Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Prayer - Petition & Praise

High School and College Students: Please pray for all high school and college/university graduates that they may find a home church family.

Personnel Changes

Ken Rogers: Ken has accepted an invitation to lead the Southern Union Conference Youth Ministries Department after serving as the VP for Student Life at Walla Walla University.

Roy Ice: Roy has served as a pastor, educator and campus chaplain for many years. He recently accepted the invitation to be the CYE Church of Refuge Director while still serving as one of the pastors in Napa, California.

Ministry Seekers

Matthew Hutchins: Some of Matthew’s passions include youth and pastoral ministry, evangelism, chaplaincy, church planting and teaching. He has a MA in educational Psychology and Mental Health, BA in Theology, Clinical Pastoral Education (Chaplaincy) and more. More Info: Email Matthew or call at 269.861.6623 or 269.815.5156.

Ministry Openings

Michigan Conference Youth Task Force: Ken Micheff, Michigan Conference Youth Director, is looking for two female and one male task force volunteers. More Info: Contact Ken Micheff.

Connect With Us

Part of the CYE

411 news is a resource provided by the Center for Youth Evangelism

**Texas Conference Associate Youth Director:** Joey Pollom is looking for an associate youth director with experience in camp and club (pathfinders, adventurers and master guides) ministries and highschool ministries. More Info: Contact Joey Pollom.

**CYE Director:** The CYE is looking for a new director who is an ordained minister with a masters degree or higher and has seven years or more of youth ministry experience. Must have technology, organizational and multitasking skills. More Info: Visit andrews.edu.

**Sunnyside SDA Church Youth Pastor:** Located in Fresno, California, the Sunnyside Church is searching for a Youth Pastor. Must have a bachelors degree, organization and time management skills and experience with teens. More Info: Contact Lauri Vaughn.

**Miracle Meadows School:** Several positions are available at this alternative boarding school for at-risk students ages 7-18. Positions include boys' dorm, girls' dorm, videographer and math/science tutor. More Info: Call 304.782.3630 or Gayle Clark at 304.266.7794.

**Guide Magazine:** Guide is currently looking for an assistant editor. If you are interested in the position or know of someone you think should be considered, please contact Guide editor Randy Fishell.

**Adventist Resources**

**The Great Controversy Countdown:** Pacific Press and the White Estate have produced a resource that empowers churches to study the great controversy theme of the Conflict of the Ages in just 13 lessons. Workbooks available at AdventistBookCenter.com or PacificPress.com.

**SDA Ministers Group on Facebook:** This group allows ministers from around the globe to discuss, ask questions, provide sermon illustrations and more. To join the group search "SDA Ministers" group on Facebook and "Ask to Join the Group."

**Elijah's Toolbox:** This new online ministry resource, provided by Elijah3 Ministries, is dedicated to those serving on the front lines of urban youth ministry. Youth leaders can read articles, watch videos and download free teaching resources. More Info: Visit ToolBox.Elijah3.org.

**Non-Denominational Resources**

**Out of the Darkness:** This DVD by Sean Finnegan, is a documentary on the problem of porn. The documentary is based on the story of Shelley Lubben, who now runs a ministry helping others escape the sex industry and find hope and healing in Christ. More Info: Visit ChristianityToday.com.
CYE Events

**WeCare Mission Trips:** Group leaders and youth work together with WeCare Missions to reach out to communities in the United States and around the world. If you are interested in setting up a mission trip please email Vern Byrd or Call 269.208.7183. More Info: Visit CYE.org/WeCare.

The following trips are confirmed and closed:


**Adventist National & International Events**

**Natural Remedies Seminar:** May 13-20, 2012, in Wildwood, Georgia. The Wildwood Lifestyle Center & Hospital will discuss cutting edge information on medical missionary work, lifestyle medicine and more. More Info: Visit WildwoodHealth.org or Contact Esther Michel at 706.820.1493 x1043 or 1145.


**Traverse 2012:** June-August, 2012. College age young adults are invited to take a break from the classroom, without interrupting the process of preparing for life as a responsible adult, either for a summer or a year. Experiences include adventure, travel, service and faith. More Info: Visit TraverseGapYear.com.

**Camp Yorktown Bay 50 Year Celebration:** June 30-July 1, 2012, in Mountain Pine, Arkansas. Ron Whitehead will be speaking and the Bond Family will be providing music. More Info: Contact Ray House or Visit CampYorktownBay.com.

