



General Conference

Executive Committee Newsletter

An informative publication for members of the General Conference Executive Committee as a service through the office of the Chair

JANUARY 2018

We trust God is blessing

you and leading you in everything you are doing to honor Him in this new year.

As church leaders, we recognize the importance of our youth. They are vital to the life of the church and to fulfilling our God-given mission. We believe effective youth engagement is essential for church revival and growth. In this issue, Gary Blanchard, Youth Ministries Director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, shares his vision for engaging and retaining this very important segment of our church family.

One exciting way to involve youth in ministry is through literature evangelism. In his report, Kamil Metz shares how 1,500 students reached 5 million homes for Jesus this past summer!

As someone who served as a student canvasser for 10 years, I know what an enlightening and faith-building experience this can be. From the age of 13 when I was in secondary school, until I graduated from the Theological Seminary, I had the privilege of being a student literature evangelist. Throughout that time, God gave me occasion to see how that experience strengthens young people's faith and helps them develop skills to serve the church more effectively, spreading Christ's love and truth to the world.

Ellen White urges, "May the Lord move upon many of our young people to enter His service as evangelistic canvassers. Our time for work is short. Many, very many, need the promptitude of the 'quickly' in them, to lead them to arouse and go to work. The Lord calls for workers just now..." (*The Publishing Ministry*, p. 280).

May you be blessed as you read this month's newsletter. As we continue praying for our Church's unity in faith, hope, and love, and in its mission fulfillment, we again thank you for your service to the

Lord as a dedicated member of the General Conference Executive Committee. We welcome your feedback at: ECN@gc.adventist.org.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS
General Vice President

EDITORIAL



AN ARMY RIGHTLY TRAINED

AN INTERVIEW WITH GARY BLANCHARD, YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

During Spring Council 2017, Gary Blanchard was elected director of the world church's Youth Ministries department. Gary comes with more than 20 years of youth ministry experience serving as a youth pastor, Bible teacher, academy chaplain, academy church pastor, and district minister. A popular speaker at academies, youth events, summer camps, and camp meetings, he has traveled around the world preaching the Three Angels' Messages and inspiring young people to do the same. Before coming to the world headquarters, Gary most recently served as youth director in the Texas Conference of the Southwestern Union, North American Division. He believes wholeheartedly in the mission and message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and sees the

youth, rightly trained, as key in carrying out that mission to the world. Gary is married to the love of his life, Erica, and they have three young adult children: Gary, Ben, and Sierra.

ECN: *Gary, what is your vision for the youth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?*

Blanchard: It's to see them rightly trained for ministry, refreshed and revived by the Holy Spirit and activated for redemptive service around the world.

Could you unpack that a little bit? What would that look like?

First, to be "rightly trained" is to be mentored by the older generation in how to do a variety of ministries. For example,



Gary Blanchard, newly elected director of the youth ministries department of the world church, and his staff can frequently be heard saying the departmental motto: "Pass it on! Identity, mission, leadership!"

local church leadership, public and personal evangelism, church planting, missions, and so on. Secondly, to be refreshed and revived by the Holy Spirit means to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Seventh-day Adventist young people in these very last days are being called upon to declare the third angel's message of Revelation 14. We are told that this message will go out with the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit just before Jesus returns. You can read in Acts 3:19-20 and Revelation 18:1 for more on that. Like the dry bones of Ezekiel's vision, young people who comprise God's army need to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Who fights battles? It's young people. Young people who have received Jesus Christ.

What kind of role do you see young people having in our worldwide mission?

Just like "jets of light" and "arrows in the hands of a warrior," young people need to be sent out into the world to declare the everlasting gospel, which is God's last message of mercy to the world, found in Revelation 14. Arrows weren't designed to stay safely in the archer's quiver; they were designed to travel fast, fearless, and focused

into the enemy's lines. Young people need to be sent into the most dangerous places of the world. They need to be organized into teams and sent into the influential cities of the world. I have also long believed that the 10/40 window, where 90 percent of the people have never heard the gospel, should be the target of Adventist youth ministry. In fact, it may be that the 10/40 is all that stands between us and the coming of Jesus! After all, Jesus said that He will return only after the gospel has gone out to the *entire* world and everyone has had an opportunity to receive him personally as Savior and Lord.

What do you see as your mission as world youth director?

If I were to identify my mission in a simple phrase it would be "to raise His army." God's army is an army of youth.

What do you consider to be the biggest challenge facing Adventist youth today?

An identity crisis, knowing who they are in Jesus, and who they are in regard to the mission and message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They need to know that they are the sons and daughters of Christ.

—continued on p. 3

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WITH SUCH AN ARMY of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! How soon, in place of a possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where 'the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;' where 'the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick,' and 'the voice of weeping shall be no more heard.'

