

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

TITLE: INTENTIONAL INTEGRATED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TO FACILITATE RETENTION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST YOUTH IN CALABAR, NIGERIA

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Date Completed: March 2020

The retention of young people is a challenge to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar and it evokes deep concerns. The inability of the church to transmit her professed faith to its young people who are faced by the pressure of society and culture evolution is the essence of this study.

This study examined factors associated with the loss of young people aged 18–39 years. As with any other group or organization, the training of youth is critical to the overall growth of the church. The research developed a biblical model that is relevant to contemporary times, implemented, and evaluated as an intervention to the problem of youth retention in the Adventist Church in Calabar. A qualitative research method was adopted and the primary source of information was through a focus group interview. Data were gathered, analyzed and stratagems were developed, implemented, and evaluated to facilitate a coherent intervention program design for the Adventist Church in Calabar.

The research findings reveal the presence of complexity and challenges of managing the differences among the varying groups of the church. A situation that edged out the young people and has become a contributing factor to the constant loss of the youth. The findings also made open the lack of professional ministerial impact, creating gross neglect of the young people; and challenges of program planning and implementation. This means that the church is not intentional about program design that targets to meet needs.

A Koinos Mentoring Program, a faith-based, biblical intervention to tackle the retention problem of the church. Koinos Mentoring Program is intentionally integrated to fuse the mentor and the mentee in a relational atmosphere leading to retention, a principle rooted in Acts 2:42. This method would have participants develop a clear understanding of and appreciation for sound doctrine; encourage spiritual growth that enhances a sense of community caring for one another.

It was implemented in Calabar Church with two groups who undertook pilot projects that ran for seven days, 2 hours 30 minutes daily. Group 'A' specifically targeted unmarried young people with "Get SMARTER" whereas group 'B' targeted the married group of young people with "Intimacy Oneonone." The result of these interventions was that the programs do not only retain young people but also attracted their friends of other faiths as well.

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A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by

Edy Ubi Ewoh

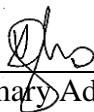
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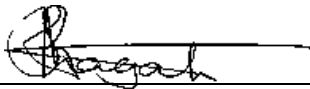
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This work is dedicated to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AV	Authorised Version of the Bible
AUA	Adventist University of Africa
GC	General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
ISBE	International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia
KJV	King James Version
NEB	New English Bible
NET	New English Translation of the Bible
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SOP	Spirit of Prophecy
OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study has been the most challenging of my entire study life so far because of the time and circumstances surrounding my writing. It is successful only by the grace and mercy of the Almighty God. May His Holy Name be forever glorified for all He has done. I remain grateful to God for my Supervisor Dr. Kelvin Onongha. His patience with me was immeasurable. I completely lost interest in the program after our last contact in 2017 and had given up on my project. But he rekindled courage and forced me back to work. I want to say thank you, my Pastor.

I appreciate AUA's collection of lecturers. Men and women who are biblically sound and deep in the Seventh-day Adventist theology and philosophy of education. These are different individuals who in touch with current issues and are up to date with contemporary relevance, such as S. Nwaomah, V. Figueroa, K. Onongha, Z. Mathema, W. Johns, E. Galenieks, A. Galeniece, D. Ganu, D. Razafiarivony, E. Fransch, M. Akpa, L. Onuoha, E. Ehioghae, and a few others. All of these left me with indelible prints. I am thankful to all of you.

I am indebted to the Seventh-day Adventist Church for granting me the privilege to undertake the study. The huge contributions of the West-Central Africa Division, Eastern Nigeria Union Conference, the defunct South East Conference, and the Cross River Conference cannot be measured by mere words. The entire membership of my local church kept me in prayer throughout the study period. I thank you all.

I also praise the Lord for my family that stood by me through the thick and thin. Those four years too a lot and brought us a lot more. My dear wife Uduakobong was always on standby to give the most needed support, encouragement, and forbearing my inadequacies. I love you then, now, and always.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The future of mankind is contingent on the first gospel proclamation in Genesis 3:15. It reveals the providential intervention of God in a rebellious world employing the gift of salvation attained only by the merits of Christ Jesus. God's love for the world (John 3:16), not wanting anyone to perish, bids rather come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). At the fullness of the time, Jesus came to die (Gal 4:4). After His resurrection, Jesus commissioned His disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." then, baptize and keep teaching (Matt 28:19-20). Making disciples and retaining them became imperative for the mission of the body of Christ. Today, the subject of retention is indisputably a global phenomenon to the Christian church.

A Brief Background of the Study

The study is conducted at Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar, Nigeria. Though a multi-ethnic church setting, it has a dominating influence from the Efik people.

The Efik People

These are an ethnic group settling along the Cross River creek and the banks of the Calabar River in Nigeria and the western Cameroon environs. Predominantly, they are found in the South-South geopolitical zone in South Eastern Nigeria.¹ They

¹ Thomas Louis Cook, "An Integrated Phonology of Efik" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Leiden, 1985), 1.

occupy largely the basins of the Lower Cross River, down to the Bakassi Peninsula, the Calabar River, and to the Kwa River, its tributaries, Akpayafe (Akpa Ikang) and the Eniong Creek.”²

The history of their origin and settlements dates back to the fourteenth century A.D., following their migration from Uruan in the thirteenth century, and to the years that marked their first settlement at Ikpaene before they arrived at Creek Town and the rest of their present riverine locations. The Efik are related to the Annang, Ibibio, Igbo, Oron, Biase, Akampkpa, Uruan, and Eket people. They occupied Calabar “towards the end of the seventeenth century or at the beginning of the eighteenth century.”³

The City of Calabar

Calabar is the city of the *Efiks*. Cook rightly observed that Calabar is the homeland of the Efik People and is called “Calabar or Obio Efik.”⁴ Efik generally refers to both the people and the language. Calabar described also as the “Cannan City,”⁵ the home city of the Efik people is the capital of Cross River State. Calabar is usually designated as the tourism destination of Nigeria.⁶ The city is divided into

² Efiong U Aye, *The Efik People* (Calabar, Nigeria: Glad Tidings Press, 2000), 23.

³ Kannan K. Nair, *Politics and Society in South Eastern Nigeria, 1841-1906: A Study of Power, Diplomacy, and Commerce in Old Calabar* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 4.

⁴ Cook, “An Integrated Phonology of Efik,” 2.

⁵ Toyin Falola and Amanda B. Warnock, *Encyclopedia of the Middle Passage: Greenwood Milestones in African American History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007), 92.

⁶ T. Valentine Achum, “Restoring Tourism,” *Marketing. Com*, last modified 2017, accessed August 6, 2017, <http://789marketing.com.ng/calabar-restoring-tourism-glory-nigerias-pride/>.

Calabar Municipal and Calabar South Local Government Areas. It has an area of 406 square kilometers (157 sq mi)⁷ and the population in 2017 is projected at 475,121.⁸

Social, Religious and Cultural Backdrop

Before the arrival of the first Adventist missionary to Calabar in 1953,⁹ the Efik people had built a strong social structure that is based on the patriarchal character of the Efik social system¹⁰ of Clan, House, and Family.¹¹ This social system was favorable for missionaries in that, when the heads of the clan, house and/or family receives the message of the missionaries, most members of the family naturally follow. The first missionaries to Calabar—the Foreign Mission Board of Edinburgh and Scottish Presbyterian Mission who established the Presbyterian Church in 1846¹² took advantage of the Efik setting. From then, it took over 100 years for the entrance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church into Calabar.

⁷ Simon Ering, “The Population Situation in Cross River State Nigeria and Its Implications for Socio- Economic Development; Observations from the 1991 and 2006 Censuses,” *Journal of emerging trends in educational research and policy studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 36–42.

⁸ Population.City, “Calabar- Population,” *Population.City*, last modified 2015, accessed August 6, 2017, <http://population.city/nigeria/calabar/>.

⁹ Enebiemi Enebiemi Eko, *African Evangelization: Problems and Prospect* (Enugu, Nigeria: Vickson, 2010), 150–151.

¹⁰ Rosalind I. Hackett, *Religion in Calabar: The Religious Life and History of a Nigerian Town* (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 343.

¹¹ Onoyom Ukpong, “A Brief History of the Efik,” *The Efik National Association- Cultural Heritage and Organization Projects for Efik-Americans*, 2017, accessed July 9, 2017, <https://www.efikusa.org/efik-history>.

¹² Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1988), 74; W. P. Livingstone, *Mary Slessor of Calabar: Pioneer Missionary* (London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916), 55; Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 172; James Buchan, *The Expendable Mary Slessor* (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1981), 25.

Statement of the Problem

The challenge of retention of young people in the Adventist Church in Calabar evokes deep concerns. The Church Records of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar, reveal a huge loss of young people¹³ leaving the church since the last two decades.¹⁴ A cursory discussion with some young people from the Adventist Church in Calabar reveals a lack of acceptance, cold and aloof, boring and irrelevant, narrow-minded, “holier than thou,” and unnecessarily legalistic and unfriendly. The failure of the church is characterized by her inability to transmit her professed faith to its young people who are constantly under the pressure of society and culture evolution. This claim is evident in the docile condition of its youth ministries. These phenomena count for the essence of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a biblical model to be implemented and evaluated perhaps a response to the problem of retaining young people in the Adventist Church in Calabar. Such a Bible-based program shall be relevant to contemporary times.

Justification

Although much has been written on the subject of youth retention in the Adventist Church, a quick search indicates that little or none has been written from the perspective of the context of the Adventist Church in Calabar. No attention has

¹³ Seventh-day Adventist Church Calabar, “Church Record of Seventh-Day Adventist Church Calabar” (Seventh-day Adventist Church Calabar, 2015 1995).

¹⁴ This observation stems from researcher’s interaction with young people of the Adventist churches in Nigeria. Specific attempt have been made by the researcher to visit at list 28 lost youths within Calabar alone. A few others in Uyo. Researcher was led by some young people currently in Calabar church membership.

been given to this ministry setting. From all observation, there is no evidence of any form of research conducted on the subject of youth loss, retention, or any related issue. For this reason, this research seeks to develop a biblical program applicable to my ministry context that is relevant, contemporary and derived from biblical principles.

Delimitations

Although the problem of youth retention was not peculiar to the Seventh Day Adventist Churches in Calabar, the study limited itself to its metropolis with two organized Adventist Churches – Calabar Church and Ikot Abasi Obori. Furthermore, the metropolis has two Sabbath School Branches namely; Edim Otop, and Ekong, however, for purposes of effective programming and evaluation, the study was carried out within the context of Calabar's main Church. Finally, the term “young people” was chosen to represent a group of people not younger than 18years and not older than 39 years of age. These groups fall between 38% and 46% of the membership of Calabar SDA's main Church.¹⁵

¹⁵ See Conference Membership on page 38.

Methodology

This project adopts the qualitative method¹⁶ requiring unstructured personal interviews¹⁷ and focus group discussions.¹⁸ There were eight key informants with equal gender representation comprising four (4) males and four females, members by baptism, graduate and undergraduate, employed and unemployed, married, and single currently in the Adventist Church, Calabar, within ages 18 to 39. They represent a group the researcher understands, are acquainted with the background of the church, and knowledgeable also to represents thinking of the youth about their church.

This project comprises five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, identifying the problem, purpose, and justification of the study. Chapter two presents the theological foundation and theoretical framework of the study, exploring relevant literature on the subject. Chapter three focuses on the field research, data collection through a qualitative method, presenting the analyses and findings of the study. Chapter four addresses program development, implementation of the designed intervention. Lastly, chapter five presents, the summary, conclusion, and recommendation from the study.

¹⁶ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, Student Edition. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), 86–144; Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), 113–124; Of the five different types of interviewing observed by Mason J. Mason, “Linking Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis,” in *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, ed. Alan Bryman and R. G. Burgess (London, UK: Routledge, 1994), 89–110.

¹⁷ Lisa M. Given, ed., *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, vol. 1 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 907.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:352; Richard A. Krueger, *Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interviews* (St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota, 2002), 4.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter surveys the theological/theoretical framework of faith formation and youth retention. It will be drawn from the Bible, the writings of Ellen Gould White, and other relevant writers to tackle the problem of youth dropout in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calabar. It is anticipated that if there is an appropriate application of the principles, it will increase youth retention by a reasonable percentage every year. The principles will accommodate effective spiritual nurture methods other principles that can assist new believers to be deep-rooted in their faith experience as Christians in Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calabar.

Youth Retention in the Old Testament

The Old Testament outlines God's efforts to keep His people from rebellion and apostasy in different ways (Gen 4:1-7; Gen 6-8; Exo 19:5-6; Deut 10:14-17; 1 Kgs 8:32) and at different levels. These include individual, family, national, as well as gentile converts like Rahab and Ruth.

Nevertheless, the Old Testament youth retention has strong roots in the immediate biological family, which forms the basic unit of society.¹ The immediate family is a source of divine blessing (Gen. 1:27-28) including children (Ps. 127:3-5; 128; 1Sam. 2:5; Ps. 113:9). Even when the center of worship moved to the tabernacle and the Temple, to the official establishment of the priesthood the family continued.

¹ Leo Perdue, "The Israelite and Early Jewish Family," in *Families in Ancient Israel*, ed. Leo Perdue et al. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 169–170.

Jacobson reiterates strongly that individual families continued to observe Passover; perform circumcisions, marriages, and funerals; observe the dietary laws, and engage in religious instruction² as a bond block. Genesis 18:19 cryptically describes the content of Hebrew education as “the way of the Lord.”

Family-centered Youth Retention

In the early Old Testament times, the family was the center of worship, having the father, as head and the priest of the family (Gen. 22: 1-14; 26:23-25; Ex. 12:3-11),³ a setting that facilitates a strong corporate dimension on faith. Especially with the perception of the Israelites’ covenant motif. People did not participate in the covenant as individuals in isolation, rather, as members of families, clans, and tribes (Josh. 24:15, 16). Deuteronomy 6 outlines the rubrics by which the family retains its youth.

Deuteronomy 6 is situated in the second discursive section (Deut 4:41-26:19) which constitutes the lengthiest of seven. The place of the composition of the Book was the plain of Moab across the River Jordan from Jericho (Deut 1: 1-5; 4:46; 34: 1-8) and is dated 1406 B.C. It is evident in the text that the discourse of the book took place between “the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month” (Deut 1:3) and probably “thirty days” (34:8) earlier than the seventh day of Nisan (Josh 1:11 and 4:19). The historical and literary observations of Deuteronomy follow the author’s veracity of the Pentateuch. Credited to Moses, it is the fifth of the first five books of the Bible comprises of seven discourses knotted together by historical narratives. In

² Arland D. Jacobson, “Divided Families and Christian Origins,” in *The Gospel Behind the Gospels: Current Studies on Q*, ed. Ronald Allen Piper (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1995), 378.

³ Colin Brown and Moisés Silva, eds., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975).

general, the book recounts the teachings and events of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. In chapter 6, God gives instructions for Israel to Moses which could be summarized in the following structure:

1. Learn to obey the Lord's commands (6:1-3)
2. Teach them to your children (6:4-9)
3. Do not forget the Lord (6:10-15)
4. Learn to keep the Lord's commands (6:16-19)
5. Teach them to your children (6:20-25)

From the above structure three basic themes are identified which are: learning of the Lord's commands (grouping verses 1-3, 16-19); teaching the Lord's commands to their children (4-9, 20-25); and not forgetting the Lord (10-15).

Learn the Lord's Commands (6:1-3, 16-19)

The second generation of the nation of Israel, the primary audience were faced with the imminence of the entrance into Canaan to occupy the land and live as a distinct nation (Exo 19:6; 32:10; Num 14:12). God had promised the nation of Israel conditional political security and economic prosperity as long as they remain faithful to Him and the promise of rejection if they go contrary (6: 1-3, 18, 24, 25). What commands were they to learn? Moses goes on with his charge to Israel, concerning their religion in Canaan.

Two basic items to learn are “the commandment of the Lord” and “the statutes and the ordinances.” But is there any difference? “The commandment” מִצְוָה (*mitzvah*) translated especially by New American Standard (NAS) and the New King James (NKJ) versions are singular forms, while “the statutes and the ordinances” חֻקִּים (*choq*) מִשְׁפָּטִים (*mishpat*) are in the plural. It is however arguable that “the commandment” is the equivalent of “the statutes and the ordinances.” That the

commandment be singular and “the statutes and the ordinances” plural could be the author’s intention that “the commandment” refers to the whole body of the law that will follow.

Again, it could also be that “the commandment” refers to the commandment to love God (v. 5), and “the statutes and the ordinances” denotes the whole body of the law that will be outlined in the chapters following (12-16). Invariably, anyone who learns to obey the commandment to love God with the heart, soul, and might will endeavor to obey all also the other commandments named as “the statutes and the ordinances.” Moses’ introduction of the chapter is rather persuasive to absolute obedience to the Lord, much the same with chapter 4. Learning obedience is a functional component of faith formation.

Furthermore, learning the Lord’s commands starts with listening and hearing (6:3, 4). “To hear” also implies “to listen,” but more so, it confers the consciousness to obey. The Hebrew imperative “Listen!” or “Hear!” as it appears in the text is *shema*. According to Hall, the word can either mean an oneness that expresses unity, or uniqueness.⁴ The *Shema* is the central prayer in the Jewish *Siddur* and is usually the first section of Scripture that a Jewish child learns.⁵ Paul Foster annotated that the Shema was recited at least twice a day—in the morning and at night⁶ and also traditional for Jews to say it as their last words.⁷

⁴ Gary Harlan Hall, *The College Press NIV: Deuteronomy*, Old Testament Series (Joplin, Mo: College Press, 2000), 137.

