Some years back, when I first began studying the art and science of leading people to a decision for Christ, I spent a lot of time shadowing people who had been unusually blessed with the gift of evangelism to see if any of their wisdom and experience would rub off on me. I had a generous conference president who recognized my passion to become a more effective evangelist and assigned me to work with a number of prominent Adventist evangelists. “Watch and listen carefully,” he told me, “and learn everything you can, because some things can’t be learned from a book.”

To that point, I hadn’t come across anything you couldn’t learn from a book, but he was right. You don’t learn the art of evangelism by reading about it; it’s one of those things you only truly know by doing. It’s a little like bungee jumping: you can read all the physics books you want and assure yourself - mathematically - that an elastic cord will actually stop you from cracking your head on the bottom of the river. But to truly know it, you’ve got to strap on the cord and jump. As with everything else in the Christian experience, eventually, you’ve got to move from knowing to living, and that requires the sheer exercise of faith.

The months I spent with successful evangelists were unbelievably productive. These weren’t people who simply pontificated on the subject of reaching people with the gospel. They weren’t those who had merely written treatises on the topic. They were people who lived in the trenches and consistently demonstrated results over the course of years. Their creels were always full of
The time I spent with these giants of Adventist evangelism only deepened my desire to become an effective soul-winner. It made me fidgety, eager to try more. Even when I was recently waylaid by an illness and found myself off the front lines for a while, I struggled with an incredible restlessness: evangelists cannot be happy unless they are bringing people to Jesus.

It also helped me avoid the manifold pitfalls that face new evangelists. I still made some of the biggest mistakes in Adventist history, but at least I recognized where I had gone wrong after living in the shadow of great evangelists and was able to correct my course. So imagine what might happen if we could all rub off on each other. That, in part, is what I hope to accomplish with Best Practices for Adventist Evangelism. There are thousands of pastors on the front lines of outreach in the North American Division. There are thousands of stories to tell, thousands of quivers from which to borrow arrows, and thousands of hearts being led by God into stronger and more effective evangelistic ministries. What if we had a place to share - to listen - to learn - to feed each other’s fires?

So here it is. A place where we can all rub off on each other. Enjoy. And be sure to send us your best ideas.

How to Participate in Best Practices for Evangelism

Not only is this the maiden voyage of Best Practices for Adventist Evangelism, it’s also my inaugural attempt at serving as an editor - so I thank you kindly, in advance, for your patience as I grow into my new role.

Here’s what I’m thinking: each month, we’ll include editorials and articles that share or illustrate a key evangelistic principle. We’ll bring you news about evangelistic projects and initiatives from across the Division. We’ll hear from pastors who are actually in the trenches and finding solutions, and we’ll take time to share our best outreach ideas with each other. Find out how to contribute to the discussion here.

You’ll find a few of the first “tips from the field” contributed by pastors on the front lines below!

San Diego Church Wins With New Immigrants

How do you baptize more than eighty people a year without holding an evangelistic meeting? By working hard in our community and caring for people, the Paradise Valley Church has been able to accomplish just that. Click here to read the article.

Will James, Senior Pastor Paradise Valley SDA Church.
Finding Christ in Sin City

It Is Written’s month-long Revelation Today series by Pastor John Bradshaw concluded on Feb. 18, live from the Cashman Center in Las Vegas. Approximately 2,000 people attended the local meetings. Here are just a few of the incredible stories that unfolded in Sin City.

On Sabbath Morning Appeals

I recently caught up with Pastor Peter Neri (Paradise SDA, Las Vegas) backstage at the Revelation Today meetings in Las Vegas. The night before, there had been a powerful altar call, building on the subject of how God finally deals with the unrepentant. Pastor Neri shared his conviction that regular appeals ought to be a part of the Sabbath worship experience. You can listen to him here.

Editor’s note: when I got back home with the recording, I discovered a high-pitched hum had been created by something in the room. I attempted to filter it out, but alas, failed. My apologies to those of you who are bothered by it. Next time, I’ll wear monitors when recording. Promise.

Evangelism Explosion in New York City

One of the boldest evangelistic initiatives in Seventh-day Adventist history is unfolding in New York City. Find out how preparations are going and how the church is stepping up to the challenge. Read more here.

