

Pastoral Interviews

Report for Week of: July 14, 1997

Number of Calls: 10

Number of Conferences: 4

My name is Curtis Rittenour and I'm calling on behalf of the Office of Information and Research for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. I'm working on a project and have been asked to briefly interview pastors on a few items. Do you have 5-7 minutes to quickly go through them?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Does your church(es) do Ingathering? Eight of 10 pastors said 'yes', but a closer look reveals that of those eight pastors, three of them specifically said the members raise the money. None of them sound like they have heard of or done any of the alternative programs. When asked for suggestions to improve Ingathering, pastors readily shared complaints about it. The repeated comments focused on "I can't seem to motivate my members to come out" and "This is an out-dated approach, people don't like going door to door and people in the community don't readily come to the door anymore." One pastor said, "It seems ridiculous to send children out on the streets at night in the city with a can of money these days." Another told the "shame" put on pastors who showed up at January "Worker's Meetings" having not raised their Ingathering goal. Suggestions centered around two main areas: Focus on businesses (cultivate business interests, keep track of business contacts for future reference) and provide more localized information on the brochures. A few other suggestions: Didn't Jasper Wayne sell magazines? Renew the vision for Ingathering's purpose. I like the green booklet showing a map and specific projects.

2. What has worked well in the area of evangelism/outreach? Most pastors reported on what they were doing regardless of whether it went well or not. The most repeated outreach events, with the most frequently listed first, were: Net '96, public crusades (Ken Cox, Amazing Facts, Charles Bursema mentioned), Discovery Bible School, Ken Cox videos, and personal Bible studies. Others mentioned: emphasis on friendship evangelism, Revelation seminar, cooking schools, stress seminar, distributing Steps to Christ. A few pastors mentioned plans for the Doug Batchelor series this fall. Another pastor said the best success with a public crusade was to hold it on Sabbath morning and evening and then do studies as a pastor/evangelist team during the week. One pastor was "down" on spending money on mailing brochures for Net '96. Had far better attendance based on friendship and family contacts. One pastor has a quarterly cycle for evangelism: 1st quarter, do a community survey; 2nd quarter, distribute literature; 3rd quarter, give Bible studies; 4th quarter, hold a public crusade.

3. Two of 10 pastors has specifically seen Adventist Witness magazine. Two more pastors said, "I think so." Of the other six, one pastor said he thought he saw some literature on it. Comments made about the magazine: "I looked through it and passed it

on to my Personal Ministries Leader.” “I’ve heard good things from the leaders in my church who saw it.” “I saw a copy. I’m not sure the focus of the magazine, who its intended for, etc.”

4. What resources are pastors looking for? In order of preference: Video (10), Fact sheets (10), Print, On-line, and software (8), Live training (5). Two pastors specifically mentioned the need for sermon outlines. One of the repeated comments from a high percentage of the pastors was “getting my members to come out.” The other was cost. Some mentioned they feared spending money and having a video seminar or live person come and no one would show. Several laughed about wishing they had money for any resources. Some of the other comments: “Not much in Saskatchewan. Closest ABCs are in Alberta and Ontario. And shipping is a high cost.” “Change the name of Cross-Training. Sounds too much like Cross-Dressing.” “I wish we had story Bible studies along the lines of old resources like Mrs. Perkins, Sam Brown, and God’s Channel of Truth, etc.” “Our church is going through a vision/mission process with a hired consultant.” “I’ve found Rick Warren’s book ‘The Purpose-Driven Church’ to be invaluable.”

5. Three of 10 pastors say they have called PlusLine. Two pastors say they think their leaders have called PlusLine. Calls to PlusLine, they say, had to do with Personal Ministries, Youth Ministry ideas, and finding an address. Seven of 10 pastors say they have called AdventSource. Six pastors say church leaders have called AdventSource (to the best of their knowledge). Reasons mentioned for calling AdventSource: Setting up an account for Pathfinders, Pathfinder supplies (2), Personal Ministries, Ordered logo kit, Family life, Community outreach, Women’s ministries, Children’s ministries, ACN videos. One pastor said, “I let my church clerk do all the ordering.” Another said, “I wish the ministry descriptions resource didn’t have so much black (boxes). It uses up a lot of toner.”

