

# Mentoring Youth for Mission in the Twenty-first (21st) Century: A Case Study of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The youth of the present generation are faced with issues that are beyond their control. These issues are as a result of the changing world. The present world of technology, the social media, and busy family life have created a gap between children and their parents, thereby making it difficult for the two parties to relate mutually. Incidentally, the church is not immune to the challenges bedeviling the contemporary world. One of the ways by which the church is negatively affected is in the aspect of mentoring. From the Apostles' days, mentoring process has been an effective way of helping and developing young Christians. However, the gap created between the older members and the young people in the Church through the advance in technology and human communication is somewhat rendering mentoring of little or no effect for achievement of mission goals in the 21st century. To ensure the trend does not hinder this generation from transmitting the apostolic values, which the preceding generations earnestly fought to sustain and carefully handed down to the succeeding generations, to those coming behind them, particularly in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria, something drastic must be done. It is against this backdrop this paper sets out to review the concept of mentoring in Christendom in the 21st Century from the perspective of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Nigeria. It therefore evaluates the extent the prevalent relationship realities between the older individuals and the youth have hindered productive mentoring processes and discouraged sustainable youth development in the church.

**Keywords:** Great Commission, mission, mentoring, youth, and the Church

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Ragins and Kram (2007:5), mentoring has been traditionally described as “a relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger, less experienced protégé for the purpose of helping and developing the protégé’s career.” Looking at the concept from a Christian perspective, mentoring has, to a great extent, contributed to the transmitting of Christian values from the apostles’ era to the contemporary part of the Christian history. In essence, much is expected of the older/experienced Christian of the end times to ensure promotion of cordial relationships between them and the younger/less experienced Christians in order to sustain and maintain the apostolic values the preceding generations earnestly fought to sustain and carefully handed down to the succeeding generation. The older Christians of these days are consequently responsible for

the transmission of the kind of Christianity they received to the present youths in its face value.

On the contrary, the current situation of the Church is an evidence of a wide gap between the older generation and the youth. Consequently, mentoring functions are inadequately attended to in many of the church dominations across the globe. As a result, many of the youth depend on worldly inspired sources of knowledge like the social media and peer group for experience. Most times, the experiences they have got from those sources have led them to becoming objects of immorality. If the various denominations have been up to their responsibilities, the situation will possibly have not been the case. Considering, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Nigeria as a case study for mentoring in the youth for mission in the 21st Century, the church has not done much in terms mentoring rather maintaining the status quo of using the older generation without involving the younger generation in leadership and mission. It is against this backdrop this paper sets out to review the concept of mentoring in Christendom in the 21st Century from the perspective of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria. It therefore evaluates the extent the prevalent relationship realities between the older individuals and the youth have hindered productive mentoring processes and discouraged sustainable youth development in the church.

### *Some Definitions*

*Great Commission:* “The Great Commission in Matthew 28: 18 – 20 is an instruction to Jesus’ disciples to make disciples of all nations, baptize and teach them to observe all things that Jesus has taught them” (Kgatie 2017:1).

*Mission:* Fernandinando (2008: 49 – 54) explains the concept of mission from a Christian context from four perspectives. First, the concept as *missio Dei*, which is a literal interpretation from Latin to draw attention to the point that all about Christian mission belongs to God, Who alone “initiates, empowers, directs, and blesses all true mission.” As a cultural mandate, it “encompasses everything that Jesus sends his people into the world to do.” When mission is considered as a social action, it “refers to the alleviation of human suffering and the elimination of injustice, exploitation, and deprivation.” The fourth view about mission is from the point of view of making disciples of all nations. It is seen in terms

of evangelism, that is, “something closely parallel to Jesus’ own practice in the discipling of the twelve.”

*Mentoring:* According to Merriam, mentoring is a powerful emotional interaction between an older and younger person, a relationship in which the older member is trusted, loving, and experienced in the guidance of the younger. The mentor helps shape the growth and development of the protégé<sup>1</sup>.

*Youth:* The United Nations (UN) defines youth as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our independence as members of a community. For statistical consistency across regions, the UN considers youth as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States (UNESCO 2016).

*The Church:* Louthian and Miller (1994:1) describe the term “church” as a concept “intended to be synonymous with the terms ‘denomination’ or ‘sect’ rather than to be used in the universal sense.” It implies that an otherwise qualified organization bring people together as the principle . . . means of accomplishing its exempt purpose.

*Morality and Ethics:* “Morality” and “ethics” are often thought to be interchangeable. However, while morality is a personal set of belief-based values, which might be said to constitute the core identity of an individual, ethics are usually articulated as those expectations and sanctions which are defined and enforced by a specific culture or society.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the two terms are not synonymous, even though they may not be mutually exclusive.

II. METHODOLOGY

Though the research employed quantitative research, it will end up using mixed-method to some extent. Why mixed-method, Nicolas Harkiolakis asserts that, “mixed-method is an attempt to draw from multiple epistemologies to frame and understand phenomena.”<sup>3</sup> This was employed to enable the researcher to have a clear picture of the situation. Also to evaluate the participants feelings and experience on the practice of mentoring and mission in the church.

