

Pastoral Interviews
Report for Week of: 5-20-98
Number of Calls: 10
Number of Conferences: 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Discover Bible School series is the most used Bible study series by pastors in preparing people for baptism. Six of ten pastors mentioned it. The rest are as follows: Amazing Facts (3), It's My Choice (3), Ken Cox videos (2), In His Steps (2), Doug Batchelor videos (1), Jack Sequiera's "For God So Love the World..." series (1), Good News (1), La Fe DeJesus (1). A couple pastors specifically pointed out that when someone is being prepared for baptism, they switch to using "In His Steps." I got the impression the other studies by these two pastors were more "doctrinal" and "foundational" while the "In His Steps" studies were short and specific to "giving your heart to Jesus".

Recommendations on Bible study content focused on making sure studies are "relational" or "grace-oriented." One pastor who deals with a lot of families in distress suggests a Bible study series that focuses all doctrine through the lens of "the family." He says, "That's mostly what I'm dealing with here in L.A. Families in distress. Studies created in the context of helping them cope with family issues will appeal to them."

Recommendations on creating something new include putting Bible studies on transparencies for use in a pastor's class or even in a home. Another pastor wishes we would put Bible studies on the Internet that he could download and use and modify (I pointed him to the McDonald church in Tennessee that is doing this). Another suggested we put a bunch of different studies on a CD-ROM in WordPerfect format so he could pick and choose and modify. And another pastor suggested a creative Bible study series on video. Not a Ken Cox format (though he thinks that's fine for that purpose), but something that is visual, conversation, flows with text and graphics, etc. Like the Dukane projector series, but greatly improved and updated. [As an aside, perhaps a series done in PowerPoint would be great!]

Three pastors mentioned Steve Case's "Its My Choice" series in preparing Juniors for baptism. One thinks its too shallow and not challenging enough for his Juniors. The other pastor really likes it and says there are three pastors in his conference that like the format so much, they are attempting to create an adult version of it. This pastor said AdventSource should ask Steve if he'd do this and save them time.

2. Seven of ten pastors say their churches have a mission statement. One of the "no" pastors said, "We're working on one." The other "no" pastor said, "We use the conferences." How did pastors help their churches create a mission statement? Besides the two pastors who said, "It was here when I came", there were four approaches mentioned. The first is basically, "Form a committee. Talk. Draft. Vote." These pastors

may have members on the committee do some study in Scripture, but nothing beyond that.

The second group of pastors (2) utilize information from other sources like George Barna's book "Turning Vision Into Action" and Rick Warren's book "The Purpose-Driven Church." One pastor attended Saddleback and is "really into what they do" (according to the Associate Pastor I interviewed). The third approach was mentioned by a pastor who surveyed his congregation for gifts/talents, then surveyed the community to determine needs and combined the two into a statement, including a 5-year strategic plan. This pastor said his members selected a 10 square block area around the church and they are going to "take it for the Lord!" The final approach was mentioned by a pastor, near retirement, who said he collected statements from some of the younger pastors. He plans to pick and choose and write "my own." Interesting concept in light of the Saddleback-influenced church who's associate pastor stressed, "A key approach to mission statement development is involving your leadership in the process."

3. When asked about Cross-Training programs and what they would like, only 5 of 10 pastors have dishes (though almost all had comments about programming!). And of the five who do have dishes, only 2 have watched Cross-Training programs (although a third pastor was on a CT program at one time). General comments made include one pastor who says, "Tell them they are doing a great job." Another says, "Gear more programs to outreach in the community. I'm in a small church districts with no professionals to help with a Breath Free program." Another said, "Dishes have been banned from Santa Monica."

When asked about program topics, the following suggestions were made: Helping members have a passion for lost people, with a special focus on the relevance of a grace-oriented gospel that meets community needs; Conflict management program for the community (families, work situations, etc. not just in the church); Effective decision making and consensus thinking; Friendship evangelism. Suggestion of presenters include: Ben Schoun, John Nixon, Stoy Proctor, and pastors who are doing "pioneering" things that are working (measurable success, not guys with titles and degrees).

