According to Steve Adams, author of *Children’s Ministries on Purpose*, many of our children’s ministries are a flurry of activities, events, and programs that volunteers, and leaders put in long hours and work hard for the good of the children and the parents they serve. However, children’s leaders and teachers need to remember that our primary goal is to lead the children toward spiritual health. To do this effectively, we need to be intentional in our ministry strategies.

What are your strategies to reach this goal? Are you just busy with planning programs?

It may well be a great idea to plot your strategy along three pathways: Events, Weekend Services, and Small Group Discipleship.

1. **Events:** While we need to plan many events for nurturing the children within our church, we also need to plan events to connect with children in the community so that we share the good news of salvation with them. For many unchurched people, coming to church may be foreign to them or even a bit scary. So fun events for their children would be more appealing to them than sending their kids to church.
COME, YE CHILDREN, HEARKEN UNTO ME: I WILL TEACH YOU THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

(PSALM 34:11 KJV)

2. **Weekend Services:** The Sabbath weekend worship services and activities provide prime time contact with the children who attend regularly. This is the time the children get exposed to Bible stories, Jesus, and other believers at worship. It is important that we get their attention, get them interested, get them connected, get them involved, and get them back. Helping children feel welcome by organizing great Sabbath schools, making learning fun with lots of participation would be a drawing power for them to return. Work with pastors to incorporate ways for children to actively participate in the worship service. It is important to utilize an intentional follow-up strategy to connect with those who missed attendance for several weeks.

3. **Small Group Discipleship:** This is an important pathway to lead our children from the weekend services to the next level of spiritual growth and commitment. This is usually a midweek small group study for the children according to their age levels. Children learn to know Jesus, grow in Jesus, how to serve Him, and share Him. In these small group Bible studies, children learn about sin, salvation, baptism, the Holy Spirit, heaven, communion, the Second Coming of Jesus, and other important doctrines.

I believe children’s leaders are already busily implementing many events and organizing great Sabbath schools for their children. However, we may not have done much with intentional small group discipleship, though in some churches they have run Kids in Discipleship. The challenge many leaders face is sustaining these small groups.

Yes, children’s ministry leaders, let’s move our children to greater spiritual health. Let’s do more than just planning events and excellent Sabbath Schools. Let’s be creative and intentional in organizing small groups for our children. Let’s work with pastors and other leaders to plan small groups for our children to grow deeper in God’s Word and in the joy of salvation in Jesus Christ.

_Linda Mei Lin Koh_
GC Children’s Ministries Director

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**EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION**

**Ethiopia Union Mission holds TMI/TCI meetings**

Speakers from all over the world, as from March 15 to 31 descended on Ethiopia Union Mission for TMI meetings. Dr Linda Koh, CHM Director of the General Conference and Dr Saustin Sampson Mfune, GC Associate Director, started their meetings on Sabbath March 23. Mfune was at Filwuha SDA Church in Addis Ababa. There were 110 children attending on Sabbath, but attendance dropped to 35 children during the week. The daily program included prayer, singing and watching part of the “Musical Journey” DVD, a GC CHM resource written by Mfune and his son Dumisani. Then they participated in active discussion.

One group went for coloring activities while the other group practiced what they would showcase on Sabbath in the main Adult's listening to children showcasing the CELEBRATIONS Castle message
church. On Sabbath morning the children presented what they had learned during the week. One highlight that captivated the audience was the illustration of the CELEBRATIONS health program. Then they sang an action-packed song which Mfune had taught them during the week entitled “African Children, we are special in God’s eyes and can impact the world.” This motivational song which is spreading across the continent of Africa like wild fire and has been translated into French and Malagasy, a language spoken in Madagascar, was written by Mfune and his son Dumisani.

At the end of the children’s divine service, when Mfune made an appeal, 43 children accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. We praise God for the initiative of Total Member Involvement which has been dubbed Total Child Involvement by those who work with children.

Uganda Union – Children Excited About VBX

Esther Kyazze of the SDA Makerere Nakulabye Church in Kampala led out in the Cactusville VBX which attracted many children to experience this interesting Texan cowboy experience. All the children wore cowboy hats, caps, neckerchiefs, ropes and singing the Hee-Haw songs. They learned about other cultures through activities that “rope them to Jesus.” It was an experience they would never forget!

INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

Division-wide VBS Training—Inter-America Unveils New Vacation Bible School Program

A new vacation bible school program was unveiled during an online two-day workshop which promises to impact more than 300,000 youngsters this year across churches and schools in the Inter-American Division (IAD) territory. Nearly 200 territory-wide children and adolescents ministries direc-
AND SAID, ‘TRULY I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS YOU ARE CONVERTED AND BECOME LIKE CHILDREN, YOU WILL NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.’

(MATTHEW 18:3 NASB)

tors met in Miami, Florida, on Feb. 10-11, to receive training in the comprehensive program while reaffirming their commitment to teach the love of Jesus to every child who enrolls in the annual initiative.

“One of the most effective evangelistic programs we have in children and adolescent ministries is Vacation Bible School, or what we have renamed as Vacation Bible Experience, where children can experience the love of God and the transformation of their lives in Jesus,” said Dinorah Rivera, Director of Children and Adolescents Ministries and main organizer of the workshop.

The new program themed, “Made by God Created with a Purpose”, will teach children how they can relate everything God has done with the human body and their lives with a purpose to praise Him for what he has done and promises to do through them.

Delegates rotated through different stations featuring the five-day series which will lead youngsters through hands-on learning about the senses and the main systems of the human body including the digestive system, nervous system, skeletal system and associate muscles, the circulatory system and respiratory system.

Witness, Evangelizing Post-Modern Teens, Teaching Object Lessons, Involving Children in Missions and Service, How to reach Digital Natives and others. The children’s leaders were so elated with the new and interesting animated booklets for kids to witness to their friends. Everyone received lots of resources for their ministry. Elizabeth Lienard-Gonzalez, CHM director of the conference organized an excellent program to equip her leaders regularly and at the end of this weekend about 20 leaders received their certificates.

**MENA UNION**

**Gulf Field holds CHM leadership training in Bahrain and Ras al-Khaimah**

From 15 to 24 February, Dr Saustin Sampson Mfune GC CHM Associate Director was in Gulf Field, and together with Amal Fawzy CHM Liaison of MENA Union and Nancy Colegado CHM Director of Gulf Field conducted leadership seminars under the theme Closing the Back door. In Bahrain, the meetings were conducted at Asdal Gulf Inn Boutique Hotel and on Sabbath they met in the Manama area at St Christopher Ca-

**INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION**

**Belgian-Luxembourg Conference Children’s Leadership Certification Weekend**

About sixty children’s leaders and teachers gathered at a retreat center in Brussels for the CHM leadership Certification event from February 8-10, 2019. Linda Koh, GC CHM director and Elsa Cozzi, EUD CHM director led in several certification courses covering topics like Teaching Children to
VBX Catches Fire Around NAD Territories

VBX—Vacation Bible Xperience has transformed the traditional VBS into real life experiential learning for thousands of children across North American Division. More than 40 churches have adopted VBX, a name conceived by the Southeastern California Conference. It is not only exciting for kids, but it is theologically sound—Seventh-day Adventist sound! Thanks to Manny Vitug, Bev Maravilla, and others who write these exciting resources. Thousands of children have participated in Cactusville, Kidsville, “Sea of Miracles,” “Where kids get caught by Jesus’ love.” Just...
SEE THAT YOU DO NOT DESPISE ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES. FOR I TELL YOU THAT IN HEAVEN THEIR ANGELS ALWAYS SEE THE FACE OF MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.

(MATTHEW 18:10 ESV)

Imagine, children enter a simulated Galilean village where they made perfume and dyed wool as hands-on activities. Which kid is not excited and motivated to come! Don’t forget to try 2019 VBX, “Jamii Kingdom!”

