

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the paper presentations, on the afternoon of the second day, the 180 symposium transitioned into the formation of three focus groups: a) Administrators, b) Practitioners, and c) Public Campus Ministry leaders. These focus groups met for several hours, brainstorming and discussing ideas from their respective viewpoints, with the purpose of formulating a list of recommendations on youth evangelism, having in mind particularly the local context, as well as leaders at the various levels of our church. Below is a summary of those recommendations.

### Administrators Focus Group

The Administrators focus group provided a summary of their discussions in two sections: First, a section with the title “Top things learned”: in this section each administrator shared his/her top takeaway from the papers and why. This discussion served as preparation for the second section: “Things that administrators can do”; here, administrators enumerated several practical recommendations in order to improve in the area of youth evangelism.

#### *Top Things Learned*

- The importance of *PCM (Public Campus Ministry) in connection to the local church*
    - PCM is a mission field opportunity of the local church; as students go to college they will end up at a different church and they need to connect.
    - When PCM is connected to the local church this results in a high and positive impact on the young adults and the church in general. Usually a synergy develops for purpose in ministry and evangelism.
    - We need healthy local congregations close to public campuses where students feel welcomed and ministered to.
    - We need to consider a church planting strategy around public campuses. In this regard, we need to seek pastors that can minister effectively in these churches.
    - We need to stop looking at our young adults as a project and instead partner with them.
  - The significance of *intergenerational ministry*. What we want in a local church is to see young people active and involved, doing ministry together with adults.
  - The potential of *church planning with young adults in mind*. As local church as well as conferences and unions make plans, young adults should be at the heart of their agendas.
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- The value of *entrepreneurial evangelism*. This refers to using business opportunities for ministry, mission and evangelism. This is key for connecting with the unchurched and for developing relationships. We need to create mentors that can work with young people through this approach—we need to support them and walk beside them.

#### *Things That Administrators Can Do*

- Have a weekly “in touch with” other Conference/Union officers to keep them up to speed, telling them what is happening in young adult ministry this week and next week.
- Many local congregations want young adults to come to their churches, but don’t know where to start. Perhaps a local youth/young adult day on campuses could be organized, where churches come and meet with students, recruiting them to come to their churches.
- Similarly, plan a Sabbath at Adventist universities where we can meet young adult members from local churches in the conference – all universities doing it on the same Sabbath.
- Conduct “exit interviews” at universities, asking young adults if we can stay connected with them for the next few years, to help them identify and get involved with healthy local churches.
- Create an app and other venues of social media for churches to market themselves so that young adults can connect with them.
- If we believe that the young people are the evangelists, then our responsibility is to resource and prepare them for winning their peers.
- Each Conference should consider hiring a young adult and place him/her in a church near a campus to strategize and to develop an environment that is friendly to public campus students.
- Have Conferences commit a minimum of \$500 dollars as “seed money” towards planting a youth-friendly church near/at a university.
- Every conference should consider hiring a Public Campus Evangelism Intern for a minimum of one year.
- Urge Unions and Conferences to implement the “one year in mission” initiative, applied specifically to Public Campus Evangelism.
- Conferences and Unions are encouraged to consider the Lake Union Conference (LUC) Youth Evangelism Model, in which church funds are matched with union funding to resource youth for evangelism.

#### **Practitioners Focus Group**

This focus group chose to categorize their recommendations as follows: a) For all (individuals, pastors, congregations, conferences, unions, divisions, general conference, educational institutions), b) For individuals, c) For congregations and church leaders, d) For Conferences, e) For Unions, f) For Divisions, and g) For the General Conference. Here are the main recommendations:

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*Recommendations For All*

- Just do something! It is better to do something than perpetually delay action.
- Expect a combination of the divine with the human. Prayer and dependence on God is a must.
- Start small.
- Don't limit your dreaming and vision by money.
- Think "intergenerational".
- Think and plan from the perspective of the local church and community.
- Include discipleship as part of the evangelistic cycle (not just events and baptisms).
- Brand/package your project with excellence
- What you market has to be valuable, accessible and adaptable.
- Foster fun and enjoyment as positive environments for sharing the Gospel in the congregation and the community.
- Prioritize relationship richness by improving communication skills online as well as offline, especially in one-to-one settings and small group gatherings.
- Celebrate natural evangelism, yet still challenge intentional evangelism.
- Invest in technology, graphic design, social media, apps, etc.

*Recommendations For Individuals*

- Exemplify and increase "weak ties" (refer to the chapter in this book) in multiple places in the community, such as participation in public and private gathering places, etc.
- Prioritize relationship richness by improving communication skills online as well as offline, especially in one-to-one settings and small group gatherings.
- Use your profession to mentor young adults with similar vocational interests.

