

CONNECTING THE COG 7 COMMUNITY OF FAITH

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.



OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2025

COG 7 LINK

Facilitator

Henry Harley

Secretary

Orlene Reid

Assistant Secretary

Nadia Broderick

Communication

Director

Lloydel Lewis

Treasurer

Milton Mc Neil

Magazine

Committee

Denielle Taylor

Dominique Moore

N Collymore

Contact Us @

COG7collaborationmagazine@gmail.com

www.TNAACCA.com

Send us your prayers,
financial support and
comments

Table Of Contents

Equipping The Church	Pg 2
Tanaacca Report And Update	Pg 5
Youth Day Initiative (Cyrmi)	Pg 7
Visual Imagery And This Church	Pg 17
What Are The Seven Seals In Revelation	Pg 19
Religious Awakening-View And Your Responses	
When The Church Forgets To Go	Pg 26
Materialism And Creationism	Pg 27
Will The Young Men Please Stand Up?	Pg 29
Equipping Youths For The Future:	
Challenges In Christendom	Pg 31
Equipping The Next Generation	Pg 33
Family Focus	
Our Horizontal Relationship With Others Won't Be Healthy If	
Our Vertical Relationship With God Isn't Growing.	Pg 35
Cog7 Early Beginning In The Caribbean	Pg 37





**A publication of
THE NORTH AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN
COLLABORATION AS-
SOCIATION.**

**This magazine is the
third in our quarterly
publication.
October 2025
volume No. 4**

**Communication
Director**
Lloydel Lewis

Art Director
Kevin Johnston

Ad manager
Orlene Reid

Magazine Comm.
Denielle Taylor.
Dominique Moore
N Collymore
Milton Mc Neil-Treasurer

The North America
Collaboration Associa-
tion Newsletter

The official magazine
of The COG 7 Collab-
oration Association is
published 4 times
per year.

EQUIPPING THE CHURCH

Church for the 21st Century

At the start of this 21st century, I believe the church faces three huge challenges, such that we need to ask ourselves some uncomfortable questions: Are we part of a culture that has gone into overdrive?

Three inter-related aspects can be identified: Scientific and technological developments, whereby our capabilities are increasing at phenomenal rates, raising some profound ethical issues. Perhaps the most far-reaching is the Internet, which offers great benefits and opportunities as well as presenting enormous challenges and significant dangers.

Cultural and philosophical shifts are often labelled “postmodernism”, the main features of which are by now familiar and readily observable: the rejection of institutions and external authority (including the notion of absolute truth); and a corresponding focus on the individual and the prizing of personal freedom and choice.

The rise of consumerism, so that people expect to be able to choose just the right product from a wide range of options. Comfort and convenience are primary values; wants become needs. How can we live faithfully in such a context? How do we assess the changes that are taking place? How much of our technology-driven, postmodern, consumerist culture can we embrace and affirm? This is not just a matter of survival - Christian discipline demands that we engage positively with our culture.

Developing Trends

Of course, there will be those who leave because they have lost their faith or have made lifestyle choices that are incompatible with Christian discipleship, and for whom we should continue to be concerned. But the more fundamental issue concerns the way we respond to those increasing numbers of committed Christians who have come to view the church as yet another drain on their resources, rather than a community that is dynamic and energizing.

How do we respond to those who still love Jesus but have come to see the church as irrelevant and unhelpful? How do we help them on their spiritual journey? We have to recognize that large segments of the population remain untouched by the gospel and continue to see the church as belonging to an alien way of life.

There are also a growing number of young adults who have probably grown up with little Christian teaching and see no relevance for the church and formal religion within the context of this sub-culture. Apart from anything else, Days when all should be in church are likely to be spent sleeping off the effects of night out entertainment!

Questions & Suggestions

How do we reach out to our culture? How can we demonstrate effectively that the gospel is the key to making sense of the world and ourselves within it? Of course, these questions are not new, but they do need to be asked anew,

and especially at such a time as this. I am convinced that we need to keep doing what we are doing and do it even better - there is an important role for the Church as a source of stability and permanence in the midst of what can seem chaotic change, and in what is very much a youth-focused culture.

The Church is also intended to be “a credible sign, an instrument and foretaste of God’s reign over all nations and all things”, which means (among other things) generating an awareness of transcendence. The Church should be different from other human institutions and organizations because it points to the God who is ultimately not like us. Furthermore, the church has a prophetic role, which will often mean critiquing the culture, subjecting new developments to Biblical scrutiny.

But we also need to think logically about the nature of the church and the various ways of authentically expressing its essence. Theological issues seem to be an urgent need to grasp hold of the Biblical concept of God as Creator and the world as his creation. This means, first and foremost, a greater awareness of the glory and holiness of “the high and lofty One who lives in a high and holy place”.

To speak of God as creator and us, therefore, as creatures is to declare that He is not like us, and to open ourselves to mystery, uncertainty, unpredictability. It is to acknowledge that worship is His right and our duty. However, a proper understanding of God as creator must also recognize that He is the one who gives and sustains life, the one who fills everything in every way.

Fierce Reality

The Christian emphasis on the local congregation has contributed much to the life of the church, and in many ways, is a model of church which is well placed to meet the needs and aspirations of our culture. However, we also need to stretch our thinking in both directions. We need to think more about the universal church. As Christians, we have tended to pay lip-service to this conviction, while continuing to believe that the local church is what really counts. And yet the fundamental truth about the church is that it consists of “all the saints” (Eph 3:18), the whole vast rainbow people of God, scattered throughout time and space, and yet united by a common faith in Christ.

This is what church is. But we also need to think more. We look to Jesus’ words in Matt 18:20 as the

foundation for our life together in the local congregation and rightly so, yet we still don’t really believe 2 or 3 is quite enough unless it’s the church prayer meeting and hardly anyone has turned up. We need to take these words far more seriously as a basic definition of the gathered church, not just in terms of numbers, but also in stripping away the “churchy” elements which we somehow feel must be in place for it to be church.

This basic definition allows for a dynamic view of church, so that any gathering in the name of Jesus may be seen as an expression of church without necessarily being regarded also as a church. This is where the church is found, wherever people meet in the name of Jesus whether or not they do so regularly, or within institutional structures.

The emphasis must be shifted away from the usual programming within the halls of the local congregation to “the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12) in every area of their lives. We might be less concerned about the static markers of congregational life (such as numbers attending on any given Sabbath). This kind of flexibility seems crucial to meeting the challenge of our ever-changing context.

Thirdly, in considering the mission of the church, we need to recognize that salvation is God’s work and not ours; so, the primary question is not “what should I be doing?”, but rather, what is God’s purpose and the role Christ is has assigned us, in partnering for His Kingdom building. Ultimately, this is the restoration and healing of the whole of creation, the bringing together of everything into its proper place, under the Lordship of Christ.

Personal salvation is therefore an aspect of that overarching purpose. Spirituality is an over-used word, which often amounts to little more than “a vague feeling that we often can’t quite explain”. However, as Christians we relate to our creator, and in a Christian context, it must include some understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.

A clear concept of God means a broader view of worship, taking us beyond the gathering of God’s people together on a Sabbath, to a recognition that our entire life should be offered

up in worship, that enables us to develop forms of corporate worship that are creative, and engaging of all that makes us human.

We must take responsibility to redeem every aspect of the Christian culture and thereby find ways of connecting with many of the people within and outside of the church who currently feel alienated. In particular, we must develop new mission strategy which should facilitate a sense of awe, amazement and desire for God. Providing a proper understanding of God as creator; also help others to discover him beyond the confines of that which we normally consider religious.

People are familiar with the idea of finding God in and through the natural world, although we suspect that the extent to which this is experienced by people varies with differences in temperament and personality. It seems both logical and appropriate to think of human culture in the same way that we think of individual human beings: deeply flawed yet still made in the image of God.

The Christian experience must therefore be as much about discerning the presence of God in every area of life, as it is concerned with meeting Him in more obviously “spiritual” experiences of prayer and worship. It must be about seeing the image of God in culture as well as in people. We must begin to see evidence of His handiwork in unexpected areas, beyond the Christian sub-culture. From these changes we will learn how to discern spirituality in the unchurched.

EDITORIAL





Update

TNAACCA REPORT

UPDATES OF LEADERSHIP COLLABORATION MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2025.

Leaders of the COG7 collaborative effort met on September 21, 2025, for their usual bimonthly meeting, which was held via Zoom. The meeting was opened with a prayer led by the facilitator, Pastor Henry Harley, who thanked God for His continued guidance and unity among the churches. This was followed by the Scripture reading from Philippians 2:14-17, read by Sister Orlene Reid, reminding attendees to serve without murmuring or disputing and to shine as lights in the world.

Pastor Harley then welcomed all participants, acknowledging those joining from various regions, including new attendees. He also took time to share an update on Pastor Karell Wilson, who had recently been hospitalized.

Sister Nadia, the TNAACCA secretary, then presented the highlights from the previous meeting held in July 2025, summarizing key points and updates from that session. The meeting then proceeded with the introduction of new participants.

New participants included Brother Florian Divorsky, a deacon and youth leader from the Jacksonville, Florida COG7; Sister Dominique Moore, a member of the TNAACCA magazine committee currently residing in the United

States; and Dr. Nahyahmkah Collymore, a special education consultant from Trinidad and Tobago who also serves on the magazine committee. Each introduced themselves, shared their background, and expressed enthusiasm for contributing to the collaborative effort.

Pastor Harley followed up and noted the importance of these additions, emphasizing that their involvement represented growing youth participation within the collaboration. He then transitioned into the main agenda item. At this juncture, Pastor Harley took the time to detail the core significance and the earlier efforts of leaders in emphasizing and advancing the need for a territorial Youth Engagement Initiative.

Pastor Lloydell Lewis was then asked to present a brief synopsis of the essential strategic mission objectives outlined in the draft framework document. He outlined the four key mission objectives:

1. To develop a concept for the North America and Caribbean Territorial Mission as a way of life involving not only leaders but all believers within the Church of God (Seventh Day) congregations — with a special focus on youth inclusion and participation.

2. To develop, administer, and strengthen an outreach across the territory of the U.S.A, Canada, and the Caribbean regions, through mentorship and community engagement—targeting unreached and underreached youth and entrenching youth leadership, visibility, and involvement in mission-based initiatives beyond the walls of the church.
3. Thirdly, to establish a regional youth-led management foundation, where a team of youth representatives would be responsible for oversight, leadership, and coordination of future collaborative projects.
4. Fourth, to strengthen unity among the various Church of God (Seventh Day) groups: including Denver-aligned, Sabbath-keeping, Beulah, Mount Zion, as well as other independent congregations, fostering inclusive participation and ongoing collaboration.

Following this, Pastor Harley stressed the need to build a strong foundation by involving youth directly and ensuring they clearly understand the mission. He recommended a renewed effort to enlist youth participation and provide them opportunities to shape the initiative’s next steps.

Pastor Dalrymple and Sister Orlene both supported this approach, noting that youth must be part of the planning and decision-making process. Sister Orlene added that what the more experienced leaders perceive as youth needs may differ from what youth actually require, and collaboration would bridge that gap.

