

Pastoral Interviews  
Report for Week of: 7-2-98  
Number of Calls: 10  
Number of Conferences: 4

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Here's a breakdown of the Bible studies these ten pastors are using: Amazing Facts (2), The Bible Says (2), Good News (2), Steps to Eternal Life (1), Encounter (1), Fe De Jesus (1), Historicals of Prophecy (1), Discover Bible Lessons (1), Burrill's Prophecy Seminar (1), Real Truth by Scales (1), uses own series (1).

Suggestions for improving Bible studies might be grouped into a couple areas. The first is theological. Pastors made comments like, "Needs more emphasis on righteousness by faith" and "More Christ-centered" and "Emphasizes the character of God like Dwight Nelson will be doing in Net '98", etc. Another set of suggestions related to a practical emphasis within the studies. Comments made include ideas like, "Studies need to appeal to the social/personal needs of people" and "Practical applications, not just facts" and "Help encourage people to study the Word" and "Encourage church attendance within the studies". One pastor said, "Less proof-texting and more in depth study on some passages." Another is working on his own series that moves along more relational lines (ask a question, look for an answer) including some icebreaker type questions.

2. Two of ten pastors say their churches have a vision or mission statement. One of these two created his own strategy for helping his members create one. Having been a "laymen", he told me that he believes in high involvement of all members. The other pastor is new in ministry and used resources his conference president gave him.

The other pastors had responses with common themes. Basically, many of them have thought about the value of having one but haven't done anything about it. A few have tried, but felt like the process got bogged down for a number of reasons... one being the low interest of members. For instance, one pastor preached on vision and mission, then invited members to a potluck and a sharing time. Few showed up.

3. Nine of ten pastors have dishes in at least one of their churches in their district. Five of these nine have watched Cross Training programs. Problems raised over watching these problems include: Making time to watch; getting money to buy a dish; language barrier (Hispanic); need to make it a priority; not familiar enough with technology; can't catch signal this far north (Alaska); technical problems with dish installation.

Some of the complaints made about Cross Training include: Programs too long; too many programs coming at us; presenters are too narrow and need to broaden perspectives shared (consider the small church for e.g.); not enough practical "how to" steps shared by presenters; programs are stiff and boring; wish programs were broadcast over 3ABN.

Suggestions made by pastors for improving Cross Training include: Create a lending library in every church; help pastors realize they need to pick and choose what to watch and not feel obligated to watch every program; have presenters consider a variety of perspectives (perhaps tape ideas on one topic from a variety of people/pastors/professionals); make the program more like Oprah Winfrey or News Magazine programs; encourage learning by discovery more than lectures; use snippets from across the division of what's happening in other successful churches; we need lots of programs on family issues; provide programs for pastors on conducting meetings and on doing evangelism.

One pastor said his people really enjoy the programs. Another pastor has a dream for an Adventist Youth TV program with heavy youth involvement in creation, production, etc. He would love to see such a program started, perhaps based out of an academy.

4. Vibrant worship service suggestions might be grouped into three areas: People involvement, resources, and miscellaneous programs ideas. The latter brought most of the responses, including: Use more contemporary music; make preaching of the Word central; do things out of the ordinary; use skits, monologues, one-person dramas; do church in a park; have extended Scripture readings; use majestic hymns; create an atmosphere.

People involvement ideas included: Involve youth; involve children; involve members during sermon by having activities. One pastor spoke of an "open discussion" Sabbaths where he would open the floor up after a short sermon and encourage discussion from anyone. He finds that the worship hour on these Sabbaths is often extended, and that visitors and guests often value these discussions.

Resources mentioned include: Permission to Worship (3 times spoken of) and Interactive Readings for Church Worship (Zackrisson and Campbell).

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Pastor: HC  
Conference: New York  
Church(es)/Position: 4 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 like to begin with Steps to Eternal Life. I then have used the Encounter Series. I use a variety, they all work. The only thing, perhaps from my own experience, I think they are weak on is "righteousness by faith." Steps to Eternal Life are good and deal with salvation. The other studies don't cover this as well. The Bible studies that we have are purely doctrinal. I wish they could weave in things like in a doctrine on the state of the

dead ... what brings them out of the grave. Same with the Second Coming, nice to know about it, but what prepares you for it.

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.?)

Oh they have something, but it doesn't amount to much. They look at it as a bunch of busy work. The majority of them can't think too far.

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).

Three of my churches have dishes, and two of them have tapped into Cross Training. Using it to its potential, it just doesn't seem to take place. A time factor. Making the time to come out. Finding the people who are willing to take an interest in it. We do get some complaints about length of time being too long. One of my churches gets into, has a lending library and copies a lot of the tapes.

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

I have come to the conclusion that we can have all manner of books and ideas, but there is no substitute for one's own connection with the Lord. You, yourself as a pastor, have to have a vision, feel the inspiration of the Spirit, etc.