**Impact Tampa:** July 8-22, 2012, in Tampa, Florida. This youth and young adult mission trip is open to all from the NAD. There will be various forms of outreach opportunities, worship, small groups and more. More Info: Contact Robert Hines, Call 407.644.5000 or Visit the Event Page. *(Sponsored by the Florida Conference & NAD Youth Departments)*

**The Ultimate Workout:** July 15-30, 2012, in Nicaragua. During this mission trip, teens will be full of projects and will be full of fun, hard work, adventure, service, and spiritual growth. More Info: Visit Maranatha.org. *(Sponsored by Maranatha Volunteers International)*

This mission trip is designed for college aged young adults. Participants will build One-Day Church structures in rural communities. More Info: Visit Maranatha.org. (Sponsored by Maranatha Volunteers International)

**The Young Adult Project:** August 1-13, 2012, in Nicaragua. This mission trip is for those ages 18-35. There will be construction, community service, new connections and spiritual opportunities throughout this project. More Info: Visit Maranatha.org. (Sponsored by Maranatha Volunteers International)

**Lake Union Conference Youth Evangelism Congress:** February 8-9, 2013, in Chicago, Illinois. More Info: Contact Ron Whitehead.

**the One project:** February 11-12, 2013, in Chicago, Illinois. Celebrating the supremacy of Jesus in the Adventist Church. Undergraduate student and group discounts are available. More Info: Contact Japhet De Oliveira, or Visit the1project.org.

### Non-Denominational Events

**Planet Wisdom:** Through an in-depth look at God's specific attributes, Planet Wisdom events provide an experience for students to discover practical ways they can change the world by becoming more like Him. Event locations and dates vary. More info: Visit PlanetWisdom.com, or call (888) 346-4179.

**Acquire the Fire:** 27 hours set apart to give your teens a life-transforming experience with Christ. ATF tours occur periodically throughout the year at various locations. More info: Visit ATFTour.com.

**Dare2Share:** The 2012 "Game Day" Tour, taking place in various locations on various dates, provides training conferences to "inspire, equip and unleash" teens for the most important competition of all. More info: Visit Dare2Share.org.

**No Parent Left Behind:** A seminar series of three fast-paced and practical sessions led by Dr. Walt Mueller, founder and President of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding. Host a seminar at your church or school. More info: Visit CPYU.org, or call (800) 807-2798.

### Spanish Resources & Events

**Lake Union Conference Bilingual Youth Congress:** June 8-10, 2012, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. This 2nd annual youth congress will feature Elizabeth Talbot and a variety of seminars will be offered with speakers like Laffit Cortes, Manny Cruz, Yami Bazan, Rodlie Ortíz and more. More Info: Visit Jovenul.org, Contact Carmelo Mercado and View the Poster Here.
Pathfinder Camporees


**Northern Asia Pacific Division:** August 7-12, 2012, at Sahmyook University Campus, in Nowon-gu, Seoul, Korea. Theme: "Mission from the Northeast" (Daniel 11:44). More Info: Contact Angela Han or Visit Camporee.kr.

**Columbia Union:** August 8-12, 2012, at Camp Mohaven, in Danville, Ohio. Theme: "Choose Without Compromise." More Info: Visit Camporee Website or Contact Pam Scheib.


Miscellaneous

**Columbia Union Conference:** In March 2012, the CUC Executive Committee met in Hershey, Pennsylvania where the members voted to adopt the following values for the 2011-2016 term:

- Christlikeness
- Unity
- Respect
- Excellence
- Equality
- Integrity
- Service

They also voted to engage and partner with youth and young adults to further the mission of the church. *(Source: Visitor, April 2012)*

**Picture of Health:** Loma Linda University School of Public Health is working on an Adventist Health Study 2, where over 96,000 Adventists in the US and Canada are participants. Of the participants, 8% are vegan (no red
meat, fish, poultry, dairy or eggs). *(Source: Adventist World, January 2012)*

**20,000 Adventist Youth Trade Vacation for Service:** The Mission Caleb outreach in Lima, Peru committed a week or more of their summer vacation to be involved in service projects and evangelism outreach. More Info: Read [Article Here](#). *(Source: Adventist Review, April 2012)*

**Is Youth Ministry Failing?:** This article by Ed Dickerson discusses how young adults are leaving the church in droves and the mistaken or unfair verdict on failing youth ministries. More Info: Read [Article Here](#). *(Source: Adventist Today, April 2012)*
“Modern Youth Ministry a ’50-Year Failed Experiment,’ Say Pastors.” That's the headline on a recent article at the website "the Christian Post."[i] The article then goes on to detail what readers of this column have been discussing for some time. Young adults are leaving the church, all churches, in droves. By that measure, youth ministries have been and continue to be a failure. But it seems to me that verdict is either mistaken or unfair -- take your pick -- on two counts.