Tips from the Field

Connection Cards

One of the trends I've noticed in recent times is that guests are becoming more and more reluctant to register when they come to our evangelistic meetings. Too often, the first impression they get is a negative one -- “These people want my name, address, phone number, and email address, and I don't want to give them my personal information.”

One way to get around this problem is to use a connection card as part of a voluntary registration process. I've done this in the last 4 or 5 series I've conducted, and it works well in smaller settings -- for meetings with 150 people or less in attendance. People are handed a connection card by the greeters when they enter the meeting. (Or you can have your row hosts distribute these cards, if you use a row system--which I highly recommend.) Sometimes I use different options on the back of the card for special nights--Sabbath, Baptism, etc... I just have to make sure that my greeters and row hosts don't get the generic cards mixed up with the special cards.

Click here to see a sample of the Connection Card, which is printed on heavy card stock.

I offer a nice door prize each night at the END of the meeting. We collect the connection cards after the appeal at the end of my message. (The card is essentially a decision card and registration card all in one.) To participate in the door prize draw, people give their connection card to the ushers who...
collect them quickly at the end of the meeting. Then we have a draw to see who takes home the door prize. The nicer the prize, the more motivated people are to voluntarily hand in their registration cards. I've given away everything from $50 gift cards for restaurants or local stores, to iPods, and even an iPad. (The iPad created a LOT of excitement!)

This system has worked well for me. People come into the meetings a little happier. And it sure gets rid of the registration bottleneck in the foyer! The drawback is not everyone will register. I usually get about 95% of our guests registering with this system. As for the guests who don't voluntarily register, I will get to know them within a few nights by mingling with people over refreshments after the meetings. (This refreshment time in the foyer is a powerful opportunity for our members to make friends with the new people who are coming to the meetings.)

Pastor Jeff Potts, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Virtual Adventist Church

Last October the church group took advantage of an offer by Linden Labs to purchase a new region to add to the existing island space at no setup fees. This saved the group a $1000.00 expense to expand the land. This was done in view of the funding we were allocated through Global Mission to help us with this outreach program. Since then we have relocated the church project to the new land and set it all up and have been holding the church services on the new land space. Pictures of the new church location are on the website at www.BibleProphecyIsland.com in the Adventist Community section on the home page. More about the Church operation is on the Church page from the main menu.

We opened a Church service for the USA time zones Feb. 4 with a regular attendance each week since. One of the student pastors attending Avondale gave a presentation to the staff and students of the Theology Dept. and obtained approval for the students to meet a portion of their preaching requirements by preaching in our virtual church. This is a double win situation as they must be able to preach and we need preachers each week for two English services. Local churches in range of the school tend to be over booked on preaching opportunities while we are lacking preachers. I have since contacted the Dean of the Seminary at Andrews about this and he has responded that he will discuss the proposal with the professors and see if any students may wish to try this from their school. So I hope to hear from them again soon. So our church project grows to supporting preacher training!

I have also been in contact with an Amazing Facts evangelist to host a Revelation Seminar in June at our new location which can support up to 200 people attending. It will present some unique challenges in follow up contact management since none of the attendees will be "local" and will represent a number of countries around the world. Possible options will be using the Amazing Facts Bible School courses for follow up study and through that program connect them with local church pastors / conferences as the case may be. Once schools start in my Gospel Learning Center program it will also be a resource that can be used. Progress on the Gospel Learning Center program is going well with the Translation Entry programming nearing completion so all the content and program pages can be translated into other languages and support SDA church organizations and ministries in school operation. More about that project at www.GospelLearningCenter.com.

Anyone interested in helping with the SDA church project in Second Life can contact me and see more about it on the Bible Prophecy Island website.

Pastor Bob Curtice, Gospel Learning Center

Holiday Baptisms

What has worked best for me is scheduling baptisms on holidays. In 2010 Christmas was on Sabbath so three months earlier I invited those who wanted to give themselves as a gift to Jesus on Christmas Day to be baptized. We baptized 7 on Christmas and 3 on New Years day. Last year we scheduled a baptism on the Sabbath before Easter. I know an Adventist pastor in Miami FL who has a sunrise brunch and baptism on Easter Sunday.

