

Adventist Youth Leader Magazine

Spiritual Youth Leaders Resource



UNITY – BUC Youth Day of Fellowship 2019

Developing an Authentic Devotional Life

Social Justice: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly!

AYL | 02 | 2019

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®
Youth Ministries Department

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Editorial

APRIL – JUNE 2019

Another Global Youth Day (GYD) has gone down in history, thanks to the planning and execution of youth leaders and their teams of young people. Global Youth Day was a success. A grass roots program that has the potential of becoming a powerful movement, Global Youth Day has the potential of galvanizing the church and ending the seeming disassociation among the youth and help eradicate the so-called generation gap. Global Youth Day is perhaps the best thing that has happened in youth ministry. Young people love to serve, and it was amazing to see how the different youth groups came together to send A SINGLE MESSAGE OF LOVE to our communities. Jesus is glorified by these acts of kindness.

The thoughtfulness and concern of our young people was evident in their creative responses to this year's GYD theme, "Adoption." The theme was selected to specifically shine a light on two

things: the many outreach ministry opportunities that are available for local churches to adopt, and the benefit of inter-departmental collaboration at the local church level, and within the community that the church is called to serve. We have confidence in the young creative visionaries of our time and know they will continue to make Global Youth Day a lifestyle, not a one-day event.

Another very important reason for Global Youth Day, is that it serves as the "launch pad" for the Youth Week of Prayer (#WOP19), eight days/nights of preaching and small group interactions that culminates in a Home Coming celebration on the 2nd Sabbath (#HCS19). Home Coming Day is a day to celebrate the youth and young adults who have found their way back to the Lord. Home Coming Day is not a haphazard, last minute event. It is a result of the young people in the church who reach out to them, give Bible Studies, and invite/win them back to church. One tested and tried way, is when youth groups form

a "Bring them Back" committee whose members are dedicated to finding the youth and young adults who are no longer attending church or are just disengaged from the church. (Please read the Week of Prayer magazine for more information on planning your Home Coming committee). Youth groups are encouraged to begin their "Bring them Back" campaign three to four months before the Youth Week of Prayer begins. The Home Coming planning should be approached with a lot of prayer and fasting. The destiny of our soul is not a light matter...it is a matter of life or death and should be treated as an urgent matter. Please plan adequately for next year. Beginning to plan now will never hurt you, it will improve your service delivery and your influence.

The theme for #GYD20 is caring (iCare). For 2020 we will focus on refugees, strangers and the homeless. While we have a theme for each year, we want to remind you that each youth group should make sure they are doing what is relevant in the community they

serve. Please plan to do projects that are Sabbath friendly. If the project you choose has components that are not Sabbath friendly, then please arrange to do it during the week. This is where your able leadership comes in, to gently and lovingly guide the young people.

We are excited to use the annual week of prayer and spiritual emphasis to remind everyone of the importance of the local church (the 2019 theme). In an interview I

did recently with Pastor Ted Wilson, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he encouraged leaders not to take young people for granted. "I'm hoping that many young people realize that we are counting upon them," said Wilson, stressing the need to share God's message for the end times. We must continue to ride on the prophetic truth that young people will finish the work!! The local church and families offer the rightful space for such training and preparation. All

the youth need is a chance! While opportunities for involvement are available at the different levels of our church structure, the local church remains a critical place for continuous and consistent empowerment.

God bless your leadership.



Pako Edson Mokgwane, M.A.
Associate Youth Director
General Conference of the
Seventh-day Adventists





UNITY – BUC Youth Day of Fellowship 2019

If I were to ask a young person, “What has been one of the most memorable days of your life?” perhaps, in light of the season we just experienced last month, they might answer that it was a time when the family was able to gather together to celebrate an occasion. Some might answer that a reunion with school or university friends was a high point, and others would suggest a recent outing with their good friends was one of the best days of their life. I believe that the BUC Youth Day of Fellowship might be one of those days: family came together, and friends travelled from all around to see each other and reunite with those they had not seen for some time.

The BUC Youth Day of Fellowship took place this year on

January 26, 2019 at the Dominion Centre in Wood Green, London. It was a day in which more than 2,200 youth travelled from all over: Ireland, Scotland and Wales, North and South England.

This very simple, but powerful, idea of bringing the family together came about last year during a committee meeting; after spending some time in prayer, someone suggested that we try and bring the youth from the Union together. For those who do not know, the British Union is a territory that is quite large and includes the United Kingdom and Ireland, so it would not be easy to try to bring everybody together for the one day. For those of us sitting on that committee, which included the directors and sponsors from all the entities, the dream did come true and I am so thankful to

God that we were able to find and work towards that one date.

For me, as the Youth Director for the Union, it was important not to add another day to plan for the very busy Mission and Conference fields, (and also important that we would not take the young people away from any of the local events already planned in the various regions). So, when the call was made for someone to open one of their existing planned dates to the whole union, Pastor Anthony Fuller said that he was willing to host the British Union Youth Day of Fellowship. Here is what happened – the South England Conference planned the day, with Pastor Anthony, his coordinator Milimo Ninvalle and regional representatives working very hard to produce the program and bring

together the volunteers needed to run the event.

My contribution was to provide the food for over 2000 people and I called on the services of none other than the BUC Treasurer, Earl Ramharacksingh, who I have worked with so often in the past at events like these. I received many comments after the event to say how well-fed and watered people had been, not just from the food that Earl and his team was able to provide, but also from Pastor Anthony's sermon which truly inspired us.

At the end of his sermon, Pastor Anthony gave out a challenge and asked those in the room who were willing to rise to this challenge to come around the beautifully-decorated table on the stage – representing our closeness with Jesus but also representing the unity in our Union. He reminded us that it doesn't matter what region we come from, what culture or ethnicity we originate from, we are all the same in God's eyes. Many people answered the call that day.

Between feeding the multitudes and a short afternoon program, the youth were able to use the precious moments to make new friends and reacquaint themselves with old friends. It was so beautiful

to see the hugs, to hear the laughter and to watch so many people with smiles on their faces as they talked with one another.

Now as this event passes into a sweet memory for me and hopefully for those who attended as well, I would like to say a few thank yous. Firstly, I would like to say thank you to God for giving us this wonderful opportunity to come together in peace and worship His name. I would also like to thank every single regional youth director and sponsor: Pastors Anthony Fuller, Adam Ramdin, David Rancic, Claudiu Popescu and the Irish Mission team, and their committee representatives who promoted and took part in this day. Without their love and willingness to cooperate with the British Union, days like these would not take place.