Pastor: IA

Conference: Manitoba/Saskatchewan

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church do “Ingathering” (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

Yes, both of them. I would like to see more advertisements, people would know more about when we will be coming around. I would also suggest we have more local information. Get information from each of the Provinces.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

I have always used the old method, door to door. Getting to know the people personally. This makes the campaign successful. I try to get the whole involved in this

mission work. 1st quarter we might do a survey. Next quarter we give out literature. Next quarter we give Bible studies. And then we do a crusade.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

No.

[He took the time to explain the differences in his churches and the different approaches ... so, one of them does more health outreach (the one in the countryside).]

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - In one of my churches, yes

Printed material - Yes

On-line computer service - Not heavily into that yet (my treasurer is on CompuServe)

Computer software - Same as the above

Fact sheets - Yes, very effective

Live training seminars - Yes

Other: What I would like to see in our churches is more reference materials for my members. Our ABC is at a distance from us. Need to have it more readily available. Shipping is a hindrance. It would be nice if I could order from Ontario or Alberta. I'm in the middle of two provinces.

5. 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?

I think I might have once or twice. Leaders? Oh, definitely, my personal ministries leader has and a few others.

Most of the calls to places like AdventSource I let my church clerk call.

Pastor: BK

Conference: Indiana

Church(es)/Position: 3 churches

1. Does your church do "Ingathering" (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

All three of them. Now a days its hard to get people to go out. I don't know if we could come to a point when we need to do it by mail... Door to door work is tough. However I've only been here for one year. I'm thinking of doing more door to door work.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

The best thing working is friendship evangelism. In other words, reaching relatives and friends. Its not the only thing I'm encouraging them to do. We've been using Amazing Facts cards, we do follow-up with It Is Written.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

Yes. I looked through it. No suggestions. But what I heard from some of my church members, they liked it.

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - What would interest me more is having some powerful testimonies of churches on fire, doing things for the Lord... One time we had a brief presentation from the Union President on soul-winning (Schneider) and you appreciated it ... the whole church did. Something like Mission Spotlight, but more to what's happening today in North America. We have used successfully the Net '96 video tapes.

Printed material - I just got out of the seminary a year ago, so I have a lot of information given to me ... some of it is relevant, some of it is not. Putting it into practice is the thing. One of the greatest thing we are struggling with is to motivate people to serve.

On-line computer service - Not at this point, lacking facilities

Computer software - See above

Fact sheets - Yes

Live training seminars - Not sure. One thing, I haven't found many people interested in my churches. I could only hope to pull together a couple people unless it was on a Sabbath afternoon

Other: Email is something I'd like. Also some good sermon outlines.

5. 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?

Not yet. I don't know.

No. But my members have called to order ministry descriptions. However, I would have appreciated it if they have not put black boxes on it ... because it takes up more toner...

Pastor: AC

Conference: Indiana

Church(es)/Position: 3 churches

1. Does your church do "Ingathering" (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

All three do. No suggestions. Its working.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

Net '96. Public evangelism. Personal Bible studies. Use my own studies that I do right out of the Bible.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

No. Saw some literature on it.

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - I use some, not a lot

Printed material - Yes, we use quite a bit of it

On-line computer service - No

Computer software - No

Fact sheets - Yes

Live training seminars - Yes

Other:

5. 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?

No. I'm not aware of.

No. No.

