

Pastoral Interviews  
Report for Week of: 4-1-98  
Number of Calls: 10  
Number of Conferences: 4

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Six of ten pastors have some sort of community service program. All six are food and clothing “dorcass” type community service centers. Most have a room at the church, a few have a separate building. One woman gathers food from local grocers that has an expired shelf life. A couple pastors are finishing renovations on building additions to their churches that will house a community service center.
2. Mobilizing members to witness can once more be grouped into three categories of responses by pastors: In the “spiritual” responses area came comments like “The key factor is the work of the Holy Spirit” and “Build faith in members so they have a faith to share.” Most comments centered around “strategies”. Examples include: Use small groups, empower members to minister, training, teach people to empathize (compassionate witnessing), allow people to share their faith in their own unique ways (vs. traditional ways), positive worship services are great opportunities for faith-sharing, encourage testimonies in church associated with baptisms, etc. Finally, a number of resources were mentioned to help in witnessing: Paul Yonngi Cho’s book on small groups, Rick Warren’s video tape series, Friendship Evangelism seminar material, and Leo Schreven’s training manual. An Oklahoma pastor uses Leo’s material quite successfully. He says, “You try a lot of things that don’t work, but this one does.” His baptisms are one indicator of his success in this area. A 29 member church that has 14 baptisms in one year with another 8 being prepared is unusual.
3. Two of ten pastors have associates working directly with them and only one of these is a paid (the other is a lay pastor). Five of ten pastors say if they had an associate, this person’s focus would be youth ministry. Two pastors said, “I’d have the associate do what I do.” And three other pastors said, “I would have this person focus on visitation of members and interests.” One pastor said he’d like an Administrative Pastor. And another would like a Worship Leader. Of interest was one pastor who said, “I’d like a research assistant to help collect sermon and prayer meeting material for me.” One emphasis that came through in this question were pastors who would properly “train” this assistant as an intern (i.e. some pastor’s reflected on their own poor internship experiences). I sensed that there are two groups of thought among these pastors: (1) Those who saw the associate as an extension of themselves (i.e. do what I do), (2) and those who saw the associate as a unique and separate entity (i.e. don’t do what I do).
4. Four of ten pastors point to the Personal Ministries (or Church Ministries, Sabbath school Director, etc.) as the most supportive to their local ministry. It is difficult to pin down one title for this since people holding this position often wear several hats. A couple pastors spoke of the President being supportive. One pastor said the

Ministerial Secretary, and another said the Conference Secretary. Support was defined by most as “listening to me” and “being interested in my local ministry” along with “resourcing me” and “providing assistance” (financially, materially, coming on site and visiting/helping/talking, etc.). Of interest were three pastors who said, “To be honest with you, no one is ‘supportive’ to my local ministry in the way I would like.” These pastors spoke of getting “general support” and “program support” (for the conference’s agenda, not their own). One pastor desired more interaction with conference planning (being asked for input on campmeeting planning, input on Christian education in the conference, etc.). He says, “When I ask for dialogue on planning with them, discussing ideas, dreaming together ... it hasn’t happened.”

5. Of special interest in this interview is a pastor who received a set of Rick Warren’s tapes (Saddle Back Church pastor) from his son who is also a pastor. He was so impressed with them, he arranged for his leadership from his two churches to meet in a motel over the weekend and listen, uninterrupted for 18 hours to these tapes (even arranging catered meals...). He’ll be doing some presentations at Ohio campmeeting this summer on this stuff. What is amazing is the way he (a pastor in his 50s) gently introduced a non-Adventist church growth specialist to his church without getting blown away. He told his leaders, “Come with an open mind.” He eventually gave the entire church “a chance” to hear these tapes. It has been a “ministry changing” experience in his life.

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Pastor: WA

Conference: Ohio

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

One church has a lady who is a “dorcass” person. Brings food to the church that she has gotten from grocery stores. Sometimes its useable, sometimes not. So, for one day, folks from our church distribute.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

I can’t say its fully implemented, but a year ago I received from my son tapes from Rick Warren. I brought all my leaders from my two churches. Both audio and video tapes. Total of about 18 hours. Got a motel. Catered food. Asked leaders to “come with open minds” and listen. Then, to help other members not feel left out. So, on a couple weekends I opened the entire series to the entire churches. Had a good group, and it tapered. About 25-30 people. The principle was that everybody had the opportunity to

listen to these tapes. I've been attempting to pull in from his emphasis things that are applicable. Not attempting to alienate people. Two things have developed since then. Keep it simple is a value. Empowering people to do their ministry. So we changed nominating committee (We call it search committee). I suggested we only choose 8 officers to be elected (because of manual requirements). Everyone else, we will put them in slots only if people tell us where they want to serve. Passed out forms and asked people to sign up. Told them we are not going to beg you or twist your arm. The other facet, Rick Warren passes out an outline for every sermon he preaches. Fill in the blanks. I use that approach now. Very much "How to" emphasis. Print all the scriptures in the outline. I think this general approach of asking members to serve is unique. I'm empowering our members. At campmeeting this year we are going to give a "mini-session" of Rick Warren's "Purpose-Driven Church".