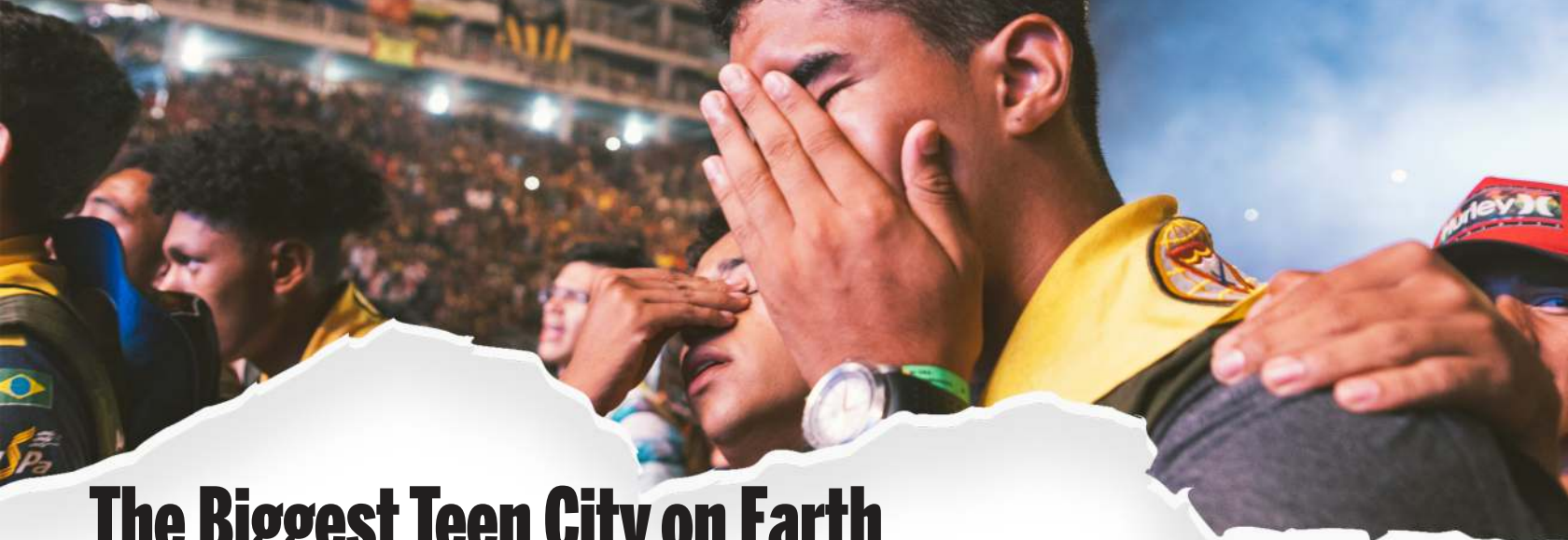
It showed a small glimpse of what we can look forward to one day soon when Jesus comes again for a second time. Our Trans-European Division Youth Director was present at the event and prayed for a blessing over everyone represented from the British Union; he also prayed that every young person would have the hope of being gathered up in the clouds with each other to see Jesus welcoming us home.

We would ask that you join us in making this a reality for every young person that you know: whether you are an older or senior member of the church, a parent, or even a young person praying for your friends, let us join together in prayer so that not one young person within the British Union will be missed out when that great day comes.



Pastor Dejan Stojkovic,
 Youth Ministries Director,
 British Union Conference





The Biggest Teen City on Earth

Imagine a "sea" of tents with 50,000 teenagers, young adults and some adults having a good adventure for six days. Then, the following week, 50,000 new campers are camping in the same place. That is exactly what happened during the fifth South-American Division Pathfinder Camporee. This event took place in January 2019, at the Parque do Peão, in the city of Barretos, state of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The 100,407 Pathfinders, leaders and volunteers came from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. In addition, there were some representatives from about 20 other countries in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Once a year the Pathfinder Clubs meet for a big camporee celebration. This event can bring

together clubs from a state, a country or even several countries, like in this Fifth Camporee, "The Best Adventure."

In this "city of tents," teens got involved in dozens of physical and recreational activities, visiting four museums, a tent mall, restaurants and snack bars with healthy food, an embroidery factory, and a pin factory. They also took pictures with life-size dinosaur replicas, conducted community outreach projects in Barretos, distributed books on family guidance (100,000 in total). They planted trees, learned more about other cultures, curiosities, typical foods and talked with teenagers from all South-American countries participating. In each program at the arena, Pathfinders were challenged to make new friends, to serve God and others.

"The Best Adventure" was also the title of the pocket Pathfinder Bible that was created for this Camporee. 100,000 special bibles were distributed for the teens, the "servants of God and friends to man."

Dr. Andres Peralta, World Pathfinder Leader and Pr. Gary Blanchard, World Adventist Youth Leader, were some of the preachers for these events. They inspired and motivated our teens to fulfill their mission. 918 pathfinders were baptized during the Fifth Camporee. About 11,000 decided to prepare for the upcoming baptismal ceremonies during 2019.



Udocy Zukowski, M.A.
Pathfinder Ministry Director
South American Division

Powerful Stories

Prodigal Called to Serve

Seven years ago, I would've said studying theology is hilarious and a waste of a degree for those who pursue such a path. I believed the study of God would get you nowhere in the real world. Only pursuits in health, mathematics, and the sciences were noble and practical. Ironically, the very thing I would've mocked is exactly what I'm studying right now in a Theological Seminary. Go figure!

Seven years ago, I would've laughed if someone asked me to consider being a pastor for the rest of my life. I wanted to make money, own a fancy car, have "fun," and live the typical American dream. Yet, the calling I would've laughed at is exactly what I am called to now and... I'm happy. I'm a pastor with the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. Seriously!

Seven years ago, as a 19-year-old, God was nowhere on my mind. He simply wasn't on my radar. Rather, He was in an old beat-up box pushed to the back of the closet in the far corners of my mind. I didn't even know He was there.

Nonetheless, in spite of my attitude towards Him, I was still on His mind. He didn't give up on me. He sought me.

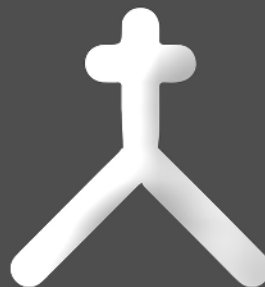
Seven years ago, I was called home.

My name is Matthew Diaz and I am a child of God. This former prodigal has been rescued by the power of Love and has been called into the service of the Master! He has saved me, broken me, and is in the process of rebuilding me into something beautiful for His glory.