Time length comments: 2 hours, 2 hours max., 1 hour 15 minutes, 2 hour max (but 1 hour preferable), 30 minutes to 1 hour. Interaction comments: "We don't have a phone at our church", "Yes, have it", "Good". How often to have programs? Once a month (2), twice a month (1). Handouts? Most pastors didn't request them. One pastor said, "I was disappointed in them. I could take better notes from watching than what were provided on the handout. Why not make these notes readily accessible on a web page? And if you have to charge \$5.00 to maintain this, do it." How far ahead of time do they need announcements? 1 month (3), 1 year in advance.

Target groups to hit with programming that were mentioned include: SS Adult teachers, children's SS leaders (with short vignettes of ideas gathered from other SS classes across the division), programs that are "trans-ministry" that reach all ministry leaders that focus

on topics like teambuilding, collaboration, etc., deacons/deaconesses, VBS leaders, programs directed toward the community not just the church (Breathe Free programs, etc.).

Other miscellaneous comments: “Why not show the first hour live, then keep the camera’s rolling with more talk and call ins, but show the second hour a week later?” “I have heard from my fellow pastors that call-ins for certain programs for the Spanish were problematic”, “I have a serious concern about the Net programs putting an ‘organizational stamp of approval’ on a certain theological way of presenting Adventism. I think we need a variety of preachers to give balance.”

4. Eight of ten pastors gave suggestions for having vibrant worship services. Most were technique oriented. A few spoke of books. Two pastors feel Rick Warren’s book (Purpose-Driven Church) positively helped them shape their services. Another referred to Kim Johnson’s book (Body Building). Another spoke of Christian Schwarz’ book called “Natural Church Development.” And another near-retirement pastor praised the seminary teachers Heppenstall and Blincoe helping him realize worship focuses on God’s majesty, not people. Another pastor from a small church district has a church that shows programs from off the satellite every other Sabbath (It Is Written, etc.). This pastor said more programs in the 40 minute range for using during worship would be nice.

Interestingly, three pastors specifically referred to Sabbath morning worship as being evangelistic. One said, “This is our primary outreach tool.” Another said he had a brother who pastored the Grace Temple church in Fort Worth and praised their worship services as being effective. His description sounded like a relaxed and relational approach. Another repeated concept by three pastors was an emphasis on quality. Comments were made that “Timing is less important than the quality of what’s presented” and “Style isn’t nearly as important as the service being inspirational”. One pastor said his board decided that changing the order service wasn’t what was needed. That missed the main issue. Quality and effort were the main issues.

Other miscellaneous suggestions: Have a relational bent to your worship services (testimonies, prayer requests—this was frequently mentioned, regular potlucks, have the music people practice, use a worship team, have an overall theme, etc.

Pastor: JB
Conference: Montana
Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

Ken Cox's video series. We also have used Doug Batchelor's series. Ken does a good job, but some in my church like Doug better. We used the Discovery Series last year and enjoyed them.

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

No.

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

Think they've done a real good job. My people have watched it and liked it real well. Two-hour program is ok. Once a month is often enough. No phone at church so interaction is not an issue. A month ahead of time for announcements. Sabbath school adult teachers is an important area, can do it again.

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

We use material off the satellite every other week in one of my churches. The other one has elders rotate. I think if we used satellite stuff for church, I think 40 minutes is good. An hour program is too long for church. So, 30 or 40 minutes if used for church service. I think that if they could bring something that would provide good preaching. Special music is nice.

Pastor: GS

Conference: Montana

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches, 1 company

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

Discovery Bible School. I think if people are familiar enough with their Bibles, you don't even need a study guide. But they work well. I go back to the old days of It Is Written's. I thought they didn't use enough texts, then I thought they used too many texts. I began to create my own. I think the best I've seen is the Spotlight on Bible M.V. series. It was sheets of topical Bible studies. You could cut and paste it into your Bible. That way you were using the Bible, not cluttering the table up with other papers. There were about 14-16 texts per study. You could leave a simple brochure with them if you like.

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

Yes. I didn't go through the procedure in another district. Set up a committee. Sat down and discussed what to have in it, composed it, and took it to the church and got it OK'd.

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

I have a dish, but not at church. Haven't tapped into their programming. It seemed to me they were jumping from satellite to satellite for awhile. Hard to follow. Not always a convenient time for me. But I realize that's not something they can help.

