

Complete Executive Summary

Telephone Interviews of
Seventh-day Adventist Pastors

Interview Dates:
October 7 – November 24, 1997

*Conducted by Curtis Rittenour
Resource Development
AdventSource*

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Pastoral Interviews

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Interview Dates: **October 7 – November 24, 1997**

Number of Calls in this Report: **50**

Number of Conferences Represented: **17**

THE QUESTIONS

***Question 1.** What types of responses do you get from business owners or civic leaders about Ingathering?*

If there is an established relationship or yearly contact, the response is almost always good. That's the sense I get from interviewing 50 pastors about Ingathering (or the new alternatives). Most pastors said, "If there hasn't been a contact, I find it almost impossible to get a donation. It's hard to break in to a new business." About eight pastors (all from Canada) mentioned ADRA appeal. Another five pastors mentioned they were doing Campaign for Community (and all comments were favorable about it).

Pastors repeatedly mentioned these words: contacts, relationships, established connections, friendships, familiarity, etc. The key strategy is to have an established connection between the business owner and a church member. Without this, its tough to "get in", especially with the numerous other charities knocking on the door. Some pastors send letters out to business owners ahead of time. Others encourage church members to "do business" with businesses who support Ingathering. One pastor suggested we seek the payroll deduction approach that other charities use.

Of the 50 pastors called for this series of questions, about 50% of them approach businesses. The others either go caroling, reach their "goals" through personal offerings, or they do nothing at all.

***Question 2.** What works well in your church to effectively minister to young adults with small children?*

By far the most common comments made to this question were: "I have small churches with very few young adults" and "I wish I had more ideas." Many pastors mentioned

traditional programs for children, some mentioned programs that are more innovative, and a few spoke of creative efforts to reach kids for Jesus. Efforts to involve children in worship services came up frequently.

Traditional programs were mentioned by most pastors: Sabbath school, children's story (during worship services), VBS, Pathfinders, church school, socials for the entire family. Approximately 1/3 went deeper in attempting to provide for young families and small children. These pastors spoke of providing more specific programs. They mentioned things like children's church, childcare during church programs for adults, parenting classes, a nursery with staff, regular platform involvement during worship services.

Some creative ideas that came from this question include a church with a social committee for children. They recently provided a special potluck meal with activities after church services (giving the parents a break). Another church has a Sabbath Family Picnic in a park on a regular basis. Several pastors stressed to me the importance of visiting families in their homes and working to build friendships with children. About one fifth of the pastors bring in guests to conduct family seminars that help young families. Another 1/3 or so provide programs for parents through support groups (Men's and Women's Ministries) that they believe benefit children in the long run.

***Question 3.** What type of leadership training have you participated in during the last year? Your church leaders? What is your preferred method of training lay leaders in your church? Attend an event? Pass out books? Watch or participate in a video workshop? Use A.C.N. satellite training? Coaching? Etc.*

Leadership training among pastors can be broken up into four areas. The first is pastor's meetings (often called "worker's meetings", something this interviewer has a pet peeve about). The second are Adventist sponsored events. Approximately 21 of 50 pastors mentioned attendance at such events. Examples in this category include things like Seeds, Next Step, A.C.N., Disaster Preparation, Ron Halverson, Oakwood Evangelism Council, Florida Hospital seminars, Birmingham, Eastern Canada Ministerial Meetings, etc.

The third area includes interdenominational seminars. About 16 pastors mentioned programs such as Injoy, Peter Wagner, Alban Institute, George Barna, Fred Pryor, Prepare-Enrich, Youth Specialties, Catholic Family Services, etc.

The final area I would classify as more "generic". For instance, three pastors are working toward a D. Min. through Andrews University. One pastor is in a chaplaincy program. And a couple others spoke of C.E.U. credits through Ministry magazine's training. Also in this category, three pastors mentioned specialized training events that were not overtly religious: IDAK (mid-career transition program out of Portland, Oregon), Landmark Education, and Carlson Learning Center programs. The last two focused specifically on developing general leadership skills.

When asked about leadership training for church members, the most common response focused specifically on teaching members how to give Bible studies. Around half the pastors in this interview told me members attended conference-sponsored events. It sounds like a strong program in the Southern Union is a lay pastor training program led by Ron Halvorsen. Another half said they conducted training for their members. Most often that means sitting down with groups of officers once a year after nominating committee (elders, deacons, deaconesses, etc.) and going over some basic job responsibilities. Very few pastors (maybe 20%) move deeper into leadership training. One pastor in Detroit has access in his congregation to some professionals who do leadership training with General Motors. Another carpet-layer turned pastor has developed a youth leadership-training program in Alberta with success. And some pastors have utilized resources for training (9 Facets, Connections, Contagious Christian videos, attending Willow Creek, using A.C.N).

Preferred methods of leadership training are a mix between going away from the church (conference sponsored events or attending a place like Willow Creek), and “at the church” events (conducted by a guest, or the pastor, and/or using a book, resource, A.C.N. clip, etc.). Some general thoughts on the responses: Churches that bring in guests most often use conference or union officers. Larger churches (with budgets) tend to be the ones bringing in other guests or professionals. One to one training was mentioned by at least 25% and most often referred to giving Bible studies. A lecture/discussion approach using a video / A.C.N. or book resource is widely used. Some pastors teach at the beginning of committee meetings. One pastor liked the conference training program of the Nevada-Utah Conference where Dan Knapp uses a group of accomplished laity and travels around to various churches.

Question 4. Have you ever called PlusLine (1-800-SDA-PLUS or 1-800-732-7587) or AdventSource? Do you know if your church leaders use Adventist PlusLine or AdventSource? If so, which ones generally use it?

Twenty-one of 50 pastors say they have called PlusLine. Ten pastors say they believe some of the church members have called. Reasons mentioned for calling: Sabbath school, demographic information, Bible study information, church logo for a fair booth, children’s ministries, outreach, and Net ’96.

Twenty-eight of 50 pastors say they have called AdventSource. Twenty pastors say they believe church members have called. Reasons mentioned for calling: Pathfinders, Sabbath school, VBS, Youth Ministry material, Personal Ministries, Adventurer’s Club material, Women’s Ministries, evangelism, “Grace” books, 9 Facets, Connections, Family Life, Stewardship, Net ’96, training material.