Further, Pastor Harley placed particular emphasis on the use of the TNAACCA Magazine as a key means of outreach and communication — encouraging that it be used to share updates, promote networking among youth, and strengthen unity and fellowship across congregations.

Pastors McNeil and Donaldson, representing the West Palm Beach COG7 in Florida, reported ongoing efforts to connect with local youth leaders, noting positive responses and growing interest in the collaborative initiative.

Additional new participants were then introduced, including Evangelist Andre Morgan from the COG& Jamaica Council in Jamaica, who spearheads

youth-related and educational ministries, and Sister Olivia Brown from Mount Zion Church of God in Brooklyn, New York. Sister Brown highlighted the challenges of retaining youth in the digital age and identified her region’s pastors’ network, led by Pastor Gil Monrose, as a valuable connection point for collaboration and community engagement.

In the final portion of the meeting, Pastor Harley reiterated the importance of ensuring strong youth representation at the next session. He emphasized that the collaboration seeks to hear directly from youth regarding initiatives that could strengthen unity and fellowship among young believers and promote activities that advance the work of the Church of God (Seventh Day). Pastor and Sister Saban of the COG7 ST Maarten spoke candidly about challenges in maintaining consistent youth participation, while Pastor Donaldson offered encouragement, reminding attendees that small beginnings can lead to great results when guided by faith.

The meeting concluded with a closing prayer by Pastor Donaldson, who prayed for the success of the initiative, the recovery of those who were ill, and God’s blessing upon all leaders and regions represented.

Pastor Harley expressed gratitude to all participants for their continued commitment and collaboration, emphasizing that time spent advancing God’s work is never wasted. The next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2025, with a special focus on hearing directly from youth representatives and reviewing proposals for joint youth-led initiatives.

TNAACCA SECRETARIAT





YOUTH INITIATIVE (CYRMI)

COG 7 YOUTH RESTORATION MISSION INITIATIVE

1. CONTENTS
2. INTRODUCTION TO MISSION INITIATIVE
3. MISSION STATEMENT
4. VISION STATEMENT
5. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
 - STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES
 - MISSION OBJECTIVE
 - VISIBILITY OBJECTIVES
 - YOUTH RETENTION AND RECLAMATION OBJECTIVES
 - GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION TO COG7 YOUTH RESTORATION MISSION INITIATIVE

We would not be more excited to introduce to you the COG 7 YOUTH RESTORATION MISSION INITIATIVE. There are several reasons why we should be excited for this youth initiative. It initiates the commencement of a spirit of camaraderie in youth ministry across the territory of North America and The Caribbean.

We're excited, as we envision COG 7 youth restoration mission initiative (CYRMI) providing an

inclusive, cohesive foundation to making dynamic collaboration long-lasting among the various groups in this territory.

This draft plan is the product of the spirit of God, leading us all into a new moment for COG7 youth ministry. As Gilbert Crammer and his companions were inspired by God as pioneers, during the mid eighteenth century; we are convinced, God is calling us to embrace this new inspiration to make young adults more like Jesus.

Many of our leaders would no doubt recount COG 7 youth ministry, as the vehicle through which you accepted Jesus and were baptized.

Now in a post-pandemic highly interconnected world in which young people often spend much time in front of a screen, as they do without one, we believe God is inviting us into His next chapter for our territory. We have all endured so much in recent memory and have all likely found ourselves tested beyond what we thought we could bear. Reading this now, you might find yourself skeptical of one more new initiative.

For this plan to succeed, two crucial elements of our spirituality must be elevated. Firstly, each step in this process must be immersed in prayer, and

our trust in Him to supply our needs must be unwavering. Let's take Christ into the darkest corners of our communities where young people's cries for help often go without an answer. Let's fight. Let's fight this battle for the salvation of future generations, knowing that Christ's final victory is already won.

From the initial moments of reflection and discussions of COG7 leaders participating in the ongoing collaboration discussions; groups in North America and Caribbean regions have agreed on the seed for what has now become the draft strategic plan of THE COG7 YOUTH RESTORATION MISSION INITIATIVE (CYRMI). The CYRMI Plan also drew upon the General Call for youth engagement in mission, and researched findings on the state of youth ministry in COG 7.

With each step and conversation, the Spirit's confirmation of this new direction will be evident in the affirmation by each group.

The CYRMI Strategic Plan for Youth Ministry is a novel, exciting approach to raising up a network of young people's leadership and involvement in the way of Jesus. CYRMI is not itself a new program, as it embraces both traditional and new program initiatives, involving and providing solutions to needs in our communities. It is a call to consider the basics of life with God; to go back to the biblical foundations of ministry.

The CYRMI initiative intends to promote a refocus on our efforts, from merely doing what we have always done, because that is what we have always done to cultivating a new framework for ministry.

OUR MISSION

To create a territorial youth mission network, geared to improving the image of the church; whilst building relationships that will empower and inspire youths to develop and grow in God's Kingdom here on earth.

OUR VISION

We envision a revitalized Church of God (Seventh Day) that is global in its reach, strategic in its purpose and mission, and united in its commitment to ministering to the deep needs of people, especially to its youth, in ways that meet the complex

demands of our 21st century world, and thereby fulfilling Christ's mandate to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20)

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Adolescence is the pivotal period between childhood and adulthood. It is that time when young people need to acquire attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills that will propel them forward to successful adulthood. It is also the time, now more than any other such time, when youths need to avoid choices and behaviors that will limit their future potential. Indeed, an enduring image of the Christian faith is the participation and contribution in their neighbors and community wellbeing. Watching out, and taking some responsibility for their care, and helping to steer them in positive directions.

In recent decades, social forces have challenged the foundations and landscape of families and community life, and the expectations for young people. A combination of factors has weakened the informal community support, once available to young people. High rates of family mobility; greater anonymity in neighborhoods, where more parents are at work and out of the home and neighborhood for long periods.

The COG 7 Youth Restoration Mission Initiative is the COG 7 primary contribution to the upliftment of AT-RISK youths in our communities; and the implementation of workable strategies to restore at-risk youths to a relationship with Jesus Christ. This report presents the findings of the evaluation of CYRMI as a solution base initiative.

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the CYRMI and its components in terms of their relevance and performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy).

2. Objective of CYRMI Youth Mission Initiative.

- Aim to encourage the use of extraordinary measures as alternative, to the formal processes presently been used where appropriate, and the application of specialty community-based programs and services to produce restoration; and help at-risk youth to integrate successfully into their communities.

- Equip young members with the skills at restoring at-risk youths, utilizing measures that are proportionate to the seriousness of their need and the degree of each responsibility.
- Elevate the visibility, involvement and responsiveness of youths in our congregations.
- Elevate our community's confidence in the possibility of change through spiritual involvement.
- To strengthen our conviction, our unity in diversity and purpose.
- promoting the rehabilitation and reintegration of young people; and,
- supporting prevention programs by referring needy young people in our communities to agencies of government and civil societies; to address the circumstances underlying their offending behaviors.
- The ultimate objective of the Youth Master Plan is to rally COG 7 leaders, and their youth leaders, policy makers in all our conferences and independent groups; around a common set of values and priorities to move the needle forward and make CYMRI the best Christian community Youth initiative; whilst it strives and grow. The voices of our youths are central to the Youth Master Plan. These efforts will be fundamental to the provision of lasting opportunities for young people to be heard by local decisionmakers and provide forward-thinking involvements in policy directions.

Strategic Benefits Envisioned

- COG7 historical values and experiences of the mid-century, building the foundation for the Youth Master Plan.
- CYRMI and its vision for the young people of COG 7, reflected in our priorities and directions for change. Recognizing the meaningfulness of forces such as race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and all their intersections, and confront forces and institutions that marginalize youth on these grounds.
- 2) CYRMI igniting improved relationships and networking will ultimately provide increase opportunities for stability for our young people; including meeting basic needs and ensuring social and emotional support through mentorship.
- 3) Though youths are resilient by nature, we must in obedience to Jesus' command provide them with the mentorship resources we have in abundance. Provide the direct support necessary to fully actualize their resilience and pro-

mote healing.

Priorities Influencing the Way Forward
Bringing our values to life, and articulating directions for change over the next five years, will be some priorities significantly influencing the structure of CYRMI Youth Master Plan. Each priority has youth-centered findings that came out of our fact-finding meetings, which will guide our subsequent recommendations.

- Youth Community agencies:
- Independent conference groups will initiate their own active agents, in shaping the future and the needs of their immediate community. By adopting youth-adult partnerships that recognize and value youth ownership and leadership within their communities.
- Culturally responsive approaches:
- Acknowledging that race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, and all their intersections are foundational to one's identity. The efforts will honor their meaningfulness to the individual and community, and the importance of cultural resilience.
- Social connection:
- Young people must be provided with a supportive church community, supportive relationships, and adequate involvement in decision-making in building and contributing to their communities.
- Responsive systems:
- We must advocate for systems and institutions that promote youth development through collaboration and aligning strategies and break down and reform systems that hinder youth development.
- Stability:
- Children and youth must live in safe, stable environments in which their needs, both for survival and for social, political, and economic advancement, are met to grow and thrive in directions that are personally fulfilling and enrich their communities.
- Recommendations
- The recommendations listed below will inch the CYMRI closer to the
- vision of our theory of change to mobilize young people, while supporting adults to share power, to shape cultures and systems. We do this so that young people can empower their education, have their safety prioritized, be connected to the natural and social world, and

engage in their communities.

- Recommendation 1:
• Ensure that efforts and programs for young people collaboration, and relationship development are sustainable and adequately resourced. Build out inter-conference partnerships to increase the capacity to pool resources equitably for the benefit of CYMRI initiative.

- Develop and initiate a youth outreach initiatives agency management team; tasked with autonomy to oversee a systematic, strategic, data driven organization, focused on providing training, targeting other street outreach teams and building capacity within the community and organizations to adopt the CYMRI's piloted outreach model.

- Recommendation 2:
• Support, plan and develop the projected NGO(Not-For-Profit) registration either in the USA or Canada. Managed by the leadership of young people who reflect the conviction for change.

- 2.1: Launch an inclusive Youth territorial jurisdiction with management board, committees, and commissions to include each youth delegate territory.

- Recommendation 3:
• 3.1: CYMRI engages in an annual organizational planning process to build policy roles as needed and incorporate with existing agendas or positions within each jurisdictional partners, including position priorities, responsibilities, and possible funding sources.

but all believers in our congregations including the youths.

2 To strengthen and expand CYMRI mission outreach in large cities of the US, Canada, the Caribbean, among unreached and under reached people groups.

3 To develop a regional foundation, which will support and provide the resources needed for the mission.

4 To strengthen CYMRI as a territorial mission center, with the available technological tools, in the growth and extension of youth development initiatives.

5 VISIBILITY OBJECTIVES

6 To elevate the visibility, involvement and responsiveness of youths in planning, leading and directing solution-based initiatives, geared towards restoration of youths left behind.