Pastor Stephen Adessa, Clearwater FL

Send your evangelistic ideas to bpevangelism@gmail.com. See this article for guidelines on what we're looking for.
How To Participate in Best Practices for Adventist Evangelism

Not only is this the maiden voyage of *Best Practices for Adventist Evangelism*, it’s also my inaugural attempt at serving as an editor - so I thank you kindly, in advance, for your patience as I grow into my new role.

Here’s what I’m thinking: each month, we’ll include editorials and articles that share or illustrate a key evangelistic principle. We’ll bring you news about evangelistic projects and initiatives from across the Division. We’ll hear from pastors who are actually in the trenches and finding solutions, and we’ll take time to share our best outreach ideas with each other.

Recently, I sent word to the field that I was looking for ideas from pastors active in outreach, and I was overwhelmed - nay, swamped - with responses. You’ll see a few of them included in this edition of the newsletter, and I would absolutely love to hear from more of you. Simply send your ideas to bpevangelism@gmail.com.

A few guidelines: I am looking for submissions that share specific ideas and give details on how those ideas are being implemented. There were many responses in the initial wave that were too general to be useful to the broader audience, such as “we use Christ’s method alone,” or “I like to get out into the community to meet people.” *Best Practices for Adventist Evangelism* - rightly or wrongly - will assume that pastors know and understand these basics, and will favor ideas that:

- **give specifics.** “Get people used to appeals and altar calls,” is not specific. “I like to have people pick up their free books and handouts at the front of the auditorium so they become comfortable coming to meet me well in advance of an altar call,” is much more specific.
- **share tangible results.** “This approach has resulted in the response to altar calls increasing by as much as 10%.”
- **report something that has actually been tried/implemented.** As opposed to ideas that you wish someone would try, or ideas that you want the conference/union/division to implement. We’re looking for a community classroom rather than a suggestion box.

Given the limits of an electronic newsletter, submissions should also be short(ish) - say four paragraphs or so. I realize that I violate this principle with some frequency myself, but hey, I’m the editor.

By God’s grace, this edition of *Best Practices* will blossom into a tool that helps us all stretch and grow as outreach leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist community.
California Church Wins Big with Recent Immigrants

By Will James, Senior Pastor, Paradise Valley SDA

How do you baptize more than eighty people a year without holding an evangelistic meeting? By working hard in our community and caring for people, the Paradise Valley Church has been able to accomplish just that.

Paradise Valley Community Services has been an active ministry of Paradise Valley Church for more than 100 years. In the 1960's the church built our Community Center (approximately 15,000 Square Feet) which for many years did the typical quilting bees, and distribution of clothing and day-old bread. In 2002, Peggy James became the new director and soon discovered the need in our community was far deeper than we were currently meeting. She began networking with other agencies in the San Diego area and soon discovered the food banks, a contact that has done a lot to expand our ministry.

Soon after the current economic recession began, we were blessed with the donation of a walk-in-cooler from a florist who was going out of business. A refrigeration company offered to dismantle and reassemble the refrigeration unit at our center, which gave birth to our food ministry. We purchased a 2003 Dodge Ram pickup and began daily trips to the food bank to pick up food, which was then sorted, bagged and distributed every Tuesday to residents of our community. Our efforts grew exponentially: during 2011 we collected and gave away over 425,000 pounds of fresh produce and perishable food with a value of over $680,000! In addition, the center also gave away well over 25,000 pieces of clothing and thousands of household and furniture items.

From this ministry we discovered that there are over 90,000 Refugees living in the San Diego area who are struggling to survive. By reaching out through our food ministry, we soon had Refugees requesting to come and attend our church. The first group was a group of Bhutanese refugees who had fled Bhutan 15 years ago and had been living in refugee camps in Nepal since that time. They were newly arrived in the United States: Hindu folk who were hungry to learn about the Christian God. They spoke no English, and we found it frustrating trying to tell them about Jesus - but this frustration gave birth to yet another Community Services ministry in 2011, our Refugee Assimilation Project (RAP) ministry.

As part of this program, we established an English language school, because we discovered that the large language schools available were not reaching the preliterate refugees who were coming to our church for assistance.

