

Welcome Letter - Alfredo Garcia-Marenko

December 17, 2003

TO THE ADVENTIST YOUTH AND LEADERS
ATTENDING THE GENERAL YOUTH CONFERENCE 2003

Dear Young People and Leaders:

“HIGHER THAN THE HIGHEST” is the lovely and meaningful motto chosen for the Second General Youth Conference held this year in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. Michigan is the State where Adventist Youth Ministry began in 1879 with Luther Warren (14) and Harry Fenner (17), the two young pioneers who organized the first-ever Adventist Youth Society with missionary purpose, which over the years were successfully planted and spread throughout the whole world. What a challenge for those churches with no local youth organization in this time of the end!

In a commendable way, 124 years later, you attend this youth event to re-emphasize the gospel commission in the same State of this nation, as part of a generation of young people who want to strive for spiritual excellence, even “higher than the highest”. Take heart with the following inspired words: “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children” (Education, page 18). “Men and women may reach God’s ideal for them if they will take Christ as their Helper” (Testimonies, vol. 7, page 49).

While you meet in Michigan, more than 1,000 Adventist young people with their leaders from all world Divisions, along with the leaders of the General Conference, are traveling to the 10/40 window— the rectangular geographical area of the world extending from 10 to 40 degrees north of the equator—that contains over 60 nations with an estimated two billion unreached people who live there in the strongholds of Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Most of them have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. We go there to work for the Lord in that vast non-Christian environment and to attend the World Conference on Youth Evangelism in Bangkok, Thailand –renamed “World Conference on Youth and Community Service” in order to avoid any obstruction to the efforts of our World Church in that region. What a day for the army of Adventist youth! What an army of youth evangelists!

I salute you on behalf of more than eight million Adventist youth around the world, who along with you, have decided to be faithful to Jesus and to His church, and go forward in faith with their highest destination: the kingdom of heaven.

Sincerely yours,

Alfredo Garcia-Marenko

World Senior Youth Director and GC Youth Department Associate Director