*Recommendations For Congregations and Church Leaders*

- Make Pathfinders more evangelistic. Invite children from the community.
  - Create an intentional church culture by purposely crafting stories to communicate the evangelistic emphasis of the congregation.
  - Emphasize, exemplify, and train for "friendship evangelism" both as an event AND as a process.
  - Provide systematic training on lifestyle evangelism that is culturally relevant.
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- Make community service and friendship evangelism, rather than public evangelism, the entry point for evangelism.
- Plan, evaluate, and adjust “sequence evangelism” (yearly cycle) for a flow of evangelistic activities.
- Repurpose the church facility to provide space and time for community usage, by making the church facility accessible daily through coordinated scheduling.
- Identify and match the community rhythms and cycles (holidays, school years, events, traditions, etc.) in a typical year.
- Coordinate with other Adventist groups and gatherings in your area.
- Envision and implement “Church without walls”—seeing and being the church in your home, neighborhood, and work.
- Encourage members to share their evangelistic experiences through personal testimonies.
- Teach church members how to create and share their personal narrative that can inspire others.
- Instead of simply creating events, create experiences that connect people.
- View all young people in the community (not just those that attend your church) as “our youth”.
- Invite individuals to commit to 8-10 hours/week of door-to-door evangelism.
- Identify older people who are “youth friendly” and take young people where they are for food and to hang out rather than always meeting at a church facility.
- Collect, process, and disseminate the evangelistic ideas and practices of young people.

#### *Recommendations For Conferences*

- Take a long-term view to measure evangelism, beyond a single event.
  - Emphasize, exemplify, and train for “friendship evangelism” as both an event AND a process.
  - Make community service and friendship evangelism, rather than public evangelism, the entry point for evangelism.
  - At summer camps provide intentional mentoring with a staff pastor for the staff who then mentor the campers.
  - Reverse the process of “Believe, Behave, Belong” so congregations practice “Belong, Behave, Believe”.
  - Conduct research of local contexts to analyze demographics, practices, and trends.
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- Teach church members how to create and share their personal narrative that can inspire others.
- Instead of simply creating events, create experiences that connect people.
- Provide systematic training on lifestyle evangelism that is culturally relevant
- Collect, process, and disseminate the evangelistic ideas and practices of young people.

#### *Recommendations For Unions*

- (See Conferences recommendations)
- Have administration empower youth ministry professionals with autonomy, authority, and accountability to implement youth evangelism.

#### *Recommendations For Divisions*

- (See Conferences and Unions recommendations)

#### *Recommendations For the General Conference*

- (See Conferences, Unions and Divisions recommendations)
- Continue Global Youth Day.

#### *Recommendations For Educational Institutions*

- (see Conferences recommendations)

### **Public Campus Ministry (PCM) Focus Group**

While generally speaking in the last few years the focus of youth ministry across the North American Division has been retention—and rightly so—Public Campus Ministry (PCM) has championed youth evangelism perhaps more than any other ministry involving Adventist young adults. At this particular symposium, we noticed that when the presentations moved into talking about PCM, we began talking more about reaching non-Adventist young adults, as well as engaging our own young adults in reaching non-Adventist friends. With its motto “Reach the campus, change the world!”, PCM should be seriously considered as a leading force in Adventist youth evangelism. Moreover, PCM is a place where experimentation in youth evangelism takes place on an ongoing basis. For instance, the proliferation of CRAVE events<sup>1</sup> throughout many public campuses in recent years is a good example. As the church considers PCM, particularly in relation to youth evangelism, here are a few questions to ponder:

- What place does PCM occupy in our administrative agendas? Do we talk and dream about it often?
  - How can we pay as much attention to PCM as we do to our own educational system? (About 80% of our own students attend public universities)
  - What sort of collaboration between Adventist campuses and PCM can be explored?
  - How much funding and resources are we dedicating to PCM? How can we improve in this area?
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*General Recommendations*

In light of the huge evangelistic opportunity with PCM as perhaps our greatest Young Adult evangelistic opportunity we recommend the following:

- Church leaders and pastors to physically visit PCM practitioners to see the growth and to learn about the success stories of PCM.
- Commission a research project to evaluate the present realities of PCM.
- Creating a new full time Director with PCM experience to oversee the growing PCM program at NAD level.
- Think of creative and effective ways to promote PCM at the NAD year end meetings.
- To explore how Adventist campuses can collaborate with PCM in their area to encourage and support PCM students and ministry.

*Recommendations on PCM Evangelism*

- Foster cultural change at local churches that engage PCM students - (consider core value paradigms such as Growing Young, COR, etc.)
- Develop a church planting movement focused on intergenerational churches that intentionally work with PCM.
- Promote PCM evangelistic resources like CRAVE for student ministries that want to reach out.
- Facilitate PCM training that encourages students to live missional lives on campus.
- Produce PCM resources for students not able to connect with local churches such as online materials, videos, etc.
- Form a team of student volunteers to help create a PCM brand and resources for online, digital resources.
- Provide financial support at local Conferences and Union levels to help further the PCM mission.
- Support PCM Spring Break mission trips that encourage students to help reach out with established ACF campus ministries within the NAD.
- Find ways to support SDA grad students (emotionally, spiritually and financially) since they may wind up teaching in an SDA university or represent the church on a non-Adventist campus.
- Develop professional training tailored for PCM (MA, DMin)

**Endnotes**

1 CRAVE is a model of public evangelism used in recent years on public campuses to reach out to young adults.