⁵ John J. Parsons, “The Shema: Introduction” (Hebrews for Christians, 2016).

⁶ Paul Foster, “Why Did Matthew Get the Shema Wrong? A Study of Matthew 22:37,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122, no. 2 (2003): 320.

⁷ Asael Lubotzky, *From the Wilderness and Lebanon: An Israeli Soldier’s Story of War and Recovery* (Jerusalem, Israel: The Toby Press, 2016), 56–57.

This is a consistent learning habit that commits what is learned to memory and can be transferable to a child. Verse 4 portrays some difficulties but can be observed from two different renditions. The rendering of NRSV reads thus: “The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.” This may be linked to the exclusive worship that Deuteronomy, the Decalogue, and the Shema itself emphasizes consistently (Deut 4:35, 39; 5:7-10; 6:5; 32:39). The KJV translation is the most common: “The LORD our God is one LORD,” portraying characteristics of the authority, integrity, and unity of God (1 John 1:5).

Foundational to Israel’s religion in Canaan is the truth that God is one (Deut 6:4). This truth is a call to duty that is not negotiable, diligently learned by the fathers, internalize as a way of life, and has to be taught to their children.

Teach Them Diligently to Your Children (Deut 6:4-9, 20-25)

The instructions in Deuteronomy 6 may not have been the first time God commanded fathers to teach their children the way to follow. God was preparing the Israelites to teach their children the Passover rituals. A celebration of the power and mercy of God to be taught to their children when they ask about the meaning of Passover (Exo 12: 26, 27; 13:14). This specific injunction to teach becomes more comprehensive in Deuteronomy as Moses prepares the people for life in the land (Deut 4:9, 10, 14; 5:31; 6:7; 11:19; 31:19).

Teach them diligently יִנְּשׂוּ (shaman) conveys “to sharpen,” “to whet,” or teach. The NIV’s rendering “impress” comes in the active voice implying intention. Teaching cannot be overemphasized. It is a vital component of youth retention. Smith reiterated teaching as the process of attending to people’s needs, experiences and

feelings, and making specific interventions to help them learn particular things.⁸ The Lord God directs them what instructions to give their children (6:20) and must be clearly understood by the fathers. Then communicate effectively to their children

Do Not Forget the Lord (6:10-15)

The crux of the chapter rests upon the command to not forget the Lord. The truth to love the Lord with all their heart, might, and soul (Deut 6: 5) must be internalized as becoming a way of life in Canaan. It is this love that should characterize the content of their religion overflowing from the heart (Deut 6:6). If the children, like their fathers, learn to internalize “the Commandment” and “the statutes and the ordinances” of the Lord and meditates day and night, it will perpetually remain alive and never forget the Lord.

Implications for Seventh-day Adventists in Calabar

Mueller said “God in His perfect wisdom and plan, has chosen to do His work through the family”⁹ in the sense that, God started with a family in Genesis and continually, He has used the family as a “primary arena for bringing people to Himself.”¹⁰

The retention of youth in Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calabar has to reflect the above discussed Old Testament module. The church has to be intentional to observe that the faith life of children is nurtured as they are embraced in a family of

⁸ M. K. Smith, “What Is Teaching? A Definition and Discussion,” *Infed*, 2016, accessed September 25, 2017, <https://infed.org/mobi/what-is-teaching/>.

⁹ Walt Mueller, *Understanding Today's Youth Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1994), 381.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 381–382.

faith and a vital faith community.¹¹ By this, learning takes its process and the true essence of learning is achieved. Mercer et, al insists that children's education is:

based on an understanding of learning as the process by which an individual mind accumulates and integrates information at the developmentally appropriate time for the mind to internalize it. Much of current practice sees learning as an activity that takes place within the individual mind of a child... learning is facilitated by some combination of input from a teacher and the teacher's arrangement of a learning environment that will cooperate with that individual child's internal cognitive processes.¹²

In other words, learning is a process that builds by gathering and incorporation of data collected while a child grows. This process becomes part of him as his mind is shaped by the accumulated information. The base is the family, evident in the multidimensional approach instructed upon parents to diligently teach the children (Deut 6:1-9).

The family, therefore, is a place where faith is taught and caught, values can be practiced, spiritual growth can be encouraged, theology can be discussed and applied in practical ways, and faith can be tested in difficult times as well as ordinary times. Deuteronomy 6 could imply that being intentional about retaining the youth begins at the home-community level. The formative influence on the faith development of infants, young children, teenage, and even older children lies with parents and the surrounding faith community. For the Israelite, retaining their offspring in faith was a matter of covenant responsibility.

¹¹ Joyce Ann Mercer, Deborah L Matthews, and Scott Walz, "Children in Congregations: Congregations as Contexts for Children's Spiritual Growth," in *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research and Applications*, ed. Donald Ratcliff (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2004), 160.

¹² *Ibid.*, 163.

Youth Retention in the New Testament

The New Testament as a reflection of the Old, it portrays the life of the church typically taking place in households. The structure of the church was house churches centered on households (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Philemon 1:2), whose fellowship included the rituals of evangelism (Acts 5:42), baptism (Acts 16: 15), teaching (Acts 20:20), the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:46), Christian training, and education (1 Cor 14:35; Eph 6:4).

However, the boundaries of these households were permeable as it was necessary, to admit outsiders into the fellowship.¹³ Heck emphasizes that the church plays a major role in nurturing its members to retain them.¹⁴ Observation of Scripture proposed that God has taught important lessons¹⁵ to the nation of Israel regarding the subject of intentional retention.¹⁶ The book of Acts 2 presents a retention module for the New Testament church that can be adopted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar.

Church Community of Acts 2:42-47

There is no doubt that the Acts of the Apostles as a book was written by Luke. Barclay suggests that the book was written to show how fast Christianity had spread within thirty years;¹⁷ while some others think of it as a reaffirmation of Jesus'

¹³ John Driver, *Images of the Church in Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1997), 150.

¹⁴ Joel D. Heck, *New Member Assimilation: Practical Prevention of Back Door Loss Through Front Door Care* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1984), 7.

¹⁵ Adam C. Welch, *Kings and Prophets of Israel* (London, UK: Bristol, 1958), 59–60.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1975), 413.

¹⁷ William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Revised edition. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976), 1–4.

teachings on the kingdom of God,¹⁸ or emphasizes Pentecostal centrality of the early Christian community.¹⁹ Brian, however, suggests the book Acts indicates the rapid growth of the early church community by an incredible depiction of the commitment²⁰ and shared life of the early believers,²¹ such that facilitated retention of its members.

The text is situated within a larger context that started in chapter 1. Chapter 2: 42-47 is a block that describes the aftermath of Peter's sermon that gave birth to a new community (Acts 2: 14-41) and from such community sprouts principles of nurture—which by application, can facilitate youth retention in Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calabar, Nigeria.

The church community in Acts 2 is a church characterized by a sense of common purpose and identity.²² The emphasis of the text, however, stresses the profound unity and intimacy this community shared.²³ The initial group of followers has expanded to include the new believers who have accepted the gospel and have been baptized (Acts 2:41), and bonded by four basic activities.

The activities include the teaching of the apostles, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers. Generally, these are regarded as four separate items, but Marshall

¹⁸ David L. Tiede, "The Exaltation of Jesus and the Restoration of Israel in Acts 1," *The Harvard Theological Review* 79, no. 1 (1986): 278–286; James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles: Epworth Commentaries* (Peterborough, UK: Epworth Press, 1996), 4.

¹⁹ David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 91–96.

²⁰ Brian J. Capper, "The Interpretation of Acts 5.4," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 6, no. 19 (1983): 117–131.

²¹ Brian J. Capper, "The Palestinian Cultural Context of Earliest Christian Community of Good," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995), 323–356.

²² Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts, Paideia: Commentaries on The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 48.

²³ Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts: Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 54.

collapsed them into two main commitments—a commitment to apostolic teaching and a commitment to fellowship.²⁴ Witherington affirms that “only two things are mentioned in the text selected—teaching and *koinōnia*, with the latter further defined as involving the breaking of bread and prayer.”²⁵ On the whole, Marshall retorts that these four elements characterized a Christian gathering in the early church.²⁶ To show it was a way of life of the early church, the verb *προσκαρτερέω* which occurs twice in the paragraph (vss 42, 46) connotes the idea of being actively involved with something, consistently and with persistence. This early church community is worshiping in the synagogue and daily home fellowship sharing meals (verse 46).

Apostles Teaching

The believers devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles (*διδασχῆ*).²⁷ The requirement of “the teaching of the apostles” though not specifically mentioned highlights the unique authority and status they had among the first believers. This instruction is for new converts who may not have heard Jesus teach or had first-hand contact with Him.

The apostles are witnesses passing along the things which they have seen and heard. The apostles may have had common sets of instruction which they regularly passed along to new converts. If this is the case, then there was a basic body of

²⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 88.

²⁵ Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster Press, 1998), 160.

²⁶ I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2010), 89.

²⁷ Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1990), 72.

tradition within months of the death of Jesus which could be called the “teaching of the apostles.”

Bruce submits that the first mark of the first Christian community is a commitment to the revelation of Jesus uniquely entrusted to the apostles.²⁸ The apostles’ teaching was with authority. God appointed these apostles to nurture the Church through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:28). Conversely, the teachings of the apostles and the prophets gave birth to the church (Eph 2:19, 20). If we conclude that the apostles were following Jesus’ instructions, then the apostles were teaching what Jesus had taught them. And, beyond teaching facts, the apostles were teaching people to ‘do’ everything that Jesus had told them to do considering (Matthew 28:19-20).

Fellowship

The believers devoted themselves to fellowship (κοινωνία). According to Achtemeier, this is a term is found in the Greco-Roman literature to express the mutuality and commitment characteristic of marriage.²⁹ It is also found in Romans 15:26 and Hebrew 13:16, referring to sharing possessions or contributions given to the poor who remained in Jerusalem after their conversion rather than return home after Pentecost. Since this word connotes sharing in common,³⁰ this is a possible suggestion to the communal life described in the next verses. At the very least includes alms and care for the poor.³¹

²⁸ Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 73.

²⁹ Marianne Meye Thompson, Joel B. Green, and Paul J. Achtemeier, *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 171–173.

³⁰ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 160–161.

³¹ At this point there is a possibility that many of those who needed assistance were Diaspora pilgrims who accepted the message of Jesus and remained in Jerusalem rather than to return home after Pentecost.

The Breaking of Bread

The believers devoted themselves to the “breaking of bread.” Such intimacy leading to the “breaking of bread” which includes “the Lords Table”³² and sharing of large meals by church members.³³ The expression can be observed in light of the writer’s intention. If the authorship of Acts is credited to Luke, then “breaking of bread” can be used as to sharing a meal, as well as describing the community celebrating a communion. Because the same words are used in Luke 21:19 with Jesus taking bread and breaks. Then upon His resurrection in Luke 24:35, He again breaks bread while his disciples grasped who he was from a distance. This probably suggests, the practice of common meals by Jesus was the foundation for this early church practice in that they all ate and drank together as one group and evidently in homes (2:2, 46).

Prayer

The community of believers devoted themselves to prayers. Since the Greek is plural this is plausibly a reference to daily prayers in the Temple. It would not be unusual for Jewish men to go to the Temple several times a day to pray, so the community continues to worship at the Temple regularly. Acts 2:46 indicates that the disciples met in both private homes and the Temple. This likely put them into contact with other observant Jews who would then be introduced to Jesus as Messiah.

³² Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, 89; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 73; Parsons, *Acts, Paideia: Commentaries on The New Testament*, 49.

³³ David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 161.

The Implication for Youth Retention in Acts 2

Acts 2 portrays an ideal community of believers whose interests are to keep the body of Christ as one. The community sold their property, pooled resources, and distributed these funds to the poor. Setting a standard description of Christian community that gives to the poor an evidence of “living in common.” When the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar gets intentional about the four elements aforementioned, the youth in the church will not feel inadequate. The church would have taught its youth the message of Jesus; facilitate a refreshing fellowship; share and living in common. Caring for new believers and following up on visitors to our churches must be the priority of the church.

Having given them the basics of the faith, and teach them how to find answers in the Word, genuine care for them, and also let them breathe. Provision should be made on how to answer questions for them; share testimonies about how God has worked in our own lives. If the youths are nurtured this way, the church would have retained a reasonable percentage if not all.

Ellen G. White on Youth Retention

The writings of Ellen Gould White have ample resources on how to retain young people in the church. These resources are bible-based and have exhaustive explanations of youth retention. Adventists officially hold that Ellen White’s writings are trustworthy³⁴ and are always subordinate to the Scriptures the focus of authority.

³⁴ Biblical Research Institute, “Reflections” (Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2004), 4.

Adventists hold her to be one who communicated messages from God for the encouragement and consolation of the church.³⁵

The Seventh-day Adventist position at present is still that Ellen White's writings offer guidance in understanding the teachings of Scripture and the application of these teachings.³⁶ Her counsel on retention of the youth transcends geographical boundaries, language barriers, and cultures. Garnered from the Bible, her counsel spans through the Old and the New Testaments with no element of contradiction—a proof of her prophetic giftedness and affirmation of divine inspiration. For this study, White's approach scrutinizes the value for souls, the collective responsibility of parents, the church, and the minister in the retention of the youth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar.

Value for Souls

Ellen White states that souls who have cost the life of God's only-begotten Son must be estimated in value by the immense ransom paid for them; and, everyone notwithstanding class or status must be treated concerning the value Christ has placed upon the human soul.³⁷ Furthermore, she added that “God's servants need a realization of the value of souls. Christ died for human beings. His sacrifice on the cross is the measure of their value in God's sight”³⁸ Every member of the church is of great value irrespective of age, status, class, and gender. This value calls for special responsibility

³⁵ Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998), 428.

³⁶ Biblical Research Institute, “Reflections,” 4.

³⁷ Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 2007), 210.

³⁸ Ellen G. White, “The Worth of Souls,” *Review and Herald*, 1903, para. 1.

from different groups within the body of Christ as reflected by Ellen White on youth retention.

Corporate Duty

In the book *Child Guidance*, Ellen White made a profound statement that calls for attention, stating that the church is appointed by God to serve as a watchman. Called to maintain jealous care over the youth and children, and as a watchman to understand the tactic of the enemy and alarm warning of danger. Unfortunately, the church does not understand the situation but rather sleeping on guard. She identifies the times as “this time of peril” emphasizing the role of working as for life for the salvation of the youth on fathers and mothers,³⁹ the churches,⁴⁰ and ministers.⁴¹

In different localities should feel that a solemn responsibility upon them to train youth and educate talent to engage in missionary work. She added that “ministers may do their work faithfully and well, yet it will amount to very little if parents neglect their work.”⁴² It is to a lack of Christianity in the home life that the lack of power in the church is due.

Responsibility of Parents

Among the factors inhibiting parental influence on children, Ellen White states, many parents, absorbed in work and care, lose sight of their opportunities to influence for good the lives of their children.⁴³ In her book *Adventist Home*, she called

³⁹ Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954), 312.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 314.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 550.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 551–55.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 322.

on parents with a mindboggling question saying, “parents, what course are you pursuing? Emphasizing with intensity, she added,

are you acting upon the idea that in religious matters your children should be left free of all restraint? Are you leaving them without counsel or admonition through childhood and youth? Are you leaving them to do as they please?

Then she refutes, “If so, you are neglecting your God-given responsibilities.”⁴⁴

In other words, every act of neglect exhibited by parents either on purpose or involuntary is considered an act of irresponsibility, because such children would not experience conversion.⁴⁵

Why would she exert such a strong language with no regard to the dynamics of modern-day parenting? Two reasons. One, she knew the youth is faced with an ever-increasing danger as they enter into the society of a huge number of their age, and varied character and habits of life. With such impending peril, “many parents,” she said, “are inclined to relax rather than redouble their efforts to guard and control their children.”⁴⁶ Two, “the course pursued by parents before the birth of their children has very much to do with the development of their character after their birth.”⁴⁷ *Testimonies for the Church* expounded in clearer detail the claim afore stated:

Parents may have transmitted to their children tendencies to appetite and passion, which will make more difficult the work of educating and training these children to be strictly temperate and to have pure and virtuous habits. If the appetite for unhealthy food and stimulants and narcotics has been transmitted to them as a legacy from their parents what a fearfully solemn responsibility rests upon the parents to counteract the evil tendencies which they have given to their children! How earnestly and diligently should the

⁴⁴ Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1952), 320.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁴⁶ Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Student* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1913), 332.

⁴⁷ Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1977), 140; White, *Child Guidance*, 389.

parents work to do their duty, in faith and hope, to their unfortunate offspring!⁴⁸

She was very clear on the enormous weight of responsibility that rests upon parents, declaring that the Lord has a special interest in working with young people because as children they are the heritage of the Lord. He would have them educated to be co-workers with him. Therefore, parents are the natural guardians of their children, and they have an earnest duty to oversee their education and training,⁴⁹ for it is the most solemn responsibilities ever committed to mortals.⁵⁰

In an age where many refuse responsibilities for their children's upbringing, White insists that, in young people, God sees talent and influence, which, when controlled by the Holy Spirit, in cooperation with parental duty, will become a power for good, and bring glory to His name. And so, "if parents will cooperate with Him by training and educating them according to the instructions he has given. This should be the first work of all parents."⁵¹ The anticipated parental responsibility includes education for their children, training in matters of daily living, and attendance at worship.

