

Pastoral Interviews
Report for Week of: 1-27-98
Number of Calls: 10
Number of Conferences: 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. How many pastors have heard of the “alternatives” to Ingathering in North America? Seven of 10 pastors have, though the two Canadian pastors have only heard of ADRA Appeal (not Campaign for Community). How many church members or leaders have heard of these alternatives? One pastor spoke of members knowing about ADRA and being very positive about the humanitarian services of this organization. But otherwise, four pastors said they simply haven’t shared information with members about these alternatives. One pastor said he just received information on these. One of the Canadian pastors said, “My members love ADRA but hate raising money.”
2. Nine of ten pastors conduct some type of mid-week service for their church(es). The most common reason given is to provide spiritual nurture or spiritual growth. Other reasons: Doctrinal teaching, tradition, members want it, social/fellowship, and support. The Bible is the basic resource used by most pastors, followed by Ellen White materials (Steps to Christ, Desire of Ages, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing), Bible study guides (Amazing Facts, the Bible Says), other Adventist books (Garrie Williams on the Holy Spirit), and other non-Adventist books (Jerry Cook’s Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness; the Kerygma Program put out by the Lutherans). The format is typically classroom/teaching in nature although many say “small groups.” Two pastors specifically mentioned they sit around tables. A few (non-Anglo) meet in the sanctuary for a more formal type of service. One pastor described prayer meeting as a support group for sharing and caring. And the pastor who said he didn’t conduct a prayer meeting said he is nurturing small groups in homes in his church.
3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change? Members would more freely share their faith in Jesus Christ. That’s the most common response given by pastors, followed by “strengthen / nurture their spiritual life.” In the words of one pastor, “It would turn comfortable Adventists into vibrant believers!” Another pastor spoke of the need for more Adventist to understand deeply what the Lordship of Jesus Christ really means in one’s life. This pastor and another said we are weak in good resources in this area and have to go outside the denomination to find it. Other responses: “Something personnel oriented—I need more help!” and “Money. We are feeling pinched financially and wish more money could stay local. We would like to build a \$2 million worship center”. The most articulate sentence was shared by one pastor who said, “It would help our churches discover the power of grace. And when they do, I see them being more forgiving, more flexible, and more willing to trust the leading of the spirit.”

4. The “average” church in this survey has a dish and occasionally records and uses A.C.N. for training purposes. Most never order the resources to be used in the program. Seven of ten pastors say their churches have dishes or have access to dishes in members’ homes. Four mentioned they record programs for a later time. None of the pastors seemed to strategically use programs for regular training purposes. Most frequently they would say, “We use it a little” or “One time we did.” The most active church involved in using recordings (or watching live programs) is a little church in Wyoming. It never purchases materials and the initiative to watch was membership based, not (I sensed) because of pastoral leadership. One pastor that doesn’t have a dish said it’s a “safety issue” in his Southern California urban church. Another Southern Californian pastor said “My members aren’t into training. I have a commuter church of 300 members with only 3 families living locally. Most of my members are savvy and secular and just don’t connect with the training offered.”
5. Have you ever called PlusLine? Six pastors said yes, and four said members have. Two reasons mentioned related to learning about new satellite technology for Adventist programming, and helping a member find information about an Adventist college. Have you ever called AdventSource? Eight pastors said yes, and four said members have. Reasons for calling: Community services, Sabbath school, children’s ministries, and family life.

Pastor: HB
 Conference: Southeastern California
 Church(es)/Position: Senior Pastor, Filipino Church

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

I think I have. I think conference sent some. Church members don’t know about them.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using? What is your basic format?

Prayer meeting. Vespers also.

We are seeking to help give them a foundation for spiritual life. Doctrinal teaching. Nurturing.

We use Ellen White books. Right now using Desire of Ages.

Singing, welcome, opening prayer, special number, then teaching. In sanctuary.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

Something that would strengthen the spiritual foundation and faith of members. The members relationship with the Lord.

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If 'yes', how? If 'no', why not?

No. Safety issue in our community.

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

Yes. I don't know exactly, probably.

Yes. Yes. Community services.

Pastor: MM

Conference: Southeastern California

Church(es)/Position: Senior Pastor, 1 Church

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

Not aware of any. (I mentioned a few). I wouldn't have thought of those as alternatives. I have very positive feelings toward ADRA, etc. but very negative feelings toward Ingathering.

Yes, when I've had occasion to speak with members specifically about the work of ADRA, its one area of the church they are very proud of.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using? What is your basic format?

Yes.

Predominantly tradition. I haven't seen any real benefit from doing it or not doing it. Here, members want it. It would hamper ministering to my members if I quit doing it. I have thought for a long time a mid-week service could be done and done well ... but the inculturation for most Adventists ... won't fly.

Typically it's a book of the Bible, in-depth study, most recently the book of Revelation.

It's mostly a "teaching" venue vs. a "worship" venue. I've seen a new approach tried. It's been pastor-driven ... but never really got the resources and support so they burned out and it turned into a traditional service.

