

**INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHING**  
**Department of Education**  
**General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists**

ADVENTIST SCHOOLS AND CONTEMPORARY  
ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

By Emilio García-Marenko  
Director of Academic Records  
Andrews University

Prepared for the  
XXI Seminar on Integration of Faith and Teaching/Learning  
Held at Universidad Adventista de Bolivia

## ADVENTIST SCHOOLS AND CONTEMPORARY ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

By Emilio García-Marenko

Present interest in youth and adolescence is striking. Through an electronic web search, I got a glimpse of how captivating —and disconcerting— is the topic for many today. Using several search engines (mainly *Alta Vista*, *Yahoo* and *Infoseek*), I found that there were at least 226,566 documents and/or web sites responding to such descriptors as “Youth Problems”, “Teen Concerns”, and also related topics such as teen sexuality and homosexuality among adolescents.

I also looked for printed literature. I checked the publication *Books in Print* to find books published between 1991 and 1997. Through a web database known as *Book Reviews*, I was able to examine critical reviews of books, as published in about 100 scholarly, professional and general public magazines and journals during the same period. I also found 169 articles in the *Education Abstracts* web database.

La adolescencia y la juventud, por supuesto, pueden ser etapas felices de la vida. En ellas se pueden poner los fundamentos para una adultez exitosa y satisfactoria. Constituyen un momento en el que pueden tomarse decisiones significativas para el bien que afectarán de manera permanente el desarrollo del individuo. Son un período crucial para afirmar la identidad sexual; para afincarse en valores positivos; para establecer patrones de relaciones satisfactorias; para obtener una visión positiva de la vida, el mundo, las relaciones, la gente y Dios; para consolidar cualidades tales como lealtad, aceptación, integridad, transparencia y autenticidad; para establecer relaciones con personas del otro sexo que pongan fundamentos adecuados para una vida familiar feliz en el futuro; para desarrollar, sobre todo, una relación con Dios caracterizada por el amor, la fe y la esperanza.

Para que este ideal pueda convertirse en realidad en la generación actual de adolescentes y jóvenes, es vital que los educadores adventistas entendamos sus conflictos; comprendamos el mundo en el que viven; tengamos una visión adecuada de las preocupaciones que los agobian; y conozcamos los factores que han contribuido a configurar su visión de la vida, su estructura mental, sus características sobresalientes, sus actitudes y su pensamiento en cuanto a la vida social, el aprendizaje, la comunicación, los problemas mundiales, la moralidad y la espiritualidad.

When considering adolescence and youth, we could do it by considering human development in these specific stages. To do that, we could use that classical approaches and talk about biological, psychoanalytic, sociopsychological, cultural and anthropological, behavioral, cognitive and moral development theories. Educators know very well the significant contributions of G. Stanley Hall, who is recognized as the father of the modern scientific study of adolescence; of Sigmund Freud, father of psychoanalysis and creator of the famous oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital stages of psychosexual development; of Eric Erikson and his eight stages of psychosocial development; of Albert Bandura and his social learning theory; of Jean Piaget and his cognitive development theory with its four stages of sensory-motor intelligence, preoperational, concrete operations and formal operations; of Lawrence Kohlberg and his stages of moral reasoning development; of Robert Havighurst and the concept of developmental tasks... And of others who have contributed to our understanding of human development and particularly of adolescent and young adult development.

More than a study of different theoretical approaches, I believe it is appropriate for us to take a look to outstanding characteristics of today's adolescents and youth, their problems, their crucial needs and what Seventh-day Adventist educators in close cooperation with parents and other professionals can do to help them in their development to prepare them for true success in life.

Let us talk first about adolescence. It is a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood. In general terms it goes from the start of puberty to the onset of adulthood. There are different perspectives about the specific ages involved, but in general terms we may say that it may extend from 11 to 22 years of age,

with individual variations that may be significant. Adolescents and youth today are different from those of previous generations. However, it seems appropriate, when considering adolescence, to review briefly what classic research and literature have taught us about its main characteristics.

## **ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT**

Some years ago my wife Ada did a detailed study of the main characteristics of children and adolescents in their physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development, as presented in the literature about this topic. As a result of this study she prepared a summary of these characteristics which she included in her book *Paternidad Satisfactoria* (Satisfying Parenthood) The following summary of adolescents' physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development is based on her work.

### **Physical development**

Humans achieve sexual maturity and the corresponding physical and emotional changes when they reach adolescence. Girls develop physically and emotionally about two years before boys. It needs to be remembered, however, that growth patterns are not the same for all and therefore nobody needs to worry if a boy or a girl develops earlier and another is slower. This is a period in which glandular balance may be present. The development of bones is completed and, therefore, the adult size is achieved. There is rapid growth of the heart, and finally, after a period of clumsiness, better muscular coordination is also achieved.

### **Social development**

One of the big concerns for adolescents is to be accepted by the social group. There is fear of ridicule and lack of popularity. Relations and activities with peers replace family. Adolescents try to identify themselves with an admired adult. They want independence from their family as a step toward maturity, and they want financial independence.

This is when they need to choose their vocation in life and prepare themselves for marriage. This is also the time in life when they develop the ability to relate intimately with significant others.

### **Emotional development**

In adolescence there is still much emotional instability that leads many to take extreme attitudes. Adults need to bear patiently the adolescent attitude of knowing every thing. There may be some regression to childish attitudes that may include biting fingernails and acting sometimes as a dreamer, others as if nothing matters, and even others as a liar. This is a time of many tensions. Sexual drive is at a high point, and many have serious problems to exercise appropriate control. Many choose their life mate. Both boys and girls are very sensitive and they may even hurt themselves in moments of frustration.

### **Intellectual development**

The adolescent is characterized by a high level of creativity. This is the stage in which full development of formal operations is achieved. In fact, during late adolescence boys and girls have the capacity of formulating complex and logical theories on social, political and moral philosophy. They have, according to Piaget, the capacity to think on what is there and what may become. Their main intellectual task is to complete their education. Meanwhile, they are busy looking for ideals.

### **Spiritual development**

Adolescents can manifest a big interest in ethical and religious problems. They can enter into mature discussions about these issues, and have the potential to establish a solid relationship with God and a permanent spiritual commitment with Him.

### **Special needs**

Adolescents need knowledge and adequate understanding about healthy sexual relations and attitudes. They continue to need kind guidance from adults, but given in a way that does not hinder or threaten their feelings of independence. They need opportunities to take decisions and to earn and save money. They also need to relate with a peer group and feel acceptance in it. It is important for them to develop a deep sense of personal identity. It is important for them to have opportunities for constructive recreation and to have a noble cause for which to struggle. They also need trust and security from significant adults.