Fathers and mothers should make it a rule that their children attend public worship on the Sabbath, and should enforce the rule by their example. We must command our children and our household after us, as did Abraham. By example as well as precept we should impress upon them the importance of religious teaching. All who have taken the baptismal vow have solemnly consecrated themselves to the service of God; they are under covenant obligation to place themselves and their children where they may obtain all possible incentives and encouragement in the Christian life.⁵²

⁴⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1875), 567, 568.

⁴⁹ White, *Child Guidance*, 331.

⁵⁰ Ellen G. White, "The Responsibility of Parents," *The Signs of the Times*, 1897, para. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² White, *Child Guidance*, 530.

The responsibility rests with the parents; and will they take up the work that God has entrusted to them and with fidelity perform it. They will move onward and upward, working in a humble, patient, persevering way to reach the exalted standard themselves and to bring their children up with them.⁵³ These would have given the church a convenient platform for adequate retention of the youth in the church.

Responsibility of the Church

Neglect of the youth in many quarters is common knowledge. White acknowledged as well that “not the ministers alone who have neglected this solemn work of saving the youth; the members of the churches” also are guilty of their indifference and neglect of duty.⁵⁴ In the *Adventist Home*, White declares:

Let the church take special care of the lambs of the flock, exerting every influence in their power to win the love of the children and to bind them to the truth. Ministers and church members should second the efforts of parents to lead the children into safe paths. The Lord is calling for the youth, for He would make them His helpers to do good service under His banner.⁵⁵

Profound counsel from the *Pastoral Ministry* elucidates on the above claims, suggesting, the overseers of the church must have councils and in those boards devise ways whereby young men and women may be trained to put to use their entrusted talents.

The older members of the church must invest their time and resources seeking to engage in good, earnest, and compassionate work for the youth. Because many of these youths have embraced the truth, and they have not yet been educated as to how they may serve the cause of God, and thereby grow spiritually. In her argument, she

⁵³ White, *Adventist Home*, 188.

⁵⁴ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1938), 77.

⁵⁵ White, *Adventist Home*, 358, 359.

proposes that, when the faculties of the mind and body of the youths are engaged in the service of God, “a door is closed against the temptations of the enemy, and Satan has not as favorable an opportunity for training the children and youth for his service.”⁵⁶ She laments grievously when she said:

We have sadly neglected our duty toward the young, for we have not gathered them in, and induced them to put out their talents to the exchangers. A different mold should be placed upon the work. There should be less sermonizing and more personal labor. Fresh manna must be gathered from the Word of God, and every man must have his portion in due season. Great work can be done by dropping a word privately to your young friends, to those you meet in your daily walks.⁵⁷

Here Ellen White emphatically established a model that aids the church towards intentionally engaging the youth’s “fresh vigor and ability, into the ranks of Christ, enlisting them as valiant soldiers in the great fight for the truth.”⁵⁸ A different mold she said, “should be placed upon the work.” This is a call for new methods. The church has to shift with intentional methods that incorporate and internalizes its young people as co-laborers. These would be achieved according to White, by less sermonizing and more personal labor; fresh manna gathered from the Word of God and everyone has his portion in due season, and dropping a word privately to the young who had been met with friendship.

The ministers may do their part, but they can never perform the work that the church should do,⁵⁹ because, God has appointed the church as a watchman, to have

⁵⁶ Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association, 1995), 277–279.

⁵⁷ Ellen G. White, “A Message to Church Officers About the Youth,” *Review and Herald*, 1914.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1925), 68.

jealous care over the youth,⁶⁰ it behooves the church to organize its membership in companies of workers⁶¹ including the youth, thereby keeping them in faith.

Responsibility of Ministers/Pastors

The role of the pastor and minister is without argument an enormous one. The book *Gospel Workers* enumerates the pastor's task to include visitation from house to house among his flock, "teaching, conversing, and praying with each family, and looking out for the welfare of their souls." He is enjoined that even those who are strong and desirous in faith should not be neglected, "but thoroughly instructed in the truth." For the watchful and zealous minister of God, no single opportunity to do good should be lost or taken for granted.⁶² Despite this massive workload, Ellen White states that the "ministers of the gospel should form a happy acquaintance with the youth of their congregations."⁶³ Why? Because "the youth are objects of Satan's special attacks."⁶⁴

To form a happy acquaintance requires the minister to make intentional moves that would earn him the trust of the youth. The failure to do this is considered by heaven, "neglect of duty, a sin against souls for whom Christ died."⁶⁵ Forming happy acquaintance endears the manifestation of kindness, courtesy, tender sympathy, and love, towards them and too often brings about salvation such that the love of Jesus will win the minister an entrance into the hearts of the young; "and when you have

⁶⁰ White, *Child Guidance*, 312.

⁶¹ White, *Christian Service*, 72.

⁶² Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 76–78.

⁶³ White, *Pastoral Ministry*, 275.

⁶⁴ Ellen G. White, "God's Means for Diffusing Light," *Review and Herald*, 1891, para. 7.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

obtained the confidence of the youth, they will listen to your words and take your counsel.”⁶⁶ Forming a happy acquaintance will require the most delicate tact, the most thoughtful consideration, the most passionate love, the most earnest prayer for heavenly wisdom to transmit values that reach the hearts of even hopeless youth.

A Call to the Youth

Probably, most of the youth who leave the church may not have had a genuine conversion experience. Otherwise may not have had properly articulated follow-up plan and adequate nurturing environment. However, the youth is to furnish the mind with valuable knowledge. He is called upon to occupy the soul with that which is good and control its powers, leaving no room for low, debasing indulgences. But rather, maintain the standard of piety and devotion.⁶⁷

The youths have been called by the Lord⁶⁸ to take responsibility and diligently enter the harvest field and “work as harvest hands” working for the Lord.⁶⁹ They are to connect with experienced church workers for this work in the great harvest field trusting the guidance of the Lord. And to give them evidence that they are chosen vessels, and will give them words to speak to the people.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ White, “God’s Means for Diffusing Light,” *Review and Herald*.

⁶⁷ Ellen G. White, “The End of All Things Is at Hand,” *Bible Training School*, 1891.

⁶⁸ Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1923), 548.

⁶⁹ Ellen G. White, “A Call to Young Men,” *Southern Review*, 1891, para. 2.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Youth Retention from Other Sources

Visionary Perspectives

Calian, speaking from the Presbyterian Church standpoint, proposed that the church needs a wake-up call. This is done by intentionally asking questions like: “do we truly desire to experience a new Pentecost of vitality in our midst?”⁷¹ Such that the church just as a matter of necessity be willing to have a paradigm shift, if necessary, let go of old approaches and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide His church into unexplored avenues.

In his thinking, structuring a visionary church is a huge challenge militating “all mainline denominations” that requires first and foremost an attitudinal change, in other words, a receptive theological framework that welcomes rather than fears the future.⁷² There are quite clear similarities in his concerns and those of the writer of this project. According to him,

Presbyterians today are unfocused; our identity is unclear to ourselves and outsiders... we seem less committed to our heritage; denominational loyalty has eroded considerably. Presently we seem to be in a survival mode. This unhappy trend is also evident among other mainline denominations.⁷³

Though addressing the Presbyterian Church, this project has observed such concerns with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar. Calian laments today’s apparent aging of mainline churches, in that, 67 percent of the Presbyterian Church’s membership as of 1998 constituted at least 56 years of age. This implies that the future of leadership and membership is bleak. “The vitality of tomorrow’s church is

⁷¹ Carnegie Samuel Calian, *Survival or Revival: Ten Keys to Church Vitality* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 1.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 2.

dependent upon the engagement and enthusiasm of youth.”⁷⁴ Out of frustration, he echoed the question “But where are the young people?”⁷⁵

In a bid for answers, he expounds on the different generational dispositions, from the baby boomers, those born from 1946 to 1960; their children who are known as Generation X or baby busters; to the emerging group of youth referred to as Generation Y. He suggested that with Generation Y, there are many large indoor sports arenas; the number of indoor playgrounds for children and youth who can afford them has increased. The computer is another kind of playground as well as a learning tool. Generation Y are exposed to a global mindset, with conversations carried out internationally through the Internet.

When we begin to add all this up, we can see where the youth have gone: following the example of baby boomers and Generation Xers, today's teenagers... do not give the church a high priority.⁷⁶

In the same vein, Muller added a new label “Generation M,”—a media-saturated generation where young people spend 26 percent of the time using more than one medium.⁷⁷ From Calian’s perspective, today’s youth is lost in transit between the pulpit and the pew resulting from what the church in his community represents. Some believe there are too many churches competing for a diminishing number of worshippers. Others see the church as a place where the older generation gathers. For many, the church does not make a difference in society (of course, some disagree).

⁷⁴ Calian, *Survival or Revival: Ten Keys to Church Vitality*, 75.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 77.

⁷⁷ Walt Mueller, *Youth Culture 101* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 78–79.

Perhaps the vitality of a congregation is due to the visionary spirit that enables the church to make a major difference in the life and welfare of the community.⁷⁸

Youth Culture

Walt Mueller has presented in his book *Youth Culture 101* the finest framework of present-day youth culture, appropriately applying psychology, sociology, and theology into such an overview that one would be disadvantaged to pass by. Mueller also dealt with the more difficult subjects, such as substance abuse, peer pressure, depression, cutting, and suicide.⁷⁹

Mueller goes through the major categories of drugs (depressants, hallucinogens, narcotics, etc.) and then lists all of the specific drugs that fall in each category, explaining what they are and what they do to a user. He expounded 11 reasons why teens abuse drugs and a comprehensive list of the signs and symptoms of substance abuse.⁸⁰ His main emphasis is about growing the teen's awareness of what worldview a movie, song, or commercial is advocating, which is often overlooked in parental watchfulness of their teen's media consumption. On selling worldviews, he comments that:

ads tell stories, depict people in real-life situations, and embed products in messages that promise relief from anxiety and fulfillment of aspirations means much more is being communicated through the ads we see. By selling both a product *and* a message, ads influence the way young people look at, understand, and live in the world... Kids see thousands of marketing messages each day and only purchase a small fraction of the products advertised. But the ads' messages still come through loud and clear.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Mueller, *Youth Culture 101*, 78.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 44, 384–386.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 338–380.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 222.

For Mueller, the science of marketing is the livewire underneath youth culture. He noted that the content of marketing seminars has numerous words that are constantly in use to describe the methods and postures needed to successfully market to the youth, unfortunately, those are church terms. Marketers talked about kids in terms of “reaching,” “building relationships with,” “empowering,” “converting,” “preaching to,” and even “evangelizing.”⁸²

The Role of the Media in Youth Retention

The rapid rise in new communication and media technologies has changed the face of ministry, especially to the youth. A growing array of options and outlets keep the youth continually in touch with media and media in touch with them all the time. They are heavily bombarded on every side, at home, school, work, sporting events, marketplace, in the car, in the streets, and proliferation of portable media devices constantly at their disposal. Everything is not only changing, but the pace of change is accelerating moment by moment, and ministry to them has to move with them in that order if it must be relevant.

Is Media Any Good?

The media according to Janssen is the collective communication outlets or tools that are used to store and deliver information or data.⁸³ Others feel it is either associated with communication media or specialized mass media communication businesses such as print media and the press, photography, advertising, cinema,

⁸² Mueller, *Youth Culture* 101, 220, 221.

⁸³ Cory Janssen, “What Is Communication Media?,” *Techopedia.Com*, last modified 2017, <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/14462/communication-media>.

broadcasting (radio and television), publishing,⁸⁴ and point of sale. The word *media* may be defined as “one of the means or channels of general communication in society, as newspapers, radio, television, etc.”⁸⁵

Business Dictionary expounded on these definitions with intrinsic detailing. It is “communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, or promotional messages are disseminated,” including every “broadcasting and narrowcasting media such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet.”⁸⁶ It is a fact that a vast majority of the people make use of these various components of the media, however, most of those who use the Internet are the youths. Purportedly, many youths spend an average of 8 hours online every day and much of that time is believed to be spent on social media sites. It is pertinent therefore to suggest that parents, the church, and the ministers are under obligation to meet the youth where they are—a move that could be described in the words of Ellen G. White as forming “a happy acquaintance.”

Social media. As with all things in life, there are positive and negative sides to social media. However, the researcher intends to explore the positive side of social media and its potentials in youth retention in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calabar. Social media has become an integral part of today’s society. Loads of information being disseminated over the Internet; social media has become the very

⁸⁴ Martin Lister et al., *New Media: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd Edition. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 9.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Business Dictionary, “Media,” *BusinessDictionary.Com*, last modified 2017, accessed October 26, 2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/media.html>.

fabric upon which our society is being built. In line with Mensah, spending time on social media may seem like a waste of time.⁸⁷

But not so for the youth. The time spent on *Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Twitter Viber, Imo*, sharing, and posting pictures, and texting is an investment. A valuable investment for friendship, gossips, and *gist*, and relationships of varying shades. This for them is the priority. And that is how they see it. Social media sites enable the efficient speedy flow of communication in a way that updates take place in seconds.

On occasions with cross-posting over social networks, the updates get to everyone on the list almost immediately. They find it easier to get in touch with friends and families despite distances. There is no debate, communication is easier and highly effective. Rightly stated by Favour Anthony, Social media and mobile technology have eventually made the world a global village⁸⁸ where communication flows without hassles.⁸⁹

The new village square. A village square is a place where people of all works gathered. A public space where the local community holds its social gatherings. The social media has become that village square for today's society. And if the Adventist Church in Calabar really wants to be relevant, having the Gospel impact and influence a community, and more so her youth, then that place of most significant impact is the social media.

⁸⁷ Millicent Mensah, "Positive Effects of Social Media On the Youth," *Modern Ghana*, last modified 2016, accessed October 26, 2017, <https://www.modernghana.com/news/727123/positive-effects-of-social-media-on-the-youth.html>.

⁸⁸ Favour Anthony, "How Social Media Makes the World 'Global Village,'" *Vanguard News*, 2015, accessed October 26, 2017, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/09/how-social-media-makes-the-world-global-village/>.

⁸⁹ Mensah, "Positive Effects of Social Media On the Youth."

Conclusion

The Old Testament held the family responsible for the retention of youth, emphasizing the duty of parents to teach their children with diligence, the way of the Lord. The New Testament presents four basic aspects by which the church is responsible for retaining the youth. By teaching as in the case of the apostle's teachings (doctrine), relationship in fellowship, sharing in nurture, and prayer. This is what the researcher sees as an intentional integrated ministry.

In the views of Ellen Gould White, youth retention is a corporate responsibility of the entire church. And such responsibilities function in different capacities and on different platforms, including parents, the church, the minister or pastor, and the youth himself. On the other hand, today's media culture has got a great influence on the youth and so, the church must wake up to that reality and meet the youth where they are even on social media. The next chapter is field research leading to the examination of theological foundation.

CHAPTER 3

FIELD RESEARCH

Having examined the theological foundation, this chapter defines the concept of the research to investigate why young people are leaving the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar. And to develop a biblical model for nurturing and retention that is relevant to contemporary times for implementation and evaluation. The researcher anticipates a result that develops a retention program that accommodates and nurtures young people in the church. It would be examining the cultural context of the research including the social and cultural background, church setting, qualitative research, and data analysis of the study.

Social and Cultural Background

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calabar is located and named after the city. The city of Calabar is the city *of the Efiks*. Cook observed that Calabar is the homeland of the Efik People and is called “Calabar or Obio Efik.”¹

Generally, Efik refers to both the people and the language. Calabar is described also as the “Cannan City,”² It is usually designated as the tourism destination of Nigeria.³ The city is divided into Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Areas. It has an area of 406 square kilometers (157 sq mi)

¹ Cook, “An Integrated Phonology of Efik,” 2.

² Falola and Warnock, *Encyclopedia of the Middle Passage: Greenwood Milestones in African American History*, 92.

³ Achum, “Restoring Tourism.”

⁴and the population at 475,121 in 2017.⁵ The city of Calabar is the capital of Cross River State.

Cross River State is a coastal state in Southeastern Nigeria, named after the Cross River, which passes through the state.⁶ Located in the Niger Delta, Cross River State occupies 20,156 square kilometers. It shares boundaries with Benue State to the north, Enugu and Abia States to the west, the Cameroon Republic to the east, and the south by Akwa-Ibom and the Atlantic Ocean.⁷

Cross River State was created on 27 May 1967, seven years after independence by the General Yakubu Gowon. General Murtala Mohammed regime changed its name from South Eastern State to Cross River State in the creation states exercise of 1976,⁸ occupying 5°, 45' 0' N, 8°, 30' 0' E, 6°, 30'E. The Efiks have a robust and entertaining cultural heritage that projected the prominence of Calabar in Nigerian history.

These include “Ekombi,” “Ukwa,” “Mbuk,” “Ekpe” and Abang dance which is performed for entertainment and on festive occasions.⁹ The Efiks have a democratic monarch who also acts as the protector of Efik tradition and the traditional head of the

⁴ Ering, “The Population Situation in Cross River State Nigeria and Its Implications for Socio-Economic Development; Observations from the 1991 and 2006 Censuses,” 36–42.

⁵ Chukwudi Njoku, “Map of Calabar Metropolis,” *ResearchGate*, last modified 2015, accessed August 6, 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Calabar-Metropolis-Calabar-south-and-municipality-LGAs-Source-Office-of-the_fig5_322079641.

⁶ Eko, *African Evangelization: Problems and Prospect*, 38.

⁷ Andem Bassey Andem et al., “Bioaccumulation of Some Heavy Metals and Total Hydrocarbon (THC) in the Tissues of Periwinkle (*Tympanotonus Fuscatus* Var *Radula*) in the Intertidal Regions of Qua Iboe River Basin, Ibeno, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria,” *Greener Journal of Biological Sciences* 3, no. 7 (2013): 258–264.