First, let it be said that youth ministries have not failed because of a lack of dedication or effort on the part of those ministering to the youth. I am not claiming that those involved in youth ministry are necessarily purer than those working with the older members of but neither are they any less dedicated. I have many friends in youth ministry, and I'm proud to be associated with them.

Second, declaring its ministries a failure as a matter of misplaced responsibility, a perpetual problem is when it comes to the question of why so many young adults leave the church. When I work with families in crisis, I generally start by saying, "I'm not much interested in blame. When it comes to blame, I find there is usually plenty to go around. But we need to know what went wrong, so that we can fix it." So when I say where I believe the problem lies, it's not so much about blame, as I see it, is understanding why, after so many years, and so much investment of talent and resources, we still are losing the vast majority of young people.

In the article on failed youth ministries, a number of youth pastors declare that segregation of the Church by age group is "not biblical." And while that is correct, it still doesn't focus on a remedy. Please pardon the fact that the following comes from a paper I presented at the 2008 180° Symposium for Youth Retention at Andrews University.[ii]

A note I received from a Filipino pastor’s wife crystallizes the issue. “Dear Pastor Ed,” the note began, Thank you for sharing Jesus to reach out for our ‘young professionals.’ This age group in our church. . . is the concern of all parents in our congregation. The Adventurers, the Youth, and the high school are very visible in church, but our young adults – the ‘young professionals’ the way we call them– aren’t.

Unless you live in a large Adventist center that single negative word succinctly expresses how young adults attend, participate, and contribute to the church– they aren’t. Note that an active Adventurers club and youth ministry had no effect on the retention of the young adults of that church. A similar experience in many other churches confirms that though they offer many benefits, Pathfinder clubs and youth ministries do not ensure retention of young adults. That would appear to be a strong indictment of youth ministries. After all, as Adventist Review editor Bill Knott wrote in a 2003 editorial, “The goal of all genuine youth ministry is the promotion of Christian maturity and the successful integration of children and youth as fully functioning members of the adult church” (italics mine). By that definition, our efforts for young adults are failing. But why?

Scripture speaks of integrating individuals into the church as a process of “grafting in.” Grafting involves the bud or branch to be grafted in, called the “scion,” and the established plant, called the “rootstock.” So far, nearly all of our efforts have been directed toward preparing the scion, in preparing the youth to join the existing congregations, while we have essentially avoided the thornier problem of renovating the rootstock– of inducing
existing congregations to change. Our attempts at grafting young adults into the existing congregations have met with frustration precisely because we limit our attentions to the young adults. But the science of grafting tells us that no matter how well prepared the scion is, the graft will not take unless the rootstock is prepared to receive it. Let me share an example.

At a camp meeting where I spoke at the “Young Adults” venue, I urged young adults not to let other people discourage them, to take leadership in providing for their needs and the needs of others of their generation. After one meeting, a frustrated mother came to me. Her daughter, not long after graduating from college, began attending a small church of largely elderly people. She put together a proposal, which she volunteered to lead, to reach out to other young adults in the community. But the church board replied, “We don’t want young people coming in and disturbing our services. We are an older congregation, and we are happy with our church the way it is.” The rootstock of the congregation simply refuses to consider grafting in any scions, no matter how vigorous or well prepared.

This episode – one of many that I know of — demonstrates that time and again, earnest, devout, thoroughly grounded and trained young adults have run into this problem. Until and unless we address the problem of stagnating congregations resistant to change and unreceptive to seekers of any sort, young adult flight from the church will continue. And our inability to retain our own young people mirrors our difficulty in reaching the broader culture. In that regard, our children are somewhat like the miner’s dying canary — a warning that the environment harbors unseen dangers for everyone.

