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Developing A Structure To Strengthen Youth Ministry In Florida Conference

Pedro E. Perez
Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A STRUCTURE TO STRENGTHEN YOUTH MINISTRY IN FLORIDA CONFERENCE

by

Pedro E. Perez

Adviser:  Steve Case
Title: DEVELOPING A STRUCTURE TO STRENGTHEN YOUTH MINISTRY IN FLORIDA CONFERENCE

Name of researcher: Pedro E. Perez

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Steve Case, PhD

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Problem

Florida Conference did not have a way to connect the Youth Ministries Department to local churches to support the churches’ teen ministry. There was a need for a structure to create a connection between the conference and local churches to strengthen youth ministry in the local church. With over 300 churches in the conference, the youth director could not achieve this alone. Furthermore, there was not even a contact list to know which churches had a youth leader or young people. Developing a structure would be a means of gaining access to local church youth leaders so that the youth director and a team of volunteers could offer help and support to these leaders.
Method

The Youth Ministries Department was reorganized to develop a structure of volunteers called Cluster Coordinators to become a link between the conference and the local church youth ministry. After consulting with different departments in the conference and in other conferences, reading what others had to say on this topic, searching Scripture regarding organization and structure, reviewing the then current Pathfinder and Adventurer structure in Florida, meeting with key leaders in the conference, and based on over 20 years of life experience in working with youth, the glaring need was to create a structure of volunteers to help the youth director.

The main emphasis would be on creating a vision of what the structure would look like, developing a basic understanding of the dynamics of change in an organization, redefining what the function of a conference youth director is, applying best practices on how to recruit, train and retain volunteers, and then implementing the plan. The focus of this document is to develop the structure, which was nonexistent, to connect local churches to the conference to strengthen local church youth ministry. This was all foundational to being able to impact local church teen ministry. The structure is simply the means to accomplish this goal. The goal is to improve local church teen ministry through a structure which would create a conduit to link youth leaders with the Youth Ministries Department. To accomplish this, a team of volunteers was recruited to partner with the youth ministries director. This group would be responsible for gathering current contact information for youth leaders, offering encouragement, support and training to these leaders. In order to make this happen the youth director would have to recruit a team of leaders to connect directly with local church leaders that would be trained and
resourced by the Youth Ministries Department so that they in turn could train and resource local church youth leaders. This network of volunteers would be the means to accomplish the goal of strengthening youth ministry in Florida Conference.

Results

A structure was put in place to recruit a team of volunteers, called Cluster Coordinators, which became the link between the Youth Ministries Department and the local church youth leader. The same structure applied to Adventurers, Pathfinders, and Youth and Young Adults. Every church in Florida Conference was grouped into a Cluster and each Cluster was designed to have a Cluster Coordinator. There were 23 Clusters in total in the conference; each Cluster represented 10-15 churches. These Coordinators, in the Clusters where they were recruited, were the link between the conference and the local church youth leader.

The number of Youth Cluster Coordinators fluctuated during the time of this project. A maximum of 16 of the possible 23 Cluster Coordinators were recruited at any given moment. These 16 Coordinators supported 139 congregations, nearly half of the 300 churches in Florida Conference. But, the full team of Cluster Coordinators was never entirely recruited for youth ministry. Nevertheless, with the help of the Adventurer and Pathfinder team of Cluster Coordinators we were able to create a database with contact information for youth leaders from every church in Florida. This was an important step which made it possible for the department to begin to connect with local churches. And this structure and information opened the door to begin investing in local church youth leaders in a new way. The structure was designed to make it possible to impact local church teen ministry, but the structure alone could not achieve this. It was simply a means
to an end. The end goal of strengthening youth ministry in local churches would happen when the Cluster Coordinators would meet with local church youth leaders and share content with them. See Appendix A for a sample of the manual that Cluster Coordinators shared with a local church youth leader to offer encouragement, resources and support.

Conclusions

On the one hand, the structure worked. The team of Cluster Coordinators that was recruited became an invaluable help to the youth ministries director and positioned the department to establish contact with local church youth leaders so that they could begin to influence and strengthen the way that youth ministry was done in their church. In the Clusters where there were youth cluster coordinators, youth leaders had more contact more often from our office and the presence of a coordinator gave consistent support, encouragement and training to local church youth leaders. On the other hand, the project did not meet the original goal of conference wide implementation. A cluster coordinator was not recruited for every cluster in Florida Conference.

In the final analysis, a structure is needed to create a link between the conference and the local church youth leader. A youth director cannot reach all of the churches in a meaningful way without the help of volunteers, and it is through the structure that this team of volunteers is organized to strengthen local church youth ministry. For this reason, recruiting a team of volunteers must be the priority of a youth director. Having this group of volunteers in place around the conference is the key to closing the gap between the conference Youth Ministries Department and the local church youth leader. But the structure is only the beginning. The youth ministries director must work diligently with the volunteers to train them so they have content to share with local youth leaders that will
help them be better leaders, serve young people better, and strengthen youth ministry.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

DEVELOPING A STRUCTURE TO STRENGTHEN YOUTH MINISTRY IN FLORIDA CONFERENCE

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Pedro E. Perez
December 2017
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Pedro E. Perez

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Adviser, Steve Case

Director, DMin Program, Kleber D. Gonclaves

Dean, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Jiří Moskala

Mike Stevenson

January 4, 2018

Date approved
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every ministry context has potential for growth and room for improvement, and any living thing that is growing needs some form of structure. Plants, animals, and human beings, all have systems and structures that support and sustain life. Youth ministry is no different. If youth ministry is to grow and thrive, it will require some sort of structure to grow. Developing a structure to strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference is the precise aim of this project.

In this first chapter the reader will get a brief overview regarding what youth ministry looks like in Florida Conference—this is the ministry context. In addition, there will be a statement of the problem, a statement of the task to describe how that problem will be addressed, and an explanation of the delimitations of the project. Furthermore, a description of the process will be outlined to help the reader see step by step what actions were taken to approach the problem. Finally, a brief description of terms will help the reader to follow along more easily.

Description of the Ministry Context

Florida Conference had two separate departments—Pathfinder and Adventurer, and Youth and Young Adult Departments—with different directors during the 1990s and early 2000s. In fact, they had the same director in each respective ministry for over two decades. However, in 2010, the conference administration decided it was time to create
one unified Youth Ministries Department under one director. This changed the way that youth ministry would be done in Florida. In order to manage a ministry this size, the conference had over 60,000 members in 2010, the youth ministries director would be given two associates. As a team of three, their job would be to find a way to make Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth, Young Adult and Public Campus Ministries work throughout the state.

This task of bringing all these ministries together was too big to accomplish alone. In conversations with key lay Pathfinder and Adventurer leaders, and after consulting with other departments in the conference, it was decided to divide the state into three areas: North, Central and South. Each area would have an Area Youth Ministries Director, one of the Associates. The Youth Ministries Director would serve as the State Director and the Central Area Director; this combination was not ideal, but it was necessary based on the available staffing at the time. One associate would cover the North and the other the South. One of the main roles of these directors would be to recruit and train teams of volunteers, called Cluster Coordinators, to help them best serve churches and local youth ministries leaders.

**Statement of the Problem**

Youth ministry in Florida Conference did not have a structure which would enable the conference to connect with local church teen leaders to offer encouragement, support and training. However, Pathfinder ministry, which officially began in North America in 1950, and since then has grown in popularity and strength, and, in my observation, has become the backbone of Adventist Youth Ministry. I believe that to a large extent this is
due to the structure—a team of Area Coordinators who assist the Conference Pathfinder Director to make Pathfinder ministry happen in churches around the conference.

Youth ministry, however, has never had a structure to organize it from the conference level. And so, in this void, youth ministry has depended on local church leadership, which is often untrained, unprepared, and unsupported. I think we can do better. I believe that the conference Youth Director can recruit a team of volunteers to partner with him/her to develop a structure that will strengthen youth ministry in local churches by closing the gap between the two. Having a network of volunteers is vital to reviving teen ministry in local Adventist churches; this network, trained by the conference Youth Director, can extend his/her influence to every church in a conference. Having the structure allows for the volunteers to be organized to know where to go and also to be able to share resources and training with the local church youth leaders to help them lead young people better. Without this structure, youth ministry will continue to wallow.

There is rarely a conference wide system in place to provide local church youth leaders with assistance, communication, information, networking, resources, support, and training that is essential to their success. This is not the formula for a well-built youth ministry. In the Florida Conference the Youth Ministries Department lacks an organizational structure to strengthen local church youth ministry.

**Statement of the Task**

The task of this project is to develop an organizational structure that will strengthen local church youth ministry in the Florida Conference. The author acknowledges that while a structure alone will not strengthen youth ministry, it will be the means to accomplish that end. However, once the structure is built, it will be possible to
contact, connect with, support, and train local church youth leaders. The structure is the framework, or the “highway,” which allows for everything else to flow—the contact, support, and training. Without the structure, there is no network of volunteers organized to impact local churches, and the Youth Director is left alone to accomplish this task.

**Delimitations of the Project**

During the course of this project there are some self-imposed parameters that will help the Youth Director to stay focused on the problem—that there is not a structure in place to strengthen youth ministry. First of all, this is an attempt to correct this issue within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, particularly in North America, and specifically in Florida Conference. The emphasis is on developing a structure. This is necessary because at the beginning of the project, one did not exist for teen ministry. This project claims that if a structure is built, if a team of volunteer youth leaders is recruited and trained, then they can help the conference Youth Director to reach out to local church youth leaders around the state to provide encouragement, support and training.

Since in the beginning, the conference Youth Director did not even have a list of the youth leaders’ names; there was a need to get help to establish such a list. In addition, the Youth Director recognized that with over 300 churches in the conference, and with limited budgets, he would have to recruit volunteers that he could train in order to accomplish more through a team than he could ever achieve alone. With a team of volunteers serving as Cluster Coordinators, the conference Youth Director could partner with the volunteers to strengthen local church youth leaders. The Youth Director would train the Cluster Coordinators, and the Cluster Coordinators would in turn train the local church youth leaders. This would all be made possible through developing the structure.
which would create a pathway to connect with youth leaders. See Appendix A for a copy of the manual that was developed so that the Cluster Coordinator could sit down with a local church youth leader and help them know how to work better and smarter with the teens in their church.

In 2006 when I began as a Youth Director in Southern New England Conference, I observed that there were at least two other conferences which were also wrestling with how to strengthen teen ministry through a structure of volunteers. I had conversations with the Youth Directors in Greater New York Conference and Southeastern California Conference, to see what they were doing (for samples of what they were developing see Appendices B and C respectively). Furthermore, the Youth Director is not in a position to initiate conference wide change, so he/she will limit himself/herself to what freedom he/she has to initiate change within the Youth Ministries Department.

**Description of the Project Process**

One starting point is to review what the Scriptures say about this topic. The Bible speaks to the issue of organization and structure by presenting God as a God of Order (1 Cor 14:33, 40). This is evidenced through Creation (Gen 1), and in Israel’s formation as a nation (Josh 7:14, 17). Further evidence appears in the life of Moses (Exod 18) and in the New Testament through the appointing of the twelve disciples (Luke 6:12-16), the early church with the appointing of the deacons (Acts 6:1-7), and finally through the development of a theology of spiritual gifts (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4). Order and structure honor God and reflect His character. The Bible connects structure to order and stability.

A second place to gather information is through current literature which will be
studied to see how others have wrestled with this issue of structuring and supporting youth ministry at the local church level. The focus will be on four main areas: vision, change, function and volunteers.

Next, the Youth Ministries Department will consult with the Florida Conference Ministerial Department, and other departments, to create an organizational structure that is sensitive to how the conference, churches and clubs are already organized. The Ministerial Department divided pastors into three areas: North, Central, and South. Youth Ministries chose to divide into the same three areas. Pathfinder ministry, the most structured ministry, will be modified to fit this new organizational structure and lay the foundation for Adventurers, Youth and Young Adult ministry. Each area will have a paid conference Area Youth Director and a volunteer Area Administrator that will be responsible for youth ministry in their area. Each Area will be subdivided into smaller segments called Zones with a volunteer called a Zone Administrator. Each Zone will be subdivided into a smaller territory called a Cluster with a volunteer called a Cluster Coordinator.

The Youth Ministries Department will assign every church in the conference to a Cluster (a grouping of 10-15 churches in a geographical region). The Youth Ministries Department will recruit and train volunteers to lead in clusters for Youth and Young Adult ministry. They will develop a timetable to launch the new volunteer Cluster Coordinators. The Youth and Young Adult Cluster Coordinator will be in regular contact with youth leaders in the churches they oversee to offer assistance, encouragement, information, support, and training. A ministry description has been created to help Cluster Coordinators know what to do (see Appendix D).
The Cluster Coordinator is the direct link between local church ministry and the conference Youth Ministries Department and is trained by the Youth Ministries Department. Cluster Coordinators should be seasoned youth leaders that have proven themselves to be effective in helping other leaders know how to deal with the complexities of the ever-changing world of teens and help other adults know how to do so. Cluster Coordinators will work with pastors in their Cluster as an officially appointed representative and voice for Youth & Young Adult ministry in their Cluster.

The Youth Ministries Department will create an Area Youth Council that will meet quarterly with the Area Youth Director. The Youth Ministries Department will appoint a Youth Area Administrator (volunteer) that will oversee all of the Youth Cluster Coordinators in their Area. The Area Youth Ministries Director will evaluate how effective the volunteers are at all the levels (Area/Zone/Cluster) through interviews in order to see how much of an impact they are making in the local church level youth ministry. Some sample questions to evaluate the structure would be: Do we have contact information for every youth ministries leader in every church?; Has each local youth ministries leader had a visit from an appointed leader? (Zone/Cluster level leaders); Are pastors aware of whom the appointed leaders are and do they have a way to contact the appointed leaders for help in youth ministry?

The timeline: This project was developed on paper in 2011; implemented in 2012-2015 and evaluated over a two-year period and reported on in 2017.

**Definition of Terms**

*North American Division (NAD):* One of the 13 divisions of the Seventh-day Adventists church (Territory includes: United States, Canada, Bermuda, and Guam).
Southern Union: The Southern Union is one of the nine unions in the North American Division. It has eight conferences within it.

Florida Conference: One of the eight conferences in the Southern Union. The Florida Conference has 300 churches with approximately 65,000 members.

Cluster Coordinator: Title given to a volunteer that oversees several churches for a specific ministry.

Cluster: a grouping of 10-15 churches in close geographical proximity.

Integrated Youth Ministries (IYM): The department created by Florida Conference to oversee and coordinate the following ministries: Children and Family (English/Spanish), Camp Ministries, Education, Youth Ministries.

PAC: Pathfinder and Adventurer Committee.

Young Adult: Ministry focused toward post-high school young people, ages 18-35 (YA).

Youth Director: The name given to most conference leaders that work with young people in general; it can mean different responsibilities in different conferences.

Youth Ministry: Ministry focused toward high school teens (Y).

Youth Ministries Department: The Department that oversees Adventurers, Pathfinders, Youth, Young Adults, and Campus Ministries in Florida Conference (YM).

Youth Ministries Director: Director overseeing all of Florida Conference Youth Ministries.
CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPING A STRUCTURE TO STRENGTHEN YOUTH MINISTRY IN FLORIDA CONFERENCE

Introduction

For centuries students of the Scriptures have turned to its pages to discover principles that can be applied to their current situations. While the Bible does not specifically mention many of the modern realities, its principles remain timeless and effective when creatively applied to shape contemporary themes. One example would be that in the Bible there is no specific detail regarding youth ministry; it is a rather recent phenomenon with roots reaching back to the late 1800s (Harris & Harris, 2008). However, there are solid, biblical principles that can help create a conference wide youth ministry structure that is in alignment with the principles of Scripture. The purpose of this chapter is to draw principles from the Bible, apply hermeneutical principles, and craft a practical theology which, when implemented, can provide a structure which will improve the way that Florida Conference Youth Ministries collaborates with local church youth leaders to strengthen youth ministry.

Hermeneutics

According to the Ferguson, Wright, and Packer (1988, p. 44), “Biblical hermeneutics is the study of the principles of interpretation concerning the books of the Bible—it is part of the broader field of hermeneutics which involves the study of
principles of interpretation.” In the Bible, there is not a specific theology of youth ministry, nor is there a theology of how to structure or design a conference wide youth ministry. Both did not exist during the times when the Bible was written. However, using hermeneutics, one can find biblical principles that are applicable to help develop a structure that will strengthen youth ministry in the Florida Conference.

Hermeneutics played a major role when the Seventh-day Adventist Church was beginning to formally develop. Church organization and structure were initially very controversial (Knight, 2001). Many were against any formal organization for fear that in organizing they would become Babylon (Knight, 2001). God used James White to turn the tide by applying hermeneutics. Knight (2001, p. 46) writes that James White, “had moved from a principle of Bible interpretation that held that the only things Scripture allowed were those things it explicitly approved to a hermeneutic that approved of anything that did not contradict the Bible.”

This Copernican shift opened the door for seeing the Bible as transmitting timeless principles with countless applications for each age and holds a key for developing a theology of youth ministry. This is important because in the Bible there is no mention of youth ministry—at least not as it is currently practiced. If one applied the former thinking, there would be no place for youth ministry in our times because it is never discussed in the Bible. Since there is no record of youth pastors, they would not be allowed either. Christians would be limited to ministering to young people only in ways that the Bible talks about. In this scenario, most likely there would be no such a thing as a “biblical youth ministry.” Is the Christian church today limited to only the roles and titles that can
be found in Scripture and nothing more? And if that is the case, why talk about a structure for organizing youth ministry in a conference?

Thankfully that is not the case. And this is what makes the hermeneutic that James White shared so relevant to this topic; it allows individuals to interpret and apply the Bible to their context under the Spirit’s guidance and tested by the believers. This opens up space to take the principles of the Scripture to draw applications that fit modern times and acknowledge that the Bible does not deal specifically with all the things which modern life forces humans to deal with. Furthermore, it is possible to get guidance from Scripture on any topic. Just because it is not specifically mentioned in the Bible does not mean that Scripture is silent about that topic. The timeless principles always remain and need to be applied to each generation.

So, to begin with, it is important to establish that even though youth ministry or a structure for youth ministry is not explicitly addressed in Scripture, one can uncover biblical principles about organization and structure to develop a biblically sound theology and practice that would be both God honoring and edifying. Additionally, part of the theological foundation of developing this structure is the belief that Scripture is applicable to real life situations in contemporary culture today, even when the Bible does not explicitly address the topic one is investigating.

Old Testament

The Old Testament has several examples of the difference that structure makes. This section will focus mainly on the creation account, the tower of Babel, the building of the sanctuary, the arrangement of Israel with its army as well as its classification of the tribe, clan, and family structure, and finally, Jethro with Moses.
Creation

In the very beginning, the Bible gives an indication that there was a lack of order. Genesis 1:2 states that earth was “formless,” “dark,” and “empty.” Right at the beginning in the story of creation, God brought much needed structure and organization to the planet. He set boundaries for the light/darkness (vv. 3-5). He set limits for the sea, the sky, and land (vv. 6-10). He commanded the land to produce seed and fruit bearing vegetation (vv. 11-13). He designed the sun, moon, stars by which He put into motion the chronology to mark days, months and years (vv. 14-19). God also put land and sea animals in their places (vv. 20-25) and finally crowned creation with a handcrafted couple to govern and rule over all that He had just created (vv. 26-27). In Genesis 1 there is clear evidence that God is a God of order.

Furthermore, the creation story is structured in a way that highlights the progression of creation and reveals the solution God had for the formless and dark earth. The six days of creation can be divided up into “days of forming” and “days of filling” (NIV Study Bible, note on Gen 1:11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days of Forming</th>
<th>Days of Filling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - “light” (v. 3)</td>
<td>4 - “lights” (v. 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - “water under the expanse/water above it” (v. 7)</td>
<td>5 - “every living and moving thing with which the water teams … every winged bird” (v. 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - “dry ground” (v. 9) / “vegetation” (v. 11)</td>
<td>6 - “livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals” (v. 24), “man” (v. 26), and “every green plant for food” (v. 30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In days one through three, God formed the necessary elements to prepare the way for days four through six. God first laid the foundation (the forming) and then He
completed creation with the filling. There had to be defined water boundaries (day 2) before there could be animals in the waters (day 5). There had to be dry ground (day 3) before there could be plants (day 6) that would flourish in that ground. God demonstrated in the development and progression of creation the importance of bringing order to chaos. And all of creation had to be in place to sustain the final creation—human beings. The result was the beauty and symmetry of creation. God revealed that He is the Master Creator that forms the formless and fills that which is empty in an organized way.

A principle that comes from the creation story is that God can take what is without form and shape it into something amazing. This is often the case in a conference youth ministry where there is a lack of structure for teen ministries. It is often formless and empty. There are churches that have youth, but do not have a youth leader (empty). There are churches that have no communication between local church youth leaders and the conference youth department (void). There are churches where the Youth Director does not know the youth leaders name and vice versa (formless). The local church and conference function as independent entities. There is no form; no structure.

Furthermore, there is often a lack of common goals and vision. In this gap, the local church youth leader, if there is one, does the best they can on their own to work with the youth. This youth leader often functions without the knowledge, support, or training from the conference and with little to no contact from other youth leaders or the conference Youth Director. This lack of conference wide organization means that youth leaders are not being linked with other youth leaders and the conference office is not communicating with local church youth leaders to offer assistance, resources, and support. It is a very accurate description to refer to youth ministry as “formless,” “void,” and
“empty.” It also means that the Youth Director remains unaware of youth ministry in a local church. There is a lack of order. There is a need for structure.

There is hope for youth ministry. The good news is that God can create order where there is none. God’s Spirit is “hovering over the waters” (Gen 1:2). Without the presence of the Holy Spirit to lead Youth Directors in conferences, there would be little hope. However, with the Spirit working and God the Father working to help connect youth ministries there is hope for order and structure to strengthen youth ministry.

What is done in youth ministry should demonstrate an understanding of design and order drawn from and reflected in the pages of Genesis. God is the Master Designer and conference Youth Directors need the presence of the Holy Spirit to begin to give them a fresh vision to shape youth ministry in conferences. And while this may look very different from one conference to the next, the Spirit will strengthen Youth Directors/leaders to better reach the local church youth leader and thus the youth that are so precious to God.

Tower of Babel

Another example of structure in the Old Testament is in Genesis 11. A strong argument can be made regarding the importance of language (structure) from the story of the Tower of Babel. At the beginning of this narrative, there was a common vision to build a tower to avoid being destroyed by a flood. The accomplishment of the task and the actual building of the tower, were facilitated through language. Without a common language, there was slowed communication. What is said, how it is said, how often words are used, and how words are understood are all key to communicating. Words matter. In fact, the Bible story clearly points out that the combination of a unified vision and a
common language unearthed the possibility that, “Nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them” (Gen 11:6).

Language matters. The descendants of Noah established a unity and common vision through sharing the same language. Applying this in a local conference, the leadership (Youth Director) has to find a common language; a vision with clear goals and objectives that is communicated clearly and consistently. Remove the ability to clearly communicate and everyone goes their own way. This is exactly what happened in Genesis 11. God confused their language (v. 7) and everyone scattered (v. 8).

When an organization is ready to head in a new direction, unveiling a new structure, it must also be ready to use a new language that solidifies the organization and is used by everyone within the organization. Hybels writes, “The very best leaders I know wrestle with words until they are able to communicate their big ideas in a way that captures the imagination, catalyzes action, and lifts spirits” (2008, p. 17). Words have the power to propel people to action. It is important to carefully choose the words that will describe where the ministry is going and to create terms that everyone can follow. Simon (2009, p. 17) points out, “For a common language to be successful it needs to be employed regularly by institutional leaders. Key phrases should be repeated in print, sermons, and lectures.” Finally, for a new language to catch, it should also be used on the conference website, newsletter (if there is one), and any other forms of communication. This helps the local churches in the conference to be on the same page and move forward towards common goals. Words matter and can help to create a solid structure to strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference.
Still another example of structure comes in Genesis 46 where Israel is organized as a nation. The twelve sons of Jacob are listed which formed the foundation for the twelve tribes and became the infrastructure for the nation of Israel. As Israel grew over time, so did the need for some type of organization. This was not required when it was just Adam and Eve or even when it was just Noah and his family after the flood. But, over the course of time as God’s chosen people increased, their need to structure themselves became increasingly evident. They needed a structure—a way to organize the people. To accomplish this, Israel was divided into tribes, clans and families to be able to better manage themselves as a nation. A structure was put in place.

An application that can be drawn is that youth ministry in its most basic unit of organization is really about family units and youth ministry at its very core is family ministry (DeVries, 2004; Burns, 2003). Even at the conference level, the Youth Director must always remember that youth ministry will always lead back to a family unit. Youth ministry should lean heavily in the direction of equipping youth leaders to help families be successful in raising their own children and leading them to Christ so they can fulfill their function as the primary care giver and spiritual instructor of their children.

Another application is that when there is a big entity, like a nation or a conference, subdividing it into smaller parts makes for a more manageable system. It is difficult to move an entire conference without some kind of subdivision into smaller units. Florida Conference Youth Ministries has implemented a system by which every church fits into the structure and the state is subdivided into areas, zones, clusters, and churches. In this way the pattern of nation, tribe, clan, family is followed. This enables the Youth Director
to have a better handle on what is happening around the state by connecting with local church volunteers.

Structure in the Book of Numbers

Another practical example of how structure was utilized is found in how God guided Israel, as recorded in the book of Numbers. In chapters 1-2, the people were organized into their tribes, clans and families in a clear progression (Buttrick et al., 1962, p. 698). Numbers 2 details where each tribe camped around the tabernacle based on the north, south, east, west configuration of the compass (Life Application Bible, 1990). Here is how one author noted the difference between chapter 1 and chapter 2 of Numbers. “In ch. 1 the nation is mustered, and the genealogical relationships are clarified. In ch. 2 the nation is put in structural order, and the line of march and place of encampment are established” (Barker, 1985). In fact, Barker later stated, “each was to know his exact position within the encampment.” Each tribe had a specific location around the sanctuary where they were assigned to camp. This structure brought a new level of organization to the nation of Israel as they all camped in an orderly fashion with each tribe surrounding the sanctuary which was now their visible reminder of God’s presence in their midst (and literally in the middle of their encampment). The priests, and then the tribes, camped around the sanctuary in a very exact and orderly fashion.

This is significant in terms of structure for the emphasis on order and organization. For Israel to accomplish God’s purposes they had to be organized and centered on God’s work among them. It is no different today. For young people, God’s modern day army, to fulfill the purpose He has in mind, there needs to be organization and training, and focus on God’s work among His people. Without this preparation, there is no execution of the
plans God has in mind for His young people. God’s Spirit is stirring to assemble His church to fulfill His mission and young people will play a major role in this as they are organized to be led by God.

Solomon: Temple

Yet another example of structure comes in the book of 1 Chronicles 28 where David called a large gathering in Jerusalem (v. 1). He wanted to lay out his plans for the temple that his son Solomon would build. For this meeting he specifically summoned, “The officers over the tribes, the commanders of the divisions in the service of the king, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of all the property and livestock belonging to the king” (1 Chr 28:1). Based on this verse, it is clear that there were further categories of organization beyond the nation, tribe, clan, family. The officer over the tribe was someone from within the tribe that was chosen as a representative of their tribe. The commanders are categorized into different kinds of commanders: over divisions, over thousands, over hundreds. It appears that these different levels of commanders had different roles and purposes. And yet, they worked together to make the nation function. Leaders were recruited to different roles to serve different size groups as a way for Israel to be organized and effectively managed.

A few chapters earlier, 1 Chronicles 23, more information was given regarding how David organized other leaders as well to be prepared to build the sanctuary. David called all the priests and Levites to gather. The total number of priests was then subdivided and given a specific task (vv. 3-5). Their tasks are listed in verses 28-31. This could be seen as a job description for the priests/Levites. Each was assigned and given a specific task. Each person accomplishing their individual tasks would enable them to
collectively accomplish the larger task, the building of the temple and the upkeep. David did not leave this to chance; he put a system in place that would allow for Solomon to build the temple in the most effective manner possible. A similar system of organization needs to be developed and implemented in youth ministry; one that brings order and structure to strengthen local church youth ministry.

King Jehoshaphat

Still another example of structure comes from 2 Chronicles 20 with King Jehoshaphat. The king received the alarming news that three enemy nations were coming up against him. He prayed and proclaimed a fast for all of Judah (v. 3). How was the king able to gather the nation together for an assembly (vv. 4, 5) and get the word out to all of the people in the land? Did he have a system in place? Was there an organized structure to communicate with everyone in his kingdom?

One of the first things Jehoshaphat did as king was to send officials into all of the towns of Judah to teach the people (2 Chr 17 & 19). In addition, the king sent out certain Levites and priests with the officials to teach the people. They took with them copies of the “Book of the Law of Lord” and “went around to all the towns of Judah and taught the people” (2 Chr 17:7-9). What happened as a result was that the “fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah” (v. 10). In addition, in 2 Chronicles 19:5, Jehoshaphat also appointed judges in each of the cities and gave them instructions about how to judge in verse 6. He also appointed leaders in Jerusalem to “administer the law of the Lord and to settle disputes” (v. 8). His instructions to these leaders came in verses 9-10. And finally, he also appointed a chief person over spiritual matters and
another over civic matters in verse 11. It was this team of leaders around the nation that made it possible for the king to communicate, teach and train his people.

By way of application, it is clear to see that having people in roles appointed by leadership are helpful in organizing a group, communicating with a group, and moving forward the mission of a group. Additionally, having other people in leadership roles creates opportunities to share the load with others and not overwhelm one person. Over and over the Bible gives clear evidence that there is structure. And that the structure has strengthened the ministry or mission of those involved. It provided form and order. Whether it is for spiritual or civic roles, recruiting others and assigning them clear roles helped advance the work of ministry.

It is also worth highlighting the fact that part of the role of the priests was to train people in spiritual matters. The conference appointed volunteers do not just visit with local church youth leaders; part of their purpose is to provide instruction and training in spiritual matters and help them be better equipped to work with youth. This is one way to keep everyone in the conference united also, by offering the same training to the leaders that will then share it with the local church youth leaders.

Moses and Jethro

Still another biblical example of structure is found in Exodus 18 where additional detail is given as to how Israel was to be organized in terms of leadership. Moses received a visit from his father-in-law, Jethro, and he learned all about how God had blessed Moses. But then as he observed a day in the life of his son-in-law he was no longer impressed. Jethro saw a lot of activity but little accomplishment.
Jethro was a priest of Midian and God had revealed to him the leadership secret of recruiting people to help carry the leadership load. As Jethro watched Moses take a seat at the city gates to hear and judge between disputes all day long (v. 13), he concluded that if Moses kept that schedule up he would be in trouble. In fact, Jethro asked rather bluntly, “What are you really accomplishing here?” (Exod 18:14) and then he followed up with a key question, “Why are you trying to do all this alone?” (Exod 18:14). Jethro saw exactly what was happening. He told Moses, “This is not good!” (v. 17). Then he gave the reason why, “You’re going to wear yourself out—and the people too” (v. 18). Jethro could see Moses was headed for burnout. Jethro understood what Moses did not, “this job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself” (v. 18). Moses needed help. What happened next is the key to the story.

Jethro did not only tell Moses what the problem was; he also gave him advice and a solution. Jethro told Moses to “select capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes” (v. 21). The first part of the fix to the problem was to recruit the right people—individuals who had their priorities straight. People who were competent (they had skills), were honest, and feared God (spiritually grounded). These were the kind of leaders that would help lighten the load for Moses. Choosing the right leaders is always important to the success of an organization. The second part is to define how they will help Moses. Jethro continued, “Appoint them as leaders over a thousand, a hundred, fifty, and ten” (v. 21). The idea was that Moses would recruit the right kind of leaders to help him meet the daily demands of the Israelites. It was more than what one person could accomplish alone. Different leaders could take on different responsibilities.
This is a very fitting story with solid principles to apply to conference Youth Directors. If a conference Youth Director tries to manage and solve all the challenges/problems alone, it would lead to certain burn out. The demands are heavy and should not be shouldered alone. God has placed capable, spiritually minded, willing volunteers in each conference. They need to be recruited and trained to serve as volunteers. In Exodus, the structure described leaders of 1000, 100, 50, and 10. There does not appear to be any fixed formula or reason for these numbers. The main point seems to be to make the larger task subdivided into manageable parts with the right leaders overseeing specific areas. The structure of appointing leaders will only add strength if the leaders that are chosen can perform their tasks.

An important point is that even though Exodus 18:25 says that Moses chose able men, it appears that this was not the case. Nichols (1957) points out, “Verses 24-26 give the impression that Moses carried out Jethro’s advice immediately. Deuteronomy 1:9-15 indicates that Moses did not actually arrange for the selection of these judges until after the law was given at Sinai.” This is also significant because Moses in Deuteronomy 1:13 directs the people to choose or nominate the leaders themselves. Moses would still give approval, but he asked the people to select who they felt could judge (lead) them. There is value in having the leaders choose who will lead them.

In this scenario, part of the concern Moses had was, who will still instruct the people? Jethro relieved his fear by stating, “You should continue to be the people’s representative before God” (Exod 18:19). It is not like he would stop being the leader. What would change is that he would stop being the only leader. The Israelites could take smaller matters to the leaders appointed by Moses, leaving the heavier cases for Moses.
Doing this would reduce his workload. Another key was that Moses would be responsible to train the new leaders to do what they would be asked to do. He was told to “teach them God’s decrees,” “give them his instructions,” and to “show them how to conduct their lives” (v. 20). Moses’ role was redefined. Rather than doing everything himself, he would train leaders to handle the smaller cases and tell them to refer the more complicated cases to him.

Often times as a leader the temptation is to do it themselves and make sure it gets done rather than to train someone to help them do it. On the front end, it will take more time to recruit and train others, but the benefit in the long run is well worth it. The reality is that if a Youth Director does not do this everyone suffers. The Youth Director, the ministry leaders, and the youth will all be set back. The lesson of delegation is delivered to Moses through his father-in-law Jethro.

Each leader should pray about what this will look like in their particular setting. Jethro told Moses in Exodus 18:23, “If God commands you to do so.” He was telling Moses to take the matter to God in prayer and ask God what he should do. Whatever a leader is considering doing in terms of crafting a new structure, that person should do so in an attitude of prayer and humbly asking God what to do. Verse 24 adds, “Moses listened to his father-in-law’s advice and followed his suggestions” (Exod 18:24). Once a leader gets advice and direction from other leaders and confirmation from God, it is time to move ahead and make the changes with full confidence.

Here are some additional principles that are evident in the story of Jethro. The leaders must be chosen carefully. The text stated several qualities that these individuals were to possess. They were to be … capable, honest, fear God and hate bribes. These
were seasoned, mature leaders that had a vibrant connection with God, were competent, and they were individuals with integrity. The wrong leaders would complicate rather than simplify life for Moses. The right leaders, those that fit the ministry description, will be able to speed up, rather than slow down, the way that others are ministered to.

The text does not say whether these leaders would be volunteers or paid staff. A conference should have some budget to provide at least some level of reimbursement for travel. Because there is rarely extra funding in a conference to hire full time staff for these positions, appointing volunteers that can work with the Youth Director and local church leaders is key. And, when volunteer leaders are appointed, there is a direct link between churches and the conference office for communication and support.