I think the core members are so used to seeing the way things "have been" that they don't have a lot of energy to change things. Also, the "team" approach is not see so a few lead out.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

The kinds of resources I need are “personnel” oriented. I have lots of ideas, and I gain lots of ideas through reading. There are “tons” of resources, but actually implementing them, I can’t personally do, I’m taxed already in terms of time and commitment of things I am expected to do as a pastor ... So, having additional help, volunteers, secretaries, more pastoral staff...

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If ‘yes’, how? If ‘no’, why not?

Yes/No. We have members who have dishes who tape for us, church doesn’t actually own a dish on site. We have members who can record off cable.

Yes I have used A.C.N., one time. A lay person was doing it.

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

Yes. I have referred the number, don’t know if they’ve called.

Yes. I have referred the number, don’t know if they’ve called.

Pastor: FM

Conference: Southeastern California

Church(es)/Position: Senior pastor, 1 church, Indonesian

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

No.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using? What is your basic format?

Yes.

Prayer meeting. Spiritual nurture.

Bible.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

Spiritual nurture oriented.

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If ‘yes’, how? If ‘no’, why not?

No.

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

No. I don't think so.

No. I don't think so.

Pastor: ML

Conference: Maritime

Church(es)/Position: Senior pastor, 3 churches

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

Yes. ADRA appeal in Canada.

Most of my members are disgusted with the idea, general feeling is we like ADRA but we hate being involved raising the money.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using? What is your basic format?

Yes.

Because they want it. It keeps the momentum moving that was generated during Sabbath services.

Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. It's generally a Bible study or topical study. Teaching approach. Classroom. We do have assignments, etc.

We have a very poor turnout. Most people "don't have the time" to come out for a midweek service. More of the older people seem to come and have the time.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

If revolution were to occur in my church, I would identify it by noticing my church members having greater interest in sharing their faith, have a passion for Jesus, and be involved in service in the church.

I want my church to be caring and soul saving. It has been my effort in the last two years and I feel at many times like a failure and like giving up. I'm able to get my members involved in "entry event" type things (a "Jesus Conference" for example). But as soon as we want to get closer to fundamental Adventism, sharing distinctives, etc. people recoil... lots of hesitation about "remnant", etc. I tell them, yes we are evangelical and ecumenical, but we have a unique message.

I worked with Amazing Facts on the road ... and while we were working back here, the people desired us to stay. The Lord opened the doors for us. We're originally from Northern California ... so this has been a "radical culture change."

I think in this culture, it seems like every body is related to everybody. So, to say in a family situation "You're religion is wrong and my is right..." wouldn't go over well.

[He talked about introducing celebration worship ... about how some Adventist churches in the states are 3 times larger than the whole Maritime conference... On the topic of gifts, he says all his members have the gift of helps... On sharing your faith, there is a resource out of Europe called Alpha that helps break down prejudices... In college I learned a phrase, "What you win them with is what you win them to..." so I prefer a little more direct approach, but it doesn't seem to be working here...]

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If 'yes', how? If 'no', why not?

No. But we have members who do. I haven't used it for training. The members do not appreciate a video projection. We have a \$5,000 machine, screen, etc. We did Batchelor's thing. The members slowly stopped coming and begged me not to do that any more. They want a live person. They don't want to take notes.

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

Yes. I encouraged one person to regarding going to an Adventist college.

Yes. I don't think so. It's all so new to them. They are in the habit of calling the ABC. We even have a big poster on the bulletin poster for AdventSource or PlusLine, but they don't feel it apply to them. If it originates in America, it's not for them. They are prejudiced against America, not Americans.

Pastor: GM

Conference: Southeastern California

Church(es)/Position: Senior pastor, 1 church

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

Haven't heard of the alternatives.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using? What is your basic format?

Yes.

For continuing education of members. For social and spiritual connections.

Right now we are going "Through the Bible in Nine Months" making up own resource manual. Thematically study, not Genesis to Revelation. The other three services, we have a women's group in the morning and a senior citizens. One resource is called the "Kerygma Program" (Lutheran ... but a good nondenominational approach to the Bible). Also used Jerry Cook's book "Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness", EGW Steps to Christ.

Teaching approach with a study outline. Open and honest discussion.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

Right now, to be honest with you, the most resource we could use is money. If we could keep 50% of our tithes local, we could do some fantastic things. We need \$2 million for a new worship center.

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If 'yes', how? If 'no', why not?

No. We have 3 or 4 churches with dishes in the area.

We're not big on training events. We are a commuter church. We have about 300 members with about 3 families that live in this area. The people who belong to this church are people for whom the church is not the center of their lives. Our greatest evangelistic tool is the worship service. The entire Sabbath service is focal. People are mostly turned off by training program I think because I have highly educated people, savvy, worldly, and just don't connect with training. They are secular. Our essential mission is to focus on people who are quite secularized, or people who have been in Adventism for years and are turned off. [We talked about Saddleback...] When you get down into the "core" of what's going on, it's very conservative, traditional, Southern Baptist. Very dogmatic. It's not what I like ... it's just a personal thing. I prefer much more religious freedom. They have lots of "non member" attenders ...