Education, p. 271

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They need to understand that God gave our Church the very last message of mercy to the world, especially the Three Angels' Message, which centers in "Christ, our Righteousness." It's really a very simple message—contained in only six verses, Revelation 14:6-12, and it ends with the second coming of Jesus. Ellen White tells us that nothing should be more important than the Three Angels' Messages. If we want to see Jesus come in our lifetime, we must get this message out everywhere. We need to get serious about mission. When we receive Jesus, then we are empowered to live in obedience to Him.

How can leaders help young people to catch the vision?

To hear from leaders that we are proud to be Seventh-day Adventist Christians, instead of mocking and making snide remarks. We need to get excited and bold with the mission we've been given as a people. This doesn't mean covering

things up. We are the Laodicean Church, but we need to allow Christ to enter in. We need to get excited and fired up about our message. Our young people need to see that. We need passionate, spiritual leaders. Ted Wilson shows that energy and excitement for our message. He's a great example of the kind of leaders we need around the world. Another is Dan Serns, evangelism coordinator in Texas, and many more. It just makes your heart swell to see the "Calebs" of the church today.

You mentioned training the youth for ministry. Explain.

I mean that they are trained for ministry in a variety of ways, not just in how to rake leaves. Our young people need to be trained to lead our local churches, to plant churches, to go into dangerous places. They need to be trained in serious, essential aspects of ministry. They need to be equipped in vital areas of church leadership. And they need leaders who will mentor

them, who are on fire for our God-given message.

What do you believe is the secret to success?

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, like in Acts 1:8. Right there is the secret to becoming a world movement. We all, including young people, must receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And we're told that the Spirit of God will be poured out in response to the preaching of the third angel's message. And in Revelation 18:1, it describes the whole world being lighted by the angel's message. Christ's righteousness, covering us, and exuding through us is the last demonstration to the world of God's people.

In closing, would you please share with us your favorite Bible text?

Yes, it's 1 John 4:9. "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

CHECKUP



HEALTH FACTS

As the new year often brings thoughts of better health practices, here are a few facts from one of the many life-saving books available from student literature evangelists: *Habits That Heal*, by Monica Fukuda with David K. Fukuda, M.D. The book is also available for purchase here.

▶ Drinking caffeinated beverages such as tea, coffee, or soft drinks, can lead to or worsen anxiety, depression, insomnia, nausea, tremors, osteoporosis, hypertension, headaches, fertility problems, and more.
—National Institute of Health, U.S. National Library of Medicine, *Medical Encyclopedia*, "Caffeine in the Diet".

▶ A few of the many benefits of exercise include lower risk of stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and several types of cancer. It improves bone health, fitness, sleep quality, and digestion. It also leads to better brain function, and fewer flu and colds.
—Dr. David Buchner, et. al, "Physical Activity Has Many Health Benefits," U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services.

▶ Some restorative benefits of being out in nature include lower blood pressure, boosted immune function, reduced stress, quicker recovery from surgeries, lower anxiety, less need for pain medication, and overall improved mood.
—Dr. Roger S. Ultich, professor, Department of Architecture and Centre for Healthcare Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden.

▶ "There is no other factor—not diet, not smoking, not exercise, not stress, not genetics, not drugs, not surgery—that has a greater impact on our quality of life than interpersonal relationships."
—Dr. Dean Ornish, president, Preventive Medicine Research Institute, Sausalito, California, and Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco.

IMPACTING LIVES FOR ETERNITY

An army of youth reaches millions

BY KAMIL METZ



As church leaders, we know that the decisions we make will impact those we serve. And from time to time we look back and consider whether the results achieved matched our expectations or not.

It is during these times of reflection that we sometimes find, in retrospect, that the impact of a particular decision made years before far exceeded our greatest expectations and our years of experience in the ministry cannot account for the success. It was all God.

A Quote With Significant Implications

In 1987, when Elder Glenn Aufderhar, then Michigan Conference president, read Ellen White's counsel that the book *Christ's Object Lessons* was to be used by students to defray the cost of Christian education, he could hardly imagine the impact his subsequent endorsement of this concept would make on tens of thousands of young people over the next 30 years. It was then that the North American Division (NAD) Magabook ministry was born.

Imagine: One conference president was impressed as he mused upon a quote with significant implications. He then sought a practical application for the quote in his present-day. And the result is a legacy of many young men and women for the past 30 years that have received evangelistic training through a re-tooled form of literature evangelism. Ellen White wrote, "We cannot too highly estimate this work; for were it not for the efforts of the canvasser, many would never hear the warning" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 313.)



Year after year we hear stories about how people have been impacted by the books that they received. However, equally encouraging are the testimonies of how our young people have been impacted by the work they did over their summer vacations.

Changed Lives

Andrew was a young colporteur whose life was changed forever through this ministry. Prior to the summer of 2015, he was not planning to make church a significant part of his life. He decided to colporteur from gentle pressure he received from friends and family, but by the middle of the summer he had committed to giving God a real chance for his heart. That day he experienced something out of the ordinary. He prayed a specific prayer, and God answered his prayer. That's it. That's all he needed! God was real. Today, Andrew has a leadership position in the summer colporteur ministry, and throughout the school year he leads out in public campus ministry to university students while attending school.