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

I've basically developed myself my own strategy. What we do... we have a theme song we sing every Sabbath called "Victory in Jesus." Lively song, fantastic message. Warms people up. Don't let it drag. Then I have a welcome and make announcements. Then we interact, welcome each other, hug each other, etc. Next is our prayer, then offering. During the offering is the children's story. (Saves time). Then we have a hymn from the hymnal. Then I go down alone and interact with the people. I talk to them, recognize visitors, prayer requests, testimonies, sharing time.

Of late I've introduced something new. A man came to our community service center, picked up some literature. Took it home and read it. He came to church. Then came on a Wednesday night. Then asked to give a testimony, then asked to sing. I was a little nervous, but decided to let him try. Had a nice voice, western style, and great testimony. So, I've been having him do a song on a regular basis. Then prayer time for all the prayer requests. Then following we have a regular special music. Then special music, then preaching. Then I close with a benediction, walk off and let people dismiss themselves. Gives them opportunity to mingle. We also have a potluck 1st Sabbath of every month. On the 3rd Sabbath of every month we have "Soup and Buns."

Pastor: GH

Conference: Newfoundland & Labrador

Church(es)/Position: 1 church

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

It varies greatly. What I quite often use is videos. I use Ken Cox videos quite a bit, also some of the Net series. I'm using that more than the written pamphlets. I think that's the way society is going. People are used to watching a professional presentation of things. Maybe 80% of my contacts I use videos.

The Discover Bible course is good, but I find a tremendous amount of information (a lot of time to read) and I have people who won't take the time for all that. Not enough opportunity to respond, only a few questions at the back. I prefer this one over the basic question and answer approach (too much the other way).

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

We do, but it's a fairly basic one, using Matthew 28. It was decided before I came.

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

We don't have a dish, but planning to get one. It would be nice to have some Sabbath school training material, particularly for some of the children's divisions. Vignettes to show samples of creativity from other Sabbath schools. Stoy Proctor, health ministries, well-read, lots of statistics. I get the sense that less and less Adventists are vegetarian. Time length, 2 hours is the max. Maybe a couple of 45-minute presentations with a 15-minute break. Once a month. Interaction would be nice. People are just getting into the email idea. Never ordered handouts. Announcements need to be at least a month ahead of time. Children's ministry leaders. Health ministry leaders. When it comes to training and health programs, I think I would rather have the actual training, like a Breathe Free speaker. What I'm finding is that people are getting maxed out. The church makes a fair number of demands. A number of activities we offer... It would be nice to have programs where a church leader is simply a "host" and orders materials, advertisements, and welcomes guests. The presentation is then made onscreen. I think you'd find a lot more smaller and medium size would bite this.

[Got off on talking about email and Websites. He was VERY pleased with the speed with which William Fagal at the White Estate at Andrews responds.]

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

Awhile back my board discussed enhancing our worship services. Changing service elements is a thing of constant flux. But, I've come to the conclusion that it isn't so much the order of service, but the effort and quality that people bring to it. You could have a boring children's story or a superb one. And where you put the children's story is less important than who does it and how they do it. I find that if you have people who are

willing to put 100% into the service is more important than the “strategy” or the “timing.” Doesn’t seem to make as much difference where it falls.

Pastor: KB

Conference: Northern New England

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

I was very fond of the “In His Steps”, but the shorter one (yellow-covered, 13 lessons). Jack Sequiera has one called “God so loved the world... series”. More in depth. Its 25 lessons. Its good if you have someone who is really going to dig in. Each one goes into 20-25 texts. Very grace oriented.

I’m actually working on something for myself. What Steve Case did (It’s My Choice) ... he focuses on very few texts and gets people dialoguing. I think its great, but its aimed at the Juniors. I’m trying to adapt it for adults. You’re missing out if you don’t get the teacher’s guide and the lesson... its really something else. I think AdventSource ask Steve to adapt it for use for adults. There are actually several pastors who are revising it for that purpose. All three of us and a Bible worker.