We have tried strategies that attempts to bypass the rootstock challenge. Separate services for young adults in existing churches, and young adult-oriented church plants have been attempted, and met with some limited success. As already noted, the separate services generally fail to pass the Knott test: “The successful integration of children and youth as fully functioning members of the adult church.” And there are other reasons to question the efficacy of an exclusive emphasis on youth ministries. For one thing, very few of our churches are large enough. As Ed Christian pointed out, we Adventists don’t do Mega-Church very well.[iii] And since a parallel youth service solution is, in effect, a Mega-Church style solution, it runs contrary to what we do well. Even if the Mega-Church idea worked for us, it still condemns small churches to extinction, and abandons vast areas of North America. Recent studies tells us more than 1000 congregations in North America — according to the Adventist Yearbook Online, approximately one out of every five — already have no teenagers or children.[iv] And even where numbers and funding support a separate youth ministry, by its nature such a ministry perpetuates separation, not integration, thus failing the Knott test.

And as for the young adult oriented church plants, in many cases, the sisterhood of churches that makes up a conference has reacted to these alternative style church plants essentially in the same way that rigid congregations react to attempts at innovation – they reject them. Not a few promising pastors have been lost this way, along with their congregations. Once again, the attempt to avoid addressing the central issue results in both failure and unnecessary casualties. Youth ministries have not failed. The Church has failed the youth.

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My greatest "crisis" of faith occurred when, soon after I married, we began worshiping in a metropolitan Adventist church near our home. I was now an adult, a college graduate, and in fact working for the denomination, and expected that the retirees and other older leadership would at least make a show of welcoming new talent into their midst. I wore the suit, shined the shoes, arrived on time, spoke up in Sabbath school, and to my knowledge did not make an intellectual or social fool of myself. But the "rootstock" seemed in no hurry to add branches—in fact, the founders were dying off and few came to warm the pews they left vacant.

In the church I cite, the founding members had invested substantial sums of money to create their comfortable little church. This was very clearly "their church" and "for them" and they were taking no chances letting some new flash-in-the-pan jeopardize what they had created by bringing in perhaps schismatic and untested ideas and styles of behavior. Possessiveness has a way of toughening rootstock almost beyond grafting. It may be subconscious, but at least part of it is intentional. To preserve is more important than to bring new blood into the established pecking order.

Our pastors and conference presidents are too focused on maintaining the churches we have. Bob Logan told us at Seeds '96 and again several years later that if we want to plant churches and grow, we need to change the way we train, evaluate, and compensate our churches.

My personal belief is that we currently need two types of pastors. Planting/Equipping pastors who will raise up new congregations, and --I know this will cause me trouble-- Hospice pastors who will help the existing churches who are unwilling to change to die with dignity. Right now they're dying, but often with neither dignity nor legacy.

If you are in a large city, there are usually enough young SDAs around to enable current SDA culture to be maintained for a few more decades. I think we have a number of pastors who are able to maintain those churches, and even help them grow from within the SDA population. So, while I agree we need to have pastors who can raise up new churches, 'hospice' churches are not yet the only other alternative.

The big problem is still that the conferences are comprised primarily of churches who will not accept innovative churches. You get Conference Presidents who can enthuse a conference to move in that direction, but all it takes is one 'failed' experiment or a change in president for things to go back the way they were.

I would not say the church has failed the youth. When you are talking about a large part of the population under 60, I think you need to find a better word than 'youth'. People in their 40s and 50s report difficulty find a church they can fit into and be accepted by.
Ed Dickerson
4 days ago

"If you are in a large city, there are usually enough young SDAs around to enable current SDA culture to be maintained for a few more decades."

I hear this a lot. But where do those young people at our colleges come from? Did you miss the fact that more than 1000 of our churches have no children or youth already? Seventy percent of our college students do not attend SDA colleges. In my state, there were 13 or 14 church schools 30 years ago. Now there are 3, and they are struggling to stay open. When we lose young adults, we lose their children, their talent, and their tithe. It's a demographic disaster that people in the large centers are ignoring.

Kevin Riley
4 days ago

It is not that established congregations are against new ideas. They are merely against new ideas that have not stood the test of time. As an elderly relative of mine pointed out, if I came up with new ideas from the inspired pen of Ellen White or the Pioneers, she and her cohorts would be very grateful and very supportive. But anything that does not come from the Bible or Ellen White is not going to be acceptable. Not all members are that extreme, but we are a risk-averse culture, and new ideas always involve risk.