*Sample and Population of the participants*

A total number of eight churches of population 1351 as at December 2019. And a sample of youth and adult was used to serve as a sample and representative to get information to curtail rowdy situation, so as to get near-perfect desired.

*Data collection and Analysis*

The aim of the study is to discover through investigation challenges of mentoring young people for mission and proffer a response. Questionnaires, focused group discussions were

the instruments used. Questionnaires were administered for the membership (including young people) of the church to hear their own responses in regard to the matter. One hundred (100) questionnaires were used to collect data for the study on mentoring Adventist youth for mission and was administered to church members of age bracket of 15-45 and above years. The group formed was engaged in a discussion to collect data that was used for analysis.

The analyses of the responses to the questions raised by the research began with regrouping the summary of the respondents’ answers for every question. The above was done in order to prescribe a more effective model on mentorship in the Seventh - day Adventist church. Out of 100 questionnaires issued 92 were returned filled, 2 were also returned but not filled while 6 were not returned. The returned number 92 indicates that 57 were male and 35 are females which is 61% and 39% respectively.

Table 1. Bible study is very important in mentoring the next generation by age group

age group	agreed	strongly agreed	strongly disagreed
18-23	2	4	2
24-29	2	24	
30-34		12	
35-39	2	4	
40-44	2	10	
45+	3	19	

79% strongly agreed that in-depth Bible study is very important in retaining next generation of church members while 2% strongly disagree within the age bracket of 18-23 years.

Table 2. The church focuses more on the elderly people than mentoring the younger people

age group	agreed	disagree	strongly agreed	strongly disagreed	undecided
18-23	2	2	2		4
24-29	9	11	6		
30-34	6	2	2	2	
35-39	4			2	
40-44		6	4		2
45+	8	9		2	2

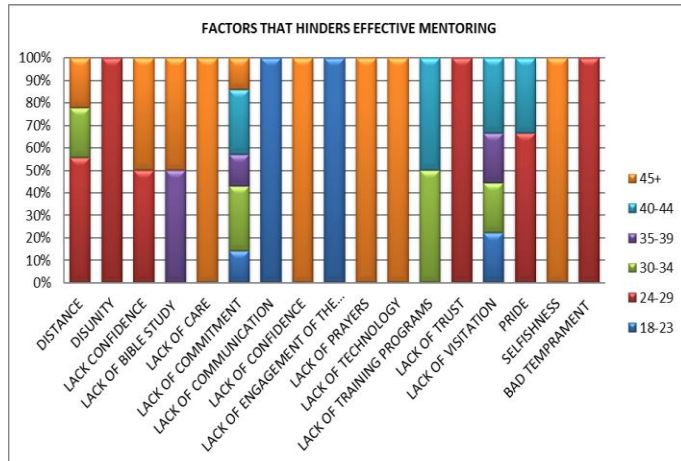
48% agrees to the fact that the church focuses more on the elderly people than mentoring the younger people while 37% are not in agreement and 15% not having either of the opinion.

<sup>1</sup> Merriam, S. (1983) Mentors and protégés: a critical review of the literature, *Adult Education Quarterly*, 33(3), pp.161-173.

<sup>2</sup> Eden Collinsworth (2018), *Behaving Badly: The New Morality in Politics, Sex and Business*; Barnes and Noble; United Kingdom.

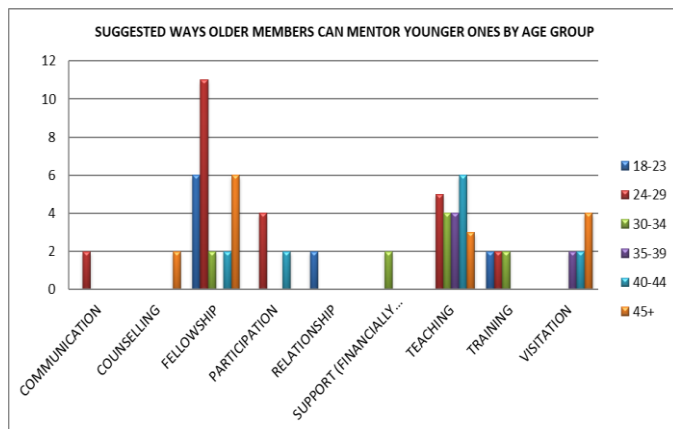
<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Harkiolakis, *Quantitative Research Methods: From Theory to Publication*, 2019, 25.

Figure 3. Factors that hinders effective mentoring and discipleship in the SDA church



Factors that have hindered effective mentoring and discipleship in the church include among others:- Lack of commitment 15%, Distance 11%, Lack of visitation 11%, Lack of trust among members 8%, Lack of bible study, lack of communication, lack of training programs and selfishness, 4% each E.T.C

Figure 4. Suggested ways older members can mentor younger ones by age group



Fellowship and teaching have a stronger bond for effective mentoring of the younger member. Taking 26, and 24% even the youth of age group 18-23, 24-29 suggest so.