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Pastor: PG

Conference: New York

Church(es)/Position: 3 churches (Hispanic)

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?

Fe De Jesus. Hispanic series. I'd like to see new ones. Appeal more to the social and personal needs of people. Not be so factual.

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).

Never seen it. None of my churches have satellite dishes. I cannot give any suggestions. Money is the biggest hindrance.

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

More contemporary music helps (instead of the current hymnal) which appeals more to young people. Involving young people in the service.

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Pastor: DK

Conference: New York

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?

Historicals of Prophecy by Amazing Facts. I'm glad somebody is asking about this. I wish, I don't know the way to do it, some kind of lessons that makes practical applications for people. They are very factual, right/wrong, etc. More relevant to people's lives. I wish they would do the same thing with the Sabbath School lesson. I think too often we baptize people who are bent toward the "information" orientation, the people who want the "facts." What about those who are passionate about relevance and practices.

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.?)

At present, no. Wish we could have one. I'd probably be looking for resources.

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 seen some of it. To me, it seems they are throwing those things at us all the time. My assumption is that I'm going to ignore some of them and grab the ones that do. We have taped and used later for our family life people (also youth department), etc. I haven't watched all of them. People have enjoyed them.

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

I have used the video Ron Gladden and Dick Duerksen have created. I thought it was pretty good, overall. It gives a well-balanced approach. I've even taught some with it at campmeeting. Also, a couple guys out in California have put together some creative Scripture readings. They are books of interactive Scripture readings. Ed Zackrison and Melvin Campbell, 1994 out of La Sierra University. Interactive Readings for Church Worship. Includes audience participation. Scription Drama Press. 11324 Flowers St., Riverside, CA, 92505. I think I was introduced to them in the Columbia Union pastors meeting.

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Pastor: MB

Conference: Illinois

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?

Usually it is Amazing Facts. The pictures in Amazing Facts (short and to the point) are good. Some of the others seem to draw it out too much. I'd shorten some of the other series.

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.?)

All three of them have. I made a list out for each of the members, an outline asking them for their vision. I wanted the churches to own it. I asked them about our purpose, etc. Then I had a committee take the responses and draw up out of those responses what the collective group stated. After formulating it, the members looked it over to see if they are satisfied. The entire church votes on it. I mentioned we can adjust it.

I came up with this strategy out of my own head. I've come to believe the person in the pew must be connected to the process. Before I became a pastor, I was a layperson.

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).

Two of my churches have dishes. Several programs have been watched, but not all. We have at least seen three of them. Usually when a person gives the training on the program, they are coming out of their own experience. I find that sometimes, not everybody fits that category. So, if the presenter could give additional examples from other people's experiences, that would be helpful. I realize you can't make it too broad, but if the

presenter gave a few other directions, that would be helpful. Also, key focus is the “how do you do this” aspect of the program.

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

No, haven't come across any material. I know some people go to Willow Creek to get ideas. I like to stick with the Adventist framework. I have tried to experiment with things I hear from other Adventist churches. And they try to make it relative to my members and their style.

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Pastor: TC

Conference: Illinois

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches (Romanian and Anglo)

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 use two sets, The Discover Lessons and The Bible Says. I like the selections available. My only concern is that people are so much involved in material things that its hard for people to take time to study the Word of God.

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.?)

The Romanian church has in mind a target community in Chicago. We just concluded a series of evangelistic meetings. We had 50-100 non-Adventists attending. Some showed interest and made public statements. None are ready for baptism.

The other church is a mixed group of ethnic groups (Puerto Rico, the Caribbean).

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 of the Cross Training programs, a language barrier. We watched the Net programs.

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

I have considered different options. But I find that people are more sensitive to the preaching of the Word of God than any changes to music, etc. Maybe I'm an old-timer. I don't want to blame other pastor's strategies.

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Pastor: RD

Conference: Illinois

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?

Good News, or the Prophecy Seminar (Russell Burrill). I've kind of started to develop my own, combining the ask-a-question find-an-answer approach, and a small group with thought questions. I only have one completed, but it takes a lot of time to get it down.

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.?)

In reality, no. We actually did that at one point in time, but it hasn't been accepted or adopted. I preached a sermon about the need for vision, then had a potluck, then had people stay by. I bulletin insert invited them to respond. The group that stayed by worked on a vision statement. "What would you like to see this church be like, look like, etc. a year from now..." Then, over two weeks, we walked the program that NADEI outlined for this. Not the level of participation I would have liked.

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).