⁸ Benjamin Obi Nwabueze, *A Constitutional History of Nigeria* (London, UK: C. Hurst, 1982), 59.

⁹ Okon E. Akak, *Efiks of Old Calabar*, vol. 3 (Calabar, Nigeria: Akak & Sons, 1982), 29.

Efiks. Today, the Obong of Calabar is the symbolic figure of the Efik people and their culture.¹⁰

Church Setting

Adventist mission in Cross River State dates back to the arrival of two literature evangelists who pioneered the work there in the year 1953.¹¹ Three years later, it had its first baptism recorded¹² and officially organized in 1959.¹³ Although, there are conflicting sources on dates about the official arrival of Adventist missionaries in the defunct South East Conference far back as 1923.¹⁴ Until 2014, Akwa Ibom and the Cross River States together constitute the South East Conference.

Cross River Conference

In line with the Eastern Nigeria Union Conference's strategic development, it was voted at the year-end and Executive Committee meeting of 2013 to sever South East Conference into two sovereign entities. The Cross River Conference was formally kicked off on the 20th of December 2014 at the joint camp meeting of the defunct South East Conference held in East Eket, Eket LGA.¹⁵ The headquarters is situated in Calabar, the capital city of Cross River State. Cross River Conference covers nine (9) Local Government Areas in Cross River State, namely, Abi, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South,

¹⁰ Akak, *Efiks of Old Calabar*, 3:33.

¹¹ Eko, *African Evangelization: Problems and Prospect*, 151.

¹² *Ibid.*, 152.

¹³ Seventh-day Adventist Church Calabar, "Church Record of Seventh-Day Adventist Church Calabar," 61.

¹⁴ Eko, *African Evangelization: Problems and Prospect*, 133.

¹⁵ Seventh-day Adventists. *Cross River Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Mini-Constituency*, 2014.

Odukpani, and Yakurr. The Conference consists of three (3) districts and one (1) group: Calabar, Ikot Abasi Obori, Akamkpa districts, and Yakurr/Abi group, a membership of 1753, according to a statistical report on membership as at December 2017.¹⁶

The demographic features of the membership of the Cross River Conference have inspired the commitment to an Intentional Integrated Program Development that Facilitates Youth Retention. A retention strategy that provides ministry to young Seventh-day Adventists, including the singles, and the newly baptized.

Conference Membership

A survey conducted by the Cross River Conference (CRC) Administration in 2017 reveals that the CRC membership is characterized by 38% of young people within ages 6 and 19; 46% are within 20 and 49, while 16% are within 50 and above. Considering that the life of the church hovers around ages 6 and 49, it would be probable that 84% of the church in CRC are with the young people.¹⁷ Therefore, if there must be a church tomorrow, there is a dare need to invest in a ministry that prepares these young people for that tomorrow.

Calabar Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar also referred to as “Calabar Church” is as old as the coming of the first missionary in 1959. The church is situated on a corner of the crossroads between Goldie Street, Marian Road, Mayne Avenue, and Atu Junction.

¹⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Cross River Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist Year-End/Annual Report* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2017), 2, 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

It is sited on the boundary between Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Areas. This church is in the city of Calabar comprising a vigorously multicultural one. It is a reception point for Seventh-day Adventists visiting from around the world. Its membership is not consistent, resulting from human movements. Currently, Calabar Church seats a capacity of about 600 people every Sabbath worship day from different parts of Nigeria. Calabar Church and its leadership are averse to change and holds traditional values passed down by its elders over the years.

Only recently were younger men ordained as elders. The church is prone to rancor and internal provocations within its membership. Most crises are about the dress code for male preachers; not entering the church without a scarf to cover their head, for women; wearing of makeup, wearing of trousers. Some members of the leadership cadre of the church could go as far as forcefully implementing these actions. Against this backdrop, young people get so troubled and deeply uncomfortable with operations like these.

Having examined the cultural context in the previous section, the next session will be examining field research, a method of observation in which non-numerical data was gathered. This data interprets meaning that helps understand concepts and issues raised in the *study* towards a program design.

Qualitative Research

The researcher adopted a qualitative research method employing a focus group discussion for this research. This method provided a conducive atmosphere for participants to express themselves without bias or prejudice. Focus groups reveal a wealth of detailed information and supply deep insight from listening to the opinions of others in a small and safe group setting.

Method

In this qualitative process, a purposive sampling method was engaged. This method is also known to be a non-probability sampling method¹⁸ and occurs when “elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher.”¹⁹ The researcher obtains a representative sample by using sound judgment, to saving time and money.

Therefore, eight (8) participants of equal gender representation were selected for the focus group interview. They comprised of four (4) males and four females, members by baptism, graduate and undergraduate, employed and unemployed, married and single, within the age bracket of 18-39 years old. These represent a group of people the researcher anticipates is conversant with the traditional framework of the local church herein mentioned. Therefore, they would be suitable to tell what the young people in the church are thinking about their church.

Data Collection

The means of data collection for this research were audio recordings and note-taking. The audio was played on an mp3 player and accurately transcribed to text, using Microsoft word processor. Afterward, the transcribed text was uploaded on *Dedoose*, a web-based qualitative data analysis software for analysis.

Data Analysis

Nayab suggests five different methods of qualitative data analysis, including:

1. “case study method,” focusing on the in-depth study of a single, usually complex series of events, that make up a case;

¹⁸ Ted Palys, “Purposive Sampling,” in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given, vol. 1 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 697.

¹⁹ Ken Black, *Business Statistics: For Contemporary Decision Making*, 6th Edition. (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 225, 242.

2. “action research method,” a systematic and interactive inquiry process; “analytical induction method” which inspects initial cases to identify common factors and the seek an explanation for existing linkages
3. “ethnographic method,” which study the people in their natural settings to capture their ordinary and normal activities, focusing on the values, ideas, and material practices articulated by the subject
4. comparative method analyses data from different settings or groups, but belonging to the same point in time and/or the same settings, to identify similarities and differences;
5. frame method, rooted in psychiatry and psychology and explains social phenomena through symbolic-interpretive constructs or frames that people adopt in their normal daily lives.²⁰

On the contrary, Surendran suggests “deductive” and “inductive” as two major approaches to qualitative data analysis.²¹ The researcher, however, approached the analysis with the ethnographic method with an inductive coding process. By this, codes were created from scratch and are based on the qualitative data collected. The researcher, however, has developed a set of codes from the analysis of data, and are discussed in the coming section.

Codes from the Analysis

Nine questions from the focus group interview revealed information on the study by the responses of participants. Fifty-eight (58) codes were generated. A careful examination of the codes was developed into a set of themes as shall be herein discussed.

²⁰ N. Nayab, “What Are the Various Qualitative Methods of Data Analysis?,” *Bright Hub PM*, last modified 2011, accessed March 20, 2020, <https://www.brighthubpm.com/methods-strategies/115531-explaining-the-types-of-qualitative-analysis-methods/>.

²¹ Anup Surendran, “Qualitative Data- Definition, Types, Analysis and Examples,” *QuestionPro*, 2018, accessed February 5, 2020, <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/qualitative-data/>.

Themes from the Interview Data

In analyzing the interview data, three themes emerged, which will be discussed in this section. These themes were: the complexity and challenges of managing generational differences; the professional ministerial impact; and challenges of program planning and implementation.

For each of these themes, working with young people was a lag in the area of professional competence which in the long run brought about misgivings and dissatisfaction of the younger group of the church. Although, there were some corrective measures identified as, the data reveals that these young people were all seeking ways to improve their church and making it a convenient place that would accommodate all worshipers, and meeting the needs of both the old and young. A failure to achieve this common goal accounts for the loss. Below is the executive summary of the themes that have been identified, leading to a detailed analysis of data.

Complexity and Challenges of Managing Generational Differences

It is substantive from the data analysis that there is a dichotomy in the transaction of church weekly business between the older members of the church and the young. It became a challenge because no one has given time to it probably resulting from a non-attentive recognition of the presence of the situation. This lack of attention undermines societal factor including the compulsion to take family responsibilities.

A participant laments: "...when you are employed, you become the problem-solution center for the family." Another participant also cried, "because the society gives a mandate for the youth to take care of their families, the majority of them

cannot cope” Many underlining factors contribute to the weakness of managing generational differences. There is a frequent occurrence of non-acceptance of youth because they feel that the church is conditioned to be cold and aloof; selfish individuals who have sectionalized the church into class segregation; intimidation by the affluent; thereby leaving them with no sense of belonging. A condition that accounts for youth loss to other churches.

Another recurrent factor revealed by the data is the extravagant lifestyle portrayed by the Media, advertising companies, and the Afro-hip-hop music industry. These have enticed the commendation of materialism which the church has failed to give counsel on. Some have agreed that the church can lovingly guide on these matters to retain its young people.

Generally speaking, no participant played ignorance to the problem of youth loss. This also suggests that young people in Calabar Church are aware that other young people like them are leaving the church. But what would have been the motivating factor keeping those yet to leave is unclear. This might be a question for further study. This condition is observed also by Dudley and Gane concerning the Adventist Churches in North America. Gane narrated his ordeal an extraordinary experience after his baptism, which rocked in disappointment, resulting in anger and self-centeredness.²² This first part of question number two validates the essence of this study.

According to Dudley, young people sense a lack of acceptance in the church describing the attitudes they perceive from members as cold and aloof, boring and

²² Barry Gane, *Loving Them Back, Leading Them Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010), 7.

irrelevant, narrow-minded, “holier than thou,” and unnecessarily legalistic and unfriendly.²³

Professional Ministerial Impact

The data reveals that the church leadership has taken for granted its role for care, love, and nurture of membership in the body of Christ. Leadership has downplayed its freedom to access the general Seventh-day Adventists provision of resources, including the use of the Church manual, Elders, and Pastors’ handbooks. These materials would have inspired ministerial proficiency that is required to impact a multidimensional Adventist Church.

Rather than continue the current state of poor spiritual care. One of the frequent occurrences is the bid for the church to be intentional about young people by prayerfully inquiring about their problems and attempting to give possible solutions, especially where it is necessary. The data also reveals that many will be willing to serve if they are engaged with the intention to retain them through teaching, involvement, and training. It was obvious that helping the youth love Jesus would require an indoctrination strategy that takes the church back to the Bible. A participant had stated

The Muslims, I believe have the best youth retention strategy. I don’t know how they do it. Whatever it is that they do is working out for them. As part of their indoctrination strategy, they start early enough to engage their young ones by involving them in the things they do, which makes it difficult for you to convert them. We have to get our young people to participate actively, even if it requires a motivation to do the right thing and a little incentive.²⁴

²³ Roger L Dudley, *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church: Personal Stories from a 10-Year Study* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 61, 63–67.

²⁴ This is a statement made by one of the participants with the code name “P3F” in her response to question number “8.”

Hodge suggests that the Muslim family is highly esteemed in Islamic culture. Its youths are likely to be raised in stable families with strong emotional ties between members.²⁵ On the contrary, White sees a different picture and suggests rather that:

Youthful talent, well organized and well trained, is needed in our churches. The youth will do something with their overflowing energies. Unless these energies are directed into the right channels, they will be used by the youth in a way that will hurt their spirituality and prove an injury to those with whom they associate.²⁶

Challenges of Program Planning and Implementation

From the data, the church is facing difficulty in intentional program planning, execution, supervision, and evaluation. It is discovered that the young people are indifferent and lack interest because of content delivery, lack of competence, professionalism, variety, poor programs resulting from lack of planning and time management. Putting all of these together ends in creating a one-jacket-fits-all situation that edges out some members and unable to meet the needs of the entire church community.

If corporate worship is not dynamic as expressed in the findings, the experience of worshipers may be lopsided and the essence defeated. Without a doubt, worship is a human response to the perceived presence of the divine, a presence that transcends normal human activity and is holy.²⁷ Tozer sees it as an act of attributing

²⁵ David R. Hodge, "Working with Muslim Youths: Understanding the Values and Beliefs of Islamic Discourse," *Children & Schools* 24, no. 1 (2002): 8.

²⁶ White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, 1:290.

²⁷ Marvin E. Tate, "Worship," *StudyLight.Org*, 1994, last modified 1994, [//www.studylight.org/dictionaries/hbd/w/worship.html](http://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/hbd/w/worship.html).

reverent honor and homage to God²⁸ and the goal is not to serve ourselves, but to serve God.

Harbison defined worship as a sacred spiritual exercise that links man with God through the expression of an adoring heart. He added that it proclaims our dependence on God,²⁹ the reason for the word ‘worship,’ ‘Shachah’³⁰ ‘to bow down, to stoop very low, or to prostrate oneself’.³¹ According to Ralph Mahoney, worship is an expression of love and adoration to God. It can be expressed only with the giving of one’s whole heart and life to Him.³²

Another consideration is with program evaluation. It is said to be a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using the information to answer questions about projects, policies, and programs.³³ However, a good program evaluation assesses program performance, measure impacts on families and communities, and document success.

The church should understand that it has the responsibility of promoting a culture that accommodates young people. According to Atkinson, culture is “a vector for youth development and civic engagement...” it “plays an essential role in

²⁸ R. Kent Hughes, Timothy J. Keller, and Mark Ashton, *Worship by the Book*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 151.

²⁹ Rob Harbison, “Worshipping God, Textbook - 525B3” (Lecture notes presented at the Master of Divinity programme, Trinity Graduate School of Apologetics and Theology, Kerala, India, 2008), 6–7.

³⁰ James Strong, John R. Kohlenberger III, and James A. Swanson, *The Strongest Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 1572.

³¹ Kevin J. Conner, *The Tabernacle of David: The Presence of God as Experienced in the Tabernacle* (Portland, OR: Bible Temple Conner, 1992), 106.

³² Ralph Mahoney, *Shepherd’s Staff: New Believer’s Training Manual*, 7th ed. (New Delhi, India: World Map and Rekka, 2002), 33.

³³ Naomi Goldstein, *The Program Manager’s Guide to Evaluation* (Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 2010), 13.

promoting sustainable social and economic development for future generations.”

³⁴Furthermore, he stated that “a wide variety of youth subculture exist alongside each other – preppies, druggies, skaters, jocks, Christians, nerds, and granolas, to name just a few. Each of these subcultures has its own set of values, interests, and characteristics, along with its worldwide and language.”³⁵ The church has to know about the culture of the youth to reach them. When the church leadership learns and understands the culture of the youth, it will become possible and much easier to help discover and love Jesus personally.

And if this church takes its rallying point around nurture, engage its members in a ministry that nurtures, nurture in turn will bring about fellowship. With the fellowship, the church community will get involved. Involvement makes it convenient for charity to thrive. With charity, the body of Christ becomes receptive and friendly. The church at this point would have opened its doors for Christ's method—mingling as one who desired its community's good. Showing His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, win their confidence, then bid them, “Follow Me.”³⁶ The next chapter shall seek answers to the findings by providing intervention program development.

³⁴ Harley Atkinson, *Teaching Youth with Confidence* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training, 2001), 51.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 52, 53.

³⁶ Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 143.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

This chapter seeks to find answers to the problems and concerns arising from the survey herein conducted. It involves an iterative process that designs a program, its implementation, and evaluation.

Background and Context

It is established herein that the design considered meets the needs of the Adventist Church in Calabar and its intended audience. The program considered is effective and has been appropriately adapted to fit its immediate context and working for the audience. In particular, the researcher attempts to address questions such as:

1. Is the design intended for the program's geographical situation (urban consideration for this program design)?
2. Is the design intended for the program's population group, taking into account their unique needs?
3. Is the design part of a larger program delivery system, does a system exist to support the program?
4. How readily can the design be adapted to the context? Does it appropriately consider aspects of diversity?

Design/Preparation

Many sources referred to program design as the overall process of program planning or approaches, from idea inception and program theory to implementation and evaluation. Kettner, Mooney, and Lawrence stated that "for many years, the whole notion of program design was all but overlooked or taken for granted in

planning programs.”¹ Such gross overlook in planning programs is the weakness of youth retention in the Adventist Church, Calabar. This is the reason for this project especially as it is reflected in the interviews conducted. Therefore, the researcher has developed the *Koinos* Mentoring Program as a means of tackling the retention problem of the church.

The Rationale for *Koinos* Mentoring Program

This program design is faith-based. Borrowing from biblical retention structure of mentoring, which includes the family, the father or the elderly being mentor, head and the priest of the family (Gen. 22: 1-14; 26:23-25; Ex. 12:3-11),² leading to a strong corporate dimension on faith.

Figure 1 shows that the father, being the head of the family is huddled with the responsibility of leading the family, while the rest of the family including its young ones follow his lead with bonding connections within the circle and community of faith.

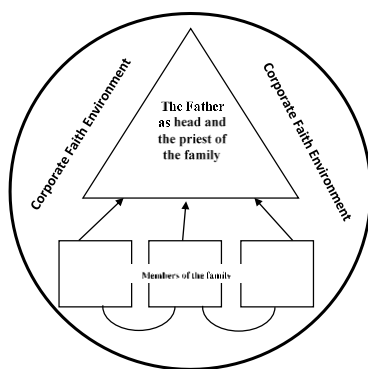


Figure 1. Father as the Head and Priest of the Family

¹ Peter M. Kettner, Robert M. Moroney, and Lawrence L. Martin, *Designing and Managing Programs: An Effectiveness-Based Approach*, 3rd Edition. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 142.

² Brown and Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*.

Figure 2 shows that people did not participate in the covenant as individuals in isolation, rather, as members of families, clans, and tribes (Josh. 24:15, 16).