7 To elevate the visibility of spiritually enabled change. People are searching for ways to change their Lives and often psychology or self-help programs are their first choice. A visible active youth community can offer the spiritual change that people long for deep inside.

8 To strengthen openness and honesty within the church's environment. Non-churchgoers sense that our assemblies have missed the real purpose of the church.

9 To strengthen our conviction, our unity in diversity and purpose. In an increasingly diverse world, people need loving caring relationships and support that mirror the diversity of God's creation. Such diversity

Must not be symbolic.

YOUTHS RETENTION AND RECLAMATION OBJECTIVES

10 To improve and increase youth member involvement in fellowship and service, both in our churches and communities.

11 To strengthen and develop initiatives for young people to embrace and practice. Focus on stewardship of time-management and their spiritual gifts in discipleship and restoration of other youths left behind.

12 To educate and integrate young people in the theories and practices of global mission.

THE POLICY DOCUMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

CYMRI mission strategic plan provides a framework of 20 objectives, divided into the categories of (1) Mission; (2) Visibility;(3) Youth retention and reclamation. (4) Growth, and Leadership. Please be guided by the Holy Spirit, as we work together to fulfill these objectives. Prayerfully consider your role as an appointed emissary of the calling and gospel of Jesus Christ.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

1 To develop a concept for North American and The Caribbean territorial mission and as a way of life, involving not only leaders

Preparing them to respond as future leaders to the opportunities that migration offers.

13 To improve retention rates, create greater accessibility to opportunity to serve; improve participation and reclaim identity among youths.

14 To teach the historical-Christ-like methods and approaches to discipleship; always emphasizing confidence in the Bible as God's divine revelation.

15 To encourage ethical and responsible use of media platforms.

GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP OBJECTIVES

16 To align the regional Cog 7 mission with this 21-century strategic objective focus.

17 To increase participation of Cog 7 youths, service personnel, volunteers, regional mission pioneers in serving in different urban areas, and among unreached people groups.

18 To integrate a regional media plan that will maximize the potential of technology.

19 To consult with the regional Cog 7 leadership and division associates, towards developing and implementing a well-defined strategy for extending the gospel of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, reaching the ends and bounds of the earth.

20 To strengthen and support the continued educational development of leaders, teachers, and support workers to meet 21st century demands.

21 To target the development of a regionally accredited tertiary institution, capable of increasing the proportion of training needed in theology and other curriculums.

CYRMI FRAMEWORK- DOCUMENT STRATEGIC OULINE.

THE FRAMEWORK'S - MAJOR PILLARS

This new framework is based on the foundation of the CYRMI Overall Purpose and the Plan's six major pillars of mission, youths' participation, accession, retention, and reclamation and leadership development anchored in the restoration of at-risk youths.

Jesus was clear in his Word that no barrier should exist that would prevent youths from knowing Him.

It is therefore our mission as COG 7 officers and youth leaders to redirect our youths, back to their

Creator, enabling a greater understanding of their calling and to further sensitize them, to the charge and responsibility Christ expects of us prior to His return. CYMRI's strategy is designed to spare no effort at restoration.

This sacred call to reach youths of all ages – and particularly young adults – is the primary motivation for this strategic plan.

- ENGAGE NEW YOUNG PEOPLE AND PRESENT THEM WITH ALTERNATIVES TO THE HOPELESS WORLY OPTIONS.
- MENTORING YOUTHS LEFT BEHIND IN OUR COMMUNITIES-CREATING RESTORATION INITIATIVES.
- LEAD YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS- ENGAGE THEIR EYES, EARS AND MIND.
- EQUIP CURRENT YOUTH LEADERS & PREPARE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR LEADERSHIP.

To achieve the goals set out under each of the three pillars, we believe that several key strategies must be employed in the CYRMI Plan.

STRATEGIC TENETS WILL BE:

INTENTIONAL

CYRMI will be intentional. What may have worked in years past will not suffice in this present age. Rather than simply doing what we have always done because it is what we have always done, our action steps should be based on the witness of scripture, leading of the Holy Spirit, and their effectiveness at accomplishing the mission.

CONTEXTUAL

What works in one location may not work in another. Our action steps should be tailored to each individual mission field's context. CYRMI's aim is not to implement an action step that does not fit each territory's context.

The needs of our communities and CYRMI congregations should shape the programs, services, and habits of our youth initiative ministry.

TRAINED

TNAACCA's leadership is committed to continuously developing leadership training resources and methods to ensure that every youth leader is ready to effectively evangelize, restore, disciple, and develop future leaders.

QUALITATIVE

Keeping statistics is an important part of youth ministry. However, they cannot give the full picture of the quality of ministry happening in a division or a program. To fully appreciate the youth ministry occurring in a district or headquarters, qualitative forms of measuring success are also required.

The field is where youth ministry primarily happens. Being field-focused will allow us to take actions as a territory that are aimed at supporting success in the field.

COLLABORATIVE CYRMI STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

Using this CYRMI document, as well as the CYRMI Statistical Guide, you will be asked to create a CYRMI Strategic Plan Report in the Youth Reporter magazine each year for your CYRMI or unit. The CYRMI Strategic Plan Report is the central organizing action step of THE CYRMI INITIATIVE.

It will be a comprehensive document for reporting on the youth activities of a group that the CYRMI initiatives or unit serves.

Alongside each age group will be the four major goals of the CYRMI Plan. Each unit will report via an interactive form (in the CMS Youth Reporter) what action steps they are taking to accomplish the major goals with each age group.

Your CYRMI group may not always have a ministry for every age group, as not every age group is represented at your conference. That is okay. The CYRMI Strategic Plan encourages planning for the community you currently have with the goal of expanding the ages found at your community level over time.

Our goal is that every group will one day minister to all ages so that a continuum of ministry exists that allows for children and youth to be disciplined as they grow. CYRMI target initiatives will, of course, change over time.

CYRMI Reports will be modified as such changes occur. These should not be static documents. Instead, they should be active tools for continually and prayerfully discerning the leading of the Spirit within the church. Support will be offered at the divisional and territorial levels for utilizing the CYRMI Report, including online training and territorial

workshops.

The impact- defining your target audience(community)

Defining a target audience provides a crystal-clear understanding of who your mission initiative is seeking to serve. This, in turn, empowers your organization to strategically tailor your initiative, framework development, and mission delivery service efforts. Doing so, ultimately, leads to stronger acquisition, retention, and solutions.

The impact of defining your target audience profile manifests in several key benefits, including:

- Improved mission delivery messaging: Craft a compelling value proposition that resonates with your core target audience. By understanding their needs and preferences, you can tailor your service to directly address their target audience's pain points, fostering a stronger connection and engagement.
- A more focused restoration service roadmap:
 - Utilize target audience (communities) profiles to inform and prioritize your service delivery development roadmap.
 - By homing in on your core target community specific pain points and requirements, you can ensure that your initiative enhancements are aligned with their expectations, resulting in a more focused and impactful restoration experience.

Understanding the impact of defining your target audience, let's now explore the practical methods to achieve this through your identifying your need for audience segmentation.

1. Needs audience (community) segmentation
Through quantitative data analysis, your youth needs segmentation, divides your youth initiative mission base, into distinct groups or segments based on shared characteristics such as demographics, behavior, or cultural habits. The segmentation is like dividing your service delivery into general categories, such as children, teenagers, adults, and seniors. Doing so helps you understand each group's different needs and preferences, allowing you to plan activities, and arrange the service layout accordingly.

5-step framework to create target audience(community) segments.

1. Define segmentation criteria

Choosing the right profiling segmentation criteria is a bit of art and science based on the stage of your initiative. The goal should be finding a way to segment the base that creates differentiation between each audience profile.

The first step is to determine the criteria to segment your youth audience(community). It could include demographics, psychographic traits, or behavioral characteristics.

The goal is to define criteria to segment your user base.

1. First Principles: Use a set of criteria to segment your base.
2. Correlation analysis: See what characteristics have a strong connection.
3. 2. Conduct segmentation analysis
4. This next step is conducting your analysis by segmenting your audience/ community base into distinct groups based on how you defined your segmentation criteria.
5. Doing so ensures you get the data you need by each segment and analyze themes for clear themes.
6. Clearly defined audience segments
7. The size of each segment within your audience base
8. Specific behavior data points for each community segment
9. Build your target audience(community) profiles.
10. Now that you have finished your data exercise, the next step is to build out these audience(community) profiles into an artifact.
11. The goal is to build an artifact so that anyone at your organization can easily understand who your target audience is (community)

STEP 1 - PRAYER

The Holy Spirit is the most important participant in the creation and implementation of our CYRMI Reports. Surrendering our best laid plans for His is the only way to make plans for missional success. We must be obedient to Him.

STEP 2 - DISCUSS WITH TNAACCA AND GROUP LEADERS

We believe collaboration makes for better outcomes. When a community is on the same page, great things can happen. Follow the CYRMI Strategic Plan Conversation Guide to discern together the best direction for your youth ministry.

MEET WITH DIVISIONAL LEADERSHIP

Once your CYRMI Report is approved, your division will schedule a virtual or in-person meeting with you and the other groups that will make up your CYRMI cohort. This meeting will be a time for you to share what your church has put in its CYRMI Report and to receive feedback from your divisional youth department staff and peers.

These meetings will also be a time for praying over the CYI Reports and the youth ministry happening at each conference. We also hope that these conversations will foster collaboration amongst area groups who find opportunities to partner together in ministry.

Each group is required to meet once a year. If a group wants to meet again later or even more regularly, that is welcome but not mandatory.

CHRIST-CENTERED

It might seem redundant to say that all evangelism should be centered upon Jesus and telling young people about Him. However, we can sometimes engage large numbers of new people without ever sharing the Good News. Everything we do in CYRMI youth ministry will be with a focus upon Jesus.

We must continually devote ourselves to sharing with all the youth we encounter the message of God's selfless, holy love for all people realized in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

CONNECTED

One of the unique and amazing aspects of CYRMI ministry is the wide array of ministries that will be incorporated under The COG 7 umbrella. From dynamic interconnectivities with leaders of social and governmental service centers, to vibrant community energetic divisional events.

There are so many activities to inspire our youths across The COG 7 network of ministry, to introduce men and women, boys and girls to our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

We think this unique approach to mission provides us with the opportunity to witness people who are not often reached by the Church. We believe it is an important part of COG 7 youth ministry to capitalize on this network of ministry and create connections between locations where such connections do not currently exist.

HOSPITABLE

Hospitality involves how we treat others and the environments we welcome them to. Practicing good hospitality must be a crucial aspect of restoration in the CYRMI ministry. One key piece within youth ministry hospitality is striving to make our ministry environments safe for youths and the vulnerable by diligently following our Safe from Harm guidelines and standards.

REPORTS

While our youth leaders don't seek the limelight and do what they do because of a passion for introducing young people to Jesus, we still believe it is extremely important to report this admirable service.

Accurate, timely, and consistent reporting enables further conversation around the vitality of our youth ministry and planning for the future.