### III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Questionnaire and Focus Group

Findings from the above responses are categorize into the following discourse: the challenges faced by the youth, lack of assigning responsibilities, relationship, lack of follow-up, parental pressure, relevant program and materials for mentorship. Despite the fact that the above represent individuals' opinions, it should be given serious attention because it is their opinion on mentorship for young people in the church.

*The challenges faced by the youth.* The youthful age are often a crisis time in life, it is a time of adventure feeling one have arrived and many complexities and challenges. In the words of Walter Mueller he says, "They are often years of conflict, struggle, and grief, years of new temptations, of trial and testing."<sup>4</sup> The pressure from group and the 21<sup>st</sup> century culture of the young people is diverting their attention through various means of information on anything that is call spiritual, especially when many of their questions are not answered by their parents and the Seventh-day Adventist church.

*Lack of assigning responsibilities.* There is a saying, "an ideal mind is the workshop of the devil" this is a true saying when you have a group of young people who are not engaged in anything, in this paper church activities and programs. As young people grow and become baptized members of the church, which qualifies them to hold any position in the church and contribute to the spiritual growth of the body of Christ by putting their talents to use. As they come to realization that they are just passive members of the church, they began to think of where the can be active. The typical culture in Nigeria is that until you reach a certain age in life, there are responsibilities that cannot be shouldered on young people. This has crept into the Seventh-day Adventist church and young people are caged in one corner of the church waiting for their time to be involved, engaged, assigned some responsibilities and also participate. This kind of behavior needs the quick response of the church so that the young people will have a sense of belonging.

*Relationship.* Relationship is key to human existence, imagine a world where people do not relate to each other, people respond to others based on how they relate to them. The early church grew faster as a result of relationship as recorded in Acts 2. In an organization or community where relationship is full of rancour, the respondents submits that, criticism, discouragement, judgmental attitudes, disunity and distance or gap are some of the things that affect a cordial relationship between the youth and the adult. It is in this line that during the study a generational gap between the adult and the young people was observed in the church. Mueller on the generational gap says, "We may share a roof and DNA, a cultural-generational gap will exist. He was quick to submit that, "if adults don't make an effort to love teenagers by working to close the gap, it will only continue to widen."<sup>5</sup> Mentorship and discipleship are all about relationship, which in turn will help in mission participation by the young people in Seventh-day Adventist church in Nigeria.

*Parental pressure.* The duties of parents to their children cannot and never be underestimated, understanding the fact that they are a gift, it is rest on their parents shoulders to care for them in all aspect until they form their homes. During the focus group discussion it was revealed that some parents has negligent attitudes and also given the young people pressure

<sup>4</sup> Walter Muller, Youth Culture. Grand Rapids: MI, Zondervan 2007; Nairobi, Kenya, July 28, 2019. 14  
<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 13

especially when it comes to the issues of spirituality and marriage. The above is an indication either they've forgotten the command of the Lord that, "...And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children..." (Deut. 6: 4- 6), and "Train up a child in the way he should go..." (Prov. 22:6). It calls for concern to hear that, parents will have no time for either morning or evening devotions with their families. It is also a concern to discover that some parents pressure their children to marry out of Seventh-day Adventist church. This calls for the church to make up for the gap especially on the spiritual aspect, because when the youth are rooted and grounded in their faith they will stand the test of time.

*Follow-up.* Paul says, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do" (Acts 15: 36). Visitation in a sense a follow-up not necessarily when it goes bad, it is even better to follow up when things are good and normal. Mueller declares, "When the potter keeps the clay in her hands, working and reworking it with tender care, it eventually turns into a beautiful and unique piece of pottery."<sup>6</sup> In the focus group discussion the young people lamented about the attitudes of lack of caring in the church especially when a young person gets it wrong. To them older members do not hold to the confidentiality of the young people and for that they lost a trust in them and sought help from among themselves whenever they are in trouble.

*Relevant materials for mentorship program.* The mentorship program for discipleship (mission) as done in the church is the pastors' otherwise known as baptismal class. Another understanding of the mentorship has to do with departmental monthly or weekly gathering where one or two things are learned. A need for Bible study materials that will address issues that young people are struggling with in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be designed and made available by the Seventh-day Adventist church in Nigeria considering the context. This type of Bible study series is very necessary and paramount for mentoring the young people for mission.

#### *Morality and the Christian Youth*

From the youth-in-Christ's standpoint, morality has a unique interpretation. The youth constitute the cohort of the overall Church population, which, regardless of gender, falls within the age bracket of 15 and 24.<sup>7</sup> It is to the cohort that the Apostle John wrote, "I am writing to you . . . young men,

*because you have overcome the evil one.* I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you . . . young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one," (1John 2:13 &14 ESV *emphasis supplied*). Indeed, it is evident that, with the energy and vibrancy of this societal cohort, it is much more fitted for the spread of the light of the Gospel than any other social cohort. Hence, the Apostle observes that the youth cohort is imbued with faith (primarily because the Word of God abides in them); confidence (because they have overcome the evil one); and the required energy (they are strong). Thus, youth is the fittest societal cohort for the invention of a better society, particularly when they are engaged with new and innovative social projects. Such projects usually pull young people from the evil attractions that characterized the moral decadence of modernity.

