

# Give them a [ \ h ] b [ W U b W

**O**ur church cannot be immune to new ideas, new goals, and new plans. We talk about these new ideas, goals, and plans through mission and vision. When God gives a vision for ministry, you know it is of God because the vision outlives you.

Christian education is a God-given vision. A God-given vision does not die with you; neither does it rest on your wallet or pocketbook. I have never had a vision for ministry that I could afford. If I could afford it, then I would say, "I did it." So God makes sure I cannot afford it, and you cannot afford it; so when God does it, we can say, "God did it!" If it's God's will, then it's God's bill. If it's God's choice, then it's God's invoice. That is Christian education.

Our world is stricken with many societal ills that are plaguing our young people. When we talk about ministry and the gospel message to boys and girls, and our young people, we can't help but think of Adventist Christian education. The servant of the Lord says, "In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' 1 Corinthians 3:11."

## A hospital, not a hospice

Yet the interest and support for Christian education is waning.<sup>3</sup> We

must do something about it. Our vision for ministry, our methods, our manner, our action plans for the future of this church must center on effectively reaching our children, youth, and young adults. If not, we die.

The church is a hospital; it is not a hospice. A hospice tries to make you comfortable before you die; a hospital tries to make you well so that you do not die. We have got to make ministry to our children, youth, and young adults a priority, because we are not here to make the church a comfortable place to die. This is not to displace our senior adults or anybody else. Young people stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before them. But this is to acknowledge the need to intentionally reach our youth; because Satan is trying to destroy them.

What do I mean?

In the first instance, young people today are exposed earlier than ever to illegal drugs. Based on a 2007 survey by the Centers for Disease Control, 45 percent of high school students nationwide drank alcohol and 19.7 percent smoked pot during a one-month period. According to the same survey, nearly 50 percent of all young people between the ages of 12 and 17 said it would be "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get marijuana. One in five said it would be easy to get cocaine, and one in ten said it would be easy to get heroin. It's not just happening in the world, it's also happening in the church. Whatever you are looking for,

you will find it—and even at a Christian school.<sup>4</sup>

## Beliefs

In a study conducted by the Barna Group for the Adventist Church in 2013, 17 percent of all Adventist young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 feel it is OK to use illegal drugs, 26 percent think it is OK to engage in premarital sex, 44 percent feel the United States is 61. We desperately need our young people.

In the last eight years, 33 percent of our Seventh-day Adventist members in the North American Division have left the church. Of those who have left, 63 percent were young adults, and we are sitting around debating about music and arguing about drums, women in ministry, and what time the young people get to church. I'm just praising God that they're singing about God in church.

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Some people say, "It's the shaking time. This is what's going to happen right before the Lord comes. The youth are going to leave the church. Let's just



This church was started by young people, and the servant of the Lord says it will be finished by young people. "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!" Serving the Lord isn't just for the older folks. Serving the Lord is for young folks too. Jesus put the disciples in their place: beneath the children. He stated, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mark 10:15, KJV).

Christian education and ministry to youth cannot be taken lightly. We are losing our youth to the many false religions of drugs, alcohol, gangs, sexuality, homosexuality, and the lifestyles of this world. Old forms of teaching no longer have an effect on our young people. The way you found