### **ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH: GENERATION X**

What we have said so far refers to adolescence. What about youth? The title of this paper includes the words adolescents and youth. Therefore, we need to be sure that we are not excluding youth from our discussion. To achieve this better, I want to invite you take a look at a particular group identified in the literature as Generation X. In 1998 members of this group are between adolescence and early adulthood. This is primarily an American (United States) phenomenon, but we will use it as a case study to achieve our objectives for this presentation.

Literature presently includes an impressive amount of writings about this generation. Americans, inclined to label people, call Seniors those born before 1925; Builders, or the Silent Generation, are those born between 1925 and 1944; Baby Boomers are those born between 1945 and 1964; and Baby Busters, Generation X or "Twenty-somethings", those who were born between 1965 and 1983 (although there are differing opinions about the exact dates). The literature has already started calling Blasters those who were born after 1983. Baby Boomers are the children of war veterans, and Baby Busters are the children of Baby Boomers.

In our considerations about Baby Busters, Generation X or "Twenty-somethings" we need to keep in mind that this is a group whose age in 1998 is between 15 and 33. Having a body of literature that identifies them, it seems appropriate when talking about adolescents and young adults, to give particular consideration to this group.

### **A worldwide phenomenon**

I said before that this is a North American phenomenon and that we will take it just as a case study. We are doing it due to two important reasons: 1) There is a considerable amount of literature about this particular group that has been observed by social research scientists; and 2) social phenomena started in North America are frequently seen in other cultures and replicated there in many respects. However, it is appropriate to insist on the fact that we are studying this group only as a case study. Each responsible reader needs to be careful not to make unwarranted generalizations but to establish parallels and contrasts with those adolescents and youth for whom they work, so as to determine which are the conclusions, implications and applications that are more legitimate to their own situation.

Some authors are even saying that the Generation X phenomenon is not limited to North America. Jay Rogers, for instance, in an article published in the World Wide Web in 1993, holds this opinion. He adds that there is a world wide net of youth who have been all their lives around computers, a reality that has the potential of making any movement a world wide one.

Undoubtedly there are those who will not agree with this approach. I would only reiterate my suggestion that we take this group as a case study. As we present the information about the members of this generation, we may ask ourselves what are the similarities and the differences between them and those with whom we work at our institution. This can be a very valuable exercise in our effort to serve our students call better.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF GENERATION X**

We need to understand that when we talk about the features of a particular group it is not appropriate to conclude that all members of the group share the same characteristics. There are marked differences among members of different groups. More than that, the group we are going to study has as one of their key features the fact that there is great diversity among them. It is useful, however, to consider some general characteristics while we keep this observation in mind.

Kevin Graham Ford made a qualitative research about the characteristics of this generation. He published the results in lay format in his 1995 book *Jesus for a New Generation: Putting the Gospel in the Language of Xers*, written with Jim Denney. George Gallup, Jr., President of the famous George H. Gallup International Institute referred in the Foreword of the book to the fact that Ford and Denney write about a profound generational and cultural shift taking place. He believes that it behooves churches (which tend to lag behind the times) and all other organizations and individuals that are concerned with the eternal destiny of young adults to pay full attention to this generation, to seek to understand it and to reach them in their deep needs (p. 9).

### **Generation in crisis**

Ford starts his description of Generation X stating that this is an angry, alienated and depressed generation: a generation in crisis. He then cites Tim Conder, youth pastor at the Chapel Hill Bible Church in North Carolina, who recognizes that youth has always been in crisis and then says: “But it seems that the severity and the frequency of youth crisis is increasing in this generation. The kids I work with are becoming more sophisticated at an earlier age, so they are dealing with more sophisticated and complex problems. Their crises are dramatic—and often fatal. In my ministry I continually confront crises of teen depression, preoccupation with death, suicidal impulses and families in which a teen suicide has occurred” (p. 18).

Some of the attitudes and crises of this generation can be better understood taking a look at the expression Baby Busters as a play on words with Baby Boomers, the tag assigned to the generation of their parents. After the baby boom that came during the post-World War II years, during the 1960s there came a dramatic bust due to the increased use of contraceptives and abortion. Many in this generation therefore see themselves as the survivors of an unwanted generation. In Ford’s words: “We are the ones who were not aborted or contracepted out of existence. We are the ones who came late to the party, who arrived just as the world was ‘going bust’” (p. 18).

### **Generation with no identity**

The term Generation X, affixed to this group by Douglas Coupland in his novel *Generation X* speaks of a sense of denial and lack of identity. And there are even other labels assigned to this generation. Some have called it the Thirteenth Generation, and we all agree with Ford that “thirteen is the floor where the elevator never stops. Thirteen is the row of seats that doesn’t exist in the airplane. Thirteen is the universal symbol of back luck” (p. 18-19).

The group has also been called the Repair Generation, the Marginalized Generation, the Recovering Generation, the Surviving Generation and the Generation After. Its members have been called “selfish, lazy, shallow, image-conscious, indifferent, unmotivated, apathetic, nihilistic, disenfranchised, angry and angst-ridden” (p. 19).

### **Marginalized generation**

The truth is that they feel very uncomfortable with the labels they have received and with the phrases used to refer to them. They hate labels. However, their reaction is that if they have to receive a label, they would prefer to be called the Marginalized Generation or the Recovering Generation because they feel that these are more accurate and less offensive descriptions.

As a group, members of this generation feel excluded from collective dreams, and they blame their parents and grandparents (the Boomers and the Silent Generation) for having left a world in social, economic and environmental chaos. They grew in an age of social unrest, urban decline, inept and corrupt governments, ineffective educational systems, escalating public debt, increasing environmental concerns, racial polarization, high divorce rates and declining values.

### **Indifferent generation**

Following their parents' example, this generation show little respect toward authority in school, church, work, government or home. The big difference is that Baby Boomers in the sixties protested against the system and attacked it, while Busters prefer to ignore it or ridicule it. In Ford's words: "We don't like the establishment, but we don't like confrontation either. So we tend not to attack authority. It's easier to just avoid it—and, if possible, laugh at it" (p. 21).

To the eyes of this generation, the world has three main features: 1) It is not user-friendly, 2) it is not simple and 3) it does not have rules. Therefore they value simplicity, clear action, tangible results, the bottom line, survival through self-sufficiency, friendships, relationships and a clear sense of limits. They also have a deep distrust of authority, of systems and structures, of talk as a substitute for action, of symbolism as a substitute for substance and of their parents as a generation that failed them.