OBEDIENT APROPRIATE RELATIONAL -

"My team and I have been noticing something as we approach the end of the Covid-19 pandemic and move into the next era. The churches that invested in their people and communities prior to the pandemic have had much less difficulty getting back on their feet than those who were most interested in numbers and filling their programs.

I think the lessons that we have taken are that there are two different types of ministries: transactional ministry and transformational ministry.

To disciple and restore effectively, we must move past transactional ministry - ministry in which you provide a program once a week and then don't invest in the program attendees personally - toward transformational ministry - where the people come first, and the program comes second.

It is through transformational ministry that a church grows, that its members thrive, and that a community can live out the purpose and the works of the Living God. We are trying to guide people in taking a hard look at what they offer "transactionally" - the various programs - and find ways within those structures to invest intentionally in the people within them.

We are having them consider how these programs could lead to what is even more important - building relationships and discipling their people. For

example, our churches might decide to add a time of fellowship after a program or perhaps provide a meal for everyone to share together.

Or perhaps it is following up with each member during the week between program meetings - doing a home visitation, or simply just calling them and checking in.

Ultimately, we need to look at how we can move from being "transactional" to "transformative" in this new era. This is how you can grow your community through what you are already doing, and disciple your people in the process.

OBEDIENT

Discipleship is about making disciples who are obedient to God. They obey Him by submitting to the authority of God's word. They obey Him by being a witness to what He has done for them. And they obey Him by following the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Our efforts at discipling youth should focus on fostering courageous obedience to Him.

APPROPRIATE

The revelation of God through scripture happens progressively and culminates in the climax of the coming of the Son of God and in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Similarly, youths are also discipled progressively, growing in ever greater degrees of awareness of the great breadth of God and His work in humanity. Discipleship actions should be planned with their level of appropriateness for each child in mind on the basis of their age and level of maturity.

RELATIONAL

We worship a God who is eternal. It might be said, then that the most fundamental thing about life is relationships.

The ministry of Jesus was highly focused on relationship.

Relationships are the primary vehicle through which discipleship occurs. While programs have their place, programs should always be designed to contribute to the flourishing of relationships.

TERRITORIAL ACTION STEPS

The Territorial Youth Department should host a

Territorial Youth conference for young people ages 16 to 30. During this week-long retreat, delegates enjoy times of worship, leadership training, strategic development on discipling youths left behind, and fellowship.

This conference should provide church members in this age bracket an opportunity to come together to worship, learn from one another, and experience God in new ways.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Becoming a youth leader at the CYRMI initiative level can be intimidating, especially without proper training. Try making a potential leader an assistant for a class for a short period before making them the leader of a class.

Also think about planning an orientation for all youth leaders just before the start of the new program year. This orientation might include a refresher on Safe from Harm or other relevant information for COG 7 youth leaders.

Use the opportunity also to pray for the coming year and to lift up each registered young person by name. This first portion of the Leadership Development pillar has to do with the recruiting and training of youth leaders around the TNAACCA Territory. The strategies related to the development of leaders working with youth are the following:

ADAPTING

Society is always changing, and leadership development should adapt to meeting changing social and cultural contexts. No leadership development tool can be left untouched for years on end. Leadership development should always be in the process of adapting to meet ever changing challenges.

RECRUITING

- Leaders often need to be recruited. Not everyone can see the potential they have for leading youth. Recruitment strategies and tactics should be a priority to prevent potential leaders from missing out on what God wants to do through them.

METHOD OF DELIVERY:

MENTORSHIP

- Leadership development across human history

has happened primarily through mentoring. While classes and coursework are helpful, the best way to develop leaders is by showing them how to lead and giving them the chance to lead. Mentoring is essentially leading through relationships, and relationships should be the basis of all we do.

OTHER IMMEDIATE MENTORSHIP:

- These other efforts fall within the broader effort of the CYRMI mission to create a youth network geared at improving the image of the Church; by building relationships that will empower and inspire youths to develop and grow in God' Kingdom. This sub-initiative will focus on the single element of mentorship. There will be three elements that we will pay attention to. (1) Higher Education (2) Career Development (3) Christian stability.

- 1. Higher Education** - This aspect will focus on providing guidance, insights and resource direction to Christian youth who are in middle and high schools, how to prepare for the transition to college or university: within academics or trade. This program will focus on peering current or past college or university students in academics and trades to aid students to understand the transition process, establish expectations, provide direction and access to resources such as financial aid, bursaries, scholarships, placements etc.

- 2. Career Development** - Participants in this part of the mentorship will focus on 3 aspects. Resume writing, interviewing skills and networking. Youth will learn critical skills and participate in workshops, focus groups etc.

- 3. Networking** - In this element of the mentorship program, youth will learn how to make critical connections locally and internationally. They will be schooled in networking techniques, rules and principles of networking, understand the benefits of networking, learning the dos and don'ts of networking.....

- **Communication** - If the recommendation is adapted, the program will be sharing the strategy of the initiative. Representatives from the coalition team will be selected as Team leads. They will work with participating churches and organizations at the larger table to identify all the youth leaders. A communication will be generated to inform all the youth leaders of the

project. A meeting will be called with the team leaders to share the total initiative including timelines and establish a leadership team among the youth to guide the project.

- **Coordination** – Due to the size, scope and complexity of the project, a roadmap specific to the project will be developed. It will enhance collaboration between the youth initiative committee, the collaboration team representative(s) and the collaboration team.
- **Accountability** – Based on the developed roadmap, this leadership team will have full oversight and general governance of the program. Key deliverables and overall outcomes will be clearly defined. While the sponsorship for the initiative will be owned by the collaboration team, the primary accountability for the initiative will rest with the assigned Team Leads to provide general management for the program.

REGULAR

No leader is beyond the need of further development. We should be continually investing in the development of our leaders much as God is always investing in us. His work of continually refining and reshaping us into the image of His Son is never over. Likewise, we each can become a better leader than the leader we are today.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER STEPS

In this CYRMI Strategic Plan for Youth Ministry Guide we have covered the overall purpose, major pillars, goals, strategies and action steps of the CYRMI Strategic Plan. We are praying for the motivation amongst young people for how individuals can readily adopt many of the strategies of this plan in their churches and their personal lives. We have also covered some best practices for implementing the CYRMI Plan.

Not one CYRMI Report will look the same. One of the crucial elements of the CYRMI Strategic Plan is that you champion it for your community at your conference level. This CYRMI Plan presents each church with the opportunity to respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit in your neighborhood.

While some may resist such a variety of approaches, we believe that we will find strength in the diversity of our models and in the unity of our purpose. While our action steps will look different

across the territory, our major goals and overall purpose will always be the same.

OUR PRAYERS FOR THE FUTURE -

Our prayer is that you will allow the Holy Spirit to lead you and to speak into what you are teaching and how you are leading wherever you are in the territory. We pray that you will intentionally partner with the Holy Spirit each day to use evangelic, discipleship, and leadership strategies in restoring our youths left behind. Utilizing the promises given to us by Christ, “I will be with you always” Let’s work to develop and accomplish His work in the days ahead.





VISUAL IMAGERY AND THIS CHURCH AGE

Visual imagery has always been an influence on the Church. Our worship space has contributed visually to the imagery and aspiration to a greater relationship with the Deity of God. Secondly, as this generation unfolds, we are beginning to experience culture parceled in visually attractive ways.

Christian leaders are observing what could be termed the visual age of contemporary culture. We are inundated by imagery all throughout the normal cycle of a day. The statistics are also confirming most people are visual learners.

Recent findings are confirming that over 60 percent of our people learn by visualizing what they hear and see. This current generation has been increasingly more interested and involved in the use of visual gadgets. As such, Christian leaders are recently realizing their congregants are no more overly excited to be in their pews. Everyone likes to think of themselves as creative and technologically savvy. Whatever we might think of these trends, they are significantly influencing the people who gather in our churches each session to worship.

Humanity and Visuality

Worship is inevitably influenced by the visual elements such as the sounds and architectural design and layout, which in most cases influence the worship experience and enhance engagements.

The structure of our chapels of worship, the images we look at and the things we do during worship, all invariably shape us one way or another. They clarify our focus and influence us to deeper worship, or they deflect us from the spirit's intent. These epitaph and images in our worship spaces, the stage, the podium set in the middle of the stage, the instruments quality, the garbs of the worship team, these things are visuals, and they all speak to us.

Now it is understandably true that we COG7 have not been keenly aware of the visual aspect of worship, as our tradition informs us that deep meaning can only be carried by words and not by images. Young people today are searching for answers as to why these cannot be accepted as reinforcing each other, so that together congregations can create inclusions in our worship, so that the Spirit

can inspire and move us toward God.

You Are What You See?

In the medieval period people believed that “you become what you behold”—which is to say if you look deeply at things that are worthy and striking, you will be formed in positive ways.

A number of Christian leaders by contrast, function as if they believe we will “become what we listen to long enough.”

Obviously, both are oversimplifications, but the fact is both hearing and seeing are necessary parts of any worship experience. Just as we are responsible for what we eat, so we are responsible for what we look at. We should not become a victim of the vast array of visual stimuli surrounding.

We do not have to be passive victims of a world that wants to entertain and distract us. ... A spiritual life amid our energy-draining society requires us to take conscious steps to safeguard that inner space where we can keep our eyes fixed on the beauty of the Lord. (Behold the Beauty of the Lord, p. 12)

Of all the events in the week that help us to discipline our “seeing” and direct us to see the beauty of the Lord, our corporate worship together should be the most important.

The Visual Word

It is true that the reading and proclamation of Scripture will always be central to Evangelical worship. And it is also the case that among our congregations there will always be a lingering suspicion of images in worship. This has to do with long standing practices and habits of mind that stretch back to our Reformation heritage. But there are some crucial factors that argue for giving more attention to the visual dimension of worship, even as we honor what is good in our heritage.

Not only have expectations changed among our contemporaries, but the widespread superstitions that the Reformers faced in their attempts to recover the gospel are no longer dangers for most people. The temptation to idolatry is alive and well in our culture, of course, but it is no longer associated with religious practices and with images, as it was in the late medieval period.

But the second thing to say about our tradition is that a deep familiarity with Scripture, rather than impeding the visual, stimulates the imagination and suggests all kinds of visual mediation. God is revealed in Scripture as often by cloudy and fiery pillars, earthquakes, light and darkness, as by the prophetic word. All this richly elaborated revelation calls for translation into a visual as well as oratory language.

- LLOYDEL LEWIS





What are the 7 seals in Revelation?

The seven seals representing events to take place on this earth during each seal's specific time period—beginning at the time of Christ and continuing until Christ's second coming.

Seven Seals list:

1. White horse
2. Red horse
3. Black horse
4. Pale horse
5. Souls crying out from under the altar
6. Earthquake, sun & moon, stars fall
7. Silence in heaven

Jesus, seals and prophecy

The whole book of Revelation, the last book in the New Testament, is “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John” (Revelation 1:1).

A great many of Revelation's prophecies have

already been fulfilled, and history bears records of them. Some are now in the process of being fulfilled, and others are still in the future. Most of these important prophecies of the Bible are in figurative language so that they might be understood equally well in any age of the world.

