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180° Symposium 2024 Focus Group—Administrators

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180° SYMPOSIUM 2024

FOCUS GROUP—ADMINISTRATORS

The Next BIG Thing

What's Coming Next In Youth Ministry

PARTICIPANTS: Tracy Wood (NAD Youth and Young Adult Ministries Director), chair; Lyle Notice (Alberta Conference youth director); Ron Whitehead (Lake Union youth director and CYE director); and Steve Yeagley (Andrews University administration—diversity, inclusion, and equity).

ADMINISTRATORS FOCUS GROUP PROCESS & EXPERIENCE

DURING THE 180 Symposium, as the paper presentations ended, we divided into three groups around tables. The Administrators table included four individuals: a Conference Youth & Young Adult Ministries Director, a Union Youth & Young Adult Ministries Director, a NAD Youth & Young Adult Ministries Director, and an Adventist University Assistant Vice-President. In addition, we had 12 seminary students join us around our table for part of the day.

We decided that we would discuss the “Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Retention” topic first. As we opened up discussion on this topic we invited responses from the students. Because many of them had already spent time in the field pastoring or serving in other capacities, they had experiences and stories to share. Some shared their challenges in recruiting volunteers. Others spoke of what it was like for them during the pandemic shutdown and how it has been challenging now, as we are coming out of the pandemic, to get commitments for volunteering. The discussion was interactive between the students and the administrators as we all processed together the topic of the need for volunteers at all levels of church leadership and involvement. For over an hour, it was healthy, nonstop dialogue as together we learned from each other’s experiences and perspectives.

As the students left for Seminary Chapel, the four of us administrators spent the next 30 minutes reflecting on what had just happened—older generation leaders inviting

next-generation pastors and leaders to share their experiences. As we listened we were impressed, inspired, and impacted by their articulation and clarity on the challenge of volunteerism. We were mentored, and at the same time, we want to believe that we mentored the seminary students as well.

Next, our 180° Symposium host brought all three groups back together. Collectively we processed together what it was like to have the seminary students with us at each of the breakout discussion tables. Reports were given by each group of the insightful perspectives shared around each table. We all concluded that the addition of having seminary students join in the discussions was rich and beneficial for us all.

Following lunch our Administrator discussion group processed through most of the other papers and presentations. We looked at each paper presented, reflected on the presentation the previous day, and reviewed the Recommendations section at the end of the paper. We looked specifically for recommendations that were particularly addressed to administrators. Some papers were clear and identified recommendations for each group. Other papers were more general and without specific recommendations. As we discussed each recommendation, there were some that we rewrote to help it be more relevant for administrators.

We ran out of time in the afternoon and still had three papers that we had not reviewed. The group facilitator took recommendations from the final three papers that were

specific to administrators and prepared the administrator's report for the next day. As administrators, we all felt great about the experience of the day and the privilege of being part of the processing of fresh ideas and inspiration. The highlight for us was the seminary students and their involvement and input.

KEY POINTS FOR "UNIQUELY SDA YOUTH MINISTRY"

1. Ricardo Bain's Paper—A Remnant Out of the Remnant: A Vision for the "End Time" SDA Youth Ministries
 - a. Key Point #1—We must be more conscious about living our faith, not only stating our faith.
 - b. Key Point #2—Need to express our openness to working with all people everywhere to share that we are aware of the open remnant that embraces the whosever's of the world.
 - c. Key Point #3—It is critical that we focus on communicating transformation in our purpose, production, proclamation, and practice of youth ministry today. NAD leaders, administrators, practitioners, and professors across NAD need to constantly review core values in our organizations, class content in universities, along with club, youth, and young adult ministry.
2. Rogelio Paquini—The Power of the Story
 - a. Key Point #1—Administrators need to lean into stories and especially young adult stories.
 - b. Key Point #2—Institutions do not tell their stories very well, nor our doctrines in story form. Administrators need more of this.
 - c. Key Point #3—NAD's "Hope and Wholeness," *Journey Magazine* stories.
 - d. Key Point #4—There is an art in storytelling and in worship.
 - e. Key Point #5—Organizationally and administratively, try to put things into a two-minute story format.