Those helping Moses were not given a specific name. Were they a captain, squadron leaders, unit coordinator? The Bible does not say. Their role was defined by the number of people they were responsible for. Perhaps this is because the most significant part is their role and not their rank or title. What matters is that there is a subdivision of the whole into manageable parts. In a conference setting, the one caution regarding naming the positions is that as much as possible, the name of the position should be in harmony with the name that the North American Division has set for positions. This will help keep the conference connected to the structure already in place in the union and division.

In the Old Testament, the stories highlighted have served to demonstrate that God moved in an organized and structured pattern over and over again. This is seen in the creation account, the Tower of Babel, King Jehoshaphat, the structure of Israel as a nation,
and Moses with Jethro revealing principles to help develop a structure. The evidence is clear and leads to the next step, exploring structure in the New Testament.

**New Testament**

Turning to the New Testament, there are even more examples of structure. Jesus, the disciples, spiritual gifts, Acts 15, and spiritual gifts are the sections that will give insight into structure and yield more valuable biblical principles.

**Jesus**

Jesus believed in structure. When he started his public in ministry, he appointed twelve disciples (Matt 4/Mark 1/Luke 5/John 1). The twelve disciples were his core followers and the ones that he invested in most heavily. Within the twelve, there was an inner core of three disciples (Peter/James/John) that got to experience some things that the other disciples did not (Matt 1: Transfiguration; Matt 26: Garden of Gethsemane). In addition to the Twelve there were the Seventy-two (Luke 10:1). What would Jesus’ ministry have been like without these teams—without structure?

Even at the personal level, down to the folding of his grave clothes, Jesus was orderly (John 20:7). Jesus demonstrated with his life and ministry that he believed in order. It is part of who He is; not just something that He does.

**Early Church: Acts 6**

Another example of structure in the New Testament comes from Acts 6. The whole book of Acts was dedicated to chronicling the development of the early church. In Acts 1:12-26 the process of how a new apostle was chosen to replace Judas (the disciple who betrayed Jesus and then hung himself) was revealed. Peter led the way in drawing a
connection between Psalm 109:8 and quoted this Psalm as the authority by which the apostles were to replace Judas (see Acts 1:16, 20). The language is very strong in verse 21, “Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time.” For some reason, the twelve that Jesus had established felt a need to keep their number intact; they saw this as their scriptural responsibility.

Not only did the apostles remain as a unit of twelve, they also began to better define what their role was in the church as apostles. In Acts 6, the Bible recorded that the “number of disciples was increasing” (v. 1). Next a fight broke out among the Grecian and Hebraic Jews. The Grecian Jews felt that their widows were being overlooked when it came time to distribute the food. Acts 6:2-3 recorded, “So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, ‘It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit of wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.’”

Up until this time, the Twelve were responsible for everything (preaching/teaching and caring for the basic needs of the people). However, this was becoming too much. So, they better organized themselves and put a structure in place to have spiritually minded men oversee the food so that they could remain focused on what they were called to do. This was the beginning of the role of the deacon in the church. The organization of a new “office” or “ministry” in the church was what enabled the apostles to do what they were called to do. It was not coincidental that they “created” a new ministry position to meet a new need. This was also the beginning of the organization of the idea of spiritual gifts in the New Testament.
There is a fair amount of literature being published on the idea of organic church. The idea is that the NT church was organic as opposed to “institutional.” There are elements of truth here. Church hierarchy and organized religion do have the potential to feel more formal, but that does not mean that structure is non-biblical (Carins, 2009; Viola, 2012). At one point, Carins comments, “The church is simultaneously an eternal, invisible, biblical organism” and a “temporal, historical, visible, human, institutional organization [emphasis in the original]” (p. 79). This is best seen through Acts 6 and Act 15 where the early church was organic and led by the Spirit, and it was also choosing deacons and holding councils to better organize and structure itself.

Youth Directors must be led by the Holy Spirit to recruit leaders to serve. This is not optional or just lip service. The Spirit was essential to the shaping of the early church and is still vital to shaping any structure—in this case, youth ministries. The church is God’s church. Youth ministry is meant to minister to God’s young people. Structure is designed to facilitate this. Trying to do youth ministry without structure is like putting a screen door on a submarine and hoping it will keep the water out.

**Spiritual Gifts**

As the church continued to get a clearer picture of what they were supposed to do, God also revealed another role that the Holy Spirit would play through the manifestation of spiritual gifts in the church. Romans 12:3 states, each person/member in the church has been given a “measure of faith.” The chapter then goes on to talk about spiritual gifts. The implication is that God gave gifts to everyone in the church for the purpose of building up the body. The basic principle of spiritual gifts is that each person has been given a gift and that they should use the gift in ministry. The Bible has four main sections
that expand and explain the purpose of spiritual gifts (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12, Eph 4:7, 11-13; 1 Pet 4:10-12).

One of the key principles that emerge from out of the theology of spiritual gifts is that everyone is called to serve. First Peter 4:10 states, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.” All Christians are called to serve—no exceptions. And each person is gifted differently. Furthermore, each person will find fulfillment only in proportion to using his or her gift. Dick and Miller (2011) write, “The gifts of the Spirit provide the foundation for who we are as the body of Christ in Christian community and in the world” (p. 21).

The application of this principle is that God has gifted certain people with the gifts necessary to be effective in youth ministry. These individuals that God has chosen will feel fulfilled only to the extent that they are involved in ministry. God has leaders that He has been preparing to take up their place as youth leaders at all different levels. Some will be local church youth leaders. Some will be ready and have other gifts to oversee youth ministries in several churches. Other leaders will be gifted and able to oversee youth ministries in larger geographical regions. The belief is that God is working to build up His army of young people through committed adults, and even young people, serving as volunteers. The role of conference youth leadership is to pray for God’s help to find the right leaders—those that are waiting to discover their calling and purpose in life through active ministry for young people. Spiritual gifts empower and enable people to carry out God’s purposes and fulfill the calling He has for them.
First Church Council: Acts 15

Another New Testament model of structure is in Acts 15 where the church formally assembled to discuss important matters that had the potential to divide or unite. The issue was how did Judaism fit into the picture? Did Christians have to become Jews first? Did the new converts have to be circumcised or not to be accepted by the believers and God? Circumcision was the sign before, was it still? The leaders gathered in Jerusalem (even the opposition party—the Pharisees—were invited) for this discussion (Acts 15:5). Earlier, in verse 2, the church in Antioch appointed Paul, Barnabas, and some others to go specifically to Jerusalem to settle this, which they did. In verse 6, the Bible stated that some elders and apostles met to consider the matter at hand. Finally, in verse 22, the decision was then sent back to Antioch, along with Paul and Barnabas (and some of the council’s own men). When they arrived in Antioch they gathered the church together, read the letter, and the church moved forward together (vv. 30-35).

This is a great example of how structure works. There were church leaders (the people in Antioch). There were traveling preachers (Paul/Barnabas). There was a council (led by the apostles/elders). There was an organized system in place for settling disputes and keeping the church unified as well as focused. And the entire discussion is seasoned with stories of how God’s Spirit was at work. Without this structure or centralized location to settle matters and maintain focus, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the early church would probably have not survived. Structures, and being led by the Holy Spirit, once again provide stability, strength, and order.

There needs to be an organized structure in youth ministry that oversees the big picture of how youth ministry functions and interrelates to ministries within youth
ministries as well as in the overall picture of where the local church and conference are headed. And there needs to be a clear path where a leader in a local church can communicate concerns/needs to the conference. This is the role of the Youth Ministries Department in Florida.

Priesthood of All Believers

Another New Testament example is the priesthood of all believers. All believers become a part of the priesthood in the New Testament (1 Pet 2:9). God’s team of people promoting His kingdom grows exponentially by opening to all that which was previously exclusive to a few. He was and is intently preparing and searching for leaders to take on new roles. Being involved in ministry is not for a few talented people, or appointed priests (pastors); it is expected of everyone who believes. It is an expression of said belief. And in this new paradigm, the role of the pastor is adapted as well.

Paul wrote that pastors are called to equip the members, “to prepare God’s people for works of service” (Eph 4:12). The pastor’s responsibility is to prepare believers to be involved and serve. This also could apply to a conference Youth Director in that one of their roles is to recruit and train volunteers to serve young people in the local church. As the Youth Director trains these leaders they then in turn train the local church leaders, and the local church youth leaders train the youth. This is part of how the structure is designed to develop leaders. The structure is the very means to accomplish this purpose.

Paul: Order

Perhaps Paul made the clearest call for order in the early Christian church by declaring, “God is not a God of disorder” (2 Cor 14:33). He ended the chapter by stating, “Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (v. 40). Nichols (1957) writes,
“God is not a being who either has in Himself or produces disorder, disunion, discord, or confusion” (pp. 792-793). In fact, the Greek words used in 1 Corinthians 14:40 (kata taxin) mean “according to rank” or “according to arrangement.” Nichols further explains, “The expression was employed as a military term denoting regularity and order with which an army is drawn up in ranks in an orderly array” (p. 794). Paul used this term to communicate an important truth; God expects order because it is an expression of who He is. God is honored in order.

While it is true that the immediate context in which Paul used this language of order is worship, it is equally true that the principle originates in the person of God, not just in the principle of worship. God is a God of order. It is who He is. It is not just something He does. Therefore, by extension, believers should conduct themselves in an orderly way to organize for ministry and be a reflection of who God is.

In summary, in the New Testament, the Spirit played a lead role in guiding Jesus and then His followers in organizing and structuring to fulfill the mission to all nations. The conference Youth Director that applies principles from these passages will be well on their way to developing a structure to strengthen youth ministry for their context.

**Summary**

Over and over again in the Bible evidence is found to support the scriptural rationale for having structure and hermeneutics makes this applicable to youth ministry. From the Creation story to the re-creation that is foretold in Revelation, God is a God of order. In both the Old and the New Testaments, the reader of the sacred Scriptures gets the idea clearly that God wants order.
Youth ministry in the Florida Conference is in desperate need of structure and organization. Without it there is no way to establish communication lines between the conference and the local churches. Without structure, there is no organized way to reduce the distance/gap that exists between these two. Without structure, there is no shared language or vision to spark a focused ministry that unites teens all across the state. Without structure, youth leaders serve in little islands of independence, struggling to survive.

But there is hope. By turning to the Bible for principles, a youth director can develop a biblically sound structure can change the way youth ministry is done at the conference level. God is a God of order and has revealed the keys to recruiting, organizing, and empowering a team to help grow an army of young people. Structure can open pathways of communication and connection. God can use structure to stabilize and strengthen youth ministry. God can use structure to help create the system by which adults can use their God given gifts to advance His Kingdom and become the modern-day hands and feet of Jesus breathing new life into churches and youth ministry. Structure is a means to an end, not an end in and of itself. Structure alone will not solve all the challenges and problems of doing conference wide youth ministry. However, developing a structure can put systems in place to strengthen youth ministry in the Florida Conference.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Youth ministry in Seventh-day Adventism, at the local church level, needs help. Often volunteer youth leaders are nominated and then left all alone to take on the immense challenges that come from working with teens. Their hearts are right, they love kids and love God, but many times these leaders abandon these roles after a year because they feel so inadequate, unappreciated, and on their own. This leaves young people without the consistent adult involvement and input that they need. Year after year, youth leader after youth leader, the cycle continues. What will it take to turn this trend around? What if youth leaders had better support? What structure could a conference develop to strengthen youth ministry? The purpose of this chapter is to glean from current literature insights into how to develop a conference wide structure to strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference by focusing on four areas: vision, change, function, and volunteers.

Vision

Vision is typically understood as looking forward. And yet, at times, the best way to get a clear view of the future is by remembering where one has come from. The intent of this section is to review the original vision for Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministry, share how that vision has largely been lost, see how prayer can lead to a renewed vision,
understand how vision drives mission and increases clarity, and then underscore the need to articulate this new vision over and over again.

Looking Back at Early Adventist Youth Ministry

Youth ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist church has changed a lot over the years since it first began in Hazelton, Michigan, at the Warren’s home in 1879, where Harry Fenner and Luther Warren organized their first meeting with boys only in attendance (General Conference, 2005). They began with the expressed goal of helping their “young friends experience spiritual birth or revival” and were fueled by a “passion for evangelism” (Holbrook, 2005, p. 2). They were intentionally ministering to other young people and saw themselves as vital to reaching their generation; so much so that the aim for Adventist Youth states, “To all the world in this generation.”

This peer focused ministry, initiated by young people, developed into what became known as Adventist Youth Society (AYS); later it became just AY. During its prime, AYS was where young people got involved, led out in ministry, had an active voice, learned leadership skills, actively participated in advancing the work of God, and were intentional about reaching their peers. Young people were creating ministries for other young people and doing ministry with other young people. And it was working. But this vision would not endure the changing times.

Vision Lost

Holbrook explains that in the 1950s-1960s in the US, society changed dramatically due to materialism and how people viewed free time and vacations. This set into motion a decline in AY attendance by young people so much so that it “increasingly became little more than Sabbath afternoon filler; a way of assuring that the Sabbath hours ‘not be
broken” (Holbrook, 2005, pp. 57-58). As a result, most Adventist churches today no longer have an AY Program. Tutsch concludes that AY was dying in America (as cited in Holbrook, 2005). What started out so well was fading away in its effectiveness and young people had lost a significant role in church life, in leadership, and were no longer challenged to reach out to their peers.

Currently, in most churches, youth no longer have a weekly service that they are in charge of coordinating and creating or even using as an outreach tool to invite their friends to. This leaves youth Sabbath School as the main, if not the only activity for young people. And this is mostly adult led and initiated. Local church youth ministry is becoming more and more anemic and desperate to attract teens. The original vision is absent. Tutsch concludes, “Systematic organization of youth, for the purpose of working for the lost, is largely missing from Adventist youth ministries” (as cited in Holbrook, 2005, p. 117).

The modern-day vision for youth ministry has left young people in a spectator role more than a participator or contributor role, and has followed the cultural trend to raise a generation of teens with low expectations (Harris & Harris, 2008). What began as a strong fervor led by young people to reach their peers has steadily shifted to be more entertainment focused, adult led, and increasingly adult initiated. Furthermore, Clark, Dean and Rahn (1997) explain how youth ministers have owned up and “recognize that building a youth ministry around charismatic personalities and fun programming is inadequate to accomplish what is really important” (p. 298). In many ways, the critics of youth ministry are right. Youth ministry has failed. The original vision has been lost. Youth ministry needs a new vision.
A conference Youth Director needs to spend time in prayer asking God for a fresh vision for youth ministry. According to Stanley (1999), “Vision often begins with the inability to accept things the way they are. Over time that dissatisfaction matures into a clear picture of what could be” (p. 17). Surprisingly enough, one of the necessary first steps to birth a new vision is to be dissatisfied with the current situation! As a Youth Director begins working in a conference, an evaluation of the current situation helps to define the reality. Engaging others, church leaders and conference personnel, in conversation will help get an accurate picture of how things are. Then, the leader begins to dream about what could be. It is up to the conference youth director to seek God, get counsel from conference administration, engage other volunteer leaders in youth ministry, and then seek God again, asking for a fresh vision determine the direction for youth ministry in the conference.

Prayer is critical to getting a renewed vision (Stanley, 1999). This is because it connects the current situation with what God has in mind. It bridges the gap from what is to what could be. Prayer helps the leader to slow down and lean in to hear what God has to say. This is intentional prayer—asking God to give a fresh vision for the task at hand. The leader prays and waits for God to speak or impress. There is no set time frame. However, once God does seem to be indicating a direction, it can and should be tested with the others—other leaders and administration—who are also seeking a vision from God. When these visions are in harmony, this can be taken as a sign that God is in the vision. Prayer helps the youth director lead the team of other leaders and administrators to bring into focus what that future might look like and then work together to put the vision
into action with their team.

In this process of praying to God, there usually comes a time in a leader’s life when the vision is big enough to make the leader wonder how it will ever get accomplished. This is when it is good to remember what Stanley (1999) claims, “What God originates, He orchestrates,” and “How is never a problem for God. It is usually a big problem for us. But how is God’s specialty” (p. 56). This is important to sustain one’s confidence in the vision that God has given—it is His vision for His young people. Prayer helps keep this in focus. Stanley added, “If you feel overwhelmed, remember, you are invited to tap into the inexhaustible resources of God. He is not expecting you to come up with everything that is needed to accomplish the vision he has birthed in you” (p. 61).

This renewed vision is born in the crucible of prayer time with God and in consultation with other spiritually minded team members. As leaders seek God for wisdom, they trust that He will speak to them. There is no set timeline for how long this takes; it lasts until God speaks and makes clear His will and it is tested with the other team members. Barna (2003) states that vision is, “a clear mental picture of a preferable future imparted by God” (p. 28). God wants to give a vision to His leaders. Prayer for vision is about getting clarity on direction to move forward in confidence toward the plan God gives to the leaders.

Vision: Mission and Clarity

Another aspect of vision is that it drives mission and brings clarity. It is almost like seeing the future before it happens (Stanley, 1999), and then working towards creating that reality. This clear picture of the future helps focus and motivate the youth director and others to take action to achieve it. The vision points everyone in a unified direction
with a common purpose and goals. It serves as the map and makes decision making less difficult. The vision becomes the standard by which decisions are made. Without having a clear vision of youth ministry, it is easy to be distracted by the latest idea or method to make youth ministry attractive to young people. Youth ministry becomes more fad-focused than mission-focused. In contrast, when a leader is clear about the vision and mission of why youth ministry exists, it helps to keep the ministry on task and pointed in the right direction to fulfill the vision. When vision is used as a metric, it becomes easier to determine if something should be a “Yes” or a “No” when ideas are weighed against the vision God has given. Thus, the vision drives the mission.

Articulating Vision

To take a vision to the next level, it must be put into words. This is what makes it possible to share it and communicate it with others (Simon, 2009). Words give vision life. The words that are chosen to articulate the vision should help others to grasp and share it easily. It is a tedious task to find just the right words to articulate it. Hybels (2008) says, “The very best leaders I know wrestle with words until they are able to communicate their big ideas in a way that captures the imagination, catalyzes action, and lifts spirits” (p. 17). Chosen prayerfully and reflectively, the right words have the power to impress ideas indelibly on people’s minds and emotions and motivate them to action.

Even after the vision is shared, it must still be communicated over and over again. Hybels (2008) claimed, “Vision leaks” (p. 52). And additionally, “People in our churches have real lives … they have challenging jobs, children to raise, lawns to mow, and bills to pay” (p. 52). Because there is competition for everyone’s focus and attention, and they have lives beyond their church involvement, the vision has to be kept before the team all
Otherwise people tend to forget the reasons why they are doing what they are doing. Sharing the vision is not a “one and done” deal. It must be communicated constantly (Stanley, 1999).

A leader must creatively and relentlessly repeat the vision so that it sticks and stays fresh in the minds of those they lead. The pressures of daily life can drain the vision of a preferable future quickly and this must be thwarted through consistent reminders. Many times, leaders may have a good vision, but never accomplish that vision because they are not communicating it clearly and repeatedly.

**Toward a Vision for Youth Ministry**

A first step in developing a structure for youth ministry is to seek God and ask for a vision. One way to do this is to study the history of Adventist youth ministry and revisit what the original vision was. Then with a team of leaders in the conference seek God for a renewed vision for our time—a vision that will drive mission and bring clarity. And lastly, share the vision repeatedly. This will provide a wise and solid foundation to forge a structure to strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference. The next step will be to help navigate through the season of change that a renewed vision is sure to bring.

**Change**

Change is possible, but it is not easy. It is hard enough to create change in one’s own life, let alone an entire conference. When it comes to conference wide youth ministry, a Youth Director can look at the undeniable fact that something needs to be done and yet change nothing. Often this occurs not because of a lack of desire. Rather it is because of a limitation on energy and resources. The director feels swamped with other urgent matters in the department, and so building a structure gets put in the “I’ll do it
later” file and the focus stays on other pressing matters. That is until, ironically enough, something changes. Fullan (2010) points out, “No real change occurs without a crisis” (p. x). And this is where youth ministry is right now: very busy and about to be interrupted by a crisis. The alarming statistics have been shared, committees have gathered to agree that there is a problem—a serious problem. We are losing our young people. Something must be done! But hardly anyone is really doing anything about it.

What will it take to create change? Only an action plan that is comprehensive and systemic will create the needed change in a conference. But that takes time; and most youth directors will move on before they find the time to implement real change in a conference. It will require doing things differently. It will take collaborative effort. Fullan asks, “‘Are we serious enough to work together?’” (p. xii). This would be the ideal—to have an entire conference reorganize itself to focus on its young people and to have this embraced by all the departments. And in the meantime, the bigger and more practical question is, “Are we ready to at least do something?”

If youth ministry is going to change, a conference youth director will need to build on the vision inspired by God and have a basic understanding of some of the dynamics of change. For example, does the youth director know: what causes resistance to change, what are the common errors in change management, what are the keys of success in this endeavor, what is the importance of relationships in change, what are some consequences that come with change, what is the process of how change happens, and how to create a culture where change is accepted—and, in the bigger strategic picture, how to get the administration to buy in to the changes? It is time to consider each of these dynamics.
Resistance to Change

Resistance to change should be expected. It is a normal part of change. There are several reasons for this. Most people are comfortable and feel safe within their comfort zones. People tend to prefer to keep things the way they are—even when it is not working. The temptation is to maintain the status quo. This is an enemy of change.

Whenever an institution desires to implement change in their organization, it is likely to be met with resistance because people tend to be content with life the way it is (Zonne, 2009). Most people think change is a good idea until they actually have to start changing. It can be painful. And most people prefer to avoid pain; at least until it is more painful to avoid it than do something about it. People will need to realize that if they want a different result, they will need to start doing some things in new ways. And that can be uncomfortable. Pain and discomfort are often a part of change.

Another reason people resist change is because of human nature. Humans are wired for status quo, even when they realize that there is a problem and admit that what is being done is not working. Until the crisis feels big enough to generate a response and action, little change occurs. And once motivated to change, one must think carefully about the implications of the changes being suggested. Change always creates more change. And this is unsettling to those that are content to keep the status quo.

To combat resistance to change, the conference youth director will need to coach and encourage those he or she is leading to be open to change. Awareness and anticipation of resistance necessitates a plan to relieve people’s fears and point them back to the vision that explains the reasons why these changes are so necessary. This helps everyone keep in focus what is at stake if things do not change. In addition, emphasizing
the positive results that can come from change can create a desire to change and minimize the sense of loss that change can stimulate. Pastors and members tend to want things to stay the same, and any change can upset this balance. Fullan (2010) explains, “Leadership is difficult in a culture of change because disequilibrium is common” (p. 6). And by nature most people want to stay in a state of equilibrium. The youth director’s job is to help people see the change as an improvement over their current situation and to see what is at stake if they do not change.

Importance of Relationships

The relationships that are forged in the change process are very important and often are a key to reducing resistance. In the area of relationships in the midst of change, Fullan surpasses Kotter (1996), who presents what appeared to be an airtight list of change factors. But Fullan (2001) reminds the reader that leadership is about relationships and leaders that lead out in change must have solid relationships. He states, “The single factor common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, things get better” (p. 5). The leader cannot afford to focus so much on structure or change that they neglect to invest in the very relationships that will make the structure work. Fullan shows that relationships are crucial.

The conference youth director will need to build relationships with different groups. Fullan (2001) comments, “Leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups” (p. 5). The conference administration, the ministerial department, the pastoral team, the volunteer team that is recruited, and then local church youth leaders are all important relationships that need to be created and nurtured. The team of volunteer leaders that the youth director will work with directly is the most
important group. This is the team that will be an extension of the youth director throughout the conference and help implant the vision and navigate change. If these relationships are not strong and growing, then the only likely change will be to hire a new youth director.

**Common Errors**

There are many common errors possible as an organization makes the effort to change. One of the most serious errors is not being able to distinguish between complacency and urgency. Kotter (1996) writes, “By far the biggest mistake people make when trying to change organizations is to plunge ahead without establishing a high enough sense of urgency—this error is fatal because transformations always fail to achieve their objectives when complacency levels are high” (p. 4). The biggest mistake is to not help people recognize the need for change—the very thing people resist! Even though some will be motivated to change because they desire improvement, many need external motivators to be so inspired. Creating this sense of urgency is a key to getting momentum. As the urgency increases, then the bent towards complacency decreases. When something does not seem urgent it is not given much attention. In any organization/ministry one of a leader’s main tasks is to paint a clear picture that something must be done now! This is vital to getting traction towards change. And yet here is where many fail in implementing change—they do not generate the sense that something must be done now.

Another error is not creating a “powerful guiding coalition” (Kotter, 1996, p. 16). A wise leader will not act alone. The call to change will not come from a lone voice. If it does it will have a seriously reduced rate of success. There needs to be a team; a group of
individuals that will support the leader and add their voices to the cry for change. When there is a group saying the same thing, it is different than just one person. It arrests people’s attention in a very different way. Ideally this would be the same core group of individuals that have embraced the vision and see the urgent need for change. Not forming this coalition can end in catastrophe. A team is always stronger than one.

Another common error leaders make in creating change is to not get any wins under their belt right away (Kotter, 1996). People like to see progress. It is important to establish some wins early on that show the vision and the new direction are actually making a difference. Those who are “early adopters” will benefit by this especially, and it may be that different leaders are piloting different aspects of the changes based on their readiness levels. The goal here is to observe that things are actually improving; there is progress towards the goal. It creates a sense of “this is going to work.” If a leader cannot find ways to establish some wins early on, it will take longer for people to buy in and join the movement. The focus should not be so centralized on strategies that nothing is implemented or visibly different. To create momentum towards change things have to actually start to change.

Not all errors can be avoided, but they can be reduced. Knowing and learning from the mistakes others have made can minimize the mistakes one makes for one’s self. Creating a sense of urgency, building a team to work with, making relationships a priority, and getting some early wins helps build momentum. There is too much at stake in youth ministry to not research and prayerfully study how change works and what some of the errors are that others have made so as to avoid making similar mistakes.
Keys to Success

There are several keys to success in bringing about change. When done well, the odds of good change happening are increased. Some of the keys may include: finding out where youth ministry is working, how is it adapting to society, and asking for input from the young people (Powell, Mulder, & Griffin, 2016).

Going on a search for where youth ministry is already working well and looking for patterns helps identify what makes youth ministry successful. Then the odds are increased to be able to reproduce a similar level of success again in a different church setting. There is a lot to be learned from others and it saves time from having to make the same mistakes one’s self. It will take fine tuning and adjustments along the way because each church is not the same, but thankfully there are some basic principles that tend to be effective universally. It is also helpful to analyze how those churches have adjusted their approach to youth ministry based on how society has changed over the decades. What worked in the 1970s has probably lost its effectiveness in modern times.

Still another key will be to involve the young people themselves in the process. Many times leaders talk about young people and neglect talking with young people. Many times, some of the best ideas come from the kids themselves. They are in tune with what they want and with what will work. Involving young people will also create a sense of ownership for them. This is also a time when they are ready to assume more and more leadership roles. It is not just a plan that the pastor, youth leader or church is creating. It is their plan to change the way the church ministers to them. This is not about giving young people everything they want. Adults are still involved in the process and let their life experience and wisdom enhance the final plans for how to move forward.
When these keys are followed, the Youth Director is much more likely to succeed in bringing about good change. He or she can search to find where youth ministry is working well and ask: What can we learn? What can be duplicated? Additionally, what input can be gathered from the young people themselves so that they can have influence and ownership in this process of change? If these questions can be answered and this process followed, success will likely come.

Consequences

Leaders must know that change always brings consequences. When one initiates good change there is a better chance of accomplishing the vision. Wilson (2004) writes, “There are consequences either way, you know—if you act, and if you fail to act” (p. 26). A leader may be tempted to not change, but must also remember that not changing still has consequences. Wilson declared, “In most churches it’s past time to initiate change. There’s nothing to be gained by waiting longer to get started. Things will not get better by themselves, you know. Not without someone like you diving in and initiating change” (p. 20). This is one of the roles of the youth director—to initiate change that leads to fulfilling the vision.

And yet change has to be done wisely to minimize the negative consequences that can come with change. Wilson comments, “Realize not everyone can tolerate the same amount of change—or risk” (p. 31). Everyone has a different tolerance for change and leaders must be sensitive to this. And yet, change is necessary to get different results. Prayerfully moving towards change and helping others see the need and benefit are crucial achieving the vision.
Creating a New Culture

To create lasting change, changes must be made at the level of culture—how and why people act the way they do. Positive change does not just happen automatically. The youth director will need to set in motion a plan of implementation for change that will start working with key leaders to address what needs to be changed in order to deal with a culture of change. The beginning of designing this new structure is to develop a culture of change. Fullan (2010) writes, “New approaches are seldom anchored in the organization’s culture by people who have been taught to think in terms of formal structure, not culture” (p. 29). People are creatures of habit. Clearly, it is not just about changing an organizational structure. Part of the change process is to bring about a culture change. Simon (2009) states, “Change the culture by giving everyone something they could believe in” (p. 85). And, he added, part of developing this culture means that people “had to want to win for themselves” (p. 87). It is not enough to understand the vision of the leader. Change must be something people embrace they desire for themselves for it to really take hold.

Decision making in the new culture will need revision. One of the tasks for the youth director must address is how to empower the team of volunteers to make decisions in the new structure. According to Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick, and Kerr (2002),

Whoever can contribute value—whether he or she is a production worker, middle manager, specialist, vendor, customer, or senior executive—needs to be encouraged to collaborate with others and make things happen, without waiting for some central authority to give permission (p. xv).

They continue,

The old questions of status, role, organizational level, functional affiliation, and geographic location, all the traditional boundaries that we have used for years to define and control the way we work, are much less relevant than getting the best people
possible to work together effectively (p. xv).

Choosing to empower volunteers to make decisions in this fashion will mean a new way of working together. The youth director will need to place a greater emphasis on recruiting and training leaders to partner with. This team of leaders will need to have freedoms and liberties that many volunteers have never experienced in the past either in their workplace or in ministry in the church. They will need to be free to make decisions in real time. Ashkenas et al. (2002) continue, “it means transferring decision-making authority away from executives and out to frontline workers” (p. xvi). In the new world of change, everything has changed. And to be effective and get different results, changes must be made. Volunteers in ministry will need to be trusted and empowered to let the Spirit lead them. This is so much more than a business model of letting people lead themselves and exercise authority. This is entrusting volunteers to lead as they are led by God.

Even though the rules have changed in this new modern frontier, “The idea is not to have … no boundaries—that would be disorganization” (Ashkenas et al., 2002, p. xix). The authors explained, “Boundaries keep things focused and distinct. Without them, organizations would be disorganized” (2002, p. 3). They also claim, “Making a boundaryless organization does not require a free-for-all removal of all boundaries … Instead, we are talking about making boundaries more permeable …flexible, moveable membranes in a living and adapting organism” (2002, p. 3). So, in this new culture it is not about having no boundaries, it is about making them more adaptable to go with the ebb and flow of ministry. It is a combination of trusting volunteers to make decisions that will be in the best interest of the organization because they were a part of forming the
shared vision and values in the first place and also providing ongoing training to keep the team on the same page philosophically.

How to Create Change

Heath and Heath (2010) provide an example of how to bring about change as they introduced a concept called solutions focused therapy (pp. 34-35). The basic idea is that most therapy focuses on the problem and goes into one’s past; however, solutions-focused therapy helps the individual to focus on solutions. Another way to think of this is to ask, “What’s working right now?” as opposed to “What’s broken, and how do we fit it?” (p. 45). This is a fundamental shift from looking at the problem to focusing on the solution that keeps the team on target.

Another way to implement change is to keep two core beliefs in front of the people: (a) a belief that change can actually happen and that (b) change must be system wide. When the leader the youth director is working with has a sense that real change is possible, this is the beginning of building momentum. When the leader understands the systemic issues that have helped create the problem in the first place a sense of hope develops along with interest in possible new systems. This can replace the discouragement brought on by working in the broken systems of the past and facilitate motivation toward achieving the desired changes.

The beauty is in the simplicity. Heath and Heath (2010) point out, “any normal person … would have craved an intensive, complex solution to match the intensive, complex problem” (p. 45). The authors went on to state, “To ask the question ‘What’s working, and how can we do more of it?’ sounds simple, doesn’t it? Yet, in the real world, this obvious question is almost never asked. Instead, the question we ask is more problem
focused: What’s broken, and how do we fix it?” (p. 45).

In a ministry context, one should ask, where is the “x” ministry going well? Investigate. Ask questions. Search for answers. Identify why it is working, and what makes it work? Is it an anomaly? Is what is happening reproducible? (Heath & Heath, 2010). Then take what was learned and see how other leaders could learn and do the same things in other contexts. The aim is to find the bright spots—where things are working well—and then help others do the same thing in other areas to improve their ministry as well. Following this change in perspective and investigation allows for flexibility and innovation to flourish in the conference and can be shared in real time to help youth ministry improve around the state. Complimenting these ideas is the book *Growing Young* by Powell, Mulder and Griffin, that studies churches all across the United States and distills six principles that help churches see what is working well in reaching young people and how the same principles can be applied in new contexts.

In studying change and the process of bringing change about, one gets this sense that a lot will have to change to really make a lasting change in the culture of youth ministry. I do not get the sense that Florida Conference has been ready, really ready, to make that change. Fullan (2010), after spending a lifetime trying to bring about change in the school system concludes, “Real change is possible but only by taking a truly systematic approach. No single quick fixes” (p. vii). The same is true in the church. Unfortunately, most want a quick fix. They do not want a systemic overhaul. This calls for a commitment to a long-term plan that calls for much more than simply putting a patch on the problem. This process calls for perseverance, intentionality, collaboration and patience to celebrate change even if it is only incremental.
As the youth director better understands change and is aware of the natural resistance to change, focuses on building and nurturing relationships, avoids common errors in implementing change, studies to discover and implement the keys to success, sees the consequences, is creating a culture of change, embraces how change happens and the need for systemic change, then the odds are increased for creating positive change and building a solid structure to strengthen youth ministry.

**Function**

In a structure, everything has a function. Buildings have a foundation to support a frame which supports the roof that keeps the house protected. The human body has a skeletal structure that supports all the other numerous body systems to make coordinated movement and life possible. The purpose of this section is to explore the function of a conference youth director and how putting into practice some of the strategies previously mentioned could strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference.

**The Role of Youth Director**

The question could be asked, “At the conference level what is the function of a conference Youth Director?” The *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (General Conference, 1990, p. 38) describes the conference departments as overseeing ministries that happen in churches. Tyner (2000) expresses that one of the roles of the conference youth director is to empower local youth ministry by, “Recruiting lay people and training them in the foundations and strategies of youth ministry in the local church” (p. 66). And, in the *Conference Youth Director’s Manual* (General Conference, 1993), it states, “Our function differs from that of other organizations in that we are not the youth pastors; we are to assist the local pastors in their ministry to the youth” and “we are called to train and
help local lay leaders discover ways and means to help the youth of their churches and to assume responsibility for their youth” (p. 2). Tutsch concurs,

Central organization of youth work could have produced lasting benefits … by providing a structure, educating and training youth and their leaders for evangelism, providing relevant and practical resources, and keeping youth groups aware of the soul-winning activities carried out in many areas (as cited in Holbrook, p. 116).