### **Electronic generation**

This is a generation highly involved with electronics. It is the generation of computers and TV. Its members communicate through e-mail and fax. They produce videos and master graphic design and presentation programs (such as *Freelance Graphics*, *Power Point* or *Corel Presentations*).

They know the Internet and the World Wide Web language. They are the experts of cyberspace. They know how to navigate through the wide world of the information superhighways and find what they need or want. In fact, if you want to know what is Archie, Yahoo, Gopher, hipertext, ftp, http, html, TELNET, Netscape or Microsoft Internet Explorer; or if you have a problem working with your computer, a high school or even an elementary school student is frequently your best resource to solve the situation.

They know the movies presented in the theater and in TV. Indeed, their main source of recreation consists of playing electronic games and watching movies. Therefore they are constantly exposed to the music and the culture promoted by Hollywood and the movie and TV producers.

### **Generation with a peculiar sense of justice**

Regarding social problems, the attitude of this generation may be summarized in simple terms: Fairness. They have, however, their own peculiar sense of fairness and justice. They expect equality between genders, between heterosexuals and homosexuals and among races. They believe that you have to live and let others live. For them sexual harassment, homophobia and racism are not right, and are very impatient with a society that has failed decade after decade in curing these social attitudes that they consider destructive. At the same time, they see abortion not as a right or wrong matter but as a purely personal decision.

### **"Just do it" generation**

Ford believes that *Nike* has exposed appropriately what is in the mental structure of today's youth and adolescents through two slogans: "Just do it", and "Life is short. Play hard". "Nike understands that my generational peers are conscious of death, fascinated with risk, obsessed with playing hard, fanatical about pumping and looking good, and at the peak of their sexual energy." He also says: "We are bombarded by sexual messages during most of our waking hours, and our bodies rage with the hormones of youth; so when it comes to sex, *we just do it*" (p. 91).

The truth is that Generation X is the object of a well orchestrated campaign to sell them sex in the context of their inclination to act and play hard. Among the many sites that I found in the World Wide Web as I was reviewing the literature for this paper I found that there were 12,069 on teen sexuality and 37,108 specifically addressing the issue of adolescent homosexuality directed both to adults and to adolescents.

These sites and documents include detailed instructions about how to use a condom and discussions about the supposed value of sexual freedom. Among many other related topics, many of them openly encourage adolescents to accept their so called sexual preference, publicly recognize it and take immediate action to satisfy their impulses of the moment.

As an example of the many initiatives that try to involve youth in sexual ventures, not only heterosexual but also homosexual, the *Alberta Report*, a Canadian magazine, has an article in its May 26, 1997, issue, accusing "Planned Parenthood" (an organization that promotes family planning) of promoting the idea that the birth control through homosexual relationships is a good idea.

According to this report, "Planned Parenthood" announced a new initiative called GLBT Rural Project, GLBT meaning Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Two-spirited, a project that tries to encourage youth from rural areas to adopt openly the homosexual lifestyle. Since homosexuals do not need contraceptives, apparently the project tries to promote homosexual relations as a good alternative to enjoy sex without the risk of increasing the number of births.

Another example is found on a web page entitled "Holy Homosexuals", developed by a so-called Reverend Michael S. Piazza. He offers a four-part lecture series either in video or audio, and the four topics he covers are as follows: 1) "What the Bible really doesn't say about homosexuality and Christianity" in which he tries to demonstrate that the Bible does not condemn homosexual practice. 2) "What the Bible does say to lesbigay people", where he offers to examine what he calls the passionate relationships of David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi and others. 3) "The homosexuality of God" in which he takes the fact that the Bible says that "Jesus was tempted in every way, just like us" as a basis to promise an answer to the question of whether Jesus struggled with homosexual feelings. 4) "How to be a happy, healthy, holy homosexual". The web page promotional announces this topic in these terms: "Rev. Piazza uses the story of Jacob to demonstrate that as lesbians and gays, we can and should be happy, healthy, and holy people. He reminds us that instead of looking to others for affirmation, we must listen to God calling to each of us as 'my beloved son or daughter.'"

Fortunately there are also efforts to encourage youth and adolescents to act responsibly in their sexual life. As an example, I found a page developed by the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention making reference to the fact that the United States Department of Health and Human Services found in a survey conducted in 1995 that for the first time in 25 years there was a decline in teenage sexual activity. The survey found that 50% of unmarried women 15 to 19 years of age admitted that they had had sexual intercourse at least once. In 1990 the figure was 55%, and previous surveys found a steady increase from 29% in 1970 to 36% in 1974, 47% in 1982 and 53% in 1988. In the case of men, another survey found that 55% of unmarried men 15 to 19 said that they had had sexual relations while in 1988 the figure was 60%. This web page attributes this decline to efforts made by different groups under the umbrella of the Abstinence Movement.

### **Postmodernism**

This generation is in several respects a fruit of postmodernism. Much could be said about the origins of postmodernism and the influence it received from such sources as the relativity theory of Einstein, Nietzsche's thought, Darwin's theory of evolution and even the "antinovel" *Ulysses* by James Joyce. We will simply say that gradually postmodernism has penetrated the scientific community, the arts, the

entertainment world and journalism. It has also saturated the ethical, moral, philosophical and religious thought of society, and it has had a particularly strong effect in today's youth and adolescents.

The thought of a typical member of Generation X includes the following elements: 1) There is no absolute and objective viewpoint in matters of morality and religion. A common affirmation is: "You have your truth and I have mine". 2) Subjective experience is more valuable than logic and objective facts. We have the freedom to choose what to believe, according to what makes us feel comfortable. "Don't confuse me with facts". 3) The nature of truth and of God are relative concepts, not absolute ones. "You have your gods and I have mine".

Ford mentions a symposium on Generation X (p. 115-118) presented by Stanley J. Grenz in 1994, in which he discussed four presuppositions of postmodernism that are probably well grounded in the thinking and world view of Busters:

1. *Feelings and relations supersede logic and reason.* The transrational, the paradoxical and the supernatural are not questioned. What matters are relations and feelings, not dispassionate knowledge or logical arguments. The X generation rejects logical arguments, not because they can't or don't want to think, but because there are many conflicting arguments and it feels better to stay away from the logical battles, as a means to survive in a world that they see as confused and chaotic.