Defining the concept of mission from the context of the Great Commission, Gunter asserted, "If you take missions out of the Bible, you won't have anything left but the covers".<sup>8</sup> Beyond Gunter's position on what mission should be for every Christian, it is more important to examine the question implied in her definition of the concept in order to establish what the Master had in mind when He gave the Great Commission – either as something that should be considered optional or a command to carry out a specified task. The phrase, "nothing left but the covers," is more than a hyperbole, since it reveals the simple truth of how mission outreach is underscored in the Scripture. The whole of the Bible is a simple story – the story of God on a mission to reclaiming His lost creation as summarised by the Lord Himself in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish." In other words, God's planned mission of redemption for mankind is foregrounded from the Garden of Eden. Thus, God did not send His Son to the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him<sup>9</sup> (John 3:17). That is why Christians have to accept the view that the entire Bible is about God's execution of a master-plan to seek, redeem, and save the lost souls of men, confirming His disposition to the work of salvation. In relation to that, Gunter stated, "If you take missions out of the Bible, you won't have anything left but the covers," meaning that the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria must not take mission for granted if they will be in the centre of God's will – the Great Commission to rescue the perishing.

#### *Redefining Mentorship*

Providing a precise definition of mentoring that captures the contemporary usage will take up more space and time than this article can afford. Meanwhile, a redefinition has been attempted. The redefinition subsumes mentoring under

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 17

<sup>7</sup> There is no universally agreed international definition of the youth age group. For statistical purposes, however, the United Nations—without prejudice to any other definitions made by Member States—defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This definition, which arose in the context of preparations for the International Youth Year (1985) (see A/36/215), was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/28 of 1981. All UN statistics on youth are based on this definition, as is reflected in the annual yearbooks of statistics published by the UN system on demography, education, employment and health. United Nations Publications @ <https://www.un.org/en>

<sup>8</sup> From Howard Culbertson's compilation entitled, *Fulfilling Christ's Great Commission: Mission slogans and notable quotes from global missionaries*; online @ [hculbert@snu.edu](mailto:hculbert@snu.edu) World missions Bible passages [accessed on 23/02/2019]

<sup>9</sup> See Jeremiah 29:11 and John 3:17



the main purpose of the article, which is mentoring the youth for mission. The article then looks into the myths and realities of the Greek mythology from which the concept of mentoring is derived and subsequently emphasizes its relevance to youth mentoring in the Church.

In the myth, Homer describes the royal household of Ithaca as being in utter disarray. Telemachus appears several times depressed, especially in time of crisis. That leads to his inability to experience transition to adulthood. Mentor has presided over this havoc and become a laughing stock in the public. He is not portrayed as mentoring Telemachus in any meaningful way. Athene – an omniscient and omnipotent deity – has to step in to remedy the situation. She is not, however, typically female. Athene has no mother, but has sprung forth, fully formed, from her father, Zeus's head. As such, in her role as the god of wisdom, she is an embodiment of male rationality. She carries out a number of functions like advising, role modeling, advocating, and raising self-esteem. Such functions are typical of mentoring. Athene spearheads the intervention as part of her principal efforts to restore Odysseus to his throne. That will serve as a means by which all issues arising, while she is away, will be resolved. Her relationship with Telemachus is impersonal and altruistic, as there is no sense of any deep emotional bond between them. Many critics of mentoring have referred to Mentor as a wise and kind elder, a surrogate parent, a trusted adviser, an educator, and a guide (Anderson & Lucasse Shannon, 1995; Haensley & Parsons, 1993; Merriam, 1983; Tickle, 1993). He is also presented as one who nurtures, supports, and protects. He is a role model and a man of vision. He is endowed with the capacity to identify the potentials in his followers. He is consequently expected to have built on his integrity to develop a robust relationship with the young Telemachus through mutual affection and respect. To advocates of mentorship, those attributes should characterize a mentor and define mentoring.

Mentoring can therefore be redefined from perspective of Athene's role in the Homeric saga rather than from the role of the helpless Mentor, which has been over-flogged in the traditional definitions (Ford, 1999b; Megginson & Clutterbuck, 1995; Roberts, 1998; Shea, 1992; Stammers, 1992; Wiggans, 1998). Therefore mentors, particularly in the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the century, should need to consistently exhibit qualities of altruism, selflessness, and commitment. That will help them to achieve in the young generation ethical and moral objectives by which irking antithetical issues of character<sup>10</sup> that has engulfed the contemporary world can be resolved. The elders in the church should then help the mentees to optimize their potentials as they prepare for self-actualization while performing required

<sup>10</sup> Helen Colley (2001); Righting Re-writings of the Myth of Mentor: a Critical Perspective on Career Guidance Mentoring; in *The British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 29 (2) 177-198. Available online at <http://journalonline.tandf.co.uk>

community roles within and outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria.