Dr. Saustin Sampson Mfune together with Clayton Nunes, on the 24th of January were at Aire Born Group Recording Studios in Zionsville in Indianapolis, Indiana to record music for the soon to be released musical drama entitled “Pro-Active Kids Adventure: Learn of the Immune System, HIV and AIDS.” The singers who came from Zionsville area, were skilled musicians and their sight-reading skills were very advanced. Seeing the music sheets for the first time, each would pick the music sheet to be recorded, walked into the recording studio. And when that song was done, they would come out, pick another music sheet and in 5 hours 6 songs were done. The drama script and the songs were written by Mfune. It is hoped that this production will be launched at the 3rd Global Health Conference to be held at Loma Linda this July.
2019 CPC Theme entitled “By Faith”
Children’s Pastors Conference dubbed CPC was again held at Caribe Royale Hotel in Orlando, Florida, January 14-17, 2019. Some four thousand people attended this leadership festival. This year’s theme was “By Faith.” The plenary sessions hinged around the theme. The breakout sessions had lots of interesting topics that one wishes that one had the ability to divide one’s self into several pieces to attend all the sessions. Dr Saustin Sampson Mfune, GC CHM Associate Director and Mrs Litiana Rakarakatia Turner, CHM of South Pacific Division attended the conference. It would be wonderful if you could avail yourself of the opportunity to attend one of these conferences. Remember, “iron sharpens iron.” Take time to be sharpened through CPC.

Dupont Park Adventist School Career Day
Tanya Muganda, administrative assistant at the General Conference Children’s Ministries Department had a wonderful opportunity to introduce children’s ministry to the students at the Dupont Park Adventist School, Washington D. C. on March 6 at their annual Career Day. They were excited to receive resources about prayer, Adventist fundamental beliefs, healthful habits, etc.

NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION
Division-wide Youth, Children, Education Leadership Summit (YCE)
This was indeed a historical first for the division to have these three departments collaborate in organizing this summit. Based on the theme How to Make Our Church Young, the
COME, YE CHILDREN, HEARKEN UNTO ME: I WILL TEACH YOU THE FEAR OF THE LORD.
(PSALM 34:11 KJV)

division aimed for leaders of these three departments on every level of the church to discuss and strategize ways to retain our young people in the church. Four representatives from the General Conference were there to present seminars which included Dr. Linda Koh, director of Children’s Ministries, Dr. Lisa Beardsley Hardy, director of Education, Dr. Jiwan Moon, director of Public Campus Ministry (PCM), and Pastor Pako Mokgwane, associate director of Youth Ministries. Besides the plenary sessions, each afternoon was designated for strategic planning and recommendations were sent to be pooled together for the division to incorporate them into their overall master plan. This was a great initiative by the division!

Japan Union Children’s Ministries Leadership Training
Pastor Masaru Kobayashi, CHM director of the union organized two training seminars to train children’s leaders in the Tokyo Central Church and also in Nagoya Aichi church. Linda Koh, GC CHM director and Lisa Clouset, NSD CHM director provided the training for JUC. The leaders were interested in special needs ministry especially ADHD, autism, and other topics in this area. Linda Koh presented topics like When ADHD Comes to Church, How to Teach Sabbath School Through Interactive Learning, etc. The participants enjoyed the learning stations method and they became very creative in the practice. They left with many English and Japanese resources for their ministry.

SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION
The Mfunes help conduct a VBS at Kawale SDA church of Malawi Union Conference during their Annual Leave
Dr. Saustin Sampson Mfune, the GC CHM Associate Director and his wife Gertrude conducted a Vacation Bible School from December 16-22, 2018 at the request of their son, Dingani Mfune who pastors Kawale District. Eighty five children, three of whom are from non-Adventist homes participated in the VBS. Investigation Station—Galactic Quest. It was a week fully packed with all kinds of activities. On Sabbath, the VBS participants were happily
showcasing what they had learned. They were eager to receive their certificates of attendance from Dr Mfune, Mrs Chimwemwe Guluka, the Central Malawi Conference CHM Director and the Malawi Union Conference CHM Conference Director, Mrs Emily Egolet. On Sabbath afternoon Dr Mfune conducted a baby dedication ceremony where 120 babies were dedicated. We praise God for the VBS activities conducted in many of our churches around the world.

