Recruiting and Equipping Postmodern Immigrant Youth Preachers in Emmaus, Christian Fellowship, and Community Tabernacle Seventh-day Adventist Churches

Anthony L. Usher, Andrews University

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First Advisor
Barry Gane

Second Advisor
Newton U. Cleghorne

Third Advisor
Stephen Yeagley

Abstract
After spending over six years at Emmaus SDA church, on January 1, 2004, the author was assigned to Christian Fellowship SDA Church and Community Tabernacle Mission. He observed that the fierce shifting winds of postmodernism have fueled the retardation of youth evangelism. If the trajectory of this dreaded trend goes unchecked, youth preaching in these churches will spiral downward into the obscure corridors of oblivion. A relevant profile, as well as a specific demographic composition of all three congregations, enhanced the development of an empowering argument that potentially could reverse the momentum of this encroaching tide back to God's side. One hundred and fifteen young adults from the targeted churches completed a similar researcher generated, qualitative, and quantitative survey before and after exposure to a week-end PowerPoint training seminar. Within the pages of this research are to be found tangible evidences, gleaned from a humanized version of a scientific experiment, which affirms that the flickering flames of successful Voice of Youth evangelistic campaigns can be rekindled. Generally, recruiting and mentoring immigrant young preachers from the targeted churches posed little or no difficulty. As anticipated, about two dozen young adults exposed to the empowerment experiment joined the ranks of gospel preachers and are
active youth preachers in their respective churches; two of which are enrolled in Andrews University Theological Seminary, and two others are laying concrete plans to pursue ministerial careers at Oakwood College. The mentorship of youth preachers was not as viable within African American circles as it was among West Indian immigrants. In a gallant effort to facilitate the preaching of the message of the three angels, the concepts of this dissertation intended to dispatch youth preachers to the pulpits of neighboring non-SDA Christian denominations for one-week revivals during Easter. Notwithstanding, this important aspect of the dissertation was only partially implemented and tested. An overwhelming exclusive mentality exercised in both pew and pulpit, led to an oppositional stance against such an unprecedented undertaking.

Conclusion

Among the factors projected to be important to revive youth preaching in the targeted churches are:

1. Youth ministers should interact closely with the youth, embracing postmodern youth culture as a steppingstone for youth evangelism.
2. Youth ministers should be willing to set aside quality time to train youth in the practical techniques of preparing sermons which should motivate them to become gospel preachers themselves.
3. Youth ministers and adult members should be foremost in setting the example of spirituality, by both deeds and words.
4. Adult church leaders should make a conscientious effort to give ownership of the church to the youth, allowing them to fight their postmodern “Goliaths” in their own armor.
5. Church leaders should eliminate from the doctrinal menu irrelevant traditions and the trivial innuendos of exclusive mentality that constantly collides head on with the varying pretenses of postmodern youth culture.
6. Youth leaders can utilize adverse social conditions against minorities as stepping stones to enhance total dependence on God, and as the fuel for youth evangelism.
7. The method of Christ appeals to Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism; lifting up Christ in words, deeds, and sermons is the most effective method for youth preachers to enhance the preaching of the Loud Cry Message.

Subject Area

Christian Fellowship Seventh-day Adventist Church (Brooklyn, N.Y.); Emmaus Seventh-day Adventist Church (Brooklyn, N.Y.) ; Community Tabernacle Seventh-day Adventist Church (Brooklyn, N.Y.) ; Church work with youth; Preaching to youth

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