

GIFTED  
FOR  
YOUTH MINISTRY

*A Guide and Tested Principles  
for a Successful Youth Leader*

*Gifted for Youth Ministry*

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# Thanks

To the millions of youth around the world whose lives I touched with my speaking engagements in youth events, and to the youth leaders that worked along with me to bring the youth to the cross of Calvary and recreate the image of God in their minds.

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# Introduction

## *Before We Start*

**M**ANY YOUTH leaders have asked me the same questions over and over as I have traveled around the world: “Dr. Muganda, how did you manage to stay at the General Conference for fifteen years, at the division for ten years, at the union for five years, and at the local conference for five years? What secret did you have for being so successful? How have you done so well? What can I do to be like you?” These questions served as the backdrop of writing this book to share my experience as a world youth leader for over 40 years in the Seventh-day Adventist church. It is my prayer that this book will bring inspiration and motivation to all those who read it.

I was born in Tanzania, East Africa, and raised in a pastor’s home. I am a PK. I know the joys and sorrows of being a pastor’s kid. Many pastors’ kids do not make it to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, but God helped me throughout my teenage life when I was trying to find my identity, and through Him I made it.

I started preaching at the age of nine. As young as that, I would gather all my age mates within the mission compound every Sabbath afternoon. I would ring a makeshift bell made from the rim of a wheel to gather the children to meet under a mango tree. I would then take the pulpit and preach, imitating my Daddy.

I would even make appeals asking the children to come forward and give their hearts to Jesus. Sometimes I would come up with mock weddings in which I would pretend to marry these small kids. This was so funny and the kids loved it. They enjoyed my charismatic approach to speaking to them at that age.

I developed so much interest in working with kids even when I was a little boy myself. My passion working with young people was real and captivating. I recall that, at the time of finishing my secondary school education, during the seniors' farewell party, one of my friends, Msafiri Manjale, gave a speech about me. He said, "Baraka Muganda will either be a politician or a preacher."

At the end of form four, which is the end of secondary school in Tanzania, I was selected to join a pre-university or high school. I wanted to study and become a lawyer. During those years there was a lot of corruption and I was determined to go and study and come back to put all such people in prison.

Then I realized that God had bigger plans for my life than putting people in prison. He wanted me to free them from the prisons of sin. After three months at Musoma Alliance High School in Tanzania, I walked into the principal's office and handed him my resignation from school. He thought I was joking, because there were so many young people who were crying to join high school and could not get that opportunity. During my days we had more students qualified to join high school than spaces available. After much discussion with the principal, he accepted my resignation.

I left the school, flew to Zimbabwe, and joined Solusi University to earn my theology degree. At that time my father was also just completing his first degree in theology. I loved my studies and did a lot of preaching while at the seminary. I also led in youth programs. I loved so much working with young people, pathfinders, and earliteens.

As I was coming to the end of my studies at Solusi, I received a letter from the secretary treasurer of Tanzania Union, calling me to employment

as a pastor in the southern part of Tanzania at a church called Nachingwea. I was so happy, and thanked God for opening up this opportunity for me. I wanted to be a pastor so badly. But when I arrived home, in Tanzania, I received another letter from the same person saying that the union committee was so sorry to let me know that I was not going to be employed due to budgetary constraints. In those years, missionaries would scare local people by telling them that employing one pastor with a degree would take salaries of four pastors. There were very few pastors at that time with undergraduate degrees. Unfortunately, our local pastors bought into this fear. My employment was turned down.

Was this going to discourage me from pursuing my dream? Not at all! I prayed about it and decided to talk to my father, who at that time was the union evangelist. I shared with him the bad news, but then I told him not to panic. I assured him that I would never leave church employment and join government forces. At that time if I had decided to join the government I would have been employed without any delay. Undergraduates were a hot commodity in the country.

At this time foreign missionaries were saying, “Africa does not have educated people to do what missionaries are doing.” It was ironic that when an African came back with education, the same people would say, “These local people have no experience.” I wanted to prove to them that beyond education and experience, dedication and commitment to God was my top priority.