Pastor: RW

Conference: Pennsylvania

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church do "Ingathering" (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

Yes, we come up with the goal, but the members generally give it. The Pathfinders go out caroling. The members prefer not to go door to door. I think its outdated as far as our methods go. In the '90s people don't like people coming to their door. I'm not sure how to go about it. I'd like to see it more on the terms Jasper Wayne started. We were trying to organize our "bands" for ministry, and small groups that would meet together and plan missionary work ... one of those would be Ingathering. Problem: finding leadership.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

The thing that has worked the best is members bringing friends. Most of our baptisms has come from that source. We've worked on making our church visitor-friendly. Net '96 was good, but getting people to the church is the hard part. That's done best by friends bringing friends. We tried distributing hand bills for '96 and it went flat. The people we baptized were already attending church.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

No.

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - They're OK. I'm running one right now. Net '96 satellite downlink ... it makes it possible to bring in higher quality teaching at a lower price. One thing that concerns me is the high cost of materials. Cutting down the all around costs for public evangelism ... there has got to be a better way to do it. I think a key is mobilizing our members. Video seminars. I'm doing Daniel right now. I run the video and we sit down and talk. I've been trying to find a way to use Cross-Training. Its a little long. Sitting for two hours is pushing it. They had one on assimilation, excellent material. Its hard to get small churches to think in terms of a system.

Printed material - Yes. Again, keep the costs down. For small churches, a book, even Doug Batchelor's book is nearly \$2 a book, and it limits the number you can pass around. The \$5-6 a book is pretty high. Cutting the cost would help. Especially lessons, Revelation Seminars, etc.

On-line computer service - Our church has a web page (www. . We need to get off the forum and on to the Internet. I used to be on CompuServe, but it got too expensive, so I've gone to a local Internet services.

Computer software - Yes. PC.

Fact sheets - Sure.

Live training seminars - They're expensive to go to. Bringing people in is expensive. We haven't done a lot of that. In my particular churches, if I bring people in, I'm concerned anyone will come to listen to them.

Other: My primary resource is the Internet

5. 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?

I don't think so. I wouldn't know.

Yes. Tried to get an account for Pathfinders. Yes, the Pathfinder leaders have.

Pastor: DN

Conference: Texas

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church do "Ingathering" (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

My definition is, "We promote in our newsletter, from the front, etc. We don't go door to door, but people donate the money."

A few years ago when I was in the Lake Union, I was asked for ideas by the president, but when I gave him a few responses, he cut me off. So I don't have the greatest thoughts about it. Our current president doesn't push it. It used to be, if you didn't make your goal, you didn't go to worker's meeting.

I think it needs to be totally revamped. Cultivating business interests is the best approach. The idea of having your children walk the streets at night with a can full of money seems ridiculous, even in the urban areas.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

As we speak, I'm in the middle of a campaign with Ken Cox. We also did Net '96. I want to follow up the Cox meetings with Batchelor. This church hasn't done evangelism for 5 or 6 years. Its like a slap in the face for some of them. You can't let it lapse too long between meetings.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

No.

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - Yes.

Printed material - Yes, always a need for this. I wish they would cover stewardship more.

On-line computer service - Yes, we have this at the school, but I'm not tuned into it.

Computer software - see above

Fact sheets - Yes.

Live training seminars - Yes, its not a critical issue. The satellite is equally helpful. Like the elder's training a few months ago. We recorded and played it at our own leisure. Cross-Training, the name sounds too much like "Cross-Dressing." Re-name.

Other:

5. 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?

No. Not that I'm aware of.

Yes. Not aware of them. Usually I do the ordering.

