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180° Symposium 2024 Focus Group—Academics

Rogelio Paquini

Andrews University, rpaquini@andrews.edu

Scott R. Ward

Andrews University, sward@andrews.edu

Kristina Freed

Andrews University, tyrrell@andrews.edu

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180° SYMPOSIUM 2024

FOCUS GROUP—ACADEMICIANS

The Next BIG Thing

What's Coming Next In Youth Ministry

PARTICIPANTS: Rogelio Paquini (Andrews University seminary professor), chair; Scott Ward (Andrews University seminary professor); and Kristina Freed (Andrews University PhD student).

KEY POINTS FOR “UNIQUELY SDA YOUTH MINISTRY”

1. Use a relational approach to minister to youth. Use divine attachment as a relational context for discipleship transformation. The priority is to teach a relationship with God instead of a set of doctrines.
2. Help young people understand that it is okay to express your faith outside of Sabbath church space and time.
3. Harness the power of storytelling, which is the language of this generation. This provides a better chance to communicate biblical truths and to strengthen Adventist identity.
4. Address the need to be aware of GenZ thinking, needs, and tendencies. Be able to translate the Gospel in terms they can understand.
5. Learn from each other’s viewpoint to understand different perspectives, which can help build a Christian community.
6. Get away from the exclusivity of the Adventist church by embracing the possibility of other groups being part of the remnant.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR “UNIQUELY SDA YOUTH MINISTRY”

Regarding the Remnant

- For professors—Discuss with students the possibility of understanding the doctrine of the remnant as being people beyond the Adventist church.

- For evangelists—Present a clearer description of the remnant based on the love of God instead of the behavior of people.

Regarding Storytelling

- Administrators—Quality matters more than quantity. Emphasis should not come from the numbers on reports, but on the stories those numbers represent. Behind each number are lay workers, pastors, and people whose lives were changed by Jesus. Telling “what the Lord has done for you” is a divine commandment.
- Pastors—Normalize testimonies. Members who share their stories about God benefit by expressing their walk with God. At the same time those who listen to the stories can relate and be empowered to experience God in their own lives and to share their stories as well.
- Seminary—Change the culture of instruction to include storytelling. Create a class “Storytelling and Preaching.” For professors: Use storytelling in teaching.

Regarding GenZ issues:

- Administrators—Create avenues for younger leaders to be part of all levels of church administration. Include their voices, skills and experiences to promote a sense of belonging for the younger generations and increase the diversity of ideas that will benefit the church in general.
- Evangelists and pastors—Teach about the value of people regardless of their political views, cultural

backgrounds, and musical tastes. Everyone is worth the blood of Jesus. All individuals bear the image of God. Neglecting that inclusivity hinders the impact of the Gospel and the message of salvation loses its power.

- Local church level—Generational differences are not necessarily evil. Create awareness that our differences do not hinder the Gospel, they enhance the ministry of the Holy Spirit by including everyone’s gifts, abilities, and life experiences.

Regarding the Shema:

- Professors—Differentiate and teach both the cognitive and the affective aspects of religious experience. They are not mutually exclusive, however, there needs to be a balance between both. Include journal writing instruction and practice in devotional life as part of class assignments.
- Pastors—Include a more intentional mentoring model. Implement better mentoring to students and youth. Learn to contextualize the information according to the people and situation.
- All—Learn how to live a devotional life according to the *Shema* (outside of church settings). Create a balance between the cognitive experience of religion and the practical element of faith. Live your beliefs.

KEY POINTS FOR “IMMIGRANT MINISTRY AND CULTURAL ISSUES”

1. As long as there are immigrants there will be ethnic churches.
2. Second-generation people tend to navigate well across cultures.
3. Develop leaders who can navigate across generations.
4. Develop awareness on trends and the benefits they can provide for evangelism.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR “IMMIGRANT MINISTRY AND CULTURAL ISSUES”

- Administrators—Continue the support for ethnic groups, understanding that the largest growth of the church in NAD is from these groups. However, promote diversity in employment, participation, and representation of all groups in leadership, programs, and committees.

- Professors—Research cultural differences, practices, and worship styles to equip students for a more efficient multicultural ministry practice. Produce models to train students to minister in a relevant cultural context. Make the models available to the Adventist Learning Community (ALC) for online training.
- Pastors—Learn to become students of the cultural context of the local church. Develop the need to be culturally engaged with the community. Practice ethnography (learn the history of traditions, culture, and practices), and apply these to the local church ministry.

KEY POINTS FOR “VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND RETENTION”

1. Jesus provided a divine model of providing a little bit of training and then quickly sending the disciples with incredible power.
2. Follow the model of Jesus—a little bit of instruction with lots of power.
3. Recruit volunteers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR “VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND RETENTION”

- Professors—Research updated methods and techniques for recruiting and training in order to equip pastors and provide resources for volunteers.
- Pastors—Teach how to develop a project including communication of expectations, communication of structure, communication of goals, and development of community. Be mindful that volunteers need training and mentoring when given responsibilities or positions. Throwing new volunteers into the deep end has not helped anyone enjoy service.