"And lo, the Lord God passed by. There was a mighty wind, splitting mountains and shattering rocks, but the Lord was not in the wind. There was an earthquake but the Lord was not in the earthquake.' [1 Kings 19:11-12]

"To me, that is the key: the Lord was not in the earthquake. Natural disasters are acts of nature, not acts of God. God cares about the well-being of good people; Nature is blind, an equal-opportunity destroyer. Where is God? In the courage of people to carry on their lives after the tragedy. In the resilience of those whose lives have been destroyed, families swept away, homes lost, but they resolve to rebuild their lives. In the goodness and generosity of people all over the world to reach out and help strangers who live far from them, to contribute aid, to pray for them."

- Rabbi Harold Kushner

Give Sabbath School Leaders and Teachers a Well-Deserved Break

By Aileen Andres Sox, Editor Our Little Friend & Primary Treasure

Working around vacation schedules and the weekly fluctuation in summer attendance is challenging-especially in children's Sabbath School.

Here's how my Kuna, Idaho, church meets this yearly challenge: we combine our children's Sabbath Schools for three months. Our children's ministries coordinator selects a curriculum and then finds volunteers for each summer Sabbath. Volunteers aren't always the Sabbath School leaders and teachers themselves-although usually each of them takes a turn-but rather people who can commit to help one Sabbath.

In a small church, a leader and a helper are usually all the personnel needed. However, if you find yourself with lots and lots of kids on any particular Sabbath, you need to be able to tap additional help. This "minute person" is an adult who doesn't lead out, but helps children do what leader/teacher asks. Actually, a helper does the same thing, but may also lead out in some portions of day's activities.

The Primary GraceLink lessons work well as the curriculum for such a combined Sabbath School. The genius of the GraceLink Sabbath School materials, with the emphasis on active learning, is that children of different ages, maturity, and
reading skills can learn by doing together, making a combined Sabbath School fun for everyone, especially if older kids are put to work helping younger ones. A VBS curriculum or a book with thirteen lessons on a theme from one of the many wonderful publishers of children’s ministries materials would also work.

Several years ago, I accepted the challenge of putting on the kids’ programming during a local ASI convention. I was told to expect approximately 15 kids from ages 4 to 13 coming to my group. A volume of Sunday School Specials, a book series from Group Publishing, worked very well as my curriculum. No one was bored and the two of us who led out weren’t worked to death either. For added interest, my helper read a continued story: Julius, the Perfectly Pesky Pet Parrot. (Julius is a particular favorite of mine.)

A combined children’s Sabbath School offers many benefits: Leaders get a well-deserved rest; kids get to know and help one another; church members get better acquainted with the church’s children; the Spirit can expose people to their undeveloped gift for children’s ministry.

Discuss this topic on our Facebook page

Responses

From our Facebook page
Responses to last week’s editorial, "The Multi-Church Dilemma"

I think we’re too focused on preaching as the key function of pastors as well as the elevated place of the sermon in our worship services. What about the challenge of discipleship, building leadership, and leading each church to discern their mission in the local community? How about energy focused on empowering each congregation to teach each other through Bible study instead of lay preaching?
- Nathan French

I wonder why more training is not offered to pastors on how to do multi-church ministry successfully? I don’t recall one course on it in undergrad or seminary. In 23 years of ministry, I don’t recall one speaker at a worker’s meeting who ever did any specific teaching on it. I would pay to attend a ministry seminar where all the lectures are given by district pastors, but I have never heard of such a program. Instead, we listen to superstars who don’t pastor districts. If we viewed multi-point charges as a specialty and aspired to shine in this work, we would have more success. Instead, we often view it as a necessary evil to be tolerated until we can graduate to one large church. With that philosophy, no wonder that the current state of affairs exists.
- Barry Kimbrough

God has given us very clear instruction on this, both by inspiration and experience. The experience is evident in other countries, as the paragraph mentioning “Hispanic pastors” refers to. Much of the direct instruction is found in Evangelism pp. 381-383. The paid ministers are to raise up churches in new places. Then the local people are to be trained to carry on the work there while the ministers go on to new areas. We are suffering in the NAD from not following this plan.
- Daniel Manzano

The key may well be the unbundling of the traditional package of pastoral services. We ask the question: "Where can we find a lay person who can and will do all the work of a traditional pastor?" Perhaps the better question would be, "What are the essential functions of pastoral ministry in the local church which our members are called and gifted to contribute?"
- Mark Welch

Media

Pastor’s DVD Volume 19 will soon be on its way to Ministerial Directors to distribute to the pastors of the North American Division. This special edition on Adventist Congregations began with the question of what it would be like if we could give every pastor the weekend off to visit another Adventist congregation? Obviously budget would not permit such a reality but we could virtually do it through the power of a documentary series. Come, take a weekend off and visit four different churches through the eyes of four different pastors as they learn how other pastors do ministry in fresh settings.