I asked my father for one favor: to pick me up on his team as a volunteer and pay me just per diem (daily expenses). I asked for no salary. My father could not believe it. He asked me several times if I was serious. I said to him, “Daddy, I want to preach and will never leave my dream. I want to serve my Lord.”

My father accepted my request to serve as a volunteer on his union evangelistic team. He made me assistant union evangelist, in charge of the team, and made me the chair of the platform and music as well. Every

evening I would prepare the program, welcome people, and conduct several songs to prepare people before my father came to preach.

Two or three weeks into the effort, a local conference president by the name of Pastor David Dobias walked into the hall and sat at the back watching. He witnessed my passion and how I made people feel at home and prepared them for the Word to be preached. I made the audience sing with joy, singing out their hearts to the Lord.

At the end of the program, Pastor Dobias called me aside and told me how I impressed him. He said the energy and passion which came out of me was so powerful. He then said words that have never left me for the past 40 years. He said, “Baraka, you have a gift for working with young people. I need a young pastor like you in my conference to motivate young people to love the Lord. You indeed have a natural gift—God has given you such a passion for young people. I am inviting you to join me on my team. You will be my youth director.”

Dobias believed in me, and took a risk in employing me. I had no pastoral experience, no work experience, and was single. Aside from the brief work with my father, my resumé was completely empty, but Dobias took me under his wing and groomed this gift I had for the youth.

He left for the conference office and within a few weeks I received an official letter of employment. It caused a lot of discomfort among the elderly people who were working in the conference office. To many, having experience as a local pastor was an entrance requirement for serving on the conference, and I had none. They tried to fight me all the five years I worked there, but the gift God gave me for working with youth, preaching and addressing youth issues, became obvious throughout the conference.

I was only twenty-five when I began work as the local conference youth director. And from that time for the next 40 years I remained in the Youth Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, working from the local conference (Tanzania General Field, Tanzania Union, East African

Division (Zimbabwe), to the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

I am one of the few pastors who never worked as a local pastor. All my life was spent in youth department, with many firsts: first black African to serve as Eastern Africa Division Youth Director, first black African to serve as World Youth Director at the General Conference, first black African to serve as Vice President for Ministry at an American Seventh-day Adventist university. Indeed, the words of Pastor David Dobias, “You have a gift,” proved to be true. The gift for youth God put in me helped me break records of “firsts” in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In this book I will share with the reader the lessons I learned through my spiritual gift of working with young people. I saw God leading me in a very awesome way. May God inspire you to be the best youth leader you can be. Our youth deserve the best from us as their leaders.



## CHAPTER 1

# Gift of Vision

## *The Beginning of the End*

**A**T EVERY level of my ministry with youth I developed a vision as soon as I was appointed as a youth leader. I asked tough question in the beginning of my journey. Where was I taking the young people within my reach? Very early in my ministry I learned about the importance of having a vision. “Without a vision the people perish” Micah 3:6.

I spent time with the Lord as I looked up for a vision for my ministry. I consulted with some seniors around me, searched the Word of God and fasted and prayed. As a youth leader, you must recognize your strength as a leader, be true to your philosophy of ministry, and respond to the pressing needs of the group with direction that you can share with the leadership of the conference or church, youth ministry and the community around you. Vision must translate into workable and measurable goals.

Vision requires willingness and the ability to articulate the goals which one is striving to reach. Vision is about the big picture and about outcomes. If you don't have a vision you don't know where you are going. I found out in my ministry that vision gave me a picture of where I wanted my department to be after I left. In other words, a vision helps you to ask the question. “Where do I want this department to be, after one year or two years or three years?” When you have that in your mind you know how to run your department.

Vision is so important in the youth department. It serves as a roadmap for the future. A good youth leader must always start ministry with a vision. Every time before I started running around to do my work I made sure my team knew our vision. I began by asking a team of those who were under my jurisdiction to come together and dream together for a vision. I made sure that this vision was owned by my team. We spend hours praying about a vision and asked many questions: Where were we taking the department? What was the outcome we wanted to see after we came to the end of our tenure?