**Southern Africa Union Conference Celebrates Global Children’s Day**

Under the capable leadership of Zodwa Kunene, CHM director of the union, many children from many churches in Bloemfontein joined in full force to get out to serve the community. They were given the vision to be the Hands of Jesus in serving others. Some children got together very early to prepare boxed foods for distribution. They visited the senior citizen homes, the prison, the police station, the dumping ground, and the orphanage.
Children and teens were filled with joy as they took time to distribute food and toiletries at the different places, fed the seniors, visit the orphans and prisoners, and show appreciation to policemen for their service. Churches were encouraged to Adopt a prisoner, a patient, or an orphan. By the end of the day, the children were tired, but they echoed, “It was fun and worth it!” Thank you, Zodwa for such leadership.

The child preachers amazed everyone in the audience with their gift of preaching God’s message so eloquently and passionately. You could hear many Amens! Praise the Lord! echoed throughout their delivery. Although they picked three winners, but all the child preachers were awarded a certificate, a children's devotional book, and a Bible.

What a wonderful beginning to inspire our children to preach God’s word! May they continue to share God’s end time messages with their friends!

**Visit to the police station**

**SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION**

**Historic Division-wide Child Preachers’ Contest**

SUD launched its first Child Preacher’s Contest on December 18, 2018. Under the leadership of Mrs. Mridula Lakra, SUD CHM director, children throughout the territory were encouraged to preach their own sermons based on the theme: “End Time Event.” A total of 16 children and teens from six unions participated in the final round held at the division headquarters.

Division-wide Kids in Discipleship Training (KID)

Don MacLafferty, president of InDiscipleship Ministry, assisted by Linda Koh, GC CHM director, launched the second Kids in Discipleship training from March 10-16, 2019 at the SUD headquarters, Hosur, India. The first four days was the Train the Trainer sector. A total of ten children’s leaders from the Northeast India Union who went to the first KID University training in Shillong in 2018 were present to be trained as trainers or coaches to run KID for the new teams that would come at the later part of the week.

**Visit to the police station**

**Child Preachers Finalists.**

**Seriously preaching the Endtime event!**

**KID Train the Trainers seminars**
These ten coaches were outstanding in their performance though they were nervous at first in running KID. When the new union teams arrived for the next three days’ training, the new coaches worked with them to cast the vision, to run Footprints for Parents and Mentors and Footprints for Kids, etc.

Many of the new teams were inspired and they plan to start KID in their unions. We pray that the next union will catch the fire to begin this initiative.

**TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION**

**Adriatic Union Conference – Children’s Ministries Leadership Training**

Jovan Radovanov, CHM director of the union organized a great CHM Leadership Training event in Crikvenica, Croatia from March 29-31, 2019. About one hundred children’s leaders and teachers from all over the union territory that included Albania, Croatia, and Slovenia attended. Some came with their children too. It was held at a beautiful retreat center by the tranquil Adriatic Sea. Linda Koh, GC CHM director and Clair Sanches, TED CHM director presented several interesting workshops and plenaries for the leaders. They were thrilled to get many samples of the animated booklets for children to share the gospel story. Clair had them participate in many activities that got them up and around. They left with many resources to enrich their ministry.

**WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION**

**Global Children’s Day Took off to Great Heights in WAD**

Children throughout the division were enthusiastically involved in serving the community on Global Children’s Day on March 16, 2019. East and West Sahel Unions, Northern and Southern Ghana Unions, and Eastern and Western Nigeria Unions rallied many children together in their respective unions, all dressed in bright colorful T-shirts who spent the
SEE THAT YOU DO NOT DESPISE ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES.
FOR I TELL YOU THAT IN HEAVEN THEIR ANGELS ALWAYS SEE
THE FACE OF MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.
(MATTHEW 18:10 ESV)

day distributing food, water and toiletries as well as bringing cheer to many in their communities.

Some visited the orphanages, the poor and needy, and the handicapped, while others helped with the adult health screening program by praying for the people and singing to them. The children as well as the adult leaders were happy and satisfied. It is our hope that serving others in the community will become a lifestyle in those young lives and not just a one-day event.
The Power of Parent’s Apology Towards a Child

It was one of the evenings in 1971. Israel, my younger brother did something which infuriated my father. In his state of rage and getting a nod from Proverbs 13:24, my father generously applied the instructions as stipulated in the Bible text. And it was the full extent of the word generous. Later in the night, my father was bothered with what he had done. He had a hard time sleeping. Around three o’clock in the morning, I heard a knock on our bedroom door. When I went to check, it was my father. He asked that I wake up Israel and come to the sitting room which doubled as a dinning room.

