUNIOR YOUTH MINISTRIES (JYM): AGES: 6-15 INCLUDES:

ADVENTURER MINISTRY (AGES 6-9)

Strengthens parent-child relationships by providing weekly activities tuned into the psychological needs of this age group and also giving parents opportunities for learning parenting skills and enjoying special activities with their children.

PATHFINDER MINISTRY (AGES 10-15)

Assists in the critical years of identity formation and adolescent transformation for boys and girls. Offering intentional activities of service and mission, Pathfinders guides the energy of young people to focus on their community.

SENIOR YOUTH MINISTRIES (SYM): AGES: 16-30+ INCLUDES:

AMBASSADOR MINISTRY (AGES 16-21)

Designed to strengthen the current senior youth ministry of the church. It challenges them to experience and share a personal relationship with Jesus; helps them develop a lifestyle that is consistent with their belief system; provides training in diverse vocational interests; and provides them with a safe environment for the wholesome development of lifelong friendships. (GCSYMH, 2013, p.9)

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (AGES 22-30+)

Engages the vitality of a generation sharing their living relationship with Jesus in work and life, recognizing the diverse demographic from those in education or work, married or single, and possibly parents. This critical ministry embraces empowering young adults for leadership, mentoring, evangelism, and healthy lives. Dartmouth, the human brain continues to grow and change into the early 20s. ‘We as a society deem an individual at the age of 18 ready for adult responsibility,’ she states. ‘Yet recent evidence suggests that our neuropsychological development is many years from being complete’ (Grossman, Lev, “They Just Won’t Grow Up,” Time, January 24, 2005, p. 42-53).

“As a result of this physical reality, your teenager is caught between two worlds: that of being a child (with simple, incomplete thinking and a minimal data bank of experience), and that of being an adult (with more complete, mature thinking and a bigger data bank).

Youth can and do act like adults at times. This is normal. And they can and do act childish at times. This is also normal.” The entire above section, including the Baird quote, was taken from <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/teens/letting-go-of-your-teen/why-parents-want-tocontrol-their-teens>

Given this important fact, youth tend to think that they've got it all taken care of, but things such as rightly perceiving the world and managing their emotions are also things that they're still working on and are a consequence of their brains' not being complete yet. Knowing this will help us keep patience with these creative, lovable, but often frustrating young humans.

Next, we must understand that youth culture and societal systems really are different and distinct in important ways from the adult or mainstream culture around them. Today, even in remote regions of the world, the digital age is creeping in, and in all developed nations, youth have more autonomy, at least in a digital sense, than ever before. Many of their parents, particularly in nations where the digital age has come more recently, do not understand computers, the internet, social media, cell phones, and newer forms of entertainment as well as their children do. They may not completely realize that their children are inhabiting a different world than their own. Getting inside that



These objectives still form the major objectives of the AYM today, and while each ministry above has adapted these objectives to suit their age-related ministry, any local church AYM that consistently endeavors to attain these objectives will reap success and become a mighty influence in the local church and its territory around.

ADVENTURERS



Our colors represent our mission. We're bold, bright, and confident. **Blue** represents Heaven. Blue is the color of the sky and a reminder of the heavenly realm **Scarlet** in the Bible represents blood and redemption. The life of man is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11) and Christ's blood atonement is necessary for the redemption of man. **Green** represents growing and blooming where one is planted. It is representative of a Christian life that produces good fruit and finds rest in Christ. White represents righteousness because of its purity of color and light. It points to the Righteous One and the righteousness He imputes to all who come to Him in faith.

