

# Link2U<sup>th</sup>

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## 1<sup>st</sup> NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONVENTION HELD IN CUBA

For the first time Cuban youth delegates eat together in church gatherings

by Baraka G. Muganda, World Youth Director



The capital city of Havana, Cuba was the venue of the first Youth Leadership Convention for local churches, held from May 12th to May 16th, 2009. Over 400 delegates, from every church on the island attended this well planned Convention under the theme "Youth Leaders of Faith". The president of the union, Daniel Fontaine Marquez, said, "For over the last twenty years nothing like this has ever been held in Cuba for youth leaders, we have had some youth gatherings but not to bring leaders of young people from every church and be trained to serve in the twenty first century with the cutting edge methods and approaches needed to save the youth into God's kingdom."

The daily program was planned to meet the theme of the Convention. Devotions of shaping youth leaders with faith were well delivered by the guest speakers. Each day had a series of seminars taught. Seminars in youth leadership and spirituality development were included in the schedule. Cuban youth sat from morning till lunch break listening to every word that was uttered. Lunch break gave the delegates a few moments of relaxation then another block of seminars were conducted to supper time with another short break before the last period of the evening, which was the power hour. One of the evenings was specifically set aside for cultural shows.

Cubans have such deep commitment for the word of God. Though the Convention was specifically held for the local church Youth Leaders, church members joined the delegates every day. The music was so inspiring. Delegates participated in the worship hour with joy and excitement. The president of the union, Daniel Fontaine Marquez with his administration team and all the union office workers attended the convention from day one to the end. With such support there is a new day dawning in youth ministry in this country of Cuba. "This is the first time in the history of our meetings held in Cuba delegates eating together, the government has now allowed us corporate entities to buy foods in large quantities, before that delegates brought to church gathering their own one kilo of rice, one kilo of beans and a bottle of water and cooked for themselves." He went on to show his appreciation to the government of Cuba for opening up this privilege, "It bonds as a church family, as all of us eat, learn, fellowship, pray and worship together."

"Last year the youth in this city of Cuba baptized over 200 people under the Elijah Project" Ruben Alvarez Alfonso smilingly reported to the attentive delegates. He went on to challenge the delegates, "we want to see more of these evangelistic projects conducted throughout Cuba after this convention." In Cuba social projects are not allowed by the government but allow the church to hold evangelistic meetings. Youth are now determined to do more evangelism than ever before as they accept the challenge to live like Daniel, and Joseph after this Convention.

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### Link2Uth

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by Baraka G. Muganda, World Youth Director

# jogging with discipline!

I am writing this Teammate to Teammate from my guest room in Nairobi at the campus of the newly established graduate school of Africa known as Adventist University of Africa (AUA), and have been here now for almost a month. Some of my teammates might ask what I am doing here. That is a million dollar question with a two million dollar answer (reflecting the joy of a fulfilled dream), I am here teaching Youth Ministry Leadership course to 83 students from many parts of the African continent. This campus is situated in a very beautiful environment. Green savannah trees decorate the hill on which the staff and teachers live.

There is a huge temptation here to overdo your physical exercise because the place is just right for such an activity. Every morning I and my students find ourselves jogging around 5am some students are even up earlier than that because they are enjoying the time put into this workout.

I have noticed several students who, on average, run four laps around the hilly campus. We are talking of about 10 miles, every morning!

While jogging and watching these students' determination in keeping up with their morning schedule and making sure they are physically fit I cannot stop thinking of the great discipline they have acquired in their lives. Every morning up at the same time, running with joy and with a big smile... and when I see them in the classroom they look so enlivened and alert!

What a lesson I have learned from my students as I jog with them every morning... if only our youth and their leaders would develop such discipline in their daily walk with the Lord, starting every morning with God; what a strong kind of young people this church would have! It calls for a strong discipline! It is not easy to leave your bed when the tropical winter breeze gives you a cool lullaby. But for these students, whether it is drizzling, cool, even sometimes raining they are on the jogging path. This is my prayer for the young people and youth leaders around the world to cultivate this kind of discipline in our daily spiritual formation. Reading the gospels one clearly sees that Jesus' understanding of religion was very much practice-oriented (exercise, right!).



## Teammate 2 Teammate

(from p. 1)

### 1<sup>st</sup> NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP

The highlight of the Convention was the award of the certificate of attendance to delegates. Youth leaders who attended were full of joy when they received these recognitions. Bernardo Rodriguez, said, "This is a new moment for youth ministry in Cuba, now we have certified youth leaders who lead lives of faith." Guests to this convention included Baraka G. Muganda, World Youth Director Bernardo Rodriguez, Inter American Division Youth Director and Mario Niño.

Young people in Cuba join other Seventh-day Adventists every Sabbath as they worship in 273 churches organized on the Island of Cuba.