It is sad to be a leader without a vision. I may say it is sin to be a purposeless leader. I approached my ministry with fear before the Lord. Every enterprise connected with His course should be carried forward with order, Prayer was the key for me to come up with a vision for my department. I knew that without prayer there was no way to come up with such a powerful vision.

I took my work very seriously because I wanted to be successful in saving the young people who were under my watch. I also learned that when you have a vision you will become a threat to some of those you serve with. Your vision will intimidate some colleagues. I saw this in my years of serving as Youth Director. Because when you have vision you tend to work very hard to meet the goals of the department. You are not lazy at all. You know what you are doing and where you are taking the department.

Ellen White says, “It is sin to be heedless, purposeless, and indifferent in any work in which we may engage, but especially in the work of God. Every enterprise connected with His cause should be carried forward with order, forethought, and earnest prayer.” She goes on to say, “The work you are engaged in cannot be done except by forces which are the result of well understood plans” *Evangelism*, (1946, Review and Herald Publishing Association) page 94.

The book of Nehemiah gave me a lot of guidance and encouragement. I spent hours reading this book, especially how Nehemiah prepared to go

back to Jerusalem and rebuild this city which was in ruins. I discovered how Nehemiah put God first in his plans, spending hours in prayer. At the end of his fast and prayer Nehemiah had a vision. A good youth leader will spend more hours in prayer at the beginning of his or her ministry. After God has revealed to you a vision then you are ready to share it with your team. This is not to say your team has no input but you give direction where you want the department to be after several years.

As you start working on the vision, ask the group, “What values do you want to see developed in the lives of young people?” A vision must have values and those values form the vision; values such as honesty, integrity, stewardship, prayer life, compassion, etc. This becomes your planning process.

In my ministry as youth leader, I spent many hours in prayer. I talked with God back and forth on my knees, asking God, “What do you want me to do, and how do I achieve this goal?” Just as Nehemiah was in constant in his life, as a successful youth leader you must make prayer your habit as you execute your vision. When you pray God comes into your ministry life and empowers you with a vision for your department or church. Briefly I followed Nehemiah’s way of developing a vision. Nehemiah was driven by a concern, and went to his knees because he knew he was powerless. Prayer was constant in his life and finally God gave him a vision. Prayer is the key to a right vision!

Here are some principles I developed from studying Nehemiah’s method of planning with a vision.

- Begin with youth group or leaders
- Develop a list of values
- Assess the needs, this involves the SWOT Exercise: Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats. Choose the objectives to meet those needs
- Develop strategies
- Plan strategies

- Regularly evaluate

Our vision in youth ministry should be so extensive that God is the only one who can fulfill it. Without vision, there can be no direction. The youth director should always be striving to see his/her vision fulfilled.

I believe that a youth director without a vision is a man/woman without success. I believe that a youth director without a vision is a youth director who will not have good, Christian, dedicated youth. You must have a vision.

A vision is not a dream. It is a future oriented look at the conditions that God would like to develop in the ministry. It is not a wish list or wishful thinking. It is seeing the ministry through God's eyes for what it can be and do.

You must have a vision of numerical growth and spiritual growth. The youth directors must constantly have a vision of someday growing and reaching many more youth.

## CHAPTER 2

# Gift of Facing Empty Walls

## *Guided by the Map*

**E**VERY TIME I was appointed into a new office I spent the first few days of my leadership facing an empty wall. In other words, I allowed myself to be empty before God. I sat there facing the empty wall, asking some tough questions. “What do you have for me? Now, Wall, what am I supposed to do? Lord, I am overwhelmed with the enormity of the task!” My goal was that after asking these questions I would then develop my own personal Youth Ministry Philosophy that would guide me as I led my department.

I recall very vividly when I was appointed as World Youth Director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As the news was broken to me that the nominating committee had voted me to serve in that capacity, I could not believe what I was hearing. When I traveled to the General Conference Session in 1995, I went there as a delegate without any agenda of moving to another level. I was so happy at the Eastern Africa Division office in Harare. The news made me freeze, literally! I told my wife. “I am freezing and scared of this big and demanding job.”