2. *Pessimism.* "For the first time in three centuries", observes Grenz, "today's youth do not share the conviction of their parents that we will solve the problems of the planet or that their lives will be better than that of their parents. They know that life on the earth is fragile and that the continued existence of humankind is dependent on a decrease in consumption and a new attitude toward the earth, an attitude that replaces the model of conquest with one of cooperation" (p. 116).

Jimmy Long, who apparently was the first person to make a link between postmodernism and the thinking of Generation X, says this: "The Boomers thought they would save the world. The Baby Busters have abandoned that notion. They only want to survive in a world that can't be saved. Just look at the different ways Boomers and Busters perceive the ecology issue. Boomers are trying to restore and re-create the creation. Busters are just trying to survive the demise of creation" (Ford, p. 116).

3. *Holism/wholism/community.* While modernism classified knowledge placing it in many compartments and exalted the individual, postmodernism tries to reunify knowledge and exalt the community. In this world view, we need to think more in global terms and less in pieces. The whole is more important than its individual parts because it is more than the sum of its parts.

4. *Truth is relative.* In modernism, truth is rational and can be apprehended by human intellect. In postmodernism, intellect has been taken off its authority position. Truth can be nonrational. It can even be emotional and intuitive. Truth is relative and even possibly non-existent. And if truth is not an absolute concept anymore, then there is no more truth. There are many truths: Your truth, my truth, his truth, her truth, their truth. None of them is more valid than any other, and the postmodern mind does not see any contradiction in this.

George Barna, from the Barna Research Group reports in his book *The Invisible Generation* of research about Busters that show that 70% among them believe that there is no absolute truth and that all truth is relative and personal; only 37% strongly agree that abortion is incorrect; and 38% strongly agree that lying sometimes is necessary.

Josh McDowell asked a group of 3,795 Christian youth from 13 denominations many of the same questions Barna asked. His research instrument classifies questions into four categories and 11 dimensions. Responses to questions about truth cause concerns about the world view of this group of Christian youth. Notice their responses:

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
In questions of morality and ethics, truth means different things to different people: Nobody can be completely sure of having truth.	48%	29%	23%
Nothing can be known for sure, except that which is experienced in life.	39%	38%	23%
There is no such thing as "absolute truth": People can define "truth" in many contradictory ways and still being right.	29%	43%	28%
Everything in life is negotiable.	23%	53%	22%

Ford notes that if truth is relative, the moral truth is also relative. The Ten Commandments become "the Ten Suggestions". What people believe or embrace is not important. It is the same to believe in Biblical Christianity or Zen or Satanism or anything. In fact, Ford notes that Christianity is distasteful for the postmodern mind, especially when it is compared with other religions, because Christianity tries to attract others. Therefore, Christianity is perceived as "dogmatic" and "intolerant" and these are the unforgivable sins for the postmodern mind.

Consequently, members of this generation see the church and organized religion with suspicion. Ford points out that they want spirituality and the power to live that comes only from supernatural sources. They want something in which to believe. But they do not want to commit themselves. They do not want the structure or the rigor of organized religion. They feel that submitting to the discipline of church life would be morally and spiritually suffocating. They want what they call spiritual freedom.

#### **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS OF THE X GENERATION**

Many members of this generation have grown in an emotional environment characterized by low support or emotional nutriment. Their family relations have brought more pain than satisfactions in their formative years. Consequently they hunger for successful family relations. This is a generation that has received the impact of family disintegration directly. Our problem families have produced a generation affected by this reality and with a great need of belonging. Perhaps its members do not know what healthy relations are, but they deeply want to experience them.

Statistics compiled in the United States reveal that although during recent years there has been a small decrease, globally divorce rates have been increasing over the years. In 1940 there were 2 divorces per 1,000 persons in the general population, and in 1960 that figure went up to 2.2; in 1970 there were 3.5; in 1990, 4.7; and in 1994, 4.6. This represents an increment of 109% between 1960 and 1994, and of 13% between 1940 and 1994.

Ford mentions a special report by Ted Koppel, brought by the ABC in September of 1994, in which the following figures were presented:

- In 1970 66% of children lived in traditional two-parent households. In 1980 the figure declined to 57%; in 1991 to 50%.
- In 1970 only 13% of children lived in one-parent households; in 1991 the figure had increased to 30%.
- In 1960 the number of illegitimate births was 5%; in 1991 they had increased to 30%.

Chris Bury, the reporter who presented this figures, observed that if these tendencies continue, most of North American children will spend several years of their lives living with a single parent. Ford says that while postmodernism affects the thinking of this generation, family disfunction affects feelings. Then he adds in dramatic tone: "As a generation, we have lost our emotional center" (p. 155).

Ford also quotes James Osterhaus, clinical psychologist and author of the book *Family Ties Don't Have to Bind*, who affirms that the results of present tendencies include a diminished sense of security, a diminished sense of identity and personal definition, and a diminished sense of satisfaction in relations (pp. 161-162).

It may be said that children of this generation are children of divorce, children of TV, spoiled children and abused children.

### **Children of divorce**

As a consequence of divorce or separation of their parents, many children have had to live with one of them or with someone else. When they come back from school they frequently find empty houses. Of course, this also happens when they have both parents if both work and come back to home after children come back from school. It also happens when both parents have many outside commitments and give a very low priority to the relation with their children. These children have had to carry a key to their home hanging from their neck. Because of this, they have been called "latch-key kids". Of course, the impact of divorce is much more complex than simply carrying a key hanging from the neck, but the expression carries the weight of all other meanings associated with their situation with all of its complexity.

A study conducted in 1988 by the National Center for Health Statistics shows that there is a greater incidence of school dropouts, adolescent pregnancies, drug abuse and problems with the law among children living with only one parent than among those living with both parents. Although some experts say that these problems are associated more with poverty than the absence of one of the parents, research conducted by Nicholas Zill led him to the conclusion that children of divorced parents, regardless of their economic circumstances, have twice as much incidence of bad relations with parents, dropping out of school and needing psychological help that those who live with both parents.

### **Children of TV**

Part of the reason why many are so obsessed and fascinated with TV is that they were reared by TV more than by their parents. Television was their companion, their comforter, their model and their guide about the complexities of life. It was the resource used by their parents to keep them quiet and to control many potentially problematic situations. It can be legitimately said that they are children of TV.

### **Spoiled children**

The Baby Boomers, parents of this generation, praised their children for doing nothing. They gave them few responsibilities and established few limits. Therefore these children grew expecting to receive praises and privileges and feeling resentful toward any person who placed demands upon them or who communicated expectations. Their sense of self-esteem did not have a firm foundation. They grew up expecting to be pampered and also expecting that hard work would be done by someone else. They grew up expecting others to raise them when facing the negative consequences of their decisions and actions.