Seven years from now I can only imagine where I'll be.



Matthew Diaz,
Pastor, Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist
MDiv student, Andrews University Theological Seminary



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ONE MINUTE CLIPS | PRAYER

10-16 NOV 2019



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YouTube: General Conference Youth Ministries

From Darkness to Light

I was born in a village in western Venezuela, Capacho - State Tachira, into a humble family. My mother was very young when I was born, and my maternal grandparents had to take care of me. I lived with them during my first 4 years. Afterwards, my mother remarried and took me to the capital of my country Caracas, where I grew up in different neighborhoods; each was worse than the one we left behind. I did not enjoy a stable home, space-wise or emotionally. When I became an adolescent, I preferred to not go home. I would stay back after school with some "friends" getting into mischief, but every afternoon or evening when I arrived at home, I had big problems waiting for me.

I started engaging in more and more harmful vices until I was 11 years old. I had an intense argument with my stepfather, to the point of trying to take his life. My mother, after many warnings kicked me out of the house. At the time I thought it would be just for a couple of days, but it was not. I went looking for my "friends" but most of them closed up to the possibility of allowing me to stay in their homes. Others did allow me to stay, but soon after were also asking me to leave.

Then I started staying in the streets of the capital; cold, hungry and filled with bitterness in my heart, it was then that I took refuge in vices, and habits. I acquired and succumbed to other even more harmful habits; drugs, theft, among others ...

God had been touching my heart from a very young age, but I always reproached him: "If he was real, why had I suffered so much?" After becoming aware of the danger to which I exposed myself sleeping on the streets, I began to stay in waiting rooms of public hospitals, mostly going unnoticed and sleeping a little safer in those places.

WORLD PATHFINDER DAY

SEPT • 21 • 2019



WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE?

JEREMIAH 29:11

#WPD19
#IAMAPATHFINDER
#CREATEDWITHPURPOSE

YOUTH.ADVENTIST.ORG

PASS IT ON



Late one night, at around 3:00am, as I walked through a dangerous neighborhood in the capital, I struck up a kind of conversation with God. I said, "If you're real, I ask you to give me a place to lie down; My back hurts so much from sleep sitting down."

To my surprise, I had not finished speaking when I saw a car on my left that had been ransacked and the only thing that remained was the back seat! It was amazing that only that was there! ... So, I said AMEN and without hesitation, I laid inside.

Looking up I realized that there was a small hole in the roof of that car where I could see the sky, and I continued talking to God saying again: "If you are truly real, give me a home I can go to get every night. Doesn't matter whether I rent or own it, just as long as I can lay down for sure. I would also like you to help me find a beautiful woman that is truly faithful and will love and respect me, one that I can love without fear. Also, can you allow me to have a son, to whom I can love like my dad never loved me." Although originally, I had three things to ask, without thinking I added one more request. I asked for him to help me depend completely on him. After that I fell asleep.

When the light woke me up, I got out of the car and started walking the streets of the city again but not forgetting what happened the night before. Then God made me understand that in order for my requests to come true, I had to make a commitment to Him.

I confess that at the time I did not want to continue listening to that voice that spoke to my heart. This was because I had already gone so far, I had already acquired many habits and vices that were hard to leave behind. However, my God kept insisting. He allowed many things to happen in my life, which always, in the end led me to think more and more about him.

I had the opportunity to meet a woman, and I thought I would live the rest of my life with her. After

two years of relationship she conceived a child. I dreamed of her in my arms and becoming the best father for her. I felt this was an opportunity God was giving me to be a better person, however at birth, there were complications and the baby died.

Then the person with whom I thought I would spend the rest of my life, fell in love with another guy and left me. I tried approaching her and asking her for an explanation and to reconsider, but her family threatened me with death if I reappeared in their lives again.

With the death of my baby, my God once again got near to me and made me remember that he was willing to fulfill his part, all that was missing was my commitment to fulfill mine.

A sister of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church began to introduce me to Jesus, as my Savior. She also told me about God's law as a law of love. With great suspicion, moved by the pain of loss, but also with the insistence of God through that sister, I began to study the Bible and pray. Gradually God was guiding me to a safer path full of joy.

There are many things to tell, but I can say that thanks to my God, today I have a place to come home to every day and every night. I'm married to an extraordinary woman; better than I had ever imagined, and together we have an energetic and highly intelligent son who loves God with all his heart and loves me as well. I also love him with the strength that only a true father guided by God can.

God not only blessed me with a wonderful family but gave me the opportunity to reconcile with my extended family (my stepfather and my mother). On top of all that, I am also a pastor of his beloved church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

After being surrounded by the wrong crowd of young people, today He has put me in front of

young people who love Him and fight every day to be faithful to Him. Now as a youth leader of the Central Venezuelan Association in the city of Caracas, it is my challenge to help them achieve this goal.

Therefore, as I have come to learn of the powerful testimony of our World Pathfinder Director, Pr. Andres Peralta, I dreamed of meeting him and do something together for the youth of my country.

And so, it was that this extraordinary encounter stopped being a dream and became a reality.

Thank God for the desire of our leader wanting to join us and overcoming any and every obstacle. God opened the doors, and thanks to a wonderful team, everything was organized so that our dear Pastor Peralta could come and give hope to our beloved youth.

This was a true miracle! And of course, a tremendous sign of love for our beloved youth and also for me.



Pastor Jesús Chacón

Youth Director, Eastern Venezuela Conference



Our young people are called by God to be His “angels of mercy” ministering to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of ALL humanity intentionally and consistently in the name of Christ.

Pastor Gary Blanchard

Go on God’s Errands

When we were children in southern Brazil, we heard stories of great explorers who had crossed great seas and faced dense forests in search of adventure. Our country is big, and contrary to what some people think, only the northern part is surrounded by forests. In the South, we grow with the cold, we are the people known as Gaucho. In our childhood, stories about forest adventurers that enchanted us seemed far removed from our reality. This was one of the great reasons why we joined the Pathfinder Club. It was there that Christ called us still small to be part of the greatest adventure that exists: the search for the treasure of heaven.