With these thoughts, I moved to Washington DC to begin this incredible journey as World Youth Director. As I did always, the first thing was for me to get acquainted with the office dynamics. I said to myself, “I know youth ministry but do not know how it works from the General Conference level.

I needed to spend more time in front of the empty wall. I spent almost three months going through the most important files. I wanted to have a rough idea of the actions taken and all the meetings held, with their minutes. As a new youth leader in your position, do not be too quick in starting your new assignment, running around before going through what your predecessors have done.

After reading all the minutes and plans of the previous youth leader. I turned now to the empty wall asking God, “What do I do? What do you want me to do in this department?” I reasoned with the wall. I did not want just to be another youth leader. I wanted to make a difference in the world of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Even when I worked at the other levels of the church, I spent more time talking to an empty wall. I needed answers from God. After many hours of facing and talking to the wall, the foundation of my personal philosophy was born.

I did not want to do the same old same old, so I called this foundation “Beyond the Obvious.” This became the dynamic force behind all that I wanted to accomplish. I turned this into a global slogan. I thank God who gave me this powerful revelation in response to my sitting facing the empty wall. I am sharing with you, as this document became the guiding start to what we were set to do.

Since the inception of the Youth Department, the directors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church have always exceeded the obvious of their times. As we approach the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, this thrust becomes of paramount importance. We need to build upon our ancestors’ visions by looking beyond the obvious as we enter the third millennium. Our current programs are great, yet we must not relax. It is essential that Adventist youth be challenged to finish the work of the gospel.

Facing the future with such a mentality requires us as youth leaders to shift our paradigm from program to people, and from past to future. Business as usual must stop. It is obvious we have youth camps. It is obvious we have many youth activities. It is obvious we have outstanding Pathfinder

programs, and it is obvious that we have an energetic Adventurer program. If we want to prepare our youth to face the future, we must move beyond the obvious and come up with programs that are issue- and, need-driven.” There is nothing wrong with the obvious: uniforms, parading or insignias. However, we are losing too many young people despite the excellent programs we have. They are looking for more than the obvious. Let us build a youth ministry that meets the needs and issues affecting the spirituality of the youth.

Recent studies within the Seventh-day Adventist Church have shown increased at-risk behavior among our youth. Many times, some of these behaviors are not being addressed by the programs that are in place. We have taken everything within the obvious contexts. The programs we run must be built on our current strength and stretched beyond the obvious traditional boundaries. In the past, Youth Ministries has concentrated its efforts on producing quality spiritual products and services for youth leaders. It is becoming increasingly clear that such efforts, while necessary, are not sufficient in themselves. Moving beyond the obvious calls for us as youth leaders to inform and persuade not only the youth, but also those that deal with youth—leaders, church administrators, parents and church members.

Our focus and priorities have changed with the societal problems that are endemic in the society in which our youth live. Aids, poverty, street kids, secularism, postmodernism, New Age, drugs, single-parent families—all force us to see farther than our own perceptions. Society is constantly changing. In order for our ministry to be successful, we must respond to the political, social and economic challenges that affect and influence our youth.

“Beyond the Obvious” calls us as spiritual youth leaders to move away from working above as a department to working together with other departments within the church. This includes youth administrators, pastors, educators and ministries throughout the world church structure. Those involved in the youth ministry of the future must expand their vision of ministry.

For too long we have been isolated by the church or have isolated ourselves from the church. Youth ministry has been seen by many to be just dealing with youth and running their programs. This has been a very unfortunate approach. To reach young people, we reach those who work with them. We must not be simply specialists in providing programs, but specialists in ministry. The Youth department must be a vehicle for the church to accomplish its mission. Spiritual youth leaders must be specialists in communicating the mission of the church to youth and communicating the needs of youth to the church.

The department, with such focus, will increase the spiritual emphasis of its approach to ministry rather than concentrating only on the mechanics of the programs. Faith development, conversion, commitment, training and the development of a life-style of service by our youth to accomplish the mission of the church will be the priorities of the department as we take up the challenge of moving beyond the obvious: preparing our youth for eternity. “The youth in our day may be workers with Christ if they will; and in working, their faith will strengthen and their knowledge of the divine will increase.” (Ellen G White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol 3, p 370)

“Beyond the Obvious” calls for youth leaders, pastors and church elders to challenge the young people with the Word of God. Many times those who work with young people say, “Youth are bored by church stuff.” Contrary to this statement, when one asks youth what they are bored with at church, they say, “We are bored with leaders who do not challenge us.”