We purchased 40 licenses to the highly acclaimed Rosetta Stone language software and 20 laptop computers, an investment of over $40,000. Two experienced ESL teachers volunteered to begin a language school five days a week in our Community Center. ESL classes kicked off last fall with 20 students in our “pilot group,” and now we have a long waiting list of clients who want to come and be part of our program. In the short time we have been operating, the refugees have been telling us they are learning more each week than they had learned in the past year or two in other English language classes.

Project Elements

We discovered that the refugees receive food stamps and medical insurance from the government, but are required to spend a minimum of 35 hours a week split between ESL and work experience. It was explained to us that if we really wanted to minister to the refugee community, we needed to find ways to meet the work experience criteria as well - so we developed yet another program component. We leased a small store in a strip mall near our church where we are now operating a thrift store as a place to provide work experience for some of the refugees taking ESL. In its first four months, the PV Thrift Store generated $15,000 in gross income, or almost $4,000 per month - nearly paying our start-up costs. This means, of course that the store will soon be generating income for our ministry.

In addition, other students are helping us to develop a 12,000-square-foot parcel of ground we have leased for a community garden. This will give some construction skills to other students as they build garden boxes and prepare the ground for planting. The garden will also give our community and refugee families a piece of land to grow their favorite foods. Other students help with the landscaping work around our church, and also in custodial work each afternoon, to obtain a variety of work experiences.

Another need that is quickly showing its face is for a good-quality child development center for the children of our students and others in the local area. We have a volunteer who is currently taking the required class work to become certified as a children's day care director. The CDC will provide yet another area for work experience for our refugee students.

Currently we are in the process of preparing our Sabbath School Rooms and getting licensing from the county for the CDC. Our goal is to have it fully operational by June 1, 2012, so that we can begin to meet the needs of these families as school lets out and their need for child care increases. The parents are desperate, as they must continue with their ESL and work experience classes or they will lose their benefits and risk becoming another homeless family on our streets - yet they have no safe place for their children to be while they are in classes. It will cost us approximately $25,000 to prepare the facility, purchase supplies and launch this phase of our community project.

We currently have a list of over 125 volunteers (giving over 8,000 hours of time during 2011) who are active in our ministries and the list continues to grow each month.

Over the past 16 months, we have baptized more than 85 individuals into our church, primarily from our Community Service Ministries, and on any given Sabbath, we have another 50 or more non-members in attendance at our worship services. Our average attendance has grown by over 100 during the past 12 months. We now have refugees from Iraq, Rwanda, Chad, Ukraine and Nepal attending church each Sabbath. We are currently providing translation in Arabic, French, Spanish, Lao, Thai & Swahili, also have S.S. classes in these languages as well as Tagalog. (We do have two English language Sabbath School classes as well!)

We are excited as we have already been able to find jobs for four of our refugees, and have also found resources to provide employers with a 75% rebate on the salaries of our students if they will hire our students as interns on a Work/Study program for a 6 month on the job training. We have placed 4 of our students who have obtained at least a level 4 English language skill into this Work/Study program.

It is truly exciting to see how God is opening doors for our ministry, and we are praying for businesses and friends to partner with us to make this ministry even more successful. We thank you for your consideration to support this vital ministry to some of the 90,000 refugees in our San Diego community.
Finding Christ in Sin City

By Michele Stotz, It Is Written

It Is Written’s month-long Revelation Today series by Pastor John Bradshaw concluded on Feb. 18, live from the Cashman Center in Las Vegas. Approximately 2,000 people attended the local meetings. Here are just a few stories:

• An enthusiastic attendee—and longtime It Is Written viewer—made a decision for baptism but was dismayed because she believed her husband would never come to Christ. Amazingly, he started attending and said that God was changing his life. Both were baptized together at the close of the meetings.

• One couple showed up at an Adventist church in Las Vegas saying they had been watching Revelation Today online and had made decisions for baptism based on what they’d heard. This happened in other churches as well.

• After one family tried twice to follow up on a Bible study interest in a gated community, they gave up and another family said they’d try to reach the man. After six unsuccessful visits, they found him on the seventh. He began the lessons and decided to attend Revelation Today. Before his baptism, he commented, “Now I know why God has preserved my life this long. It’s so I could learn His truth!”