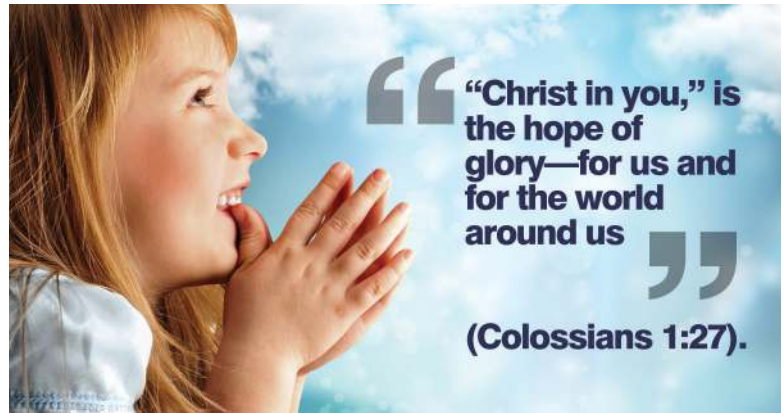
Little did we know as children that one day God would give us the chance to make great expeditions beside Him. We have become a missionary couple and have dedicated our lives to carry the message of Jesus to people who do not know Him yet. For this, we chose the most fun way to go to heaven: through the Pathfinder Club. Our ministry is to open clubs in places where there is still no Adventist presence, in order to plant churches. We surrender totally to God and ask Him every day to mold us, to be good instruments in His hands. So, God sent us to the Amazon, the largest forest in the world, where we could live stories like the ones we heard about in childhood.

We recently received an invitation from Adventist Frontier Missions Brazil to open the Pathfinder Clubs and organize this ministry in Papua New Guinea, which is one of the most remote places on the planet. There are many challenges that this mission requires: getting the money, facing distance, learning new languages, separation from the family, going to a difficult and unknown place, starting the project from scratch, among many others. In fact, the list of challenges is endless, but we have faith that none of them is greater than the God who called us. We will spend a few years living with little, in situations still unknown to us,

but we trust that the Lord has great plans for the PNG people. Of course, this will be an adventure like the ones we heard when we were children, we will face seas and forests, but differently from them, our treasure will last forever. Live this adventure with Jesus, also.



Charles and Lara Cabral
Youth Volunteers, Brazil





General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Adventist Youth Ministries

Love Your Neighbor.

BEING KIND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

1 PETER 3:15

PASS IT ON 





Developing an Authentic Devotional Life

I have always told my assistant youth leaders at church, the youth leaders in the seminars I have taught and now my seminary students: "If you have a great devotional life, ministry is much easier. You will never need to worry about being unprepared for an impromptu devotional thought or sermon—all you have to do is talk about what you experienced with Jesus that day or week in your devotional time with Him."

In addition to that young people can spot fake from a mile away. They can tell very easily if what you are sharing is a "prepared study" or if it's something that you are actually living out in a relevant way in your life. Based on my experience working in youth and young adult ministry for 27 years, (including 8 years as NAD public high school ministries coordinator) high school aged teens are not struggling so much with doctrine as they are trying to decide if they want to be a Christian or not. Teenagers are

in that phase where they are deciding if they will personally accept the religion, they have been taught all their lives. They are determining if they will take that knowledge and use it to become truly spiritual people, with their own personal relationships with Jesus. I believe the best way to lead youth and show them how to live life out of their devotional time is by modeling and teaching devotional life every opportunity you get, just like we are told in Deuteronomy 6:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the

doorframes of your houses and on your gates (Deut 6: 4-9 NIV).

My favorite way to teach on devotional life is through applying Psalm 23 to my personal life every day and challenging others, including teenagers, to do the same (The following is adapted from *Authentic*, pp 79-84).

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

At first hearing I suppose this is to many people a very poetic introduction with all its imagery of the good shepherd watching his sheep. It's very idyllic and many are happy with the comfort of the familiarity of it. But this phrase is far more than soothing—it is the very foundation of the Christian life. For David it was true—the Lord was his shepherd. There is overwhelming evidence of this throughout the Old Testament. David followed the Lord faithfully. He learned to follow His Lord as a young shepherd on the hillside tending his sheep writing and singing

hymns to Him. Spending his time writing songs and praises to God is evidence that God was on David's mind and heart constantly. But what about me?

Every day I must ask myself if I am allowing the Lord to be my Shepherd. It is a choice. We do not have to follow God. We are often like the sheep that intentionally or unintentionally strays. We all know the stories of the lost sheep. The sheep make a choice and we must as well. It is foundational in my relationship with Jesus to ask myself each morning if I am committed to making Jesus "my" Shepherd for the day. Every day the choice is new. As I pray about this, I think through the choices I have been making and I ask myself where my choices are taking me—to the shepherd or away from Him. My goal is to pray, "Dear Lord, be my shepherd today. Guide my actions and choices and help me to follow You and Your ways." "The Lord is my shepherd" is not a given—it's a choice!

I SHALL NOT WANT

This is the promise that comes with the choice. When David first chose to follow the Lord, he still remained a poor shepherd boy for many years. Then he became a fugitive hunted like an animal for even longer. As one intimately committed to God, he definitely did not have everything his heart could desire—but he never "wanted" for the basic necessities of life. Through it all David remained faithful to his Lord and eventually became king. Scripture promises that if we are faithful through

the difficulties of our own lives as David was in his, we will reign with Christ in heaven (Revelation 20:6) just as David reigned as Christ's anointed king on earth. "I shall not want" is a promise for now and eternity when Jesus is our choice.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul...

Part of choosing Jesus as your shepherd is to choose to spend time with Him listening for His voice and observing His ways in nature. Obviously, we hear His voice in scripture—that is why we memorize and dwell on the 23rd Psalm—but we can also personally hear the "still small voice" that Elijah heard so many years ago.

The best way to hear God's voice is to unplug the technology, disengage other people and commitments and escape to nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork (Psalm 19:1 NKJV)." Sabbath is time away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and commitments. We take a literal Sabbath every week to spend time with God, friends and family at church, but we also need to take personal Sabbath breaks with God every day and at other regularly scheduled times as well. The concept of Sabbath is what personal devotional time is all about and engaging devotional practices is a key part of making the most of this time together with God.

Every morning I take time in a quiet place with God. Sometimes out in nature and sometimes in my office where I have paintings and photographs of nature scenes. I also love going to the prayer chapel at my church where there is a painting of Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane. Using nature and reproductions of nature to remind us of God's love and care for us is critically important in reminding us of our creator and His plans for our lives and His desire to live with us forever.