### *The Youth in Modern Society – the Need for Mentoring*

The Apostle Paul, demonstrating the importance of mentoring, told his protégé, Timothy that

But understand this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, opposed to what is good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, loving pleasure rather than loving God. They will maintain the outward appearance of religion but will have repudiated its power. So avoid people like these (2Tim 3:1 – 5 ESV).

In other words, the end-time society in which parents and elders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church have to raise the young ones is a morally depraved world. Pipim confirmed Paul's prediction, citing his experiences on the campuses of the US and Western Europe. He described the secular campuses in those countries as “. . . concrete jungles, which are such because of the lure of research that has led to the relegation of the knowledge of God.”<sup>11</sup> Some of the things enumerated by Pipim may not be taking place in our local schools and campuses in Nigeria and Africa. However, we cannot deny the fact that globalization is fast turning the world into a single culture – a global culture of what Pastor Wintley Phipps calls the culture of digital idolatry<sup>12</sup> – that is importing many vices into our societies. Pipim described some of his observations in those campuses as:

- The new age mindset or new-ageism that is anchored on emerging spirituality;
- Gender-neutral housing that has gone from co-ed dormitories where men and women share the same hostels to co-ed hostel rooms in which men and women share the same rooms;
- Religious fanaticism with football as the dominant religion and other sports as religious sects;
- Rituals that include such annual celebrations as the “hash-bash week” during which all sorts of illegal substances are consumed freely while the police watch helplessly and the naked mile run which entails men and women stripping naked and running for a mile;
- Curricular paradigms that include evolution as the guiding principle of science, Marxism for history,

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Samuel Korenteng Pipim (2009), from the series TROJAN HORSES: ALL HANDOUTS; a document comprising the six sets of handouts prepared for the Trojan Horse series presented at the 2009 Generation Youth for Christ (GYC) meeting in Louisville, Kentucky. The full title of the series in the GYC brochure read: TROJAN HORSES: Counterfeit Revivals, The Emerging Church, & the New Spirituality Movements Presented by: Samuel Koranteng Pipim.

<sup>12</sup> Pastor Wintley Phipps in his sermon “Remember Me” delivered at the South Central conference Youth Camp meeting with the theme, “At the Cross”, in Nashville Tennessee USA, 2016.

new-ageism for psychology, feminism for language studies, lesbianism for literature, and so on;

- The search for answers and fulfillment that has led to an over-indulgence in alcohol, sex (including drunken orgies), occultism, and mysticism.

Pipim lamented that “almost 75% of all Christian school-age children and youth are on these campuses and what is even worse is that the Christian institutions are now copying those secular campuses. Those vices and ills are now found on Christian campuses albeit, with Christian labels.”<sup>13</sup> Newcombe (2018) is of the opinion that the growing call for more and more laws is a sign that there is a problem in the world we live in, and the problem requires more and more regulations. The challenge, however, is how formulation of more regulations can be made to heal the ills of a sick society in which laws and protocols are not properly enforced. Newcombe, citing Adams, lamented the decadence of the present society. He argued that a free society has to be a virtuous society. Constitutions are made for judicious leaders who are guided by personal morality that should operate in an environment where religious ethic is prevalent. Since those requisites are lacking, constitutions have proved completely unfit for our modern governments. In the modern society, God has been taken out of schools and Judeo-Christian morality is as well not welcomed.<sup>14</sup> The youth live, more or less, in the ‘jungles’ of a world in which religion has lost its God. It is what the Apostle Paul describes as “the outward appearance of religion but . . . (a society), which has repudiated its power” [2Tim 3:5 NET]. Hence, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria is expected to take up the responsibility of mentoring the youth out of the ‘concrete jungles’ of popular morality and bringing them back to Jesus for a reunion with the Father. That implies that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria, in collaboration with other church denominations across the globe, must play the role Athene plays in Homer’s Greek saga. According to Colley (2001),

Ford correctly identifies the goddess Athene and her work to reunite Telemachus with his father, rather than the actions of Mentor himself, as the central elements of the myth (that gave birth to the concept of mentoring). He associates . . . *Athene’s role in encouraging Telemachus, building his morale, inspiring him to adult independence, and illuminating his way as, together with his father, she leads him to overthrow the usurpers. Ford also selects, or ascribes, particular qualities displayed by Athene – her ‘high standards of professional practice’, her willing voluntarism, and her*

*evidence of possessing the necessary skills*<sup>15</sup> (emphasis added).

Older and experienced members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria need to play the role of Athene in the lives of the youth by helping them to mature out. The form of Christianity every member of the Adventist practices should illuminate the paths of the youth in Christ, by whom they can overcome the world. Above all, the church has to show evidence of professionalism in mentoring the youth, using all the necessary skills at her disposal.