Pastor: LO

Conference: Pennsylvania

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church do "Ingathering" (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

Yes. One of them does a dozen businesses. I've struggled with that one a long time. A rumor got spread around that it was dying or dead and I think that killed the fervor. Anyway, that's what it sounded like, back in the early '80s. It seems like to me the church vacillated on what to do ... searching ... so, leadership's uncertainty contributed to the weakness of it. I think we should ask, why do we do it in the first place. It kind of became self-defeating from all the negative talk.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

We use Revelation Seminars, nutrition classes, stress seminars, etc. One of our churches did a traditional public evangelism using Amazing Facts and we also had Charles Bursema ... and we baptized more people than we had coming to church before. So, it brought it to life. There were only 10 coming, but we're in the 30s.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

I received a copy some time ago. It was positive. I guess at this moment I'm not real sure where they are going with it ... who the intended audience is, and what the intended results are.... I read some of it.

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - Certain ones. The satellite programs, we've used one called "He Said, She Said" that did a good job for us. A number of others we've used that have to do with "in house" things, parenting, nutrition. Some of those we found useful. Now when they deal with inner city and urban problems, that doesn't hit where we are at in our rural community.

Printed material - Yes. but I don't know what they're thinking here. For interests, we find tracts and small pieces for general interest we hand out. But as far as developing something new, I don't know...

On-line computer service - No, but I am looking that way, I'm planning to get one

Computer software - Looking that way

Fact sheets - Don't have a fax machine

Live training seminars - We've had some personal ministries people from the conference come, growing church concept

Other:

5. 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?

No. No.

Yes. I think our Personal Ministries leader may have to check on something.

I appreciate Monte and his good work up there. He's the only one I think I know in that department.

Pastor: GS

Conference: Pennsylvania

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church do "Ingathering" (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

No, haven't done it for awhile. Different members will put money in toward the goal. What's happening today is that people don't like to come to the door. Not sure how to deal with that. Especially since one of my churches in a rural area. I'm not against Ingathering, I just can't get anyone to come out.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

We're at a stand still on this. I've really struggled with these churches to do a whole lot. We are trying the Discover Bible School. Any major outreach has not really worked through. The churches here have not really ... I've tried to push them, but they don't push easy. They have not really wanted to do it... say "it doesn't work." So, we've focused on personal evangelism. One of the things we have been working on is a video tapes ... Ken Cox videos. We've had ... I know two or three instances where they have almost completed the tapes ... one lady has completed, but she has not made a decision. Her big struggle is that she owns a business that operates over the Sabbath.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

I think I have seen it at the church, but I haven't had a chance to be involved with it. I try to pass those things on to the Personal Ministries Director.

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - I think video, as far as, I church went through the Ken Cox videos for prayer meeting. The problem with satellite ... they feel it won't work in their areas. I've been excited about what I hear about the great potential of the satellite, training, etc. I understand some of the programs you can buy. I really wish we did have a dish. I see the real potential. I know I'll never be able to bring certain people into my local church to teach.

Printed material - I think its good. I haven't used a lot ... as far as ordering a bulk amount and handing it out.

On-line computer service - Yes. I'm hooked up to CompuServe.

Computer software - Yes.

Fact sheets - Yes.

Live training seminars - Yes.

Other: Sometimes I wish the spirit of our people were different. To motivate them to be involved as well as giving to resources. Giving, I think, you get some really moving in that direction. Others its a problem.

5. 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?

No. Yes, I think some have ... find out information on youth ministry resources. Someone else was looking for an address.

Yes, just ordered the logo kit. Not that I'm aware.

Pastor: RS

Conference: Texas

Church(es)/Position: 3 churches

1. Does your church do "Ingathering" (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

Yes. My members pretty much raise their own. It would be good to get rid of it. I don't even read that in where this came from to begin. Didn't Jasper Wayne go out and sell magazines? Churches that work Ingathering, churches that have people that have some business contacts, and are systematic about it, in my opinion, have a very public relations ... unique relationship with the community. I believe it, done properly, and making sure that the office has a record of your business contacts especially for the next pastor, helps. Its a worthwhile. Its hard work.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

We've done the Kenneth Cox video tapes. Nobody seems to want to do it. Its hard work. It ends up the pastor does it. We've done the Discover Bible School. We've done Net '96 in one of the churches. I liked Net '96, it was very successful.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

Seems like I've read something about it.