I also enjoy spending a half day of prayer monthly in a local Japanese garden where I can listen to the rushing water, see the variety of beautiful plants, trees and fish in the Koi pond while I breathe in the refreshing fragrance of a well-watered garden in full bloom. It is truly nourishing to the soul to sit in this environment contemplating scripture, crying out to God and listening for His voice. These times of refreshing are the central part of a devotional life that helps us to continually dwell in His presence and be filled with His peace and they lead to a truly restored soul that is filled with His Spirit.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Jonah was sent to Nineveh to tell the people there about God because they didn't know their right hand from their left. When we don't know God, we don't know His will, and we don't have any clue which path to follow either. This Psalm builds on itself. When we choose God

and make Him number one in our lives by spending time with Him regularly, He not only provides for us physically, but He gives purpose to our lives as well. Paths of righteousness are the missions God sends us on because of the desire He gives us to reach out to others both physically and spiritually. Every day as I pray this part of the 23rd Psalm I ask God where He wants me to go and what He wants me to do. As a pastor I have many missions I'm engaged in at any one time and I ask God if I'm focusing on His mission rather than my mission and pray for guidance on what to do more of and what to turn away from. I ask for God's blessing on all my activities praying that my activity will be a part of His activity in the world. To be working in our own power instead of God's is the surest way to burn out and fail. Jesus wants us to be like the 70 disciples He sent out with His power to preach, heal and cast out demons. "Christ in you," is the hope of glory—for us and for the world around us (Colossians 1:27).

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

This is a promise that hard times will come our way just as surely as they came David's way. Not that God wills it but because He knows the nature of the Devil and his evil desire to destroy us—often by the hand of others who

are strangers to the voice of God. The Great Controversy is very real. So, the question is not if we will walk through the valley of the shadow of death, but when and how often. We need to learn to expect and even anticipate trials as they come. Not in a welcoming anticipation but in a preparatory anticipation that reminds us to always be connected to God and filled with His Spirit so that we can be victorious in the battle against evil. Just as surely as trials will come, they will also send us down one path or another in the Great Controversy. If we are unprepared to meet them trials can fill us with bitterness towards God and others. But when we are engaged in an active and committed relationship with Jesus, God can use the trials to help us grown in our dependence on Him and His word, which leads to greater peace and joy. Yes, more trouble can bring more joy! As James said,

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you

know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So, let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing (James 1:2-4 NLT).

It is a comfort to know that God is always with us in times of trouble protecting and defending us.

This brings us to the rod and the staff. God has two tools to use as He walks with us through the valley of

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the shadow of death. The rod is for the enemies. The rod symbolizes God's protective care that doesn't allow us to endure any more than we can handle (1 Corinthians 10:13). God uses this rod far more than any of us realize. It won't be until we get to heaven that we hear all the stories of the countless times God has protected us so well we didn't even know we were in trouble!

The staff, on the other hand, is for God to use on us. The staff has a hook on the end and is what God uses to pull the straying sheep back on the path. This takes shape in God's disciplining activity in our lives. Sometimes we have to endure hard lessons before we change our ways. But just as a loving parent hates to discipline their child yet they know that without discipline the child's sinful nature will take over their whole lives—so, God is willing to use tough love to teach us lessons just as He did when He had to kick Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden helping them learn about the consequences of sin.

As I pray through this portion of the Psalm, I keep all these things in mind and ask God to guide and protect me through the trials I am in the midst of and the ones I see coming. I also try and remember to thank Him for the ones he's seen me through remembering what a great and loving personal God He is—His name is surely to be praised!

*Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil.*

When you are worn out and tired, when you feel like your prayers aren't getting past the ceiling, when trials have you so beaten down that you wonder if you ever really did have a connection with God—you must remember that God hasn't forgotten about you. Enemies can be very distracting and disheartening but Jesus always loves you. This phrase of the Psalm is so amazing! It is a promise that eventually—one day—God will lift you up and prepare a banquet just for you right in the face of those who hate you and plot against you.

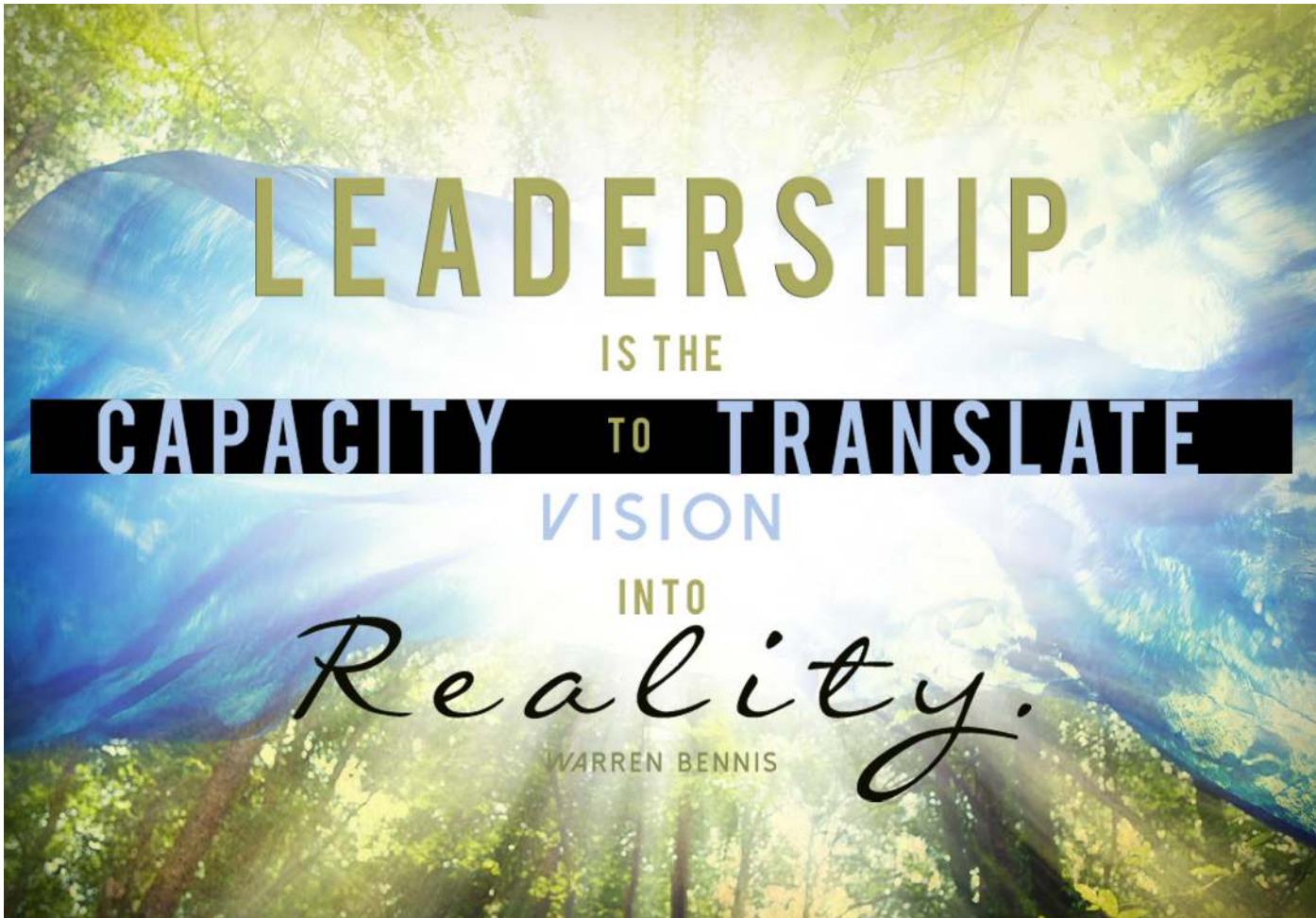
This is also an assurance that if you have enemies you are not alone. Jesus Himself had so many enemies that they eventually overcame Him and won the battle against Him—or so it seemed for a while. David was hunted down like a wild animal for years and he was mistreated and disrespected by his own wife and children at times—yet he was exalted to the position of king of Israel. Jesus was mocked, beaten and killed—yet He reigns as King of the universe even now. Trials and enemies may pursue and persecute us now, but we have the promise that those who choose Jesus as their shepherd will be anointed princes and princesses of His kingdom and will reign with Him forever and ever amen (Revelation 20:6)!

