

# **Building a Sustainable Foundation for Revival and Reformation utilizing the ministry of Kid's in Discipleship in every Department of the Church**

## **I. Introduction**

Did you know that the median age of the population of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is 52? ***INNOVATION (Center for Creative Ministry) Volume 12, Number 19, November 1, 2006.*** Where are all the young people that could have made the median age lower? What have we done wrong since the children that has grown up in our church are not figuring in this statistic. If we do not change this trend then our church could be only one generation away from extinction. Statistics show that the Church is losing more than 51 + % of its youth. According to research by George Barna, the "magic" window to secure decisions for Jesus Christ is from birth – 13. ***Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions by George Barna, pages 18, 24, 47.*** Have we as a church done enough to disciple our children to Christ before the age of 13?

Based on findings from the Value Genesis Survey, George Barna's research and from other similar surveys it is evident that the major reason the Youth is leaving the Church is that many parents do not share their personal faith with their offspring. Why? Because they themselves have not been taught how.

The busy schedules of the families, along with the many-faceted influence from the media has led to a culture where family worship no longer part of their daily program.

The importance the family plays in forming the spiritual lives of the new generations have been known ever since God instructed His people through Moses (Deuteronomy 6:4-8) about the significance of using every opportunity to teach and remind the children about God's faithfulness and grace. The Spirit of Prophecy through Ellen G. White time and time again talks about the importance of creating a heavenly atmosphere in the home.

As the General Conference is emphasizing the need for revival and reformation, the Church has renewed its efforts in leading its members to renewed consecration to the Lord. But questions have been raised as to weather or not the Revival and Reformation

emphasis really can make a difference, will it have a lasting effect or just a temporary surge in spirituality.

As the General Conference leads out in its Revival and Reformation efforts there is a huge need to also refocus our efforts towards a very special group of people in our church, **our children and their parents**. Parents need help, first to become disciples themselves and then help in a practical way to disciple their children. As a church we must pool all our efforts together in a joint venture of all our departments, focusing on the various aspects of a child's development, to make sure that our children get the spiritual foundation they need in order to live their lives as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. **Here Kid's in Discipleship can play an important part**, and the General Conference needs to play a central role in this important work.

**Kid's in Discipleship (KID)** has already had an enormous effect on parents, families, church families and children in several divisions.

**Results for parents & mentors:**

They rediscover Jesus call to discipleship.

They intentionally mentor their own children.

They know longer need to depend upon someone else to connect their children with Jesus.

**Results for families:**

Family relationships are strengthened.

Spiritual communication is increased and "natural" as the Bible is studied.

Together they experience a deeper involvement in the life of the church in worship and ministry and mission.

**Results for the whole church family:**

The whole church family supports the individual families through prayers and encouragement.

They become a more caring church.

Revival and reformation happens, because children and youth learn to study and apply the Word of God.

**Results for children:**

Children establish a personal connection to Jesus in daily time alone with Him and His Word.

Children understand the Biblical foundation for their Christian beliefs.

Children experience the joy of bringing their friends to Jesus.

Children become involved in the ministries of the church according to their spiritual gifts

## **II. Kid's in discipleship. (K.I.D.)**

Kids in Discipleship is a ministry offered to local churches and is specially designed for families but with its focus on children. The K.I.D. ministry is a tool ministry for churches to use intentionally in its discipleship ministry. This ministry will equip parents to disciple their own children, to solidly root their children in a relationship with Jesus Christ, to empower families to participate in their local church through worship, in ministry to other believers, and in mission to others outside our faith.

In some areas of the Trans-European Division the percentage of youth leaving the church when they start their University education is as high as 80%. Because of this Kid's in Discipleship has been emphasized and implemented in most of its unions and has had a life changing effect on the families and the churches that has implemented it. **Kid's in Discipleship works!** it has been tested and tried and it is changing lives, and as the years go by we will see the changes more and more.

Kid's in Discipleship has proved itself to be effective in various parts of the world, not only in one culture. It is therefore becoming strategically important that the ministry is driven and coordinated by the top level of the church. **The world Divisions, unions and conferences will only begin to take serious note of the ministry as it is run from the top.**

### **III. Kid's in Discipleship is a ministry for every Department of the Church.**

In order for Kid's in Discipleship to become a life changing ministry in every church around the globe there is a need for all the departments of the church to work together in order to get the attention of a wider audience.

Children's ministries, Women's Ministries, Youth Ministries, Family Ministries, Ministerial, Health Ministry and Stewardship should, and need to, co-operate and put their forces together, working towards the same goal; that of bring our children into a close and lasting relationship with Jesus Christ. This would mean working together on training material and running seminars for parents and developing resources for the children all coming from the perspective and emphasis of each department.

- Children's Ministries –resources/lessons for children
- Women's Ministries – materials for parents/single mothers on child guidance, faith-sharing, family worships etc.

- Youth Ministries – material on how to follow up when the child becomes part of the youth so that the faith walk continues into the teen years and into adulthood.
- Family Ministries – materials on discipline, parenting skills, anger management etc.
- Ministerial – materials and training for pastors on the importance of them knowing what the children of their church is learning, K.I.D. training for every pastor, making every pastor a K.I.D. advocate and supporter.
- Health – materials and lessons on health full living for children (obesity).
- Stewardship – materials and lessons for children on tithing, giving, investment programs and managing money, a variety of tithe and gift envelopes for children

In many parts of the world the church's mindset on discipling children need's to change. It is a common practice in the majority of our world fields that there is no need to start any kind of teaching on doctrines or discipling before the children are old enough to be baptized (in their teens) But George Barna's research has clearly showed us that we have a window of opportunity between birth – 13 after this it is a lot harder to make this life changing decision. All the departments of the GC needs to lead out and do training to their counterparts in the Divisions on their role in also discipling the children of the church.

Discipling does not mean more programs for the children, but rather materials for the children, training materials for the parents and training materials for the church family all coming from the viewpoint and specialty of each department.

#### **IV. How it can work**

The General Conference needs a person that can:

- Liaison with Pastor Don Mac Lafferty and work with him when it comes to materials that is to be used around the world (culturally adapted).
- Liaison and run KID training with Pastor Mac Lafferty when the training is done outside of the North American Division
- Collaborate with the World Divisions so that the KID materials being developed in the various Divisions is made available to all the World Divisions
- Co-ordinate the work between the different departments.

- Work with statistics dep. On ways to measure the effect K.I.D. is having on retaining our children and youth in the church and on what effect it is having on church growth. (This has already been implemented in the TED)

The benefits of pushing Kid's in Discipleship from the highest level of our church would be a true Revival and Reformation and a fulfillment of the prophesy of the last days by the Prophet Joel as found in Acts 2:17. "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams."

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