Horace Butler
4 days ago

"The big problem is still that the conferences are comprised primarily of churches who will not accept innovative churches." "But anything that does not come from the Bible or Ellen White is not going to be acceptable. Not all members are that extreme . . . ."

There is nothing wrong with innovation, as long as it passes the Isa. 8:20 test.

I don't understand why the philosophy which says that ideas which are not in harmony with the Bible or the SOP are unacceptable, should be considered extreme. That has been our philosophy for years. It's what's kept us from going the way of Willow Creek or the World Wide Church of God.

Youth do not remain so forever. At some point they must become adults. A gradual transition would seem to be more logical than an abrupt, stress-producing change. Conducting parallel church services for youth delays the process of integration into the real world.

Many of our church pioneers were youth when they started leading out. They were also a lot more mature than the youth of today, or even the youth of 40 years ago (when I was a youngster). No adult that I know of wants to keep the youth from full participation in church activities, whether it be leadership roles or whatever. But, they can't be voted into an office based on their ages. They must show a level of maturity that indicates their ability to accept the responsibilities that go along with church leadership. In our small church 2 of our 3 elders are 30 or younger, as are 2 of our adult SS teachers. Only one elder and one teacher comes from the "geezer" generation. Our assistant AV technician is not yet 20. They were put in these positions because they showed a level of maturity and dedication to the truth which gave us confidence that they would faithfully execute those responsibilities.

Maybe I live in a bubble, but my experience has been that those who are willing to help out, and are members in
good standing, are welcomed by the church, regardless of their age.

Ed Dickerson
4 days ago

Horace, all this talk of maturity assumes that current leadership in most of our congregations are mature. First, that does not match my experience at all. I imagine if that notion were put out at a minister's retreat, the response would be rueful laughter.

Second, it implies that we're losing the young because they are immature for their age. If that's so, who raised them?

We keep the children largely separate for 18 years, providing a quite different SS experience for them. If we have a 'children's story,' we congratulate ourselves. After telling them for years that the main worship service is not really for them, it's not surprising they leave.

Horace Butler
3 days ago

Point well taken. We do have problems when it comes to who is leading out. Could that stem, in part, from the proliferation of "spiritual gifts" seminars? Some, who think they have "discovered" their gift (which in reality may just be a desire or a hope) get put into offices for which they are not qualified.

I did not mean to suggest that we are losing young people because they are immature. It is the result of a combination of factors. Parents are partly to blame, of course. Failure on the part of the parents (and to some extent the schools) to teach kids the principles which undergird our doctrines and standards is another reason. I'm always astounded when I talk to young people and find out that many of our core doctrines were passed over rather lightly or not at all, when they were attending SDA schools.

Our local church may be unique, but we don't keep kids separate from adults for 18 years. Being a small church, and having few kids, they come up with the adults much sooner than in most churches I've attended. Even as young teens they often have insightful comments and relevant questions.

Ed Dickerson
4 days ago

"new ideas that have not stood the test of time."

I can only guess that was facetious.

"new ideas from the inspired pen of Ellen White or the Pioneers, she and her cohorts would be very grateful and very supportive."

Don't know about your friend. Was not true 20 years ago, when homeschooling (yes, strongly supported by Ellen White's writings) was an opportunity for ministry which our churches largely refused to take advantage of.

Elaine Nelson
3 days ago
In all these comments I found not one who questioned a "youth" regarding their feelings about church. What do they think? Why do they not attend?

The one answer to all such questions is "Why should I?" People ask and answer such questions daily: "Why should I buy this product"? Why should I go to that meeting, event"? If you have a business and people are not buying your product would you wring your hands, hold discussions over the matter or would you ask former customers why they no longer buy your product? Business 101.

Just as we olders question "Why?" and feel no benefit to many activities, youth are no different once they are no longer being told by parents or school what to do. Maybe that is part of the reason: they have too often been told, or taken to church, sent to SDA schools, told what sort of activities to avoid and which were approved, that when they finally must make their own decisions they have little practice in doing so.

Please, please, stop talking around young people and talk to them, but more importantly, be willing to listen. It might be surprising.

William Noel
3 days ago

Ed,

I think your illustration about the young woman in the church that wanted to stay old really hit the heart of the matter: our youth leave because they are not wanted, even in churches where there are a large number of youth. As them (as I have) and you'll quickly hear there is no expectation on the part of the adults that they will assume positions of responsibility in the church any time before their hair turns grey, so they expect to leave in search of somewhere they are wanted.