Two dishes. Watched a few Cross Training programs. I think if they would adopt more of a ... too stiff and boring. They are so stiff, so boring ... and I realize we are experimenting with this. I realize this is probably a phase. But if they were more like an Oprah Winfrey type program (panels and audience participation), or like one of the News Magazine type programs. Learning by discovery than lecture. If you are going to learn by TV, you need a "discovery" approach. Watch the Discovery Channel. Watch a kids program. Little snippets of programs here, real life experience there, non-formal, non-stiff environment. I think we could tap into more resources out there. I'm sure it's hard, but not impossible. Surely we have connections with people and places out there. It doesn't have to be as elaborate as some make it seem.

One of my personal dreams while I was in youth ministry, was a youth TV program that could even be replace the Sabbath school program. A program by teens for teens, produced at an academy, real life issues that affect teens. Perhaps little visits to different academies or high schools. Personal interviews, video clips, etc. Be thematic in approach.

A story line. Contemporary music. Ask kids what they think of issues. Point of view from the person on the street. I think teens would be very interested in that.

Unless you really “catch people” and turn them on, I think it’s a waste of denominational money. I’d rather see less programs that are done well.

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

Doing something out of the ordinary is a great strategy. Get people out of a rut. Varying the preaching style. I’m a textual preacher. Sometimes I’ll alter that. For instance, my current sermon doesn’t have a single shred of Scripture in it, more of a monologue. Other times I’ll do a one-man skit. Then I’ll involve the congregation in a variety of activities within the sermon itself. We sometimes have “Church in the Park” once a year.

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Pastor: LH

Conference: Southeastern

Church(es)/Position: 3 churches (1 is about to be organized)

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?

Mainly we use Amazing Facts. We also use the Real Truth by Scales. I think we lessons that are more Christ-centered from the very beginning. Help them fall in love Christ first and then learn about the doctrines.

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. I’ve been through seminars on this but haven’t done one yet.

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, in one of my churches. In one of my churches, a person has recorded some of the programs. Maybe the timing, etc. but we haven’t availed ourselves of the training. I think some areas we need help is in the area of family life. Perhaps some more programs for pastors on things like conducting better business meetings, board meetings, more thrust in the area of evangelism, perhaps looking at things working in some places better than others.

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

We are using a traditional approach. We're planning to do some experimentation.

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Pastor: RA

Conference: Southeastern

Church(es)/Position: 2 churches (retired)

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?

Use my personal notes. I don't like to be bound down by a notebook.

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.?)

Have thought of it, but don't have one.

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 we do. Don't operate the machine. The gentleman who does uses it for the Net program. I'm of the old school, so I'm not skilled in these things. I think one program I saw. No suggestions, I just looked on.

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

I think the congregation is a passive group of people and need to enter into worship... I encourage responsive reading, extended reading. My hymns of worship usually are "majestic" and "thanksgiving". I believe in creating a atmosphere of worship. Then there are times I include children. I also will occasionally encourage discussion from the congregation. It's called an "open discussion." You allow members to ask questions. Its good for guests to see and hear this. Sometimes the church will want to go on beyond the worship hour because it gets going. It is very stimulating for the church, its informative, and its helpful for the visitors.

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Pastor: BB

Conference: Alaska

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?

Good News for Today by Don Gray. The direction I would like to go is similar to what I think Dwight Nelson is doing on emphasizing the character of God. Also, Doug Batchelor also goes into a passage more than just proof-texting. I'd find it much more enjoyable.

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, one does, one doesn't. The one that doesn't fought me all the way and believe the Bible makes a statement on our vision ... and that's good enough. I sat down with elders, visioned what our purpose was and what we are trying to do. Proposed it to the board to ammend, change, etc. We now use it and print it and hold it before the people. Given some material from my conference on creating vision statements.

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. We are so far north that we barely caught Hope Beyond 2000. Galaxy 4 or 9? I've only seen advertisements for Cross Training, but haven't seen them. We have access to 3ABN, are they broadcast over that???

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

This last week we went to a church planters seminar and saw John McGhee and Ron Gladden. Gave some handouts on music, on format, and the cell church worship format.

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Pastor: WD

Conference: Alaska

Church(es)/Position: 1 church plus school teacher

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've used a variety, for the most part, "The Bible Says." I've also used for kids, Monte Church's. I always am willing to look at new things. Right now I'm fairly satisfied with the Bible Says. It covers a broad range. I think there is one area we are week in ... and that is the need for church attendance, and church fellowship. Right now in our

conference we just finished hearing about Cell Churches. I see that as a need area. You can't always gain what you need by hearing about it.

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.?)

I've asked the very same question. I haven't found any and they aren't aware of any. Since I've been focused on teaching, I haven't had a chance to focus on this. I've only been here 6 months.

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).

Have a dish in one church. It has technical problems. They never completed the installation. At the same time, we had an outflow of people, so the church is pretty small. I got a little of Cross Training at my previous church. So, I'm not sure I can speak authoritatively.

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

I saw some material that I'm interested in at the seminar we just finished with John McGhee. I wasn't able to get the names of the material. Ron Gladden also recommended a great book that I can't remember the name of.