*My cup runneth over. Surely
goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life: and I
will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.*

Keeping this in mind on a daily basis will help us to be constantly aware of our true identity and help us to act like princes and princesses of God's kingdom in all situations. This mindset will help us to approach life with an attitude that will help us to see that our cups are indeed full and running over with blessings our entire lives here on earth. It will also continue to run over throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity, if we continue daily choosing to make the Lord our Shepherd and King.

If we are to be connected with Christ personally, we must stop merely using scripture to prove doctrine or read about other people's relationships with Jesus. We must start using scripture as a guide for nurturing our own intimate connection with our Lord. We have seen here how scripture calls out to us from the 23rd Psalm inviting us to dwell on who the Lord is, to contemplate His loving deeds in the lives of Bible heroes and in our lives as well.

The invitation is to choose and follow the Lord our God, and make choices in accordance with His will, as revealed in scripture throughout our days as David did. Some days will be good, and others will contain mistakes but just like David, we can always recommit and start again. The invitation is to bask in the knowledge and experience that God will provide and protect us and to remember to rest in nature to hear His voice and experience His leading. This scripture calls us to remember that we are children of the King of the universe and that He is calling for us to join Him



for an eternity of joyful communion, love and peace. This is what a devotional, scriptural relationship with Jesus can bring to our lives.

For me, Psalm 23 has been life-changing as I have prayed it thousands of times over that past 7-8 years and as I have taught it to teens and adults. It has nurtured and directed my life and has helped me to live prayerfully and has helped me to always “be prepared to

share the faith that is in me” with those whom I find around me. I hope and pray that this Psalm will be a greater blessing than ever before in your life as well—especially as you lead, challenge and nurture the youths within your sphere of influence as they are in the process of deciding what role Jesus will play in their personal lives for the rest of their lives.



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For more on the devotional life from Scott R Ward see, *Authentic: where true life-changing Christianity begins*, R&H 2012.



SOCIAL JUSTICE:

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly!

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| Adventist Youth Leader | **AYL** | 02 | 2019

Obviously, this is a hot topic today and one that many have been wrestling with. The following are my personal thoughts on "social justice" as I have observed it in action, particularly here in the United States. However, I believe the following insights are applicable anywhere around the world wherever social needs are found.

As a youth leader, I believe this is an urgent topic and one we must discuss with the younger generation. With the Bible in one hand and Spirit of Prophecy in the other we will not fail to give discerning and motivating leadership to our young world changers!

So here goes...

THE GOOD

It might come as a shock to some,

but Spirit of Prophecy supports the idea of social justice and even suggests in some sense that young people are the perfect social justice warriors. Ellen White writes "If the young men in our cities would unite their efforts to discountenance ungodliness and crime, their influence would greatly advance the cause of reform. It is the privilege and the duty of every youth, as an angel of mercy, to minister to the wants and the woes of mankind. There is not a class that can achieve greater results for God and humanity than the young" (Signs of the Times Nov 3, 1881). I love how she describes our young people as "angels of mercy" and points out that they can have the most powerful impact.

THE BAD (or not so good)

Social Justice warriors are often fighting crime, injustice, poverty,

inequality etc. but in the name of their favorite political party or secular organization. Christians on the other hand are called to minister in the name of Jesus and build His kingdom! One of the best examples of this is the Apostle Peter who ministered to the crippled man in Jerusalem. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up..." (Acts 3:6-7NIV). It is imperative that all our "social justice" activities be boldly done in the name of Jesus and be accompanied with the sharing of the gospel. Why? Ellen White writes, "For earth's sin and misery the gospel is the only antidote. To make known to all mankind the message of the grace of God is the first work of those who know its healing power..." (Ministry to the Cities p. 59).

THE UGLY

"Social Justice" leaves the teaching of Jesus and becomes ugly WHEN it values one social group by devaluing, demonizing or marginalizing another. Both the great commission and the great commandment call us to value all humanity regardless of creed, religion, politics, authority, age, race, gender, economics etc. In fact, The Three Angel's message which was given to God's remnant church at the end of time calls us to share the gospel without prejudice to "every nation, kindred, tongue and people" (Revelation 14:6). Perhaps what we need more today than "social justice warriors" are Seventh-day Adventist Activists!

SUMMARY

To summarize, our young people are called by God to be His "angels of mercy" ministering to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of ALL humanity intentionally and consistently in the name of Christ. God is calling them to be more than just "social justice warriors" they are being called to be gospel sharing Seventh-day Adventist Activists!

We encourage young people around the world to get involved in Global Youth day and Total Youth Involvement: 100K (100,000 youth lead evangelistic sites around the world). These initiatives will give them the opportunity to "be the sermon" and "share the sermon."

To learn more about our "Adventist Activist" initiatives and get resources go to youth.adventist.org and follow us at [@gcyouthministries](https://twitter.com/gcyouthministries). You might also sign up on our website for our monthly newsletter and quarterly magazine.



