

Sermon for Pathfinder Day

Courageous Pathfinders, Full of Faith, Determination and Bravery

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A STORY OF CONQUEST THROUGH 65 YEARS

Today is a very special day for Adventist Pathfinders, and for the leaders and directors of the Powerful Generation, who selflessly dedicate their time, talents, and resources to carry this beautiful ministry forward.

This is a day to celebrate the 65 years since the General Conference (GC) officially adopted the Pathfinder Club as a worldwide program for the whole church. Let's praise God today, because this special army is present in nearly 170 countries all around the world. At any point on the globe, we have the same song, the same ideals, the same logos, and the same purpose. Although, in reality, Pathfinders began much earlier, we announce that not only are they the future of the church, but they are an important part of its present.

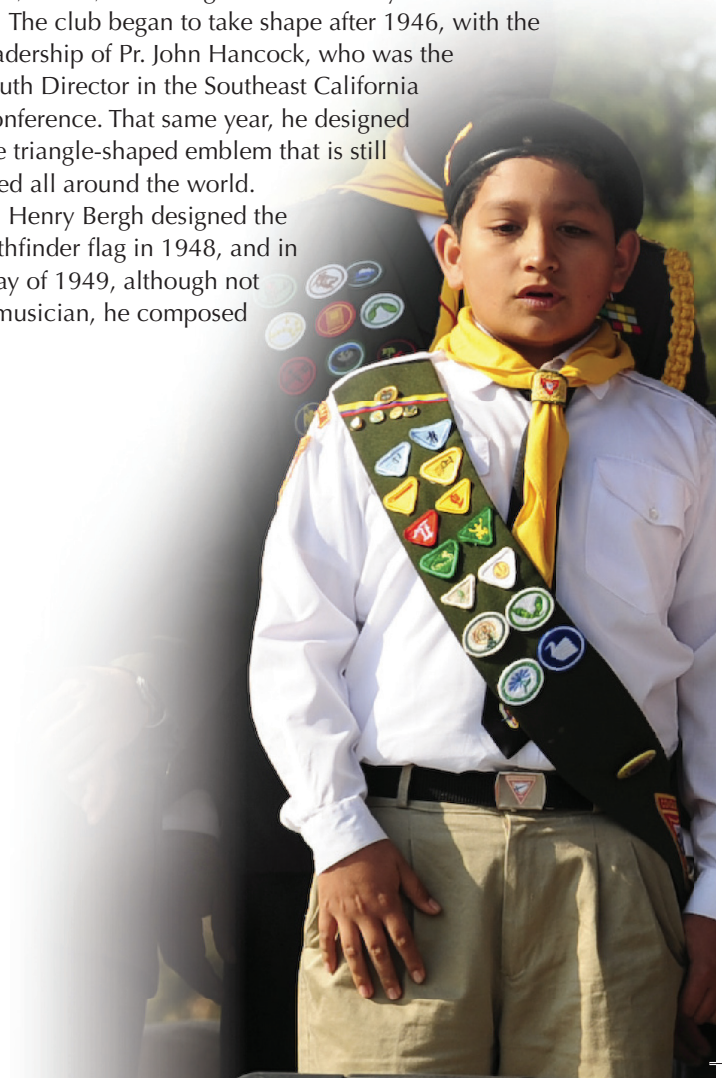
As we review history, we find that between 1879 and 1907, many local churches and schools experimented with adolescent youth societies. However, it was in 1909 when a vote was taken for a program for youth between the ages of ten and fifteen, called Junior Missionary Volunteer (JMV) Societies, which were established in churches and schools.

In 1922 the JMV Friend and Companion classes were introduced, and in 1928 the first Vocational Merits were offered, renamed in 1929 as Vocational Honors. The Junior Missionary Volunteer Manual from 1929 included

35 Vocational Honors. At about that time, the Pathfinder Aim, Motto, and Pledge we know today were created.

The club began to take shape after 1946, with the leadership of Pr. John Hancock, who was the Youth Director in the Southeast California Conference. That same year, he designed the triangle-shaped emblem that is still used all around the world.

Henry Bergh designed the Pathfinder flag in 1948, and in May of 1949, although not a musician, he composed



the Pathfinder song. Finally, on August 24, 1950, the GC officially adopted the Pathfinder Club as a worldwide program for the whole church.

Sixty-five years have passed from that historical moment, and Seventh-day Adventist Pathfinders continue to be standard bearers in fulfilling its mission. Praise God today for the Pathfinder leaders who began this ministry and worked so that Pathfinders today can build more meaningful lives with multiple opportunities for leadership.