PATHFINDERS



- a. **Red** reminds us of Christ and His sacrifice. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Rom. 12: 1).
- b. **Three sides** represent completeness of the Trinity -- Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Tripod of education: Mental Crafts and Honors, Physical Campouts, work bee, health focus Spiritual Outreach and personal spiritual development.
- c. **Gold** represents excellence “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich” (Rev. 3:18). The Pathfinder Club has high standards to help build strong character for the kingdom of heaven.
- d. **Shield** represents protection. In the Scripture God is often called the shield of His people. (Protection) “Fear not... I am thy shield” (Gen. 15:1) “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” (Eph. 6:16)
- e. **White** represents purity. “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment” (Rev. 3:5). We desire to have the purity and righteousness of Christ’s life in our lives.
- f. **Blue** represents loyalty. It is the purpose of the Pathfinder Club to help teach us to be loyal to: Our God in heaven. Our parents. Our church. Loyalty is defined as a reflection of the character of our True Master Guide.
- g. **Sword** represents the Bible. The sword is used in warfare. A battle is always won by offense. We are in a battle against sin, and our weapon is the Word of God. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. (see Eph. 6:17)
- h. **Inverted Triangle** represents the order of importance Jesus taught which is contrary to that taught by the world. Sacrificing of one’s self by placing the needs of others ahead of our own.

AMBASSADORS



- a. **The cross** in the logo points to the fact that Jesus’ sacrifice is the center of a relationship with Him. The cross on the earth is symbolic of His sacrifice, giving us hope of a new and better life both here on earth through the concept of servant leadership and through an earth made new at His return.
- b. **The open book** is the Word of God, the foundation for our faith, knowledge, and lifestyle. It is open because it’s a message for us to internalize as our constant guide and companion. It is also for sharing with all who will freely receive it.
- c. **The graded colors** of yellow to orange represent the dawn of eternal life that follows the darkness of our temporal experience on this sinful earth.

YOUNG ADULTS



The gospel of Jesus represented by **the cross** is at the center of Young Adult Ministry. Colossians 1:17 The **three angels** message of Revelation 14:6-12, represents an urgent plea to the world. A message to be carried by the Young adults to all the world in their generation. **The half globe** represents the world field that should receive the three angels message. The message is for every tongue, nation, kindred. NO discrimination. **Blue** represents loyalty. It is the purpose of the Young Adult Ministry to teach loyalty to God, the mission and the church. Loyalty is defined as a reflection of the character of Jesus. **Yellow** is the color of sunshine. It’s associated with joy, happiness, intellect, courage and energy.



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THE IDEALS OF THE ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRY AYM

While the senior AYM church youth leader endeavors to fulfill the AYM key objectives laid out above, the ideals of the AYM find their expression and fulfillment in living out the senior AYM Aim, Mission, Motto, and Pledge of the department.

Aim

“The Advent message to all the world in my generation.”

Mission

“To lead young people in a saving relationship with Jesus and help them embrace his call to discipleship.”

Motto

“The love of Christ compels me.”

Pledge

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

(For a detailed explanation of Ideals of the senior AYM see page 129-133 in the book, Foundations for Senior Youth Ministries)

7. CONCLUSION

The senior youth leader in the AYM who remains in constant harmony with AYM mission statement, and ideals as expressed in the aim, mission, motto, and pledge, will reap success and become a mighty influence in the local church and its territory around the world. Ellen. G. White expressed it well when she said:

“To save from sin and guide into service:” this true and only motive, so complete and impressive, was adopted during the 1926 General Conference session. To obtain the salvation of the youth it is necessary to give them every possible opportunity to participate in all Adventist youth activities. By keeping youth actively preparing for more efficient service, they are protected from evil. It is necessary to place them in some activity as soon as they are ready. “Seeking the good of others is the way in which true happiness can be found.” (Counsels on Stewardship, p. 24)

8. ACTIVITIES

INDIVIDUAL:

A. What are the Six Key Objectives of the youth department as outlined by M.E. Kern in 1907?

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____
- iv. _____
- v. _____
- vi. _____

B. List the AYM organizational chart (Written/Recorded)

GROUP:

C. In partners or small groups, discuss specific ways what you have learned in this module can be translated into your local youth ministry. How closely does your ministry adhere to the AYM philosophy, mission, and ideals?