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

No. Probably to start with, visitation. What I would really like is research assistants. I have to produce sermons every week. Be nice to have someone help me in this area and way. North Carolina's "Preach It" has been very helpful in this regard.

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

Personal ministries leader. He makes contact with me and asks me what's going on. Communicates. Unless I tell the President or Secretary, they don't know what I'm doing.

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Pastor: EM

Conference: Ohio

Church(es)/Position: 1 church (and 1 company), Hispanic

1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

We have a dorcas organization.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

We have been working with small groups. Since 1981 I started to work with that. I eventually found a book by Paul Yonggi Cho on small groups. So, people share their faith through the group. The leader of the group gives the lessons in preparation for baptism.

The visitors that come to the group are brought in by other members. I have also read Miguel Cerna's book and Kurt Johnson's.

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

No. They would be dedicated to evangelizing youth.

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

Not the president. Probably the Secretary and Personal Ministries person. They promote evangelism among the pastors.

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Pastor: ER

Conference: Ohio

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

No.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

Each One Reach One. Theme in one of my churches. I'm in the process of putting together a program for all Sabbath on sharing your faith. One resource I'll be using is Friendship Evangelism.

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

No. I would probably have him focus on youth.

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

Church ministries (Personal ministries). Good listener. Very knowledgeable about vary aspects of churches.

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Pastor: LH  
Conference: Central States  
Church(es)/Position: 1 church

1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

We have a clothes distribution for the needy and food. Temporary aid.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

I encourage members to look at their own experience and then think of someone in your same situation. Empathize. Then look for those people. Always try to share with your members that their greatest witness is not quoting Scripture, but having compassion with others and through that expressing God's grace.

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

No. At this present time, sharing the work as a co-equal. Help me with prayer meeting, preaching, etc. I was originally a Baptist. And my pastor (Baptist) told me that being an associate is an opportunity to be an apprentice under the master teacher.

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

Sabbath school director/personal ministries/community services director. I think the President has been wrapped up in so many duties... so this director has been the one in touch. Has been helpful.

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Pastor: BM  
Conference: Central States  
Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

Yes. Clothing giveaways, etc. We are trying to get geared up to start it again. We are in a building project so we're kind of displaced.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

In my opinion, its getting the people to love their church and loving to attend their church. If they are proud and happy with their church, then they will gladly share their faith.

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

No. Visitation (members and interests).

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

For me, it has always been the president. They have the wherewithal to come up with the resources that I'm not able to come up with here locally. I do my job, and if I need help outside what I can do, I give him a call.

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Pastor: SA

Conference: Washington

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

No. Would like to have one, working on it.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

I think the key factor is the work of the Holy Spirit. We can prod and nudge them. I think members have different understanding of how to share the faith as we as pastors think of sharing on our faith. Many of them share their faith, but different than "giving Bible studies". They may be involved in many church programs... For example, in one of my churches we have a "Live Nativity" and "Cooking Schools", etc. Members have invited friends to church. Some feel overburdened... but yet they are sharing their faith.

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

No. To work with senior pastor, visiting house to house, and also to develop a youth ministry.

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

Frankly, I don't know how to describe this... they provide "general" support (mostly advancing their programs). I've asked for help, but have noticed that they do not respond, specifically coming to my church.

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Pastor: BA

Conference: Washington

Church(es)/Position: 1 churches

1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

Clothing bank. Largest in the Puget Sound area. Community service center on grounds.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

I think the number one key factor (weakness in Adventism is heavy on cognitive) is having a positive worship service experience that is consistent. We occasionally have people up front who make derogatory comments about diet or Catholics. Consistency in worship is so crucial. Another factor ... Adventists have an inferiority complex. We should consider using modern day tools (web sites, modern and attractive brochures, business cards, etc.). Even professional business people can check out. See [www.ksda.org/ksda](http://www.ksda.org/ksda)

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

Yes. If I could dream and add another one ... Youth Ministry. Worship Ministry (drama, music, etc.). Our current associate is a Minister of Church Growth (deals with small groups, etc.).