Horace Butler
3 days ago

Where is it that youth are not wanted? Maybe I've been in the same local church for too long, but that's certainly not the case in our church. We have no age discrimination in our church. Anyone who is willing and able is welcome to take part or lead out, as the case may be, as long as they stay within church guidelines. We started a "Junior Deacon" program years ago (when we had more youth) as a means of training younger members to be deacons or deaconesses. Our problem is usually lack of volunteers rather than unwillingness to allow younger members to assume positions of responsibility.

Kevin Riley
3 days ago

In some churches, 'church guidelines' mean a lot more rules than just those found in the church manual. That is one reason I have heard for youth refusing to be baptised - their SDA relatives, if not their fellow church memebrs, will expect them to conform to all SDA 'standards' once they get baptised. Some choose not to get baptised, some get baptised at a service at another church that does not insist on church membership. I have found most youth don't see a lot of value in church membership. That could be an attitude they have learnt from their elders.

Other churches have the problem that young people can take part, but will face criticism if they don't 'get it right'. Youth are no different to the rest of us, if they don't feel their effort was appreciated, they don't bother.
Many churches facing a dearth of volunteers ask 'what is wrong with these people?' Sometimes there are good reasons why people don't volunteer. I have been lucky to attend churches where everyone is encouraged to get involved. But not all churches are like that. And I have discovered that even in churches that are, you can still have one or two people who appoint themselves as 'critics' for those in their immediate family or circle of friends. They can undo most of the good the wider church is trying to do.

Timo Onjukka
3 days ago

Reduction in number of youth, and volunteers (even in your church, Horace), begs the questions author asks.

How can we do better at not only retention, but attraction of more youth?

I sense NOT by saying 'we do not discriminate on age' (perhaps a true statement, yet functional reality)-but by asking "how can we do better". Admitting there is a problem-taking off the fig leaves and not polishing the apple-is the first step back to relationship. Tightening up our too-perfect suits and refusing to see reality (reduction in youth, in this case, as you indicated even in your ageism-free church) will result in further loss of members. This, to me, evinces, as E White writes "the church will appear as if it HAD FAILED" more so than doctrinal squabbles or interpretive conflictives.

I hope no one dares claim this is the shaking. Lets rather hold on tight as a group of believers encouraging each the other, and not watch the falling away, commenting smugly on our justifications.

William Noel
about an hour ago

Horace,

In most churches the primary (if not only) duty of a deacon is to take up the offering, which really is meaningless in terms of responsibility or meaningful ministry. So a "junior deacon" program in such a situation is an effort in futility that illustrates a common problem situation: our youth see little or no opportunity for meaningful ministry because there is so little real ministry going on and what is happening is so often dominated by the silver-haired who have been doing it since ages past and don't want to quit.

ghansen
3 days ago


"Between 1976 and 1979, I spoke in numerous churches around the United States as the campus ministry in Charleston grew from a few to 300! I was exposed to several different elements in the Churches of Christ. The spiritual condition of most of the Churches of Christ ranged from lukewarm to disgusting (Revelation 3:14-19). After almost 200 years since the inception of the Churches of Christ movement in the United States, the average Church of Christ was about 100 in membership and less than half attended the midweek services. The average church had but eight baptisms in a year and six of these were children of the members. Of those baptized out of the world, less than 10% remained faithful and half of the members' children who were baptized fell away. The divorce rate was around 33% (about the
same as the world), according to the Institute of Marriage and Family Studies at Abilene Christian University. Alarms were constantly being sounded about the declining numbers of full time ministers and missionaries. Reuel Lemmons, in his editorial February 9, 1982, in the Firm Foundation declared that over 8,000 Churches of Christ had closed their doors in the previous 20 years."

Kip Mckean found out the hard way when he tried to revitalize existing CoC congregations. he met with continuing resistance until he finally started a new church. It became known as the Boston movement. It attracted, in Los Angeles area alone, hundreds of college age and recent graduates, including medical students and residents, attorneys, and various other yuppie types. This in addition to numerous individuals of varying education and abilities.

Naturally, the Boston movement was denounced as cultic, fanatical, manipulative, and dangerous. So was Millerism and the SDA church. A lot of people were blessed by the church. Kip was a fantastic speaker who spoke anointed sermons that had transformative impact on people's lives.