When we entered the dining room, we could not believe our eyes when we saw appetizing food loaded on the table. Israel and I exchanged glances wondering if this was a trap. Mom told us to sit around the table. After prayer, we hesitantly began to enjoy the food because we were very suspicious. But dad did what had not entered our minds. Like Jesus in the upper room washing the feet of his disciples, he knelt down. His voice quivering as someone who has been in the cold, dad said, “Israel and Saustin, I would like to ask for your forgiveness. I over reacted. I should not have gone to that extent.” Tears streaming down his face, he stood up, hugged Israel, then me and then he hugged my mother. There was no dry eye in the room and not dry tear. We did not expect this from our father. What dad did that early morning empowered him more than he will ever know.

A lot has been written on the benefits of parents apologizing to their children when they have wronged them. Here are some points:

- It erases bottled bitterness, pain and anger which has been built in a child towards the parent.
- It heals a broken bond between the parent and the child.
- It communicates to the child the message that you as a parent recognizes the child’s feelings and consequently it builds the child’s self-esteem when it dawns on the child’s mind that you as a parent value their feelings.
- It demonstrates to the child that the parent recognizes that each one of us makes mistakes in life and as such, we own and correct them. Hence, it teaches the child that in life, one has to take responsibility for their words and actions.
- It is a gift to a parent because it demonstrates to the child that we are all humans who have sinned and have fallen short of God’s glory and we all need His grace on daily basis.
- It reveals to the child what mature Christians ought to do.
“Parents should make wise use of every spare moment of time in training their children to honor God in the home life. Parents stand in the place of God toward their little ones. As they desire God to be kind to them, so they are to be kind to their children.”

- It frees the parent’s conscience from a guilty trip.
- It helps the parent earn respect in the eyes of the child.
- It communicates that you view the child as an individual who is also made in the image of God.
- It helps children learn that it is possible to recover from error.
- It will help your children in the future to be honest in admitting when they have made a mistake.
- It helps remove a thinking of perfectionism from your children helping them to know that making mistakes is not shameful. This will lead your children to admit their own mistakes.
- It helps kids not to fear attempting things because they realize that when they fail, they will receive encouragement from you and not condemnation. This in turn builds resilience in children.

Parents must realize that asking an apology from their child is not defending their self for the mistake made. As you read Chapter 4 of the book Steps to Christ by Ellen White, she informs us that the words - “but you” - do not belong in a confession. Neither can you say, “I’m sorry I slapped you but it’s the way you acted which irritated me.” That’s not an apology.

Ellen White’s further states that, “Parents should make wise use of every spare moment of time in training their children to honor God in the home life. Parents stand in the place of God toward their little ones. As they desire God to be kind to them, so they are to be kind to their children. {Ms67-1903.18} She also writes thus, “Parents are not to provoke their children to wrath by a harsh, dictatorial, overbearing spirit. They are simply to teach them the law of the Lord.” {Ms67-1903.19} She further states, “Fathers and mothers . . . need to appreciate more fully the responsibility and honor that God has placed upon them, in making them, to the child, the representative of Himself. The character revealed in the contact of daily life will interpret to the child, for good or evil, those words of God. {Ed 244.5}"

May I conclude by stating a profound statement I recently heard from one of my students. He said that a son and his father went for the first time to go and swim in an ocean. As the boy enjoyed himself in the blue waters of the ocean, in his excitement, he looked at his father and exclaimed, “Dad, I did not know that when you were teaching me to swim in the small river near our village, you were actually teaching me how to swim in the ocean.”

Take opportunity of every small thing around you to be a teaching moment for your child. By daily helping your children learn how to swim in little ‘rivers’ of life around them, you are actually teaching them know how to encounter big ‘oceans’ of life tomorrow. Don’t ignore the little rivers surrounding your child’s life. And one of those little rivers is asking for an apology from your child.

Saustin Sampson Mfune
Associate Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE ORANGE CONFERENCE
May 1-3, 2019
Atlanta, Georgia
Register: theorangeconference.com

D6 CONFERENCE
September 26-28, 2019
Orlando, Florida
Register: d6family.com

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