This reveals what the main function of a conference youth director should be—the one who assists and trains youth leaders and pastors to know how to best work with and for their young people. But often it is not what is practiced.

Typically, a Youth Director is responsible for the existing youth ministries in a conference. This varies across North America, but usually the directors are in charge of Adventurers, Pathfinders, Summer Camp, Youth, Young Adult, Public Campus (College/University) Ministries, and sometimes even more. Very often, most of their attention is given to Pathfinders and summer camp ministry. Historically, it is difficult to be a successful director if one fails in these two areas. However, the youth director cannot ignore Adventurer ministry and an event or two for teens (Bible camp, high school retreat, mission trip or ski trip). And if the director has any time left, some attention is given to young adults, or public campus ministry. The allotment of time often is determined by the director’s interests or passions. Additionally, the directors are supposed to keep their personal, spiritual, and family life in balance and healthy as well.

In most conferences the conference youth director role is reduced to being an administrator and event planner with a very full plate which leaves little time, or energy, to even think about creating a structure to strengthen youth ministry and implementing plans that actually shape local church youth ministry. This creates a gap between what should be and what is. Many times conference youth directors are stuck in this cycle and
are not fulfilling their function—to develop leaders and a structure to actually accomplish their real role. This is the greatest need.

Restored Function

It is time to restore the main function of a conference youth director—to recruit and train adult volunteers to help local church youth leaders and pastors with the end goal of strengthening local church youth ministry. To accomplish this something will have to change. Several current functions of the youth director would need to be reframed: (a) conference administration would need to agree to this new frame as the primary function; (b) A fundamental shift away from programming to people development and training would need to be embraced; (c) Capable lay volunteers would be needed to be in charge of more events with less conference leadership; (d) Some events may need to be cancelled; (e) The conference youth director would need to re-organize their weekly work schedule to prioritize developing leaders; (f) A group of pastors, youth pastors, and key lay leaders would need to be assembled to serve as an advisory; (g) A structure would need to be designed and implemented for recruiting volunteers; (h) Training for those leaders would need to happen; (i) These trained leaders would need resources to share with local church youth leaders; (j) This team of leaders would be assigned and deployed to go visit and consult with local church youth leaders and pastors to provide encouragement, ideas, resources, training and support; and (k) The team of leaders would report to the youth director who the local church youth leaders are, their contact info, their needs, and work together to best serve each local congregation.

The conference youth director needs to take the lead in developing the people and the structure to strengthen youth ministry. Just as an architect or engineer is paid to design
a structure that will support whatever it is that it is intended to carry and ultimately may even be a matter of life or death (Gordon, 2003, p. 99), so in youth ministries, the structures put in place to sustain it are either strengthening it or sucking the life out of it.

Youth directors are the new engineers of our times and need to focus on two areas: architecture and atmosphere to help develop structures in youth ministry (DeVries, 2008). Within the Adventist system, when conference administration creates space for the youth director to realign their role with the primary focus of developing leaders, culture change can happen and the vision for youth ministry can be a reality. But currently this goes against the status quo of running summer camp, keeping Pathfinder ministry growing and token appearances in churches. The real solutions for youth ministry are systemic, not superficial (p. 17). It’s not about hiring a new director or trying the latest ministry fad. DeVries brilliantly presents a case for creating a sustainable youth ministry and not just a quick fix. He even claims, “Building a sustainable, thriving youth ministry is not only possible, it’s actually predictable” (p. 11). This should offer hope for any youth ministry. DeVries continues, “Effective youth ministry happens when a very consistent set of factors is put in place” (p. 19). The role of the conference youth director is to put these factors in place. With the support of administration, the youth director can lead the conference in creating a culture where churches are expected to do their best to reach and retain young people; where pastors are held accountable to achieve this, and members are clear that this is the direction the church and conference are headed. It is no longer optional. It is an all-out assault on complacency and remaining unchanged by the exodus of our young people. This will generate traction and movement towards fulfilling the vision and restoring the function of the youth director.
Filling the Gap

There is a gap between the conference youth ministry department and the local church. With such a high number of churches in a conference, a youth director could never visit them all and keep up with what is happening in each one. This is why a team of leaders must be recruited, trained and sent out to help local church youth leaders. This will also mean an increase in the budget to support these leaders. What does this structure look like and what is its function?

By making the main function of the youth director to recruit and train other leaders as volunteers this gap can be narrowed. The focus is on training more than doing activities.

Departmental leaders who do not train other leaders are not fulfilling their calling. The church needs leaders, and it is the responsibility of all directors to prepare other leaders. Teaching and training is an integral part of youth ministry. Seeking fresh information to share, and revising and improving training methods are essential to a vibrant, growing youth ministry. A vast army is waiting to be instructed and trained. The key to successful leadership is in the teaching and training role. Many church members have a desire to work, but don’t know how. Therefore, training must precede activity (General Conference, 1993, p. 27).

The shift from the director doing everything to the director focusing on building a team is huge. Simon (2009) states, “Beyond the structure and systems a company is nothing more than a collection of people” (p. 85). The model itself is only a method; the most important ingredient is the people that will make the model work. If this is forgotten, then any success will be short term at best. The purpose of a structure is to facilitate ministry. It is a means to an end. The real focus is supporting the leaders’ growth and development. Wilson (2004) adds, “One good test of a good leader, rather than How much have I done? needs instead to be, How many others have I involved?” (p. 34). This statement points toward the re-framing of the role of the conference youth
director purposefully in the direction of trainer as opposed to a program coordinator or event planner.

The conference youth director should look for ways to help the local pastor involve parents, church boards (Zonne, 2008), and church youth councils into the process of developing a structure. This managed change will not look like another conference program that churches are asked to adopt without a chance to give input. The youth director and the team of leaders they recruit will be there to help the local pastor lead their congregation through the phases of change and implementation of a plan the local church has developed for their young people for a preferable future that is shared and embraced.

Summary

It is important to understand the role of a conference youth director as strengthening local church youth ministry. The director must be able to recruit and train a team of leaders that will work as partners with local church pastors and youth leaders to train and support them. The function of the structure is to validate the role and function of those two entities—the conference youth director and the local church youth ministry. The structure should be designed to increase the likelihood that youth leaders in local churches will be supported in ways that help them fulfill their function to help young people experience salvation and have opportunities to serve. The focus must be on helping local churches to know how to best train and equip the leaders who serve young people in that local setting. In the Adventist church, and most other churches, the doing of youth ministry locally falls to volunteers with a strong desire to see youth engaged in kingdom business. This is the next key.
Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to the organizational structure in Florida Conference, and particularly in youth ministry. While having a clear and well-articulated vision, understanding and navigating change, understanding the role of a youth director and the function of structure are all important, none of them can replace the need for volunteers. The art of youth ministry rests on the ability to not only recruit, train, and retain the right volunteers, but to build solid, helpful relationships with them.

The key to successful youth ministry has always been people and relationships. Richards (1972), one of the pioneers in youth ministry, states, “Most churches leaders still naively expect to have a spiritual impact on kids in and through meetings—not in and through persons” (p. 345). Volunteers are people. People make ministry happen. People minister to people. This is the reason why volunteers have to be recruited. Programs have their place—but they do not replace relationships. People have relationships with other people. And the relationship that the conference youth director has with the team of volunteers and the relationships that the team of volunteers develops with local church youth leaders will be the key to influence the way youth ministry is done in local congregations in Florida Conference. And ultimately, local church youth leaders have to have relationships with young people to impact their lives. This is why there is a need for a re-framing of the job description of the youth director and a re-allocation of the time and efforts of the youth director and his or her team focused on finding volunteers.

The Rationale

Currently, most ministries are dependent upon volunteer leaders. Youth ministry is no exception. According to Hybels (2004), “the church was designed to be primarily a
volunteer organization” (p. 31) and it is commonly accepted that there are not enough paid staff to fulfill all the needs in a church (p. 32). The reality in all conferences is that the paid pastors/youth pastors are not a large enough workforce to meet the need for youth ministry. Morgan (2005) points out, “Instead of agonizing over how to find the money to hire staff, spend your time figuring out how to motivate members to take part in ministry” (p. 65). And Senter (1997) adds, “Long-term growth of a youth ministry is directly dependent on the ability of the youth worker to release ministry responsibilities to mature and qualified lay volunteers” (p. 150).

A major missing link in the current structure is the volunteer youth leader who can partner with the conference youth department. In the new structure, geographical regions called Clusters would be overseen by a volunteer. This volunteer would coordinate youth ministry within his or her cluster by connecting with, encouraging, supporting, and training the local church youth leaders that live in close proximity to them. For more details about what the content of this material is, see Appendix A. These coordinators form the team that the youth director would work with to strengthen youth ministry in the churches in their Cluster.

Getting Organized

One of the first steps in finding volunteers is to get organized and create clear job descriptions for all volunteers. Rusin (1999) states, “Before you begin recruiting volunteers, decide exactly what you want them to do” (p. 23). The youth director must be clear on what is expected of the volunteer. People deserve clarity. Volunteers should understand exactly what is expected of them (Hybels, 2004, p. 111). A simple ministry description will help them decide if they are up to the task of serving and whether their
current time schedule will have space for all that will be asked of them (Wilson, 2004, pp. 25-26). This lays the foundation for what will come next—recruiting volunteers. See Appendix D for the Cluster Coordinator ministry description.

Recruiting Leaders

Once the youth director has a clear picture of what is needed, then finding who will fulfill those roles is paramount. Those in ministry have a variety of opinions on how to do this. The natural response in recruiting volunteers is to ask people to help. Some authors claimed that they do not ask individuals to help (Morgan & Stevens, 2005). Other authors explain that some will never help simply because they are never asked (Hybels, 2004). And yet another argues that people need to be asked (Simon, 2009). Hybels (2004) writes that one of the most effective ways to recruit volunteers is ask them one on one “and the more personal, the better” (p. 106). Hybels further explains how in so doing, the leader can share both the vision of the organization and the value of being a part of the team.

The youth director should ask the recruited volunteers to help in recruiting additional volunteers. Morgan (2005, p. 45) calls this strategy “shoulder-tapping.” He gives a challenge to, “Tell each volunteer in your church [organization] that in the next year it is his or her job to “tap the shoulder” of one person who is currently not serving” (p. 46). Recruiting volunteers should not be limited to the pastor or paid staff positions (Morgan); everyone should be asked to be on the lookout for potential volunteers. The volunteer team will be broader and stronger when the whole team is constantly on the lookout for new recruits. The youth director can help create a culture where it is normal for all leaders to always be searching for additional leaders. This would be a quick way to
add additional volunteers or leaders. This is the current practice in Florida Conference. In addition, there are electronic posts (emails/newsletters) that communicate where volunteers are needed. The goal is to involve as many as possible in the process of recruiting volunteers.

The conference youth department will be the hub around which volunteers are recruited and cleared for youth ministry. Wilson (2004) writes that organizations should “grow toward centralizing the function of volunteer recruitment” (p. 46). There are several advantages of centralized processing. Insurance claims for example involve the whole conference. A central office needs to have access to personnel information in case of an emergency. In order to move forward in the same direction, each area would recommend volunteers to be processed by the central office to stay coordinated.

Helping People Find Fulfillment

When people volunteer, it helps them to know that their life matters and they often find fulfillment and satisfaction through volunteering. Morgan and Stevens (2005) put it this way,

It is a privilege to invite people into what might be the only activity in their lives that causes them to feel worth and significance, one in which they might experience for the first time being used by God almighty to touch another human life. (p. 14)

Hybels (2004) states it this way,

You and I get to invite people to be used by God in ways they never imagined. We have the opportunity to empower them to develop gifts they didn’t know they had. We can cheer them on as they courageously assume new levels of Kingdom responsibility that fill their hearts to overflowing. And we get to see the look on their faces when they realize God has used them to touch another human being. (p. 12)

So many people are hungry for this experience. Inviting them to be volunteers can tap into this need and generate an enormous sense of accomplishment in a volunteer’s life.
Too many people end up living their lives as spectator Christians. Hybels adds that serving is what leads people to the “amazing realization that this is what you were made for!” (p. 33). That is the “aha” moment that volunteers experience when they are recruited, trained, and set free to do what God created them to do. Hybels claims that this desire to make a difference comes directly from God and is implanted in the human heart. Leaders have the joy of calling people into service to experience the thrill of being a participant/contributor to the work of God rather than merely watching. Wilson (2004) comments that volunteering helps “members grow deep in their faith or be satisfied with their spiritual growth” (p. 7).

Orientation

Volunteers need to be introduced to what their role will be. Too often, individuals are invited to serve and then left to figure things out on their own. Simon (2009) recommends conducting a volunteer orientation session that includes sharing an information packet, going over the short and long-range goals, sharing what role the volunteer is expected to fulfill, what compensation/reimbursement the volunteer is eligible for, and including a date for a follow-up visit 3-6 months later to see how the individual is doing (pp. 58-59). The orientation serves to make it clear to volunteers what is expected of them and what their purpose is. It is an important first step in their training.

Ongoing training, in addition to the orientation, is also needed. Lipp (2009) writes, “While an orientation provides people with all the background information they need to be successful in your organization, training gives them the information and skills they need to be successful doing their job” (p. 122). Simon (2009) cautions, “Most organizations have a tendency to view leadership training as a separate track or occasional occurrence rather
than part and parcel of the organization itself” (p. 100). To have a successful volunteer ministry the leadership must commit to training the volunteers to do what is expected of them. This training should be ongoing and focused on what the volunteer’s role is and must be relevant to helping them reach the goals they have been given. Rusin (1999) adds, “The success of a volunteer program is directly proportional to the amount of resources, energy, and time the organization devotes to its volunteers” (p. 15). This is key. These two areas, orientation and training, will require time and energy, and they are the bridge between recruiting and retaining volunteer’s which will help them succeed.

How to Retain Them

Once a volunteer has been recruited, the work is not done; more is still needed. Rusin (1999) explains, “Just because volunteers have signed up and begun working doesn’t mean they will continue to volunteer” (p. 75). Simon (2009) also states, “Volunteering isn’t always easy” (p. 1). Volunteers often face challenges that can make their experience delightful or disastrous. For this reason, Simon concludes, “they need to be handled with care” (p. 1). This is true of any organization that depends on volunteers, but it is even more important when one is dealing with a culture that is dependent on the development of volunteers but does not invest much in volunteer development and training. The goal would be to transform an organization into one that holds volunteering high and raises the bar in terms of expectations. This can be very challenging. Simon points out, “Understanding organizational culture is the key to improving it” (p. 13) and “Key phrases should be repeated in print, sermons, and lectures” (p. 17). Hybels (2004) adds, “A great volunteer culture never happens by accident. It always requires a major investment by church staff” (p. 113).
Hybels also shares three lessons that he suggests church leaders bear in mind to help retain volunteers. (a) A new volunteer is fragile—“a new volunteer is extremely vulnerable to discouragement and disillusionment” (p. 113). (b) The easiest way to defeat a volunteer is to waste his or her time—“wasting a volunteer’s time is the best way to assure that he’ll never show up again … An equal danger exists of loading too much responsibility on a volunteer” (p. 115). (c) Leadership needs to remind volunteers that, “Sustained servanthood flows from spiritual fullness” (p. 132). Each volunteer must be taught to monitor themselves and ask, “What is motivating us spiritually” (p. 132).

Ministry that is done out of the overflow of a volunteer that is experiencing God on an individual, personal, daily basis is vital. Hybels warns, “If we are frenetically serving God but never taking the time to commune with him, we may make it through a fifty-yard dash, but we’ll never know the joy of finishing the serving marathon to which God call us” (p. 132).

According to Hybels,

Volunteers should be reminded, again and again, that they’re valued; that what they’re doing is part of the redemptive drama that’s been going on throughout human history; that the role they are playing is not insignificant; that God treasures every task they perform, every hour of service they render (p. 116).

Hybels adds, “We need to create a culture of encouragement by taking the time to look each other in the eye and remind each other that what we’re doing matters. God sees it, and for what it’s worth, I see it too” (p. 117).

A final way to help retain volunteers is by helping them serve in ways that align with their spiritual gifts. And this may or may not happen all of a sudden. Hybels cautions, “The key is to look at discovering, developing, and deploying your spiritual gifts as a process. Don’t worry about finding the perfect fit immediately. Give yourself
permission to learn as you experiment” (p. 71). Hybels adds, “One of the goals of experimentation is to discover that special passion. Connecting our spiritual gift with an area of passion is key to ultimate effectiveness and fulfillment in serving. It is also one of the keys to maintaining energy in serving” (pp. 81-82). Most people are naturally drawn toward a particular people group, social group or area of need. Tuning in to these inclinations is a great way to start discovering one’s passion (p. 95). Hybels continues, “I believe it is generally unwise to ask a potential volunteer to make a long-term commitment up front; better just to invite him or her into the experimentation process” (p. 107). Lipp (2009) explains another reason why this is so important by stating, “Putting the right people in the right jobs is the secret to successful volunteer management” (p. 31).

**Conclusion**

Volunteers are the most vital ingredient to transform the way Florida Conference does youth ministry. The youth director working with a team of volunteers who are recruited, trained, and deployed in the three regions of Florida Conference would facilitate the cultural shift that is needed to better meet the needs of the youth in the congregations in those regions. Developing great relationships with these volunteers and then helping them to develop great relationships with the local church youth leaders they serve would be the biggest job of the youth director. This will provide the relational structure to shape the way youth ministry is done. It would show the youth leader a way to conduct their own ministry structure in their youth groups. It would provide the frame for the team of volunteers to come alongside to support, train, and strengthen youth leaders in local churches which means young people will be better served by those who lead them.
Summary

Youth ministry in Florida Conference will be strengthened by following the concepts explored in this document and developing a structure that links local church youth leaders with their colleagues in a particular geographical territory through a network of volunteers called Cluster Coordinators. The youth director will need a clear vision, and must be able to rally others to support the vision. The youth director will need a basic understanding of change dynamics and how to lead their conference youth department from where is to where it needs to go. The youth director will need to create a structure that will allow volunteer coordinators to flourish. And finally, the youth director will thrive by being clear on what volunteers are to do and by inviting them to join the team and then taking care of them through nurturing relationships and ongoing training. If the youth director can accomplish these things, youth ministry in Florida Conference will be strengthened and a new, more dynamic culture will be seen.
CHAPTER 4

NARRATIVE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

Florida Conference has been through many changes in youth ministry in the past several years and there will be more changes in the future. Youth ministry is dynamic, and good youth ministry at the conference level is in a constant process of structuring and restructuring. The focus of this chapter is to chart a course detailing what intentional changes will be necessary in Youth Ministries in Florida Conference to strengthen youth ministry in local churches based on the previous chapters’ insights. This will include the following: a brief description and history of what youth ministry looked like in past decades in Florida Conference, the development of a new department in 2009, the blending of two departments in 2010, and then, most of the focus will be on what it will take to install a new vision for Youth Ministries in Florida Conference.

Description and History of the Ministry Context

Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists enjoyed several years of abundance, growth, and tithe increases in the 1990s which created capital to hire new departmental associates along with the budgets to do ministry. The Pathfinder Department grew to a team of two and the Youth Department grew to a team of four. However, early into the new millennium, the newly elected conference president saw that changes were needed if the conference was to survive, let alone thrive into the future. Under heavy financial
pressure, the difficult and necessary decision was made to lay off 30 pastors and 30 office staff beginning in 2004 as part of an attempt to balance the budget, reduce debt, and get spending under control. This included a gradual reduction in staff from two to one in the Pathfinder Department and four to two in the Youth Department. But this was only the beginning.

In 2009, the conference administration formed a new department, Integrated Youth Ministries (IYM), which included the following ministries: Camp Ministries, Children and Family Ministries, Education, Adventurers, Pathfinders, Youth, Young Adult and Public Campus Ministries. A vice president, who would meet weekly with the conference administration and monthly with these departmental directors, was appointed to oversee IYM. The mission statement for IYM was “working together to disciple God’s children.” From birth to young adult life, all of the ministries that worked with children/young people were to collaborate in a seamless transition to help them come to know Jesus, live for Jesus and follow Jesus. This was the broader context in which youth ministry was to develop and function.

In August 2010, the conference administration completed their search for someone to come in and bring what had been two separate departments—Pathfinders and Youth—under one new director. After having spent the last two decades divided where one director ran Pathfinders and another director ran Youth, this merger brought Adventurers, Pathfinders, Youth, Young Adult, and Public Campus Ministries under a unified Youth Ministries Department with one director. I was invited to serve in this new arrangement as the Youth Ministries Director in August of 2010 and I was told I would have two
associates. My job was to find a way to make this new combination work. Change had become the new normal in Florida Conference.

**Statement of the Problem**

Youth Ministries in Florida Conference was in a time of transition. Even though there had been strong leadership in both departments before, when looking at what it meant to blend them together into one unified department, it felt like I was in the opening chapter of Genesis—things were formless and void. There was no map on how to make it all work. For at least the past 20 years, they had worked under a system of two separate departments and directors. Lack of communication was a problem during those 20 years; I was told there was a time when the two departments functioned without even consulting each other to coordinate a calendar of events. But things had changed: the staff was cut in half and budgets were reduced. And on top of that there would be a new director and a new unified Youth Ministries Department. This was all in addition to the major change towards creating the IYM Department.

Leaders from Pathfinders and Adventurers did not really know or associate with youth pastors or youth leaders. These ministries were far apart from one another. And many times they were in competition with one another for time on the calendar. They were entrenched in their silos and worked independently of each other. A shift away from that model was what the conference was looking for. Collaboration was to be the new desired culture in Youth Ministries and in IYM.

As a starting point, in order to establish contact with the local youth leaders I needed a list of who they were. Was it in the file cabinet, computer, or did the secretary have it? How could I contact and influence youth leaders without any details on how to
reach them? Or where was the info about what youth ministry looked like in a particular church? How could I build something that had no connection point with local churches? Who were the leaders that I could meet with and process ideas with to get their input? There was not a list anywhere. We would have to create one. It was obvious that a lot of work needed to be done to strengthen local church youth ministry. Connection to and communication with the local church would need to be established right away.

It was challenging for me to have no plan or blueprint on how to do what I was asked to do. If the two departments were to become one and start to work together, many things would need to change. I knew from my research to expect resistance to change, and that I would need to have a clear vision and the wisdom of God to bring about that change. I would need a map to clarify and organize myself for the task ahead.

Even though IYM and YM were created to improve what had been, the problem was, not everyone thought there was a problem with how things had been. There were many who wanted it to stay the way it was—separate Pathfinder and separate Youth Department, with no IYM. Some could not imagine justifying a whole salary to oversee all the departments. In the midst of all this change, there was a very clear sense that God’s Spirit was needed to inspire a new structure in Youth Ministries in Florida Conference.

It came down to a matter of perspective: On the one hand, there were problems that were causing chaos; but on the other hand, there were also enormous opportunities. I was struck by the glaring need for a structural change. The conference administration had given me the green light to make the needed changes. This was a chance to put into practice structural systems that I had dreamed of since beginning pastoring in the 1990s, and had seen more clearly in the four years of serving as Youth Director in New England,
not to speak of all I had learned from the research for this project on structure. I would
need a vision from God. I would need to find the best ways to introduce change, to get
input from and show appreciation for the volunteers that actually make things happen,
redefine the role of the youth director, and then develop a structure to facilitate the
ongoing needs and changes of youth ministry in a much larger conference.

It was exciting to realize this task would require taking biblical principles of
organization and structure and applying them to modern day youth ministry. This new
structure would need to be anchored in these scriptural concepts: God is a God of order,
principles for structure are found in both the Old and New Testaments, language matters,
and God continually calls His people into service as the means to help humans find
purpose and fulfillment in their lives. These principles would gird the formation of a new
structure for Youth Ministries in Florida Conference.

Statement of the Task

The conference administration wanted a unified Youth Ministries Department
under one director. This director would oversee Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth, Young
Adult and Campus Ministries and have two associates. My assignment was clear—I had
to find a way to make it work. But that is all that was clear. At the beginning, there were
more questions than answers. It was obvious that there would be a need for restructuring.
And yet there were many unknowns. How could one person do this? How would the load
be divided among the team of three youth directors to manage and move forward all of the
ministries in Youth Ministries and all across a very big state like Florida? Would each
ministry have its own structure? Would there be a common structure to simplify and unify
all of the Youth Ministries? Would one structure be enough? What would be the best
approach moving forward—creating a new structure or using one that was already in place? Did any other department in the conference already have a viable structure in place? Could that model be adapted and/or applied to all of the ministries in Youth Ministries? What would be the organizing principle that would keep us all together in this process of change? These were some of the questions that were asked in attempting to find the best way forward. The more these questions were explored, the more I could see what I would need to do to turn things around.

The challenge was to create a structure that would strengthen youth ministry. Local church youth leaders would need to be contacted, encouraged, supported, and trained. To do so, I would need to understand what was going on and why it was being done that way before introducing change. It is important to have an understanding of the situation before introducing change. And it would need to be something we discussed and decided together, not just me as a leader declaring what needed to happen. I would have to meet with the current leaders and get to know them and appreciate them and their role as volunteers. And the team of volunteers would need to grow. I would need to work with the current volunteers to build from the ground up the structure to support local church youth leaders. Furthermore, I would have to find a way to link all the ministries together or create five different models and give each ministry its own structure.

**Delimitations of the Project**

There are many areas that could and maybe even should be addressed in attempting to re-position the Youth Ministries Department to strengthen teen ministry. For the purposes of this project the focus will be on what the Youth Ministries Department can do within the parameters that it has been given by administration. It is beyond the
authority of the YM Director to change entire conference systems, but it was expected that the systems within the YM Department would be modified to meet the objectives laid out in this project and agreed upon by the administration.

This structural change is predicated on recruiting, training and retaining a team of volunteers to work closely with the YM Director. While the assumption is that God has people who are waiting to take up their role as a volunteer in this structure, and that He has equipped leaders and given them a calling to serve young people, the timing for this to develop is not guaranteed to occur within the time limits of this project. Nevertheless, the foundation can be laid and one could expect to see, at least in some areas, success in implementing the proposed structure. God’s timing may be different than mine.

Finally, once the structure is implemented, the lessons learned should be analyzed to facilitate constant learning and adaptation going forward. Ministry is always in motion. This structure is not meant to be a one size fits all for all people and all places. Rather it is more of an attempt to create a model that will remain adaptable and that others can modify to meet their contextualized needs. The bottom line will remain the same. Something must be done to strengthen local church youth ministry. Doing nothing will improve nothing. The future generations are counting on this generation to do something.

**Description of the Project Process**

I will begin by praying to God for a vision for Youth Ministries in Florida Conference. This vision will be shaped by what God has already revealed about how He is eager to share with his leaders a vision for what He wants to accomplish through them and will include a vision for structure and organization as informed through the Bible. In addition, the vision will need to be verified as it is shared with the other leaders and
volunteers. God has been in charge of Youth Ministries in Florida Conference and has a plan for what He wants to see happen and His plan will be better than anything I could come up with on my own. Ultimately His plan will be best.

As the vision is clarified, I will start to map out the steps to get us there. This is where the dynamics of change will be so important. Change cannot happen in isolation. I will need to communicate with the key volunteer teams to share what direction God seems to be moving us and how we can get there. Because ministry is mainly a volunteer movement, getting input from the volunteers will not only help shape the future but also develop ownership of a shared vision. For the vision to outlast the YM Director, the volunteer leaders will have to embrace the vision.

Furthermore, administration will need to be consulted so I will know what I can decide on my own and what they want to be able to have input on before making a final decision. I will also want to know how often they would like to get information or reports from me and to whom do I need to send my reports? Building my relationship with my vice president will help him actively share in what is developing. He will convey our progress to the rest of the administration. Collectively, volunteers and the administration will agree on a plan of action as we build a consensus. Then it will be time to begin implementing the managed changes in stages over time.

I will need to meet with other departmental directors to learn about the structures they are using. It is apparent that Education and Ministerial are most similar to Youth Ministries. However, I will also include Children and Family Life Departments as well. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. And at the very least, what another department is doing may spark an idea that may turn out to be great for the YM Department.
I will need to stay always vigilant and move at a reasonable pace. Change is difficult for most and it is easier when the team gets to give input and take ownership of the changes. I will not allow myself to start making changes until there is a consensus among the leaders. The target will be to have 75% buy in—a clear majority. Getting less support is dangerous (less than 50%), not to mention potentially divisive, and waiting for 100% percent may not be realistic. Once that threshold is met, I believe it will be safe to move forward in confidence that most of the team agrees with the direction. The more leaders that I can get to come on board quickly, the faster the assimilation will be. This will be a balancing act—to talk with people from a sense of urgency and to allow time to answer questions and let the vision catch on in people’s imaginations.

I will need to meet with the current Pathfinder and Adventurer leadership because, as of this writing, I have not found an acceptable youth organizational model to work with. The Pathfinder organizational structure is the most developed of the three. If I can learn from them what is working and what the strengths of their operations are, I can add that to the mix of what could work for youth ministry. I have observed that the area coordinator system has worked with local churches and is what has made the club ministries work over the years. Could it work in youth ministry? In the process of asking questions and finding out what is working I will begin to define reality and build the relationships that will be key to moving forward in a united way. Finally, I will ask the current Pathfinder and Adventurer leaders to keep an eye out for potential volunteers in youth ministry. They are already visiting churches and talking with pastors. If they join the effort to recruit a new team of volunteers for youth ministry, it can help accelerate finding willing
adults to help build this volunteer core. I cannot do this alone. Their recommendations will be invaluable.

I will examine the Pathfinder and Adventurer structure to see if it can be modified or blended to accommodate youth ministry. I will explore if there is anything that is so specific to these two club ministries that would prevent teen ministry from developing a similar structure. The thinking is that it would be complicated and cumbersome to have unique structures for each specific ministry. What remains to be seen is whether or not this will be practical; given the fact that the youth ministry here in Florida Conference has traditionally been unstructured. Is youth ministry here unstructured because it has to be or because no one has done recent work on structuring it? Or is it just the nature of many youth leaders to be anti-structure and anti-organization? Will the same structure be able to fulfill the same function of bringing order and offering support?

I will be sensitive to the roles that current volunteers have already been playing on the team and the titles they have. As new positions and titles are created, I will keep in mind how people feel about their new title. I want to always communicate value and worth to our volunteers and for some people this will matter a lot. Additionally, I will look for a new common language that will be simple and clear and will help us all know what we are talking about when we use certain words. The titles we decide on will be the same for all of the ministries in YM.

In many ways, the work that has to be done to unify a Youth Ministries Department is a vital step in the bigger picture. The main target is to strengthen teen ministry in local churches. But this has to be done in the context of what the whole department is being asked to coordinate. It is a part of a much bigger whole. So, in order
to impact youth ministry, I will also have to redesign and refine how the other ministries are being executed as well. This is one of the challenges and exciting opportunities—to find a way to make it work.

Additionally, I will look at Florida as a whole and see how it can be broken down into parts—smaller parts that are easier to manage and oversee. This is what Moses did once his father-in-law spoke with him. Jethro told Moses to appoint people to help him with his task. He could not do it alone, and neither can I. There has to be some kind of division or breakdown of the whole. In the big picture a conference is made up of churches, and Florida has over 300 churches. How will we best subdivide these churches into more manageable groupings? What will those groupings be called? Who will decide which churches are in each grouping and how many are in each grouping? What is a reasonable number of churches for one volunteer to oversee effectively? The breakdown of Israel as 1000s, 100s, 50s is instructive and possibly prescriptive. The principle of dividing the whole into smaller parts for improved delivery of service and training will be the key.

If the organizational structure of Pathfinders and Adventurers proves useful to emulate, I will happily tell the leaders of those ministries that they will be leading the way and paving the path to a new and brighter future for all of Youth Ministries as we learn from them and lean on them for input and direction. I will have to prepare the youth leader group for the changes and encourage them to embrace the changes. I will also have to share a vision of what the benefits will be of doing so. I will have to keep an open ear to listen to what leaders are sharing about what they like and do not like from the discussion side and the implementation side. And, I will have to help each ministry feel
like it is important and can function interdependently, as a part of the Youth Ministries whole.

Sorting out the job descriptions for the director and associates will be an important step. Dealing with questions like: Is it best to have each associate specialize in an area of ministry for the whole conference or to be a generalist and focus in one geographical area? Are the associates autonomous or inter-dependent? Or are they both? Could the division of labor be event-based? Does the team do events together or does each one handle separate events? These issues will all have to be prayed over and processed, with input from research and other departments and leaders with experience in managing change in Youth Ministries.

**Summary**

I will move forward in confidence that God is a God of order and that He is a specialist in bringing order out of chaos. I will work this plan and expect that adjustments will happen along the way and that God will continue to guide us as we make those modifications. This will anchor me on the days that I feel overwhelmed by what I have inherited. I will ask God for a fresh vision and hold lots of conversations to build consensus with administration, current leaders, pastors and potential leaders to start to form a vision and then prepare everyone for changes that will need to come and intentionally plan ways to counter possible resistance to change. I will also formulate a structure based on what was learned regarding structure from the Bible, through my reading, and through what I have learned from the conversations with leaders.

Then, I will continually look for ways to hold up the role of volunteers as primary. It is imperative that the current volunteers feel valued and that new volunteers are
recruited with a sense of “I play a vital role in accomplishing the vision.” The goal will be to find practical ways to develop and implement this structure to strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference. And I will remain sensitive to how change affects people and work to develop a sense of urgency as well as being clear in my communication of the process of change.

There will be several ways that I will measure whether or not this structural redesign has been successful in strengthening youth ministry in Florida Conference. First, do we have a current contact list of local church youth leaders in the conference office? Are we able to, and do we, regularly make contact with these leaders from the office? Have we recruited and trained volunteer lay leaders to serve as Cluster Coordinators? We started with none and the goal is to recruit 23. Next, are we providing training for our Cluster Coordinators that they, in turn, can pass on to their local church youth leaders? These are some ways we can measure from the conference office if we have actually created the needed changes in the structure of Youth Ministries in Florida Conference.

There are also some subjective ways to measure whether or not youth ministry has been strengthened. Do local church youth leaders feel supported? Do they feel like they are not alone? Do they feel like they are better prepared and resourced to lead out in youth ministry at the local level? Do pastors feel like the Youth Ministries Department supports them, their youth leader(s) and their local youth ministry? Is there a sense of a common vision developing? These are more difficult to measure and yet they are as vital in determining the success of the new service delivery structure. The subjective elements are signs that the culture of how the structure impacts youth ministry are viscerally experienced—it is not just theory; it is also being felt.
In conclusion, there will be two ways to measure success. The first is, did we actually build a structure where volunteers were recruited to be Cluster Coordinators and did we connect local churches to those Coordinators? Second, do the local church youth leaders feel more connected and supported by the conference than they did before. This can be measured by two sources of data: (a) Discussions with Cluster Coordinators; (b) Personal conversations with key leaders at various levels from local church to conference administration. These two ways will help me evaluate whether or not Youth Ministry in general and specifically is stronger and better off than before having this re-structuring in Florida Conference.
CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the steps that were implemented to develop a structure to strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference. The theological foundation and the learning from the literature review shaped the development that became the building blocks to implement a new structure. I will describe the process that took place, which was often different from the original plan. And, I will also describe what I have learned through this journey of developing a structure to strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference.