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - If it costs money, no. [laughter]. If we can get them around the tube and without cost. Money is scarce.

Printed material - Yes.

On-line computer service - Yes.

Computer software - I have a church management directory.

Fact sheets - Yes.

Live training seminars - No. Too small. Won't come. That's why satellite is so good.

Other: I wish ... really we don't have any of the good books we used to have ... like the good stories we used to pass out ... Mrs. Perkins, Sam Brown, God's Watchtower, etc. We need some good stories ... 3 or 4 good ... God's Channel of Truth ... taking people through a story that takes them through the doctrines of the church ... one was for Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormon's etc. We could use something from an evangelical setting. Its like a "story Bible study."

5. 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?

Yes. Don't know.

Yes. Don't know.

Pastor: CC

Conference: Texas

Church(es)/Position: 3 churches

1. Does your church do "Ingathering" (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

Yes. We do Christmas caroling and approach businesses. It would be good to find ways to motivate people more.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

We've done the Net '95/'96, the Discover Bible School going. We did a blitz of Steps to Christ with positive results. We're planning to tap into the Doug Batchelor series in October.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

That's a new one to me.

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - Yes, we do.

Printed material - No, just the outreach with Signs magazine racks.

On-line computer service - Yes, I'm active in that area

Computer software - Probably I would

Fact sheets - That would be good, for my church newsletter

Live training seminars - It does, but I don't get a good response ... the satellite ACN doesn't get people out... Our Union provides people to do training ... youth ministries, children's ministries, lay people ... but that's sparsely attended. When we go, we don't have a good response either.

Other: Sermon ideas. There are several non-Adventist resources I've used.

5. 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?

No. No, don't know.

Yes, we have an account up there. Yes. Pathfinders, Community outreach, family life, etc.

Pastor: RH

Conference: Texas

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

1. Does your church do "Ingathering" (or an alternative)? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

Has not in the last three years I've been here. We did have a big push and 10 people came out for one night. I like what they did with the little booklet, different projects around the globe ... a little green booklet, little map, description of needs and how the church could be involved.

2. What has worked well in your church in the last year in terms of outreach and evangelism?

We have had the best luck in baptisms ... is the pastor and evangelist visiting and having Bible studies in the home. The only meetings there was, was Sabbath morning and evening. We've had 15-20 baptisms from this. We had similar to less results with Net '95 and '96, though we did have more people involved in greeting and visitation.

3. Have you ever received "Adventist Witness" magazine? If yes, what is your reaction? Positive/negative? Why?

No.

4. What kinds of resources are you as a pastor looking for (or need most) in doing ministry in your church? (Yes/No)

Video seminars - The kits are probably easier because its packaged well with descriptions and instructions, satellite also useful, pre-recording it. The trouble with satellite stuff, unless I really build it up with PR, people don't come out.

Printed material - I use a lot of what I see, one I like now, the packet from AdventSource with stuff in it ...

On-line computer service - Yes. Useful. Saw your home page.

Computer software - Yes. We're planning to order the Worship Software. We use the Automated Church System.

Fact sheets - Yes.

Live training seminars - Occasionally. Once a quarter.

Other: Right now we are going through a vision and mission focusing with an outside consultant. We are using the head elder of the Hinsdale church, our president recommended him. Helping churches be more purpose-driven. Rick Warren has a lot of good methodology that could be adapted. This consultant, Paul Robberson, has served in other capacities in the Division on consulting. I've tried for three years to bring some vision into place, and have concluded an outside consultant can probably bring about this vision sooner and more effectively.

This last year we pretty well lost two of our key leaders, they went to war with each other and they both resigned. So we are rebuilding. Paul hasn't been here yet. We are dialoguing through email.

5. 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?

Yes. Couldn't tell you.

Yes. Yes, women's ministries, children's ministries, ACN videos.