

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Seventh-Day Adventist Pathfinders March For 'Souls' During Congressoree's March Of Witness

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ST. CROIX -- "Left! Left! Left, right!" echoed through the streets of Christiansted this weekend; it's a rhythm that typically signifies discipline, but a group of Seventh-day Adventist young people are also using it as a method of persuasion.

"The March of Witness" is important because it shows the community "who we are, what we are, and what we plan to accomplish or what we want to accomplish," 13-year-old Anjeness Williams said on Sunday.

Williams is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Pathfinder Club. The club, which caters to youth ages 9-15, can be compared to the Boy and Girl Scouts of America as

many of its activities like camping, swimming, and exploring are aimed at offering practical life lessons. But the ultimate accomplishment for SDA pathfinders, according to Williams, is to “save souls for the kingdom.”



Flag Bearer (Media One Productions)

What “kingdom”?

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Jesus was more than a prophet or a good man. They believe he is part of a sovereign godhead and was raised from the dead by divine power.

According to their message, Jesus will return to the earth a second time to rid the world of suffering and evil. Only those who have determined in their hearts to be good people and to seek truth will be able to live forever at the end of the Armageddon event, the Advent teachings say. The kingdom, Williams referred to, was this kingdom – a final kingdom where everyone lives eternally.



Discipline (Media One Productions)

Pathfinders and “The Kingdom”

Pathfinders often recite a pledge or code that reminds them of the Bible standards they represent. Part of the pledge encourages them to “be a servant of God and a friend to man.”

During their time in the Pathfinder Club, they engage in activities that allow them to be “a friend to man” through community service. In this way, they hope to model goodness and truth-seeking so that as many people as possible will have a chance at “eternal life.”



Salute (Media One Productions)

Pathfinder Congressoree

Every year, pathfinders must fulfill requirements to demonstrate their development in spirituality, community service, health and science, vocational activities, recreational activities, and other basic life skills.

To culminate their learning, an annual graduation of sorts is held. It's called Pathfinder Congressoree. Since Seventh-day Adventism is a global denomination, this event happens worldwide. In the Virgin Islands, the event location rotates between St. Thomas, St. Croix, and Tortola as members from both the U.S. Virgin Islands and British Virgin Islands join together for the celebration.



Discipline (Media One Productions)

“March of Witness”

One of the highlights of the congressoree is the annual “March of Witness.”

Scores of uniformed bodies marched in synchronization on Sunday from the Juanita Gardine Elementary School to the St. Croix SDA School in Welcome, near the D.C.

Canegata Ballpark. Some held flags and others, banners that read, "I love to serve."

Accompanying the marchers were three sets of drum corps.

The corps are an integral part of the march, according to Oneyke Huggins, a member of the Heartbeatz Drum Corp from Tortola.

"We're the pulse. We're the heartbeat," he said. "Without the drum corps, the march doesn't make sense."



Inspection (Media One Productions)

As the pathfinders and other uniformed personnel marched to the energizing rhythms through the Water Gut community and the streets of the historical town, they attracted local and tourist spectators.

According to Vincent David, the SDA youth director for this region, that's the idea.

“The march does two things,” he said. “One – it becomes a march of witness to those who view and follow and two....To put them on the march is to keep them focused and, at the same time, to role model what youths are about when they are disciplined.”

It seems like the 13-year-old articulated it correctly. It's more than a showcase of discipline. It's influence. It's a march for “souls.”

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