#### *Conceptualizing and Contextualizing Mentoring*

Although mentoring has become extremely popular in the last two or three decades, it has rather been weakly conceptualized<sup>16</sup>. On that basis, the Seven-day Adventist Church, Nigeria across all her branches in the country needs to reconceptualise and contextualize mentoring, particularly as it pertains to mentoring the youth for a specific activity in this case-mission. The process is necessary for transiting her youth from school to the living world of work and citizenship.

Ford (1999) identified the ethos of professional mentoring in his submission,

‘It is illuminating to return to the original source of the word “mentor”, and to discern at least some of the characteristics of the behaviour that lend force to the term’s entering in the English language in order to describe a particular quality of caring relationship’<sup>17</sup>.

Since the term became accepted in the English language, many types of relationships which might be described as mentoring relationships, have been based on important practices in certain cultures and historical eras like the religious master-disciple or the artisan craftsman-apprentice relationships<sup>18</sup>. Mentoring is chiefly characterized by some form of extra-curricular and parental relationship in relation to the personality of exceptional individuals like Socrates and Plato, or Haydn and Beethoven, who were known for some emotional bonding that was absent in the impersonal relationship portrayed in the Odyssey. In relation to that, Merriam stated that

From the legacy of famous mentoring relationships comes the sense of mentoring as a powerful emotional interaction between an older and younger person, a relationship in which the older member is trusted, loving, and

<sup>13</sup> Cited in Professor John Garah Nengel (2014), Education and Environmental Management – the Role of Christian Educators, in a lead paper delivered At the Convention of Adventist Educators held at Buken Academy, Bukuru, Jos, Plateau State, On 30th July 2014 [unpublished]

<sup>14</sup> Newcombe, Jerry (2018), The Price of Kicking God Out of the Schools, in *Christian Headlines, (Truth in Action)*, online @ <https://www.christianheadlines.com/> [accessed on 21/11/2018]

<sup>15</sup> Helen Colley (2001), Righting re-writings of the myth of Mentor: a critical perspective on career guidance mentoring, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 29 (2) 177-198.

<sup>16</sup> Helen Colley (2000), in a paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Cardiff University, September 7-10 2000; published online @ <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/> [accessed on 13/02/2018]

<sup>17</sup> Ford, G. (1999b). Youthstart Mentoring Action Project: Project Evaluation and Report Part II. Stourbridge, Institute of Careers Guidance.

<sup>18</sup> Gay, B. & Stephenson, J. (1998) The mentoring dilemma: guidance and/or direction? *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 6(1), pp.43-54.

experienced in the guidance of the younger. The mentor helps shape the growth and development of the protégé<sup>19</sup>.

From the foregoing, mentoring in a contemporary world can be seen from the perspective of the myth about Mentor in Homer's *Odyssey*. That brings to the fore the argument that the various definitions of mentoring are weak in terms of its functions, and fragmented by some myriad opinions. Over the years, the concept of mentoring has grown strong in terms of the emotional disposition it demands of mentors through rhetorical and mythic representations. Today, emphasis is placed on evaluation of reports on the quality of mentoring relationship and achievement of empathy for young people. Thus, "Mentors befriend the young people by getting to know them and trying to understand their world view. . ." <sup>20</sup> By implication, the youth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, especially in this century, should be assured of a friendly environment both in the church and at home.

Mentoring allows the mentor to offer advice, but only after earning the client's trust and respect. That suggests that the mentor should be seen supportively standing beside the client. He should prepare to share the client's burdens, at least in terms of empathy. He should be a genuinely experienced individual, and be transparent in the genuineness to the client<sup>21</sup>. Since emotional disposition dominates the various definitions, the concept of mentoring has lost its meaning, and has somewhat metamorphosed into a modern day slogan, 'Love will win the day.'<sup>22</sup> However, the change that occurs should not affect importance of the older members' helping and developing the younger generation as handed down by the founding fathers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### *Contextualizing Mentoring*

Jesus Christ commissioned His Church to make disciples of all nations (Acts 1:8). To demonstrate the reality of the Christian youth's readiness for mentoring, the Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministry (AYM) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church could be given a consideration. The aim of AYM is "The Advent message to the entire world in my generation" while its mission is "To lead young people in a saving relationship with Jesus and help them embrace his call to discipleship." The AYM pledge is "Loving the Lord Jesus, I promise to take an active part in the work of the Adventist youth ministries, doing what I can do to help others and to finish the work of the gospel in all the world". The statements

and pledges spell out the ideals and ambitions of Adventist youth, which may also be true about the youth of some other Christian denominations. One may also say that the youth are usually ready, willing, and able to carry the ideals of Christianity to the ends of the earth. If that is the case, Thunberg's assertion that "young people are unstoppable"<sup>23</sup> – especially when they are united in mission – is true.