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

One church has both, the other church is sort of in the baby steps toward doing that. We formed a strategic and visioning committee. Spent prayer time, Bible study. Went through ... I took stuff from George Barna’s book on Turning Vision Into Action. Gives some steps (understanding self, God, and circumstances and framing a plan). We asked ourselves some questions, “Who are we looking to serve ... If the church could be anything, what would it be ...” Took about 6 weeks of meeting every week. Ironically a group met 6 years ago of work done, but couldn’t find any record of their work. This group was totally new. When we were done, we happened to find the old one and it was almost identical. We were amazed. Also, as part of our preliminary work, I used Rick Warren’s material (the five areas), but the major work was influenced by Barna. He also has a video that our group watched. It was excellent. He debunks some myths of our current society, etc.

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

I've done some work with Jack. We don't have a dish. Topics: I think the most important training is in the area of theological orientation regarding grace and outreach ... instead of pumping our people full of prophetic time lines, we need to fill them with an understanding of the relevance of the gospel to the people in their community. A lot of our programming is introverted and introspective. I want church members to develop a passion for lost people.

Presenters are probably doing well. Some of the folks like John Nixon is extraordinary should be used, guys doing "pioneer" stuff. Identify churches that are doing good things and pull those people in. Measurable and identifiable success. Degrees and positions may not be as relevant as those doing something.

Beyond 1 hour and 15 minutes you start losing people. Frequency... shorter programs more often than a two hour program once a month. Cutting down on travel expenses is to have two sessions, with the first being live, and the next two hours are not on the bird, but are still recorded (with call ins) and can be shown later.

Announcements a month ahead of time. I would shoot for ministry leaders. Not just the VBS Leader, but ALL ministry leaders. Leadership issues. Motivation, teamwork, collaboration, cultivating an environment for leadership.

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

First and foremost, what we've found is that our primary outreach tool is worship. Most important is having a unified philosophy of our worship service so everyone is on board. The music people have practice sessions. Things are more seamless. Worship is much more than perfect timing, etc. But anything worth doing is worth doing well. Having themes tying everything together is important. You may find a much higher.

I went to a worship team format quite awhile ago. I am currently attempting to transform this team into a small group. I really believe this is important in developing a deeper sense of community among them.

Purpose-Driven Church, Rediscovering Church, etc. the common thread they have is establishing values in everything you do and then pursuing them. There is another must-read put together by Kim Johnson, Body Building.

[spent some time talking in more detail about LTN (Leadership Training Network) and things he's doing, etc. Will network with him more...]

Pastor: WE
Conference: Maine

Church(es)/Position: 3 churches

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

What I use ... once they are ready for baptism ... In His Steps. Take them through a personalized study of that. We're also using (not baptism preparation) the Discover Bible School.

One thing we need is something for Juniors and Youth. I'm using Reasons to Believe (for youth but using for Juniors). I think kids are better challenged than what "It's My Choice" offers.

What I would like to see us have a Bible study series that would include baptismal preparation emphasizing the unique perspective that we have of God. And I'd like to see it available on the Internet. Another approach might be to simply have it on a disk. WordPerfect format. Perhaps a pile of options on one CD.

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

Two have some that a previous pastor made and pinned on the bulletin board. We are currently working on one. We are studying Nehemiah to give us a foundation for creating a church strategy. At this point I'm not using a particular resource.

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

We have done one or two Cross Training programs. I'd like to see a monthly elder's training program. Visitation, preaching, discipline, administration, etc. I'd like to see them recognize elders as Lay Pastors. Get them familiar with what the pastor does. I think we need some family life things. I'm personally working on developing some family life material. I'm having a difficult time to get them to commit to over 2 hours. An hour is preferable. Interaction depends on ... I'm finding that what we need is basic stuff. I think ... I'd like to see a multilevel presentation... first ½ hour be very basic and then move toward complexity. So, interaction later on might be less important. Handouts? I was disappointed. I could sit and take notes and get the exact thing on the screen. Put handouts on the Internet. If you have to charge \$5 a month to maintain it, fine. But make it readily available. New Englanders want to have all the facts before making decisions. We just recently decided to go with Net '98. I thought it was late, but that's the way they. They tend to decide last minute. So I need general information ahead of time. My elders meeting fits a one-hour time frame, and I'd like to see programming on Sabbath afternoon or even Friday evening (often devotional in nature). Maybe I've missed it, but I think we

need something for deacons. Here's one I have a lot of call for ... they miss the old "conference sponsored children Sabbath school workshops" and VBS as well.