Adventists will hold a meeting, talk about it, write some articles, and so forth. Unless they decide to put new wine into new skins, things aren't going to happen. The church will continue dying until it becomes an irrelevant shell.

Elaine Nelson  
2 days ago  

"Unless they decide to put new wine into new skins, things aren't going to happen. The church will continue dying until it becomes an irrelevant shell."

Those who remain will be the ones who have been members; but young people are not attracted to the same thing that may have worked for parents and grandparents.

Has anyone answered the question: "Why join a church?" If there are no positive benefits for becoming a member, it is a useless exercise." It is the same question asked of anyone, but the social needs of some may not correspond to youth. One can attend church whenever she chooses, can contribute and work with many charitable community organizations but unless there is something of worth to be gained from church membership why join? Frankly, belonging to any church organization is decreasing every year. Maybe trying to pump life into any organization that is slowly dying is not worth the effort.

Ask yourself the question: How many of your work associates and neighborhood friends would you invite to your church and want them to become members?

Timo Onjukka  
a day ago  

Good question, Elaine. With how many of your friends, colleagues, peers, associates would I be willing to worship with, in THEIR tradition? Do I have to have an agenda underlying invitation to relationship? Integrity in faith, and congruence in action, with the individual gentle nudges of the Holy Spirit perhaps can do the work of convicting towards truth.
Thomas "Vastergotland"
2 days ago

I recently moved to a new city. It has two adventist churches, and is situated in an area where many of the surrounding towns and cities also have adventist churches. One of the churches has mostly older members, two families with children and one family with youth. There are also a few younger couples. Anyone who has been going regularly to adventist churches would be instantly familiar with the service, and even though I am not fluent in the language spoken, I always know exactly what is going on.

The other church has the opposite demography. Almost everyone is a university student, with a few older members. Because of the flow of student life, the total amount of participants is large while any particular sabbath will show about the same number of persons as in the first church. Many of the members of this church have had any background in adventism, nor in many cases with christianity. This church also has a very different liturgical style. The service usually starts and ends with singing as in the average adventist church, but the message part in the middle is quite varying and thus far with a quite unpredictable style.

This second church is based on serving its community and was founded around the pathfinder club. Now it also has other projects as well. After coming 5 or 6 times, I too was asked to join one of the activities. You would think that the other adventist churches in the area would be happy for the successful outreach to the student population in this church. But as I have had opportunity to visit a few other churches in the area, the attitude towards this church has ranged between "they wont change and be like us so that we could work together", to "they are not really adventist". No doubt what I have written here will be enough for some to concur with the later appraisal of this church.

Kevin Riley
a day ago

It is a typical reaction to any church that is different. Most long-time SDAs are so used to what they do, and so comfortable with it, that they can't imagine that other people aren't. I have had quite a few conversations with older, conservative family members, and they just cannot understand that some people may not be comfortable with, or enjoy, the conservative Adventism that they have enjoyed for their whole life. They often do not understand the Adventism of their own children or grandchildren. They really do not see any reason why the Adventism they have known and loved for their whole life should change. It is their life, and losing it would be like losing a life partner. That is something many of them are going through now, and while I am worried about the loss of younger people (those under 60) from their churches, I find it hard to say that it should be taken away from them. There is a place for 'hospice churches'. Even though I prefer innovative churches, I would find the offer of looking after a 'hospice church' tempting - far more than the regular SDA church. There is something appealing about a church that does not change, and does not want to change. Perhaps that is my AS speaking rather than my brain :)

Not sure if it is coincidence or what, but I am listening to random music while reading/writing, and Chris Rae's "Road to Hell" started just as I began replying. Sometimes having a somewhat Anglican approach to life throws you some strange things to ponder :

Chris Blake
a day ago

What is needed is a transformational change in focus from "worship" to "discipleship." (Jesus actually talks little about church worship.) The best way to achieve this is through activist small groups--what is called
Sabbath School.

When Young Adults start their own discipleship Sabbath Schools, they find their space in church, and they find Jesus in their space.

Let's start aiming them in this direction rather than trying to restock all the aisles in the old country store.

William Noel
about an hour ago

Chris,

Right on! The challenge in discipleship is discovering real ministry that is empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit instead of just doing the same old thing in the same old way and hoping for different results. Both discipleship and ministry are things where tradition abounds so few have any real experience or are allowed to grow.

Anonymous

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