### **Children of abuse**

Paradoxically, many of these spoiled children were also victims of abandonment, neglect, mistreatment and abuse. Many had parents who were divorced, who had affairs and who dragged their children through a series of unhappy and short-term relationships. The result is, according to Ford and several other authors, an angered, alienated, frustrated and low self-esteem generation.

### **Morally confused children**

This type of family life has its impact on the behavior of youth and adolescents; their concepts about the nature of true love; their beliefs about the meaning and value of sexual relations; their convictions about perpetuity and sanctity of marriage; and their sense of family commitment and loyalty.

In a writing published in the World Wide Web under the title "Effective Ministry to Baby Busters", the author Richard Burton quotes a survey conducted by Bob Levin with results published in 1992 in the *Maclean's* magazine. The survey indicates that among 15- to 16-year-old children, 20% of boys and 33% of girls report having had sexual relations. More than a third of sexually active boys and girls say that they use a condom "only occasionally". Ninety five percent have drunk alcohol and 25% have used illegal drugs.

Josh McDowell, for instance, in his book *Right from Wrong: What You Need to Know to Help Youth Make the Right Choices*, says that daily in the United States 1,000 unmarried adolescents become mothers; 1,106 adolescents abort; 4,219 adolescents pick sexually transmitted diseases; 500 adolescents start using drugs; 1,000 adolescents start drinking alcoholic beverages; 135,000 youth take pistols and other arms to school; 2,200 adolescents drop-out from school; and 6 adolescents commit suicide.

These few examples and figures draw a dramatic picture of the moral situation of many in this generation. They seem to validate the statement that this is a generation of morally confused children. SDA educators have here a challenge that they need to take very seriously.

### **WHAT TO DO**

Adventist educators obviously face tremendous challenges in the fulfilment of their mission on behalf of adolescents and youth of this generation. God's ideals continue to be as high and sublime as in past generations. It continues to be our responsibility to transmit to our students the conviction that "higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children" (*Education*, p. 18).

It also continues to be true that both today and when our students complete their course of study in our institutions, the greatest want of the world is and will continue to be "the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall" (P. 56).

Our great challenge is to discover under the Holy Spirit's guidance what we can do for this generation to help them fulfill God's ideal for their lives. With profound conviction and holy fire, this dear children and students of ours can become instruments in God's hands for the fulfillment of a great mission.

In an attempt to respond to these concerns, I will draw from the writings of several authors and from my own experience as an Adventist educator for a number of years. Without pretending to have the final answer, I want to submit to Adventist educators that there are **four specific actions** that we may take.

#### **Action 1: Get them involved *today***

These boys and girls and young adults are not happy being just observers. They want to be active participants. A. Allan Martin points out in a paper entitled "The ABCs of Ministry to Generations X, Y & Z" (placed in the web site of a special ministry for this generation that he has developed with his wife Deirdre) that members of this generation "perceive themselves as being full of limitless possibilities, like the x variable in those algebra equations" (p. 1). Reared with video games and a joystick in their hand, says Martin, they are not happy just watching life images. They are pragmatic individuals who look for practical solutions for today's problems. They know how to negotiate, are autonomous, are capable of talking with adults on an equal to equal basis, and know how to use their social knowledge and interpersonal relationships skills to achieve what they perceive as needed.

They want to act on matters and issues today and not leave things for tomorrow. The message “Just do it”, applied so frequently to sex and hard play, can be used to involve them in positive action. Their desire to be involved and to act today, therefore, is a big plus that may be extremely helpful in helping them to realize their potential in positive avenues.

### **Action 2: Cultivate positive relationships with them**

It is surprising to some that in different dialogues, interviews and surveys, Seventh-day Adventist members of this generation have identified as their primary need a desire to establish more involved relationships with significant adults. As a part of the first generation of latch-key-kids, they understand what it means to grow alone. Given the abandonment, abuse and alienation they experienced having been reared by Baby Boomers, known also as the “Me Generation”, kids from Generation X have decided to spend time alone as a basic survival technique. They distrust adults and fear intimacy. But in reality they want and need relations.

George Barna points out in his book *The Invisible Generation* that Baby Boomers see the passing and utilitarian nature of their relationships as something completely acceptable. Busters, on the other hand, have rejected the impersonal, fluid and short-term character of their parents’ relationships. They really want deeper relationships while at the same time they share the fears and distrust of their parents.

Significant adults can facilitate growth and a positive perspective for this generation if they can establish with them the kind of relations that engender an atmosphere of trust. Our youth and adolescents need to see in them persons who are willing to demonstrate integrity, honesty and genuine interest in their well being; an attitude of dialogue; willingness to listen; sincere efforts to understand them instead of insisting that they should understand adults; and a definite inclination to put themselves in their shoes (as it were), coupled with conscientious efforts to perceive the world with their eyes.

This is a must first of all in the home. Len McMillan in his 1993 book *ParentTeen: How to Pull Together with Your Teens* has a chapter dedicated to the importance of parents cultivating friendly relationships with their teens. He points to five characteristics of friends that would strengthen relationships between parents and their children: 1) Friends are confidants; 2) friends share common interests; 3) friends do things together; 4) friends are truthful; and 5) friends love each other. Adventist educators would do well applying these elements also in their relationships with their students and to teach them to parents and children.

To establish positive relationships with members of this generation is also important to have good communication with them. Kay Kuzma in a little booklet entitled *How to Talk with Your Teenager* recommends seven keys to effective communication especially with teenagers: 1) Don’t correct them while they are talking to you. 2) Don’t interrupt. Wait until they have finished or want your opinion. 3) Avoid door-slamers that cut off communication. These may include commanding, threatening, moralizing, giving advice, arguing, criticizing, ridiculing, analyzing, questioning, withdrawing, sympathizing and exaggerated praising. 4) Be a responsive listener. 5) Encourage them to talk, to express themselves, and to share their values and goals. 6) Encourage them to share their feelings. And 7) Allow them to communicate both positive and negative feelings.

The relational environment of the church also needs to reflect this positive disposition. The *Value-genes* research conducted among Seventh-day Adventist kids in North America reveal that this group perceives that the church lacks warmth, acceptance and grace. The lack of more positive, deeper and more lasting relationships is to a great extent responsible for this perception. Every effort made to strengthen this key ingredient is definitely a step in the right direction to produce positive change.