AN ISRAELITE PATHFINDER

Today I'd like you to open your Bibles with me to learn about an Israelite Pathfinder who lived in the 9th century B.C. and who was uprooted from within a very noble family, to be taken as a slave to a faraway place.

There she had to face life with much pain and sadness, but with a lot of courage. Let's go to the second book of Kings, chapter 5, verses 1 to 5.

Naaman was a very important and brave man in Syria. He was responsible for coordinating and carrying out several attacks against the people of Israel, in which many died. It is possible that this Pathfinder's parents may have died in one of his military attacks. However, verse 1 says that Naaman was now suffering from leprosy, one of the time's most terrible diseases.

Verse 2 says that some Syrian armed bands or military squads had gone out to look for goods, and among the things they took, they abducted this little girl and took



her to Syria to sell her as a slave. Quite possibly, she was sold in the slave market in Damascus, where she was bought by Naaman's family.

She was taken and sold to be a slave in a strange country with a strange language, customs, and beliefs that were completely pagan and different to those her parents had taught her. It appeared that she had been forgotten by God and left without any comfort or hope. Tragedy struck her life when she least expected it.

We don't know the age of this captive girl, but the Bible tells us she was a young girl (2 Kings 5:2). We don't know her name, either. We simply find a faithful young girl who retained her faith, courage, and complete trust in God, demonstrating it at a critical and transcendent moment of her life as a slave.

Some have said that perhaps she might have been around 13 or 14 years old. If that's the case, then she was a very brave Pathfinder who had two key concepts deeply rooted in her life: salvation and service. At this critical moment of her life, she said with determination, "I will 'do my honest part.'"

The Adventist Bible Commentary tells us that she "must have been faithful in her service, for otherwise she would not have been employed in such a home as this. [...] Only eternity can measure the results of

that testimony of confidence in Israel's God borne by the captive maid before her mistress in an alien land." Earlier, it says, "Life seemed to have for her little of good, and she might have become bitter and morose if she had allowed herself to center her thoughts upon herself and her unhappy plight. But even in an aliend land God had a service for her" (vol. 2, p. 875).

This Israelite girl is a significant character in the Bible. She had every reason to hate Naaman, his wife, and her captors. However, she concerned herself with the health of her master who was suffering from leprosy. That's why she told her mistress that she could help her.

She hadn't forgotten her God or her homeland. Nor was she complaining about her situation as a slave. She was certain that if she was faithful to God, He would take care of her and protect her. She wished Naaman no evil; on the contrary, she sought a way to help him so he could be healed. She had faith in God and trusted that God's prophet Elisha could help him. She knew that there is nothing impossible for God. Her convictions of faith were great, and she was not afraid to talk to her mistress about the matter. Her testimony in that home was powerful, and what she most hoped for was that her master could also experience the victory granted by the God of the hosts of Israel.

Jordan River



She had been well instructed by her parents and now the results were emerging. Her mistress believed her, and Naaman's story changed. There is a great lesson here for all parents present here today. The best thing you can give to your children is a good education with Christian principles. The best thing parents can do is help them to be Pathfinders of faith, determination, and bravery.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD I WILL BE . . .

Dear Pathfinders, now I want to move forward in the story and visualize this miracle. Imagine Naaman coming back home. Imagine this girl's happiness when she sees her master come, safe and sound, and giving thanks to God. Can you imagine him giving her a strong handshake, or perhaps giving her a hug or bringing her a present? I don't know how this happy moment played out. But what the Bible does tell me is that this man was healed (v. 14). This noble and kind girl was well-anchored in the Pathfinder Pledge: *"By the grace of God, I will be pure, and kind, and true. I will keep the Pathfinder Law. I will be a servant of God and a friend to man."* Now there was a Naaman who was healthy and clean and had flesh "like the flesh of a little child," and a very thankful wife.

This girl kept her faith intact, and her word was believed by her mistress and by Naaman. She helped so that her master would not only receive healing, but also God's greatest gift: salvation.

APPEAL

Dear Pathfinders, this beautiful story teaches us that we need to learn to obey and serve the Lord even in the worst circumstances. This teaches us that no problem, as hard as it may be, should break down our faith in God. It also teaches us that no matter your age, condition, or how little your influence or position may be, God can use you to spread His Word! Look today for any opportunity you have to tell others how great and wonderful God is. Remember that our purpose has always been and will always be "To save from sin and guide into service."

Faithful Pathfinders will never be forgotten. Though their names may not be registered, their actions will follow them all their lives. Never forget that when God wants to do great things, He can use the least-expected people to bring about His purposes.

How many of you want to be courageous Pathfinders with faith, determination, and bravery?

May God bless you.