By her late teens, Estefany was out of the church and deep in the world—though not feeling fulfilled. One summer day her aunt, a Seventh-day Adventist, got a book from a student colporteur. She made a plan to gift that book to her prodigal niece. Estefany read the book, and a couple of months later she was back in the church, serving the Lord. Today she trains young people to share our literature, knowing well the powerful influence a book can have on a life. A book changed her.

We praise God for our young people and their dedication to be actively involved in Total Member Involvement through literature evangelistic efforts! However, we are also grateful to our church leaders, who, through their votes and voices, enable our young people to be engaged in evangelistic work while still in their youth. Let us add our voices to the legacy of reimagining ministry that puts our youth to work for Him today!

*Kamil Metz, a native of the Czech Republic, serves as director of Literature Ministries for the Michigan Conference (miyouthrush.com). He also serves as the GLOW International coordinator (www.glowonline.org). He is the author of *The Open Door*, a collection of inspiring stories from Youth Literature Evangelists. Learn more at www.theopendoorbook.com/about.*

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YOUTH LITERATURE EVANGELISTS*



1,500 Number of Students

**SUMMER
2017**

5,000,000
Homes reached



AT A GLANCE

\$6,000,000 Monies Raised



3,500,000

Bible study cards and
GLOW tracts shared



\$3,900,000
Student earnings



900,000

Books distributed

8,000+
Bible Study and other spiritual Interests



*STATISTICS COME FROM THE "YOUTH RUSH" PROGRAMS IN THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

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Year after year we hear stories about how people have been impacted by the books that they received. However, equally encouraging are the testimonies of how our young people have been impacted by the work they did over their summer vacations.

THE BACK PAGE



January 2018

REPORT FROM THE UNITY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Unity Oversight Committee met at the world headquarters on Dec. 14, 2017, with newly appointed chair, Mike Ryan (voted by the GC Administrative Committee), and Hensley Mooroooven, secretary.

At the December meeting the committee voted to begin a process to gather qualitative and quantitative data from the world church. The qualitative data will be gathered through personal visits and dialogues with leaders of the 13 world divisions, and the attached field.

Quantitative data is currently being gathered through a survey sent to division and union presidents, and the president of the attached field. Each recipient received the survey in his native language. The survey was designed by the world church's Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, and is being administered by them.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data will be used in helping to craft a document that will be brought to the 2018 Annual Council for approval.

1 While political tensions with **North Korea** have increased, **Adventist World Radio** (AWR) continues to broadcast God's end-time message into that closed country via shortwave radio. The North Korean government, however, has outlawed ownership of shortwave radios, and severely punishes anyone discovered with one. Miraculously, an opportunity has opened for AWR to purchase airtime on an AM radio station that reaches into North Korea, so citizens will be able to listen to AWR-produced programs without using illegal equipment. Pray these broadcasts will touch many lives.

2 The **General Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty** (PARL) department is requesting continued prayers for wrongfully convicted church member Bruno Amah, who has already served five years of a life sentence in **Lomé, Togo**. PARL director Dr. Ganoune Diop has recently returned from visiting Amah in prison, and the church continues its efforts to intercede with authorities on his behalf. **Read more** about Amah's case and about **his witness** in jail, which has led to the baptism of some 30 fellow inmates.

3 Pray for the department of Family Ministries as

they host the **Adventist Pan-African Conference on Dynamic Family Relations**, to be held at the Adventist University of Africa in **Kenya**, March 1-3, 2018.

The purpose of this conference is to take a closer look at several family practices in Africa to make sure they are biblically sound or in need of seeking greater realignment with the Bible. For more information, visit the GC Family Ministries **website**.

4 Beginning Autumn 2018, **Loma Linda University** School of Public Health will offer a PhD degree in nutrition with an advanced research focus on plant-based nutrition. "The school is recognized as an international leader in establishing and disseminating the benefits of plant-based nutrition," writes James Ponder in a **recent article** published in the online **Adventist Review**. Prospective students are encouraged to apply early for admission into this research degree program.

5 You won't want to miss this quarter's Sabbath school lessons on Stewardship: Motives of the Heart, presented in the **Adult Bible Study Guide**. "Stewardship is the daily practical expression of what it means to follow Jesus; it is

an expression of our love for God, a means of living out the truth that we have been given in Christ. We are stewards because God first loved us," writes John H.H. Mathews, principal contributor to the lessons. Current and past lessons are available on the **Adult Bible Study Guide's website**.

6 The **GC Office of Archives, Statistics and Research** is seeking a Managing Editor for the Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists. This position is a full-time salaried position with full benefits. Interview and relocation costs are at personal expense. Duties include coordinating research, selection and work flow, developing resources, process, and plans for guiding the process through to a successful launch in 2021. Must be a Seventh-day Adventist church member. Applicant must have a detailed knowledge of church structure. Editorial experience required with a background in religion and academia preferred. Send resume to stavenhagenr@gc.adventist.org.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE INVITED

to submit items for
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ECN@gc.adventist.org.