Description of the Intervention

In order to establish a structure to strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference, several building blocks were needed. The order of the blocks has some importance, just as in a building a foundation must be laid, then the walls, and then the roof. There was a clear picture of what this would look like when it was constructed—youth leaders all over the state would be connected to the Youth Ministries Department through a network of volunteers called Cluster Coordinators. The structure would serve as the means to deliver to the youth leaders the encouragement, support, and training they lacked. As a result, youth leaders would be able to lead young people better in local churches. This relationship would strengthen local church youth ministry. This was the structure we were trying to build to improve the conferences ability to impact teen ministry.
I investigated how other departments in the conference were addressing the issue of structure and how they were reaching out to the constituents. The Education Department had a director and four associates. This was not an identical match in personnel, but that was not the only difference. They chose to divide into specialty areas with each associate traveling the entire state to help schools within the area of their expertise and training. This did not seem ideal for us. Furthermore, the Education Department only had 30 schools; we would serve over 300 churches and companies.

I next spoke with the Ministerial Department. Since it oversees pastors and churches I expected more similarities. I was not disappointed. It had one director and three associates. Each associate was strategically placed—one in north, one in central, and one in south. The job of the field associates was to work with the pastors in their area and be a part of the ministerial team for the conference. This model looked more promising. Even though Youth Ministries only had two associates, I figured I could double as the Central Area Youth Ministries Director as well as the State Youth Ministries Director (and pray for another associate to take on Central Florida in the future). This would prove to be unrealistic—to do both jobs well was more than I anticipated.

I gave regular reports to Administration. I met with my VP monthly to share updates and how plans were progressing. I also met with the President regularly and at times monthly to share with him what we were doing and ask for input. I often got affirmation to continue with the direction we were headed. I was working to unify the Youth Ministries Department at the request of the administration and needed to make sure that they approved of the actions we were taking. This task alone, combining the two
departments into one, absorbed a lot of time and energy. It was a preliminary step that had to be accomplished to get to the purpose of this project, to strengthen youth ministry.

In my interactions with other conference Youth Directors over many years, I have found that most were not dealing with this matter of having a structure to strengthen local church teen ministry. Summer Camp and Pathfinder ministry consume most of a director’s time and very few youth directors have any extra time, energy, or desire to work on creating a new structure and recruiting volunteers. However, there were a few that did. Greater New York Conference and Southeastern California Conference were the two that had developed a structure to focus on growing local church high school ministry through a team of volunteers. See Appendix B and C for their respective documents. And, it is interesting to note, that here in Florida Conference, the Youth Ministries Director did not run summer camp; nor was the youth director responsible for summer camp in the other two conferences that were experimenting with structures. I believe in summer camp ministry and saw firsthand as a camp staff and the Camp Director how powerful it is; and, it undeniably demands the largest portion of any youth director’s time and energy.

Building Block Two: Dividing the State

Another important block was getting a handle on how to divide Florida up into smaller parts. The three areas were helpful, but each area was not small enough. I asked the secretary to buy me a large wall map of Florida. I stared at it and prayed over it for hours, asking God to give me insight and to see His vision. Then God gave me an idea. Does someone else in the conference already have all the churches mapped out on a map? Surely a map would bring some order. I was clicking around the conference web site and found a digital map that one could search to find all the churches in Florida. It was clunky
and not very user friendly. I asked around and found that our office technology expert, 
Dave, had designed that and when I talked to him he said he had some software that he 
was playing with to improve it. This was a breakthrough. He entered every church 
address which turned into a little dot on the screen. It was easy to see which churches 
were close together and would make a natural grouping based on their geographical 
location. It felt like a plan was coming together. This mapping software gave wings to 
the vision and helped us begin to literally “see” how this could look and function. 

This was all organized in the office, but I knew that it had to be approved by the 
team. As it was coming together, I would leak it out in pieces to our state leaders in 
Pathfinders and Adventurers. They were the only volunteers in place at the beginning. I 
wanted them to see it first and to have a chance to give their input. I believed that if they 
could see it and we could unite our voices then it would be easier for others on the team to 
accept the changes. Once the map was populated with all the churches by location, it 
seemed so obvious; breaking the state into smaller groupings to make it manageable was 
gaining momentum. It looked like we were getting organized! And putting a structure in 
place was going to help us to become more effective in how we ministered to young 
people. The next step would be to open the concept for input and to be approved by a 
wider circle, the Pathfinder and Adventurer Committee.

Block Three: Pathfinder and Adventurer 
Committee (PAC)

I began by working with the main governing body for Pathfinder and Adventurer 
ministry—PAC (formerly called—Pathfinder Advisory Council; now called the Pathfinder 
and Adventurer Committee). First, I met and visited with each of the appointed PAC 
members one-on-one to get their input about how Pathfinder and Adventurer ministry was
going and to ask what was working and what was not working. This meant miles and
days of travel up and down the state. But those miles would pay dividends and were vital
to building rapport and relationships with the leaders, a key element in change. Basically,
I wanted our lay leaders to get to know me and to have a chance for me to get to know
them. I was new to the team and it would take time to trust me and show them that I had
the best interest of the leaders and ministry in mind. Plus, they were the experts. They
were the ones already doing it. I needed to know what they knew. And, I wanted to
convey that we were all in this together. I knew there would need to be changes, and so
did they, but that did not mean it would be easy. Change rarely is. But we were building
relationships first. This would be the capital that would be needed to navigate the often
bumpy roads of change. I knew what would be asked of them and anticipated how
challenging the changes would be because I saw clearly the gap from where we were to
where we needed to be. The vision was already at work guiding the decisions and
direction of what was being done. If this group, PAC, could make the change, I felt like
we could turn the entire Youth Ministries around.

Building Block Four: Separating Adventurers from Pathfinders

We had to make several monumental changes early on regarding structure. One
change was to separate Pathfinder and Adventurers. They are two distinct ministries but
they were being treated as if Adventurers was an extension or mini-version of Pathfinders.
In fact, Adventurers were referred to as Pathfinder Adventurers. This decision to create a
separate Adventurer identity was actually part of the move to unify our department. We
would be one department representing five unique ministries. I had to sort out the
Adventurer and Pathfinder piece first because this was by far the strongest ministry. The
thinking was, “if we can get these two re-organized, then we can build the whole
department around the same structure.” We organized it on paper first. And each step of
the way I was constantly sharing with our key Pathfinder and Adventurer leadership what
the structure could look like. Once we agreed to the changes conceptually with the inner
core of our leadership, the volunteer State representatives for Adventurers and Pathfinders,
then the PAC met to give feedback and their blessing.

This separation was more about function than structure. The purpose of the
Adventurer ministry is to help a parent know how to raise their child. The main purpose
of Pathfinder ministry is to involve adults to help develop the character and skills of
mainly junior high kids. A child between the ages of 5-9 is still parent dependent and it
makes sense that the parent is still the main influencer in the life of the child. However,
once a child becomes 10 and grows into preteen and teen years, there is a steady march
toward independence from their parents. So, the goal of these two ministries is different.
This is why we separated them. And this is how it was originally designed to be.

There was a strong conviction that both ministries would need a network of
support. That would not vary. What would vary is the kind of support they needed. Each
one would need people who understood what their unique ministry needed. Both would
need structure. The structure would be the path to deliver the product: connection,
encouragement, support, and training through the role of the Cluster Coordinator. The
structure would be the means to deliver these services. It was a necessary, foundational
step. It was by no means the only step needed to strengthen youth ministry.

The way that this would impact youth ministry would be the same. The structure
would be needed to support local youth leaders. While the youth ministry has a very
different function, the youth leaders are still very much in need of a support system, and this is where the structure fills the gap. The needs of youth leaders are addressed by a unique team of Cluster Coordinators recruited to help local church youth leaders navigate the challenges of leading their youth through their presence, support, and training.

Building Block Five: Gathering Data

Ultimately, we had to find a way to impact the local church youth leader. To do that we would need to connect. The biggest gap seemed to be between the conference and the local church. So, this was where the effort was put. One would think that the contact information should already exist. This was not the case. The conference tried to keep the e-Adventist system current. In theory this sounded great, but they were dependent on local church clerks, who are volunteers, to send in the updates. But this did not happen consistently in churches across the state. Pastors were asked to send in the list of leaders for Youth Ministries, but this did not happen either. The conference administration was aware of this challenge and has tried to improve it. To gather the information our department needed, the decision was made to gather it ourselves through appointed leaders that are passionate about Youth and Young Adult ministry and recruited to serve in a defined geographical portion of the conference, the Cluster Coordinators.

The conference office had very little data to help develop a strategy to reach young people in Florida. Somehow, we needed to gather data. There was not a person that I could find that had any hard data. The Secretariat said they had nothing and referred me to the lady in charge of e-Adventist for Florida. She only had what clerks sent in, which was very little. A basic search yielded 17,000 people which was less than 1/3 of the total conference membership that were young people under the age of 35. And because we
only track members, until a child is baptized they are not even on the records. Whether it was by survey or from reports from somewhere else, we needed to find out what we really looked like. The Youth Ministries Department suggested we have a census done, but with a $100,000 price tag, we did not get administrative support, and understandably so.

Even within our own department, the secretary said that she stopped doing the reports for the club ministries because she was told that it was no longer needed. So, there was very little information to process or look at. We did try to contact our division office to get a copy of the reports that were sent in, but we did not get a returned email or phone call. We have redesigned the excel sheets to be able to start recording data and to be able to compare it over time (year after year). Youth data was not the only one that was sparse. We also looked for Pathfinder and Adventurer data. In addition, not all the clubs were registering or reporting. It was tough to get a solid number when we did not have the data coming in from the churches.

The lack of information was across the board in all youth ministries. However, for youth and young adult ministries we had even less information than for the club ministries. Which churches had a lot of Youth and Young Adults? What kinds of ministries were offered in those churches? Who was the youth or young adult leader? Did they have an active collegiate group or Sabbath School meeting? What was the contact info for the leaders? All of this information was missing. Without this information, we did not even know how to help. At best, it was a guess in the dark.

The only way we started to gather some data was when one of our Adventurer or Pathfinder volunteers visited a church for the club ministries, we also asked them to start probing for youth info. Who was the leader? What was their contact info (phone/email)?
This started to help. There was just no way for our team of three directors to gather this info in 300 churches. So, we relied on our network of volunteers to get this for us. And it worked! Between the Youth Cluster Coordinators we had recruited, and the Pathfinder and Adventurer Cluster Coordinators, we created a list of all the local church youth leaders in the conference, over a period of a year and a half.

Building Block Six: Overhauling the Existing Structure

We overhauled everything that was in place in Pathfinder and Adventurer ministries in terms of how they were organized and volunteers were reimbursed. We standardized how many churches a volunteer would oversee. The new range was 10-15 churches for a Cluster Coordinator. Some were responsible for 30-40 churches in the previous model; we found this too large a number for a volunteer. We standardized how volunteers were reimbursed. Some were getting one mileage rate, others another. Some had toll passes, paid by the conference, others did not. Some even had equipment like laptops and golf carts, others did not. We agreed to have one flat mileage reimbursement rate for all volunteers. There were no other special deals here and there for individuals. Everyone knew what everyone else would receive and it was the same for everyone. We standardized how this was all reported by creating one report form for everyone in all the ministries. See Appendix E. We capped the number of miles that a volunteer would be reimbursed for each month. Some were reporting literally thousands of miles and getting hundreds of dollars a month. One volunteer even confessed that he/she used this reimbursement to pay his/her mortgage! We standardized what the role of each volunteer would be by creating ministry descriptions. See Appendix D. We scripted everything we could script because we knew that we were building a foundation on Pathfinders and
Adventurers for the rest of the department. It was clear that we had to bring a different
level of order. What had been working was built around a different leadership style and it
did not have to fit for five different ministries. All these changes were done with the end
goal in mind, to strengthen each ministry and ultimately to prepare the way to establish a
structure for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

When we mess with people’s money we mess with their minds. This was one of
the challenges that I did not foresee, but should have anticipated, knowing that change
brings resistance. The financial benefit of being a volunteer in Florida Conference was so
significant that other people outside of Florida heard that volunteers in Florida were
getting paid! Even though I shared with the team the budget and how much we were
spending in travel alone, getting less of a reimbursement was a blow. This started to
threaten the stability of how much buy in there was to the changes we were bringing.
Over several months this finally settled down and we moved forward to other issues.

One related issue was that we had people in one part of the state regularly traveling
to the opposite end of the state—and Florida is a big state! In addition, I discovered that
there was no limit to how many miles a volunteer could travel, and some would even rent
a car, and turn in the bill for their rental. That was all acceptable in the system they were
used to. We knew we had to define territories and limit reportable travel to plan our
budget and be more efficient. Each day, as I learned new details, I realized more and more
how much needed to be done to implement the structure, to harness our resources and
maximize our impact for the new Youth Ministries Department.
Building Block Seven: Recruiting and Training
New Leaders

Over the course of the next several months, new leaders were recruited in Pathfinder ministry to flesh out the expanded structure. In some cases, the people that came on board had already been unofficially assisting the current volunteers to help them cover their areas. One of our goals was to reduce that number of churches each volunteer was responsible for and to make it more realistic. We also asked our existing Pathfinder volunteers to recommend names/individuals to be considered for these positions.

Furthermore, there was an additional step after recruiting the leaders, and that was training them and supporting them to do the work they have been called and invited to do. This was an important step and made a difference. Volunteer leaders needed to know what was expected and they needed to be held accountable for what they did (or did not do). The training involved going over the ministry description, clarifying expectations, attending an annual training, and participating in retreats.

The success of the structure was predicated on the belief that volunteers were out there and just needed to be invited to serve. And then they would need to be trained to accomplish the specific tasks of their job description. If we could find the right people and show them what to do and then turn them loose to do it, we felt that we could make this happen. And we did see it start to happen, just not as fast as I imagined. Each of the three ministries would need a team of 23 people. How hard could it be to find 23 people for Youth and Young Adult Cluster Coordinators in a conference of over 60,000? It was harder than I thought.
Building Block Eight: Creating a New Common Language

I knew that having a common language would be important for us to move forward as well. With the previous Pathfinder structure, there were only Area Administrators (one in the North, one in Central, one in the West, one in the East, three in the South). What made this system more complicated was how Florida was further subdivided by using compass directional names. In South Florida for example there was an area called South-South-South and South-South-North and there was even a South-North-South. In the North, there was also a North-South-North. It felt like we had to have a special degree to know which area we were talking about. In print and in conversation it was challenging to follow this system. To reduce this confusion, I got the conference Youth Directors together and we wrestled with the names. We brainstormed, used a thesaurus, prayed, and came up with new names: areas/zones/clusters. Areas refer to the three major sections and subdivide the entire state into three parts: North/Central/South. This was in line with what the Ministerial Department was already doing. Areas were further subdivided into Zones. North has Zones A, B; Central has Zones A, B; South has Zones A, B, C, and D. The zones were then subdivided into Clusters. These clusters refer to a geographical grouping of churches that are near each other. Each cluster has 10-15 churches in it. Every church in the Conference was assigned to a cluster. See Appendix F. These were the basics of our structure that was put into place to start to strengthen youth ministries.

We knew that the language would have to be the same for us to make this work. We all had to understand and mean the same thing when we spoke or referred to different pieces of how we were going to operate. This would also help keep the department and all the ministries working with the same system; in the long run this would simplify the
structure. We would only have to learn one structure that applied to all of the ministries. It sounded simple and looked solid. I did not want to have three or more separate systems and names for leaders—that seemed too confusing and unnecessary.

The other challenge was the name to put after the Area/Zone/Cluster level leaders. We had some that were already “administrators” and to call them coordinators might feel like a demotion. We wanted to be sensitive to people’s feelings in all of this as well. We decided that we could keep the name Administrator for the Zone level (which was a renaming of the former Area Administrator). We would also keep the name of Area Administrator but we redefined it in the new model to mean one of the three areas only: North/Central/South. Then we had to settle on a name for the Cluster level leader—we decided on Cluster Coordinator. So, the structure was set, the names/titles were set. Now we could all say the same thing in a simplified language and everyone should be able to tell exactly what we were talking about. This would apply to all ministries in our department. This was a huge step forward.

Building Block Nine: The Structure Starts Taking Shape

We wanted a Cluster Coordinator over each Cluster (seven in the North, seven in Central and nine in the South—23 total Cluster Coordinators). Clusters were identified by numbers (for now 1-9). Every church in Florida was assigned to a Cluster with a Cluster Coordinator representative. This person was responsible for overseeing 10-15 specific churches in their assigned territory and for their ministry. This Cluster person contacted the local leader of the ministries that were already happening in the churches to assist, connect, network, support, and train those leaders in their territory. They were also responsible to visit each church in their Cluster and make contact with the local church
pastor to see if they have any needs in terms of starting Adventurers, Pathfinders, Youth or Young Adult ministries (based on what the church child/youth population is and what the church is ready for.) By working with the current leaders and ministries and seeing how they could help the church start new ministries as they were ready, this team of volunteers was coming alongside local churches to strengthen their youth ministries.

In addition, we recruited Zone Administrators that oversee two or more clusters. Their role is to work with the Cluster Coordinators to answer questions, offer support, and visit churches and leaders as requested by the Cluster Coordinator. Basically, they are the first line of support for their Cluster Coordinators. In addition, we have asked that they would plan an annual Zone event that would gather young people from their Zone together into a larger group. This was to help keep the idea in focus that we are all a part of something larger. Each church is a part of a Cluster which is part of a Zone which is part of an Area which is part of the Conference. We wanted local churches to see the value of partnering together with other churches, either in the Clusters or Zones. We wanted to get the few young people from one church to connect with the few from another church so that when they met they could do more (in service) and have fellowship with other Adventist young people (in social settings). We had also dreamed about how stronger ministries within the Cluster can join forces to strengthen a weaker ministry within their Cluster or Zone. This will help instill the mentality that we are all in this together and need to help one another.

Structurally we were moving in the direction of getting organized to move ahead strategically. By having Cluster, Zone, Area, and State level volunteer leaders we were positioning ourselves to best serve each church in the ministries the Youth Ministries
Department represents. In addition, we had the three Area Youth Directors to oversee Youth Ministries (Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth and Young Adult, and Public Campus Ministries) in their area. We were also clarifying who the key volunteer leaders were and recruiting additional volunteers to fill in the gaps. It was clear to us that the distance between the conference office and the local church was too large. As we continued to recruit competent leaders we reduced the gap between the conference office and the local church.

We created a ministry description for each level of leaders: Cluster, Zone, Area, and State. See Appendix D. This was done to help clarify the expectations and roles of each leader. It had to be clear who is responsible for what and who they are directly accountable to. The ministry descriptions were basically the same across the different ministries with some language changes to fit each specific ministry (Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth and Young Adult). This was very important to keep the department united. We used the same verbiage for each ministry.

Building Block Ten: Setting Target Dates

We set some target dates to create a timeline to implement fully the structure that had been created on paper. It was time to put the plan into action and work towards achieving the goals of recruiting volunteers to fill vacancies. We set the following targets:

1. Pathfinders: have full structural implementation by August 1, 2011
2. Adventurers: have full structural implementation by December 31, 2012
3. Youth and Young Adult: have full structural implementation by December 31, 2012
4. Youth: have full structural implementation by December 31, 2014
5. Young Adult: have full structural implementation by December 31, 2014

By full structural implementation we mean that we would have recruited a full team of volunteers (all State/Area/Zone/Cluster level volunteers) for that ministry (Adventures, Pathfinders, Youth, Young Adult). This would be 34 volunteers for each ministry: 23 Cluster Coordinators, 8 Zone Administrators, and 3 Area Administrator. It also meant we would have grown in our budget to be able to sustain the team of volunteers at fair levels of reimbursement. As a bridge, we decided to combine Youth and Young Adult for 2012 and 2013. This would give us more time to grow the concept/structure and to recruit leaders. It would also help us ease into the additional budget cost of financing additional reimbursements for new leaders. We wanted to find the right people and put them in the right positions. Adventurer Ministry was behind on its target and so was Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

It took longer than expected to recruit the needed volunteers. In Youth and Young Adult, we agreed to start with our Cluster leaders first and then work out towards recruiting Zone and Area volunteers for Youth and Young Adult ministry as leaders grew into those positions or became available to us. To date, we have still not separated Youth and Young Adult to unique volunteer teams for each. The thinking evolved into, let us develop one layer at a time so we do not fragment and weaken the system.

In the one area, the Associate Youth Director led the way and had recruited an Area, all Zone levels, and some Cluster Coordinators. However, it weakened once there was turnover in leadership at the associate level. It did not help that the Associate Director position remained vacant for nearly a year. All the volunteers that had been recruited resigned. It was very obvious that maintaining the structure would take constant
nurturing and effort; and that the volunteers would need to have more than a connection to a Youth Director’s personality, they would have to feel more of a calling to this role.

In another area, there were several people interested in serving, but then circumstances changed and they were unable to help. One decided to go back to school. Another went through a divorce. Still another moved away. This initially led to frustration. But I had to keep coming back to a belief that God knew who He wanted in these positions, and His timing was also a factor. Maybe the volunteer we needed had not even moved to Florida yet. It was the ebb and flow of developing this structure.

Another challenge I faced was trying to juggle the State responsibilities as Youth Ministries Director and the Central Area Youth Director. This was more than I had anticipated. I chose to make sure that the state level did not suffer, but Central paid the price. Central did not get my exclusive presence and support. I did not focus solely on one area like my associates were able to. I traveled the state while they mainly stayed in their areas. This created an imbalance. To adjust, I asked each associate to take the lead in planning different state events. I could not do it all, just as Moses could not. I had to delegate to survive. It made a difference, but we were still one Associate Youth Director short.

For perspective and to paint a picture of the magnitude of what we were undertaking, consider the South area for example. We had four Area Administrators in the previous model. They were responsible for ministering to over 100 churches. They had some helpers, but it was basically four people. In the new structure, we had one Area Administrator, four Zone Administrators and nine Cluster Coordinators. There are now 14 officially appointed leaders where there were four before. This is a huge increase. And
that was just in Pathfinder ministry. The goal was to repeat that in Adventurers and Youth and Young Adult as well.

We had most of our Adventurer team recruited by December 2012. Our State Administrator served as both the State and Area Administrator for North and Central. This was not ideal, but we realized that God’s timing was not our timing. We had five of the nine Zone positions filled and 16 of the 23 Cluster Level positions filled. It simply took longer than anticipated. But we were willing to add as God brought us new leaders that were ready to serve and make do with what we had until more leaders came on board. Regardless of the pace of adding volunteers, we had more people involved and were able to better serve churches than we were before. We knew we were headed in the right direction and it was easy to see that we were making progress.

For Youth and Young Adults, the decision was made to keep the two together, at least to start with. We wanted to get some momentum. By our December 2012 deadline we had recruited 16 of the 23 Cluster Coordinators. We made it over half way to our goal. And there was a lot of quick turnover as one associate in one area went back to pastoring. It was a challenge, to say the least, to get this group of leaders recruited and retain them. We even experimented with having youth pastors take on the role of Cluster Coordinator in some Clusters, but this did not work really well. It would require steady work to build this network of volunteers. It was taking more effort and energy than was initially anticipated. But, I still believed that we had the right structure. It was just taking longer to recruit the volunteers.

It took a monumental amount of effort and energy to get Pathfinders and Adventurers organized, set up in the new structure and to recruit new leaders to fill the
new positions. The reason for the constant reference to Pathfinders and Adventurers was that this step was seen as a pre-requisite to addressing the structure in Youth and Young Adult ministries. We were simultaneously revamping the whole of the Youth Ministries Department. We were taking what had been two separate departments and creating one new department. In this merger, we had set goals to triple our volunteer workforce in approximately two years and to position ourselves to have a strong platform from which we can better train the Florida army of young people and deploy them in ministry. I knew this was an ambitious goal, but only as we came up short did I realize how ambitious.

We even set new targets to recruit the additional Cluster Coordinators. The new goal was to have Cluster Coordinator (Y/YA) officially appointed by the Florida Conference Youth Ministries Department by December of 2014. The Cluster Coordinator volunteer would serve their 10-15 churches and champion Youth Ministry in that Cluster. They would make themselves known to the church pastor and other leaders. This volunteer would have an official ID card (valid for one year). This Cluster Coordinator would work with the Area Administrator for Youth and Young Adult Ministry and with the Area Youth Director. Together they would support and strengthen local church Youth Ministry. We did not hit this goal either. The same issues presented themselves: difficult to recruit willing leaders, individuals had other commitments, there were events to plan, and the Youth Ministries Directors were busy with other responsibilities.

Building Block Eleven: Pastors

Pastors also played an important role and were involved in many ways. When a new candidate is being considered to join the team, Pastors are always asked to give a reference; Pastors are briefed at regular pastors’ meetings about the direction/structure of
Youth Ministries; Pastors are given contact information for their Cluster Coordinators in Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth and Young Adult ministries (and our leaders receive contact information for pastors in their Cluster); Pastors are informed by mail/email that they now have a team of leaders to help them with anything they need as it relates to Youth Ministries.

We did all we could to inform and communicate with our pastors. I felt like we were placing a treasure before our pastors by offering them a team of volunteers to help them in their local church to grow youth ministries. But it was not always seen as a gift. It was often ignored. Most pastors simply wanted a guest speaker. Rarely did I get a request to help them with a youth ministry challenge or to provide training for their leaders—the very things that could have made a significant difference.

There have been flashes of success. One day, a pastor called the Conference Office and asked for the Youth Department. He said he needed help with Youth Ministry in his church. He wanted a Conference Youth Director to come to his church on a specific date to help his local church youth leaders. The Youth Director was unavailable, but the director contacted the Area Administrator and Cluster Coordinator where this church was located. Both volunteer leaders agreed to attend and were available on the date given by the pastor. The Area Administrator met with the Area Youth Director, was trained in what to say and given all the materials needed to hand out to the local church youth leaders. The Area Administrator met with the Cluster Coordinator and shared what the Youth Director shared with them. They met together to go visit the local church youth leaders to share the information, offer encouragement, gather and exchange contact info, and pray together. The pastor called later the next week and was overjoyed at the team that was
sent to his church and how helpful that meeting was to the youth leaders in his church. This was how the model was set up to work and did indeed work in this situation.

Building Block Twelve: Youth Pastors

There was another angle we needed to look at. We had 15 youth pastors in the Conference. Some of them were more like Associate Pastors than Youth Pastors. The Ministerial Department looks at some churches to be “intern” churches where young pastors go to learn ministry on their way to becoming senior pastors; they are not really youth pastors—they are pastors that are young. When we looked at the number of youth pastors compared to the number of pastors in the conference, we found that youth pastors were only 6% of the pastoral force. In a pastors’ meeting, I shared this with the conference pastors and said that this number is way too small. We need 100% of our pastors to be concerned with, involved with, and ministering to our youth. We also found that 78% of our churches have fewer than 300 members. That was a lot of churches. That was a lot of churches that were sharing pastors. That was a lot of churches that do not have youth pastors. We were still trying to get a handle on how many of these did or did not have youth attending. These were the churches that had youth and needed a youth leader that was supported by the conference Youth Ministries Department. This was what we believed the structure would specifically address. Youth ministry needed a structure to strengthen local church youth ministry and the leaders.

Building Block Thirteen: Councils

Having all the leaders in place, designing and building the structure was only the initial phase. Next, we set up area councils and state councils. We had an existing Pathfinder/Adventurer quarterly meeting called PAC. This group makes all the major
decisions in the club ministries. Representatives from around the state sat on that committee. We had to develop the State Youth Ministries Council as well as Area Youth Ministries Councils. On the Area level we had an Area Council for Youth Ministries (all ministries) and Area Council for each ministry. The purpose of these councils was twofold: (a) to keep our team of leaders focused in the right direction and motivated to keep moving us forward so we would have a common direction across the state; (b) to listen to our local church leaders to get feedback so we would know where to adjust what we were doing. This time together was key to keep a common vision and move forward to the same future.

Summary

The building blocks described in this chapter give a brief overview of what has been done over the course of several years to build a structure to strengthen Youth Ministry in Florida Conference. From re-organizing the Pathfinder and Adventurer ministries, to recruiting new leaders, to creating documents, to networking with administration, leaders, and pastors, to even being sensitive to ministry titles and learning the art of being a ministry engineer. What was written above has served to document the ups and the downs of the process. At this point in the process, it is time to consider the outcomes, make some summary statements, followed by conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER 6

PROJECT EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will give a summary of all that has been done toward accomplishing the project proposal, describe the method of evaluation, share outcomes, draw some conclusions and finally list some recommendations.

Overview

The stated purpose of this project proposal was to develop a structure to strengthen youth ministry in Florida Conference. To accomplish this, one of the first steps was to investigate how other departments in Florida Conference were organized. The thinking was that if the right model could be put into place, youth ministry could shift from isolated and unsupported to integrated and strengthened. This would require developing a core of volunteers, Cluster Coordinators, which could be an extension of the Youth Ministries Department. They would be recruited and trained to serve as encouragers, supporters and trainers of local church youth leaders and report back to the department contact info and needs in order to collaboratively work toward solutions.

The theological foundation was also key and highlighted that God is a God of order and biblical organizational structure models are instructive even in modern times. The Creation account, Tower of Babel, Israel’s classification system of nation, tribe, clan, and family, as well as Jethro’s counsel to Moses were some of the Old Testament stories...
used. In the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples, Acts 6 and 15, and spiritual gifts gave added insight into church organization.

Furthermore, the literature review focused on four main areas: vision, change, function, and volunteers. It was clear that there had to be a vision of what could be accomplished and a belief that change was possible. A key element in change is building a broad basis for support, and that was very important especially early on. Being clear on the function of the structure and realizing its limitations was also helpful. Structure was to be a means to an end, not the end goal itself. And lastly, without volunteers, none of the vision could have been accomplished. Having a good understanding of how to recruit and retain these leaders would make or break the structure.

These chapters have helped convey a plan of action to put a structure in place to strategically assign volunteers called Cluster Coordinators around the conference in defined territories. These volunteers have helped us gather information about what was happening in local church youth ministry and come alongside local church youth leaders to help and support them in their role and create a link between the Youth Ministries Department and local congregations. We have implemented this plan and seen the results.

When it came time to initiate some changes, practice did not match theory. The idealistic optimism of creating a new structure in theory was tested by the reality that changes in ministry are challenging and messy. It does not always go the way that one imagines it. And yet, this is part of the beauty of the process. Sometimes we cannot see what we need to do from where we are; we have to plunge right in and then, and only then, do we see other aspects that they were previously oblivious. And the byproduct is that one is changed in the process. One learns to adapt and flex. It was easy to say we
need our volunteer staff tripled. It was not so easy to accomplish it. It was fairly straightforward to see the problem—we need more help; we have to recruit more volunteers. But this is not automatic. People have busy lives and families and work responsibilities. Ministry is not all that matters. In the context of real life, the implementation of the structure was slower than anticipated. Current volunteers sometimes reacted negatively to changes. Damage control had to be done. Having a great idea and making it happen is not the same thing. So, we learn to celebrate small victories and we trust that God is ultimately in control. We recognize that perhaps the biggest change is what happened inside of us. We are humbled. We are grateful to be a part of the bigger picture of what God is doing in the world. We pray more and we ask God for a renewed vision of what He wants to accomplish in us and through us. And we start again, but with new history of experiences, insights and understanding because of what we just went through.

**Description of Evaluation Method**

The evaluation method was based on accomplishing certain tasks. There was a need to create a list of current youth leaders in local churches. We now have this list. This started to come right away as I empowered the current team of Pathfinder and Adventurer leaders to start asking for this information as they visited their clubs. It happened a lot faster in clusters where we had a Cluster Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult ministry already recruited. Overall, the list took over a year to feel like we finally had a basic grasp on who youth leaders were and how to connect with them. We had to have contact with local youth leaders. The list facilitated this contact. There was a need to recruit and train a network of volunteers called Cluster Coordinators across the state.
Twenty-three volunteers were needed. The closest we ever came was sixteen. This was in 2012. I kept pushing this as a priority to the Associates. It had to stay high on the priority list. The full scale of what was set as the goal has yet to be accomplished. However, in the territories where Cluster Coordinators were recruited and trained and functioning, the communication from the Youth Ministries Department to local churches went from non-existent to making contact and sharing information and training with the leaders in those churches. The connectedness and level of support we could offer to local church youth leaders increased. And young people benefited by these volunteers because they were able to organize their Clusters for Cluster activities that offered young people opportunities to connect with other young people for service, social and worship occasions.

**Outcomes**

One outcome was that Florida Conference had a unified Youth Ministries Department. Prior to August 2010, the Conference had a separate Pathfinder and a separate Youth Department. But in 2010, all of Youth Ministries were combined under one Youth Ministries Department. This was one of the stated goals that administration had, and it was accomplished. The Youth Ministries Department in Florida had the following ministries: Adventurers, Pathfinders, Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministries (A, P, Y, YA, ACM) all united under one department. This prepared the way for all of the other changes and developments.

However, in December 2016, the conference administration voted to return to the earlier model of two separate departments—Pathfinder and Adventurers in one department, and Youth and Young Adults in another department. This was an admission
by conference leadership that for a conference this size and for the amount of staff the department was given, the task was too large to accomplish with the team they staffed us with. There was concern that the magnitude of the Pathfinder and Adventurer ministries was too encompassing to combine with Youth and Young Adults. The hope is that by separating the departments again, the Youth and Young Adult ministry will receive more focused attention and improve the way that the conference ministers to those age groups. It is worth noting that I was asked by administration to serve as the new Youth and Young Adult Director, however, once the conference executive committee met, they changed the recommendation and appointed me to serve as the Pathfinder and Adventurer Director.

One should not conclude that by attempting to develop a structure for youth ministry their job is in jeopardy. Furthermore, I had been asking for another Associate Youth Director for years to free me up to do other tasks, but was always told it was a financial issue—the money was not there. From 2010-2016 we were capped at three directors, but, as of 2017, the administration has created the budget so that each department is staffed with a director and an associate—a total of four salaries now.

A second outcome was that all of the Youth Ministries had the same structure. This was significant because prior to the first outcome, there was a very limited structure in Youth Ministry. Pathfinder ministry was the only ministry to really have a structure, but even that structure needed to be reworked. To simplify and stabilize the situation, and to provide the same level of organization for all the ministries, the decision was made to have one structure that was identical for Adventurers, Pathfinders, and Youth and Young Adult Ministries. This was based on the fact that while these ministries are unique, the need for organization, structure and support from the conference was common to all the
ministries. The Pathfinder structure served as a starting point and helped to create the model that was the basis for the entire department.

It could be argued that Pathfinder and Youth Ministry are not the same. Pathfinder Ministry is structured and disciplined. Youth Ministry is fluid and free from a lot of structure. And the adults that lead these ministries often reflect the structure. I would contend that this is part of why youth ministry has floundered. One of the goals in creating the structure was to stabilize and strengthen youth ministry. At the structural level of providing oversight and support, this has been welcomed. Youth leaders were looking for a network—a way to connect with other youth leaders. And they were looking for a link to connect them to something bigger than their own local church teen ministry. In essence, they needed a support structure. Without it, they were isolated and this feeling of isolation leads many youth leaders to serve only short term.