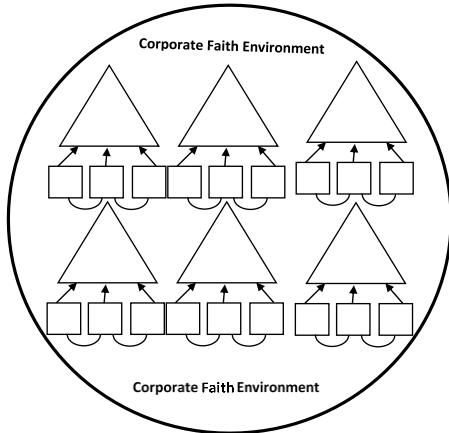


Figure 2. Participation in the Covenant as a People Group

This is also reflected in the New Testament church community (Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 1:2) such that was penetrable, necessary to admit outsiders into the fellowship³ (Acts. 2:46; 5:42; 16: 15; 20:20; 1 Cor. 14:35; Eph. 6:4) to enhance nurture and meaningful relationship. Though the father figure does not play prominence in the New Testament Church, in the sense of family, clan, and tribe, a relationship that enhances nurture was predominant. The diagram below indicates a slight shift in the order of retention of the Old Testament.

With a common contribution to the corporate faith community, bonding takes place with the intention to build relationships. This is seen in Figure 3.

³ Driver, *Images of the Church in Mission*, 150.

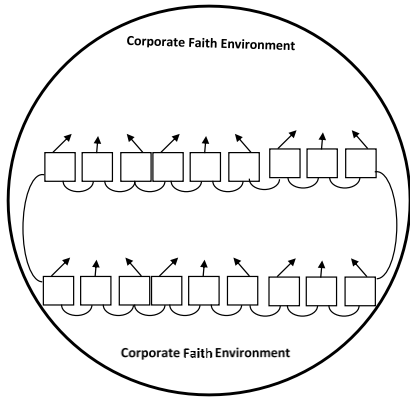


Figure 3. The Corporate Faith Environment Bond Relationships

Brad Waggoner, states, that “relationships are often the glue that keeps people in church or serves as the attraction to begin attending again following a period of absenteeism. Many people are deeply influenced by friends and loved ones.”⁴

A friendly relational faith environment breeds love and love builds trust. The establishment of trust engender vibrant relationship-oriented in sharing and a formidable sense of activity drive. This is the essence of the *Koinos* Mentoring Program. It is intentionally integrated to fuse the mentor and the mentee in a relational atmosphere leading to retention. Figure 4 gives a graphic display of the intention.

⁴ Scott McConnell, “Reasons 18- to 22-Year-Olds Drop Out of Church,” *LifeWay Research*, 2007, accessed November 14, 2018, <https://lifewayresearch.com/2007/08/07/reasons-18-to-22-year-olds-drop-out-of-church/>.

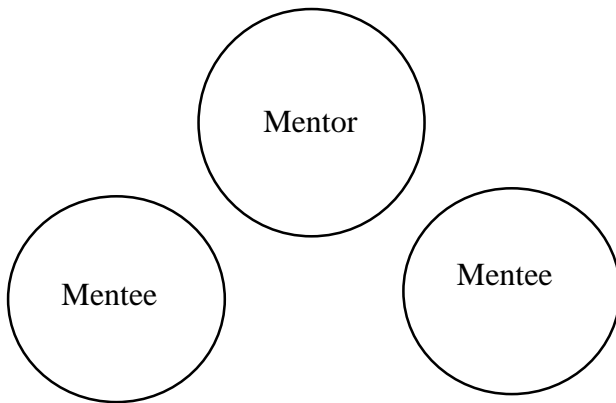


Figure 4. There are Opportunities for Intentional Mentorship

It is observed that there are potential opportunities within the corporate faith community for mentorship. But it does not just happen. There has to be an intentional indication for a senior individual, just like the father/priest emphasis above, who makes the move to raise a mentee if the faith community must be maintained.

In Figure 5, the purposeful mentor reaches out to the mentee with intention. This singular move has linked mentees who now find themselves as recognized, accepted, and cared for by the senior member of the community.

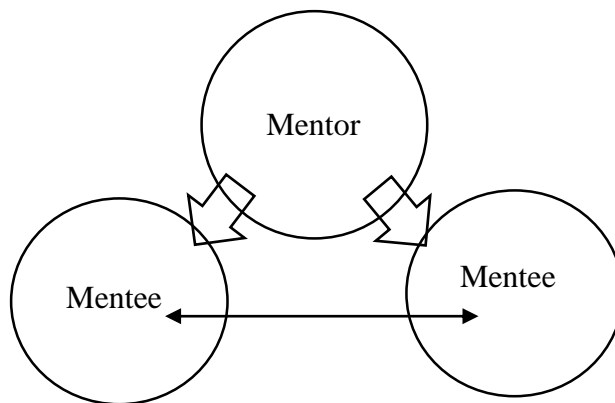


Figure 5. Mentor Intentionally Connects a Mentee

By this act alone, the mentee will unconsciously remain loyal to the mentor. For as long as the mentor connects with the corporate faith environment, the mentees

replicated under him will as well remain. The mentees owe the mentor to remain in faith. This is the crux of the *Koinos* Mentoring Program. It is biblically-based, and of course, the foundation block of the New Testament church in Acts chapter 2.

***Koinos* in Acts 2**

Acts 2:42 reports that the early church “continued steadfastly” in four basic activities, including the Apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. In all four, fellowship is notably the binding component of these activities. The fellowship is an attempted translation of the fascinating Greek word “*koinonia*” which may have no English equivalent. In 2 Corinthians 6:14, Paul asked, “What communion has light with darkness?”

The word communion is *koinonia*. Writing to the Corinthians about giving money for the poor in Jerusalem, he stated that, as they receive this gift, they will glorify God for receiving the gospel of Christ and for their liberal distribution unto them. Here again, the word “distribution” is *koinonia*. To Philemon he wrote thanking God having heard of his love and faith which he had toward Jesus and all of the saints, and that the communication of his faith might become effectual. The word “communication” is *koinonia*. *Koinonia* appears in Acts 2:42 and is read that believed were together and had all things in common.

The word “common” is *koinos*, the same root as the *koinonia*.⁵ *Koinos*, an intimate sharing of one's self with another—the contribution and even distribution of selflessness characterized the early church. By this, it was convenient to place a high priority on the teaching of the word of God, breaking of bread, and pray together.

⁵ Bible Study Tools, “Koinos Meaning in Bible,” *Bible Study Tools*, last modified 1999, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/koinos.html>.

Consequently, the *Koinos* Mentoring Program would have participants develop a clear understanding of and appreciation for sound doctrine; encourage spiritual growth that enhances a sense of community caring for one another. *Koinos* Mentoring Program empowers participants to share their goods without reservation, strengthen the fellowship with unhyprocritical prayer life, and assert purposeful biblical Christian leadership.

According to Bill Donahue “biblical leadership is the task of leading God's people into mutual ministry with one another to build up the body of Christ and reach out to the world.”⁶ Although the term “mentoring cannot be found in the scriptures, the concept of mentoring is scriptural. The Old Testament records numerous examples including Moses and Joshua (Deut 31:7–8), Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1:7–18; 2:17–3:16), as well as Elijah and Elisha (2 Kgs 2:1–6).

The New Testament also has evidence of mentorship. Jesus mentored the Twelve. Peter had some form of a mentoring relationship with Barnabas (Gal 2:11–13), who in turn went on to mentor Paul and Mark (Acts 12:25–13:5). Paul, in turn, mentored Timothy, Titus, and several others (2 Tim 2:2). MacPherson and Rice affirm that mentoring activities are either developed based on expedient considerations⁷ or vaguely guided by Christian virtues of love and accountability.⁸

Klinge described mentoring as “a process in which an experienced person (the mentor) guides another person (the mentee or apprentice) in the development of her or

⁶ Bill Donahue, *The Willow Creek Guide to Leading Life-Changing Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 37.

⁷ M. MacPherson and W. Rice, “Mentoring: One Kid at a Time,” in *Josh McDowell's Youth Ministry Handbook Making The Connection*, ed. Ray Willey and Sean McDowell (Edinburgh, Scotland: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 57.

⁸ Glenn C. Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church: A Leadership Guide for the Majority of Today's Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2008), 140.

his ideas, learning, and personal/professional competence.”⁹ Hall pointed out that “depending on the issues and concerns for their target population, mentoring programs might specialize in anything from scholastic improvement, social skills development or rites of passage to preparation for child-rearing, vocational and career training, or physical education.”¹⁰

Additionally, Bohannon and Bohannon described mentoring “as a partnership between two people (mentor and mentee) who share similar experiences based upon mutual trust and respect...” These researchers went on to point out that “the role of the mentor is to guide and help mentees to choose the right direction and develop solutions to issues they might face.”

Implementation of *Koinos* Mentoring Program

Koinos Mentoring Program took place at the Cross River Conference headquarters, Calabar with six delegates in participation from the Adventist Church, Calabar. It was run with great support from the Ministerial Association of Cross River Conference for two months. It started with a three-day training of six delegates.

This three-day training program of seventeen hours in the first month was followed by a pilot project scheduled to run in two plans within two months. Participants are grouped into two (“A” and “B”), each group assigned a pilot project prepared and supervised by the researcher for retention of young people within the study demographic (ages 18—39). Group “A” was given a project for singles, named “Get SMARTER” while Group “B” was given a project for the married called

⁹ Carolyn M. Klinge, “A Conceptual Framework for Mentoring in a Learning Organization,” *Adult Learning* 26, no. 4 (2015): 160.

¹⁰ H. R. Hall, “Food for Thought: Using Critical Pedagogy in Mentoring African American Adolescent Males,” *The Black Scholar* 45, no. 3 (2015): 39.

“Intimacy Oneonone.” They were to carefully study the projects and partner with the researcher in its implementation. Thereafter, three days of fifteen hours in the second month, they returned to report experiences and evaluate pilot projects. These exercises spanned through September and November 2018.

Objectives

The aims and objectives of the training are summed up in the following:

1. To create a clear understanding of the role of biblical mentoring and explore the intentionality concerning the role of the mentor.
2. To examine the skills, behaviors, and values essential to becoming an effective mentor and identifying the key competencies of a mentor.
3. To discover how winsome-focused leadership is beneficial in a mentor/mentee relationship and implement protocols to ensure the ethical and confidential nature of the mentor/mentee relationship is secure.
4. To cover the essentials of mentoring and mentoring approaches, alongside challenges and pitfalls to avoid.

Content of Training

This practical three-day training allowed participants to explore the role of mentoring today’s generation of young people having retention in mind. And the skills necessary for actualizing the mission’s objectives. Details of the content can be seen in appendices but are summed up in the following:

Day one: 6 hours. Session 1. Introductions: This session sets the tone of the training with introductions of concepts (1 hour 30 minutes).

1. Introduction and rationale for a young people-orientated ministry.
2. An interactive session geared for feedback on the role and function of mentoring young people in a multi-ethnic/multi-cultural setting.
3. Share practical ways of engaging with young people to gain their confidence and trust.
4. Share the rationale for the pilot project, the formation of project groups, and the selection of a pilot project.

Session 2. Qualities of desire for the mentor: The personality traits that make for effective mentoring (1 hour).

1. Discipline and self-knowing—a prominent factor for mentoring young people.
2. Situational awareness and anger management and getting involved as a mentor.
3. The mentor as a role model.
4. Communicating upwards and downwards.
5. Setting clear boundaries for others.
6. Creating opportunities for the mentee (or learner) to practice their new skills.
7. Understanding feedbacks.

Session 3. Mentoring: What mentoring is all about, place, and time (1 hour 30 minutes).

1. Exploring definitions, challenges, and benefits.
2. Identifying mentoring opportunities and taking advantage.
3. Preparing for mentoring.
4. Mentoring Millennials and Post Millennials.

Session 4: Mentoring beyond the basics: Meeting the needs of young urban dwellers especially the rising unemployment (2 hours).

1. Labour Market Information. The provision of information on the labor market, like the economic sector, job-creating enterprises, areas of high labor demand, education streams that provide skill acquisition for a certain occupation. This is extended to the information dissemination method.
2. Job Search and Placement Skills. Short term training and guidance on how to identify economic sectors with available job openings, approach employers, write curriculum vitae and job interviews, and guided pursuance of career.
3. Literacy Programmes. The provision of functional numeracy and literacy packages
4. Entrepreneurship Development and All-purpose Vocational Trainings. This is an avenue to develop young people with the skills to perform occasional tasks for both on-the-job and off-the-job. These programs also target young people who have missed out on educational and labor market opportunities, including school dropouts and young offenders.

Day two: 6 hours. Session 1. Beliefs and values as a person. Self-understanding and reflection (2 hours).

1. Identifying what core values and beliefs are and how these shape your perception of yourself and others and how God uses these to shape the essential 'you' in ministry to others.
2. A solution-focused approach to mentoring. Exposing mentors to the concept and how it can be used beneficially to facilitate the relevant and good dynamic relationship between themselves as mentors and their protégé

Session 2. Active listening skills and how they can be used to facilitate a professional mentoring relationship (1 hour). Session 3. Role-Playing. Creating role-play around some issues they may face, presenting some scenarios, and incorporating some other aspects of a mentoring relationship (1 hour 30 minutes).

Session 4. Leadership. Type of leadership needed for this program. Differentiating between the outcome of the supervisory and mentoring style of leadership (30 minutes). Session 5. Boundaries, ethics, safeguarding; obligations, values, and how these impact upon who we are or become and how we can facilitate a positive role for the protégé (this session to be primarily interactive)¹¹ (30 minutes). Session 6. Commitment and agreements on time, frequency of meetings, establishing contracts, and terminating contracts (30 minutes).

Day three: 5 hours. Exploring biblical mentoring that fosters retention and winsome witnessing. Drawing from the book of Acts chapter 2.

Session 1: Building Relationships—God and the created universe (1 hour). Session 2: Building Confidence—Old Testament models (1 hour). Session 3: Effective Feedback—Jesus and the twelve (1 hour). Session 4: Confidentiality—the early church (1 hour). Session 5: Parting shots—general interaction (1 hour).

¹¹ Day two is adopted from the work of Desmond Boldeau, "Developing a Mentoring Model, Based on Christ's Approach to Discipleship, for Intern Pastors in the British Union" (D. Min. Dissertation, Andrews University, 2014).

Jesus having observed Passover with His disciples admonished them saying, A new commandment I give to you, that you also love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this, all will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another” (John 13: 34-35).

The authentic love that believers demonstrate toward one another is a marker of identification for true followers of Christ. Those who simply do not have a love for God’s people are simply not followers of Christ. Author Kenda Creasy Dean expresses the importance of relationships as the desire for mentoring grows:

Youth ministry focuses on relationships, not only because of who teenagers are but because of who God is. God is a relationship – Christian tradition uses the relational language of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to describe the persons of the Trinity – and this God’s love is so generous the Godhead alone cannot contain it. Significant relationships with other Christians matter because they teach us something about what God is like – the One who can love us despite ourselves and who loves us passionately enough to suffer willingly on our behalf.¹²

Pilot Projects

Within a space of one month, groups “A” and “B” departed to implement the assigned pilot projects borne out of the *Koinos* Mentoring Program. They had “SinglesUplink” and “Intimacy Oneonone” respectively. Project duration was seven days aside planning and other logistics.

Get SMARTER

This project ran for seven days, 2 hours 30 minutes daily (Find details on Appendix). Colorful flyers were printed and circulated amongst young people in the church and were also encouraged to share with their friends. A venue was selected, properly lite and decorated, good sound output, and refreshments set on tables.

¹² Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2005), 27.

Young people started walking in, some of whom had suspicion written on their faces for not knowing what is about to happen. Attendance began to build as the program ended with 78 in attendance. On the average, daily attendance of 200 hundred was recorded, more than 75% are non-Seventh-day Adventist young people.

The daily program started with arrival and music at 3:00, followed by some opening formalities, a little background stating the day’s objectives. The main engagement is tagged “DISCUSSION THEME.” The time allotted was 3:30 to 5:00 pm. This is the most engaging moment where selected topics of interest to these people are dialogued covering contemporary issues, social issues, spirituality, and religious issues and finding meaning from the scripture.

It is followed by the “SmarTalk” series that runs only for 45 minutes each day (SmarTalk 101 to 107). A slot meant to engrave “words” of eternal values and setting the pace for mentoring. The order of program for the period every day is as follows, but details of the event are found in Appendix F.

Daily Program for Get SMARTER – (3:00 – 6:00).

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------|
| 1. Music/Arrival | - | 03:00 |
| 2. Welcome/Opening Formalities | - | 03:10 – 03:20 |
| 3. Backgrounds | - | 03: 20 – 03:30 |
| 4. DISCUSSION THEME: | | 03:30 – 05:00 |
| 5. GET SMARTER | | 05:00 – 05:45 |
| 6. Refreshment/Sponsorship - | | |
| 7. Thanks/Closing Formalities - | | 05:45 – 06:00 |

Discussion themes for the seven days include.