The seven seals are found in Revelation chapters five, six and eight. As each of the seven seals is broken a picture or representation of events to take place on the earth during that seal period is described.

Who can open the seals?

As this prophecy opens, we see Christ as the Lamb of God take the great book of God's providence and begin to open its seven seals, one by one. The right to break these seven seals of future events belongs to Jesus Christ because He died for humanity of all ages, from creation to the end of time. When He took the book, the holy ones about God's throne...

“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation’” (Revelation 5:9).

The lamb is worthy.

There, supreme, at the center of power of the whole universe, is the Lamb of God who died for us. In Him we see infinite power in self-sacrifice. Lucifer in heaven sought power in self-exaltation, but Jesus humbled Himself and was awarded exaltation above every name—something He had never sought. He came to save the lost and to glorify His Father. As by faith we see the shining ones above bow before Him in loving adoration, declaring Him worthy to open the seven-sealed book.

1. The first seal: a white horse. 0- 100AD

As the Savior breaks the first seal of the great book, a wondrous scene flashes before the gaze of the holy apostle John, He says, “And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer” (Revelation 6:2). These seals cover seven eras or periods of time from the time of the apostles to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, to a large extent, they depict: religious affairs in the world.

In the first seal we see Christ with the wreath of a conqueror. He rides the white horse, white being the emblem of victory and also of purity. This prophetic picture shows the apostolic church led on by its divine Captain to victory over a pagan world, its doctrines pure, and its victorious Leader, Christ Himself. As the apostle Paul exclaimed when he saw the pure gospel transforming men:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans. 1:16).

But after the apostles died, a change came. Faith grew cold, and the predicted days of “falling away” came (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The next seal flashes a sad picture on the screen of prophecies.

“Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, ‘Come and see.’ And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.”

White is the symbol of purity. In the apostolic age the doctrine and life of the church was pure, and

under the leadership of Christ and the living apostles, it went forth victoriously, carrying the gospel to the entire civilized world in that generation. Without railroads, highways, or space travel—without the printing press, TV or the internet—those first gospel messengers carried the good news to the whole civilized world in a very few years. As the apostle Paul said, “it was preached to every creature under heaven” (Colossians 1: 23).

One reason the church was pure during this time period was that it was busy working for others. The church that is busy working for the salvation of the lost has little church trouble. It’s when the members settle down to enjoy religion for themselves alone that the troublers of Israel get busy. And if the pastor does not watch out, they will keep him so busy settling; their affairs and keeping them sweet that he will never get out after the lost sheep at all.

2. The second seal: a red horse. 100-323AD

“When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, ‘Come and see.’ Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword” (Revelation 6:3,

4). From a white horse, denoting victory and purity and truth, the color is changed to red—the red horse of bloodshed. These days, from the death of the apostles to exaltation of the worldly church by the great emperor Constantine, depicted the times of pagan persecution.

Nero, Diocletian, and other emperors of Rome put the followers of Christ to death and also attempted to destroy all copies of the Bible. Many Christians found refuge in the catacombs or underground rock quarries in Rome.

But, when one Christian was thrown to the hungry lions or burned at the stake to make a Roman holiday, another took their place, and faith spread more and more. The martyrs of Jesus “loved not their lives unto death” (Revelation 12:11).
Christians Persecuted

During this time of pagan persecution, the Ro-

man emperors attempted to stamp Christianity from the face of the earth. The amphitheaters and arenas witnessed the death of thousands of the martyrs of Jesus. Sometimes ferocious lions and other beasts would be starved for days and then suddenly turned loose to tear in pieces a band of Christians, old and young. Those who professed the name of Christ were sometimes tied to posts, covered with pitch, and lighted as torches to illuminate the festivities in Nero's gardens.

Whenever any great natural calamity occurred it was blamed on the Christians, and the fury of the mobs was vented upon them. Many Christians fled to the catacombs of Rome and lived and worshiped in those gloomy underground passages.

Christianity grows.

Bloody persecution did not stamp out the blessed hope of the gospel. It just spreads faith all over the world. It has been said that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the earth.

3. The third seal: a black horse. 323-538AD

The third seal was broken, and the apostle says, "When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, 'Come and see.' So, I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand" (Revelation 6:5, 6).
Spiritual darkness

This apostasy was in the church from about the third century on down to the sixth century, when the church-state authority was established in 538. Of this time, Philip Schaff, the well-known church historian, says that the elevation of Christianity as the religion of the state involved great risk of spiritual degeneracy to the church.

The prophecy of the apostle Paul was being fulfilled. He said: "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:29, 30).

The Church Paganized

The Christianizing of the political Roman state amounted, therefore, in great measure to a paganizing and secularizing of the church. The mass of

the Roman Empire was baptized only with water, not with the Spirit and fire of the gospel, and thus heathen manners and practices were smuggled into the sanctuary under a new name.

Many of these ancient doctrines, first known to the pagan world and the heathen philosophers, are still carried along by organized Christianity—ideas, customs, rites unknown to the Bible and which were unknown to the apostles and the early Christians.

In summary, in many things during this period the traditions of men began to take the place of the Bible, and the power of the emperor often interfered in the affairs of the church.

The pair of balances is a symbol of scarcity of bread representing spiritual food or the scarcity of the holy Word of God—being doled out by weight. The apostle Paul had foretold the apostasy in Acts 20:29, 30: "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."

And so, it happened. For the next two hundred years there was a great departure from pure gospel truth and widespread absorption of pagan philosophy and forms.

4. The fourth seal: a pale horse

This is the vision of dark times: "When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come and see.' So, I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth." (Revelation 6:7, 8).

Notice it is a pale horse—the very color of death. Notice the fourfold judgment: "Power was given unto them...to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. "This seal represents "the Dark Ages," when the principles of religious and civil liberty were obscured, and leaders in both the political and spiritual realm were far from our present-day blessings of democracy and religious freedom.

This seal was marked by much cooperation of

the political and spiritual powers and of religious wars and troubles. The history of those times is full of the sad record of intolerance, especially religious intolerance, and it was not limited to any one religion, or to anyone nation or race. Catholics suffered, Protestants suffered, Jews suffered—and those of other religious views, and even those of no religious profession, suffered. It is said that many, many thousands were put to death for their faith in those sorrowful years. How thankful we can be for the religious freedom we enjoy today!

The Dark Ages

In the original language the word “pale” here denotes the color of blighted plants, certainly an unnatural color for a horse. This symbol must refer to the work of per-secution, and death carried on by Christians against each other in those Dark Ages. No wonder the ages were dark beginning about 538 and until the days of reformation and religious liberty changed the character of the western world. Even today there are times when the true principles of religious freedom are forgotten. The Scripture says: “Render...to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21).

Combining politics and religion

We are not to mix the responsibilities of the spiritual church and political state government. The true Christian will be loyal to his state government, but he will not forsake the plain commandments, teachings, and guidance of God as revealed in the Bible, for decrees and acts of men.

Religious liberty and freedom mean not only that I demand for myself freedom to worship God according to the dictates of my conscience, but that I demand it also for the other man whose conscience may be entirely different from mine.

The use of force

If God, who could use force, does not see fit to do so and to compel men to follow the truth of His gospel, certainly we human beings, limited as we all are, especially in our knowledge of the hearts of others, have no right to im-pose our views by force upon our neighbor. Every man must give account of himself to God, as we read in the Holy Scripture 5. The fifth seal: souls crying from under the altar

Next, the fifth seal is opened and we see... “When

He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed” (Revelation 6:9-11).

Remember the story of Cain and Abel; and that the Lord said to Cain, who had just killed his brother, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground” (Genesis 4:10). This is a picture of the martyred victims who were killed during the previous seal and up until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the power of persecution for religious faith was restrained. During this time those who witnessed for the faith with their blood are shown as crying out to God.

The fifth seal can be found in Revelation 6:9-11 and reads as follows...

“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

What are the Martyrs doing?

“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’” (Revelation 6:10).

Their cruel mistreatment cried out for vengeance just as Abel’s blood cried out to God from the ground when he had been slain by his brother Cain, as we read in Genesis 4:10. Of course, the blood of Abel did not actually have a voice and speak, but in the ears of God it was heard.

So, these victims, killed during the preceding times of affliction and persecution, are not in heaven, but under the altar where they had been slain. On this especially crucial point, Dr. Adam Clarke, the great Methodist commentator, says, “The altar is upon earth, not in heaven.”

What was given to these martyrs?

“Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed” (Revelation 6:11).

The persecutors as well as the persecuted themselves were now dead, of course. If these persecutors had passed to their punishment at death, as is by some supposed, why should the martyrs still want to call for their punishment? In this, as in many other passages of the Bible, especially in the great prophetic books, the figure of personification is used. Things that are not are spoken of as things that are. (See Judges 9, where we read of the trees talking with one another; also, Romans 4:17.)

White robes

These martyrs had gone down as heretics under the darkness and superstition of preceding ages. They were covered with shame before their generation, but now in the new light of liberty and reformation of Holy Scripture, their true character appears.

They are seen to be the righteous and true children of God. So white robes are given to them, for the white linen is the righteousness of saints, as we read in Revelation 19:8. Righteousness, then, is ascribed to them after they have rested a little longer where they are with all others who would follow them for their faith, and together they are raised to glorious immortality.

6. The sixth seal: earthquake, sun & moon and stars

“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men,

the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains” (Revelation 6:12-15). The days of the fifth seal, the Protestant Reformation, had just closed, when according to the prophecy, the sixth seal was to open with “a great earthquake.”

Lisbon Earthquake

Sure, enough a great earthquake did follow. History shows God spoke the truth, for “the most notable earthquake of history,” as Nelson’s encyclopedia calls it, took place on November 1, 1755. It is called the Lisbon Earthquake because that great city was practically destroyed by the quake in six minutes.

The dark day

25 years later came the next event of the sixth seal, the great Dark Day of May 19, 1780, when that mysterious darkening of the sun took place which scientists are still arguing about. Its real cause is not yet known. But God foresaw it, and it was a part of the prophetic forecast of the book of Revelation nearly 1700 years before it made its black mark on the face of nature. The following night the moon appeared as blood.

Stars falling

Prophecy now marches on 53 years, to the night of November 13, 1833, when stars fell over America in the most gigantic display of celestial fireworks ever seen by the eye of man. Eyewitnesses of the falling stars describe with vivid words that never-to-be-forgotten night when the whole sky seemed to be on fire with blazing stars—and continued so for hours.

Deeply impressed with these signs in the heavens, someone wrote the following few lines: “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake” (Revelation 6:12)

Following the events of the fifth seal, comes a great earthquake—the greatest earthquake in history, the famous Lisbon earthquake—on November 1, 1755. Please notice the accurate historical chronology of these events. Sixty thousand people died in six minutes in the city of Lisbon and the surrounding areas. The Encyclopedia Britannica estimates the deaths at a slightly lower figure, but

the effects of the earthquake were felt from Scotland to Turkey. Now we continue under this sixth seal:

The dark day

“And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood” (Revelation 6:12).