In one Cluster in Central Florida we had a pattern that was working well. In the Fall, I planned with the Cluster Coordinator to conduct a Cluster-wide Youth Weekend in January. The Cluster Coordinator contacted each youth leader in their Cluster inviting them and their youth to attend this special weekend. They could do this because they had established contact and built relationships with those local church youth leaders. They planned a Friday night vespers in one church, a church service in another church, an afternoon outreach event, a Sabbath vespers in another church and finally an evening social. Most of the churches from the Cluster were involved in some way. The weekend activities rotated to a different church in the Cluster so that each church could host and take ownership of at least one segment of the weekend. This was the structure functioning to coordinate activities and ministry for the young people in a Cluster. It provided an
opportunity for young people to mingle with other youth socially, partner together in serving their communities, and to worship together. For the youth leaders, they got better acquainted with each other from the various churches and exchanged contact info and stories with each other. This was what I envisioned. And this has happened in a couple of other places, just not as consistently or as broadly as was desired.

The goal was to have in Florida Conference one Youth Ministries Department that oversaw five ministries (A, P, Y, YA, ACM) but used one structural model for all of the ministries. The model had each church in Florida assigned to a geographical grouping of 10-15 churches called a Cluster. The churches in any given Cluster were the same for all ministries. Also, each Cluster was designed to have three different Cluster Coordinators (one for each: Adventurers, Pathfinders, Youth and Young Adults). Developing this organizational structure was initiated to have a system by which Youth Ministry in the local church could be strengthened and in the process it has served to strengthen Adventurers and Pathfinders as well. Every pastor in the conference would have a team of three trained volunteers, Cluster Coordinators, to help them grow which ever area of youth ministries they needed help with in their church at the time.

The first and second outcomes paved the way to focus on the staffing side of the structure. The goal has been that in each ministry (Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth and Young Adult – A, P, Y/YA) volunteer staff would be recruited and trained to help strengthen respective local church ministries. The Pathfinder structure has been most fully implemented, hovering between 85-95% implementation consistently. The Adventurer structure has approximately 70% (24 of 35) of its volunteers in place. Adventurers only had a few volunteers that worked with a few others unofficially when I started in 2010.
This is a huge increase, and Adventurer ministry is much stronger because of the volunteers in the structure that support local church clubs/directors.

The biggest challenge has been in the main area of emphasis for this project—Youth Ministry, where just over 50% (12 of 23) of the needed Cluster Coordinators had been recruited at the highest point. The number drops to 46% when all 35 positions are counted (Cluster/Zone/Area/State), which would be the full team of volunteers for Youth and Young Adult ministry. When I started in 2010, there were not any volunteers that I could find on record that were a link between the local church and the Youth Ministries Department. So, from that perspective this was a big increase! We had a team of 16 people helping us where before we did not even have one. In terms of actual churches impacted, 139 of the 300 congregations had a Cluster Coordinator assigned and serving. And it was making a difference.

I would expect that there will be some additional shuffling of volunteers as the new Youth and Young Adult director takes over July 1, 2017. Since December 4, 2016, there has been minimal leadership and direction given to Youth and Young Adult leaders and it will likely take the rest of the year to build some momentum. This is a significant setback in my opinion. The recovery time to have momentum again after the split into two departments will most likely take until 2018 or later.

The major expected outcome was that having a structure in place would strengthen youth ministry in the local church. All of the outcomes listed so far were designed to move Youth Ministry in this direction, but I chose to do this transition in conjunction with the whole department and not independently. The structure was developed and put in place. What has not been fully accomplished is the recruiting (and retaining) of the
leaders to take on the volunteer positions in the structure as Cluster, Zone and Area leaders in Youth and Young Adult ministry. So, developing the structure was only the first step. Staffing the structure was the next step and we partially achieved this goal.

Original Vision

Imagine every church in Florida (there are currently over 300) being attended to and covered by one of the 23 Cluster Coordinators, volunteers, leaders experienced in/trained in Youth Ministry, available to pastors and youth leaders to help them, encourage them, pray for them, support them and be with them as they do local church Youth Ministry and to be connected to the conference. This would be the core team that the Youth Director would work with to grow youth ministry in the conference. The local church youth leader would no longer be alone. They would have a team of volunteers that supported them. They would be connected to a network of local church youth leaders in their Cluster and in the conference. Pastors would also have a sense of support for youth ministry from the Youth Ministries Department. That was the goal. That was the vision. It has begun to take place on a small scale and by God’s grace it will continue to grow stronger, until finally, not only is the structure in place, but the right people are in place, local church youth leaders are receiving the communication, information, support, and the training they need to be the best leaders of youth that they can be. And they can send feedback and give input in real time through their Cluster Coordinator to the Conference Youth Ministries Department.

I am convinced that the structure is solid. It is the right model. It is the right direction to accomplish the stated goal of strengthening youth ministry in the local church.
So what has happened? Why have we not recruited all of the volunteers? Why is the model not fulfilling its intended purpose throughout the conference?

**Summary**

The structure has had a positive impact on Pathfinder and Adventure ministry. The team that currently serves the club ministries has grown from seven or eight to nearly 70 volunteers. This team can be mobilized at a moment’s notice. They are an enormous blessing to me as the director. I could not imagine working without them. It is a lot of work to keep this all organized, but when I think about what God accomplishes through them, I am truly humbled. This is evidenced when we do an event or when I get a call from a pastor or a club director. I have a team in place that can offer assistance and support that is within an hour of any church in Florida Conference.

I have also seen that a plan does not guarantee success and whatever one can imagine does not always happen the way they imagine it. There is often a gap between a dream and reality. And yet, that is part of the learning. In fact, sometimes, unless we try something we would never see what needed to be changed to really make it work. I am grateful for the resources, both financial and personnel wise that I had access to in Florida Conference to help make this all happen.

In terms of youth ministry, I am convinced more than ever before that there is a need for structure. Youth leaders need help. And if the conference does not find a way to provide it, where will it come from? I have found that youth leaders are open to and want to receive support from other leaders who are willing to help them do their best. The conference can and should provide this. The role of the conference Youth Director, more than planning events, is to develop leaders to assist him or her in growing local church
youth ministry. Youth directors are not able to accomplish this on their own, regardless of the size of their conference.

To accomplish this, it must be seen as non-negotiable by conference administration. This is the role of the conference Youth Director—to invest in and grow local church youth leaders and youth ministry, even if it means planning and providing less conference programming for young people. For too long, the emphasis has been on events rather than developing leaders. There must be agreement on the part of administration and the Youth Director to turn this around. There must be a clear vision of how they will approach and attack this topic of strengthening youth ministry in local churches throughout the conference. They will need each other’s support and commitment to get this done.

**Recommendations**

After spending years in ministry and then focused study and reflection on this topic of how to improve local church youth ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I have some recommendations. These recommendations will focus on two main areas: What are the things the Youth Director can do? What are the things others must do? And finally, I will conclude the recommendations section with advice to the new leadership team that will take the lead in Youth and Young Adult ministry for the conference now that I am no longer directing all of Youth Ministries for the conference.

**What the Youth Director Can Do**

The conference Youth Director is not in a position that can create change in the whole conference. The wise Youth Director will work within the conference structure to continue to focus on what matters most—raising up new volunteer leaders; training them;
releasing them to partner with him or her. In reality these volunteers are an extension of the director. Youth directors must find ways to reproduce themselves. What would youth ministry look like if a youth director’s primary goal was to develop a team of volunteer leaders that could help grow youth ministry church by church in the conference? This is not as appealing to most youth directors as throwing a big event. But I would argue that in the long run this would be so much more effective and impactful.

A youth director must guard one’s thinking. One could surrender in despair, thinking that there is too much that needs to change—or even worse, believing that things will never change, so why even try? Systemic change is the ideal, but it is also like trying to create heaven on earth. There are limitations this side of glory. I get that. And there are also amazing opportunities. This is the tension that the youth director lives with. While one might grasp conceptually and idealistically the need for a massive overhaul to really catapult youth ministry to where it could be most effective, one needs to think incrementally and proceed proactively while pursuing the vision God has given. What are youth directors to do when they are not the one to make decisions that will bring about systemic change? They do what they can with what they have. They remember that God is ultimately in control and they learn to lead in a different way. Just because they are not in charge does not mean they cannot lead the charge to change.

I agree with Maxwell (1998) who states, “Leadership is influence” (p. 11). A conference Youth Director may not have the influence that a conference president does, however, a youth director does have influence. The success of a youth director lies in one’s ability to influence one’s organization. Youth directors will need to learn how to become 360 degree leaders. They will need to learn how to leverage their role as leaders
in the conference by expanding their influence. Youth directors should take the initiative to plan lunches and meetings with their vice-presidents and presidents. They should be present at the Conference Executive Committee meetings. They should constantly share what they are doing and the direction they are heading. They should also ask for input and guidance from administration. I believe that youth directors should be members of the conference administration team that meets weekly, or at the very least be an invited guest monthly—whatever the administration agrees to. Ideally, they would have a voice and vote with ADCOM. Since most youth director’s come from the local church and are sometimes clueless as to how a conference office is run, this could be difficult. Maybe our current youth directors and union youth directors could help open this door for new directors. It is time youth ministry be taken seriously and appear on the agenda consistently to strategize ways to be more collaborative and integrated into the conference strategy. One does not have to become a conference president to help change the culture of a conference.

Pastors are an under tapped resource for growing youth ministry. While it is true that not all pastors have a passion for youth ministry, I believe most pastors can see that if their church is going to grow, they will have to do something about their children, family and youth ministries. The savvy youth director will leverage this to help cast a vision for how the conference youth department and the local church’s team of volunteers can come alongside that pastor to actually help grow their church together by focusing on recruiting and developing local church youth ministry leaders. Pastors need help. The youth department can provide it. It is a fact that pastors are busy and have limited time and resources. So, does everybody else. We must explore new ways for pastors to partner
with youth directors to maximize everyone’s efforts. In my estimation, this was one of the weakest links in getting broader buy in to the structure. Pastors, for the most part, were not on board. They liked the idea, but it is a challenge to get the attention of a pastor—there are already so many other voices and departments clamoring for their attention. Nevertheless, the youth director needs to be proactive in pursuing pastors and helping them see the vision, even if it means putting on fewer events.

I also believe that the foundation had been laid to make this structure successful and that we were two hires away from making it all really work. I wonder what would have happened if we would have hired a third associate to cover Central Area and then one more associate to focus on helping us really dial in and think deeply about how to best reach our youth and young adult population. One director with three area associates and a fourth to focus specifically on Youth and Young Adult ministry—to me this would have been a dream team. A team of five people working together to provide local church leaders and pastors with the very best support, resources and training for youth ministries. I don’t know of any other conference that has taken young people this seriously.

What Others Can Do

The Ministerial Department is a key player in helping open doors for the Youth Director. If the Ministerial Vice-President can partner with the youth director to create access points to engage pastors in conversation and training it can help build the youth directors rapport with pastors. There will also need to be some level of accountability for pastors to take youth ministry seriously and have leaders in place to make youth ministry happen in their local church. I believe that for the structure to be fully implemented and for pastors to come on board and embrace this change, it has to be driven by the
conference administration. And that starts with the vice president to pastors—the ministerial director, and the president. They can use their influence to open doors to pastors that the youth director could not open on their own. They must do this consistently and persistently through emails, during meetings with pastors, in conversations with administration, in ministerial meetings, during visits one-on-one with pastors and on the scorecards that measure pastoral success. This has to be ongoing. If this does not happen, again the youth director can still do what they can to make a difference, but it will be limited.

The goal is to position the Youth Ministry Department to become the catalyst. Churches need young people and young people need churches. If churches are ignoring or alienating their young people, they will have to make some changes. The youth director and team of Cluster Coordinators can be trained to serve as consultants that do a simple standardized assessment and provide a simple report back to the church, ministerial department, and youth department. The youth director and ministerial director could become a powerful tandem for helping transform willing congregations. As more and more churches go through this process, one can develop a base line and see patterns of what are the needs and issues that most churches have and what resources will be most helpful. This can serve as a starting point to begin conversations and set things in motion to create real change in congregations that are ready to do something different to get better results with young people. The book, Growing Young by Powell, Mulder and Griffin (2016) and the website, www.churchesgrowingyoung.com, are great resources to help congregations start to take seriously how they are ministering and reaching young people. Youth directors should be scouring websites, libraries, and seminaries looking for the very
best resources to share with churches. And as these stories of transformation happen, they can be shared to inspire other congregations to also follow suit.

In order for this to happen, how a conference measures success will need to be redefined. The metric that has been used for years is baptisms and tithe. While these may be good measurements, are they the best ones? What if we rewrite the scorecard of what makes a pastor successful? What if pastors were evaluated on whether or not they created opportunities for young people who were attending to actually be involved in significant ways in the church ministries, let them lead out in the church services, and created service opportunities in their communities? This goes beyond baptism, as important as that is. What contributions are they allowed and invited to make in the church? This goes way beyond token roles of being a junior deacon that collects the offering. How are their talents and spiritual gifts nurtured and given room for expression? What if success was measured by having mentoring ministries in place where godly adults were building intentional relationships with young people, meeting on at least a monthly basis, preferably weekly, over a year or two? Young people need to see what authentic Christianity looks like. This can happen best as young and old people partner together to do life and learn ministry.

Pastors are the gatekeepers of the church. A conference relies on its pastors to help shape congregations. Churches and pastors will need to be held accountable at a different level. Local church youth ministry is not an IF … it is a MUST. What if the local church saw as its reason to exist—to grow and challenge families and young people spiritually? A conference that emphasizes this would have to start to hold their pastors to a different standard. On the one hand, pastors of growing churches that support youth
ministry would receive recognition among their peers. On the other hand, holding a pastor accountable by making youth ministry training mandatory, or re-assigning them to a church that does not have young people, or even putting them in an associate role to learn from pastors that are great with youth ministry are some options to broaden their focus. Every opportunity should be afforded them, but if they do not want to come on board, then maybe the tough decision to release and replace a pastor should be made.

In my opinion, after spending time trying to create a structure and having spent over 20 years in ministry, the best combination is when a team of like-minded individuals can all work toward the same goal. Imagine if the conference president led the charge to focus all of the departments of the conference on doing something to help local churches have thriving, vibrant children and family ministries to reach young people from birth to young adults. What if all the departments worked together to help young people know that they matter to their church, and to God? Every department would be singularly focused on providing the best possible resources, support and training to help churches minister to families and young people. What if young people were given real leadership responsibilities and released to initiate ministries to reach their peers? I imagine it would make a profound difference. And youth ministries could lead the way by leveraging all their resources to bless local church leaders through the network of volunteers spread out all over the state.

Advice to the New Youth and Young Adult Director

Ultimately the big question to wrestle with is—is the local church adding value to its members’ lives? Are families better equipped to raise godly children? Are young people offered quality programing and connected to caring adults in the context of the
local church? Is the church leadership committed to having an impact for good in their communities? Why would a family choose church over going to the lake or the beach? What will they get from church that they cannot get anywhere else? These are the tough questions churches must find an answer to. We live in a consumeristic age and trying to minister to people who primarily care about, “what’s in it for me?” is challenging indeed. How is this influencing what we do in youth ministry? Is the youth ministry department helping pastors answer those questions? Are churches focusing on helping parents know how to raise their kids? This is the kind of training Cluster Coordinators can organize for local church youth leaders and local churches. The Youth Director cannot get everywhere to address these issues. But with a team of coordinators, the youth director can have influence in places he or she could never personally get to. Having the right people trained and positioned all across the conference to partner with pastors to change local churches seems like a viable solution.

From the conference youth department side, the question becomes, “How do we do this?” How does a conference youth department deliver products and services to local churches that help them serve young people better? Part of that answer is through the network of volunteers. What they are called is insignificant. But having this team is nonnegotiable. If youth directors make their main work to recruit, develop, and train individuals that can easily travel to local churches to help youth leaders face and address real issues and needs, they will strengthen that local churches potential to better reach its young people. If youth directors focus their best time and effort and energies here, teen ministry has to improve. This will take some effort because the default for years has been to plan events to measure success. Changing the focal point to the local church has the
potential to emphasize service and an incarnational approach to ministry which can lead to transforming local church culture.

Imagine a generation of young people that feel accepted and loved in their local churches. Imagine a generation of young people that have explored their giftedness and settled in on a ministry and tasted and seen how God can use them; an army of young people taking up their place in communities and serving in churches too. Imagine churches where young people are at the heart of what that church is able to do in the community. Imagine a church where youth leaders have been trained to know how to train youth to be leaders. Imagine a church where youth leaders have been trained to help parents to know how to parent. This should be the goal of the youth department—to make this a reality—getting homes and families to partner with churches and pastors to impact our young people and help them be lifelong followers of Jesus that are growing up to become all God wants them to be. This should be the main focus of a conference youth department. It will take a team of volunteers to partner with the youth director to accomplish this goal.

Conclusions

The conclusion of the matter is that the structure which was put in place from 2010-2016 is no longer in place in Youth and Young Adult ministry. An enormous amount of energy and effort went into creating a network of volunteers that is no longer being used. The Youth & Young Adult Director has a team of different volunteers and is organizing them as he best sees fit. This is the life cycle of ministry.

The structure we created had an impact where it was implemented, but it never got fully installed conference wide across all the ministries. I still believe that this structure or
something similar to it is the answer to helping strengthen youth ministry in the local church in a conference and thus reducing the gap between the two. The Youth Department will have to lead the charge. There is not one only way to strengthen youth ministry in a conference. However, I am fully persuaded that whatever method is employed, the youth director must have a clear vision, an understanding of the basics of change dynamics, and clarity as to what the function of the Youth Director is and how a structure can facilitate that role. Finally, it will, by necessity, have to lean squarely on the shoulders of volunteers; conferences simply do not have the finances to staff the youth department adequately. Together, youth directors and volunteers can be a powerful force to turn youth ministry around in a conference.

In addition to the youth director and volunteers, the wise youth director that connects with conference administration and other departments collaboratively has a far greater chance for a wider impact. Youth ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist church needs help. It will not improve on its own. It will take all these things working together under God’s guidance and timing to help turn the tide and strengthen youth ministry in local churches in Florida Conference.

I am still the director for Pathfinder and Adventurer ministries. I did meet with our current PAC members in February of 2017 and told them that since we were undergoing such a big transition to go back to a separate Pathfinder and Adventurer Department, this was an ideal time to make any other changes. Were there things that they would like to see changed? For the most part, they were happy with the structure and the improvements that have come as a result. There was one suggestion—they wanted to add a fourth area and call it the West Area, but still keep the same structure. It was satisfying to see that as
we re-evaluated the structure that we have built together over the last six years, they wanted to keep it. They have seen that the team is stronger and that we have more volunteers involved now. They have seen that clubs are being better served and that leaders are getting the support they need to be successful. The true test will be when there is a change in the Pathfinder/Adventurer Director someday. Will the team still want the structure when there is no one keeping it together at the director position? For now, God is using the structure to continue to strengthen Pathfinder and Adventurer ministry in Florida Conference. I see it and the leadership team for Pathfinders and Adventurers sees it. Even if it is only at the level of these club ministries that the structure is functioning, it has clearly strengthened these two ministries.

I still long for the day when volunteers are reaching out to youth leaders and working together to help grow youth ministry where it is weak or non-existent so that all young people feel included and needed in the churches they attend. I want to live to see a day where we not only know how many youth are in our conference, but we also know what they are skilled and gifted in. A day where young people are thriving spiritually and actively involved in service opportunities at the local and conference level. I pray that God would so build up His army of youth in Florida that everyone in this great sunshine state would have a chance to choose eternal life. I believe that God will help us to build up His army of youth in Florida to accomplish amazing things in His time.
Local Church Youth Leader Binder
Youth Leader Name: ___________________________  Cost: $99.00

Church: ___________________________  Area: ________  Cluster: ________

Signature: ___________________________  Email: ___________________________  Phone: ___________________________

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<td><strong>SDA Resources</strong></td>
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<td>Pens-Florida Conference Youth Ministries</td>
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<td>Life On Fire Guide</td>
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<td>Youth/Young Adult Binder (Ministries Quick Start Guides included)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting It Right</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ambassadors Manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tips for Youth Leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SDA Resources in Spanish</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Siete Principios Para Un Ministerio Juvenil de Excelencia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Una Guia Rapida-Ministerio Juvenil (in Binder)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-SDA Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Issues, Absolute Answers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Response Handbook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handbook on Counseling Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School Ministry Made Simple</td>
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<tr>
<td>My First 90 Days in Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose Driven Youth Ministry</td>
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<td>Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Life Book- The Gospel Of John</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Ministry Nuts &amp; Bolts</td>
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<td><strong>College</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SDA Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Insight Magazine-Spiritual Life in College/College Prep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Launching Public College Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Life for College &amp; Beyond-Advent Source</td>
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<td><strong>SOLID (Service Outreach Life Issues Discipleship) Resources</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SDA Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12 in 12 (Discipleship)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Reason To Believe (Discipleship)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Thoughful Hour (Discipleship)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible Marking Guide (Discipleship)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida Conference Pathfinders 60 challenges in 2012 (Discipleship)</td>
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<tr>
<td>It's My Choice: Student Workbook (Discipleship)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JWYD (Discipleship)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life/Vida-Book (Discipleship)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steps to Christ -Youth Edition (Discipleship)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Bible Textonary (Discipleship)</td>
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</table>
### Tips for Involving Youth in Community Service (Service)

#### SOLID (Service Outreach Life Issues Discipleship) Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video: Life</td>
<td>Discipleship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video: Vida</td>
<td>Discipleship</td>
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<tr>
<td>What About? (Life Issues)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who Cares? (Service)</td>
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#### Non-SDA Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Leader Value Pack</td>
<td>Discipleship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video: Jesus</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video: Outflow</td>
<td>Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Black Book: Sex, Love &amp; Dating</td>
<td>Life Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Black Book: How to Win A Friend to Christ</td>
<td>Outreach</td>
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#### Other Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little Black Book: Hard to Find Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Vision Gift Catalog</td>
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#### SDA Resources

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<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
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<tr>
<td>Escape From The Rocking Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIQ Amazing Facts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underdogs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth: Advent Source Catalog</td>
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*Items may vary pending on availability.*

To order: conta.cc/1kIBMZa

Or send a check or money order with a copy of this form to:

Florida Conference Youth Ministry Department
351 SSR 434 Altamonte Springs 32714

For more information, go to the Youth Ministries website
Floridaconference.com/youth-ministries
Hello Youth Leader!

Congratulations on being chosen (and choosing) to take on one of the most important ministry roles in the local Seventh-day Adventist Church – Youth Leader!

Whether you are excited or scared or a little of both, we want you to know that we have your back! We will support you in any way we can – and you can count on our prayers.

Here is a quote someone shared with me recently, I want you to read it carefully. Beyond and above whatever we can do, God is ready to help you to succeed as a Youth Leader.

“IT IS NOT THE CAPABILITIES YOU NOW POSSESS OR EVER WILL HAVE THAT WILL GIVE YOU SUCCESS. IT IS THAT WHICH THE LORD CAN DO FOR YOU. WE NEED TO HAVE FAR LESS CONFIDENCE IN WHAT MAN CAN DO AND FAR MORE CONFIDENCE IN WHAT GOD CAN DO FOR EVERY BELIEVING SOUL. HE LONGS TO HAVE YOU REACH AFTER HIM BY FAITH. HE LONGS TO HAVE YOU EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM HIM.” (COL 1:18).

With God on your side and with our whole Youth Ministries Department Team behind you ... move ahead with confidence and courage. Expect God to do great things in you and through you.

MISSION STATEMENT – Our Mission Statement is – To Train, Equip and Deploy an Army of Young People. Use this as a filter in all of your planning. Is what you are planning helping to train, equip, deploy young people. It is meant to keep you focused on what the goal of youth ministry is – to mobilize young people to share a message of service and salvation.

RESOURCES - We know that having resources can help spark great ideas and lead to amazing outcomes. Think of these as your tools to help you be creative, fresh, and relevant. Spend some time to become familiar with these resources in your starter kit. They can help you be a great youth leader.

SOLID – This is an acronym that is an assessment tool. It stands for: Service, Outreach, Life Issues, and Discipleship. These are the basic components that help make a Youth Ministry SOLID. Constantly look for ways to incorporate these key words into the teaching/worship/small group/training/etc. This will help you evaluate whether or not the ministry you are leading is SOLID. It will also show you the steps to move in that direction of becoming a SOLID youth ministry.

AREA COUNCILS - Twice a year we have Area Council meetings designed to get feedback and input from local church leaders in the area. It’s also a great time to network and meet other leaders that are doing similar things like you. There is nothing like having a new friend you can call on /count on to help, share an idea, pray with you, or keep you encouraged. And we need your input about what’s working and how we can better serve you.

TRAINING – Every year we offer a state wide training event that brings the whole team together. We also will begin offering more training year round by areas. This is an opportunity for you and your team/staff (if you have them) to go to another level, to invest in yourself, to improve your ability to lead. Let’s face it, it is challenging to work with young people. So let us help you, let us equip/train you so you can go back (deploy) to your local church recharged to go at it again.

TEAM – We have a team of Cluster Coordinators and Area Administrators for Youth & Young Adult Ministry. Keep in contact with them and they will keep in contact with you. They are your first level of support/resources.

We look forward to hearing about the great things God is accomplishing through you and your team – keep in contact with us and we will keep in contact with you. Courage. Pedro Perez – Youth Ministries Director.

Pedro.Perez@floridaconference.com (407) 267-5371 – Mobile (407) 644-5000 – Conference Office
There are few things in life that are so challenging and rewarding as working with young people. We are happy to know that you have heard God’s call to be involved in Youth Ministry and partner with us to train, equip and deploy an army of young people. We know that Together We’re Stronger.

Here are a few pointers that can help you be successful:

COMMUNICATE – “Communication is key to moving a group of individuals in one common direction.”
Keep in touch with our office and your leaders by email, phone, text, Google hangouts, visits, etc.
Connect through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Do what you are comfortable with and discover what the best way to connect with different people is.

FOCUS – “We tend to see what we focus on.”
Ever buy a new car/item thinking what you bought was rare, only to discover that all of a sudden “everyone” seems to have what you just bought. We tend to see what we focus on. Focus on helping leaders help young people. Remember that we are in youth ministry to help young people see Jesus, enter into a saving relationship with Him and serve others. That should keep us focused.

MISSION – “If you know what your target is you are more likely to hit it.”
The clearer a leader is on what their mission is, the easier it is to aim at it, and hit it! Our mission in the Youth Ministries Department is to: Train, Equip, and Deploy an Army of Young People. That is what we are about. This is the filter through which we assess what we do and why. It helps us decide if we should or should not do certain things and helps us define why we do what we do.

PLAN – “No one plans to fail, they just fail to plan.”
Busy - It is so easy to get busy and end up winging it. A little time in pre-planning and preparing can make the difference between average (or below average) and excellent. Aim for excellence.
Calendars – Ask your church clerk/pastor for a church ministries calendar. Online you will find the latest Fl. Conference Youth Ministries calendar. Calendar planning without other people’s calendars can cause conflicts. Use already occurring holidays to build ideas/programs around.

RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS – “No one of us is as good as all of us.”
Team - Having a makes it easier on everyone; plus ideas go to the next level when we brainstorm and feed off each other’s creativity.
Specific – Many volunteers are willing to do specific tasks for a defined time period or event, more so than they are to commit for 12 months. Ask volunteers to help with a specific thing.
Conversations – Make notes from your conversations with other adults about what they are good at (cooking, organizing, calling, emailing, praying, caring, hosting, etc.) to call on them when needed.

TRAINING – “Invest in yourself.”
We offer resources online on our website (www.floridaconference.com/youth). There are many great books and events you can attend. It can be overwhelming with all that is available. Start small with articles/books/event. Commit to putting at least 1-2 things into practice in your ministry right away. Some may try audio books. The Kindle app gets you access to hundreds of e-books. Contact your local Youth Director for more ideas.
Florida Conference Youth Ministries Department
Office Number- 407-644-5000

Youth Directors
Pedro Perez- Central Florida and State Youth Ministries Director Ext. 2420 / 407-267-5371
   Pedro.Perez@floridaconference.com
Robert Hines- North Florida/ Associate Youth Ministries Director Ext. 2422 / 407-454-1454
   Robert.Hines@floridaconference.com
VACANT- South Florida/ Associate Youth Ministries Director
Angelo Grasso- ACM Associate Youth Ministries Director
   Angelo.Grasso@floridaconference.com 352-363-8590

Office Staff
Cheryl Smith- Youth Director’s Assistant
   Cheryl.Smith@floridaconference.com Ext. 2424 on Wednesdays
Cheryl Roda-Wu - State/PAC Office Assistant Ext. 2416
   Cheryl.Roda-Wu@floridaconference.com
Aimee Layson - North Office Assistant Ext. 2425
   Aimee.Layson@floridaconference.com
Aida Crescioni - Central Office Assistant Ext. 2423
   Aida.Crescioni@floridaconference.com
Viviana Rengifo - South Office Assistant Ext. 2421
   Viviana.Rengifo@floridaconference.com
Liz Bence - Store Manager/Secretary Ext. 2424
   Elizabeth.Bence@floridaconference.com

For more info, go to Florida Conference Youth Ministries website
www.floridaconference.com/youth-ministries
Leadership

John Maxwell, leadership expert wrote, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.”

Whether something goes really well or not so well, it is usually because of a leader or the absence of a leader. Everywhere we look there is a need for leadership.

What is leadership? One writer describes leadership as ... INFLUENCE.

A leader must have the ability to influence others and to influence others we have to be present in their lives, win their confidence, work alongside them and earn their trust.

One of the main roles of a leader is to care for themselves. It is difficult to lead someone to a place you have never been. Often times a leader neglects their own development and spiritual growth. This not only affects the leader ... it affects those we lead.

Make sure that you are making time to stay alive and connected spiritually. Spend regular, unhurried time with God. If we are going to speak for Him, shouldn’t we listen first?

Here are some links that have helped me over the years to stay grounded as a spiritual leader:

- YouVersion – if you have a smart phone, the YouVersion Bible app is my favorite; when you sign in you have access to all kinds of reading plans and devotionals as well dozens of Bible translations

- Minute with Maxwell – one minute video by John Maxwell that focuses on a word a day
  www.johnmaxwellteam.com

- Equip – A ministry of John Maxwell has a short, daily, leader devotional you can sign up for and it’s delivered to your email inbox
  http://www.iequip.org/daily-devotional/

- UCB (United Christian Broadcasters) – another daily devotional sent to your email; this is consistently solid and makes me always have an idea or way to put the message to use
  http://www.ucb.co.uk/word-for-today.html
Youth Ministries Assessment Tool – it is helpful to have a way to measure whether or not we are being successful, doing well in ministry, and accomplishing our goals; this tool is a way to gauge how “healthy/SOLID” the ministry we lead is.

Youth Ministries can be evaluated by:

1) PHASES - Number of times a ministry is meeting
2) STAGES - Number of options/programs a target ministry group is being offered
3) LEVELS - Number of times the CORE CONCEPTS are emphasized/taught

PHASES - How often does a ministry meet?  Phases focus on the frequency of meetings

Phase I – Meet once a quarter

Phase II – Meet once a month

Phase III – Meet twice a month

Phase IV – Meet weekly

GOAL: Grow ministries into Phase III or Phase IV ministries (meeting twice a month or weekly)

(Example 1 – Your church has a Youth Sabbath School/meets weekly – Phase IV ministry)
(Example 2 – Your church has an AV/Vespers program/meets once a month – Phase II ministry)

STAGES - How many different meetings does a ministry have?  Stages identify a healthy variety of ministry programs

Stage I – Have one meeting for target ministry group

Stage II – Have two meetings for target ministry group

Stage III – Have three meetings for target ministry group

Stage IV – Have four meetings for target ministry group

GOAL: Grow ministries to Stage III or Stage IV ministries (conducting three-four meetings for target ministry group)

(Example 1 – Your church has a Pathfinder Club meeting/Outreach Sabbath monthly/Camp Outs or Trips – Stage III)
(Example 2 – Your church has a Youth Sabbath School – Stage I; if you add an outreach/service component – Stage II)

DESIRED OUTCOME – All Youth Ministries would assess what PHASE/STAGE they are in and pray about how they could grow to the next PHASE/STAGE. This means adding/recruiting new leaders to start new ministries (not same leaders/people doing more). We are setting an ideal for what a dynamic, well-balanced, SOLID Youth Ministries program would look like.
May 6, 2015

TO: Shield the Vulnerable Administrators & Pastors

FROM: Rhonda Harper & Shawn Hayden

RE: Shield the Vulnerable Program Updates

It has been over two years since the Florida Conference has rolled out the mandatory background screening and training through Shield the Vulnerable. Over four thousand volunteers in our conference have registered and used the program, and there are still more that need to comply.

One new feature just added to Shield the Vulnerable is that the program is now available in Spanish. Once the volunteer gets on the Shield the Vulnerable website, they would click on Español in the top right corner so they can proceed to log in and set up their account using the Spanish version. Please let your volunteers know that this is now available, as many have been asking about the Spanish version.

Many volunteers have asked how long their background check is good for. The background check is good for three years from the date it was run for each volunteer. So beginning next spring, volunteers will need to go through the process again of completing a background check if they are within their three year cycle. The administrators for the various locations can help ensure everyone is compliant by checking their list of volunteers for their location and making sure it is current. Any new volunteers wanting to work with children must complete their training and background check before they are accepted to work in any area with children.

We still have some locations that have not elected an administrator for their entity, or else their administrator has moved away. If you need to update the administrator for your church, please complete the enclosed administrators form and return it to us so we can update the files. We would suggest keeping a blank copy of the administrators form in your records so if at any time you need to notify us of a change, you have the form.

351 S. State Road 414, Altamonte Springs, Fl 32714-3824  •  (407) 644-5000  •  www.flordaconference.com
ADULT SIGN UP

1. Go To: shieldthevulnerable.org
   
   FIRST TIME SIGN UP | ADULTS
   
   Adult Signup
   
   Your Organization
   
   Pick Type:
   
   >>>> 1. Pick Seventh-day Adventist from the dropdown list.
   
   Pick Union:
   
   >>>> 2. Select your UNION Southern Union
   
   Conference Level:
   
   >>>> 3. Select your CONFERENCE Florida Conference
   
   If correct, click <<
   
   4. Click "Confirm" if selections are correct.

   NOTE: If you cannot find your Union or Conference, STOP... contact your administrator.

   User/Login Tab: Fill in the requested information and create your own login. Only one person can be named on the registration. It’s also important to provide a valid email address — if you have one.

   NOTE: Please write down your ID and Password in case you need to log in again.

   Affiliation Tab: Identify status: employee, volunteer, or parent. Then identify which type of location (church, school, etc.) at which you work or volunteer. Finally, identify your position at the organization. If you work/volunteer at more than one location, click "yes" and complete.

   Summary Tab: After reviewing and verifying your registration, proceed to "Accept" the license. ToBegin your training, click "Confirm Signup."

   TRAIN: Once you confirm, you will be taken to My Courses page. Click "Start" to open the "required" course. You may take other courses once you complete the required course.

   BACKGROUND SCREENING: Once you train, you may be required to do an electronic background check. If so, you must complete a form and electronically sign an authorization to permit the background check. If fingerprinting is required, you must arrange for it at a location near you. Your local administrator can help you.
AREA YOUTH MINISTRIES COUNCIL

MISSION: To train and deploy an ARMY of youth
VALUES: Inspire/Connect/Equip/Deploy
FOUNDATIONS: Service-Outreach / Life Issues / Discipleship

TERMS

Florida Conference has one YOUTH MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT.