### **Action 3: Cultivate the kind of church life that will respond to their needs**

Deirdre y Allan Martin report that 38% of youth in the North American Division have left the church and that some experts even believe that 50% of youth may have done it during the last three decades. Deirdre and Allan say: "There is a fear that looms over our church, especially locally on the front lines of youth and young adult ministry: Help may arrive too late for the Baby Busters. Given the track record of most church bureaucracies..., Generations Y and Z will be headed out the backdoor by the time 'the organized church' is set to impact Xers. We dare not wait for 'someone else' to minister. In this time of spiritual crisis the call to action goes out to all who are Christian disciples" ("The ABCs of Ministry to Generations X, Y & Z", p.1).

Richard Burton, in the already mentioned paper about effective ministry on behalf of Baby Busters, identifies five areas of church life that must be developed so that they may be helped to perceive that the church has attractiveness and relevance to them, and that it responds to their needs.

*The first key area is evangelism.* It is vital, says Burton, that Baby Busters get involved in the evangelistic task. They can do it as their personal effort or as a part in a collective effort in the context of the local church. For participation of adolescents and young adults in the evangelistic task to be effective, it is important for evangelism to have four characteristics: 1) It must be **real**. Not only a realistic picture of Christian life needs to be presented but also the lives of leaders need to be transparent. 2) It must be **stimulating**. It has to be an excellent, challenging, provocative, innovative and attractive experience. 3) It must be **relevant**. It must respond to real needs and deal with topics that are of interest and represent a need for the people of this generation. Present problems should not be ignored, including AIDS, abortion, sexuality and sexual relations, suffering, relationships, self-esteem and a sense of purpose in life. Along with the presentation of these topics, of course, the appropriate Christian response should be presented. 4) It should be **relational**. Newcomers should feel welcome and connected with other persons. The emotional climate should be such that transmit to them the confidence that they can establish friendships.

*The second key area is assimilation.* As said before, this generation needs to be involved, and this applies particularly to church life. They need to participate. They should receive help to discover their strengths and talents, so that they can use them getting actively involved in action for others.

Martin considers that to make it possible for Generation X to return to the church it is important that at the organizational and personal level they get involved using their strengths for the life of the church. They "are not content to be the church of tomorrow. Given the environmental, societal, and moral devastation inflicted by past generations, Xers understand that tomorrow may never come. If I make authentic efforts today to identify and implement Xer talents, skills and, most importantly, their passions, our church will not only find itself retaining a generation, but more over mending the spiritual leaks that have crippled our ability to live and share the gospel in the contemporary youth setting" (p. 2).

*The third key area is preaching and teaching.* They need preaching and teaching. It should be kept in mind, however, that this is a generation that eats, sleeps over and drinks what is presented through mass media, especially TV. They are used to flashing images, strong stimuli and high expectations. Therefore both preaching and teaching need to be creative, stimulating and visual. Sermons need to be short. Burton expresses the opinion that a good sermon for teenagers and young adults should not last more than 20 minutes unless it includes an audiovisual presentation, in which case direct exposition still should not be longer than 20 minutes.

*The fourth key area is discipleship.* The commission given by Christ requires making disciples. This implies guiding this generation through the path of Christian living. In many cases it requires to take them by the hand. Jesus' mandate includes teaching them all things that he has commanded, and the promise to be with his people every day until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). Spiritual leaders, including Adventist educators, need to identify themselves with teens and young adults and make them an integral part of the Christian community. Sometimes they need to be fathers and mothers to them and

even being willing to help them with heavenly tact in matters that may seem elementary. It is useful to establish groups of adolescents and young adults which participate in activities that provide for companionship and Christian fellowship while at the same time they keep their heart open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Martin quotes Stanley Hauerwas, who says in his book *A Community of Character*: “To be a disciple is to be a part of a new community, a new polity, which is formed on Jesus’ obedience to the cross. The constitutions of this new polity are the Gospels. The Gospels are not just the depiction of a man, but they are manuals for the training necessary to be part of the new community. To be a disciple means to share Christ’s story, to participate in the reality of God’s rule... Because of a community formed by the story of Christ the world can know what it means to be a society committed to the growth of individual gifts and differences. In a community that has no fear of the truth, the otherness of the other can be welcome as a gift rather than a threat... The most striking social ethical fact about the church is that the story of Jesus provides the basis to break down arbitrary and false boundaries between people... (p. 11).

Martin adds that as a part of the church we have the responsibility of restoring character in the community of faith by calling its members, including myself, to return to the story of Christ. “For too long we have been a community of behavior instead of belief. We worship structure and standards, overlooking the Savior” (p. 4).

He also says that by creating character communities in which the story of Jesus is correctly shared in the church, the home and the school, we will be attracting members of the Generation X to the very heart of the Christian community. “Christ, who valued people more than power, relationship more than regulations, and sinners more than self, must be personified not only in individual piety, but also in communal piety (p. 4).

By living responsibly as Christians, in consideration to one another, we can transmit to our adolescents and young adults the message that they do not need to be alone. To achieve this, we need the attitude that St. Paul promotes in Philippians 2:4 about not looking only for personal interests but also for the interests of others. This is the true test of discipleship.

*The fifth key area is mobilization in ministry.* As mentioned before, many adolescents and youth today have problems with their self-esteem. It is important for them to feel that they have meaning as persons and that they have an important role to play in ministry. They need to have opportunities for successful ministry and they need to feel that they belong to a successful team. Being involved in ministry give them opportunities for personal development and it represents the most authentic and Biblical form of obtaining a profound sense of personal fulfillment.

This is particularly true if in the process of discovering their strengths they were helped to discover their call to the Christian ministry and to look at those strengths as gifts of the Holy Spirit to bless others and contribute to unity in the church, as a source of joy for themselves and as the divine means to fulfill their mission and the mission of the church.

#### **Action 4: Understand the postmodern mind and provide an appropriate Christian response**

Assimilation of postmodern thinking by today’s adolescents and adults is cause of intense concern for many Christian leaders. In fact, anxiety about this on their part might be contributing to make dialogue with them more difficult.

However, we do not need to develop a structure of confrontation with this intellectual system. It is true that it may be very dangerous to elevate feelings above reason and logic, give an excessive emphasis to the subjective experience, weaken truth by making it relative and coming to the conclusion that every thing may be truth. There may be, however, alternatives of dialogue which is free from tension if we take into consideration the fact that the postmodern mind is open to consider the opinions of others as truth which are as legitimate as their own. This reminder can facilitate dialogue and relationships.