May 19, 1780, is known as the Great Dark Day, in New England especially, and that night the moon did appear as blood. Let us continue reading our description of the events of the sixth seal:
The stars fall.

“And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind” (Revelation 6:13). When the Scripture mentions stars as falling, it must mean the falling of meteors, not actual planets or suns.

Notice that within a very short time there occurred the most notable earthquake (1775), the most notable darkening of the sun and moon (1780), and the most remarkable meteor shower, -that of November 13, 1833—and they came in the exact order mentioned in the Bible.

These falling stars or meteors came as if they were from one central spot. Just as a tree might be shaken and the fruit flies in all directions from it, so these stars radiated from the constellation of Leo. Had these three events—the great earthquake, the dark day, and the falling stars taken place in reverse order, skeptics would never cease telling us about it. But because of the fact that they came in the exact order as mentioned in the Scriptures, skeptics should think seriously, change their ways, and become people of faith.

The sky rolled up as a scroll

But what was the next great event mentioned in the prophecy? Let us read the next verse: “Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place” (Revelation 6:14).

This, of course, is still future and will take place in connection with the second coming of Christ. So, we are now living between two great events, the last of the signs in the heavens and the parting of the heavens when all earthly things are moved out

of their places.

We are living between verses 13 and 14 of the sixth chapter of Revelation. The great signs which we have just mentioned are all in the past, signs which mark the approach of our Savior’s return to this earth. We are living under the sixth seal, waiting for the opening of the seventh.

Hide us from the lamb...

Between us and the opening of the seventh seal another event is to take place. Let us read it in verses 15-17:

“And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’

”This is the great final prayer meeting when everybody prays. God’s children will be praying because they love Him and believe in Him and are looking for the return of their Savior, watching for the great white cloud, waiting for the angelic host that “shall gather together his elect . . . from one end of heaven to the other.” Matthew 24:31.

all will pray..
skeptics will pray,
infidels will pray,
atheists will pray,
pleasure-lovers will pray,
doubters will pray;

great men, mighty men, rich men, captains, military men, all will pray.

Men and women of all nations, tribes, and peoples will pray.

Unfortunately, many of them will not pray to God, but to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of Christ. They realize now that all their doubting were based on sand, and that the faith of the Christians was built on the Rock, Jesus. All this is to happen under the sixth seal, and we are living under that seal today, right between verses 13 and 14 of the sixth chapter of Revelation.

The vision of the sixth seal sweeps on to the events that occur in connection with the second coming of Christ. But multitudes are pictured as unprepared for His appearance. They have no faith in God's Word; therefore, they are not looking for the certain events of the sixth seal.

They have not yielded themselves to God's love, nor received the free gift of eternal life offered to them through the blood of Christ as a gift to all men. They have either rejected or neglected so great salvation. And as the sixth seal closes they are being forced out of the era of time and are not prepared for eternity.

God grant that none of us be in such a situation and that our hearts may be prepared for Christ's appearing, with every sin confessed and forgiven. Men who never prayed to God will cry to the rocks and mountains of inanimate nature, and say...
"To the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand.

7. The seventh seal: silence in heaven

"When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour" (Revelation 8:1).

That's all—silence! But silence where? Silence in heaven? Yes, silence in heaven.

This is the end of the seven time periods in the history of redemption, the completion of God's plan for humanity in the Christian dispensation. It's the end of the story, when God puts a period to history. It is that "divine event, to which the whole creation moves." (Tennyson) It is the return of Jesus in power and great glory.

-----EDITORIAL



RELIGIOUS AWAKENING—VIEW and your responses



When the Church Forgets to Go.

In a time when programs often replace personal connection, I call the Church back to its original heartbeat: to go, teach, and love as Jesus commanded.

When Jesus rose from the dead, His final words were not about buildings, titles, or traditions, they were about people. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19). This Great Commission was not a suggestion but a sacred command, the heartbeat of the Church and the foundation of its purpose.

Yet somewhere along the journey, many believers have lost sight of its true essence. Today, the Great Commission is often seen as a one-time act rather than a lifelong call. Many have mistaken “making disciples” for simply “winning converts.” But Jesus never said, “Go and make members.” He said, “Go and make disciples.” That means walking alongside others teaching, nurturing, praying, and guiding them toward maturity in Christ. True discipleship takes time, patience, and love.

“Jesus never said, ‘Go and make members.’ He said, ‘Go and make disciples.’”

The early Church understood this. They didn’t have large buildings or complex programs, yet they turned the world upside down through genuine faith and community. They broke bread together, shared what they had, and lived out the teachings

of Jesus daily. Their power came not from performance, but from presence; God’s presence moving through willing hearts. If we are to reclaim the true mission of Matthew 28, we must return to the simplicity of Jesus’ example.

The Great Commission is not about status, structure, or self but about service. It’s about reaching hearts, restoring hope, and revealing Christ through our words and actions. Every believer is called to go, not only across oceans but also across the street; not only to nations but to neighbors. The world is still waiting for a Church that lives the message it preaches. A Church that reflects the love, humility, and truth of the risen Christ. May we once again hear His voice saying, “Go...” and may we answer with obedience, passion, and faithfulness, carrying His light to every corner of the earth.

Reflect

How can I live out the Great Commission in my everyday life at home, in my community, or at work?
Blessing:

May every believer rediscover the call to go, teach, and love as Christ commanded.

DR. N. Collymore

general ... it is a special form of the movement of matter. ” 2 Thus the materialist denies that life is really different from physical energy, maintaining it to be merely a special form of physical energy to which it can be reduced. Neither is there anything truly distinctive about human life. “With the appearance of man, however, there arises a new social form of motion of matter.

Scientific data on living things.

We have long known that our body consists of at least 80% water, with the rest composed mainly of carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and, to a smaller extent, a few other elements. Yet our body somehow makes complex molecules out of what we eat (mostly proteins, fats, and starches), after we have first broken these down into smaller molecules. Enzymes, for example, are special proteins that can speed up chemical reactions in our body by many thousands of times. Each of hundreds of thousands of different proteins has its own special structure and function. We know some functions of DNA, RNA, and others which are related to cell division and propagation of individual organisms. Each type of molecule has its own characteristics which the cell that has made them need for its overall functioning. As soon as we take such a molecule out of the cell, it can still display the same chemical reactions as it does inside, but only in random fashion. Its directed activity is gone.

Science regained.

Materialists have been repeating repeatedly that Christians want to introduce supernatural forces into science. But it is really the materialists who want to introduce spirits and animism into science under the guise of creative forces hiding in dead molecules. Christians need no longer try to accommodate these spiritual inventions of pagan philosophy. It is now becoming well known that there are many scientific arguments that discredit evolution. Furthermore, the philosophical bankruptcy of materialism has been exposed by Herman Dooyeweerd, whose life’s work has given Christians a mighty arsenal of philosophical weapons against the materialists.

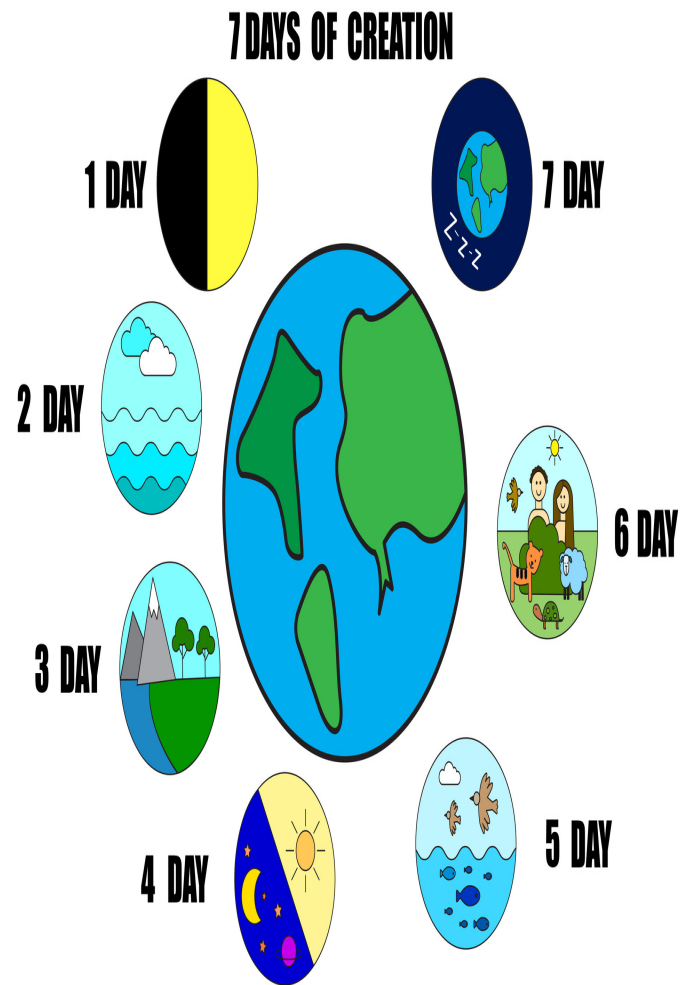
As summarized in his theory of the modal aspects of reality, this outstanding Dutch philosopher demonstrates that of creation, which scientists can discover, cannot be reduced to each other. Each, rather, is a distinctive, irreducible, and specifically

created aspect of reality.

He showed that all humanists assign creative powers to some force inside creation, which in effect becomes their god. The different philosophical “isms” arose from whatever force various philosophers chose as the one to which all the others were to be reduced. Thus, they worship idols of their own making—idols dead matter, as helpless as the stone idols of the ancient humanists.

It is now possible for Christian scientists not only to show where materialism went wrong, but even more importantly to build a true scientific endeavor on a Biblical foundation instead of Greek mythology. If we confess that the origin of this cosmos is: “ ... the sovereign holy will of God the Creator, who has revealed Himself in Christ,” 16 we can search for these laws.

-----EDITORIAL











HURRICANE MELISSA - JAMAICA OCTOBER 2025

Hurricane Melissa left a trail of destruction as it moved across Jamaica, seen for the first time from space.

The storm made landfall in Jamaica on Tuesday as a monstrous Category 5 hurricane before moving onto to Cuba on Wednesday and later, the Bahamas.

This image show widespread flooding and extensive damage in towns along Jamaica's southwest coast in the parish of St. Elizabeth and, on the opposite side of the island in Montego Bay, the capital of St. James parish. The storm first made landfall on Jamaica's southwest coast near the town of Black River, seen in part here. Damage to homes, businesses and community centers in Black River is extensive - even seen in this limited scope. This satellite photo taken after the storm shows the roof of one of the largest markets in the neighborhood ripped cleanly off its foundation.

Coastal communities were hit hard by the storm's devastating winds, with some remote fishing villages nearly flattened by the hurricane. In the town of White House, less than 10 miles northwest of Black River, small boats were washed ashore in a

town where the economy is reliant on its closeness to the Caribbean Sea.

As the storm progressed north, it drenched rural farmlands across St. Elizabeth Parish, a southwestern region that's become Jamaica's breadbasket. Footage captured on the ground showed just how quickly the low-lying farmlands were submerged by rainwater.

