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Ron Whitehead

Andrews University, whitehead@andrews.edu

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A Chosen Generation

BY RONALD H. WHITEHEAD

Youth ministry in the Lake Union goes back to 1879 when Luther Warren and Harry Fenner, ages 14 and 17, gathered together for prayer in Hazelton, Michigan, to establish the Adventist Missionary Youth Society. In 1901, the General Conference voted to establish a youth department and in 1916, the Lake Union Conference established a youth department to better serve the needs of Lake Union youth and young adults. Since 1996, Ron Whitehead has coordinated Lake Union youth ministries for three union presidents.

The Lake Union historically and currently values youth and young adults. This union of conferences believes their youth are not only the church of tomorrow, but they are the church today. Here are a few ways our youth are involved in the mission of the Seventh-day-Adventist Church.

MISSIONS

Each year, hundreds of young people take the Matthew 18:19 commission to heart. To illustrate their dedication and how quick Lake Union young people can respond to God's call, look no further than Hurricane Katrina. Hundreds of youth rotated into the Gulf States area to be "salt and light" for Jesus. For more information, visit: www.cywecare.org.



Lake Union youth were quick to help Hurricane Katrina victims.

MISSION EVANGELISM

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Student Missionaries/Taskforce	38	36	28	32	35
Short Term Domestic Trips	17	21	18	20	31
Short Term International Trips	30	38	31	32	33
Total Participants (estimate)	978	1,216	1,008	1,072	1,315



Campers form lasting memories at Indian Village campfire worships.

SUMMER CAMP EVANGELISM

Year after year this form of evangelism pays big in the following areas: baptisms, decisions for Jesus, young adult leadership training and employment, and pure fun. Beautiful Camp Akita in the Illinois Conference is the newest conference center and camp in the Lake Union.



Ronald H. Whitehead, youth ministries director

CAMP EVANGELISM

S = Staff C = Campers R = Request for Baptism NA = Not Available

	2001			2002			2003			2004			2005		
	S	C	R	S	C	R	S	C	R	S	C	R	S	C	R
Illinois	NA	NA	NA	25	172	NA	25	180	NA	31	285	NA	35	316	NA
Indiana	28	286	55	30	350	70	32	470	90	35	420	90	38	530	125
Lake Region	29	1,400	71	29	1,400	71	29	1,400	71	29	1,400	71	29	1,400	71
Michigan	90	1,672	443	90	1,632	374	92	1,714	390	96	1,769	371	90	1,802	453
Wisconsin	30	311	57	30	270	62	30	286	43	30	254	56	32	296	53
Totals	177	3,669	626	204	3,824	577	208	4,050	594	221	4,128	588	224	4,344	702

PATHFINDER/ADVENTURER EVANGELISM

Pathfinders and Adventurers are the strongest local church youth programs within the Lake Union. These two ministries effect “our” youth. They learn Christian values, build a relationship with Jesus, discover the world around them, and train for leadership, as well as Bible evangelism, etc. Adventurers and Pathfinders are for those in grades one to 12. Barna Research Group well documents if young people do not make a decision for Jesus by age 14 they are only four percent likely to make that decision later on.

In 2001, the Lake Union Pathfinder Camporee was held with just over 1,800 in attendance. In 2004,



An Illinois drummer marched in a parade at the 2004 Faith on Fire Camporee.



Adventurers learn many new skills. They enjoy collecting patches from their classes for their sashes.



Adventurers enjoy making new crafts at Adventurer Fun Day.



More than 30,000 attended the 2004 Faith on Fire Camporee in Osh Kosh, Wis.

the Lake Union hosted the world camporee in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, with more than 30,000 in attendance. The Lake Union will host its quinquennial camporee September 14–17, 2006. For more information, contact Terry Dodge, Michigan Conference Pathfinder and Adventurer director: tdodge@misda.org.

PATHFINDER/ADVENTURER EVANGELISM

PC = Pathfinder Clubs PM = Pathfinder Members AC = Adventurer Clubs AM = Adventurer Members

	2001				2002				2003				2004				2005			
	PC	PM	AC	AM	PC	PM	AC	AM	PC	PM	AC	AM	PC	PM	AC	AM	PC	PM	AC	AM
Illinois	22	298	10	175	24	324	11	196	27	328	13	228	19	396	15	257	26	412	17	306
Indiana	11	280	11	258	13	358	12	270	17	390	13	253	17	425	15	270	18	380	14	298
Lake Region	26	531	13	222	26	531	22	291	26	531	21	254	26	531	15	216	26	531	12	193
Michigan	59	1,122	28	479	61	1,135	40	385	69	1,310	47	578	62	1,314	40	648	60	1,206	37	547
Wisconsin	13	150	8	40	13	120	8	42	13	125	8	39	13	107	8	41	13	113	8	40
Totals	131	2,381	70	1,174	137	2,468	93	1,184	152	2,684	102	1,352	137	2,773	93	1,432	143	2,642	88	1,384



Abdiel Quetz portrayed Jesus in the 2005 Andrews University Passion play.

PUBLIC DOCTRINE EVANGELISM

During the past few years, increasing numbers of youth and young adults are seeking more involvement in various forms of public evangelism. Some youth are holding Revelation seminars, others are starting Bible correspondence schools, while still others are preaching the gospel. One of the most recent Lake Union youth evangelism efforts was held in Ghana, Africa, with 49 Pathfinders. More than 500,000 pieces of literature were distributed and 702 people were baptized. With more youth evangelism training and funding taking place in the Lake Union, we expect more youth and young adult involvement.



Andrews University students lead the dynamic Fusion worship experience monthly at the Howard Performing Arts Center.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

There is a wise saying, “what you value, you measure.” This is true in the corporate world, but also applies to our personal and spiritual lives. In ministry, we value people. In youth ministry, we especially value young people and are overjoyed when they make a decision for Christ. There are a number of indicators that suggest what we are doing through summer camp, Pathfinders, missions and outreach ministries is having a significant impact on the number of youth baptisms. New software technology is now being em-



Ron Whitehead baptized this young woman from Ghana, Africa, during the Pathfinder evangelistic effort there.

ployed to track this information so we can monitor baptisms for young people under the age of 17 and between the ages of 18 to 35. With this information, we can better assess the effectiveness of our ministry to the young.

The youth and young adults around us are a chosen generation called to usher in our Lord’s return. To this end, the Lake Union youth department stands ready to support its youth.

Ronald H. Whitehead is the Lake Union youth and young adult ministries director.