Such ideals confirm the truth about the youth concerning the demonstration of expected Christian lifestyles. They have also proved that they possess the qualities needed to achieve the goal of carrying out "the work of the gospel in all the world"<sup>24</sup>. Hence, the Seventh-day Adventist Church should continue to encourage her youths and inexperienced members to respond actively to the Great Commission and prevail over negative influences of the current socio-economic and cultural challenges. If the church fails in this regard, external forces of the globalized culture will weaken the church militant – the youth – and progressively reduce the morale of the church army. The Seventh-day Adventist Church should not forget that the enemy in the form of secularism and social decadence is "like a roaring lion" seeking the youth he will devour. The management and older members of the church should then device effective means by which the focus of the youth in the church can be broadened and sharpened for mission in these end-times, more importantly that the Great Commission as an all-inclusive command demands the active participation of all according to divine instructions:

He, the very one who descended, is also the one who ascended above all the heavens, in order to fill all things. And *he himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God – a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature [Ephesians 4:10-13 ESV (emphasis supplied)].*

Therefore, where the youth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are willing to take up the responsibility of the propagation of the gospel, the Church should not hesitate to mentor them into becoming a formidable army for the Lord.

#### *The how of Mentoring*

The twenty first century is witnessing many changes owing to the breakthroughs in technology. The advancement in technology has turned the world into a global village. Unfortunately, that is not without some challenges. Many people around the world are becoming immorally enamored by the influence of modernity and postmodernism being

<sup>19</sup> Merriam, S. (1983) Mentors and protégés: a critical review of the literature, *Adult Education Quarterly*, 33(3), pp.161-173.

<sup>20</sup> Employment Support Unit (2000) *Mentoring Young People: Lessons from YOUTHSTART* (Birmingham, Employment Support Unit); in Helen Colley (2000), in a paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Cardiff University, September 7-10 2000; published online @ <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/> [accessed on 13/02/2018]

<sup>21</sup> Ford, G. (1999). *Career Guidance and Socially Excluded Young People: Working with Groups* (Briefing). Stourbridge: Institute of Careers Guidance.

<sup>22</sup> Helen Colley, 2001; *Righting rewritings of the myth of Mentor: A critical perspective on career guidance mentoring Article in British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* · May 2001 DOI: 10.1080/03069880124266.

<sup>23</sup> Activist Greta Thunberg Leads the Youth Climate Strike on September 20, 2019 in New York City. Roy Rochlin/WireImage Climate activist Greta Thunberg said that during the climate strikes across the globe on Friday "we showed that we are united, and that we young people are unstoppable." Online @ <https://www.insider.com/>

<sup>24</sup> The Seventh-day Adventist Youth Pledge



promoted through technology. Undoubtedly, the youth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are not immune to the trend. Hence, the older members and parents in the church are faced with the challenge of keeping the young people from seeing what is going on in the world through the various technologically promoted platforms. However, the elders and parents need not relent in their efforts to live up to their responsibility concerning the young ones. In essence, both the adult and the youth of the Seventh - day Adventist ministry need to live up to the expectation of being “the salt the world” and remain unstained by the prevalent lifestyle in the world while they are still in the world. Mentoring the youth in the Church is therefore necessary to build an army of vibrant young disciples for Christ. The individual Adventists in this army, by living a life without blemish and being committed to taking the Gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth, will be examples of Christian living both in preaching the Word and in action.

While explaining how to mentor Christian youth for mission and who does the mentoring, Rivera identified the theology of Jesus. He argued that Jesus did not establish a formal school; He never organized regular seminars and workshops; He did not write a curriculum or define a course of study; and He never had a register for the enrolment of students. Rivera concluded that Jesus only taught His disciples and others His way, and draw them close to Himself. He was His own school.<sup>25</sup> Going by Rivera’s argument, it follows that Jesus can simply be regarded as a Mentor or a Mentoring School.

Mallison, a specialist in mentoring, categorically asserted that Jesus is our one and only perfect model, our only message, and the best method in the mentoring project. Mark stated that the Master “appointed twelve that they might be with him. . .” (Mark 3:14). By keeping His disciples close to Himself and sharing the whole of His life with them, Jesus molded their lives and made them to be like Him to the extent that members of the Sanhedrin Council confirmed that “they had been with Jesus.”<sup>26</sup> Based on that record, mentors, especially in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria, are expected to be models to their mentees for effective mentorship, particularly that the youth of today need role models not only preachers or Pharisees. Consequently, while distinguishing between the rabbis and Jesus, Boldeeau opined that

Jesus made Himself available to His disciples (Mark 9:30-31). He took special interest in their understanding of His teaching and mission (Mark 4:34, Matt. 16:21), He exercised patience with them because they were slow in understanding (Mark 8:17-21), He displayed great concern and love for them, and longed for their companionship (John 18:8, 15:9; Luke 22:15). He addressed them in affectionate

terms like ‘little Children’ (John 13:33) ‘children’ (Mark 10:24), ‘friends’ (John 15:15; 21:5) and ‘my friends’ (Luke 12:4; John 15:14).<sup>27</sup>