[Spent time talking about family life issues...]

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

The best I've found, Natural Church Development, Christian Schwarz. I've come to believe that the "style" is less important than the idea that it is inspirational to the group. I can have a laid back Celebration style service if I don't call it that. I'm simply trying to have "inspirational" worship.

Pastor: RF

Conference: Maine

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

We're using Amazing Facts and the Discover Bible School program. I think there could be some work in creative video studies. The traditional video studies are OK (Ken Cox, etc.). Something creative, less preachy setting. I'm not really sure on what the latest is on "youth".

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

Yes. That was here when I came. I've only been here a year. Can't answer that.

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

Not in tune with this much. Have a dish but not utilizing it in this as much as we would like. I need a person to help me get this going. Ben Schoun, our new conference president, could do well on conflict management. I think this seminar could have an evangelistic appeal if you put on a generic program and invited the community.

Length of time: 30 minutes to 1 hour. Couple times a month. Interaction is good. I think if you get a crank call, you should have a time delay. We have a guy in our church who is a real talker and has bizarre. Information ready a year in advance for strategic planning purposes or sermon planning. Target groups: Inreach and Outreach groups. I like the idea

of programs for outreach. I can't always afford to bring in specialists, but I can afford to show them through a satellite program. Our church struggles with finances, local funding is hard to come by. Our constituent school drains us. It's going to take awhile for the value of ACN to seep down.

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

Nothing creative to say to you on this. I don't know that we're doing anything terribly innovative. We try to have a balance between involvement/interaction and listening.

[Got off on talking about his church district being the seed bed of Adventism (in New England). He'd like to see a new resource, a video tape created just on the rich heritage of places in New England ... to be used for educational purposes, etc. I referred him to PlusLine and explained a little bit about the CRC process. Thought that some other organization that Lenard Jaecks, Maxwell, etc. are a part of might be more likely to fund this...]

Pastor: OP
Conference: Southern California
Church(es)/Position: 1 church, bilingual

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

Mine is a Spanish church. We use La Fe DeJesus. For the English I use Amazing Facts. I've used a variety over the years. I'd like to see a series of Bible studies on transparencies (7-8 per Bible study). Have about 20 lessons. Would use them in a pastor's Bible class, in the home, etc.

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

No. Just go with one from the conference.

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

We don't have a dish. In our Spanish church, not much is available. They've sent us videos instead of picking up over the airwaves. I've heard through my fellow pastors that some of the "call ins" on these programs were difficult for the Spanish.

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

In my church we are bogged down with so much tradition. It's been difficult to incorporate change. I'd like to see a moderate move toward more progressive music.

Pastor: WC

Conference: Southern California

Church(es)/Position: 1 church, African-American

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

Amazing Facts. I'd like to see some studies that address current need families are going through. For instance, a study on family structures (still using the Sabbath, health reform, 2nd coming of Christ, etc.). But put it in a package that reaches families in distress.

I would like to see more studies that were ethnic-based. Issues that directly impact whatever backgrounds you come from—Hispanic, African-American, Asian, etc.

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

Yes. We did a survey of talents within our church to find out ... a talent bank to find out what we had to offer. Doing a survey of the community to discover its basic needs. Then developed a statement based on the needs of the community including the resources we had to offer. We also created 5-year goals. We took a 10 square block area around the church and "take it for the Lord."

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

Yes, have a dish. Haven't seen any Cross-Training programs. One area that I think there is a high need is in "consensus thinking". Training to help individuals understand that the church will prosper more from consensus thinking than independent. Churches have power structures. Such members aren't going to willingly give up that structure. But if the majority of members have opportunity to give input, then those who have strong feelings hopefully will be supportive of the majority. So, some type of training that would promote consensus development. Depending on the area of the country you are in ... for instance in my church, we have a number of retired ministers. Then we have individuals a part of corporate America high up on the totem pole. So, when you have people with strong opinions, conflict can arise. It can be a real battle. A pastor coming in needs to

make alliances, taking a significant amount of time to develop relationships in order to help create a balance of power. Less squabbling, more focus on reaching goals and objectives.