# MASTER GUIDE SEMINAR

Euro Africa Division

by Corrado Cozzi, Euro Africa Division, Youth Director

**W**ay 1-4, 2009. Baden Powell Park – Rome (Italy). More than 80 Master Guides coming from all the Euro Africa Division (EUD) countries participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Master Guide Seminar.

This Seminar is normally held every 5 years, and is aimed to empower Master Guides to perform at their best the Pathfinder leader role. Starting more than 13 years ago with these kinds of programs, we try to follow the “continued education” principle for our leaders, especially for those directly in contact with children and youth.

This program focused on three major areas: dynamic group principles, pathfinder survival techniques, environmental care.

We were hosted in a beautiful park close to Rome, in the middle of wild nature, lakes, hills, a fabulous landscape. The park itself bears a really big attraction for pathfinder activities. This park will be the next EUD International Pathfinder Camporee site, in August 2011. You are invited, of course!

In order to reach the Seminar purpose, we avoided any kind of theoretical teaching. First of all: there was no electrical power (so, no computer could be used), we slept in our own tents, fought the rain and the cold weather at night. We asked everybody to put away their watches and cell phones (but we had some addicted ones!).

In order to get the two first axes “dynamic group principles” and “survival pathfinder techniques”, we divided the participants into 8 different groups, the most heterogeneous possible, even if not everybody

spoke the same language. Early in the morning each group received a map and a solar quadrant (sundial), a few indications, and the appointment for the bivouac far from the camp. Before leaving, one of the leading organizers presented instructions on eating wild plants, giving demonstrations on which plants to gather for the evening meal. In fact, during the excursion, the Master Guides had to gather plants for dinner, besides finding the station points and get to the end of the course. This exercise was well accepted by the participants, whom were pushed to speak other languages, find common consensus on the way to follow, gather plants, and more. At the end, all groups arrived at the site and started to prepare the fire (without matches!) to cook their meal. Surprise: the organizer gave them some ingredients to prepare at the best their new recipes. Believe me: my hobby is cooking, but I was so delighted to taste the food prepared by the groups. And it was not only plants, it was consommé, chapattis, omelettes, bread, etc. We also tasted a cake and a very good drink. During the night everybody slept very well! The way back was a gift of God, a wonderful day, walking in beautiful nature that you can find in all countries of the world.

Back at camp, each delegation presented a workshop inviting all participants to improve their knowledge on different practical aspects of the pathfinder life: ropes, pioneerism, natural kayaks, handcrafts, etc.

For the environmental care area, we gave 4 different quizzes just to feel the degree of the participants’ knowledge. Questions about overshoot, footprint, energy saving, climate change, ethical shopping, etc., were on the questionnaires. Unfortunately we, as creationists, very rarely defend God’s property. I hope we can improve our support to the climate change and be more environmentally oriented also in our churches. The groups were invited to create a “Kids Environment Expo”, a material to be used in schools, or in an Expo, like the well known Health Expo that we have here in EUD.

We are looking for the next seminar, which we hope will be

held before the Camporee in 2011. But, my dream is to organize a week-long Advanced Master Guide Seminar: complete survival, in one of the thousands of islands we have in the Mediterranean. Will we be able to reach this goal?





Adventist Youth

# Dateline



Ireland



The Three Missions in the British Union joined to gather in convening a Youth Retreat for their youth this year, which was held in Ireland, from, April 10th to April 13th. Around 120 young people attended seminars, devotions and fellowship activities under the theme, Forgiveness. Dramas around the theme were performed to introduce the sermons on each day. Early private devotions before 7am were well attended by youth in small groups. The event has now become the annual trade mark of youth ministry in these three union missions and each year they rotate it among the missions.

England



The weekend kicked off on Friday night, April 17th with music, drama, and lively preaching for the London Youth Federation event. 1500 youth celebrate the theme Live which has become an icon in youth ministry in the South England Conference, says Collins. On Sabbath the youth filled the Emmanuel Convention center down town. Young people in this conference want to revive the basic youth ministry. During this weekend a special drama was played showing the beginnings of youth ministry and the causes of the death of youth ministry in many churches in UK. The meetings ended at 6pm with a general annual meeting for the federation to lay plans and objectives for the rest of the year. UK youth want to be involved in their communities and impact them with the Love of God, thus the project Live. They want to live like Bible youth showing the love of God to those who come face to face with them. Baraka Muganda was the guest for this awesome weekend.

## Travel Plans for July

- Baraka: 1 - 31: Annual Leave
- Hiskia: 1 - 22: Annual Leave  
29 - (Aug) 2: Yth Evangelism, Peru
- Jonatán: 4: Pathfinder gathering, New York  
6 - 12: Pathfinder Camporee, Bolivia  
17 - 19: Youth Campmeeting, Texas  
24 - 26: Youth Campmeeting, Texas