Pastor Gary Blanchard
World Youth Director
General Conference of the
Seventh-day Adventists

***To Read more from Ellen White on Social Justice check out *Testimonies for the Church* Vol 9, p 11-12 (1909), *The Ministry of Healing* p 183, 187 (1905) and *Patriarchs and Prophets* p 534.





Spring Break Mission Trip to Peru Makes an Impact

A group of fourteen undergraduate and graduate students participated in a Spring Break mission trip to Pucallpa, Peru. Students were hosted at the AMOR Projects facility. During the week-long trip, the group joined forces with student missionaries stationed at AMOR to execute multiple projects. Their efforts resulted in a significant blessing for the community of Pucallpa, AMOR Projects as well as the missionaries.

Approximately 45 people received medical care during the two days of clinics held. Home prayer visits were conducted for approximately 30 families. Two minor construction projects were completed at the AMOR facility. Over 80 children were impacted by the VBS program held in the local church. Over 75 families received a grocery bag donation

containing food items as well as basic household goods and books. A five-night evangelistic meeting was conducted, resulting in 6 individuals committing their lives to God through baptism.



Nashonie Chang,
MDiv student
Andrews University Theological
Seminary



Remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'.

(Acts 20:35, NIV)

Their first **WORK** is to be so
KIND to the **YOUTH**, so
THOUGHTFUL of their interests,
that they will feel at **HOME** in
their presence.

The Review and Herald, April 28, 1903.



General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Adventist Youth Ministries


PASS
IT ON



On Their Way to Mission: God Springs Into Action

22

| Adventist Youth Leader | AYL | 02 | 2019

Life-Changing,' 'Humbling,' 'Hunger-Inducing.' were the repeated sentiments of some of the participants of the Care for Cuba Study Tour, when asked to sum up their experience in one or two words.

On March 15th, 27 Master of Divinity (MDiv) students and their sponsors traveled to Santiago, Cuba for the 7th annual Care for Cuba Evangelistic Study Tour. Care for Cuba, since its inception in 2013, has equipped hundreds of pastors and churches in Cuba with ministry resources like bicycles, computers, tablets and brought 150 MDiv students for ten-day evangelistic campaigns and baptized more than 1800 new believers into the Kingdom.

However, it was a journey that its leaders, organizers and participants worked hard to bring to fruition. Three huge setbacks threatened to stop the mission in its tracks. First, as if to pay homage to challenges faced in previous years, the team's flight was canceled just 36 hours before their scheduled departure due to the grounding of Boeing 737 Max planes. After fervent prayers and multiple calls, all 31 tickets were rebooked. While that provided enough excitement, it was not the end. The arena frequently used

on the final weekend for a mass gathering, was cancelled before their arrival. But heaven had different plans and the arena was granted days before the actual event. The 3rd attempt by the enemy to halt this mission was that just a week before departure, there was word that "group trips" may find difficulty traveling to Cuba. Thankfully, a clerical error showing the group's arrival 10 days earlier cleared their entrance. Definitely not a clerical error but a providential act! Dr. Fernando Ortiz, program director and Care for Cuba Study Tour leader, points: "On every trip we face hurdles. But time after time we also see God in action, going before us as 'parting the seas'!"

The ten days spent in Santiago de Cuba saw the MDiv students working shoulder to shoulder with Bible workers, pastors and lay people. They went into churches, communities, homes and used Creative Evangelism to witness to the Cuban community. Students creatively ministered using street soccer, free haircuts and haircut training, and the distribution of reading and sun glasses. One lady shared with MDiv student, Joshua Ward, of her pleas to God to be able to read the Bible. Her joy was evident as she pointed to her new reading glasses that would now allow her

to do so. Residents of Cuba were also ministered to through the use of photography where they were given the chance to be photographed by professional photographer, Eric Perry, and get free prints of their photos when they came to evangelistic meetings. Most memorable and heart-warming of all, would be 'Pepe' the Puppet which proved to be a sensational hit with the children! Chants of his name would erupt as the children eagerly awaited the stories of Jesus that he would share with them that evening. This year's group of students used every tool in their arsenal to reach the hearts of the Cuban people.

Amidst the many stories told about their time in Cuba, the students spoke about one of the churches, Fomento, that had a profound effect on them. At this church, there was a special group of people called 'The Prayer Warriors.' Jonathan Picon recounted that this group didn't just pray in the way we think of prayer in our church, but that they prayed in surprising ways. They would pray in a back room before worship started until well after the appeal had been made and the final prayer had been completed. Most impactful was the practice of three ladies who took on the task of walking around the church building during the sermon in prayer and song. They prayed fervent, militant prayers. Jonathan shared that "they were claiming that place as the Lord's the place, there was a spiritual barrier being claimed." This experience was one that he will carry for the rest of his life.

While reflecting on this trip, Dr. Ortiz shared that the 'Care for Cuba' study tour's goals were to train and inspire seminary students into evangelism and total church involvement, to equip the local church with much needed ministry resources and to invite the local community to follow Jesus by sharing the everlasting gospel.

He told of the many gifts that God blessed this group with during their time there. However, they all paled in comparison to the most important gift of all. It wasn't health and safe passage to a communist country or the five churches they were able to minister to. It wasn't the

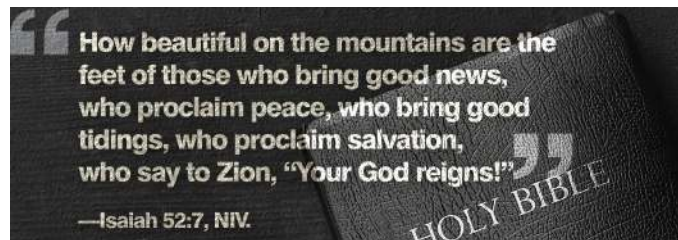
resolution of every obstacle that threatened its success and it wasn't quite the distribution of thirty (30) bikes, twenty-five (25) computers, twenty-five (25) tablets and phones distributed that were pre-loaded with valuable tools for ministry. But rather, it was God's hand evident in the 341 souls won for Him through baptism. Only eternity will tell the scope and impact of their efforts. Speaking to their observed impact, Conference President, Jenaro Jiminez, said "you need to know that when you get to heaven you all will have little Cuban stars on your crown," and to this, the only thing that can be said is, "To God Be the Glory."

To learn more about the Care for Cuba Study Tour, email mdivstudytour@andrews.edu or visit www.careforcuba.org.