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

Not necessarily in the form of a book, but I have a brother who pastors in Fort Worth, Texas (Grace Temple). The model of worship he uses has been very effective. It doesn't follow the strict liturgy within our church. It's more free flowing. There is giving the opportunity for congregational singing, testimonies, etc. Individuals have opportunity to pray in public, people can come forward. This is done right before the preaching. Offering is taken at the end of service. Many members come late, so to take the offering later meets that need. Church business comes earlier. Then singing, then prayer, then another song. Then the Word is shared. Then as an act of thanksgiving, the offering is taken.

We've been talking with our church leaders about the idea of Sabbath morning worship being evangelistic. The traditional methods of evangelism has served us well in the past, but I think we need to think more in terms of the needs of people in the community. If you were NOT a Seventh-day Adventist, what would draw you to visit this church? Many of my members were baffled by the question. Worship for many is a habit, a tradition. But when someone FIRST embraces Adventism, it is such a radical change. We tend to promote Biblical truth (devoid of the Spirit or relational or personal issues). When you live in a society where drugs are on the rampage and violence is more common than uncommon. What is the church doing to address these needs? When the church addresses these needs and shows how on this earth they can taste of some of this peace and joy... people will come. Like the question in the ASSQ recently, "Would we choose to serve Christ if there were no resurrection?" Anyway, worship has to address this.

Pastor: PC

Conference: Southern California

Church(es)/Position: Associate Pastor

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

Discovery. For the kids we use Steve Case's My Choice. I think we tend to have more of a doctrinal, proof-texting approach than relational.

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

Yes. We used Saddleback's seminar and his book. I think its important for the church leadership to be involved in the process.

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

No dish. I've seen some of Mark Finley's stuff and he seems a little stiff. I've read Monte's book and liked that much better. I'm convinced its Friendship evangelism that is key. Intellectually or theoretically, Mark's a little too formal. Our church is experienced in using evangelism by satellite, etc. Our baptisms almost all came from friendships already created.

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

Our model is middle of the road. Blended between traditional with praise songs. My senior pastor has been really inspired by Saddleback. He liked that model, but we've picked up something from Wayne Hooper who visited a Sunday church and they had prayer requests and praises before the intercessory prayer time.

Pastor: EA
Conference: Southern California
Church(es)/Position: 1 church

1. What Bible study series do you primarily use to help prepare people for baptism? Would you be interested in something new or different? What would you like to see changed or improved in the current selection of studies?

I usually use the Good News for Today series. Focused on Jesus. I'm satisfied with. My thought has always been, we do much better for our doctrinal setting in the gospel of grace, rather than a merely informational thing... implying to other groups that we are better than you are, etc.

2. Does your church have a mission statement, and/or vision statement? If yes, briefly explain the procedure you went through to create it. (Resources, consultants, etc.?)

Not a written one, but working on it. I've read and gotten copies of some younger pastors who have done this. I'm in the west region of the Southern California conference, and I've read some of the statements created by younger men. Will pick here and there and add my own touch.

3. What kind of training would you like to see offered via satellite linkage to your local churches? (Topics, presenters, time length, how often, how much interaction, type of handouts, how far ahead announced, target audience).

Santa Monica does not allow dishes. They have gone all out to safe guard all the businesses, etc. Never watched any of them. I have very serious reservations about the Net programs. My worry is that we are going to end up with more of a “central” message and the “true” message with the imprint of the “state” (organization). I think we have greater safety by having a multiple group of pastors sharing and speaking from their study. So, I’ve always felt a little nervous about these Net programs ... in which the organization puts its stamp on everything.

4. Have you found any helpful strategies or resources for vibrant worship services?

You’re talking to a man who has been in the ministry for 40 some years. I suppose my concept of a worship service, a lot of it came to me through Heppenstall, Blincoe, etc. Outstanding theologians, but dynamic of Christians. Every aspect of worship is not to be about our virtues or ourselves. It’s always about discovering the beauty and wonder of God and his love—and to have this in the setting of our times and unique challenges (television, movies, etc.). Not to take the negative approach, but the informational approach called the “Word of Wisdom” as the Mormons would say.

Heppenstall was a great man. Perhaps a bit too evangelical for some church leaders and got him in trouble. Someone did a study of who was a great influence to SDA ministers and Heppenstall appeared 70% of the time.