Youth want to be challenged. Give youth more than entertainment. As youth leaders with an ear tuned to Beyond the Obvious, we are admonished to hear the cry of our youth. Youth are crying to our church saying:

- We want to find real *answers*.
- We want to find *hope*.
- We want to be *challenged*.
- We want to know *God*.

- Please give us more than concerts, parades, insignias, uniforms and other mechanics within the various Youth Ministry activities.
- The youth are saying, “Show us how in God’s Word to find answers to our questions!”

Youth ministry has one goal—to save its youth and involve them in the mission of the church. Youth Ministry is not babysitting or entertaining. Many youth leaders try the following approaches:

- Hold young people in the youth society or club so that they do not leave church or join another church.
- Hold young people in the youth society or club so that they do not go places or do things we don’t approve of—to keep them entertained and under our control. We are not suggesting that youth should not be entertained but that entertainment should not be used as a long-term goal for Youth Ministry.
- Hold young people until they are old so that we can give them some positions in the church and teach them the Christian faith.

Youth leaders whose goal is to hold young people usually end up catering to those who are most likely to leave—at the expense of committed young people. Our business should always be to mold the character of youths into the image of Jesus Christ. That is our Ministry.

The “Beyond the Obvious” attitude’s objective is to place emphasis on Salvation and Service. Paul’s goal in ministry was to present every person mature in Christ (see Colossians 1:28). The goal of Adventist youth ministry should be to present every young person mature in Christ. The goal is not to run programs or use methods, because they are merely tools we use to achieve the goal of leading young people to maturity. When the goal is maturity in Christ, the youth leader is set free to use any method that achieves that goal. Neither is the goal to hold young people within the fellowship of the church; that is a by-product of leading young people to maturity in Christ.

“Beyond the Obvious” challenges the way we think about youth ministry, because youth ministry is not only happening where there is a youth program. It is quite possible to have a Pathfinder or Senior Youth/ Young Adult program where hundreds of young people attend smoothly organized activities and yet no one is led to maturity in Christ. On the other hand, a church may lack an organized youth group, so that people say it has no youth ministry; yet, through personal relationships, young people are led to maturity in Christ. That is going “Beyond the Obvious.”

“Beyond the Obvious” challenges our youth to move out of comfortable faith into challenging faith. It might be more of a sin to suggest to young people that the Christian life is always fun and never boring. Christian faith may begin on the mountain top, but Christian character is formed in the crucible of pain. Mature Christian adults, then, are those people who no longer depend on “whistles and bells” or “Mom and Daddy” to motivate them to live out their faith.

Young men and women become proactive Christians—not reactive. When young people grow up to be reactive Christian adults, they are constantly waiting for someone, or something, to attract them—to involve them, to impress them. A reactive Christian youth puts the responsibility for his/her spiritual life on someone else.

Could it be that our church youth programs and publicity may, in fact, be moving teens away from, rather than toward, mature Christian adulthood? Today we are fighting for young people, including the small young ones of the church. Youth ministry has to be reinvented for the needs and wavelengths of a whole new youth world. Some basics have not changed, and they never will. In other areas, today’s youth leader needs fresh thinking, plowing a new path where the old “young people’s group” used to sit. Beyond the Obvious mentality recognizes that the youth society is “base camp” for the Adventist young people who are the frontline soldiers in the battle for their generation. It is a “field hospital” for the many wounded kids. And it must be the redeeming place where Satan’s prisoners

of war are attracted and set free. Ellen White rightly said it: “We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they might rightly represent the truth, giving reason for the hope that is within them, and knowing God in any branch of the work where they are qualified to labor.” (Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin*, Jan 24, 30, 1893).