- | | | |
|------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Sunday | - | Common Slipups |
| 2. Monday | - | Standing Tall Where Great Men Fall |
| 3. Tuesday | - | Legacies, and Tendencies |

4. Wednesday - *UpDating*
5. Thursday - The Art of Dating
6. Friday - Destructive Detraction
7. Saturday - Saved to Serve

GET SMARTER is an acronym for Grow, Emotion, Time (GET) Specific, Manage, Attitude, Rules, Tact, Education, and Respect (SMARTER). For the seven days participants were expected to develop in the following:

1. Sunday GET Specialized in area of interest
2. Monday GET Management skills
3. Tuesday GET Alternatives plans
4. Wednesday GET Rules to live by
5. Thursday GET Tactful
6. Friday GET Education at all cost
7. Saturday GET Respect

Intimacy Oneoneone

This a young couples' empowering pilot project design to run for one week to provide support and nurture, leading to a daily Marriage Renewal (Program details in Appendix). If retention is institutionalized at the family level, the church membership is retained. This event held on November 13—20, 2018. Its primary objectives include:

1. To empower couples to build on their relationship.
2. To enrich marriages in the local church.
3. To focus on communication, conflict resolution, role relationship.
4. To offer professional help from clergy/professional counselors as the need arises.
5. To sensitize couples to give in time and attention as when dating.
6. To consciously pay attention to that which enriches marriage(s) for retention.

In this couples' empowerment program, information and relationship skill-building elements are combined with personal and relationship assessment tools. The pastor/counselor and the Family Life Coordinator in Calabar Church provide information as necessary and model the skills involved but primarily serve as facilitators of a process that enables couples to discover their personal and relationship strengths and weaknesses and stimulates relational growth. Especially with the cooperation of members, it is a weeklong spiritual retreat spanning through a Sunday and another.

Young couples are encouraged to sacrificially engage themselves for one hour every day through the said period, enthusiastically participating in an activity that is targeted at enriching their marriage(s). This activity includes opening up to each other in potential problem areas of their marriage experience. It requires complete openness and free discussions. That one hour is concluded with a prayer session. They can do well to keep a journal of their activities for the said period, encounter, and experience. It is meant to be spiritual and fun-filled.

The event culminates on Sabbath, having couples come to church in their agreed identical uniforms representing the individual families. Whatever a couple can do to identify themselves. They are also encouraged to invite their friends and neighbors to their Marriage Renewal Service (A public demonstration of their daily expectations).

A minister graces the service to recommit them to their marriage vows and charge them to their marriage renewal and commitments. Thereafter, a certificate of Marriage Renewal is presented to all the couples who participated in the event.

The last Sunday is a family get-together where experiences are shared with testimonies and encouragement for one another. Soft music, quiet admonitions,

pastries, and drinks for refreshment. The content of the empowerment event is briefly described below.

Sunday: God intends for us to be loving. These young couples are made to understand that the command to love one another is repeated throughout Scripture. And that, expressing love to one another is one way to show love for God (John 13:35; 1 John 4:7; Romans 12:10). Discussion and other activities in Appendix F.

Monday: know your mate. The type of knowledge a husband develops in his relationship with his wife can bring about respect and honor her, and vice versa? Bearing in mind James 3:16; Ephesians 4:29,30; and 1 Peter 3:7.

Tuesday: pay attention to ‘significant nothings.’ Couples are made to ask themselves (often), are we growing together as a couple or further apart? Is the marriage growing stronger or are there holes that need addressing? Couples should not assume their spouses feel as they do. They have to establish an understanding early in the relationship that each of them has the right to periodically check on the state of their marriage.

Wednesday: celebrate your differences. Some differentness can be expected in couples, arising from differences in gender, temperament, a family of origin, culture, and habits or personal preferences. Understanding, accommodation, adaptation, even appreciation come as the couple’s love and commitment are aided by improved communication and conflict resolution skills (Rom. 14: 19; 1 Thess. 5: 11), or lift each other when you fall (Ecc. 4:12).

Thursday: emotional love languages. Developing a love language can be an extensive enhancer of a marriage relationship. It differs from couple to couple but they are led to understudy some very common elements (James 1:17; John 3:16; Genesis 2:15; 1 Corinthians 12:4; Proverbs 17:8).

Friday: be realistic with your relationship expectations. Romance is wonderful and seeing the best in your partner is a sure way to maintain love and intimacy. At the end of this week-long exercise, the Sabbath became truly a day of joy and delight. The sabbath program is found in Appendix F, and a sample of the marriage renewal vows also attached as Appendix F.

Evaluation

The *Koinos* Mentoring Program as a key strategy to improve youth retention has presented a huge success and prospects for the nurture and retention of young people in the Adventist Church in Calabar. Only six participants were inducted for training and empowered to engage meaningfully in pilot projects that have become a tool by which to retain a teeming young population for the future of the Adventist Church in Calabar. There were to train more and develop other projects like “Get SMARTER” and “INTIMACY ONEONONE”

In 2019 the program was expanded across all ages within the Adventist Church in Calabar and currently, almost every newly baptized young person in their first few weeks is grafted in the *Koinos* Mentoring Program. The Adventist Church in Calabar has access to at the least, a youth mentor.

Across the entire church community, mentors have been drawn from young people who may have been mentees. More senior members and young people understand and have had some experience with the *Koinos* Mentoring Program.

Consistent evaluation data since from mentors, mentees, and coordinating personnel in the participating areas affirm that the program not only meets its retention goals but also significantly improves the youth experience for all participants. It also enhances the sense of community within the church, assists church leadership, and contributes strongly to the church’s reputation around its community.

The pilot projects would continue in the Calabar Church, especially its acceptability and commendations from the targeted audience.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter gives the summary, conclusion, recommendation, and suggestions for further studies drawn from the findings. The objective of this study was to examine intentional integrated program development that would facilitate the retention of young people of the ages 18 to 39 in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar.

Summary

The purpose of this research primarily is to find a solution to the loss of young people in Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar. By intentional integrated program development that facilitates retention. A biblical approach was considered by examining the retention process of the Old Testament, the New Testament Church, and the guide from the counsels of Ellen G. White, including other relevant authors.

A focus group interview was conducted leading to the discoveries that brought about the development of the *Koinos* Mentoring Program. This program trained six people who in turn followed up with two pilot projects with the researcher “SinglesUplink” and “Intimacy Oneonone.” On the one hand, are singles and on the other hand, married people of the demographics of the study. Transversely the church community is now building a network of mentors that have been drawn from young people who have been mentees.

Conclusion

It is important to note that the overall goal of the project has been achieved, which was to intentionally develop a program that can be continued by those who have been given the training. Thereby curbing the loss of young people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar. It is also necessary to mention that; the success of this program development has significantly achieved the goal of Seventh-day Adventist mission which is to make disciples for Christ and prepare them for His soon return.

The implementation of the project has amplified my research methods, particularly at the local church. This is the place where such research is to be conducted for the kind of impact on the mission.

Consequently, church leaders have a lot to do to make sure that they value these programs and are to encouraging the entire churches having understood its benefits for their young people. The young people should be accepted and integrated into the corporate church platforms and involving them in the decision and implementation of various programs in the church.

Recommendations

Having come far, the researcher desires to make a few recommendations regarding the *Koinos* Mentoring Program.

1. As the *Koinos* Mentoring Program is extended to other Adventist Churches within Calabar, it should maintain flexibility concerning how the program is implemented within each church, and as to how much support to provide each church.
2. The church should continue to update training to better respond to mentoring needs, including the expansion of the specific training information provided.
3. Inclusion of the *Koinos* Mentoring Program as one of the nurture program experience of old and newly baptized members of the church.

4. Every baptized member should be enrolled in the *Koinos* Mentoring Program to enhance the church's discipleship experience.
5. The church should have a continued strong emphasis on the role of Mentoring in the church's weekly activities.
6. The church should make room for expanded advertising strategies to raise awareness of the *Koinos* Mentoring Program and expectations to respond to mentoring amongst newly baptized members.
7. The church should allow young people to come up with their own program ideas that they can own and enjoy in the implementation and not getting imposed programs.
8. The church should take note, not to engage young people with the same program for a long period.
9. Church and youth leaders should work together to make sure that they come up with new products now and then to avoid monotony.
10. Where possible churches should be having a variety of activities done frequently and with consistency.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The findings of this research study are indicative rather than conclusive; hence the following research action has been suggested.

1. Further research can be done on empowerment programs and the retention of other groups like the teenagers who are currently going through developmental transitions.
2. The AYM is not active enough to transmit value that is capable of retaining the youth. There has to be an intentional integrated ministry geared in that direction, especially with progressive classes.
3. Further research can be done to ascertain whether the research that has been done on the empowerment program and youth retention in the church can bring relevant results when conducted to a single denomination at a time.
4. Further research can be done to affirm other programs that can be introduced to the youth and which can help them to own their church more.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM



ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA
FACULTY OF REIGION
Department of Pastoral Theology

Informed Consent Form—Church Member

Title: Intentional Integrated Program Design to Facilitate Youth Retention in Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calabar.

Purpose of Study: I understand that the purpose of this research is to develop a model that will help in the holistic retention of the young people of Seventh-day Adventist in Calabar, Cross River Conferences. Also a means by which to help strengthen the discipleship processes of the local church in the retention of its youth, resulting in spiritual growth and vitality of the church as a whole in Calabar.

Inclusion Criteria: I recognize that for me to participate I need to be 16 years old or above, and of a sound mind. I need to be a member or leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar currently, or at some time in recent past.

Risks and Discomforts: I have been informed that there are no physical risks to my involvement in this study. I understand that Pastor Edy Ewoh will be available to offer counsel and support in the event of any unforeseen happenstance. Also, I have been assured that my involvement in this study will not affect my relationship with the church.

Benefits/Results: I accept that I will receive no remuneration for my participation, but that by participating, I will help the researcher and the Seventh-day Adventist Church to develop a model that will help transform the commitment of the members and leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar.

Voluntary Participation: I understand that my involvement in this interview is voluntary and that I may withdraw my participation at any time without any pressure, embarrassment, or negative impact on me. I am willing to take part in this interview, and consent to answer questions regarding my knowledge. I understand that the information I provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality, codes will be assigned and effort shall be made to ensure protection of my identity so that my name and that of others shall not appear in any printed or digitized form. I consent that this private interview held in a private place of my choosing for an hour be recorded.

Contact Information: In the event that I have any questions or concerns with regard to my participation in this research project, I understand that I may contact the researcher, Edy Ewoh at edyudy22@gmail.com (or Tel: +234 703 1062 295, or Dr. Kelvin Onongha at the Department of World Missions, Adventist University of Africa, Private Bag Mbagathi 00503, Nairobi, Kenya, kelvinosnr@yahoo.com (or Tel: +1269-277-2806) I have been given a copy of this form for my own records.

Signature of Subject

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

Signed at: _____

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Eight young people (four male and four female) of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calabar

Good morning. My name is Edy Ewoh, the moderator for this focus group discussion and my assistant is Onoyom Ededet. We are very pleased you have agreed to join us today.

We are here to talk about the challenge of retention of young people in the Adventist Church in Calabar and how to design intentionally integrated programs that would completely eradicate the challenge. For the study, the phrase “young people” and the word “youth” shall be used interchangeably. You were selected because you have been a member of the church in Calabar for a very long time, and have been actively involved with the youth and ministry significantly.

The discussion we are going to have is called a focus group. For the benefit of those of you who have never participated in one of these sessions, I would like to explain a little bit about this type of research.

Focus groups are used to gather information informally from a small group of individuals who have a common interest in a particular subject—in this instance, you all are young men and women who belong in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calabar. This discussion will provide invaluable information to our church about how it can better retain our youths in the church for service today and in the future. The focus group is part of our overall strategic planning process, especially, as a tool for data collection for my project at the Adventist University of Africa—a project intended to proffer solutions to the problem of youth retention in the Adventist Church in Calabar.

There are a few guidelines for this focus group. First, there are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view. You do not need to agree with others, but you must listen respectfully as others share their views. We want to hear from everyone in the room. We're tape recording, one person speaking at a time. We're on a first-name basis. We ask that your turn off your phones. If you cannot and if you must respond to a call, please do so as quietly as possible and rejoin us as quickly as you can.

We are pleased you can be part of this group because we think you have important ideas regarding youth retention. Do not hesitate to speak up when you have a point you would like to make.

I will be moderating the session and moving us along so that we touch on all of the key subjects on our agenda. I would like to avoid getting bogged down on issues that do not pertain to everyone in the group. If I think that we are spending too much time on one subject, I will step in to keep the discussion moving. We will be keeping a record of this discussion so that as to capture every point made. I like to follow what is being said and then go back later to review what you said again so I can accurately convey your ideas and opinions.

My role today is to see that we have a productive discussion and to summarize the group's feelings. I will not refer to any participant by name in the reports I prepare.

The information will be kept confidential and used only by the researcher to develop new strategies and programs that will better address the subject of youth retention in the church in Calabar.

1. How long have you been a member of the church and how do you describe your commitment as well as the level of your involvement?
2. Is the Calabar Church having a problem of losing its youth? What is your opinion that could be the causes—primary, or remote?
3. *Are there young people you have known in this church who are no longer attending church?*
4. What can the church do to engage and retain its youth in the church?
5. Are there societal or other factors that pose challenges to the church for retaining its youth?
6. How does the manner worship is conducted have any influence on youth attendance or participation in the church?
7. How would you evaluate the programs planned for the youth?
8. How can the church help youth discover and love Jesus personally?
9. Do you find the church to be an accepting, welcoming environment, what can be done to improve this?

APPENDIX C

POST-INTERVIEW COMMENT SHEET

After the interview, interviewers filled out the Interview Summary shown below. This information served as a record of the interview and its important points. If the interviewer marked the interview as having lots of interesting detail, the researcher could listen to it again on the audio recording and analyze it more thoroughly. The interviewer could also use the notes to form follow-up interview questions.

Interview Summary

ID:	
Date:	
Length of interview:	

1. How would you describe the interviewee's overall attitude about college life at the moment: content, frustrated, discouraged, apprehensive, relaxed, etc.?

2. How would you rate the overall quality of the interview? Did the interviewee provide lots of interesting detail or very little? Circle one.

Little interesting detail	Some interesting detail	Lots of interesting detail
---------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------------

3. Did the interviewee say something noteworthy/interesting in response to one or more of the interview questions? What questions did he/she provide interesting detail, if any?

Question number and/or question topic:	Jot down 3-4 words about what was said:

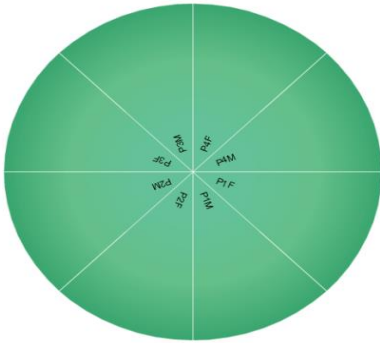
4. Items that came up in this interview that would be worth following up on during the next interview:

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____

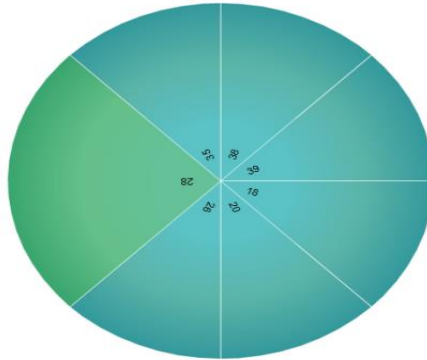
APPENDIX D

ANALYSIS

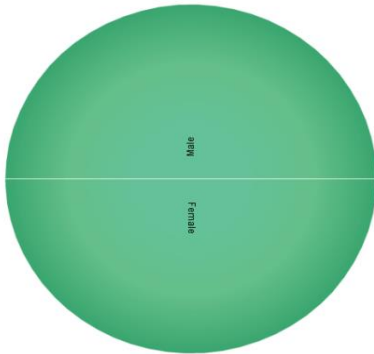
Set: TRANSCRIPT ANALISE, Field: Participants



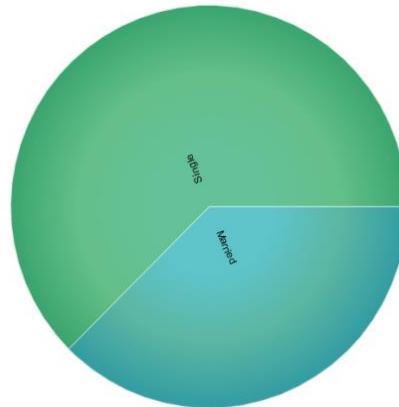
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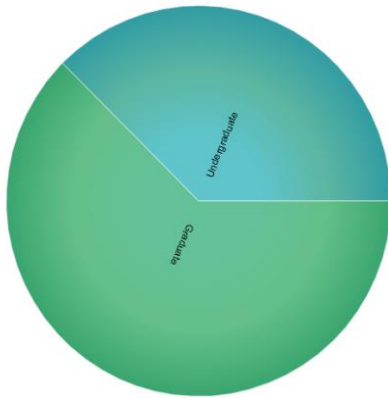
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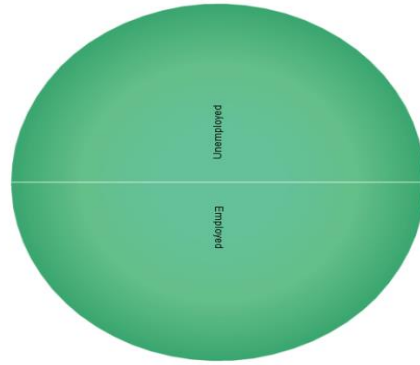
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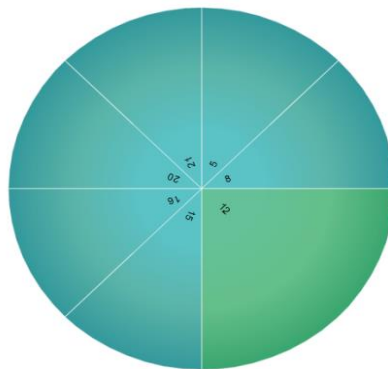
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APPENDIX E

TRANSCRIPT

Question 1. How long have you been a member of the church and how do you describe your commitment as well as the level of your involvement?