Dan Smith has really revolutionized his church. He's a guy who really is reaching young people in his congregation. Mitch Henson is really doing well also. He is one of those unique people you come across about three times in your life. He has about 150 gays. Active membership is 200. He's a deep thinker and is really doing great things there. Cutting edge. Reaching gays in a tremendous way. Scanner magazine, coming out of the Glendale City congregation.

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

Yes. Don't know about but aware of the number.

Yes. Don't know, but aware of it.

Pastor: JH
Conference: Rocky Mountain
Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

No.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using?
What is your basic format?

Yes.

Spiritual growth.

I'm using the Amazing Facts in one church, and Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing in the other.

Small group environment.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

It would change comfortable Adventists into vibrant believers.

Right now I'm being assessed to plant a church in Denver. If we could have a ton of resources like at Willow Creek, with an emphasis on walking with Christ, I'd immediately buy them. You can't find a set of discipleship Bible study guides ... there is a focus on beliefs, but nothing on deep prayer, devotions, fasting, what it means to have your own Lordship with Christ. If we had materials like that, I'd use them, to not help them be so much Adventist but to be Christian. [He will be on the beta test group with the devotional guides Paul is putting out.]

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If 'yes', how? If 'no', why not?

Yes. A little bit. I haven't used it enough to make a fair judgment. The Day of Prayer was used. One church has one.

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

Yes. Don't know. I haven't marketed it. They've probably seen it.

Yes. Don't think so.

Pastor: AH

Conference: Rocky Mountain

Church(es)/Position: 4 churches

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

Yes. I don't believe my church members are aware of the alternatives.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using?
What is your basic format?

I don't really. I'm trying to do more small group type thing.

Creating my own resource for small group.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

It would help our churches discover the power of grace. And when they do, I see them being more forgiving, more flexible, and more willing to trust the leading of the spirit.

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If 'yes', how? If 'no', why not?

Yes. Three do. Yes. I have ... its used primarily in one of my churches. They like to utilize a lot of these Sabbath afternoon training things for all members. Then they try to apply it in the community. They hardly ever purchase the books. They are a small, poor church.

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

No. I don't know. Maybe a couple have.

Yes. Maybe Sabbath school.

Pastor: ME

Conference: Rocky Mountain

Church(es)/Position: 3 churches

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

Yes. Church members don't know. I just became aware of it recently.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using? What is your basic format?

Yes.

Nurture.

Used Bible and made up my own study lessons. I've used ABC material. I'm currently using the Bible Says lessons since I'm working with some non-Adventists. Small group around a table.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

Impacting the members as far as understanding the Lordship of Christ, discipling (inward, personal, spiritual growth). In the past we've had to rely on outside sources for good material in that area.

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If 'yes', how? If 'no', why not?

Two of them do. No, haven't used it in that regard yet. I think it's been more of not being aware of the program that's available. Has been some. Probably in the process of getting the people aware of the A.C.N. resource, their need to utilize it more.

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

No. I have talked about it, and publicized the number. Don't know if they've used it.

Yes. Yes, children's material, family ministries.

Pastor: SS

Conference: Rocky Mountain

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

Yes. Not shared with church leaders.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using? What is your basic format?

Yes. People feel a need to be together during the week, fellowship.

I've created my own resources. We've used series of evangelistic meetings. Sometimes its more support oriented. I've used small group, classroom, support group approaches.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

The two churches I pastor are different in personality. For one church, the thing I would wish it would do is help them to feel a need for what's going on in the community. The other church has that sense, but a more direct evangelistic bent to reach the community.

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If 'yes', how? If 'no', why not?

Both do. Yes we have. I don't think we've ordered resources, just recorded it and then deliver to people who could most benefit from using it.

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

I think so, information on the new satellite technology coming out. I believe they have, I've heard them talk about it.

Yes. My guess is yes, but not sure of the area.

Pastor: JL

Conference: Maritime

Church(es)/Position: 3 churches

1. Have you heard of the alternatives to Ingathering in the North American Division (ADRA Appeal and Campaign for Community)? The new name for Ingathering is World Service Appeal. What comments do you hear your members make about these?

Haven't heard of Campaign for Community.

2. Do you conduct any type of mid-week meeting? Why or why not? What are you using? What is your basic format?

Yes.

Familiarize them with the Bible and build community.

Usually the Bible. Have used EGW books, also used Garrie Williams books on the Holy Spirit.

Small group approach, sitting around a table.

3. If a resource existed that would help revolutionize your church, what would it change/what would it do?

I would most like to see my church go out and do witnessing. The biggest change would be to have membership involved in soul winning. There are some helping, but very much a minority.

4. Do you have a satellite dish? Do you use A.C.N. for training lay leaders? If 'yes', how? If 'no', why not?

One does. Yes, we have been. Record ahead of time.

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

No. I think I've heard of it, I don't if my leaders have.

No. I don't know.