The Youth Ministries (YM) Department is responsible for developing, overseeing, and supporting ... Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth, Young Adult, and Adventist Campus Ministries (A/P/Y/YA/ACM).

The age range for Youth Ministries is pre-school to young adult (roughly ages 4-35).

Youth Ministries is a department under the Integrated Youth Ministries Department.

Integrated Youth Ministries (IYM) oversees these departments: Camp, Children & Family, Education, and Youth Ministries.

The mission of IYM is “ministries working together to disciple God’s children.”

The IYM Director is also a Conference Vice-President and reports directly to the Conference President.

ADVENTURER Ministry is a family ministry designed to help families raise their children in Grades 1-4.

PATHFINDER Ministry is a child/teen ministry created to help children grow and develop as Christians, and socially responsible young people in Grades 5-10 for North America and Grades 5-12 in Florida.

YOUTH Ministry focuses on high-school age youth (teen age years) and seeks to grow young people physically, spiritually, socially, and mentally.

YOUNG ADULT Ministry focuses on post-high school and young adults that are settling into ministry roles and leadership roles in their local churches.

ADVENTIST CAMPUS Ministry focuses on Adventist young people in non-Adventist (public) colleges and universities to reach out on their campuses to minister to the non-SDA students.

AREAS: Florida Conference is divided into three (3) AREAS: North, Central, and South.
AREA YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR: Each AREA has its own Youth Ministries Director that also serves as an Associate Youth Ministries Director to the Conference Youth Ministries Department.

AREA YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTORS RESPONSIBILITY: oversee Youth Ministries (Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth, Young Adult, and Adventist Campus Ministries) in their AREA and serve the STATE needs of Youth Ministries.

AREA ADMINISTRATOR: Each Ministry has an AREA ADMINISTRATOR that works closely with the Area Youth Ministries Director to coordinate a specific ministry in their AREA.

Currently, the Youth Ministries Director for Florida Conference is also the Central Area Youth Ministries Director.

ZONES: Each AREA is subdivided into ZONES and are referred to as Zone A, B, C, D. There are 8 Zones at this time (2-North; 2-Central; 2-South).

ZONE ADMINISTRATORS: work with Cluster Coordinators to encourage and support them.

CLUSTERS: Each ZONE is subdivided into CLUSTERS and are referred to as Cluster 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. There are 23 Clusters at this time (7-North; 7-Central; 9-South).

CLUSTER COORDINATORS: Cluster Coordinators are assigned to a grouping of 10-15 churches in a geographical territory.

OFFICIALLY APPOINTED: The State Administrator, Zone Administrators, Cluster Coordinators are officially appointed/voted volunteers and officially represent the FL Conference Youth Ministries Department.

PURPOSE OF CLUSTER COORDINATOR: Cluster Coordinators serve as the link between local church Youth Ministries and the Conference Youth Ministries Department AND serve local churches (leaders/pastors) through their presence, sharing information, support, and training.

CLUSTER COORDINATORS: Ideally each Cluster will have three Cluster Coordinators: one for Adventurers, one for Pathfinders, and one Youth & Young Adult.

We are working on building our team of Coordinators for Adventurer and Y/YA Ministries; we already have a solid team of Coordinators for Pathfinder Ministry.

HOW TO BECOME AN OFFICIALLY APPOINTED VOLUNTEER: To be considered as a Cluster Coordinator or Zone Administrator in one of the Ministries, the individual must submit a resume to the FL Conference Youth Ministries Department. The corresponding Youth Ministries Director will do a reference check and/or pastoral check for approval. The leader will be officially appointed after following a process to do our best to ensure we bring the best qualified individuals on board. The individual must also complete the Shield the Vulnerable training and be cleared to begin their term as a volunteer leader.

We are doing our best to be sensitive to local churches/pastors as we recruit individuals to serve in a wider sphere than in their local church. Just as the local church is dependent on volunteers, so is the Youth Ministries Department. We all need solid, volunteer leadership. May God help us as we endeavor to raise up a generation of leaders to bless churches and Youth Ministries.
The FL Conference Youth Ministries Department oversees the following ministries: Adventurer, Pathfinder, Youth, Young Adult, and Adventist Campus Ministry (A/P/Y/YA/ACM).

**Adventurer Ministry** – a club ministry organized around the parents to help them raise their children in grades 1-4

**Pathfinder Ministry** – a club ministry organized around young people grades 5-10 in NAD and 5-12 in Florida designed to help young people develop in a balanced way (mental, social, spiritual) and through camp outs, discipline, honors, and structure prepare them to be productive young people and active members in church

**Youth Ministry** – focuses on high school age young people; this age is a time of incredible changes and the focus is on helping young people develop a Christ-like character and provides opportunity for service

**Young Adult** – is targeted towards young people from after high school to married with children (generally speaking); ministry to this group focuses on life calling and purpose; choosing to serve God regardless of one’s profession; finding a mate; how to have relationships that last; using one’s spiritual giftedness to be involved in the life of the church

**Adventist Campus Ministry** – reaches out to the SDA young people attending public universities to help them remain Adventist and to work together to reach their non-Christian/Adventist friends for God

When we use the word Youth Ministry we are referring only to Youth Ministry – high school age youth

When we use the word YOUTH MINISTRIES we are referring to ALL the ministries in the Department (A/P/Y/YA/ACM).

The Youth Ministries Department is also under the Integrated Youth Ministries Department whose aim is “working together to better lead children and youth to Jesus.”

Integrated Youth Ministries (IYM) includes the following departments: Camp Ministries, Children & Family, Education, and Youth Ministries (Adventurer/Pathfinder/Youth/Young Adult/Adventist Campus Ministries).
<table>
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<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>EVENTS</th>
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| MARCH | 4-6 YIYA - STATE Sex, Love & Relationship — Youth and Young Adult Editions (PLR) *  
11-13 P - CENTRAL Directors/Staff Campout (Camp Joy) ** |
| APRIL | 1-3 P - STATE - Everglades Reveille  
6 YM - STATE FL Youth Pastors' Day Retreat (C FL)  
7-10 FL Conference Camp meeting — English (CK)  
15-17 FL Conference Camp meeting — Spanish (CK)  
5-16 P - Division PBE (Phoenix, AZ)  
24 P - NORTH EEE (Orlando Airport) ** |
| MAY  | (Adv/PIF - Reports Due)  
1 PAC Meeting (FL Conf)  
6-8 YIYA - STATE Hispanic Youth Congress (CK)  
6-8 YA - NORTH Young Adults Retreat (PLR) ** |
| JUNE | 11-12 PAC Mini Spiritual Retreat (TBA)  
19-29 YIYA - STATE Youth Impact Tampa Mission Trip |
| JULY | 8-10 YM - NORTH Leader's Planning Retreat (PLR) **  
8-10 YM - CENTRAL Leaders' Planning Retreat (TBA) **  
15-17 P - STATE Island Navigator (Marathon, FL)  
22-24 P - STATE Island Navigator (Marathon, FL)  
22-24 YIYA/ACM - STATE Survival Camp Level 1 (CK) ** |
| AUGUST | 29-31 YM - STATE Leadership Convention (CK) **  
31 YM - NIC/S AREA Youth Ministries Council (CK) * |
| SEPTEMBER | (2016-2017 Club Year Begins)  
18 STATE Youth Ministries Committee (TBA)  
23-25 P - CENTRAL Varsity Reveille (TBA) |
| OCTOBER | 01 YM - STATE Sports Basketball League  
12-16 P - Southern Union Camporee (CK) * |
| NOVEMBER - (Adv/PIF - Reports Due) | 6 PAC Meeting (FL Conf) **  
11-13 P - CENTRAL E-Tracker Reveille (TBA)  
13 A - NORTH Zone B Fun Day (TBA) **  
18-20 PIYYA/ACM - STATE BLAZE FEST - A Ministries Training for Ages 14+ (BCC, Lake Yale) **  
24-25 THANKSGIVING - Office Closed |
| DECEMBER | 2-4 P - STATE Drum Corp Training (TBA)  
? P - STATE Varsity Canoe Trip  
16-18 YIYA/ACM - STATE Survival Camping Level 2 (Orlando National Forest) **  
? Store/office closed for end-of-the-year inventory |

*** = New Event  
** = New Entry  
? = Pending  
Bold font events = Club of the Year requirement
Event Registration Links:

For more information go to Florida Conference Youth Ministries website
Floridaconference.com/youth-ministries

Please note that two weeks prior to each event, the registration cost will increase. As with all our events, fees are not refundable and not transferable. Check event details.
REQUEST FOR FUNDING

Thank you for expressing an interest in receiving funding from the youth ministry department. We want to find out about you and your project so please fill in this form providing as much detail as possible. We will endeavor to get you a response within two weeks.

Your full name ________________________________
Address ______________________________________
______________________________________________
Email _________________________________________
Email 2 _________________________________________
Home phone ________________________________
Cell phone ____________________________________
Facebook .................................................. □ YES □ NO
Church attending ________________________________
Church where membership resides ________________
Baptismal date ________________________________
Church position(s) ________________________________

Name of project ________________________________
Target audience ________________________________
Has there been church board approval? .................. □ YES □ NO
Target audience ________________________________
Date of project ________________________________
Who is your advisor? ________________________________
Their contact details ________________________________
Description of project

How does your project fulfill the goals and aims of the youth ministry department?

Budget: please provide us with details about your sources of funding.
How much are you requesting from the Youth Ministry Department? ________________

Most of our funding is provided after the event has been completed. Would you be able to receive funding after the event? .................................................. ☐ YES ☐ NO

Will you be able to provide a 600-1000 word report on the project? .............. ☐ YES ☐ NO

Will you be able to provide at least 12 high quality pictures of the project? ... ☐ YES ☐ NO

Will you be able to provide a 3 minute video report on the project? ............... ☐ YES ☐ NO

Please provide other information to support your application

Please mail or email this application to your area youth director or to the office
FLYouthMinistries@floridaconference.com
Global Youth Day is an initiative from the General Conference Youth Ministries.

The aim is for all young people to spend a Sabbath engaged in service and outreach. They are to be the church rather than go to church. The date for this is March 19, 2016.

For more information by GYD visit the GC website.

In Florida, we would like each cluster to host a GYD event.

This will allow every young person to be involved without having to travel too far.

This means the Adventurer, Pathfinder and Youth/YA coordinators should work together. This is a checklist of things to do:
1. You do not have to meet face-to-face but you can arrange an online (FaceTime/Oovoo) or a teleconference. If you need a teleconference code please contact the Youth Department.
   a. Don’t assume that someone else will call the meeting. Take the initiative and YOU call the meeting.
2. The city of choice should have numerous projects for the young people to get involved in. Often it’s who you know that will make these opportunities materialize. The host city/church should be supportive.
3. The venue will be used to meet first thing in the morning and then lunch and then the evening. Technically you could use a church and it be not too much disruption to their normal Sabbath schedule. If you cannot get a church you may have to hire a hall. (see budget)
4. Let the Youth Department know where you will be hosting the GYD. We’ll help you promote it. We can also assist with your planning.
5. Contact all local youth leaders (Adventurers, Pathfinders, Youth & Young Adults). Let them know when and where the GYD will be. Ask them to arrange to be there. Let them know that more details will follow.
6. Your plans may involve an evening speaker, praise team, MC. Please get names and book them ASAP. As far as possible try to use local talent.
7. There’s about two hours in the morning and two-three hours in the afternoon. The young people need a good amount of activities.
a. Contact volunteer groups
   i. Food bank
   ii. Shelters
   iii. Salvation Army
   iv. Thrift Stores
   v. Refuges
   vi. Prisons
   vii. Nursing homes
   viii. Sheltered accommodation
   ix. Day centers
   x. Hospitals
   xi. Clinics
b. Contact agencies
   i. Police
   ii. Mayor’s Office
   iii. Social services
   iv. Churches
c. Church outreach projects
   i. ONCE
   ii. Literature distribution
d. Contact numbers are online.
e. Ask for 5-10 young people to assist for a couple of hours
f. Arrange for a variety of activities arranged by age.

8. As these option as clarified inform the local churches in our cluster and invite them to sign up to and commit one morning and one afternoon option. Have a cut off date. Inform the projects how many children have signed up. Send details of what each young person needs to wear or bring to their youth leader.

9. Finalize the schedule for the day:
   a. 9:00 – 9:30 Youth arrive
   b. 9:30 – 10:00 Instructions and departure to morning project
   c. 10:00-1:00 Morning project (including travel time)
   d. 1:00-2:30 Lunch
   e. 2:30-3:00 Instructions
   f. 3:00-6:00 evening project
   g. 6:00-7:00 supper
   h. 7:00- 8:00 Worship and testimonies (sunset 7:34 dependent on location)
   i. 8:00 Games

10. Budget. Check with your youth director but you can plan on $200-$500 from the Youth Department. Collect an offering. Ask the youth to bring $2-$5 each for refreshments. The Youth Department has a form for you to use to request funding.

11. Let the local pastors know what is happening and why they won’t see their young people. The Youth Department will be sending out GYD events to all pastors and to our distribution list, but local pastors may have questions about their event.
12. Your local club leaders will be transporting the young people to the event. Remind them that they should apply with all guidelines regarding the safe transportation of minors. This event should be approved by their church board so that they are covered by their local church insurance. For clarification contact Rhonda Harper at the Conference office.

13. ONLY volunteers/staff who have completed the Shield the Vulnerable training and have been cleared to work with children should have any involvement in this event.

14. You may need the following:
   a. Cooks
   b. Audio visual personnel
   c. Games coordinator
   d. Worship coordinator

15. Get your local Adv/Path youth leaders involved. Assign them responsibilities.

16. Assign persons to take pictures and video. This will help with promotion for next year. The Youth Department will also need these in order to release funding.
SOLID – Youth Ministry

by Pedro Perez
What does a ...

S.O.L.I.D.

Youth Ministry look like?
How do we best "train, equip, and deploy an army of young people"?
How can we better serve local churches in Y/YA/ACM ministries?
CORE CONCEPTS – four (4) main concepts/emphasis in Y/YA Ministry

Service – service is defined as activities that help/do nice things for others

Outreach – outreach is the evangelistic side of serving; intentionally reaching out to someone and leading them to make a decision about God in their life

Life Issues – helping young people find their way through adolescence to make decisions based on a biblically informed/transformed mindset and worldview; young people hear all kinds of voices telling them all kinds of opinions—what does God/Bible have to say about the issues young people face

Discipleship – discipleship is modeling/showing young people how to live an authentic Christian life so they experience how Jesus is involved and in control of every area of my life; and then we ask them to find someone else they can help to become a follower of Jesus; we are called to make disciples
Youth Ministries Assessment Tool

How to measure whether or not a ministry is ... successful, doing well, accomplishing goals ...
How “healthy” is the ministry?

Youth Ministries can be Evaluated by:

1) PHASES - Number of times a ministry meets
2) STAGES - Number of options/programs offered
3) LEVELS - Number of times the CORE CONCEPTS are emphasized/taught
PHASES - How often does a ministry meet?

*Phases focus on the frequency of meetings*

Phase I – Meet once a quarter
Phase II – Meet once a month
Phase III – Meet twice a month
Phase IV – Meet weekly

GOAL: Grow ministries into Phase III or Phase IV

*(Example 1 – Your church has a Youth Sabbath School/meet weekly – Phase IV ministry)*

*(Example 2 – Your church has an AY/Vespers program/meets once a month – Phase II ministry)*
**STAGES** - How many different meetings does a ministry have?

*Stages identify a healthy variety of ministry programs*

Stage I – Have one meeting for target ministry group
Stage II – Have two meetings for target ministry group
Stage III – Have three meetings for target ministry group
Stage IV – Have four meetings for target ministry group

**GOAL:** Grow ministries to Stage III or Stage IV ministries (conducting three-four meetings for target ministry group)

*(Example 1 – Your church has a Pathfinder Club meeting/Outreach Sabbath monthly/Camp Outs or Trips – Stage III)*

*(Example 2 – Your church has a Youth Sabbath School – Stage I; if you start an outreach/service component – Stage II)*
**DESIRED OUTCOME** – All Youth Ministries would assess what PHASE/STAGE they are in and pray about how they could grow to the next PHASE/STAGE.

This means adding/recruiting new leaders ... to start new ministries (not same leaders/people doing more).

We are setting an ideal for what a dynamic, well-balanced, SOLID Youth Ministries program would look like.
**LEVELS** - Implementing the four (4) CORE CONCEPTS of Youth Ministries:
Service/Outreach/Life Issues/Discipleship

**Level I** – **Once** a month focus on one of CORE CONCEPTS (S/O/LI/D)

**Level II** – **Twice** a month focus on one of CORE CONCEPTS (S/O/LI/D)

**Level III** – **Three** times a month focus on CORE CONCEPTS (S/O/LI/D)

**Level IV** – **Four** times a month focus on CORE CONCEPTS (S/O/LI/D)
GOAL- every quarter teach on ALL of four (4) CORES (S/O/LI/D) to help young people see what are the basics to living a SOLID Christian experience/life.
SUMMARY: In each category (Phases/Stages/Levels) the important thing is growth!
If your ministry is at Phase I, what would it take to get to Phase II?; if your ministry is at Stage II, how could you advance to Stage III?; if your ministry is not focusing on the Core CONCEPTS, what will we need to gather in terms of resources to begin guiding our young people down this path towards a SOLID youth ministry?
Every time a ministry goes to the next step, the ministry is potentially getting stronger and reaching out more effectively.
It may be helpful to think of the numbers as: basic/intermediate/advanced/excellent (or another way to see it is: so-so/good/better/best)
Resources

floridaconference.com/youth-ministries - FL Conference Youth Ministries

www.livingiths.org (High School Ministry – Adventist site)
www.adventsource.com (Adventist Resources for ministry)
www.cye.org (Center for Youth Evangelism – Adventist site)
www.adventistyouthministries.org (NAD Youth Ministries – Adventist site)
www.acflink.org (College/University Campus Ministry – Adventist site)
www.gcyyouthministries.org (GC Youth Ministries – Adventist site)

Group.com (Youth Ministries Resources – non-Adventist)
SimplyYouthMinistry.com (Youth Ministries Resources – non-Adventist)
DownloadYouthMinistry.com (Youth Ministries Resources – non-Adventist)
Service Resource

S.O.L.I.D.

Discipleship → Service

Life Issues ↓ Outreach
Tips on Starting a Community Service Project

What’s Your Issue? Defining Your Community Needs:
Look through your local paper or talk with friends about a couple of the most important needs facing your neighborhood or community. Write these down along with three things that you can do as an individual or group to help. Better yet, hold a meeting with some of your friends and discuss concerns/issues facing your community.

What Can We Use? Identifying our Resources, Skills, and Assets:
We all have many resources and skills that we can lend to solving a community problem; we just need to identify them. Write down three to six sentences about what resources, skills, or assets (such as other groups, programs, funders, volunteers, etc.) your group brings to the project or that exist in the community to help combat the selected problem.

What do we want to achieve? Defining your Mission, Vision, and Goals:
Planning a project requires developing a structure that helps organizers define their vision, mission, goals, and strategies. Strategic planning enables young people to “See It,” “Believe It,” and “Build It” (see steps below).

1. First give your project a name.
2. See It—Mission: Write one sentence that describes what your group’s long term goal or purpose is in meeting this need. A mission should be a concise statement that reflects what, why and how your group does its work.
3. Believe It—Vision: A vision statement provides a clear description of what success looks like for your project. Complete the following sentence with the ideal vision you have for your community related to this issue: “(Name of group) is working towards the day when... (describe the change you wish to see in your community).”
4. Build It—Establishing your Objectives and Tasks: Define your short term objectives and describe the specific tasks that you will need to take to achieve the objective. An objective is a specific, time-based measurable goal that you work towards. Also, be sure to write down the name of who will be the contact person for each task and your deadline for completing the task.

What do we need? Creating your Budget:
Set up a chart: here are suggestions on what to include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Items</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Cost per Item</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Possible Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex. Equipment</td>
<td>Lunches</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>112.50</td>
<td>hotels and restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rakes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
<td>140.00</td>
<td>hardware stores</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who will support us? Developing your Fundraising Campaign
Make a list of the top groups and sources for you to contact to mobilize the necessary cash or in-kind (donated supplies) resources. Be sure to add as many possible sources as you can think of to help you in meeting your funding goals.

Fundraising Plan:
Set up a chart using the following headings (an example has been provided):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Sources</th>
<th>Source Name</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Person responsible for contacting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex. Businesses</td>
<td>Marriott</td>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td>1.202.555.1234 x100</td>
<td>Mel</td>
<td>12/31/200_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COSTCO</td>
<td>John Doe</td>
<td>1.202.555.2345 x100</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>12/31/200_</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ideas from 30 Hour Famine (www.30hourfamine.org) Already read our top 5 service project ideas? Then read below to see more service project ideas.

respect your elders
Visit the home of an elderly person who lives on a fixed income. Bring the right tools to get the place in shape and looking better than you found it. You can offer to paint the house, work in the garden, do some heavy lifting, walk the dog, clean and dust, take out the trash... you get the idea. Get in touch with the person ahead of time so you can have a to-do list ready for your group.
If you can’t find an individual to help, visit your local retirement home and sing songs, play bingo, serve dinner, or simply sit and talk with the residents.

feed the homeless
If you are looking to really stretch the hearts and stomachs of your group, volunteer to serve breakfast, lunch, or dinner at your local homeless shelter.
You might choose to pre-pack sack lunches and drop them off at a shelter or soup kitchen — or actually visit the shelter to help serve a prepared meal (check with the facility to verify what will work). A visit to the shelter will put into perspective how hungry millions of people can be every day.
Make sure to contact the shelter or soup kitchen well before your Famine weekend to get on their schedule and get instructions about things like what to wear or what you can include in pre-made sack lunches.

service adventure
“We jumped in our church van armed with snow shovels (there was at least one foot of snow on the ground!), cleaning supplies and garbage bags. We started out in prayer asking God to lead us to a help to people. As we drove out of the parking lot, I pointed out, ‘When do we have time to simply be available to help other people? How can we help someone today? We are going to drive around and if you see a need, then let’s see if we can help!’ We began by picking up trash, returning lost lacrosse gear, and shoveling off playground equipment. Other service projects included shoveling off porch decks, prayer with neighbors, and small cleaning projects. In all, we enjoyed our time together even throwing snowballs but more importantly being available and ready to help our community.”
— Jason Platt, Trinity Church
Take your own group on a service adventure and see what a blessing you can be to your own communities!

Items needed:
• Lawn work tools: mower, hedger, clippers, etc.
• Shovels
• Trash bags (for picking up trash, leaves, etc.)
• Hammer and nails
• White paint (for graffiti or fences)
• Anything and everything else you can think of!
thrifty nifty
Everyone knows the feeling of walking into Goodwill or a thrift store and finding something for $1 that you don't know how you ever lived without. But the truth is, millions of American families can only afford to shop at these used clothing and furniture stores.
Grab your group and head to your local Goodwill, Salvation Army, or thrift store and help organize, clean, and stock their racks so that they can better serve those in your community who rely on them for basic needs such as clothing. Just be sure to ask them first! Also, see if your group can bring some of their own excess clothing to donate. You can even organize a “Thrifty Nifty Fashion Show” for after your service project. Ask your group members to bring $5 or less to spend, and see what kind of outfits they can pull together after they are finished helping out. Find a local park or head back to your facilities for a fashion show! Consider offering awards for “craziest,” “most original,” “cheapest,” and more.

emergency snack bags
Make sack lunches and deliver them to the ICU or ER waiting areas of your local hospital(s). It’s a great way to help those who are waiting for ill or injured loved ones and are unable to leave. Lorna Roper posted this idea, suggesting that each bag be labeled with a comforting Bible passage and the name of your youth group. If you have leftover bags, take them to a homeless shelter or mission or simply drive around town looking for people in need to offer them to.
Items needed:
• Paper lunch bags
• Sandwich makings
• Other lunch items such as granola bars, apples, cookies, etc.

fast with fashion
Split into teams. Each team has an hour to collect a specific list of clothing going door-to-door. Then take the donated clothes to your local Goodwill, Salvation Army, or homeless shelter. Not sure what to put on your list? Call your local thrift store and ask what they need most.

not-so-random acts of kindness
Descend on the house of someone who could use a hand (or twenty): the elderly, new parents, or those recovering from surgery. Cook them dinner, wash their car, do yard work, whatever they need. Divide into groups and tackle several households at once.
service scavenger hunt
Divide your group into teams of about the same size. Assign an adult to each group for transportation and safety purposes. Give the groups a specific amount of time to go door-to-door in different neighborhoods and complete service projects. Designate a meeting place for the groups to go as soon as they finish all of their tasks or think that they have enough points to win.
When you knock on doors, explain that your group is doing the World Vision 30 Hour Famine to help feed hungry children around the world, and that you would love help with your fundraising efforts as well.
Suggested points rankings:
• Wash windows (1 point per window)
• Rake or mow a lawn (5-10 points)
• Weed a garden or flower plot (2-8 points)
• Sweep a porch or sidewalk (4 points)
• Clean mirrors (3 points)
• Read to a child (3 points)
• Take out trash or recycling (2 points)
• Dust furniture (2 points per room)
• Vacuum carpets (2 points per room)
• Other (1-10 points)
Make it a competition — whoever finishes their tasks the fastest or accumulates the most points wins and gets a two-liter of premium, extra tasty juice!

parks and recreation
Not the TV show, the real one! Call your local parks department and ask about any group volunteer action your students could get in on.

the amazingly trashy race
Need a worthwhile activity with minimal planning? Hold a contest to see which group of students can collect the most trash. Only junk found on the ground is fair game — no raiding trash cans. Be sure to take your youth to a safe area that could use a good cleanup. Winners could get a two-liter of premium, extra tasty juice.

camp clean-up
Do minor repairs and cleaning at a local camp that serves kids... all in exchange for a venue for your Famine!
Items needed:
• Rakes, bags, cleaning supplies, and paint
366 Community Service Ideas

Categories:
- General Ideas
- Children, Family & Friends
- Crime
- Government
- Those with Special Needs
- Performing Arts & Sports
- Senior Citizens
- On the Calendar
- Safety
- School Activities
- Helping the Hungry/Homeless
- Neighborhood Enhancement
- The Environment
- Helping Animals

On the Calendar:
1. Conduct a community service project during the Big Help Day in October.
2. Plan a Memorial Day program.
3. Recognize veterans in your community.
5. On Thanksgiving, make sure your family knows what you are thankful for.
6. Trim a mitten Christmas tree to donate mittens to local schools and homeless shelters.
7. Organize a coat drive in which old coats are donated for use by needy people.
8. Contact a local tree farm about donating a Christmas tree to a nursing home, homeless shelter or needy family.
9. Decorate a Christmas tree at a nursing home, hospital, school or homeless shelter.
10. Ring the bell for Salvation Army during the holidays.
11. Deliver a May Day basket.
12. Offer safety tips for youngsters during Halloween.
14. On St. Patrick’s Day, don’t only wear something green, care for something green!
15. Volunteer to return shopping carts during National Supermarkets Month in February.
16. Make Spring baskets for seniors’ residential facility, neighbors or homeless shelters.
17. On International Picnic Day in May, take your family or friends on a picnic. You supply the food and let Mother Nature supply the ants!
18. Make a Halloween Safety Kit for youth.
19. Give your Mom a hug and a homemade card for Mother’s Day.
20. On Johnny Appleseed Day in March, deliver apples to homeless shelters.
22. During July on National Cheer-Up Day, share a smile and cheer someone up.
23. Mow the lawn for your Dad on Father’s Day.

Know how. Know now.

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.
Children, Family & Friends:

1. Surprise your parent(s) or neighbors and offer to babysit a sibling, relative or friend.
2. Design a game for young children.
3. Explore history by interviewing a nursing home resident about how they grew up.
4. Check on either a younger student or an elderly person after school.
5. Read a book to a young kid a blind person or an older neighbor.
6. Cheer up a sick friend with a visit or phone call.
7. Celebrate a birthday by asking friends to donate items for causes instead of gifts.
8. Make get well cards for people in hospitals and convalescent homes.
9. Become pen pals to a younger person or someone from another country.
10. Knit or crochet baby blankets.
11. Conduct a clothing repair or sewing workshop for needy people.
12. Assemble a new parent's kit for the arrival of a newborn.
13. Collect old magazines and donate them to day care centers.
14. Quilt a blanket for newborn babies.
15. Plant a tree or present a tree to the parents for each baby born in your community.
16. Collect unused make-up, perfume and other cosmetics for a center for abused women.
17. Make a cancer or aids quilt or mural to remember people of who have died from these diseases and remind others of their life.
18. Write a kids' book or an author and ask them to donate signed copies, auction the books off and donate the money to local library.
19. Donate old eyeglasses to an organization or place that recycles them for the needy.
20. Collect old stuffed animals and dolls, clean them up, repair them and donate them.
21. Organize a babysitting service for foster families.
22. Collect old clothes and donate them for a dress-up area at a daycare.

Safety:

1. Take a life saving class.
2. Create a play that teaches young children how to stay safe at home.
3. Design a fill of after-school safety tips and deliver it to day care centers and grade schools.
4. Check railroad crossings and make signs to promote safety.
5. Offer a safety workshop prior to July 4th.
6. Ask your parents to help you get your town to fix dangerous intersections.
7. Conduct a bicycle rodeo to help children learn bicycle safety.
8. Create an poison awareness campaign.
9. Ask your fire department how you can help others learn about fire safety.
10. Get permission to fix up your town's fire hydrants.
11. Make emergency kits for your home.
12. Collect money for a good cause.
13. Create a holiday safety video.
15. Volunteer at a police station.
16. Become a certified lifeguard and volunteer at a swimming pool.
17. If you're good at fixing bikes, volunteer to teach others how to fix their bikes.
18. Conduct bike safety checks for your neighborhood.
19. Sponsor a drug free post prom event.
20. Organize a drug free pledge campaign.

Crime Fighting:

1. Start a Crime clue box.
2. Survey your neighborhood to find out what people think are the leading crime causes.
3. Start a neighborhood watch program.
4. Join a community crime prevention organizations such as DARE or McGruff Program.
5. Work with local government to start a victim's aid support service.
6. Create a TV or radio public service announcement against drugs and alcohol.
7. Paint over graffiti.
8. Organize a self defense workshop.
9. Create a billboard for gun graffitis, allow people to paint sections.
11. Sponsor a TV blackout event that kids spend time with their family rather than watch TV.
12. Create and distribute a list of hotlines for kids who might need help.

School Activities:

1. Paint a mural over graffiti.
2. Volunteer to be a teacher's aide during your study hall.
3. Collect coupons and small gift certificates for students who show progress in school work.
4. Hold a used book sale and donate the money.
5. Organize a "get acquainted" lunch for students at your school.
6. Set up a buddy system to match new students with ones who have attended school.
7. Start an anti-smoking campaign that encourages students not to smoke.
8. Encourage the school cafeteria to donate left over food to local homeless shelters.
9. Tutor students who are learning English as a second language.
10. Feature community minded people on a school bulletin board.
11. Make new kid survival kits for new students at the school.
12. Have your class hold an old videogame drive and donate them to your library.
13. Invite local police officers to present a drug awareness or bike safety assembly.
15. Collect school supplies to give to kids who need them.
16. Form a study group to help younger kids with their school work.
18. Volunteer for student council and school government committees.
19. Tape you and your classmates reading a story and give it to a children's hospital.
20. Form a campus safety escort service.
21. Put on an information fair on how little kids can be safe at home.
22. Tutor a student that needs help learning English or some other subject.
23. Conduct a canned goods drive during a school event and donate the items to a local food bank.
25. Make a New Kid Survival Kit.
26. Start a New Buddy Club for new students.
27. Create a play that teaches young children how to stay safe at home while their parents are away.
28. Provide child care during a PTA meeting.
29. Conduct a seatbelt check at school as students leave the parking lot.
30. Organize a safe walk to school event.
31. Recognize teachers during National Education Week.
32. Volunteer to be a part of a school flag raising ceremony.
33. Assist an after-school little league or other sports program for younger children.
34. Volunteer to serve as a crossing guard before and after school.
35. Set up a volunteer referral service between your school or organization and other community organizations.
36. Write or make a picture book to read to a younger youth.
37. Inspect school playgrounds for hazards.
38. Write a proposal for a sports safety clinic to your coach and school officials.
39. Organize a Safe Walk Service to escort young children to and from schools.
40. Make simple reading and math flash cards for a preschool or day care center.
41. Organize a reading hour for children at your local school or library.

**Government**

1. Telephone residents and encourage them to register to vote.
2. Provide a voter pick up or transportation service for seniors.
3. Campaign for a candidate who is running for an office.
4. Organize a public issues forum for candidates.
5. Contact your juvenile court system. Find out if they have a "Kids in Court" program to match older kids who have been in court as abuse victims with younger kids who are facing a court experience.
6. Go door to door to register votes.
7. Design and paint a community mural.
8. Become an advocate. Contact your legislators on issues close to your heart.
9. Contact a local organization about donating flags to public institutions.

**Helping the Hungry and/or Homeless:**

1. Help cook and/or serve a meal at homeless shelter.
2. During National Nutrition month in March, organize a nutrition awareness campaign.
3. Organize a food scavenger hunt to collect food for the needy.
4. Alter and repair clothes for the needy, elderly and homeless.
5. Gather clothing from your neighbor and donate it to a local shelter.
6. Make "I Care" Kits with combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc. for homeless people.
7. Bake bread on National Bread Day in November and deliver to the hungry, homeless or just your neighbors.
8. Help with repairs at a local homeless shelter.
9. Donate art supplies to kids in a homeless shelter.
10. Make a care package with mittens, socks, T-shirts, etc. for a child at a homeless shelter.
11. Collect grocery coupons to give a local food bank.
12. If your community doesn't have a food bank, work with local officials to start one.
13. Clip coupons and give them at your local food pantry or homeless shelter.
14. Pack and hand out food at a food bank.
15. Organize a neighborhood group to plant, tend and harvest a vegetable garden.
16. Donate the produce to a food bank.
17. Sponsor a food drive at your school or parent's workplace or business.
18. Prepare a home-cooked meal for the residents of a nearby homeless shelter.
19. Bake a batch of cookies and deliver them to a soup kitchen or homeless shelter.
20. Raid your closet and attic to find toys and clothes to donate to a homeless shelter.
21. Assist with sorting and organizing items donated to a homeless shelter.
22. Food drive - set up collection bins in stores, banks, movie theaters, and schools.
23. Start a program to help poor people build their own houses.
25. Help raise money for Reading is Fundamental Open Book Program - Have a Read-a-Thon or Book Auction.
27. Make first aid kits for homeless shelters.
28. Contact a homeless shelter in your community and see if they already have a reading center and need help to keep the project going.
29. Set up a Saturday Reading Hour where you visit a homeless shelter once a month, bringing books to share and leave behind.
30. Collect items to deliver to homeless shelters (blankets, sheets, towels, toys, books, disposable diapers.)
31. Become a Big Buddy for one or more of the children at the homeless shelter.
32. Find out about low-cost housing in your area for the homeless people.
33. Contact job training and placement centers in your community.