An image captured less than 24 hours after the floodwaters rushed in shows inundated farmland and vegetation stripped from large swaths of agricultural land.

On the opposite coast, Hurricane Melissa swept through Montego Bay, in Jamaica's north. This satellite image captured in its aftermath shows extensive flooding throughout the city and large pools of water around storage facilities at the city's main port.

As the storm moved out to sea, it pulled debris and muddy water through the Barnett and Pye Rivers, seen at the center of the frame. The debris appears as a large cloud of dirty water seen beyond the shoals off Montego Bay.

YOUTH REFLECTION

CHANGE COACHING

Will the Young Men Please Stand Up?

-Carnel Dennis

On any given Sabbath, the Church of God Seventh Day gather for Sabbath School and Divine service. We sing songs in praise and worship sessions; fellowship with the saints, and soul-stirring sermons are often delivered. However, even though we manage to carry-out the services with the customary songs and sermons, there lies a persistent challenge: fewer young men are stepping forward to serve in ministry. Our pastors are retiring, pulpits are being left vacant, and the faithful and oft weary servants are asking the same question: Who will be the next Pastors, Evangelists and lay preachers when we are no longer around?

Based on my observations and conversations over recent years, I have realized the following:

1. Many Pastors have been considering leaving ministry, citing stress and burnout.
2. The average age of pastors in our denomination is close to 60 years.

3. Young men in the church now generally view Pastoral Ministry as a burden that they are not willing to bear

4. Most Pastors in our denomination provide pastoral care for two or more congregations. With the waning interest of our young men and the aging cohort of ministers, this means that in the next decade, many of congregations could be without a pastor—not because God has stopped calling, but because fewer young men are interested, or even aware of the call.

Why the Lack of Interest?

1. Cultural Pressures – Our culture has changed. Christianity is often frowned upon or castigated. Public respect for pastors has declined due to highly publicized negative stories about church and church leaders. This has caused the role of the pastor to be unattractive to young men.
2. Financial Concerns – Ministry rarely comes with sufficient financial compensation. Bur-

dened with a high cost of living or family responsibilities, many young men turn to careers that promise financial security.

3. Lack of Spiritual focus – Our society appears to be much more worldly in focus, as the church appears to lose its influence on our people, less young people are inclined to spiritual matters

4. Witnessing Burnout – Many of these young men have watched their pastors wearing out before their eyes. On top of this they will also witness various levels of mistreatment and disrespect meted out to church leaders.

5. Lack of Mentorship – There has not been a culture of mentorship and discipleship in our denomination and without this deliberate focus, promising young men have not giving this noble calling serious thought.

While all this is taking place, many are dying in the ruined field of sin. Jesus Himself said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38). Therefore, the church has a very important role to play in addressing this crisis on our hands – pray, pray that the Lord will send us “laborers”.

What Can We Do About It?

1. Purposefully engage young men – Pastors and leaders must engage young men, creating mentorship relationships, helping them to recognize the Lord’s calling to minister in this capacity
2. Serve the Lord with gladness – If the next generation sees us looking and sounding unhappy while serving as shepherds of the flock, they will steer clear of this noble calling. But if they see us serving joyfully, they will be attracted to serve.
3. Create Opportunities to serve – Give these young men the opportunity to deliver mini-sermons, teach, and serve in various ministries. Practice will breed confidence overtime.
4. Pray About the Issue – Let us all talk to

God, without ceasing, so that he may raise up young men for ministry.

A Parting Word to Our Young Men

In closing I am thinking of the story of Samuel. The scripture says in I Samuel 3:1, that the boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under the guidance of Eli, in a time when the word of the Lord was rare. It was in those conditions that Samuel heard the voice of the Lord calling his name, and responded, “speak Lord, your servant is listening”. If you are hearing that still small voice, if you feel a stirring in your heart, don’t ignore it, but respond as Samuel did. It is a very rewarding calling with everlasting implications.





Equipping Youths for the Future: Challenges in Christendom

EQUIPPING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THIS CHURCH AGE.

Universally, the future for young people seems punctuated by numerous uncertainties. There is extensive anticipation developing, fueled by uncertainties which need to be addressed, if ever we are to successfully prepare young people for this fast-changing world. It is my view that for young people to advance while grounded in a relationship with Jesus, efforts must be made for them to attain robust societal and emotional preparedness, as well as contemporary edification.

UTILIZING THE AVAILABLE TOOLS

For these skills to be cultivated and nurtured, it is important that young people are provided with exposure to different learning environments. One such critical learning environment is the church. Matthew 6:33 (KJV) implores: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” As Christians, we strive under the affirmation that without Christ leading our lives, failure seems the surest path. Hence, it is critical for the church to play a pivotal role in equipping young people with the aptitude to navigate the real world, affording them with the necessary coping tools, as well as personal and spiritual support to enhance character formation.

Our church community should provide safe and secure environments that is deeply rooted in Christ, encouraging youths to develop and main-

tain a Christ-centered lifestyle. A Christ-centered lifestyle will contribute significantly to success, by fostering the foundation in which young people’s individuality is grounded in spiritual purpose and not that of social encumbrances. Promoting Godly-mannerisms and a concentration on what is eternal, not merely short-lived material success or worldly accomplishments.

Embracing a life aligned with Christ-like principles yields to godly-prosperity. Young people should be adequately equipped to view success as an outcome of formulating decisions centered on faith, being completely devoted to God, living a life embodying spiritual fruit and a purpose outside of material attainments. This is not to infer that material accomplishments are insignificant. They are important.

We are reminded in Ecclesiastes 5:19 (KJV) “Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.”

RECENT EXPERIENCES AND SUGGESTIONS

It is fair to say that some churches have been experiencing a distinct decline in youth’s attendance and participation. This poses a challenge for churches to foster enduring commitment and spiritual development among these youths. Young people also appreciate an all-embracing culture --diversity, inclusivity, and impartiality which are occasionally perceived as disregarded or unreli-

able. Consequently, many young people who were nurtured based on conventional frameworks have discontinued or re-evaluated their religious beliefs.

This tendency creates a need for modification in the church's approach to effectively equipping youths for the future. Many young people struggle with career uncertainty, financial insecurity, and mental health difficulties, all of which disturb their belief system and sincerity to religious commitment.

Young people are living in a fast-changing world classified by technological expansion. Digital connectivity frequently substitutes face-to-face collaboration, hindering authentic community, purposeful affiliations, and other fundamentals that the church, when deliberate, is distinctively intended to cater to. Young people are influential which outspreads individual faith and impacts how faith is conveyed to others or how society perceives Christianity. Hence, a lack of active involvement in spiritual development is an impairment to the church's vivacity and permanent applicability. The curiosity nature of today's youths often opposes approaches to spiritual experiences which they regard as "old-fashioned" or completely detached from their realities.

It is imperative for churches to be more strategic concerning their participation in youth development; not to be partial, but, because it is an intentional and spiritual requirement in tackling the ever-changing panorama of faith contribution in modern-day society.

-----DOMINIQUE MOORE





Equipping The Next Generation

- EDITORIAL

In view of the continuing high attrition of next generations from the Christian church, perhaps, like with effective parenting, the best the church can do is to equip the next generation in preparation for when they may leave church, releasing them to give birth to the next generation of Christians. This involves trust — trusting the next generations and trusting God with the future of His church.

The proposal to equip youths for the ultimate reality of them leaving the church may seem to run counter to the efforts of educators, childhood specialists, youth leaders, and pastors. However, here is the reality: despite the best children's departmental leaders and resources, teen programs, the most dedicated teachers in our education system, camping programs, youth rallies, youth pastors, and leaders, the majority are still leaving.

It is hardly feasible that more, different or even better programs will alter the exodus. This in real-

ity is a difficult proposition for those of our older members to accept.

Our freedom of choice is given to us at high cost to God. We all suffered with Adam and Eve's choice. The next generation will make choices different from ours. That is reality. However, the choices of our youth, although painful for us, are not always wrong nor a choice to leave God.

Sometimes they are choosing to create networks and communities that they are convinced will honor God, change lives, and transform societies in more biblical and meaningful ways. The proposal to equip youth to leave signals a new paradigm. This is not to suggest that what has been done by local churches, parents, pastors, youth leaders, educators, or the denomination is wrong or a failure. But new mission eras call for new responses.

The only consistent factor may be that the next generation choose to disconnect. It is disturbing and discouraging for a church family when

the youth choose another path. It challenges the church's identity. However, there are some hopeful signs although they may point to uncomfortable possibilities. Handing on faith or a worldview to the next generation is complex.

Globalization, multiculturalism and social networking are major contributing factors, changing the sources of authority, truth, and structures; breaking down the claims of denominationalism and hierarchies; and opening new avenues for participation, fellowship, ministry, and service.

This is reshaping church— confronting youth with diverse options from which to choose. While the forms are really not the issue, the freedom of choice to shape spirituality and participation with God's mission heart is critical.

Does Parenting Provide an Effective Model?

This may be simplistic. But parents who equip their children to leave home have healthier relationships with their young adult children than those parents who are overly protective and controlling.

Christian education is also designed to equip youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. There are many models that are useful, but this family/parenting model is most instructive for the church. It is also biblical, for New Testament churches were built around oikos or the extended family or household.

Effective parenting could be defined as building relationships of love and friendship and equipping the kids to leave home to make their own decisions for life, relationships, beliefs, structures, families, society, and the world.

Perhaps, as with effective parenting, the best the church can do is to equip the next generation who will ultimately leave the church. Clearly more and better programs and resources are not keeping them at home in the church. Just as with adolescent children in a family, the next generations must be equipped to be released from the controls, dictates, and resources of the church family to reinterpret and apply their faith to life and community.

The model by which families hand off life to their children is instructive for the church, wishing to

hand off faith to the next generation. But it is just scary, perhaps more so! However, we must do this— equip them to leave, for we are failing in trying to keep them! A Scary Option, by leaving I mean fully releasing youth to mold the next generation of churches and this is best done by (again using the family model) releasing them to reproduce and give birth to new churches.

This is not just giving them a say. It is not letting them have a part in the program or sitting on a committee. It is not just sending them off on mission trips— only to come back home to a situation of control. It is not just training them to do things in the home church. It is not just letting them run a youth church or take part in the worship service, under the watchful eye of the church board, elders, or pastor. It is letting them mold their future, including their personal convictions. It is letting them go with our full support and blessing—but not control.

While models are available to hand off as effectively as possible; our complex faith system and our educators, children and youth specialists, etc. are developing fantastic resources and programs to enable, yet we are still being disappointed.

Three Stories The story of Elijah is really important to Christians, for we believe our message is the Elijah message, to be anointed with the power of the spirit of Elijah. What did he hand off to Elisha? It was his relationship with God, his coat, and a double portion of the Holy Spirit. The story of Jesus is our message. What did Jesus hand off to his disciples?

-----Lloyd Lewis



FAMILY LIFE FOCUS



OUR HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS WON'T BE HEALTHY IF OUR VERTICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ISN'T GROWING.