P1M: He is 28, and has been in church from birth. “My family members have always been members of the church.” He attends church regularly and returns his tithe and offerings frequently.

P2M: He was baptized 20 years ago. He has full participation in almost every facet of church life.

P1F: Seriously, I don’t know how to qualify myself, but the fact is, I am a Seventh-day Adventist in good and regular standing for over 12 years.

P3M: This is my 12th year as an Adventist. It's very clear in my head that I have served and I’m still serving in diverse offices in the church for the last 10 years.

P2F: I have been in church for at least 5 years now. For 3 years, I have served as a teacher and song leader in my church in the village.

P4M: For 21 years I have been in church membership. A leader in the Youth Ministries for so many years, Sabbath school teacher and superintendent in this church.

P3F: I am 8 years old in the church. I was baptized in my home church before leaving for Calabar 5 years ago. When I came to Calabar, I did not quite love how the church was. The behavior of the people and how they treat the people they didn’t know. I decided to be on my own, but this year they said I should help in the children’s department, but I did not feel I should do it.

P4F: I was baptized 15 years ago in her home town. But working with the bank does not give her the time to actively participate and function fully in church regularly.

NOTE: 62.5% of youth loves the church and are willing to stay, but desire improvement

25% of youth can be committed and involved if they are discovered early

12.5% of youth may be on the verge of leaving the church if things remain the way they are.

Question 2. Is the Calabar Church having a problem of losing its youth? What is your opinion that could be the causes—primary, or remote?

P1M: Oh, yes! It is a huge problem. I have been here for the last 6 to 7 years, I know what I’m talking about. We have a very boring and stereotypical worship pattern that is very annoying. I have worshipped in Abuja during my service year and I have seen lively and dynamic worship patterns but here, if it is not what the elders want, nothing happens.

P3F: You that young people have so much energy to expend but they need a system that helps them channel that energy in the right perspective otherwise, they’ll just be looking at you while you fool yourself before them. As a church, we cannot keep them. Truth be told, like he said, our worship has a problem and our programs are poorly managed and delivered. Another thing I see is that of selecting which program

to attend and who. Now if the youth is having a program, it is not just a program for children. The entire church should be involved. These programs belong to the church and the publicity of programs should be widely spread and the church authority should also be involved, to encourage this youth and also see how the church is carried along. The Bible even mentioned how Jesus Christ himself rebuked the elders to let children come to Him. Here in Calabar Church, when the youth are having a program, and the church says, let's see what they are doing, let's see how to support them. I think the youth will be happy and they will stay.

P2M: This is an issue of young people leaving the church is our number one problem. More to it is that we do not even mind whether they stay or go. I would say that most young people leave because the content and delivery don't match.

P2F: Apart from all that has been said, some of us feel that as a church, we are unnecessarily rigid and legalistic, we are too conscious of our social status as individuals. So when you find out you do not have a social class you belong, you're not rich and famous, you have not money and the kind of swag that thrives here, men! You just leave. And it would shock you, pastor, to know that there are many more preparing to leave, and I think we must deliberately do something about it.

P3M: It is not contestable about losing our young people. The issue is, you have to be grounded to be able to stay. Look now, I am here, am I not a young person? If you're not grounded, you won't stay. I also know that we will not put everyone on the same scale so we have to fill in for what is the root cause which I will suggest is poor spirituality and lack of care. Care is one of the problems we are facing that makes most of our youth gradually falling out of the church.

P4M: Yeah, we lose a lot of members for the simple reason that we pay no attention to people's concerns. You are on your own, everybody minding his own business. Again, there is segregation as a problem of the losses of young people. A situation where somebody who has a great voice in the church because of who he is in the society or is someone who is well placed gives his opinion whether it rhymes well or not since it is him, it becomes acceptable and this other brother or sister says sometime else we turn around and look at who he or she is. If he or she is a 'nobody,' whatever is said, right or wrong is swept as trivial.

P1F: Young people leave and go where they are needed, where they are accepted. In this church they don't have a voice, we don't have a say. We just follow, when you get tired, you find your way out. If we inculcate the spirit of involving the youth in the various programs of the church, as parents or the elders of the church begin to involve the youth from sabbath school and sometimes when we have the divine service bring in one youth or two, involve them in one or two activities, I think they will feel that sense of belonging, knowing that, oh they belong to a group, they belong to an organization that cares.

P4F: Me, I would have left 3 years ago when I felt I was only wasting my time here, a place where people don't mind whether or not you're doing fine. Especially that I was not employed then, unmet needs and low economy can drive you crazy when people who should have helped act as if they don't know you need help.

NOTE: The first part validates the essence of this research. Programs untargeted, Lack of Care, Youth not Relevant

Question 3: Are there young people you have known in this church who are no longer attending church?

P1M: I know quite a few of them.

P1F: I can name them if you want me to

P2M: I know two brothers who now worship with Christ Embassy

P2F: I don't know any, but I have heard there are.

P3M: I know about two couples.

P3F: I do not know in specific

P4M: I know of an entire family, not just youth.

P4F: I do not know any

NOTE: Known, Do not know, Heard

Question 4: What can the church do to engage and retain its youth in the church?

P3F: There is but one thing that the church must understand and do. Involve us at personal levels. Doing it with us makes it fun and rewarding. By that, it would be difficult for young people to leave the church. Teach us and show us how to get integrated into the affairs of the church, I emphasize, at personal levels.

P4M: Pastor, we all have to make the church a youth-friendly church and allow them to speak out. Until we take up our place as young people in the church today, we have no church tomorrow.

P4F: The leadership of the church must take a special interest in involving the youth and providing for its needs, by creating an encouraging environment for the youth knowing that the youth of today's church are elders of the church tomorrow.

P1M: We are slow to follow trends and events happening around us. The church has to realize there is competition out there for souls. The young people you play with today are those that will hold and keep the church shortly.

P1F: Our worship system is a stereotype. This is a burden. We can do better. It is said that "variety is the spice of life." Pastor, if the church wants to retain its youth, we have to revisit our liturgy. I'm not proposing that we beat drums and make all the noise, but we can be creative and have variety. I stand to be corrected, when you look at creation, you find a display of variety, but His church abhors it.

P2M: For the church to engage and retain its youth, it must plan programs that benefit the youth. When you involve a person in the kind of thing that benefits him, it becomes fun for him to enjoy and appreciate what it is that is done for him. Our church should plan and involve young people in planning. If you don't involve them, you may never know the impact and result of the outcome. And you will not be able to evaluate your effort.

P2F: In our church, we provide one pill for the cure of every ailment. We do not look at needs while we do the planning. For instance, a program that benefits one person may not interest another person. Talking about preference according to needs. Let me say this, the youth will stay if our programs are planned and executed with intention. Planned to meet needs according to age and generation. On the other hand, the people we give to handle programs matter. If they are not well informed, they could ruin people and mess up a program with their presentation by their sentiments and biases. When I was in my 200 level, I had this lecturer who was on my neck for whatever he wanted. My grades for the course were tied to whatever he was demanding of me. This was my core course. I had contemplated a lot of options. But I thought that Wednesday to go to church and have my brethren pray with me.

Unconsciously I entered the church not remembering to cover my head. The presenter turned to his presentation into an aggressive head-covering seminar. I could see the attack was on me. My dear, I could not pray again nor ask anyone to pray with me. When I left that church that day, I found me another branch and never went back there again

P3M: Our publicity is bad. We can learn a few good things from the Pentecostals. Good publicity is good. We are always a church of "small beginning," and then remain small forever. We love to hide behind society. Other small churches put up all

forms of awareness and public presence but we are uninterested in any of those things that would make people know who we are. You see the large billboards, we have none. People feel we are a secret cult group and we do nothing about it. How can anyone be happy? **If we set our publicity right, young people will stay and love their church.**

Involvement and Training, Intentional Programs, Publicity, Presenters

Question 5: Are there societal or other factors that pose challenges to the church for retaining its youth?

P4M: Should I call it visionlessness? There is **latent energy-wasting with untapped potentials. The youths have talents, they have gifts and massive energy but we cannot see it. It becomes wasted on other matters that have no value. Whereas, we could harness this energy for our benefit as a church. Because we do nothing, something else takes it from us.**

P3F: Believe it or not, **the media is a huge challenge to the mission of the church.** Extravagant lifestyle from the media can change youth's orientation. Everybody wants to live large without work, Adventists young people inclusive. Why not? We live in the same society, share in the same economy. The evolution of the music industry is a direct attack on the dignity of labor. You'd spend your entire life in school, finish very well, but a person who did not stress himself with a school like you did picks up a microphone and starts to make noise and the next thing is so much good life and luxury around him. We see this every day and you don't want to carry last. The church does not have a system of indoctrination like the Muslims do to retain its youth.

P1M: **The advertising industry is a big challenge for young people. Somebody mentioned publicity the other time. Advertising and marketing have changed the way to think, the way to talk and the way to look. The things they say are changing the way we speak; their appearances are affecting the way we look, and their philosophies are remodeling our thinking. We need to realize that we are in the middle of warfare as a church and if care is not taken, we'll wake up one day and don't know who we are anymore. Maybe, people with no identity. It is so sad.**

P4M: The weakness of our **school system brings about stress, and this kind of stress makes it difficult for a young person to be focused and be consistent with church life.** More so, you finish school and there are no jobs. **If you don't have a job, you are broke, and if you're broke you cannot focus, and your church life is tampered with.**

P2M: I disagree with you about school stress and lack of jobs. An unserious person is unserious at any time anywhere. Though I am with you on the issues of lack of employment opportunities, it does not in any way constitute much of a societal factor on youth retention.

P4M: You don't get it **when you are unemployed, it requires a very high level of commitment for you to be faithful.**

P1M: Another aspect of society is the fact that when you are employed, you become the problem-solution center for the family. This can be very stressful. When I got this job I'm doing today, I became the sole provider for my parents and siblings. And until they are all settled, it appears I do not have a life of my own. Many people suffer this same dilemma. A friend of mine who is also our member has been struggling to show appearance in church. He is neither here nor there. He started work five years ago but has been paying loans the family took to train him and his two siblings. **So, because our society has made it that you must take up the responsibility of our families, most young working people find it difficult to cope.**

P2F: **The friends we chose to keep affect our commitments in church and hamper on the church's ability to retain us. Our peers, our relationships, our family issues, and**

problems mount upon the young people, making it difficult for the church to retain its youth.

P3M: The pressure of materialism is a constant force militating against the effort of the church in retention. The pursuit of a better living makes most young people difficult to keep in the church because they want to develop the capacity to acquire material possession. Look at for instance, as someone mentioned earlier, the media, the music industry. It is easier than imagined to be like Davido and his luxurious spending, Olamide, and the rest of them. These are all young people who have asserted a huge influence on the social structure. Believe it or not, we have young people in our church who are influenced by these people. That is a challenge for the church.

P2F: Let's not forget also that marriage is a big deal. Our society is not fair with the unmarried. They make you feel like you're not supposed to live if you are not married. Pressure coming from family, friends... everybody expects you at a certain age to be married as if marriage is a qualification for living.

P4F: The church cannot retain its young people because of the failure of the school system. If our school system is structured in a way that people learn trades other than just looking for white-collar jobs, our young people would have had professions to pursue. This would in turn help in stabilizing us in the church.

Unemployment, Life Expectations, Media Effect, Untapped Potentials

Question 6: How does the manner of worship influence youth attendance or participation in the church?

P1M: I can tell you frankly that, most young people come to church because they can't afford to stay at home on Sabbath day. They come to church and have no say as par the order of worship. Everything is predictable from start to finish. There is no variety, no special feature, and nothing new—recycling of items from the days of Clifford. It does not influence anybody or encourage any participation of young people anywhere.

P3M: I agree with P1M, it is an abomination to stay at home on Sabbath. My father will chew you raw. In fact, what will you be doing at home on a Sabbath day? You cannot watch TV, you can't do the washing. Where would you gather the liver to stay? You must go to church whether you like it or not.

P3F: I don't look at people and what they do to allow it to affect me. I am not sure if the worship pattern has any form of influence on me. I am talking about how I see it myself. I guess it is personal, it is just a mindset. That's how I see it, I don't know about anyone else.

P4M: I have a particular mindset about worship. For me, worship is experiential and it is communicating. When communication is distorted between the sending and the receiving, it takes feedback to be able to correct whichever portion that is not clear.

The manner of worship does not send clear communication to young people. Take some time and explain a little bit of the reasons for doing what we do and let these young people understand the rationale for holding that position. But neglecting to do that, leads to misunderstanding, distrust, and lack of interest.

P1F: Our pattern of worship is usually cold and uninteresting. Only a few instances when you have the Conference doing a program in this church would you find some difference and lively worship experience.

P2F: Let's not get it wrong, we are not saying or encouraging people to be jumping up and down, but worship should be dynamic and lively. Sorry to mention you Pastor (referring to the Interviewer), that Community Service we had last year was interesting and successful because you undertook the planning, coordination, and

execution of the entire program. My question therefore is, why can't subsequent programs follow that pattern? But after that period, everything went back the way they have always been.

P2M: "Hmm! That kind of influence sef. Na today?" The fact is, some things will never change. Our church left the way it is now, does not encourage a young person to stay for any reason. By the way, the older folks are okay with the church that way, but there is no consideration for young people. That's my position, anyway!

Worship Pattern Influence Attendance, Worship Pattern Does Not Influence Attendance, Indifferent

Question 7: How would you evaluate the programs planned for the youth?

P1F: Our programs are very poorly planned and shabbily executed. How we get at our programs is without preparedness, and unfortunately, one does not need to observe for long before you start seeing the flaws.

P2M: my observation is that we are too full of ourselves in our incompetence. Yet, we are too proud to ask and enrich our knowledge, because we are afraid other people will take our shine. I don't even bother myself at all.

P4M: I think people are trying their best. Most times they try.

P1M: Try ke? The needs of the people are paramount in anything you find yourself doing for the people. Programs generally score zero in this church. Especially that the young people are edged out most of the time for whatever reason.

P2F: I find it difficult sometimes inviting my friends to church because you are not sure what you're going to meet before you embarrass yourself. Brothers, programs in this church like others have mentioned, are below standard. I must say it.

P3M: Some people feel they know it all. The church leadership has to learn to involve people and listen to others as well. People just get up and do the things they do without carrying other people along. Afterward, they end up dumping anything on us thinking they have done something whereas, they only succeeded in wasting somebody's time.

P3F: It gets so tiring at times because our programs are not people's need-oriented.

P4F: We cannot overemphasize the need for proper planning. The church is guilty of improper planning with no respect for time. You'll wonder what is taking our time in worship. Everybody wants to talk, so, a little thing as the announcement, someone will talk and talk and talk. Before you realize it, the church has lingered to 2 pm.

Question 8: How can the church help youth discover and love Jesus personally?

P1M: The church must learn to love the young people first, and there, they will learn how it feels to love Jesus. you know, sir, it is easier to know how to love God when you are loved yourself by those around you who teach that love by showing you an example.

P2M: There is no quarrel about the fact that young people make mistakes. You don't only scold or discipline them when they go wrong, you also bring them back again to yourself if you desire to help them do the right thing. In other words, the best way to show God's love is to exercise it practically.

P2F: Besides, pray for them and with them. It is not an easy task to be a young person. The challenges are enormous and stressful. Older members have the responsibility to help young people grow gradually into the knowledge and love of God. Seriously, we need more support than anyone would imagine. I'm saying we because I am talking from experience. I had much of those struggles to deal with back at home until I left for school here in Calabar. The church should not take things for granted, we need to pray for our young people, and pray more so with them if we desire to have them take Jesus personally.

P4F: It is not possible to get up and start praying if you do not realize the problem. I think prayer for the young would be effective if the church creates avenues to interact and find out their needs, work with them to achieve those needs in any way possible including prayer as she rightly mentioned. For as long as we treat the young with anonymity, it will be extremely difficult to show them the kind of Jesus to love. You and I know the kind of love that sells out there. It is confusing to truly love these days, let alone love the things of God.

P3M: Coming back to the issue of program, if we are to succeed in making our young people love the Lord, we must be intentional about the programs we develop for them. We need to give them an enriching program that meets their holistic needs and stop being judgmental.

P3F: The Muslims, I believe have the best youth retention strategy. I don't know how they do it. Whatever it is that they do is working out for them. As part of their indoctrination strategy, they start early enough to engage their young ones by involving them in the things they do, which makes it difficult for you to convert them. We have to get our young people to participate actively. even if it requires a motivation to do the right thing and a little incentive. Design their program with intended aim and objective, and anticipate an evaluation afterward.

P1F: When we miss doing the right and simple things, we suffer to correct the problem it would have created. We have neglected Bible study that is capable of causing transformation and revival and reformation. The youth need practical living sermons and not just the talk of mouth. Let's go back to the Bible and all our problems will be gone forever. That is the noblest thing to do.

P4M: The youth need to be involved. Involve them in all of church life whether or not it is convenient. Let them be part of the decision-making process. Find out from them what they desire to see in church. If their wants are not characterized as needs, they can be guided to seek after their needs, but have them be part of the planning and execution process. When they feel involved, they will be responsible. That is how a caring community conducts itself.

Give Care and Show Love, Be intentional about Program Design

Question 9: Do you find the church to be an accepting, welcoming environment, what can be done to improve this?