And if you can’t wait for the DVD you can watch all of the documentary pieces on the Adventist Congregations on-demand internet video channel. This week’s featured documentary follows Pastor Trey Sharp as he takes the weekend off to visit Pastor Boyan Levterov who is planting a church in the affluent growing community of Frisco Texas. Trey wonders what kind of person makes for a good church planter? What are some of the challenges of church planting? How can you make sure that your core team carries the values of the new church? All of this and more in this compelling documentary entitled "A Visit to Frisco."
Reading for Pastors

“Too Much Judgment”: a compassionate piece on Harold Camping by Tiffany Stanley of the New Republic. Quote: “Now to me, the schadenfreude has turned sinister. Based on the high traffic the articles are garnering, it would seem as if many of us are intrigued voyeurs, gleeful in knowing the exact day when these people will experience their life's greatest disappointment. We feel superior, knowing that even though they told us we were heading for death and destruction, now, they get theirs.... But should our reaction to them be chuckling glee or something more like sadness? Pay attention to their individual stories - their willingness to sacrifice everything in anticipation that their earthly lives are over - and I dare you not to feel the latter.”

Is preaching a performance art? Quote: "T.S. Elliot said the purpose of literature is to turn blood into ink. In preaching, we're called to turn ink back into blood.“ (Thanks, Bill Davis.)

Joplin tornado:

- A number of Joplin churches were destroyed.
- The Adventist church was damaged.
- ACS is responding.
- Head of public affairs for the CJC/LDS opines for the Washington Post on that denomination's disaster response.

Be careful what you say when decrying the worsening state of the world, says Monte Sahlin. At least one thing is improving: the divorce rate is down.

The uniting power of the King James Bible.

According to the Faith Communities Today newsletter, 68% of congregations have been hit by money problems during the current recession.

To the Point

With a natural disaster, who do you get mad at?
- David Fassler

He who sees the calamity of other people finds his own calamity light.
- Arabian Proverb

I always tried to turn every disaster into an opportunity.
- John D. Rockefeller

Can you see the holiness in those things you take for granted - a paved road or a washing machine? If you concentrate on finding what is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul.
- Harold Kushner

There's a need for Christians to stop being portrayed in our industry as crazies... Christians - whether as a priest, a nun, a minister, whatever - have just been stereotyped to death. You try to be a model of kindness and love and forgiveness to all those around you, because you have received kindness and love and forgiveness from God through Christ. That's what Christianity is.
- Patrician Heaton (actress from "Everybody Loves Raymond"

God doesn't use scare tactics to win people. He uses love tactics and acceptance. He also doesn't invite people to join a gated community or club to work on peoples hearts and minds. His kindness is available to everyone.
- Tony Romeo

News, Ideas & Reminders

- World No Tobacco Day - a great way to link with the local community. Posters and information available. RPHA has a nicely done How to Stop Smoking for Life mag available for the occasion.

- Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day: Sermon, powerpoint and other material available in both Spanish and English.

- Previous resource links:
  - Andrews Study Bible
  - The Hope of Survivors, ministry to victims of pastoral sexual abuse
Got a tool, resource, site, article, idea or seminar that you like a lot? Share it with us at BestPractices@ameritech.net.

**Upcoming NAD Events**

Do you have an event you’d like to invite NAD pastors to? Send details to BestPractices@Ameritech.net.


**GYC en español 2011: Firmes y Adelante.** Jun 9, 2011 - Jun 12, 2011, Southwestern Adventist University, 100 W Hillcrest Street, Keene TX 76059. Participate in seminars, devotionals and mission work. Connect with ministries and other young people from around the country that share a passion for souls and a vision of finishing the work of God in this generation! All youth and adults who await the soon coming of the Lord Jesus. Phone: Kayla Piña (401) 649-9256. For more information, email: kayla.p@gycesp.org

**Community Services Leadership Development.** Jun 11, 2011 - Jun 12, 2011, Blue Mountain Academy, 2363 Mountain Road, Hamburg, PA 19526. Plan now to attend the Community Services Leadership Development "Reach Out" Symposium where you will develop church growth by building a relationship with the community through outreach ministries. Phone: 610-476-4255. For more information, email: jdare@paconference.org


**SEEDS Plus 2011 Multiplication Movement.** Jun 14, 2011 - Jun 18, 2011, Blue Mountain Academy, 2363 Mountain Road, Hamburg, PA 19526. Plan now to attend SEEDS 2011 Multiplication Movement a church planting seminar. Come learn the steps necessary to plant a church, or help a recently planted church grow. Phone: 800-255-7566. For more information, email: clarkc@andrews.edu

**Great Controversy Tour - Summer, 2011.** Jun 19, 2011 - Jun 30, 2011, Italy, Switzerland, France and Germany. Retrace the Adventist heritage in Europe from its roots in early Christianity, through the Dark Ages, to the Reformation. Tour Host: Dr. P. Gerard Damsteegt, Specialist in Adventist Studies and Church History. Phone: 269-471-5172. For more information, email: gctours@mac.com

**PSI International Conference on Philanthropy.** Jun 21, 2011 - Jun 24, 2011, JW Marriott Indianapolis, 10 S West Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Planned by and designed for the chief executives and fundraising professionals of Adventist organizations, the conference’s goal is to foster vision. Recognized internationally, Principles & Techniques gives you the foundation and inspiration to lead your nonprofit to its financial goals. It provides you with the framework for operating a successful total development program. Phone: 301-680-6133 or 6134. For more information, email: Chris.Bearce@nad.adventist.org.