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary was founded in 1936 and is located in Berrien Springs, Michigan. The Seminary holds full accreditation from the Adventist Accrediting Association, the Association of Theological Schools and the Higher Learning Commission. It offers five master programs, six doctoral programs and four dual degree programs as well as postdoctoral studies. It is home to around 50 faculty members and more than 1000 students worldwide.



By: Lianne Zilke
Administrative Assistant,
Master of Divinity Program
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Inclusive Pathfinder Club “God’s Gifts”

It is a real privilege and a wonderful opportunity from the Lord, to share this beautiful experience! The inntegration of children, youth and adults with disabilities to our AY activities. But over the years and the opportunities this has ceased to be an integrative experience to become an inclusive experience.

It has been 9 consecutive years in which children, youth and adults with intellectual disabilities and other associated conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, visual impairment, among others, intentionally and formally, have been able to experience next to regular youth (like any child and young person their age), growth of Jesus in their heart, developed skills, abilities and talents that all God's children have regardless of their status and the privilege to testify that God will soon receive them in the clouds of heaven.

Various strategies have been implemented to achieve these objectives and surely many of our leaders (directors, counselors and others) in their clubs, at some point, have also considered some if they aren't currently considering them already.

What we hope is to motivate you to intentionally, in a planned and prepared way, take the opportunity to include children, youth and adults with disabilities in our clubs. The idea is not to have different clubs for them, but rather teamwork, collaborative work (children and regular youth working with children and youth with disabilities) so that everyone can have the same opportunities for spiritual, personal, social and emotional growth.

As of today, here in the territory of our East Venezuelan Union, we have three clubs in different cities of our country and each one of them are working with the same purpose “Save from sin and Guide in Service”

And once again we confirm that if we can do great things where we are, that it is possible to fulfill the mission that the Lord Jesus has left us in the midst of a world of pain and suffering, we can show the glory of the Lord.

“The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness” (*Christ's Object Lessons*, 386).



Pastor Jesús Chacón

Youth Director, East Venezuela Conference



“The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness.”

Christ's Object Lessons, 386.

Dare to Dream

"Don't let anyone despise your youth, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12, CSB).

Whoever has stopped dreaming has started to die. No matter how old or young you are, never stop dreaming. Les Brown, motivational speaker and author, puts it this way, "You are never too old to set another goal or dream a new dream." Dreams keep you energized, hopeful, and give you a reason to move forward and fight.

Martin Luther is quoted as saying, "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree." We all have dreams. It may be for a better relationship with God, a better relationship with a family member, getting a better job, getting a better education, or maybe increasing our income. Walt Disney once said, "First, think. Second, believe. Third, dream. And finally, dare." The dreamers that have dared are the ones that have made a significant change in the world.

Ellen White said, "Many who are qualified to do excellent work accomplish little because they attempt little. Thousands pass through life as if they had no great object for which to live, no high standard to reach. One reason for this is the low estimate which they place upon themselves" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 498).

Why is it that so many of us never fulfill our dreams? What are your dreams? How can you achieve your dreams? I would like to share three steps to making your dreams become a reality.

STEP 1: MAKE SURE YOUR DREAM COMES FROM GOD

A dreamer needs to learn that prayer is the main key to discovering their dream. The Bible says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7, NIV). If you have a dream, ask God if that is the dream He has for you. Your dream must sync with God's dream for you. If you miss this, you might still acquire what you call your dream, however, you will never have the satisfaction and the peace that comes only when you live under God's dream for your life. So, make sure your dream comes from God.

STEP 2: BEGIN NOW

Time waits for no man and each minute counts. Do something every day that brings you closer to your dream. Be intentional. Do not give up on your dream just because it will take too much time to accomplish it. The time will pass anyway, and you will regret it. Begin now!

STEP 3: BE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE

I concur with the retired general Colin Powell, who said, "A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination, and hard work." Most people with a dream give up before they even start, because of the fear of failure. Remember that you obstruct your dreams when you allow your fear to grow bigger than your faith. The best example of someone who was willing to pay the price for His dream was Christ. Jesus, in His daily living, relied on God's guidance. He did not waste time and was willing to pay the price to save us.

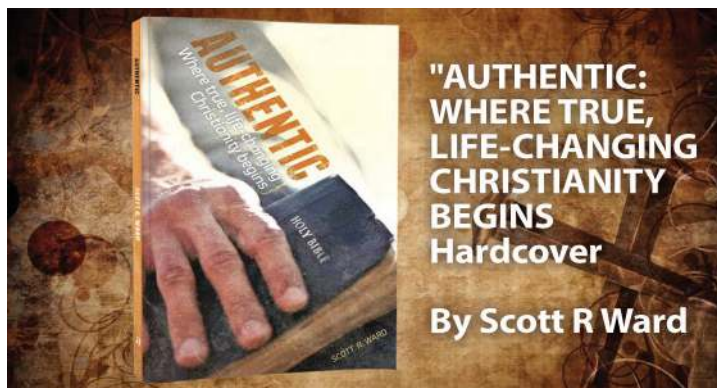
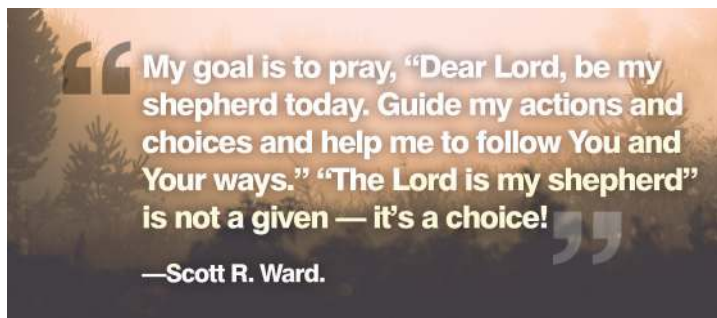
Sometimes life is about risking it all for a dream no one can see but you. Jesus did!

Dreams give people an incentive to live. Have you stopped dreaming? Can you dare to dream? Remember, make sure your dream comes from God; begin now and be willing to pay the price. I hope that your main dream will be to be with God for eternity.



Andres J. Peralta, D.Min.
Associate Youth Director
General Conference of the
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From *Change Our World*, by Andres J. Peralta, 2018
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The General Conference Youth Ministries Department welcomes Kenia to the team. She will serve as the senior editor with primary support for Pathfinder Ministry. We pray that God will use her in a mighty way to impact youth around the world for His glory in her new assignment.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (Deut 6: 4-9 NIV).



GOD'S PROMISE

ALWAYS WITH YOU



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