P1M: You'll hate yourself visiting the church for the first time. You stay all by yourself without anyone saying "hello" to you. At the end of service, people cluster in a group of acquaintances until you find your way out as a visitor. We can only accept the people we already know. Our level of acceptance is within the people we already know. That is why people come and they don't come again and it doesn't bother us one bit.

P1F: Generally, people are reserved, around here they are a bit cold when it comes to relating to others. When I came here newly, it took me time to make adjustments because no one seems interested in you, especially when you are my type of person. I could be so quiet and unnoticed, which makes it convenient for someone never to come near. But over time I just knew it is a common effect on us as church members. So, I decided to break out of myself. I became the one who goes after people, also lookout for people who are new in the church. I go to them to generate acquaintances and chat with them a little before we all depart. I guess it worked for me.

P2M: It's a bit complex than that, my sister. *Shoe get size!* People size you up and if they suspect from your looks that you are on the money, they associate faster with you. But like some of us still in school, unemployed, they feel you have nothing to offer. For the fear that they might be committed to giving a helping hand, they simply

ignore you and turn the other side. *Nobody sends you!* We are selective. That's all I mean to say.

P2F: Well, this is our church and we have to say it the way it is. We do not have any other church than this one. It may not be receptive as a cooperate entity but we as individuals have a part to play. We need to go beyond pushing it to others and taking it as individuals to promote the wellbeing of the church.

P3M: You won't come back here after your first-time visit. We have seen many people who visited and for no reason, they do not show up again. There used to be a brother, a Pharmacist, and his wife who came in from, I don't know where. They identified with the church on their own but because of lack of follow up, I am told that the day a brother in the church who decided to visit them with his family got to his home, they found Jehovah's Witnesses' pieces of literature littered everywhere. And he never returned to church again.

P3F: This particular situation is a general Adventist problem. I have heard people talk about it at various places. I confirmed it when I traveled to Imo State sometime last year. The church where I worshipped did not know a visitor came to their church. At the end of service, I walked up to one of the Elders and told him I came from Calabar. He was both surprised and ashamed that they did not notice and it was I who went to inform him. I simply told him not to worry it's like that even in my church back home. Imagine that someone did come and that was his first time... there would be no need to come back. It's embarrassing.

P4F: It's nothing other than selfishness. We are selfish and afraid of losing our possession. So, we hide under that cover while the result is to not accept strangers.

APPENDIX F

SEMINAR OUTLINE

INTIMACY one on one

FAMILY WEEK

SEVEN DAYS OF EXTRAORDINARY FAMILY COMEBACK SABBATH PROGRAM - CALABAR

THEME "INTIMACY 1 ON 1"

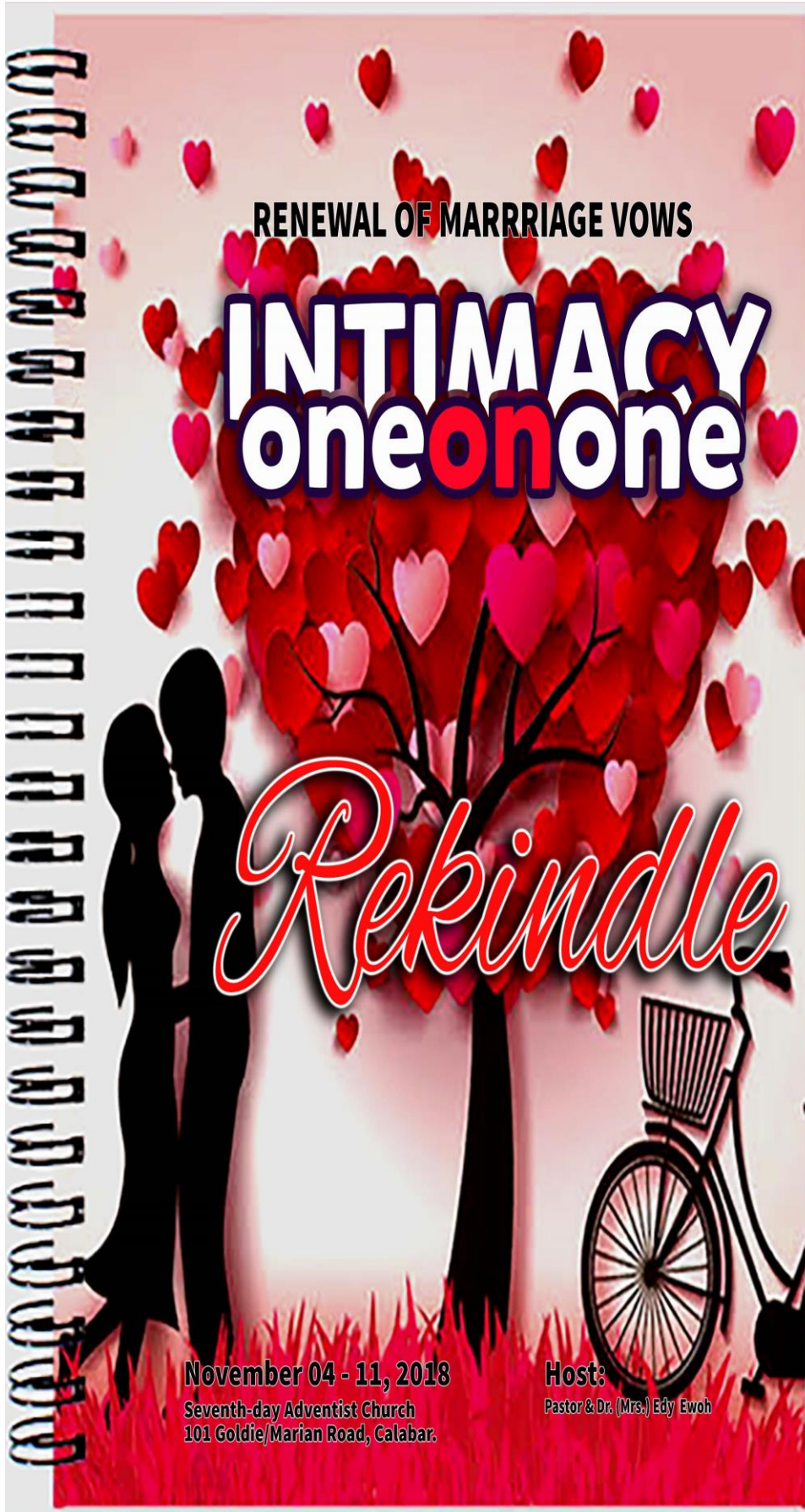
SABBATH SCHOOL	08:45 – 10:10
CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	10:10 – 10:30
Announcements	10:30 – 10:40
DIVINE SERVICE (10:40 – 12:35)	
Welcome/Introduction	10:40 – 10:50
Opening Hymn (SDAH 652)	10:50 – 10:55
Pastoral Prayer	10:55 - 11:00
Call for Offering	11:00 - 11:10
Scripture Reading	11:10 - 11:15
Marriage Renewal/Blessings	11:15 – 11:55
Choir	11:55 – 12:00
Sermon "Intimacy One on One"	12:00 – 12:30
Closing Hymn (SDAH 654)	12:30 – 12:35
Benediction	12:35 –

FRIDAY PROGRAM FOR SINGLES UPLINK – (3:00 – 6:00)

Music/Arrival	-	03:00
Welcome/Opening Formalities	-	03:10 – 03:20
Backgrounds	-	03: 20 – 03:30
DISCUSSION THEME:		
Common Slipups		03:30 – 05:00
GET SMARTER 101		05:00 – 05:45
Refreshment/Sponsorship -		
Thanks/Closing Formalities -		05:45 – 06:00

SATURDAY PROGRAM FOR SINGLES UPLINK – (3:00 – 6:00)

Music/Arrival	-	03:00
Welcome/Opening Formalities	-	03:10 – 03:20
Backgrounds	-	03: 20 – 03:30
DISCUSSION THEME:		
The Art of Dating		03:30 – 05:00
GET SMARTER 102		05:00 – 05:45
Refreshment/Sponsorship -		
Thanks/Closing Formalities -		05:45 – 06:00



RENEWAL OF MARRIAGE VOWS

INTIMACY one on one

Rekindle

November 04 - 11, 2018
Seventh-day Adventist Church
101 Goldie/Marian Road, Calabar.

Host:
Pastor & Dr. (Mrs.) Edy Ewoh

REPLICATION OF PROGRAM

As proof of program viability, INTIMACY ONEONONE is replicated in two local churches within its first two months.



SAMPLE CERTIFICATES





EMPOWERING COUPLES PROGRAM

PROGRAMME TYPE: Marriage Renewal Prayer Week. This program is specifically for married couples (Male husband and a female wife).

PROPOSED DATE: November 13—20, 2016.

DEPARTMENT: Family Life Ministries.

LEADER: Eld./Prof. C. Iroegbu

OBJECTIVES:

1. To empower couples to build on their relationship.
2. To enrich marriages in the local church.
3. To focus on communication, conflict resolution, role relationship.
4. To offer professional help from clergy/professional counsellors as need arises.
5. To cause a reminder as not to take marriage(s) for granted.
6. To sensitize couples to give in time and attention as when dating.
7. To consciously pay attention to that which enriches marriage(s).

METHODOLOGY: In this couples' empowerment program, information and relationship skill-building elements are combined with personal and relationship assessment tools. The pastor/counsellor and the Family Life Coordinator in Calabar Church provide information as necessary and models the skills involved, but primarily serves as facilitators of a process that enables couples to discover their personal and relationship strengths and weaknesses and stimulates relational growth. Especially with the cooperation of members.

It is a weeklong spiritual retreat spanning through a Sunday and another. Married couples are encouraged to sacrificially engage themselves one hour every day through the said period, enthusiastically participating in an activity that is targeted at enriching their marriage(s). This activity includes opening up to each other in potential problem areas of their marriage experience. It requires complete openness and free discussions. That one-hour period is concluded with a prayer session. They can do well to keep journal of their activities for the said period, encounter and experience. It is meant to be spiritual and fun filled.

The event culminates on Sabbath, having couples come to church in their agreed identical uniforms representing the individual families. Whatever a couple can do to identify themselves. They are also encouraged to invite their friends and neighbours to their Marriage Renewal Service. A minister graces the service to recommit them to their marriage vows and charge them to their marriage renewal and commitments. Thereafter, a certificate of Marriage Renewal is presented to all the couples who participated in the event.

The last Sunday is a family get-together where experiences are shared with testimonies and encouragement for one-another. Soft music, quiet admonitions, pastries and drinks for refreshment.

REGISTRATION: Three Thousand Naira (N3,000.00)

1	Building Strong Marriages Couples Workbook	N1,850.00
2	Pastries and Drinks (for Get-together)	N1,150.00

ORDER OF EVENT:

SUNDAY

God intends for us to be loving.

The command to love one another is repeated throughout Scripture. Expressing love to your spouse is one way to show your love to God (John 13:35; 1 John 4:7; Romans 12:10).

Discussion/Activity:

- ✓ What are those things that caught your attention the first time you met?
- ✓ Are there things you remembered that can be tried again to spice your marriage even today?
- ✓ Make commitments; note them down in your journal.
- ✓ Pray together holding hands.

Write two or three paragraphs giving your definition of marriage. Include reflections on Genesis 2:25, 25; Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14. Why do you think God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16)?

MONDAY:

Know Your Mate. What type of knowledge must the husband develop in his relationship with his wife in order to respect and honour her? The husband must develop knowledge of his wife's person. Each person is uniquely made. Things that bother the wife might not bother the husband. Things that excite the husband might not excite the wife and vice versa. There is often miscommunication in marriage simply because couples do not know each other well enough. The husband must learn what makes the wife happy, what makes her sad, and what angers her and use this information to build her up and communicate with her better. Even though Peter speaks to husbands, this is certainly true for wives as well. In Greek, the word "know" typically refers to not just an intellectual knowledge but also an experiential knowledge. The husband and wife must know each other intimately so they can better communicate with one another.

While dating, couples often spend as much time as possible with one another, but sadly in marriage, quality time starts to fade. The husband has work; the wife is caring for the house and children and possibly working as well. As the children get older, the husband and wife spend more time focusing on the children and less time on one another. As this rhythm continues, they eventually get to the point where they no longer know one another at all.

Discussion/Activity:

- ✓ Discuss the following texts in light of the statement above. James 3:16; Ephesians 4:29,30; 1 Peter 3:7.
- ✓ Does movie viewing cultivate unrealistic expectations about love? Share your views.

TUESDAY:

Pay Attention to 'Significant Nothings.' Couples should ask themselves (often), are we growing together as a couple or further apart? Is the marriage growing stronger or are there holes that need addressing? Don't assume your spouse feels as you do. (I've learned this is especially true for men who often don't know there is a problem until it's a big problem.) Establish the understanding early in the relationship that you have the right to periodically check on the state of your marriage.

Discussion/Activity: On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best:

- ✓ What is the health of your marriage right now? Share your observation and scale.
- ✓ How well do you communicate as a couple? Discuss before scaling.
- ✓ Do ever sense there may be problems in your marriage? Think it through before you share and scale.
- ✓ What is the # 1 problem in your marriage right now, in your opinion?
- ✓ What do you like best about your spouse?

WEDNESDAY:

Celebrate Your Differences: Some differentness can be expected in couples, arising from differences in gender, temperament, family of origin, culture, and habits or personal preferences. Understanding, accommodation, adaptation, even appreciation come as the couple's love and commitment are aided by improved communication and conflict resolution skills.

Discussion/Activity: Discuss healthy self-worth

- ✓ Discuss the exercise "Celebrating Our Differences." identify each other's needs and talk openly about how you expect to address these now and in the future. Be alert for the tendency to gloss over differentness or the expectation that the other person will change. Watch for warning signs of abuse, attitudes of superiority, manipulation, or emotional control that are inappropriate in relationships.
- ✓ What are those things that caught your attention the first time you met?
- ✓ You may wish to discuss the importance of a healthy sense of personal worth as it is rooted first of all in God's attitude of love and acceptance of us through Christ and then reinforced by experiences of unconditional love found with in marriage, with family, friends or church.
- ✓ In what ways do each of you give affirmation to each other, build each other up (Rom. 14: 19; 1 Thess. 5: 11), or lift each other up when you fall (Ecc. 4:12)?

THURSDAY:

Emotional Love Languages: Developing a love language can be an extensive enhancer of a marriage relationship. It differs from couple to couple but the following elements are very common:

Words of Affirmation. This is when you say how nice your spouse looks, or how great the dinner tasted. These words will also build your mate's self-image and confidence.

Quality Time. Some spouses believe that being together, doing things together and focusing in on one another is the best way to show love. If this is your partner's love language, turn off the TV now and then and give one another some undivided attention.

Gifts. It is universal in human cultures to give gifts. They don't have to be expensive to send a powerful message of love. Spouses who forget a birthday or anniversary or who never give gifts to someone who truly enjoys gift giving will find themselves with a spouse who feels neglected and unloved.

Acts of Service. Discovering how you can best do something for your spouse will require time and creativity. These acts of service need to be done with joy in order to be perceived as a gift of love.

Physical Touch. Sometimes just stroking your spouse's back, holding hands, or a peck on the cheek will fulfil this need.

Discussion/Activity:

- ✓ Discuss James 1:17; John 3:16; Genesis 2:15; 1 Corinthians 12:4.
- ✓ Proverbs 17:8 tells us that "a gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it."
- ✓ An individual with the primary love language of Gifts sees gifts as visual symbols of thoughtfulness and expressions of love. How true is this statement?
- ✓ Gifts can be purchased, found, or made; and the price of the gift is usually of little regard. Small or large, gifts are appreciated when they are given as genuine tokens of love and give evidence of consideration. How do you understand this statement?

FRIDAY:

Be realistic with your relationship expectations. Romance is wonderful and seeing the best in your partner is a sure way to maintain love and intimacy. But you are going to have years with your spouse, so you need to be able to expect some imperfections. In the first throes of passion, the object of our romantic focus may seem perfect but then we discover their 'feet of clay'. At this point, for the marriage to last we need to see beyond personal weaknesses and foibles - after all, no one is perfect. All marriages need work sometimes; expecting it all to be effortless or that it 'should' always be perfect creates disappointment (as unrealistic expectations always do).

Discussion/Activity:

- ✓ Are there things you can share with other couples on Sunday?
- ✓ Plan an experience to share on Sunday.

SAMPLE VOWS FOR SABBATH: Consolidation Renewal Vows

HUSBAND

(Wife's name), ____ years ago, I pledged my love and commitment to you, but it seems like only yesterday. I promised to love you, honour you, comfort and keep you. I pledged to be by your side in sickness and in health, in times of want, and times of plenty, for better or worse, for the rest of our lives. We have had all of those things, and you have been by my side as we created a family, a home, and a life together. Today, at the beginning of our ____ year as husband and wife, in the presence of God, and our family and friends, I consolidate my vows to you, pledging my eternal love for you, and eagerly awaiting what life may bring us.

WIFE

"My dearest (Husband's Name), you are my beloved husband, my hero and my best friend. 10 years ago we made a pledge before God and all those we hold dear to be committed to one another and love one another for life. And today my heart rejoices as we celebrate that promise that has only grown stronger as we have travelled down life's road together. I am so lucky to have you in my life. You are still the best part of each day. You still have the power to surprise me with your love and consideration. You still make me laugh until my sides hurt. And it is my heart's prayer that in another 10 years we will still be celebrating all of these things. You have made my life complete and secure, through good times and challenges, and helped me become a better person. Thank you for making my dreams come true. Thank you for being the most special part of my world. I promise to always be beside you as your loving and devoted wife and give you the very best of me. I love you with all my heart" and I always will."

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