At world youth conference, Asscherick, ‘Reality 7’ bring evening messages
Preaching, musical performances part of nightly devotionals in South Africa

World youth conference closes with worship in stadium, evening celebration
Wilson, Carson affirm youth for spirituality, development

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At world youth conference, Asscherick, ‘Reality 7’ bring evening messages

Jul 09, 2013
Pretoria, South Africa
Ansel Oliver/ANN

David Asscherick, the self-described former purple-haired punk rocker, is bringing spiritual messages each night to more than 3,000 young Seventh-day Adventists attending the denomination’s world youth conference in South Africa and those watching via live streaming.
Asscherick became a Seventh-day Adventist at age 23 after reading the book, “The Great Controversy,” which was authored by Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White.

“Is it good news that there is a God?” he asked the audience at the opening of his sermon this evening, the second night of the conference.

“It depends,” he said, going on to describe a view of God that some Christians had tried to teach him before he became a Christian himself.

Some Christians had told him God would send someone to hell if they didn’t accept Jesus Christ as their savior. Asscherick would challenge them to consider those who might not ever hear about the Christian gospel and be given the option to choose. He later came to the conclusion that, “If there is a God who allows people … to suffer unending, conscious torment for something that they never even had the chance to know … I would rather choose atheism.”

His evening devotionals have focused on what he says are “non-negotiable” truths that should be on the table – chief among them, he says, is that “God is love.”

“If God is … as described in First Corinthians 13,” the love chapter, “then I suggest this is the best possible news in all the universe,” he said.

Asscherick is the co-founder of ARISE, a supporting ministry of the Adventist Church. He also became co-director of Light Bearers when the two ministries merged in 2011.

Evening devotionals of the global youth conference are being streamed on Facebook.com/ImpactSA2013 and Facebook.com/AdventistNews.

Attendees of the world youth conference are also treated to nightly musical performances by several groups, including the featured South African a capella singers, “Reality 7.”

The six-member group was founded in 1992 by men who were raised in a children’s welfare home. The group performs fulltime ministry by singing South African gospel music at hospitals, schools and church events. On weekdays, several members mentor youth through the Abalindi Welfare Society Home in Inanda, KwaZulu-Natal.

“It’s an honor for us to perform here, to show our international guests the African way of praising God,” said Themba Nkosi, the group’s manager. “It’s our prayer that God uses us.”
As the group performed their final song this evening, “I Feel Like Traveling Home,” two 24-year-old men from Botswana danced and waved their arms along with the song in the back of the hall.

“We like this group so much,” said Tshwaragano Aupiti, a nurse. “We just enjoy dancing, it blesses us,” he said with a huge smile. “When they sing I can feel the Holy Spirit.”

“They are singing the African way,” said Thubelihle Ncube, who works at a safari park.

At the end of the song, many in the audience applauded, shouted “Amen,” and 16-year-old Enzo Bocchino from Australia offered his appreciation with a short blast through an orange vuvuzela.

World youth conference closes with worship in stadium, evening celebration

Jul 13, 2013
Atteridgeville, Gauteng, South Africa
Ansel Oliver/ANN

Renowned brain surgeon Dr. Ben Carson this weekend implored Seventh-day Adventist youth to exercise their willpower and remain committed to God in a series of three speeches to the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s world youth conference.

Carson served for more than two and a half decades as chief of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, United States, and was a key presenter at Impact South Africa. The event has drawn more than 3,100 Adventist youth and young adults from around the globe for two weeks of community service, workshops and worship.

“God has given each one of us something that is extraordinarily special. It’s called willpower. You don’t have to give in,” Carson said of things than can divert young people from realizing their full potential.

During this morning’s Sabbath worship service, Carson also recounted his experiences in becoming a neurosurgeon, as told in his book “Gifted Hands.” He credited God for allowing him to make an impact through his career, despite it turning out differently than his childhood ambition of becoming a missionary doctor.

“Never get too big for God, never deny God, no matter where he takes you, no matter what roles you’re in,” Carson said. “If you put him first in your life, you will be extraordinarily successful.”
In the audience, Argentinian Ezequiel Durán, 26, said Carson’s speeches were some of the conference’s highlights for him. “He is a good leader and example for young people. He dedicated his whole life to God. I like that.”

Carson and other presenters today spoke to an audience of more than 18,000 – youth conference attendees and community members – at Lucas Masterpieces Moripe Stadium in this suburb of the national capital of Pretoria.

In a sermon, Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson similarly affirmed youth and urged them to continue carrying out the Adventist Church’s mission.

“We love you and we’re counting on you for the future,” Wilson said. “Impact your city. Impact your country. My brothers and sisters, impact the world for Jesus Christ!”

Indeed, Shereen Rodney, 24, from the United Kingdom, said she came to the conference for the community service work that some 1,000 attendees gave during the conference’s first week. In a stadium seat, she said, “We’re looking to replicate some of these things when we go back home. It’s going to be like a chain reaction.”

Gilbert Cangy, director of the Adventist Church’s Youth Ministries and organizer of the conference, said the event successfully integrated youth from around the world as a family of faith.

“We truly embraced diversity at this event,” Cangy said. “There was a place at this conference for everyone – from every country, from every culture.”

Celina Sunder Singh, 20, from India, said the conference offered her the chance to meet new people in a supportive environment. “It’s nice to know so many people having the same faith as you, and learning a few words in every language was fun,” she said. “My favorite was Spanish.”


This evening, back at the conference’s base at the Saint George Hotel & Convention Centre, a report was given from the final of the denomination’s 13 world divisions. Each regional administration presented throughout the week, with colorful national garb and video reports.

Cangy also thanked his team of organizers, who helped coordinate everything from service projects and workshops to producing evening worship services that featured music and preaching by evangelist David Asscherick.
“By God’s grace we’re finishing well,” Cangy said. “We give God all the glory and we’re grateful for His gracious spirit.”

—see more photos of Impact South Africa at the ANN Flickr account

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