The Bible clearly shows the need of prayers in the lives of youth leaders. In the story of Moses, Aaron and Hur, the Israelites prevailed against the Amalekites as long as Moses could hold up his arms. But he couldn’t keep them up all day, so Aaron and Hur walked with him and held his arms up (see Exodus 17:10-12). Every youth leader needs an “Aaron and Hur Club” around him—this is war.

We cannot afford to have a ministry that is program-driven or idea-driven or even goal-driven. It must be a prayer-driven ministry or we will only see results humans can produce. In *Beyond the Obvious*, fervent, focused prayer will show us what God can do for our young people. “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16 NIV).

A youth leader with the *Beyond the Obvious* burden will challenge the young people to be what they would like the church to become. Young people can catch a vision that says, “If it starts here, maybe it could spread throughout the church.”

Adventist young people need to realize their potential to be spiritual examples for their church and beyond. They could be God’s instruments to lead the church into something more loving, more evangelistic, more exciting, more real than many adult believers are experiencing.

Ellen White, in her “Appeal to the Young” says: “If they would elevate their thoughts and words above the frivolous attractions of this world and make it their aim to glorify God, His peace, which passeth all understanding, would be theirs.” (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p 371).

In another place she says, “Our young people need to be helped, uplifted, and encouraged, but in the right manner; not, perhaps, as they would desire it, but in a way that will help them to have sanctified minds. They need good, sanctifying religion more than anything else.” (Ellen G White, *Guidance*, p 557).

God has commissioned us as leaders to “pump up the volume” of Adventist youth ministry for the salvation of our youth! Let the message of salvation sound above the noise of the world through the Adventurer, Pathfinder and senior youth/young adult programs, resources, and leadership. Time is running out. We must move Beyond the Obvious to save our youth.

As youth leader you must develop your own personal philosophy for youth ministry. I realized that from the early days of my ministry. God had given me a gift of developing a philosophy for a vibrant youth ministry in the local conference or wherever God put me to serve. Keep asking God. “Lord, what do you want me to do?” Approach Him with emptiness in you. Avoid being like some leaders who run around the world or conferences delivering nothing because they have not developed a personal youth ministry. Be knowledgeable. Be an expert in the office on youth ministry matters. Dream big for the youth of this church.

My personal youth ministry philosophy was now born: The ultimate purpose of youth ministry is to assist the young people to become Christ followers by equipping them for worship, discipleship, service, outreach, and fellowship, and to help youth to develop their full potential physically, spiritually, and socially.

### **Primary Focus**

The salvation of youth through Jesus Christ and their acceptance and involvement in the mission of the church.

## Aspects of Youth Ministry

Various aspects of youth ministry will guide and inform the model of ministry we wish to implement. These aspects form a theology of youth ministry.

### 1. Intentional

Youth ministry must be planned, based on a vision for a desired future amongst young people. That desired future is to see young people come to know and love Jesus as Savior and Lord of their lives, and for that to make a difference to them and, through them, to the world.

### 2. Incarnational

Jesus, the God who became man, is the example for all ministry. Without giving up his divine qualities, he nevertheless became fully immersed within the culture of the people to whom he brought Good News. He was part of the culture, yet transcended it. The incarnation is a challenge to understand and live within the world of youth culture. It must make the Good News culturally relevant to young people, and take it into their world. Incarnational means enfleshing Christ to youth, not judging youth on externals, spending time with them, being for them at all costs—God so loved the world that he gave. Identify with youth, feel their hurts and their joys, know their minds.

### 3. Relational

Youth ministry is a strategy, not a program. The purpose is to influence the lives of young people towards Christ-like living. Youth programs must be designed to foster relationship between young people and their friends, the youth leaders, and other significant adults, who can have an input into their lives. Programs and structures are only important in so far as they promote relationship-building.

#### 4. Integrated

Youth ministry **MUST** be integrated into the rest of the church. Youth ministry **MUST NOT** function independently; it is part and parcel of the whole church. Most ministries in the local church have an effect on young people, and this effect should be considered and integrated into the vision and functioning of each ministry.