**For Those with Special Needs:**

1. Volunteer to help at a Special Olympics event.
2. Set up a buddy system for kids with special needs at your school.
3. Raise money for Braille or large print books for blind or visually impaired people.
4. Volunteer at an agency that works with children with disabilities.
5. Read books or the newspaper on tape for blind or visually impaired people.
6. Make gifts with friends for kids in the hospital.
7. Prepare sack lunches and deliver them to homeless or homebound people.
8. Bring toys to children in the cancer ward of a hospital.
9. Work with physically challenged kids on an art project.
10. Build a ramp for a person in a wheelchair so it is easier for them to get in and out of their house.
11. Clean a neighbor's yard who can not do it themselves.
12. Get your class to put together a library at a children's hospital.
13. Give valentines and other cards in individuals who are in the local hospital.
15. Visit a rehabilitation center. Learn about patients with special needs. Volunteer to help.
**Neighborhood Enhancement:**

1. Help neighbors paint and repair their homes.
2. Arrange for the local health department to conduct neighborhood health checks.
3. Volunteer to teach classes on a sport you enjoy and know a lot about.
4. Contact Habitat for Humanity to see how you can support them in your community.
5. Work with the local health department to set up an immunization day or clinic to immunize children against childhood diseases.
6. Organize a newcomers group in your neighborhood to welcome new families.
7. Produce a neighborhood newspaper.
8. Train to become a guide for your local tourist bureau.
9. Make maps of local parks, libraries, or historic sites.
10. Research local historic sites and provide the research to visitor’s bureau.
11. Petition your city to make drinking fountains and/or restrooms in public areas available.
12. Volunteer to clean up trash at a community event or county fair.
13. Make signs to label community buildings and sites of interest.
14. Set up an art exhibit at a local business, school, or nursing home.
15. Design a mural or quilt highlighting important aspects of the community.
16. Organize a campaign to paint storm drains to prevent dumping of hazardous materials.
17. Set up an informational display at a local library.
18. Volunteer to help with Vacation Bible School.
19. Organize a community chorus, orchestra, or band.
20. Volunteer to help set up for a community event.
21. Distribute leaf bags during the fall encouraging residents to clean leaves from their streets and yards.
22. Adopt a pothole and raise funds to repair it.
23. Plant native flowers or plants along highways.
24. Adopt a billboard and use it for a public service announcement.
25. Campaign for additional lighting along poorly lighted streets.
26. Clean up vacant lots.
27. Collect supplies for persons who have been in a fire or natural disaster.
28. Help fix a run-down playground.
29. Start a yard of the week award for your neighborhood.
30. Participate in an Annual parade.
31. Spruce up and paint the community or youth center.
32. Plant a community garden. Adopt a town monument and keep it clean.
33. Clean an elderly neighbor’s driveway and sidewalk after a snowfall.
34. Clean up after a natural disaster.
35. Organize a local blood drive with the American Red Cross.
36. Plant flowers at town hall.
37. Organize a campaign to raise money to buy and install new playground equipment for a park.
38. Survey community agencies to learn the leading causes of accidents in your community then design a campaign to reduce accidents.
39. Paint a mural or clean up a local park.
40. Plant flowers in public areas that could use some color.
41. Mow the lawns and care for the plants of neighbors who are away on vacation.

42. Conduct a community accessibility check to identify potential barriers for individuals with disabilities.
43. Plan a disabilities day where friends or classmates are given a physical disability for a day and are forced to function during the day.
44. Read aloud to a person who is visually impaired.
45. Build park benches.
46. Paint fences or park benches.
47. Help winterize homes in a poverty-stricken neighborhood.
48. Lead a helping hand at a local community center.
49. Identify corners where bushes and trees make it difficult for drivers to see.
50. Conduct a neighborhood drive to collect used furniture.

**Performing Arts & Sports:**

1. Form a band with your friends and give free concerts.
2. If you play an instrument, help a friend learn to play.
3. Serve as an usher at a sporting event.
4. Get your martial arts or dance class to give a demonstration at a youth center, nursing home or school.
5. Write and produce a play about a current issue.
6. Serve as a coach for a youth sports team.
7. Teach a friend how to in-line skate.
8. Start a collection drive for old sports equipment and donate it to needy families.
9. Get friends to assist at a sporting event.
10. Provide refreshments at a local race or sporting event

**The Environment:**

1. Plant a garden or tree where the whole neighborhood can enjoy it.
2. Set up a recycling system for your home and participate in your neighborhood curbside recycling pick-up.
3. Organize a car pooling campaign in your neighborhood to cut down on air pollution.
4. Set up a seed or a plant exchange in your neighborhood.
5. Grow fresh flowers and deliver them to someone to brighten their day.
6. Pick up a trail during National Trail Day in June.
7. Make bird feeders for public places.
8. Collect old phone books in your neighborhood for recycling.
9. Adopt an acre of a park or a mile of roadside to keep clean.
10. Elect a family “energy watchdog” to shut off lights, radios, and TV’s when not in use.
11. Help everyone in your family conserve water.
12. Clean up trash along a river or in a park.
13. Create a habitat for wildlife.
14. Create a campaign to encourage biking and walking.
15. Test the health of the water in your local lakes, rivers or streams.
16. Get places to be! Burn energy on your bike instead of taking the family car.
17. Participate in the Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program, 703-790-4000.
18. Start a butterfly garden at home, at a community center, senior home or school.
19. Sponsor an environmental slogan contest in school.
20. Build a bluebird trail.
21. Collect aluminum cans and donate the money to a favorite charity.
22. Get together with friends and make conservation posters for the community center.
23. Encourage your parents to buy products made from recycled materials.
24. Conduct an energy audit at your school.
25. Monitor the indoor air quality.
26. Organize an asbestos check.
27. Test the drinking water for lead.
28. Adopt an acre of rainforest.
29. Plant a commemorative tree to honor someone.
30. Create a children’s nature garden, labeling plants and trees and scheduling guided tours.
31. Place trees that have died.
32. Take household toxic waste to a proper disposal facility.
33. Check indoor radon levels.
34. Adopt highways and clean up clutter.
35. Volunteer to separate recyclables.
36. Organize a hazardous waste collection.
37. Start a recycling center at school.
38. Host a recycling fair.
39. Hold an invention contest with entries made out of recycled goods.
40. Form a volunteer lawn mowing service with your friends.
41. If you see a tree that’s in trouble, try to save it. Pamper it, water it, or don’t water it if the case may be. Find out what’s wrong with it and how to make it better.
42. Pick up litter.
43. Use a lunch box instead of throwaway bags.
44. Practice the 3 R’s in your house: Reduce, recycle, reuse.
45. Adopt a park with your friends and keep it clean.
46. Bring a backpack when you shop or reuse those little plastic sacks.
47. Clean up a beach or riverbed.
48. Start a compost pile and encourage your family to use it!
49. Plant trees.
50. Plant a commemorative tree to honor someone.
51. Ask your school to use recycled paper.
52. Repair homes or abandoned buildings.
53. Start an Environmental Club.
54. Hold a recycling center.
55. Check homes and public buildings for lead based paint.
56. Clear a new trail at a nature center or park.

Senior Citizens:
1. Adopt a “grandfriend”
2. Visit a nursing home.
3. Rake leaves, shovel snow, clean gutters or wash windows for a senior citizen.
4. Pick up medicine for an elderly person.
5. During bad weather, visit seniors to make sure they have everything they need.
6. Pick up the morning paper for a senior neighbor on your way to school.
7. Form a Mall Patrol with your friends to help seniors with their shopping.
8. Form a kids carwash squad to clean and wash seniors’ cars.
9. Write your “grandfriend” a letter, or write letters for an elderly person.
10. Go for a walk with a senior citizen in your community.
11. Hold an afternoon dance for your local nursing home.
12. With the help of family and friends, hold a summertime play or songfest at a nursing home.
13. Teach them your dances and ask them to teach you theirs.
14. Deliver meals to homebound individuals.
15. Offer to pick up groceries with/for a senior citizen.
16. Help senior citizens in your neighborhood obtain and install locks or smoke alarms.
17. Teach a senior friend how to use a computer or the Internet.
18. Get a group together to sing or present a play at a nursing home.
19. Do something creative on the holidays for the Senior Citizens (cook a meal, bake cookies, dress up in costumes, etc.)
20. Take a pet to a nursing home.
21. Do art projects with people in nursing homes (finger painting.)
22. Organize a sing-a-long.
23. Offer to read to people in a nursing home.
24. Write letters to people in a nursing home, if you can’t go and visit.
25. Teach an elderly neighbor a new card game.
26. Call up elderly people who live on their own to see if they need anything.
27. Teach your senior friends how to use computers.
28. Get with friends and form a Clean Up Club to help elderly with their house cleaning.
29. Be a friend to the senior citizens.

Helping Animals:
1. Volunteer at an animal shelter. Help clean up, play with the animals, or do whatever’s needed to make the shelter a nicer “temporary” home for the animals.
2. Become a foster parent. Some shelters have temporary foster care programs. You take care of a pet until they can find a permanent home for it.
3. Control animal populations.
4. Find out about raising a dog for persons with disabilities.
5. Raise money for pet causes by organizing a pet photo session.
6. Organize a pet show for a local nursing home.
7. With the support of a vet clinic, organize a neuter and spay campaign to get animals neutered and spayed at a reduced rate.
8. Set up donation centers for animal products to be donated to needy.
9. Learn about pet therapy and do pet therapy with your animal at nursing homes and day care centers.
10. Form a “we love animals” club and volunteer to care for animals at a children’s zoo.
11. Plan a special awareness event during Be Kind to Animals Week in May.
12. Organize a community dog wash.
13. Volunteer to clean out animal shelters at homeless shelter.
14. Collect and sort newspapers to donate to a local animal shelter.
15. Collect food and supplies needed for a local zoo, animal shelter or food bank.
17. Learn about pet therapy and do pet therapy at local nursing homes or child care centers.
18. Find homes in shelters for abandoned pets.
19. Talk to a Wildlife Conservationist or Game and Parks official. Check out their volunteer opportunities.
20. Clean wooden duck house before each nesting season.
21. Care for a neighbor’s pet.
22. Find out about volunteer opportunities at a local wildlife sanctuary or survival center.

These 365 Community Service Ideas were compiled by Jovita Fox, former Nebraska 4-H Extension Specialist.

References and suggested resources:
• Kid’s Guide to Service Projects by Barbara Luis
• The Kids Can Help Book by Susan Logan
• 2005 National Youth Service Day 10th Anniversary
• Youth Service Project Ideas
Giving back is a great way to fulfill your community service requirement for school or a club, build your resume, and make a difference in your community. But sometimes it's difficult to find an exciting volunteer opportunity. Try some of these community service ideas for teens and get inspired to volunteer. (Taken from teenlife.com)

Don't have any time? Here are a few quick community service ideas for high schoolers:

1. Donate old clothes or household goods. Take a look through your closet or storage space to find those dusty items that you've outgrown or just don't use anymore. If it's in good condition, give it to your local Goodwill, or women's shelter.

2. The next time you go grocery shopping, pick up some non-perishables to donate to your local food bank.

3. Bring new or lightly used toys and stuffed animals to a children's hospital.

4. During the holiday season, answer a letter to Santa from a needy child. Visit your local participating post office to get a letter from an underprivileged kid, buy a gift, and mail your package.

5. For your next birthday, ask that people give donations to a charity of your choice instead of gifts.

   [Find a community service organization.]

6. Send a care package to deployed troops, veterans, or wounded soldiers. Write a thank-you letter and include some food (no homemade or canned food allowed). If you're under 18, make sure to sign your letter with your first name only. Take a look at Operation Gratitude or Give2TheTroops to learn what to donate and who to send it to.

7. Donate blood. You have to be 17 or above, or 16 with parental/guardian consent. You can make an appointment with the Red Cross, or look for a community blood drive near you. If you're under 17, you can still donate your time.

8. Donate children's books, novels, and other reading materials to shelters, libraries, and schools.

9. Write a letter to your Congressman about an issue that you care about.

10. Offer to rake leaves, shovel the walk, or do housework for an elderly neighbor.

Volunteer based on your skills. Believe it or not, the knowledge that teens sometimes take for granted can really make a difference in someone's life.
1. Teach computer skills to the elderly.

2. Become a volunteer tutor. If you excel in a particular subject, share that knowledge with other teens who are struggling. Volunteer your services online non-profit or let your teacher know that you’re available to other students.

   [Find tutoring and test-prep services]

3. Become a tour guide for a local historical organization.

4. Volunteer to teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

5. Coach a sport you love to a youth team.

6. Good at sewing or knitting? Donate homemade blankets to people in need. Take a look at knit-a-square.com or Project Linus.

7. Got a big vocabulary and a little time to kill? Test your skill on freerice.com. They’ll donate 10 grains of rice through the World Food Programme for every answer you get right.

8. Use social media. Spread the word about a worthy-cause through posts on your own account, or volunteer to set-up a social media account for a local non-profit.

9. Do you love to cook and bake? Invite your friends to participate, and hold a bake sale for your favorite charity.

10. Volunteer to give music lessons to people in your community.

**Consider volunteering for a one-day event.**

Volunteer organizations are generally small-staffed, so they need to recruit lots of volunteers for a huge event. This short-term community service idea is ideal for teens who can’t make a weekly commitment, but still want to help out.

1. Volunteer to run/walk for an event, like Race for the Cure or Relay for Life.

2. Offer your help taking registrations, handing out water bottles, cleaning up after, or other administrative tasks for an event. It might not feel as glamorous, but this volunteer work is actually really helpful to non-profits!

3. Participate in a clean up of a beach, riverbed or local park.

4. Trick-or-treat for UNICEF. Think you’re too old to collect candy, but still want to dress up? Collect money for a charitable organization like UNICEF, and no one will judge you.
5. Join the day of service: Martin Luther King Jr. day. There are tons of volunteer opportunities on the National Day of Service that don’t occur any other time of the year.

6. Plant trees for Arbor Day.

7. Organize or participate in a sleep out. Experience the difficulties that homeless people face every day while raising money and awareness for homeless or at-risk youth. Covenant House Sleep Out provides online tools to help you plan.

8. Volunteer on Thanksgiving Day with your whole family. Serve a meal, in your home or in a local shelter, to someone who needs it.

9. Host a food packaging event at your school to help hungry children with nationwide organizations like Outreach.

Volunteer organizations love consistent, weekly teen volunteers.

When you make a commitment to being a volunteer on a recurring basis, you’ll fulfill your community service requirement in no time. These types of posts often require training before you start. And, in addition to giving back, a long-term volunteer commitment is a great thing to put on a high school resume.

1. Volunteer with animals. Check out your local rescue league, ASPCA chapter, or animal shelter to learn how. Make sure to check out the volunteer requirements—some places require 18+ volunteers to actually work with the animals.

2. Become a mentor to a younger kid.

3. Volunteer at your local library.

4. Help special needs kids or adults through an organization like Best Buddies or The Friendship Circle.

5. Deliver food to those who are unable to leave their home. Contact your school or church to see if they have programs in place, like Meals on Wheels, or start one of your own.

6. Volunteer at a crisis line. Many organizations have specific programs for teens and their peers, where you’ll be trained to listen actively as a teen crisis counselor.

7. Visit a retirement home and spend time doing fun activities with the elderly who lack immediate family.

8. Volunteer at a homeless shelter. There are multiple different volunteer options, such as preparing and serving food to people in need.
9. Offer to nanny or baby-sit for free to a family in need. You can contact a local women’s shelter, department of social services, or church to volunteer your services.

10. Help an adult learn how to read.

Have a unique idea for giving back to the community? Start your own non-profit! Here are our favorite ideas from teens who have created their own volunteer opportunity:

1. Jonathan Woods established the Under the Tree foundation at 12, when he realized that teens are often overlooked during toy drives.

2. Neha Gupta began her non-profit at the age of 9! Her organization, Empower Orphans, has helped more than 25,000 children globally.

3. Jordyn Schara founded WI P2D2 (Wisconsin Prescription Pill and Drug Disposal) when she turned 14, which works to dispose of drugs in an environmentally friendly and safe way.

4. A 10-year-old Zach Cottner started his organization, SNAP, as an athletic program for children with special needs.

5. Shannon McNamara started SHARE, a non-profit that provides thousands of girls in Africa with books and school supplies, when she was 15.

6. Kalin Konrad started her annual backyard carnival for Alzheimer’s when she was in 5th grade. Kalin originally began the event when her grandmother was diagnosed with the disease.

7. 13-year-old Claire Fraise wanted to give dogs who would be euthanized a second chance with her organization, Lucky Tails Animal Rescue.

8. Former anorexic teens Liana Rosenman and Kristina Saffran decided to start Project HEAL to raise money for teens who needed treatment for eating disorders.

9. LuLu Cerone founded LemonAID warriors at 10 years old to help other kids make social activism part of their social lives.

10. Wanting to end hunger, Katie Stagliano, now 14, started planting fruits and vegetables in her garden to help the hungry. Her organization, Katie’s Krops, has helped feed thousands of people so far.
Outreach Resource

S.O.L.I.D.

Discipleship  Service

Life Issues  Outreach
The mission statement of the Youth Ministries Department of the Florida Conference is to Train, Equip and Deploy an Army of Young People. We aim to mobilize all young people into action for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

The ONCE project is one of the tools/programs that we are using to reach this end.

The ONCE project involves young people meeting at a designated church on a Sabbath afternoon to go door-to-door conducting a survey. All the resources and training have already been prepared: clipboards, pens, name tags, questionnaires etc. All are FREE and waiting to be used. The ONCE project does not cost the local church anything.

The ONCE project has resulted in 100’s of contacts and leads for participating churches. Lots of people are in Bible studies as a result. Furthermore the ONCE project has strengthened the young people and given them confidence in sharing their faith. The North Area has the ONCE project fully implemented in all of its clusters and the results are astounding.

We are requesting that you allow your young people to get involved in outreach that will benefit them and your church. For ONCE resources, go to  http://www.floridaconference.com/youth-ministries/

There are Five Steps to implementing:

1. Set a date
2. Request Bin from the proceeding church, if you don’t already have it at church.
3. Have a planning meeting for ONCE
4. Contact you Area Youth Director
   a. **Central Area**- Pedro Perez: (407) 644-5000 x2420 Pedro.perez@floridaconference.com
   b. **North Area**- Robert Hines: (407) 644-5000 x2422 Robert.hines@floridaconference.com
   c. **South Area**- Vacant
5. Then execute your ONCE event.

If you have any questions about this request or the ONCE project please call Robert Hines at (407) 644-5000 x2422
POSSIBLE EARNINGS
sell 10 books a day $3000
sell 15 books a day $4500
sell 20 books a day $6000

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS
- Share Jesus in the best possible way
- Earn school scholarships with SDA institutions
- Be part of a new family

Sign Up!
INTERESTED? SIGN ME UP!

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Come, Join Us!
Life Issues Resource

S.O.L.I.D.

Discipleship  Service

Life Issues  Outreach
SOLID: LIFE ISSUES

The Christian youth are facing a lot of challenges. In a world which is increasingly becoming skeptical about anything related to God. A young Christian, for example, is unable to reconcile the ideas of evolution taught in school and the creation story they learned in church. There is also the pressure to conform to fit in a group. Preteen, teenage, and early adulthood years is the period when we strongly crave affirmation from our peers. The problem for the Christian youth is that conforming means abandoning Christian values in part or wholly. A sense of being untrue to our values may later bring regret or shame, which is detrimental to emotional well-being. At this critical time, therefore, it is important for Christian youth to look for guidance to avoid problems later.

By Samantha Gold

Here is a list of some of the Life issues we would like you to cover with your youth. There are more resources that will come to help you with this topic of the SOLID Program.
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You Can Download this book at:
Discipleship Resource

S.O.L.I.D.

Discipleship  Service

Life Issues  Outreach
# GETTING STARTED: A FORTY-DAY BIBLE READING PLAN

If you're new to the Bible and looking for suggestions on where to start, we offer a forty-day reading program that will help you gain an overall understanding of what the Bible is all about. It will introduce you to some of the most important passages of the Bible, it will help you see the big picture of what God has done, and it's easy to accomplish.

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Greater New York Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
Adventist Youth Ministries Department

Adventist Youth Leadership Certification
(AYLC)
I. OBJECTIVE

Adventist Youth Leadership Certification (AYLC) is designed for youth, young adults, and adults. Its objective is to assist the leader in training, to develop knowledge, personal spiritual discipline, leadership skills, and a practical approach to Youth and Young Adult Ministries in the XXI Century, in the Greater New York Area.

II. PRE-REQUISITES

Be at least 16 years of age at the beginning of the course.
Be a baptized member of a Seventh-day Adventist Church.
Be a member of the leadership team for one of the following:
Adventist Youth Society, Teens Club, Young Adult or Small Group Ministry, Youth Council, Youth Choir, Collegiate Ministry, Youth or Young Adult Elder, Youth or Young Adult Sabbath School, Youth Emergency Services Corps (YES Corp), Local Church NSO Representative, or Conference AY Coordinators Advisory.

Leadership Post: ______________________ Ministry: ______________________
Church: ______________________ Signature of Pastor: ______________________

III. IN-SERVICE TRAINING

A. Serve as a member of one of the following ministries in your church or area for a minimum of 10 months, at the time of the graduation (check the ones that apply):

--- Adventist Youth Society (AY)  --- Teens Club  --- Collegiate Ministry
--- Young Adult Ministry or Small Group  --- Youth Choir Leader  --- Youth Council
--- Youth or Young Adult Sabbath School  --- Local Church NSO Representative
--- Adventist Youth Emergency Services Corps (AYES Corp)  --- Youth or Young Adult Elder
--- Conference AY Coordinator

Name of Pastor: ______________________ Signature: ______________________
Signature of the Adventist Youth Ministries Director of the Conference: ______________________

B. Complete both group projects before graduation:

--- Organize and execute an AY program (5-7 persons per group). Instructor will assign the church. If the class does not have enough students, they can join another area for this project.

--- Lead or assist a team in planning the execution of your Area's Youth Mission Project. If your area is not having one before graduation, you must join another area.

C. Within the 10 months, prior to graduation, lead or assist a team in the planning and operation of at least four of the following. For advanced credit you must complete the four mentioned above, plus an Advanced Requirement (check the ones that apply):

--- Youth or Young Adult Week of Prayer  --- Youth or Young Adult Week of Evangelism
--- Four (4) Youth or Young Adult Sabbath  --- A Teen, Young Adult, or Collegiate Weekend Retreat
--- A Sports League with evangelistic purpose (minimum of 8 weeks)
--- Four (4) outreach or witnessing events outside of the walls of the church
--- Two (2) local mission projects
Initiate a Teen, a Young Adult, or a Collegiate Small Group, which meets once a week, for the entire year, till graduation *Advanced

A Domestic or International Mission Trip (Minimum of 7 days) *Advanced

Serve for a Week as a Summer Camp Staff Member (Minimum of 7 days) *Advanced

Name of Pastor: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________

*For Advanced Credit in this section, the Signature of the Adventist Youth Ministries Director is required: ___________________________

D. Within the 10 months, prior to graduation, fulfill the following requirement:

____ Visit a church of a different language group in the Greater New York Conference.

____ Visit three churches of three different language groups in the Greater New York Conference. *Advanced

Include the bulletin of the church(s) visited in your Binder with the speaker’s signature.
Include a one-page reaction paper explaining how the service(s) is/are similar or different than your own church.

IV. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

____ Dedication Service  _______ Conference Adventist Youth Ministries Leadership Retreat

____ At least 1 Conference Campmeeting (Youth & Young Adult Pavilion)

____ At least 3 Conference Campmeetings *Advanced

Include Campmeeting bulletin(s) in your Binder. The bulletins must be signed by the corresponding instructor at the camp.

____ Attendance to 85% of the total 23 hours of classes. You will not get credit for a workshop if you are 15 minutes late.

____ Attendance to 100% of the total 25 hours of classes and a minimum final grade of 85%. You will not get credit for a workshop if you are 15 minutes late. *Advanced

V. SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS

A. Complete the following Courses. Completed courses must be checked and initialed by Adventist Youth Ministries Director:

1. ____ 23 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
2. ____ Official Seventh-day Adventist Statements on Issues of Relevance
3. ____ Denominational History

B. Complete the following seminar and workshops (1 hour of each). Completed workshops and seminars must be checked and initialed by Adventist Youth Ministries Director:

1. ____ Need for Adventist Youth Ministries
2. ____ Leadership Styles
3. ____ Communication Styles
4. ____ Reclaiming Lost Youth & Young Adults
5. ____ Contemporary issues
6. ____ Youth Evangelism
7. ____ Small Group Ministry
8. ____ Public Campus Ministries
9. ____ Adventist Youth Emergency Services & Disaster Response (AYES Corp.)
10. ____ How to lead an Effective AY Society
11. ____ Teen Ministry
12. ____ Young Adult Ministry
13. ____ Music in the Church/Praise & Worship
14. Spiritual Gifts
15. Adventist Education
16. Child Abuse

C. Complete four seminars or workshops in the following areas. Completed workshops and seminars must be checked and initialed by Adventist Youth Ministries Director. *Candidates for the Advanced AY Leadership Certification must complete six (6) seminars or workshops in the following areas (1 hour of each):

1. Gang Related Issues
2. Recreation, Sports, Outdoor Ministry, Christian Camping
3. Sexuality & Dating
4. Public Speaking
5. Ministry in a Cross Cultural Setting
6. Church Practice & Procedures, How to present Youth Plans to the Church Board?
7. Parent & Teen Relationship
8. Mentoring
9. How to chair a Board, Committee, Taskforce Team
10. Using Dramas and Skits in Ministry
11. Public Relations (How to advertise and promote your ministry?)
12. Finances

VI. KNOWLEDGE OF CONFERENCE VARIOUS MINISTRIES FOR YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

A. Explain the function of the following ministries. How do these ministries work in your local Conference and how can the Children, Youth, and Young Adults of your local church benefit from them? This assignment must be entered in your Binder (No more than one 1 paragraph per ministry and no more than 2 pages for the entire assignment).

1. Adventist Youth Society
2. Bible Bowl
3. National Service Organization
4. Adventist Youth Emergency Services Corps (AYES Corps)
5. Collegiate or Public Campuses Ministry
6. Teens
7. Adventurer Ministry
8. Pathfinder Ministry
9. Master Guide
10. PIA
11. PLA

VII. PERSONAL ENRICHMENT

A. Read the following books of the Bible and enter the date in which you read each chapter in your Bible Reading Record. Also prepare a journal of your favorite chapter in each Bible book you read; your entry does not need to be longer than a paragraph. Mention the chapter and why it your favorite chapter in the entire book. This assignment is intended to have the candidate read at least one chapter per day, thus creating the habit of reading the Bible daily. (Due with your entire Binder prior to the Final Examination)

1. Genesis (50 chapters) *Advanced
2. I Samuel (31 chapters)
3. II Samuel (24 chapters)
4. Proverbs (31 chapters)
5. Daniel (12 chapters)
6. Gospel of Matthew (28 chapters)
7. Gospel of Mark (16 chapters) *Advanced
8. Gospel of John (21 chapters)
9. Acts (28 chapters)
10. I Timothy (6 chapters)
11. II Timothy (4 chapters)
12. Revelation (21 chapters) *Advanced
B. Read one (1) of the following books written by Ellen G. White, and write a two page reaction paper:

1. **Desire of Ages** White, E. G.
2. **Steps to Christ** White, E. G.
3. **The Great Controversy** White, E. G.

C. Read one (1) of the following books on Leadership and write a two page reaction paper:

1. **The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader’s Day** Maxwell, John
2. **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People** Covey, Stephen R.
3. **The Power of Team Leadership** Barna, George

D. Read one (1) of the following Devotional Books and write a two page reaction paper:

1. **Let Your Life So Shine** Paulsen, Jan
2. **Six Hours, One Friday** Lucado, Max
3. **To Know God** Venden, Morris L.
4. **I Used to Be Perfect: An Ex-Legalist Looks at Law, Sin & Grace** Knight, George R.

E. Read one of the following Youth Ministries Books and write a two page reaction paper:

1. **Purpose Driven Youth Ministries** Fields, Doug
2. **Help! I'm a Small Church Youth Worker** Grassel, Rich
3. **On They Run When They See You Coming** McKee, Jonathan
4. **Bridging the Gap** Norman, Bruce

VIII. Adventist Youth Leadership Certification Final Project or Dissertation. Submit a project which contains the following (Due with your entire Binder, prior to the Final Examination):

A. Prepare a written plan for an entire year (January-December) for one of the following three ministries:

1. **Adventist Youth Society** (Outline of programming, yearly budget, themes, and objectives for each Sabbath of the year. Include Conference events, week of prayer, week of youth evangelism, at least 2 youth Sabbaths & 2 youth baptisms, and 1 outdoor youth evangelistic program)

2. **Teen Small Group** (A list of leaders who can help you, location to hold it, an outline of the program, topics for the lesson of each weekly meeting, and a yearly budget. Include appeals to accept Jesus, two baptism dates, and a once a month social activity for your small group)

3. **Young Adult or Collegiate Small Group** (A list of leaders who can help you, location to hold it, an outline of the program, topics for the lesson of each weekly meeting, and a yearly budget. Include appeals to accept Jesus, two baptism dates, and a once a month social activity for your small group)

B. Create or Research and Submit for one of the following:

1. **Four (4) different programs for the AY Society**
   a. **One (1) skill or drama**
   b. **One (1) educational program**
   c. **One (1) outreach program outside the walls of the church**
   d. **One (1) program for young people who have left the church**

2. **Four (4) different Bible lessons for a Teen Small Group**, on four different topics, which are relevant to teens in the XXI century. Each one must end with an appeal to do something good; at least one must have an appeal to be baptized and follow Jesus for life.

3. **Four (4) different Bible lessons for a Young Adult or Collegiate Small Group**, on four different topics, which are relevant to Young Adults or University students in the XXI century. Each one must end with an appeal to do something good; at least one must have an appeal to be baptized and follow Jesus for life.
C. Create a list of fifteen (15) Teens and/or Young Adults (ages 13-35), in your church and name the ministry, among the various Adventist Youth Ministries in your church, which could be a match for each to serve in.

D. Identify ten (10) non-Adventist, preferably non-Christians, Teens or Young Adults in your community or the community surrounding your church. What method and which ministry, among the various Adventist Youth Ministries in your church, would you use to share Christ and reach each person for God?

E. Help one (1) Teen or Young Adult (ages 13-35) to come to Jesus, through baptism during this year and mentor him or her as they become part of your local Seventh-day Adventist Church. *Advanced

All written assignments must be part of the binder. The completed binder and all the signatures must be submitted no later than the day of the Final Exam. No exception. If you do not have a completed binder, you can not take the final exam.
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*Image of Youth Ministries logo with a bold title page.*
A Word from Your Senior Youth & Children’s Ministries Directors

Service is a cornerstone trait of Christian living. It is the manner in which Christ lived out his ministry to us. In explaining the importance of being a leader, Jesus described himself first as a servant. "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45 (NIV)

Service is a quality that is not always embraced in secular leadership, but essential to spiritual leadership. It is the very quality that was needed in a Savior for us to be redeemed. It is the same quality that we need to live out in life and will of Christ. Jesus, as He struggled in the garden of Gethsemane, said, "Not my will but yours will be done." This was said as He prepared Himself to perform the ultimate act of service, the act of giving His life for ours.

This year’s theme for SECC Youth Ministries (September - August) is "Serve." We want our leaders and young people to know that being in a relationship with Jesus also means walking and doing the acts of Jesus. An act of true service defeats haughtiness, self-importance and pride in us humility. It is in the act of serving that leadership through true service, renders us in our heart humility.

Service is not just a group activity but a personal one. It is an attitude. A willingness to let go of self-promotion and promote others. Paul said it best when he said “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the worst sinner of all” (1 Tim 1:15). We serve as Christians because Christ first served us, in humility and love.

Our Theme of Serve is based on Kingdom Building, which is one aspect of the three prong strategic plan of SECC Youth Ministries to fulfill its mission.

We hope that this emphasis will encourage and transform us as leaders to help the young people we serve to be more like Christ.

Elder Eric E. Penick
SECC Youth Ministries, Associate Director
Senior Youth & Jr. High Ministries

Elder Manuel S. Ving
SECC Youth Ministries, Associate Director
Children’s & Jr. High Ministries
The desire of SECC Youth Ministries is to provide a Christ-centered ministry to youth so that each one will grow and mature spiritually, therefore becoming a disciple of Christ, who is increasing daily, "in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Luke 2:52

SECC Youth Ministries works with the church, home and school to provide a nurturing atmosphere for the youth. Giving them the "home court advantage," as they face the challenges in today's society.

We strive to keep our ministry "God-led, people focused and church empowering."

The three major goals for the development of our leaders and young people are in the areas of: Discipleship, Authentic Living and Kingdom Building. Within these general goals are more specific aspects of youth and leader development.

Kingdom Building:
- Reaping
- Inviting
- Serving
- Evangelizing

Authentic Living:
- Faith Ownership
- Balance
- Integrity

Discipleship:
- Nurturing
- Equipping
- Training

Each year we cycle our theme and focus on a specific aspect of it. This year we are focusing on 'Service', one aspect of Kingdom Building.
Your Support System

Training:
- Annual leadership training workshop provided by SECC Youth Ministries
- New youth leaders training
- AY Network: Meets once a year for leaders to discuss methods and techniques that work and those that don’t work in their local churches.

Resources:
- AY Planning Kit: A year’s worth of ideas for youth group meetings.
- Speaker Core: a list of speakers available to speak at various youth meetings.
- Youth Assistant Summer Program: we help you get a youth worker for the summer.

Participating in the Planning Process:
- Every church leader is a member of their local Network Council.
- The County Network Coordinator is a member of the SECC Youth Ministry Advisory Committee.

How Information Flows To And From SECC Youth Ministries:
- Provide monthly newsletter with information about the different events happening throughout the year.
- Survey leaders for feedback and opinions regarding youth programs.
- Social Media: Follow us on Twitter & Like us on Facebook.
- SECC Youth App: A one-stop spot that connects you to our calendar, blog, contact, and much more.
- Blog: Find resources, highlights, and giveaways from all of youth ministries.
- Website: Your ultimate information hub that will allow you to be in the loop and up to date on all that is happening in our conference.

Opportunities for Peer Support:
- Area Leader Meetings: held twice a year.
- Monthly prayer hotline for leaders.
- Joint church activities.
- Conference and Network meetings.

Service Recognition:
- Yearly Volunteer Appreciation Program: This is where we say Thank you, Gracias and Salamat!