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

My definition of "supportive", I don't find any of the personnel being that way. Here's what I mean. I will find affirmation from them from time to time, or input. But when I ask

for dialogue with them, planning and discussing, and dreaming together ... that would be supportive for me. It hasn't happened. I would love pastors to dream with the planning team for campmeeting ... and also the future of Christian education (separate or para-church). Third area would be a "resource person." When I called for Hope 2000 help, I didn't get the support I needed. The officers of this conference are not strong resource people.

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Pastor: JB  
Conference: Washington  
Church(es)/Position: 1 church

1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

Clothing and food distribution.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

I think sharing testimonies of those who have shared their faith helps. Including them in the service if they have been a part of leading someone to Jesus.

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

No. Administrative pastor.

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

Ministerial secretary. Passes along resources. Gives support for specific programs like evangelistic series. Spends time visiting and working out what resources would be helpful, financially and making connections with evangelists.

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Pastor: HK  
Conference: Oklahoma  
Church(es)/Position: 2 churches



1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

No.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

There's a book put out by Leo Schreven, training manual. Excellent. Lists a bunch of different ministries. How to get them started. Mailing out cards. People moving to town. New babies, etc. Getting people ready for a satellite crusade. With It Is Written.

A lot of success in baptisms this last year. One 29 member church, we baptized 14 people and 8 more are lined up. I turned the members into ministers. I used Ken Cox videos, Discover Bible School, and Leo Schreven's manual is really good. I train my members. We have a group of guys that go door to door... have a card on every single interest with details (great card system) on family, prayer requests, etc. You try a lot of things. This works.

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

Yes, a lay pastor. Youth ministry.

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

President and Secretary. When they listen. And secondly, helping me implement programs, especially evangelism.

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Pastor: GS

Conference: Oklahoma

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. Does your church sponsor (or co-sponsor) any "viable" Adventist community service program(s) such as a soup kitchen, remedial reading program, etc. (Viable meaning eligible to join United Way.)

No. Rectifying that with one church, finishing a fellowship hall.

2. What do you believe is the key factor in helping mobilize members toward sharing their faith in Jesus with others?

I guess I have to say that the reason a lot of people don't share their faith is because they don't have a faith. So, I talk about faith and what it really is and means. Encourage them to think of faith, not as a passive thing, but something we do. I have had some resistance. But, if I keep at it, it really works. Once folks are convinced that faith is not just "in us" but what we do. Without actions, it's not faith. I study the book of James and John. The gospel of John is the basis for my prayer meeting series. You can't go through the gospel of John with talking about "believing."

3. Do you have an associate/assistant pastor? If you could have a paid, full-time assistant, what would be that person's primary job?

No. I'm in Oklahoma. If I had an associate, that person would do a lot of what I do. Helping put together the church newsletter... have a sharing of the responsibilities with no ... I don't think I would want an associate to have a clear cut job different from my job. Sure, some items would be different. Pastoral teams that work together, and know what is going on in each area, are stronger than having a specific job. I'm a "servant pastor." I'm not in charge. My people are given responsibility to chip in.

4. Who at the conference level (no names, just title/position) is most supportive of your local ministry work? What are key factors that make them supportive?

I have to be honest from you. I get every little support from the conference office. I get lots of requests, lots of gung ho (You ought to be doing this and that...). Unless you're a problem or very spectacular ... I try not to be either ... I don't get a lot of help from the conference office.

Let me go back to when I was an intern. I never once had someone come to my district and visit and/or critique me and my effectiveness as an intern as a preacher. One president gave me a paragraph on how well my clothes matched. That didn't help me. I would have appreciated him sitting in on my board meeting, giving me constructive help on my ministry. I felt they were more interested in getting as much out of me as they possibly could. I do believe our local conference is in a tough situation and trying to improve. I admire that.

I'm probably a rebel in one sense... I very much dislike the "baptism numbers" emphasis. I come into the church and find a lot of unconverted people in the pews. I think Morris Venden speaks of the "evangelism of the church pew." I find myself drawn to strengthen my own members before nudging them to share their faith.

One of the detriments at Conference Meetings ... plaques are always given to the Pastor of The Year. The plaques are purely based on baptisms. I think it doesn't help. Pits people against each other. I don't need pats on the back as much as tools to do ministry. Affirmation for me is putting money into R&D. Put the money into this instead of Net programs, to give pastors more tools to deal with their church members.