

**YOUTH AS CHANGE AGENTS IN THE
CHURCH:**

NBTS
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THE EXPERIENCE OF THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION M Div

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CONCLUSION

Youth is a time by which adjustments are made by a person from childhood to adulthood. It is a time of change. So youth are agents that can precipitate changes in the church.

As change agents, youth initiates a process of change. Change in itself can be either good or bad. Older people through interaction with the young people should decide the direction which change will take. Change cannot be done unilaterally by the youth acting alone or on behalf of outside interest. Hence the people who work with the youth can be referred to as animator, motivator, mobiliser, facilitator or change agent.

To help the youth in their process of changing, the youth minister is called to keep the tradition of the secular and Christian culture by giving respect to whom it is due. Youth are to be made to “obey their parents in the Lord Eph. 6:1. They ought to proclaim to all other youth that Godly character is necessary and important for all that intends to enter the peace of God.

¹ Watson Stanley J. Youth Ministry in the church Nashville Broad Press, 1979 p. 12.

Youth leaders need to imbibe humility, and only a humble leader can encourage the followers to be humble Phil. 2: 6 – 11 The culture of decency and politeness is valued in the Baptist church. Bad manners must be avoided by the youth so that they will not tarnish the good image of the church.

“Finally, take heed to your ministry “let no one despise your youth but be an example to the believers in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). “Till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, give rapt attention to reading of the word of God, to exhortation, to doctrine, do not neglect the gift of God in you, listen to the leading of Holy Spirit. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine, continue in them for in doing this you will save yourself and those who hear you (1Timothy 4:16).

In our daily experience as Christian, we are confronted with the fact that our lives are the book that people are reading.

It is young people’s duty to witness to their peers for Christ. Where elders fail because of the over-stressed and often misunderstood generation gap, members of your own age group will easily identify with you and win you over. Yours also has the duty of tempering, through Christ like humility. But as you try carrying the elders along, remember to be humble enough to listen to their warnings about where the pitfalls are. Never you think that you have a reservoir of wisdom. Learn to listen and to reflect on what you hear from elders. Remember that age is no disease. On the contrary, age is healthy and it is merely a state of mind. A man of 90 may be progressive, alert, and consequently young in mind. A

youth of 20 may be unprogressive and phlegmatic, and consequently old and useless. Thus you will find that you will have everything to gain from having some elders as your consultants from time to time. In fact, this is precisely why the Youth Committee of the Baptist World Alliance retains a certain percentage of old people on its membership. These old members are NOT “young” but they are “Youth Leaders”. They are often men of alert minds.

Let me here recount a well known story of a king who asked the young men to kill all their parents. All of them carried out the king’s order, but one of them kept his father. One day the king called the young men and ordered them to produce a long rope made of yam flour. He threatened to kill them if they failed to produce the rope within seven days. Days passed and they had no solution to the problem. Then the one who kept his father went to tell his father their problem. Said the old man to his son, “call your friends, and all of you go back to the king say to him “your Majesty our fathers had this type of rope made for you in the past. Please give us a sample of it so that we may follow it to produce a new one. They went to the king and told him what the old man directed them to say. The king shook his head in frustration and asked, “Is there an elder left in this kingdom”. The young men answered with the prayer “Long live the Elders, long live the king”.

The lesson in the foregoing story for you is clear and simple. Be humble enough to listen to the caution from elders. Be humble enough to listen to the voice of God in all that you think, plan or execute. Let not

personal ambition, the lust for office or power; blind you. Let Christ Lead at all times and let love and brotherhood prevail as you interact and have fellowship together as young people.

Nigeria Baptist Convention Youth Fellowship must have as its watchword Ecclesiastics 12: 13-14 "fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's call. For God will bring every work into judgement including every secret thing whether good or evil.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Having studied the organisation's mode, programmes and the personnel involved from inception, the following suggestions in some areas are needed to be closely looked into so that a meaningful adjustment can be made now and in the nearest future.

Age Bracket

The present age limit of the Nigerian Baptist Youth from 17 years to 40 years is too wide. A typical example is area where a child of seventeen will be in the same camp with a father of 40 years (forty years, if care is not taken fear of intimidation may set in except in few areas whereby some radical teenagers' area found to be bold in facing the issue like David in 1 Samuel 17:21.

The age bracket of seventeen years and forty years cannot relate adequately at the same level.

This will not give room for us to develop future leaders. With the little effort of this thesis in my few interview and relation with various age

brackets, I will suggest that the Convention at round table conference come out with an age bracket of seventeen years to thirty years for Nigerian Baptist Youths.

The rest should go to MMU and female counterpart to WMU. The adult should therefore slow down for young people to go up, this can be done gradually within five to ten years.

The youth ministry should be a form for the development of future leaders who are ready as bride of Christ and who in turn will go out and affect changes in our contemporary world positively for the coming of the Lord (John 14:1-3).

Duplicating Effort

The issue of duplicating efforts needs to be looked into. The Convention in particular should project and harmonise our duplicating effort. Same age bracket different convention programmes. The youth organization, Lydia circle, Royal Ambassador, Girls Auxiliary, how can a young boy or a girl be involved actively well in these programmes.

It is therefore recommended that the groups should have programmes like that of Sunday school, Church training group where they meet together.

Personal Evangelism should be a compelling responsibility of the youths. Their efforts should be directed to bring other youth outside the fold to realities of the gospel of Christ Jesus irrespective of their cultural background ability and characteristics. The issue of follow up should be taken seriously. The young Christian added to the church in all youth mission work needs to be brought up to maturity. Certain segments of