3. Steve Yeagley—the Existential Turn: An Adventist Response
 - a. Key Point #1—Provide trauma training for administrators as one pathway toward discipleship. We are getting people trained from the Andrews University's International Center for Trauma Education & Care run by the Social Work department under the direction of Ingrid Slickers.
 - b. Key Point #2—Share Steve Yeagley's paper with administrators, including NAD Youth Directors & Camp Directors.
 - c. Key Point #3—Create dream spaces by administrators for young adults ("We Are Listening" sessions).
 - d. Key Point #4—Take seriously the issue of over-programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR "UNIQUELY SDA YOUTH MINISTRY"

1. Accept the challenge that we, as administrators, restudy and reapply SDA fundamental beliefs #12 "The Church" and #13 "The Remnant and Its Mission" (as well as the rest of the fundamental beliefs) in the context of current youth and young adult ministries for the purpose of helping our youth and young adults better understand them.
2. Refocus on storytelling as ministry and discipleship tools, and as administrators, help find storytellers and resource them to tell stories of faith, hope, and wholeness.
3. Learn about and provide Trauma-informed Training for Discipleship to administrators, camp and youth ministries directors (provided by Andrews University's International Center for Trauma Education & Care run by the Social Work department, Ingrid Slickers).
4. Motivate more people to do research in sociology, psychology, and social work to use every potential area to reach second-generation immigrants.
5. Provide intentional in-person gathering opportunities that foster consistent community taking seriously the issue of over-programming.

6. Provide opportunities for peer mentoring among administrators and youth directors through the concepts of the *Shema*—“when you walk by the way.”
7. Conference Youth Directors and pastors should receive training (curriculum forthcoming) in Divine Attachment for Discipleship Transformation for Youth. In addition, youth leaders at all levels should be trained to explore the students’ God representations before progressing through a series of Fundamental Beliefs Bible studies.

KEY POINTS FOR “IMMIGRANT MINISTRY AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES”

In the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, we are known as a multicultural church. Other than our indigenous people groups, we are all immigrants to the geographic territory of the NAD (Bermuda, Canada, United States, Guam, and the Micronesia Islands). We have multilingual challenges, but even more so, we have multicultural challenges throughout our churches and leadership levels. For youth and young adults, it is critically important that, as administrators, we continually do all we can to provide recognition, support, and empowerment in areas of ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR “IMMIGRANT MINISTRY AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES”

1. Motivate more people to do research in sociology, psychology, and social work to use every potential area to reach second-generation immigrants.
2. Develop a Department of Diversity at conferences throughout the NAD. This would include: providing training on cultural sensitivity, intergroup relationships, and cultural intelligence strategies—all for the purpose of developing and fostering an environment of intercultural community. This may best happen in multicultural small-group settings.
3. Conferences leverage the Hallyu effect by recruiting Korean, Asian, and immigrant church planters to start multiethnic church groups.
4. NAD Youth & YA Ministries reestablish the “Embracing Our Diversity” initiative that was

developed in 2021, which included ethnic-diversity leadership modeling and ethnic youth discipleship networking

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

1. Steve Case—The Lord Will Provide; What Will You Do?
 - a. Key Point #1—When I left seminary I had a reality check with wanting to have a VBS (example). If you say you are the leader but you have no followers—well, you’re not a leader when nobody is following. What happens if you don’t have volunteers in your church organization? The volunteer topic coming out of COVID—the local pastors are dying at the local church. Combine age groups. Ask people to volunteer for only one quarter rather than for a full year.
 - b. Key Point #2—The difference between club ministry and other ministries is there is a celebration moment on Pathfinder Sabbath. In children’s and youth ministries at a local church there is no moment or celebration sabbath.
 - c. Key Point #3—Club ministry has an opportunity for summer vacation but other ministries do not. After a year and a half of coming back, volunteers want to get involved. As administrators, give a space for a month or two. We need administrators to advocate for youth directors to not burn out.
 - d. Key Point #4—Does every conference have a youth advisory? Having a youth advisory can help the youth director be more successful. Host youth and young adult pastor days. Probably about a handful of youth directors do this.
 - e. Key Point #5—A lot of churches have a family and a caregiving model of ministry. How do we help parents with volunteering? Local church leaders need help with how to work with kids and parents. Maybe we need to re-vision the family model.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR “VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND RETENTION”

1. Continue youth ministry training by the NAD Youth & Young Adult Ministries department. All union and conference youth directors join in trainings and finding ways to keep communicating and making contact with local church volunteer youth and young adult leaders.
2. Continue to involve all ethnic and immigrant ministries at all levels throughout the NAD as part of a comprehensive marketing plan for “Do It Together” Sabbath School training provided for the local church children, youth, and adult Sabbath School leaders three times per year.
3. Provide volunteers with youth ministry job descriptions, youth leadership best practices, and additional resources and support