Nurturing Relationship with Christ & Spirituality:
- Monthly prayer hotline for leaders.
- 6pm on the 1st Monday of the month.
- Dial-In Number: (760) 984-3000
- Code: 566378#
- Quality devotionals are available & sent to leaders.
- Monthly podcasts encouraging leaders.
**January 2014**
- Children's Sabbath School & Leadership Training (La Sierra Spanish)
- Jr. High Bible Camp (TBD)
- Staff Teens Swim Camp Off (Deer Creek Center)

**February 2014**
- Just Clinic Mth (Miami, FL)

**March 2014**
- Bible Quiz-o-Rama (Mt. Rubidoux SDA Church)
- VBS Workshop (Anahiem Spanish)
- VBS Workshop (Kansas Avenue)
- FEBA Rally & Sports (LSU)
- Youth Evangelism Fair (TBD)
- Park Clean Up Day (TBD)

**April 2014**
- PF Teen River “Reward” Trip (Needles, CA)
- Adventurer Fun Day (Conf. Office)

**May**
- PF Fair (Conf. Office)

**June 2014**
- Sizzling Summer Kick Off (Coronado Beach)
- Youth Camp Meeting

**July 2014**
- SECC Youth Day

**August 2014**
- Education Event at LSU (Working Title)
- Shoebox Collection to Send Overseas

**September 2014**
- PF Leadership Convention (FSR)
- Adventurer Leadership Convention (FSR)
- Oratorical AF
- Adventurer Beach Day (Boks Chico State Beach)

**October 2014**
- Teen Institute (FSR)

**November - December 2014**
- PF Camporee (Campgrounds)

October 30 - November 2
WHAT IS THE NETWORK?
The Network was developed as a tool to keep churches within a certain geographical area connected. It easily allows our churches to support each other and work together to lift up Christ before our young people and the world. A system of Networks is recommended for every conference in North America to strengthen the youth ministry of the local church.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE NETWORK?
The purpose of the Network is to:

- Encourage spiritual and social fellowship among Adventist young people by providing events which bring outstanding speakers, musicians, and church leaders to inspire and nurture young people in their spiritual and social development.

- To strengthen local church organizations by modeling excellent programs, and by providing an occasion that requires planning and involvement of each area church youth group.

WHY BECOME PART OF THE NETWORK?
1. It gives you the ease of youth leaders working together with their Network Coordinator to plan regular combined church youth activities.
2. You will have a voice in planning, organizing, and implementing county-wide events. Each of the area churches’ Lay Youth Ministers will be members of the Network’s Youth & Childrens Council (NYCC). The conference youth director will serve as advisor to each NYCC.

These multi-church lay leaders will plan special area-wide events each year to provide opportunity to meet other Adventist in a positive atmosphere. Network Coordinators will work closely with the Conference Youth Directors in making such plans. Network Coordinators are elected by their peers and approved by the Conference Youth Advisory.

HOW DOES IT WORK?
Following the model of Pathfinders, each church belongs to a county and each county is a network of churches. Each Network has a council of youth and childrens leaders and pastors. From there the council elects a Network Coordinator and each coordinator represents their Network at the SECC Youth Ministries Advisory Committee meetings.

Network Youth and Childrens Council (NYCC): Each church naturally belongs to their county’s Network. Each Network will hold a yearly meeting arranged by the SECC Youth Director. Leaders meet here to discuss, support and plan with each other ways that they can impact the youth in their church and in their Network for Christ. This is when the NYCC will elect their Network Coordinator, Network Treasurer, and Network Secretary. (See Pg. 13 for position descriptions and expectations.) It is also as this meeting that plans are laid out for the upcoming year.

HOW DO YOU JOIN A NETWORK?

1. Meet
   The decision to join a Network is made by the youth and/or children’s leaders and their officers. Once you have decided to join the Network, you and the leaders will show up for the called meetings and take your seats at the hub. Visit www.seccyouth.com for more information or contact SECC Youth Ministries by telephone at (55)900-2264 or by email at syyu@seccsid.org.

2. Dues
   Each Network has to raise funds to run and facilitate programs. This is why churches are required to pay dues in order to participate in Network activities.

NETWORK DUE CHART:
Dues are based on church congregational size as reported to the conference office.
The Network

The dues that your church pays will help take care of the collective expenses that are associated with group activities. These include, but are not limited to, supplies, marketing, rental fees, resources for leaders, and much more.

For the first two years (2014-2016), SECC Youth Ministries will match Network contributions up to $4,000.

JOIN IN

Join in on the activities. Once you have done the first two steps you’re done. All that is required of you then is to participate and enjoy the benefits of fellowship and working together.

WHAT IS THE NETWORK’S RESPONSIBILITIES?

• Youth rallies
• Outreach
• Mission projects
• Community service projects
• Campouts
• Social events
• Banquets

These are a few events that the NYCC might choose to plan for the Network; however, the only mandatory event is a Youth Rally once a year. Network events should be held in various locations throughout the county area.

The Network has a basic structure: Coordinator, Treasurer, Secretary, and Pastoral Advisors. To better meet the needs of the Network, there may be two sets of officers: one representing Senior Youth Ministries and another representing Children’s Ministries.

Network Youth & Children's Council (NYCC) Responsibilities

JOB DESCRIPTION & EXPECTATIONS

Network Coordinator:

• Coordinates youth/children events for their Network.
• Encourages older youth and children's leaders to attend events.
• Assists local church youth and children's leaders.
• Helps youth and children's leaders develop their own resources such as people and materials that will help in their ministry.
• Models a leadership style that involves working together with others.
• Visits churches in the area when possible.
• Assists in the evaluation of needs of individuals involved in Senior Youth & Children's Ministry in the Network.

Network Treasurer:

• Must be at least 16 years of age.
• Provides a report at each meeting of the NYCC regarding its financial status.
• Authorization from the NYCC is required prior to the expenditure of any funds.
• In special cases, when a meeting has not been arranged by the NYCC, the authorizations of the Coordinator, Secretary and Pastoral Advisor(s) are required to appropriate funds.

Network Secretary:

• To draft minutes of the meetings and make them available to NYCC members.
• To maintain the record of minutes and develop an agenda under the guidance of the Network Coordinator and the Pastoral Advisor(s).
• To assist the Network Coordinator with various duties.

Can have voting rights:

• Provides spiritual counsel and direction to the NYCC.
• To counsel the Network Coordinator for logistical and strategic planning.
• Has voting rights.
In addition to the network we have two sub-networks that have been around for years in one form or another: FEDYA and M68. Both networks are part of the larger network but facilitate specific needs in the conference. Churches can participate in both sub-networks activities, please contact the youth department for more information.

**FEDYA (LA FEDERACIÓN DE ADVENTISTA LA JUVENTUD HISPANA)**

The purpose of FEDYA is to promote a Christian environment that will produce spiritual, physical, and mental growth that will lead youth within the Spanish speaking churches and nurseries to testify of Christ and share our faith. Opportunities are provided for the development of leadership and talents that God has given to encourage growth as Christian youth. FEDYA exists in the following Counties: Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange and San Diego/North San Diego. It helps to know Spanish to be a part of this sub-network.

**M68**

This network is based on Micah 6:8, emphasizing service and youth leadership within the context of urban culture, in partnership with SBC Community Services. Churches that choose to join this sub-network will be a part of the conference wide movement to serve others and empower young leaders.

The SECC Youth Ministries Advisory Committee is comprised of the SECC Senior Youth Ministries Director, Network Coordinators, and Chairs of the Senior Youth/Children's Ministries Director. It is to be convened and chaired by the SECC Senior Youth/Children's Ministries Director.

The main objective of the Advisory Committee is to meet, plan and develop their ideas and techniques with the Conference Youth Directors. Their goal is to make a difference in how young people are nurtured and leaders are supported not only in their local churches, but also conference wide.

**Purpose:**
- To develop outreach activities.
- To develop public awareness strategies.

**Process:**
- To serve as a 'think tank' and develop new strategies.
- To serve as sounding board for testing conference proposals and providing feedback from local churches and networks.
- To provide counsel and proposals to the Youth Director.
- To help plan and provide orientation and training for new youth leaders in local churches around the conference.

The term of membership for advisory members continues as long as they are in office at the local church and serve as their Network Coordinator or are appointed to the advisory by the Conference Senior Youth/Children's Ministries Director.
I understand the need for the network and groups based on geography, but why do we have groups based on culture and language? Is that not just creating a divide?

The groups based on languages have been in existence for a very long time. They serve a specific need for our church.

What happens when a church decides to be part of the network?
- It means that you will be part of the Network Youth & Children Council.
- They become part of a group who comes together, meets, discusses joint activities and plans and execute a yearly rally.
- Support group for each other.
- Every church is a part of the Network, whether they want to be an active member or not, their place is there.

Why are we splitting San Diego and North San Diego?
We are following the Pathfinder model.

How do you become part of the council?
Everyone who is a youth leader is part of the council.
Why Should Youth and Families Be Involved in an AY Program?

AY is purposeful fellowship with young people in leadership. It is the avenue to create leaders & foster communication and discuss issues that are important to the young people and their families. This is not just another program.

Teams can learn how to work together in planning a program, how to cooperate in group discussions, how to love and pray for one another, how to speak in public, lead songs, teach Scripture, and exercise other leadership functions.

They will be equipped to serve Christ in the local church as adults because they did so as youth.

Instruction, fellowship, and worship are necessary parts of a person's spiritual experience, but to be properly balanced, youth need a meeting where they actively participate, where they share their thoughts and feelings, and by using their God-given abilities, creatively express their faith. A regular youth meeting provides this outlet and gives balance to the total church program. They grow more by being involved than by being spectators. This comes with structured or well planned programs.

Benefits of AY:

- Provides a balanced youth ministry in the local church. These meetings include the weekly Adventist Youth meeting, often held Friday evening or Sabbath afternoon, and social and recreational events (preferably held weekly, at least monthly).

- Provides opportunity for young people to enjoy Christian fellowship with other youth. This is especially important for those not attending Adventist schools.

- Nurtures personal Christian growth by providing creative and stimulating meetings and events, and by bringing young people into personal contact with mature Christians, especially the AY adult leaders/sponsors.

- Provides opportunity for young people to discover, develop, and strengthen their leadership skills through active participation in planning and conducting youth activities.

- Trains young people in all aspects of church ministries: Leadership, Nurture, Soul Winning, and Service (Outreach). This includes learning:
  - To develop leadership skills related to church life (Leadership).
  - To establish a lifestyle of caring for others by experiencing service activities (Community Service).
  - To disciple those who are younger in Christian experience (Nurture).
  - To talk willingly and openly about their faith and spiritual experience with others (Sharing, Witnessing, Evangelism).
  - Provides opportunity for young people to express their feelings, concerns, beliefs and needs in a safe atmosphere of love and trust. Establishes the youth in Christ's lifestyle and Bible principles as understood and taught by Seventh-day Adventists.

The Purpose of AY is Three Fold:

- For young people to serve other young people.
- For young people to serve the Church.
- For young people to Serve the Community.

Planning an AY Program:

Each AY program should fulfill one of these three purposes of AY. Traditionally AY is a Sabbath afternoon program but do what fits the culture or needs of your church.

Sample Organizational Structures:

- Led by Youth with Advisors: The youth take the leadership roles with an appointed adult to act as an advisor. The AY president/leader sits on the board to represent the youth and to report to the youth elder or pastor plans of AY.
- Young adult led: A young adult is appointed to work with the youth to develop AY Programming. It is advised that a committee of youth is formed to assist in the planning of programs and activities.
- Youth Council: The youth council (various youth leaders of ministries) works together to plan programs and activities for AY. This is mostly done to get the ball rolling and to set a tone in the meetings but later moves to a youth led model.
Purpose of AY

SAMPLE PROGRAM:
Below is the most basic and potentially boring setup for an AY program:
- Song Service
- Opening Prayer
- Opening Scripture
- Report of upcoming activities and programs
- Program/Activities
- Closing Song
- Closing prayer
- Announcements

What would be better is to be creative and let the youth express themselves. Here are a few elements that you can add: Special music (that appeals to youth), poetry, video clips based on the theme, skits (rather than video clips), Bible trivia, games, creative prayer sessions, questionnaires, and testimonies. Get creative and remember that all features should accent the theme, whatever it may be.

RESOURCES FOR PLANNING AY:
- www.secyouth.com: A new AY program idea is posted monthly on the blog and the SECY Youth app (iPhone, Android & Windows)
- Insight Magazine Resource: This is a quarterly resource magazine that will equip you with an AY program for each Sabbath in a quarter. This is a very helpful tool for those Sabbaths when you need a program quick.
- This Planning Kit: Use the theme ideas along with your own to create a meaningful program for your teams.
- Adventist Youth Society Handbook

Other resources for planning AY programming:
- www.adventeyouthministries.com
- www.SECYYouthMinistries.org
- www.Insightmagazine.org/youthleader/
- www.ADRA.org

Non-Adventist resources:
- www.youthministry.com
- http://lancasteru.edu/ki/serviceideas.shtml#neighborhood
Programming Ideas

Service in your church

January: Service in Ministry
• Internship: Work with other ministry directors in your church to give them an opportunity to allow the youth to shadow them in their duties for one month. Think of it as an internship in ministry. Allow youth members to choose who they would like to shadow. Have each ministry director dedicate a certain amount of time to train the teens in their ministry. Let the youth choose a new ministry after a month. This will allow the young people to experience what the other ministries do in your church and find what fits them best.

• Activity: Have a Ministry themed Fun Night. Put together games that highlight the responsibilities of the different ministries in your church. Give points for participating in the games and extra points for winning. Invite the whole church and have fun.

February: Service through Discovery
• YM2: Help youth learn how to be of service to God by finding a ministry of their own they can do. Gather the youth together and contact SECC Youth Ministries for YM2 workbooks to give to each of your teens. Check out www.seccyouth.com for facilitators to help you with this.

• Activity: Attend the youth ministry fair at the end of the Month (Feb 15) to get ministry funds for your idea. Also, encourage youth to attend an outreach training provided by SECC Youth Ministries. *please refer to April’s “Cheaper Gas” event for preparation ideas that may need to occur this month.

March: Service through Fellowship
• Visitation: As a youth group plan a Sabbath to visit members of your church that are not able to make it and spend time with them. If you have a large youth group, then split up and go to different locations. Once you’re done come back to the church and let the youth share their experience and what they have learned. Check out some visitation ideas at www.seccyouth.com

• Activity: Hold an old fashion game night and invite the whole church. An alternate activity is to host a “Parents Night Out.” Allow the teens to take charge of the games and activities.

Service in your Community

April: In your Neighborhood
• Cheaper Gas: Ask a local gas station to lower their gas price by a nickel per-gallon for about two hours. Have local businesses donate 15 cents per gallon sold to the gas down for a special cause. During this time pass out invites to a Sunday or Saturday morning free breakfast. Have plenty of Guide, Real and Insight magazines to share with people.

• Activity: Contact the local parks department for an appointment to take the youth out and plant trees. https://www.carbonday.org/

May: To those that serve
• Sweet for the Heat: Have youth bake cookies and other fun pastries at their homes during the week or at the church. Give the teens time to learn what the fire department that serves your community does and how they can help their community. Be sure to coordinate the best time to arrive and drop off the baked goods.

• Activity: Take the teens out to clean up a park. Plan a picnic for the group after the clean up.

June: Service to Fathers
• Donuts for Dads: Team up with your local library to host a summer reading event where children can bring their dad/another figure to read at the library. Have your youth team up with the local donut/donut bakery to sponsor free donuts for the event. Be sure to give recognition to the bakery at the event by passing out flyers or coupons from the bakery or posting signs.

• Activity: Have a super-soaker water battle with community and church members at a local park. Invite the fire department from the month before to supply the water. At the event have the fire department promote fire safety and ways to beat the heat in the summer.
Programming Ideas

Service Abroad

July: Service to the World

- Partner with ADRAs: If your group is not going on a mission trip, download ADRAs “Do Something Kit” and choose an activity for the youth to do. You can also fundraise for a cause using ADRAs gift catalog or have the youth vote on which cause they should support. You can show videos, or have a special speaker come speak on the cause you have chosen.

- Activity: Conduct a 40-hour famine with your youth and have them decide what they will give up.

August: Service to Student abroad

- Education Support: Send a book box of school supplies to students overseas. SECC Youth Ministries will be collecting the shoe boxes to send to elementary students in a developing country. Download the “stuff in a box” list of things that are needed for donation from www.seccyouth.com.

- Activity: Host a back to school party or attend the MS8 Federation Back to school black party.

September: Serve those who protect

- Put together care packages for military troops serving overseas. They can be from your church, family friends, anyone who the youth can be of service to. Collect the names and addresses and have the youth write small notes of encouragement (this is great for families to do together). Here is a list of the most requested items: http://www.give2thetroops.org/items.htm

- Activity: Host a “Military Family Appreciation Dinner” for families in your neighborhood who have members serving overseas.

Service during the holidays

October: Service to the forgotten

- Adopt a Cemetery: During this month society focuses on Halloween and dressing up. Take this opportunity to locate a cemetery that will allow you to pass out flowers to people so that they can place it on friends or families burial sites. Find a company willing to donate carnations to pass out. Place an ad in the paper to let the community know you will be offering this service.

- Activity: It is harvest festival season! Donate your time to help put out local harvest festival if your church is not hosting one. This is a great way for your youth to socialize with other churches and their youth groups too.

November: Service to those in need


- Activity: Potluck for the Hungry: Have an after-church potluck at someone’s house or in the church’s fellowship hall. Ask someone to organize the potluck and have an “entrance fee” of one canned good. Use the canned goods to help stock a local food bank or your church’s community service event.

December: Serving up good cheer

- Caroling: Now this idea is a little bit of old fashioned fun. You don’t have to sound magical. Choose three songs that your youth can sing well, choose an evening and go door-to-door in a neighborhood and sing. You can pass out Steps to Christ or an invitation to a youth or church event.

- Activity: Have a Year of Service Party. Since you have been taking pictures and video footages of all the service events the youth group has been doing all year, use them to put together a slide show. Make poster size collages of the pictures and put them up in the youth room or wherever you’re celebrating the Year of Service. Make it a big deal about it, because it really is.

Resource materials will be given to further help plan your Outreach and Meaningful Family Moments. Check out our blog monthly at www.seccyouth.com
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<th><strong>Workshops</strong></th>
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<td>Alan Berecho (NCC)</td>
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<td><strong>How to Create a Sabbath School Lesson</strong></td>
<td>Eric Penick (SECC)</td>
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<td><strong>Matthew 28, Activate!</strong></td>
<td>Daryl Brooks (SECC)</td>
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<td><strong>Religious Liberty, the Gospel, and the Final Crisis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>True Manhood: What does it mean to be a man?</strong></td>
<td>Wade Fordie (SECC)</td>
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<td><strong>True Womanhood: What does it mean to be a woman?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Will you Work on Sabbath?</strong></td>
<td>Alan Berecho (NCC)</td>
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<td>How to do Service in Your Community</td>
<td><strong>Description:</strong> Get up and get out! Be the difference you want to see in your community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Rogers (SECC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dlr@rogers.com">dlr@rogers.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>How Can I be a Part of Teen Community Ministry</td>
<td><strong>Description:</strong> The class will teach you how to create and be part of Community Outreach Ministry as a teen. How to become a leader of such a project. It will teach you how to design and develop such a project. You will be taught through a model of successful Teen Outreach Ministry.</td>
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<td>Dan Rogers (SECC)</td>
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<td>Solo Serve</td>
<td><strong>Description:</strong> Simple Ideas for 1 on 1 Service</td>
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<td>Dan Rogers (SECC)</td>
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<td>Starting a Youth Driven Community Service Organization</td>
<td><strong>Description:</strong> Making your Sabbath School come alive!</td>
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<td>Dan Rogers (SECC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dlr@rogers.com">dlr@rogers.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teen Community Projects, Specific Examples and Practical Applications</td>
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<td>Dan Rogers (SECC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dlr@rogers.com">dlr@rogers.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes (Programming) Youth Involved in Community Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin V. &amp; Tiffanie Willis (Non SECC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yes@zavwasaottu.org">yes@zavwasaottu.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Evangelism (Rummage), Manny Cruz (NAD)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mmarcy@nadaladventist.org">mmarcy@nadaladventist.org</a></td>
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<td>Dan Rogers (SECC)</td>
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<td>Reaching Out From Your Heart:</td>
<td><strong>Description:</strong> The only way to stay true to Christ and never deviate is to develop a personal relationship with Him. In this powerful seminar you will learn how living devotionally can be the foundation of your existence and the key to reaching the world for Jesus. This seminar is based on Pastor Scott’s new book: Authentic: Where true life-changing Christianity begins (BAH 2012).</td>
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<td>Scott Ward (NAD)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pastorward@mac.com">pastorward@mac.com</a></td>
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<td>X-Men: Launching a Public College Ministry (Training)</td>
<td><strong>Description:</strong> Explore what it means to be a man after God’s heart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott Ward (NAD)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pastorward@mac.com">pastorward@mac.com</a></td>
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<td>College Bound: How to Get Scholarships and Financial Aid</td>
<td>Tiffanie Eggleston (SECC)</td>
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<td>Being a Christian in a Non-Christian World</td>
<td>Derick Chatman (Non-SECC)</td>
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<td>Devotional Life for Dummies</td>
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<td>Get Shot! Or Die Trying</td>
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<td>Obedience beyond emotions</td>
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<td>Stand for Jesus in Your Home</td>
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<td>21 Things Every Leader Should Know</td>
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<td>Building a Family Based Youth Ministry</td>
<td>Michael Heney</td>
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<td>Conquering, not Conquered</td>
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<td>Is it my Personality?</td>
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Teens | Young Adults | Leaders |
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<td>It's OK to Say No</td>
<td>Fikani Elesu (SECCC)</td>
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<td>Jackyl &amp; Hyde</td>
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<td>Living with Esquire</td>
<td>Samed Nuhu (SECCC)</td>
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<td>Loving Myself to Love Others</td>
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<td>Delroy Brooks (SECCC)</td>
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<td>Swagga Like Him</td>
<td>Shawn &amp; Alison Williams (Non SECCC)</td>
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<td>What's Wrong with Them, Because I'm Perfect</td>
<td>Richard Lee (SECCC)</td>
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<td>Getting on Public Campuses and Staying There</td>
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<td>411 on Christian Sex &amp; Dating</td>
<td>David Solomon Hall (UC)</td>
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<td>Hytizik Relationships</td>
<td>Doytizkl &amp; Derick Hill (Non-SECCC)</td>
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<td>Mischael Scott (SECC)</td>
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<td>Delroy Brooks (SECC)</td>
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<td>Do you want to Facebook that?</td>
<td>Delroy Brooks (SECC)</td>
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<td>Praise &amp; Worship for Youth &amp; Young Adults</td>
<td>Hamsi Tait (Seattle)</td>
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Please check out www.seccyouth.com for updated Speaker & Workshops for both Youth & Children's Ministries.
Terms & Structure

Terms and Structure for Senior Youth Ministries

Southeastern California Conference Youth Ministries has the following elements for organizational purposes:

Adventist Youth on a local level is the name of the youth organization at the local church level. You may wish to use the church or city name to designate your organization, or your local Adventist Youth (AY) or BSA. You can choose any name that works if your youth group already has a name that will work even better.

Lay Youth Leader is a title for one who serves as a coordinator, providing guidance and providing balance in all facets of each local church youth ministry.

Youth Council is the local church coordinating committee which oversees the planning of all local church youth ministry.

The Network is a multi-church community designed by the SEC Youth Ministries: Senior Youth & Young Adult Director and the SEC Youth Ministries Advisory Committee.

Network Youth & Children’s Council (NYCC) is the organization that plans area events bringing the youth of several churches together. Its membership is composed of all area church Lay Youth and Children’s Leaders, Youth and Children’s Pastor, and the SEC Youth Ministries Senior Youth & Children’s Ministries Director. One youth leader from each constituent church should also be selected by the local church.

Network Coordinator is a layman who is selected by the NYCC and the SEC. Their role is analogous to the Pathfinder area coordinator.

SEC Youth Ministries Advisory Committee is comprised of the NYCC Coordinator. It is chaired by the SEC Youth Ministries Senior Youth Director. It serves to provide feedback, support, and planning for the senior youth aspect of SEC Youth Ministries. The Advisory meets at least twice a year, convened by the Chair.

Contact Us

Rudy Carrillo
Youth Director - Pathfinders & Adventist/MD
rcarrillo@secrcfo.org
951.309.2254

Judi Jeffery
Secretary - Pathfinders & Adventist/MD
judjjeffery@secrcfo.org
951.309.2255

Erik Rems
Associate Director - Senior Youth & Young Adults
erik.rems@secrcfo.org
951.309.2252

Manny Vining
Associate Director - Children & Athletics
manny.vining@secrcfo.org
951.309.2259

Liz Adams
Secretary
Senior Youth & Young Adults/Children Ministries
liz.adams@secrcfo.org
951.309.2250
Contact Us

Ana Bonac
Student Worker - Pathfinder & Adventurer Supply Store
youth.students@secuc.edu
951.909.2668

Carmen Rodriguez
Director - Pine Springs Ranch
director@pine-springs-ranch.org
951.659.4161

David Mendez
Assistant Director - Pine Springs Ranch
dimendez@pine-springs-ranch.org
951.659.4163

Jeremy Cruz
Assistant Director - Summer Camp
jcrew@secuc.edu
951.309.2664

Stephanie Smith
Secretary - BOR Summer Camp
stephanie.smith@secuc.edu
951.309.2666

Pine Springs Ranch Reservations
reservations@pine-springs-ranch.org
951.659.4161

www.securyouth.net
11930 Flora Street, Riverside, Ca 92505
APPENDIX D

CLUSTER COORDINATOR
Ministry Description – Pathfinder Ministry
Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Qualifications:
1. Must demonstrate a love for the Adventist movement, family, Jesus, and Pathfinder age youth
2. Must have at least three years of Pathfinder experience including one year of administrative responsibilities.
3. Must be at least actively working on becoming a Master Guide, if not MG already
4. Must live in the geographical region where he/she is serving
5. Must have the best interest of heart for the FL Pathfinder ministry
6. Must be willing to work with all the diversity of cultures represented in FL
7. Must be a team player
8. Must be a member in good and regular standing with the beliefs/lifestyle/teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including returning a faithful/honest tithe

Duties:
1. Be available to give assistance to the local pastors and club leadership in the following areas:
   a. Promoting local Conference, Union, Division and General Conference Pathfinder programs
   b. Provide guidance to conference policies and procedures and help leaders find resources
   c. Be familiar with and able to answer questions with regards to Pathfinder handbook, conference events/policies and protocol
   d. Seek to establish new Pathfinder clubs where possible
2. Assist local clubs with such activities as Pathfinder Day programs, Investitures, Inductions, Inspections and any other reasonable activity clubs request
3. Promote participation in community activities such as parades/fairs and mission projects
4. Partner with club Directors in your Cluster to consider doing activities/outreach as a Cluster
5. Review quarterly reports from clubs and update Zone Administrator regularly re: activities in cluster

Responsibilities:
1. Balance volunteer role as Cluster Coordinator with other church/family roles
2. Attend Cluster, Zone, Area Meetings, State Meetings, Reveilles, Camporees as requested
3. Make contact with local church Pastor, Club Director, Club Staff
   a. Monthly – make contact by email/phone with each club director in Cluster
   b. Quarterly- Contact each Pastor in Cluster by email/phone
   c. Twice a year – Visit churches in Cluster that have no active club; see about starting club
   d. Annually - Visit, in person, all active Pathfinder clubs in your Cluster, 3-4 times a year (suggested once a quarter)
CLUSTER COORDINATOR
Ministry Description – Adventurer Ministry
Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Qualifications:
1. Must demonstrate a love for the Adventist movement, family, Jesus, and Adventurer age youth
2. Must have at least three years of Adventurer experience including one year of administrative responsibilities.
3. Must be at least actively working on becoming a Master Guide, if not MG already
4. Must live in the geographical region where he/she is serving
5. Must have the best interest of heart for the FL Adventurer ministry
6. Must be willing to work with all the diversity of cultures represented in FL
7. Must be a team player
8. Must be a member in good and regular standing with the beliefs/lifestyle/teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including returning a faithful/honest tithe

Duties:
1. Be available to give assistance to the local pastors and club leadership in the following areas:
   a. Promoting local Conference, Union, Division and General Conference Adventurer programs
   b. Provide guidance to conference policies and procedures and help leaders find resources
   c. Be familiar with and able to answer questions with regards to Adventurer handbook, conference events/policies and protocol
   d. Seek to establish new Adventurer clubs where possible
2. Assist local clubs with such activities as Adventurer Day programs, Investitures, Inductions and any other reasonable activity clubs request
3. Promote participation in community activities / outreach projects
4. Partner with club Directors in your Cluster to consider doing activities/outreach as a Cluster
5. Review quarterly reports from clubs and update Zone Administrator regularly re: activities in cluster

Responsibilities:
1. Balance volunteer role as Cluster Coordinator with other church/family roles
2. Attend Cluster, Zone, Area Meetings, State Meetings, as requested
3. Make contact with local church Pastor, Club Director, Club Staff
   a. Monthly – make contact by email/phone with each club director in Cluster
   b. Quarterly- Contact each Pastor in Cluster by email/phone
   c. Twice a year – Visit churches in Cluster that have no active club; see about starting club
   d. Annually - Visit, in person, all active Adventurer clubs in your Cluster, 3-4 times a year (suggested once a quarter)
CLUSTER COORDINATOR

Ministry Description – Youth and Young Adult (Y/YA) Ministry
Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Qualifications:
1. Must demonstrate a love for the Adventist movement, family, Jesus, and Youth and Young Adults
2. Must have at least three years of years’ experience working with Youth and Young Adults including one year of administrative responsibilities (director/leader).
3. Must live in the geographical region where he/she is serving
4. Must have the best interest of heart for FL Youth and Young Adult ministry
5. Must be willing to work impartially with all the diversity of cultures represented in FL
6. Must be a team player
7. Must be a member in good and regular standing with the beliefs/lifestyle/teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including returning a faithful/honest tithe

Duties:
1. Be available to give assistance to the local pastors, Youth and Young Adult leaders in the following areas:
   a. Promoting local Conference, Union, Division and General Conference Y/YA programs
   b. Provide guidance to conference policies and procedures and help leaders find resources
   c. Be familiar with and able to answer questions with regards to Y/YA ministries: budgeting, leadership, planning, programming, spiritual mentoring, and Conference policies/protocol
   d. Seek to establish new Y/YA Groups / AY Programs where possible
2. Assist local youth leaders with such activities as Outreach Activities, Sabbath School, Y/YA Sabbaths, Social Events, Training, Witnessing Activities, and any other reasonable activity/request
3. Promote participation in community activities such as parades/mission/outreach projects
4. Partner with Y/YA Leader in your Cluster to consider doing activities/outreach as a Cluster
5. Review quarterly each Youth and Young Adult Leaders calendar/plans and give assistance/input

Responsibilities:
1. Balance volunteer role as Cluster Coordinator with other church/family roles
2. Attend Cluster, Zone, Area Meetings, State Meetings, as requested
3. Make contact with local church Pastor, AY/Youth/YA Leader/Staff/Sabbath School Leader
   a. Monthly – make contact by email/phone with each Y/YA Leader in Cluster
   b. Quarterly- Contact each Pastor in Cluster by email/phone
   c. Twice a year – Visit churches in Cluster that have no active Youth and Young Adult group
   d. Annually - Visit, in person, all churches with active Y/YA Groups in your Cluster, 3-4 times a year (suggested once a quarter)
ZONE ADMINISTRATOR Y/YA
Ministry Description – Youth and Young Adult (Y/YA) Ministry
Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Qualifications:
1. Must demonstrate a love for the Adventist movement, family, Jesus, and Youth and Young Adults
2. Must have at least three years of years’ experience working with Youth and Young Adults including one year of administrative responsibilities (director/leader).
3. Must live in the geographical region where he/she is serving
4. Must have the best interest of heart for FL Youth and Young Adult ministry
5. Must be willing to work impartially with all the diversity of cultures represented in FL
6. Must be a team player
7. Must be a member in good and regular standing with the beliefs/lifestyle/teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including returning a faithful/honest tithe

Duties:
1. Work with Cluster Coordinators to attend local churches for Y/YA Sabbaths, Socials, other activities
2. Partner with Cluster Coordinators to have accurate contact info from all Y/YA groups in Cluster
3. Assist Area Administrator with Zone/Area wide councils/events/planning
4. Assist Cluster Coordinators in their contact of local pastors/Y/YA leadership in the following areas:
   a. Promoting local conference, union, division and General Conference Y/YA programs
   b. Provide guidance to conference policies and procedures and help leaders find resources
   c. Be familiar with and able to answer questions with regards to Y/YA ministries: budgeting, leadership, planning, programming, spiritual mentoring, and Conference policies/protocol
5. Assist Cluster Coordinators in assessing where new Y/YA groups can be opened (work with churches/pastors)
6. Assist the Area Administrator in conducting/scheduling: community service, outreach, training events, and other Zone/Area Y/YA events

Responsibilities:
1. Balance volunteer role as Zone Administrator with other church/family roles
2. Attend Cluster, Zone, Area Meetings, State Meetings as requested
3. Make contact with Cluster Coordinators:
   a. Monthly – make contact by email/phone with each Cluster Coordinator in your Zone
   b. Monthly – make contact by email/phone with your Area Administrator
   c. Quarterly - make personal visit to each Cluster Coordinator and Area Administrator
   d. Quarterly – visit several churches/clubs in ZONE to support local Y/YA ministries
   e. Annually - Visit, in person, each Cluster Coordinator in your Zone, 3-4 times a year (suggested once a quarter)
# Youth Ministries Volunteer Leader Form

(Adv/Path/Youth/YA/ACM - Cluster/Zone/Area/State)

## Mileage Report Form for Volunteers

**Your Name**

10/9/2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Phone**

**Email**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>YA</th>
<th>ACM</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Cluster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Month & Day**

**City-State/Purpose**

**Miles (0.30)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster-200</th>
<th>Zone-400</th>
<th>State-1200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Overnight Stay**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per Diem Single</th>
<th>Per Diem Couple</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10.00 Breakfast</td>
<td>$15.00 Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15.00 Lunch/Supper</td>
<td>$20.00 Lunch/Supper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tolls**

**Other Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe</th>
<th>Amt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Notes and Details:**

**Overnight Stay**

**Totals**

- $ - $ - $ - $ - $ - $ -

**Other Expenses**

**Describe**

**Amt.**

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS?**

**(CHECK BOX)**

**Print Out Form and Turn in with Receipts**

*Reports received after Wednesday at 12 noon will be processed following week.*

**Revised:** 1/2/2015
APPENDIX F
Master Grid of All Churches by Clusters/Zones/Areas
REFERENCES


Oestreicher, M. (2008). *Youth ministry 3.0: A manifesto of where we've been, where we are & where we need to go*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Youth Specialties.


VITA

Name: Pedro E. Perez  
Date of Birth: October 15, 1970  
Place of Birth: Hinsdale, IL  
Married: December 22, 1996 to Claudia V. Romero de Perez  

Education:

2010-2018  D.Min. in Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Andrews University
1994-1997  M.Div. from Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University
1991-1993  Bachelor of Arts in Theology, Union College

Ordination:

1999  Ordained to the Seventh-day Adventist Gospel Ministry in Michigan Conference

Experience:

2017-present  Pathfinder and Adventurer Director – Florida Conference
2010-2016  Youth Ministries Director – Florida Conference
2006-2010  Youth Director – Southern New England Conference
2003-2006  Family Life Pastor for Winter Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church (Florida)
1999-2003  Youth Pastor for the Village Seventh-day Adventist Church (Michigan)
1998-1999  Teacher for Great Lakes Adventist Academy (Bible, Outreach, Witnessing)
1994-1997  Youth Pastor for Berrien Springs Spanish Church and Pastor for Lawrence Spanish Company (Michigan)
1993-1994  Youth Pastor for Lansing Seventh-day Adventist Church (Michigan)