Kevin Graham Ford in the book we have already mentioned expresses the opinion that the Christian world view has four points of contact with the postmodern world view: Acceptance of the supernatural, questioning of the autonomous self, emphasis in communal life and emphasis in stewardship of the environment. I also believe that some substantive concepts of postmodernism have points of contact with Christianity and I want to discuss three of them.

1. *Reason, feelings and subjectivity.* Postmodernism has placed feelings and subjective experience above reason, but in the same way modernism in its moment raised reason above revelation. An examination of the treatment of God with human beings as presented in the Bible demonstrate that the relationship with God does not place reason or feelings or subjective experience above revelation. At the same time, the experience of relating with God has a number of subjective elements that can be understood only in light of the experience itself as guided by revelation.

Perhaps we have been too dogmatic and have not given enough importance to the subjective elements of the relationship with God. The postmodern mind inclined to give value to these aspects of experience may be ready in vulnerable moments of weakness or crisis to recognize the value of the relationship with God. A prayer ministry that actively looks for the intervention of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals in moments like these, can be used effectively by God to help them start their Christian life and from then find delight in discovering God's will in His written word as the authentic, complete and effective source of guidance for life.

2. *Holism and truth.* The final conclusion of postmodernism about the nature of truth is erroneous. It is not legitimate to affirm that each person can construct his or her own truth out of the context of divine revelation given by God himself. It is inappropriate also to say that truth is so relative that in the final analysis it does not exist.

On the other hand, this generation is hungry for truth in many practical areas of life. An electronic site in the World Wide Web built by the county of Maricopa, Arizona (United States of America) offers a service that consists of giving adolescents the opportunity of calling a toll free number to ask questions and look for advice about areas of concern in their personal lives. When I examined the topics about which they ask questions, I could not help but coming to the conclusion that they are anxious to receive clear answers to their questions. They want to know the truth.

These boys and girls look for guidance and truth about questions covering problems related to alcohol and other drugs, sexuality, birth control, pregnancy, emotional problems, family problems, social concerns, school concerns, health problems and others. Within each of these categories there is a long list of specific problems about which they want to know the truth.

When dealing with the problems of our youth and adolescents and their postmodern mind setting, it is appropriate to keep in mind that God presents the truth with many different facets to appeal to many different minds. This has always been true, but perhaps postmodernism has helped us to remember it. It is striking to discover how the Bible presents the same concept in many different ways. In the Sabbath School lesson for Friday, January 9, 1998, for instance, the author cites Paul Minear and his book *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, who counted a total of 96 different images used to describe the church. Among them are the images of a body, a temple, a bride and many others. Each image highlights one particular aspect of the concept or truth presented, in such a way as to appeal to different minds.

The postmodern mind is predisposed also to recognize the many aspects of truth and at the same time think in global terms. This is what we call holism. Germans contributed the word *gestalt* to refer to a whole configuration which is more than the sum of its parts. The truth is that the revelation of God and of truth is presented to us in many ways for didactic purposes, but it is truly a *gestalt* which is more than the sum of its individual components. This is true about truth and it is also true about experience. Discovering it should humble us because it leads us to recall that we will spend eternity in the study of the revelation of the person of God and of truth.

The book of Hebrews in the Bible tells us that God has spoken to us many times and in many ways and that the supreme and definite revelation of his person is the Son, who was constituted as heir of all and through whom he created the universe (Hebrews 1:1-2). The story about the Son, however, is presented in the Bible in four different versions, and in addition to these four each author in the New Testament offers a piece of the picture about his person.

About this Ellen G. White asks: Why need Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Gospels...? Each has an experience of his own, and this diversity broadens and deepens the knowledge that is brought out to meet the necessities of varied minds. The thoughts expressed have not a set uniformity, as if cast in an iron mold, making the very hearing monotonous. In such uniformity there would be a loss of grace and distinctive beauty. . . .

Then Ellen G. White adds: The Creator of all ideas can impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction. The fact that this difference exists should not perplex or confuse us. It is seldom that two persons will view and express truth in the same way. Each dwells on particular points which his constitution and education have fitted him to appreciate. The sunlight falling upon different objects gives those objects a different hue” (Selected Messages, Book 1, pp. 22, 23).

Therefore, the dialogue with this generation can start with the recognition of the multiform and multilateral nature of truth. Starting from there, it can be continually enriched as common elements of understanding are explored and gradually other vital aspects of truth are shared. A dialogue of this type, when well conducted with grace and tact, has the potential of arriving to a happy culmination by revealing Him who presents Himself as the water of life, the bread of life, the Word of God, God Himself, the light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, the vine, the way, the truth and the life.

*3. Value of relationships.* This generation has given an extraordinary value to relationships, in part because of their intense hunger of significant relationships. In Christian life there is a constant tension between the type of religion centered on behavior and the type of religion centered on a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.

We cannot stop telling the truth about God’s ideal for Christian conduct. The Bible is full of instructions about behavior. The Ten Commandments are an expression of God’s will and the only conduct acceptable in response to their demands is obedience.

On the other hand, nobody becomes a Christian as a consequence of making conscientious efforts to develop a conduct that reflects God’s ideal. We become Christians by establishing a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, and continue to be Christians as we cultivate that relationship.

The amazing thing is that a relationship with Jesus is the most powerful resource in the universe to transform our behavior. Living every day in friendship with Him transforms us. Behavior becomes the result of submitting our life daily to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the power of his word, and of a continuous relationship with Jesus Christ.

#### **Action 5: Develop a strong and effective family ministry**

An effective family life ministry is an imperative need, because many of the difficulties we face with adolescents and youth have their focal point in the family. My brother Alfredo García-Marenko, Youth and Family Ministries Director of the Inter-American Division, shared with me a written piece that shows that the learning tools in the home are instruction, observation and participation, and then mentions seven reasons why youth rebels, all of them in some way related to family life. These reasons are: 1) Too much negative information too early in life, 2) loss of control by parents, 3) loss of traditional values, 4) absence of appropriate models, 5) total or partial loss of self-esteem, 6) double standards of life in significant adults and in church leaders and 7) lack of appropriate communication between parents and children and between youth and leaders.

Some times when it is too late, parents look back and start thinking what they could have done and did not do and what they did that they should not have done. This is clearly illustrated in the following clip entitled "If I could raise my children again", taken from page 107 of the book *Diez Cosas que su Hijo le Agradecería un Día* (Ten things that your child would thank you for some day), and that my brother shared with me also: 1) I would make Sundays afternoons more interesting and would take less siestas. 2) I would look for hobbies and activities that I could enjoy with each of my children. 3) I would be a patient, unhurried listener. 4) I would never spend a cold night in a somber airport because of work matters on my daughter's birthday. 5) I would pray more with my children. 6) I would allow my children to teach me. 7) I would go camping with my son twice as much as I did. 8) I would leave out more with my children's mother. 9) I would celebrate their victories more often. 10) I would give them an extended family. 11) I would carry my son on my shoulders more frequently. 12) I would keep my sense of humor as they pass through puberty. 13) I would never punish them because of their grades. 14) I would stop fighting because of their rooms after they become teens and I would save my energies for more important matters. 15) I would get discouraged less frequently. 16) I would have my family involved in more projects to help others.