In the like manner, the mentors of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria in different contexts – home, church, and general public, need to bear it in mind that their mentees love, cherish, and understand them. In the same vein, the mentees need the love of their love (that is, the mentors’ love) and can only have it if they (the mentors) are patient with them and address them with genuine affection. On Christ-like mentoring, Engstrom and Bohrer listed five cardinal characteristics of mentorship, viz., service, leadership, selfless sacrifice, gender inclusiveness, and trustworthiness.<sup>28</sup> Jesus exemplified all of the above. He served His disciples; He provided impeccable and enduring leadership principles for all of them; He was at home with all kinds of people irrespective of their gender, ideology, and age; He earned their confidence and trust: and He selflessly sacrificed His life for all who believe. Muganda mentioned that after Jesus had mentored His disciples (mentees), He gave them the key to His Kingdom and released them into the world with the Great Commission.<sup>29</sup> Such gesture is greatly required from the older/experienced members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria to the youth/inexperienced section of the church.

#### *Mentoring Tools for Achieving the Great Commission among Young People in the 21st Century*

1. *Training:* Commenting on training young people, White said, “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world.”<sup>30</sup> The training of mentees by the mentor is the number one consideration in mentoring the young people for mission. Jesus devoted over three years to training His disciples. All those who were mentored in the Scripture received training for a certain period of time. During the mentoring training, the mentee is given an opportunity to perform and assist the mentor, as a proof that the mentee is catching up. That means that, the mentees of this generation, too, must listen, watch, observe, and apply the knowledge he has acquired in social situations from the elders and older members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria before going into mission fields.

<sup>27</sup> Desmond Gaius Boldeeau, developing a mentoring model, based on Christ’s approach to discipleship, for intern pastors in the British union, Doctor of Ministry DMin (Andrew Universitys, 2014),84-85.

<sup>28</sup> Ted W. Engstrom and Norman B. Bohrer, The fine art of mentoring: Passing on to others what God has given to you [tessesse: Brent wood, Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1989], 157-159.

<sup>29</sup> Baraka Mugandan, Unlocking the key chain, Lecture Notes, Adventist University of Africa, (Nairobi, Kenya July 28, 2019).

<sup>30</sup> Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People, (MI: Hagerstown, 1969). 196

<sup>25</sup> Orlando Rivera. Mentoring stages in the Relationship between Barnabas and Paul (Regent University, 2007), 2.

<sup>26</sup> John malison, mentoring to develop disciples and leaders (South Australia: Openbookhowden, 1998)



2. *Compassion*: Christ had compassion on those He was mentoring for the mission. Compassion is an important requirement for good mentoring. Mentors, who have the knowledge of the theory and the real world, will translate their experiences into the challenges facing the ones they are training.<sup>31</sup> In the mentoring process, especially in mentor/mentee relationship for mission in the 21st century, young people of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria need compassion. That will help them to overcome the challenges of youthful exuberance and fragility.
3. *Closeness*: When Jesus called His disciples to follow Him, He intended to have a close relationship with them, using mentoring exercise and discipleship. Throughout the Bible, mentors and mentees relationship is always close and not distant. Similarly, mentors need close relationships with their mentees for effectiveness. For young people of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria to be mentored for mission in this century, they must engage in close relationships.
4. *Trust and Being Entrusted*: After training, the next thing that happens is to release the mentee. It is necessary to allow the mentees to work independently as Jesus did after training His own disciples. The release brings about authority and responsibility. On that basis, the relationship between the mentor and mentee in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria should be such that will be built on trust. The young people in the church should therefore note that they have been trusted and entrusted with the responsibility of the gospel commission in their generation.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATION

In applying a biblical model of youth mentoring for mission in the 21st century from the Seventh-day Adventist Church perspective, the experience of spiritually matured older individuals is required. This is demonstrated in the relationships between Elijah and Elisha; Naomi and Ruth; Mordecai and Esther; Jesus and His disciples; Barnabas and Paul; and Paul and Timothy. The Adventist Church can therefore benefit from the experience of the biblical characters by pairing adults of good spiritual records on morality with young individuals to serve as mentors and mentees to each other respectively.

#### V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The youth of the present generation are faced with issues that are beyond their control. These issues are as a result of the changing world. The present world of technology, the social media, and busy family life have created a gap between children and their parents, thereby making it difficult for the two parties to relate mutually. The family system has collapsed. Thus, children are made to depend on the internet,

peer group, and social media for solutions to life challenges instead of their parents. Specifically, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nigeria has a fair share of the problems. Mueller submitted that “All of these factors keep families away from eating together on a regular basis, and these realities have certainly contributed to the fact that our teenagers need advice, without which they shall certainly (have) to turn to friend.”<sup>32</sup> That the church may be able to overcome those challenges, it is necessary the Seventh-day Adventist Church create conducive environments in which the youth in the church can have individuals who will work closely with them as advisers, guardians and counselors, and impact in them that Christian values as handed down from the previous generations of Adventists through mentoring.

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.imb.org/2016/12/27.Fundamentals-of-mentorship>

<sup>32</sup>Walter Mueller, *Youth Culture*. (Grand Rapids: MI, Zondervan 2007), 15-16

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