#### 5. Holistic

A youth training model must have a holistic youth approach, taking seriously the spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and psychological wellbeing of the youth. As the Bible advises, "...making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the Lord's will is" (Eph. 5:16-17). The youth ministry that touches youth in every area of life tends to be easily embraced by the youth themselves. The utmost example of how to model the holistic ministry is drawn from the ministry of Christ Jesus.

- i. Christ fed people when they needed food. (John 6)
- ii. He healed the sick who cried to Him for help; e.g., the blind man who could not be quiet (Matt. 9); those who believed in Him by faith; e.g., the son of a rich man healed from afar (Matt. 8); those who touched His clothes, e.g., the woman who bled (Matt. 9); those who were brought to Him by friends; e.g., the people who put the sick man down through a roof (Mark 2).
- iii. He showed justice and mercy, e.g., the woman found in the act of adultery (John 8).
- iv. He visited the bereaved, e.g., Lazarus' family (John 11).
- v. He ate with sinners, e.g., Zacchaeus (Luke 19).

- vi. He was trusted with private counseling, e.g., Nicodemus (John 3).
- vii. He forgave His enemies on the cross, saying, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”) (Luke 23:34).
- viii. He chased evildoers from the Temple (Matt. 21).

These are just a few examples of how Jesus ministered to people’s needs. People’s needs are numerous and varied. Young people have multi-needs to be met; however, an effective youth training model is patterned after Jesus, the Great Shepherd.

Youth ministry must meet all the needs of young people: physical, emotional, mental, relational and spiritual. The whole person must be ministered to. Jesus developed in four distinct areas: in the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual aspects of His being (Luke 2:52). Youth ministry cannot isolate the spiritual maturity of a young person from the rest of their being. Age specific ministries must be developed; e.g., Adventurer Club, Pathfinder Club, Ambassadors Club and Senior Youth.

## 6. Six Major Areas of Youth Growth

- a. Physical
- b. Cognitive
- c. Social
- d. Emotional
- e. Moral
- f. Faith/Spiritual

Youth ministry must encompass the social sphere within which each young person operates. It must impact and address issues within the family, school, community, sport and entertainment and other areas of life that affect the young people of the church’s community. The holistic view must always be maintained.

## 7. Pastoral

Although they don't always appreciate it, young people do need to be led. Youth ministry is not the place to let people "try out" a spiritual gift or "practice" their leadership ability, except, perhaps, under the supervision of an experienced youth leader. Most people who are Christians as adults made a profession of faith before the age of 16. Thus, youth ministry should be where the church's *best* ministers are used. Experienced adults must be involved in youth leadership, at all levels.

Many young people in the world today are emotionally damaged, due to incredible pressures at school and play, family breakdowns and peer pressures. Youth ministry must touch their lives in a compassionate way, giving Biblical counsel, and attempting to help resolve these issues. Youth ministers will very often impact families and be involved with family ministry and as well as encouraging individuals to seek professional Christian counseling when needed.

## 8. Spiritual Ministry

Youth ministry is not an entertainment center, nor is it a babysitting service. It is a spiritual ministry, involving modeling and teaching of spiritual disciplines by spiritually gifted and spiritually mature people. We are in the business of molding in the minds of young people the image of Jesus Christ that was lost in the garden of Eden. This is not to say that it will not be fun, but the ultimate purpose is spirituality, not entertainment.

## 9. Based on Scripture

Although youth ministry must be culturally relevant to young people in a modern world, it can never compromise the gospel, nor can it go against scriptural instruction. Youth ministry by its nature must remain fresh by always keeping an open mind and continually testing whether we have truly understood the Bible and applied it correctly.

In accordance with 1 Corinthians 12:1–31 and Ephesians 4:11–16, our aim should be to help young people find their gifts and use them in ministry. These gifts indicate some important areas of attention. We need “apostles” who are continually reminding us of the outward direction of our youth ministry. Their hearts are for the lost world that doesn’t attend the youth group. They focus our attention on the world beyond. They are prophets and visionaries (Acts 2:17) who are never satisfied with the status quo. They remind us that there is always room for improvement. Pastors and teachers point us back to Scripture. The guide for youth ministry must not be human wisdom, but Scripture.