One factor that contributes to complicate matters is the fact that frequently parents themselves are going through their own mid life crisis while they face the difficulties and conflicts that are typical of adolescence. Sany Rangel, who graduated in the University of Montemorelos in 1995 from the Master of Family Relations program, prepared as her master's project a piece that reminds us of this fact that adolescence as a stage in the family life cycle generally comes at the same time when parents face their mid life crisis.

This reality should represent an unavoidable component in our considerations about family ministry on behalf of adolescents and youth. The literature has documented very clearly the reality that crises in adolescence are more intense frequently because parents themselves, both individually and in their marriage relationship are facing a crisis. It is vital then that efforts on behalf of the generation of youth and adolescents be developed in the wider context of a family life ministry that takes these reality into account.

Undoubtedly this generation needs to hear more positive messages at home. Paul S. Swets in his book *How to Talk so your Teenager Will Listen* includes a chapter written by his adolescent son Jud, based on a survey he conducted among several hundred adolescents. The survey reveals that there are five messages that adolescents want to hear from their parents. These are: 1) "I am proud of you". 2) "You may come to me at any moment and I am going to listen to you". 3) "I understand you". 4) "I trust you". 5) "I love you". As we stimulate parents to transmit these messages, we will be working positively for the integral development of our youth and adolescents.

Adventist educators should seriously consider how to get involved in a family life ministry. Their preparation, knowledge, mastery of interpersonal processes and commitment to the integral human well being place them in a position which is particularly crucial for the fulfillment of a mission oriented toward the well being of the family which will impact directly adolescents and young adults.

This ministry can have many different forms and that can be easily adapted to the preparation and specific talents of each educator. Of course it may be a **therapeutic** or **counseling ministry**. This ministry would call for those educators that have the talents and professional preparation to work directly in helping individuals and families to manage intra-personal and interpersonal processes that require the intervention of an effective therapist or counselor. When dealing with adolescents and young adults, doing in the wider context of family processes can give to this work extraordinary dimensions for a more complete, more integral and more effective ministry.

And this can also be an **educational ministry**. The Adventist school has much to say about integral health, emotional life, human development in its different dimensions, friendships, courtship and mate selection, marriage, parenthood, communication, conflict solving, self-esteem, personal discipline, sex education and many other areas.

Adventist educators who have the conviction that God has called them to this ministry, and who have the professional preparation to get involved in it, can provide a significant service to the church if they do not limit themselves to provide family life education to adolescents and young adults directly. They can also be instruments in God's hands to provide educational and consulting services to parents, other educators and even pastors in the context of church life. The potential of a ministry of this nature is unlimited.

### CONCLUSION

Ellen G. White affirms that "the Lord of heaven is looking on to see who is doing the work He would have done for the children and youth. The eyes of our brethren and sisters should be anointed with heavenly eyesalve, that they may discern the necessities of the time. We must be aroused to see what needs to be done in Christ's spiritual vineyard, and go to work" (*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 42). God is inviting every Adventist educator to get involved in this redemptive task. While the evil forces get delighted by exhibiting the results of their destructive work, God is building a community of children, adolescents and youth that he wants to present as trophies of his power to save and of his infinite love.

While Satan goes around roaming through the earth trying to ruin our young people, God asks him a question he cannot respond: "Have you considered my servants Job, Mary, Susan, John, Anna, Peter, Ellen, Joe . . . , who are blameless and upright, who fear God and shun evil?" Generation X members have been chosen by God to live in the culminating moment of human history. They are not destined to fail. God wants them to be successful in present life as they prepare themselves for immortal life. He tells them: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12, *New International Version*). We can be instruments in God's hands to bless the life of many adolescents and young adults to whom God will soon say: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness" (Matthew 25:21, *Idem*).

### SELECTED REFERENCES ON TODAY'S GENERATION OF YOUTH AND ADOLESCENTS

- Barna, George. *Baby-Busters: The Disilusioned Generation*. Ventura, California: Regal, 1996.
- Barna, George. *The Invisible Generation: Baby Busters*. Glendale, California: Barna Research Group, 1992.
- Burton, Richard. "Effective Ministry to Baby Busters". [Http://www.epbc.edu/burtf94.html](http://www.epbc.edu/burtf94.html).
- Coupland, Douglas. *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*. New York, New York: Saint Martin's, 1991.
- Dudley, Roger L. *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance*. Riverside, California: La Sierra University Press, 1992.

- Ford, Kevin Graham con Denney, Jim. *Jesus for a New Generation: Putting the Gospel in the Language of Xers*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1995.
- García-Marenko, Ada. *Paternidad Satisfactoria: Un Programa de Conocimientos Prácticos para la Crianza Exitosa de los Hijos*. Personal publication.
- Kuzma, Kay. *Talking to Your Teenager*. Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1991.
- Long, Jimmy. *Generating Hope: A Strategy for Reaching the Postmodern Generation*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InverVarsity, 1997.
- Howerwas, Stanley. *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.
- McDowell, Josh. *Right from Wrong: What You Need to Know to Help Youth Make the Right Choices*. Dallas, Texas: Word, 1994.
- McMillan, Leonard David. *ParentTeen*. Hagerstan, Maryland: Review and Herald, 1993.
- Pollard, C. William. *The Soul of the Firm*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1996.
- Rangel Alvarado, Sany Marizia. *Adolescencia: Una Etapa Compartida: Un Programa dirigido al Mejoramiento de las Relaciones entre Padres e Hijos Adolescentes en su Etapa del Ciclo Vital*. Master's Projetc, Maestría en Relaciones Familiares. Universidad de Montemorelos, Montemorelos, Nuevo León, México, 1995.
- Rogers, Jay. "Generation X: What Makes this Generation Different". [Http://www.forerunner.com/forerunner/x0856\\_Generation\\_X.html](http://www.forerunner.com/forerunner/x0856_Generation_X.html).
- Scales, Peter C. "Making a Difference to Young Adolescents in the 90s". *Education Digest*, April 1992, pp. 30-34.