To date, 280 people in Las Vegas have requested baptism, and 100 of them were baptized the final day of the series. It Is Written, the Nevada-Utah Conference and ASI—who joined forces for this event—have received reports of many more who were baptized around the world at the conclusion of the series. Follow-up efforts will continue as hundreds take Bible studies and baptismal classes. Please keep this ongoing outreach in your prayers!

Download the archived programs at http://www.itiswritten.com/television#seminars/podcasts/revelation_today or pre-order the DVD at https://store.itiswritten.com/RT-DVD.html.

View a short video of the baptismal ceremony here: http://lasvegas.itiswritten.com/news_entries/144

Finding Christ in Sin City http://www.nadministerial.org/article/241/public-evangelism-resources/ar...
An Explosion of Evangelism: GC, NAD, Unions, Conferences Collaborate to Reach Large Cities

By Rohann Wellington, Greater New York Conference

Shawn Boonstra, associate ministerial director for evangelism, North American Division, recently sat down with presidents and other representatives from the GC, NAD, Unions and Conferences who have formed a strategy to reach New York City, the largest metro area bordering their territories of responsibility.

Stepping up to the challenge as presented by General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson and North American Division president, Dan Jackson, were Donald King, president of the Atlantic Union and Frank Bondurant, vice president for Ministry Development, Columbia Union in addition to presidents of Southern New England, Frank Tochterman; New Jersey, Jose Cortes; Northeastern, Trevor Baker; Allegheny East, Charles Cheatham; and Greater New York, G. Earl Knight. They discussed the whys, the hows and the historical significance of targeting New York City with the message of a personal Savior.

Ted Wilson answered Boonstra’s leading question, “Why target large urban centers and why New York City?” Wilson put it simply, “That's where the most people are. Approximately 50% of people live in cities rather than the countryside. While on this earth, Jesus went to where the people were. He wept for them. He did practical and good things for them.”

Jackson added, “God loves the cities. He loves the people who live there. It is our work to find people who are yearning for something better, so it is our goal to reach every major population center in the North American Division. New York is the first. Much will be learned from the NYC experience and that knowledge will help us focus efficiently on future initiatives.”

Ellen G. White wrote about NYC. She said, “Those who bear the burden of the work in Greater New York should have the help of the best workers that can be secured. Here let a center for God's work be made, and let all that is done be a symbol of the work the Lord desires to see done in the world.”

A training school, community services, youth ministries, and more relational activities and services will be widely implemented throughout the city prior to the evangelistic meetings slated for 2013. Guest evangelists from around the world have volunteered to simultaneously preach the gospel in neighborhoods of NYC. This strategy to reach the city is the first time that the General conference, Division, Unions and Conferences have worked closely together to accomplish a major initiative of this kind.

King continued, “New York City is the financial capital of the world with 20 million people. God wants His work to explode in NYC.”

The one hour NY13 special program produced by the NY13 Communication team was filmed for television on April 16 in the Hope Channel studios. It will be shown on Hope Channel and 3ABN and as a promotional DVD throughout the Division so that members will have a clear understanding of what NY13 is and what they can do to have a part in the massive initiative to offer the gift of grace and hope to the huge metropolis of NYC. Visit www.NY13.org (http://www.NY13.org) to watch the program.

QUICK FACTS on the New York Project:

**What is NY13?**
NY13 is an evangelistic outreach project sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to reach people in New York City and beyond with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Why New York?**
New York City has been chosen as the first of about 650 cities where the Seventh-day Adventist Church plans to hold evangelistic meetings over the next several years. It is an urban center whose population reflects a microcosm of the world. Church leaders are also following the counsel of Ellen White in the Spirit of Prophecy that the work done in New York City should be a “symbol of the work the Lord desires to see done in the world.” Representatives from all of the 13 divisions of the world church will be involved in this effort and the knowledge gained from their participation will allow them to be able do a similar work in their fields.
**MY NEXT STEP TODAY IS TO...**
- □ Receive Jesus as my forgiver and leader
- □ Decide to attend the rest of these meetings
- □ Invite a friend to this seminar
- □ Other: ________________________________

**SEND ME INFO ABOUT...**
- □ How to become a Christ-follower
- □ Baptism
- □ Participating in a small group Bible study
- □ Other: ________________________________

Prayer Request: ________________________________

Question / Comment: ________________________________

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