Love for the Lord

The first and most important quality of a synergistic organization is that it nurtures a love for the Lord. It's the number one requirement for all Christians—in ministry or not. And it's especially important in ministry.

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. (Mark 12:30)

Love for self-kills our passion and joy, and it undermines our ability to serve others.

Furthermore, our horizontal relationships—with others on staff or with those we serve—won't be

healthy if our vertical relationship—with the Lord—isn't growing.

A shared biblical view

What brings people together in a ministry context is shared doctrine and beliefs. We need a view of our Christian conviction, that is based on the Word of God and applied to our personal and ministry lives.

A biblical worldview reminds us that God alone is worthy of our worship, that His Word is our final authority, and that His ways are both right and best.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye

may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2)

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Christians with a biblical worldview must be the ones to redirect people's attention to God during tumultuous seasons. Rather than being issue-oriented politically or socially, we must be eternally oriented while remaining loyal to Christ and to biblical truth.

The kind of synergy required for local church work requires also a common understanding of shared doctrine, particularly on the doctrines that make the core beliefs of that church.

Reflection of the leader's vision

There has to be a shared vision for ministry, and that has to come from the team's leader, which in the local church context is the pastor.

Paul used to describe a sharing of ministry direction and effort was fellow laborer.

And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow laborers in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: (1 Thessalonians 3:2)

And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life. (Philippians 4:3)

The whole idea of synergy is that multiple people are combining their efforts to reach a shared goal. Synergy is enhanced by having a variety of spiritual gifts, personal skills, and unique perspectives; synergy is diminished by an autonomy of direction in using these gifts, skills, and perspectives. When team members become individualistic and have a personal agenda, joy leaves and friction comes. We don't know all the details about the collection and distribution of the letters of Paul, but it is apparent that these letters to the churches were a stimulus for cooperation. When you think about the challenging circumstances of first-century Christianity, where persecution was common and communication was difficult, you can begin to understand the necessity of cooperation for personal encouragement and Kingdom advancement. The early churches had no option but cooperation.

COOPERATION AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LETTERS OF PAUL

The letters of Ephesians and Colossians provide an example of the distribution of several of the Pauline letters for mutual encouragement. The general tone of the Ephesians' letters and the lack of personal remembrances make it unlikely that Ephesians were written to a single congregation. Notice, for example, that in Ephesians 3:1-2, Paul introduced himself by including a reference to his ministry to the Gentiles. Such an introduction would hardly have been necessary in a letter to the church where Paul ministered for at least two years (Acts 19:1-20).

While Paul was in prison, he encountered Epaphras (Colossians 4:12), a leader in the church at Colossae (Colossians 1:7-8). Epaphras must have shared with Paul concerning the heretical teachings that were creating difficulties for his church family. Thus, Paul wrote Colossians at the request of Epaphras. After writing the letter to the Colossian church, Paul seized the opportunity to write a more general and positive letter designed to stop the spread of similar heretical teachings to other local churches.

I would suggest that Paul dispatched Tychicus, a beloved brother and a faithful servant with these two letters (Colossians 4:7). Tychicus was also accompanied by the slave Onesimus, whom Paul felt compelled to return to his owner, Philemon.

Tychicus and Onesimus landed at the port of Ephesus with the letters we call Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon. Paul left the letter we now call Ephesians in Ephesus with the instructions that it should be shared with other churches in proconsular Asia.

It would have been natural for a letter intended to strengthen and unify the churches in Asia Minor to originate from this seaport location which had been the focal point of Paul's ministry in Asia. It is possible that the original route for the distribution of the letter was the seven churches mentioned in Revelation — Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. It is possible that these churches had banded together for communication and mutual support, functioning much like a modern-day association of churches. I think it is highly probable that the distribution of the Pauline letters was designed to encourage and unify the early churches. Cooperation is a vital necessity for the health of the individual church and for the advancement of the Kingdom.

--Editorial



COG7 EARLY BEGINNING IN THE CARIBBEAN

In 1905 the General Conference elected elder A.F. Dugger to be the paper's managing editor. A.F. Dugger and Elder Brinkerhoff contributed many of the articles that helped to clarify and solidify doctrine in the Church. Articles on prophecy, clean and unclean meats, tithing, proper observance of the Passover and what it means to be "born again" were printed. One belief held by A.F. Dugger, was that the Gentile Times would end in 1914. This was based upon his understanding of Bible Prophecies concerning a 2,300-year period.

Based upon the "seven times punishment" prophecy of Leviticus 26 and the "overturn, overturn, overturn" of Ezekiel 21:25-27, Dugger concluded that "As it required three consecutive strokes in the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by the overturning three times by Nebuchadnezzar, so it is to require three strokes for the destruction of all Gentile nations;" that is three world wars. Judah was restored in three successive returns, just as it was destroyed in three strokes.

Elder A.F. Dugger, Sr. became the sole editor of the Bible Advocate in 1905 at the ousting of W.C. Long. Dugger's health was failing, and to assist him in the publishing work at Stanberry, he requested sixty six year old Jacob Brinkerhoff, who became office editor in March of 1907. On Sabbath evening, December 20, 1907, the Advocate building and offices were destroyed by a fire, and the press was damaged. Most of the printing types and cases were carried out into the street. However,

the upper story where the tracts were stored was destroyed. Insurance did not cover the loss, and a drive was started for financial contributions for another building and office. The "new" building was purchased for \$1,000 on West First Street.

In 1903, Gilbert Cranmer, a minister since the 1850s and one of the chief builders of the Church in the aftermath of the Seventh Day Church of God split in the 1860s, died at age 89. In 1909, Alexander F. Dugger's health would no longer permit him to continue as editor, so Brinkerhoff became sole editor. In 1910, Alexander F. Dugger, who had served as a leader of the General Conference since its inception, as well as having served as editor of the Bible Advocate, also died.

A third faithful pioneer, Jacob Brinkerhoff, died on May 12, 1916. He had served as editor of the Advocate on and off for 21 years. Mr. Brinkerhoff was considered by many to be the most outstanding leader of the Church in his time. "Jacob Brinkerhoff had served the Church of God for over 40 years.... Instead of buying a home in 1874, Brinkerhoff used the money instead to buy the press equipment for the Advent and Sabbath Advocate.... Single handedly, he had prevented the total collapse of the Work."

"In a private conversation between Elder A. N. Dugger and Mr. Hugh Sprague... the latter stated that the Pilgrims were his direct ancestors, and that he very well knew their religious beliefs and

practices. And, in addition, he stated that all his grandparents and great grandparents knew that the Pilgrims of the Mayflower were strict Sabbath observers on the seventh day of the week, instead of on Sunday.” History of Church of God (7th Day) by John Kiez.

In his early years, he was a schoolteacher twenty miles south of Bassett. In the summer and his spare time, he, and his brother Alexander F. Dugger, Jr., each homestead 640 acres, raising cattle and hay. Andrew saved up enough money to buy another 640 acres, which had a natural artesian well.

A.N. Dugger, taught by his parents to tithe and readily accepted the Church of God teachings. Andrew was granted his ministerial license, and received into the ministry, in 1906 at the Church of God camp meeting at Gentry, Missouri. He began his ministry in 1906 he became an elder although he had not completed college. He was a school-teacher and allegedly the most educated Church of God minister of his day.

After his father died in 1910, Dugger saw in a vision the light of heaven shining around him, and the moving in the direction of Jerusalem. In 1912, he held meetings around Stanberry in November which resulted in a “good interest to hear the truth presented.” On October 19, 1913, Andrew N. Dugger was elected to the Executive Committee of the General Conference. In 1914 Dugger disposed of all his worldly possessions, his cattle, horses, and land, and answered the call to the executive board and editorship of the Bible Advocate. In the move, he cleared some \$5,000.00 debt that the Church press owed.

A.N. Dugger went to the University of Chicago, where he majored in theology and public speaking, mastering Greek, Hebrew, and German.

Andrew N. Dugger followed his father’s footsteps becoming editor of BA and president of General Conference. The same year that A.N Dugger took leadership and editorship of the Bible Advocate, World War I was beginning, as soon the way was opened for the Jews to return to Palestine: these prophecies that the Church of God had taught were being fulfilled. This seems to have been an impetus for the year 1914 marking “a decided awakening in the church.” It marked the beginning in an explosion of “missionary work” performed by the Church of God in the years the Great War and into Roaring Twenties.

During the fall of 1931, Andrew N. Dugger was commissioned to establish the work of the COG7 in multiple parts of North America. His focus was not to be on North America but on foreign countries. He moved to Israel and established a headquarters there with a printing press. Because of

this, the gospel went throughout the Caribbean, Scotland, Africa, Europe, India, and other third world countries.

It seems certain that there were a few Churches of God (Seventh Day) in the Caribbean before the 1930’s? because of the oral history that have been passed down through the years. The first islands known to have churches were Trinidad, Jamaica, and St. Lucia. In years following, missionaries and evangelist were sent throughout the different parts of the Greater and Lesser Antilles and the Virgin Islands to establish churches.

Until his death in 1975, these churches benefited greatly and enjoyed years of progress. This was in part due to A. N. Dugger’s writing of over 150 different tracts and books such as Israel Correspondent Bible School lessons, the very popular Mt. Zion Reporter (also known to some as the Judah Magazine), Sabbath Lesson quarterlies, the Jerusalem Messenger, Jewish calendars and the Chart of the Daniel image and Beasts of Revelation. The Mt. Zion Reporter was such an intricate part of these churches that an article was read from this magazine every Sabbath morning during service.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) Jamaica Conference grew out of the effort of Elder James Murray of Trinidad who, on the request of one Sis. Hannah Smith visited Jamaica on June 14, 1930. Sis. Smith’s home, which was then situated at 29 Long Mountain Road, now Mountain View Avenue, was the first venue for prayer meetings and Bible Studies. As this evangelical work intensified it was a matter of time before the trappings of the early church body emerged.

After a stay of two and a half months, Elder Murray returned to Trinidad but soon came back to Jamaica to continue the work he had started in Sis. Smith’s home. The house church grew rapidly and therefore during 1931-33 a proper place was sought to construct a building.

By this time, Elder Charles J. Ellis who was then an Adventist returning home from Panama became a part of the church. Under the direction of Elder Murray, Elder Ellis was given the responsibility to supervise the work here in Jamaica. On November 4, 1933, he was chosen by the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) Salem, West Virginia as representative of the British West Indies.

After the death of Elder Murray, Elder Ellis became the recognized leader in the Caribbean. Under his leadership the Church of God (Seventh Day) was officially established and recognized in the Caribbean.



TNAACCA

THE NORTH AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN COLLABORATION
ASSOCIATION

**ENGAGE WITH TNAACCA ON THIS MISSION
“FOR GLORY AND FOR BEAUTY GOD DESERVES A
BEAUTIFUL CHURCH”**

**TNAACCA MEETS BY WAY OF ZOOM EVERY TWO MONTHS.
OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON JULY 20th 2025.
MEETING ID: 522 518 8004 – PASSCODE: ctz271**