#### 10. Assisting Young People

“Good discipleship involves developing a ministry that lasts” (Burns 1988:62). Youth Ministry must produce disciples of Christ who can think and act independently of the leaders, who can stand firm spiritually, and who are willing to take a stand against evil. Help young people to test their Christian faith, to experiment with it. Lead them on the path of discovery that will lead to their own personal acceptance of Christ and what it means to be a Christian.

#### 11. To Become Christ Followers

The task of every discipler is to help people become more like Jesus. When they are better Christ-followers, then we will be succeeding in our ministry—no matter where they start or end on the scale. Salvation is God’s work, not ours. Our task is to do ministry, not to “get people into heaven”, (Col 1:13). The purpose of youth ministry is to point youth toward God and help them become involved in the Great Commission of salvation and service.

#### 12. Equipping

The ultimate goal of youth ministry is not to do things for young people, but rather to equip them to effectively minister for Christ

(Ephesians 4:11–16). Young people must be encouraged to get involved and to minister as their gifts, personality and spirituality allow.

### 13. Leadership

Adventist Youth Ministry needs to be:

- To Youth—Ministry that centers on youth and their actual, felt, real needs, not on what adults think youth ought to need.
- For Youth—Ministry that belongs to the youth, not to the adults, and is for the beneficial development of youth.
- With Youth—Youth are helped to become actively involved in the whole planning processes that focus on their felt and real needs
- By Youth—Youth themselves do the work of the ministry. They are not just spectators.
  - I Do
  - We Do
  - They Do
  - I Watch

Adults are actively involved as facilitators, coaches, and helpers. Youth learn leadership principles and practice them immediately, instead of waiting “till they are 35.”

In order for this to take place, well-planned, appropriately structured, and timely-executed leadership training programs must be systematically carried out at all levels of church organization.

### 14. Balanced Program

All youth activities must reflect these four areas: worship, evangelism, fellowship and nurture (Acts 2:42).

Out of the facing of empty wall I developed this personal youth ministry philosophy which became my north star, my energy, my dynamite in working with youth. I knew what I was going to do,

I knew where I was taking the department. I spoke with energy, I spoke with passion because I had a philosophy. I was not a blind youth leader.

When you face an empty wall, it helps you to dream big. As a result of facing wall, especially when I went to the general conference office, I dreamt big for the youth of this church. I came up with big ideas and plans for the department, and I started giving them to local conferences. I applied this philosophy at all levels where I worked: General Conference, division and union. While at the Eastern Africa Division I saw this gift at work. I planned for the first-ever division-wide youth ministry summit, called Mombasa Youth Summit. We spent the whole week planning. Out of this summit we came with a vision for the Division and a Mission Statement for the department for the first time. To this day what we planned at that time is still being implemented.

My associates at the General Conference level used to tease me, “So, Dr. Muganda, what is the new idea today?” Every time God would give me a new exciting idea I would always share it with my team.

At the General Conference, backed with this philosophy, I continued to build a strong youth department for the world church. I introduced the document “Beyond the Obvious” to the world church during the World Youth Advisory Council and it was well received and implemented all over the world. Then came the Impact idea in the place of the traditional Youth Congresses. At Impact events, youth spent half of the time in humanitarian projects and then ended up with three to four days of celebrating what God had done through them in seminars and devotionals. The first Impact was held in Bangkok, Thailand, known as World Conference on Youth and Community. The General Conference Executive Committee voted that every five years an Impact event would be held. Since its inception, the

department has held them in Taiwan, South Africa, and recently in Germany.

This idea of Impact events was the outcome of the first Global Youth Leaders' Summit, which was held in Sao Paulo, Brazil. All division youth directors and union youth directors met for ten days again dreaming and praying for God's guidance. I saw the Lord leading this department from strength to strength. The first book on Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministry was compiled and published, called *Getting It Right*. Before this book was produced the church had not one single book as a resource for youth leaders but only resources in pamphlets scattered all over.

As a youth leader I was to be concerned with making things happen within the youth movement. So the youth leader must always remember that you are there to provide the climate and environment to make sure that youth ministry happens.