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Spam
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Too Much Judgment

The media’s shameful, cruel obsession with those awaiting the rapture.

Tiffany Stanley  May 21, 2011 | 12:00 am

The trumpets have sounded. Judgment Day is upon us. At least in theory. Harold Camping—an 89-year-old former civil engineer turned radio mogul who seems to command a number of followers—has predicted today, Saturday, May 21, as the day of the Rapture. And the media, as well as the people who consume it, have responded with barely contained glee. Yesterday, references to Judgment Day made up the entire top five of Google’s Hot Searches. At The Washington Post, a story about Family Radio—the Christian broadcast network that Camping owns—was the site’s most popular item. Another piece, on the group’s followers, was the most-emailed from The New York Times. Meanwhile, Huffington Post has devoted an entire webpage to doomsday coverage, under its standard heading: “Some news is so big that it needs its own page.”

Here at TNR, we thought about joining the circus. Last week, when we learned that Camping was predicting the apocalypse, I was tasked with spending May 21—the day of the Rapture—with a few of his true-believing followers, who have been filling websites, billboards, and city squares, handing out pamphlets, and generally warning the world to repent. What an amazing story, I thought. I’ll spend time with people who believe the world is going to end, and then be able to watch their reactions when it doesn’t.

But before long, I had second thoughts. First, I ran into some accessibility snags. While the media-friendly end-timers wanted to warn heathens beforehand, they really just wanted to spend their last day on earth surrounded by loved ones, in quiet preparation. Their response to me was something like: Why would you want to follow us around on Saturday? We’re not going to be here anymore. Yes, there was a certain humor to this. But the more I looked into the story, the more it began to turn my stomach to think of spending my Saturday evening in someone’s living room, waiting for that gothca moment when they realized it was all a lie—leaving me to file a story the next day, poking fun at their gullibility. I decided I couldn’t do it.

Yet the media coverage has continued, and now to me, the schadenfreude has turned sinister. Based on the high traffic the articles are garnering, it would seem as if many of us are intrigued voyeurs, gleeful in knowing the exact day when these people will experience their life’s greatest disappointment. We feel superior, knowing that even though they told us we were heading for death and destruction, now, they get theirs.

While some news stories have been nuanced and evenhanded, others have opted for smug superiority and cheap laughs. The Daily Beast featured “Your Guide to the End of the World,” with such salient tips as “Where’s the best place to weather this sucker?” (Note: avoid fault lines.) In its “comedy” section, Huffington Post made an exhaustive set of lists, from “9 Ways to Tell the World is Over” to “21 Reasons Why May 21 is NOT the End of the World” (on the latter: “Justin Bieber wouldn’t let it happen”). A blog item on NPR—under the headline, “The Rapture supposedly starts tonight”—invited readers to take a quiz on who is most likely to be left behind. (By an overwhelming majority, politicians will feel the fiery furnace; journalists, surprisingly, are more likely to be spared, at least ahead of bloggers and those who talk on their cell phones.)
Do the end-timers seem ignorant? Yes. Are they insane? Possibly. But should our reaction to them be chuckling glee or something more like sadness? Pay attention to their individual stories—their willingness to sacrifice everything in anticipation that their earthly lives are over—and I dare you not to feel the latter. Ashley Parker of *The New York Times* writes about a mom who stopped working, and stopped saving for college for her three teenaged children. One of the kids admitted, “I don’t really have motivation to try to figure out what I want to do anymore because my main support line, my parents, don’t care.” At NPR, Barbara Bradley Hagerty* reports on a young couple, with a toddler and a baby on the way, who are spending the last of the savings. The wife says, “We budgeted everything so that, on May 21, we won’t have anything left.”

Laughing at religious fanatics is nothing new. And, at some level, there’s nothing wrong with it. But this story didn’t just take off in popularity because people wanted a quick laugh or some insight into a quirky subset of our country. There’s a cruelty underlying our desire to laugh at this story—a desire to see people humiliated and to revel in our own superiority and rationality—even though the people in question are pretty tragic characters, who either have serious problems themselves or perhaps are being taken advantage of, or both.

Sure, it’s an interesting story when a fringe group decides the world is ending tomorrow. But it’s also a small story. Come Sunday morning, as news articles flood in about the disillusioned end-timers, and those articles instantly become some of the most popular on the web—as they surely will—we might want to ask ourselves not what is wrong with this sad group of apocalyptic believers, but rather what is wrong with a society that takes such pleasure in their dysfunction.

*Correction:* The article originally referred to the NPR journalist as Barbara Brown Haggerty. We regret the error.

*Tiffany Stanley is a reporter-researcher at* *The New Republic.*

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**Source URL:** http://www.tnr.com/article/88803/rapture-judgement-day-may-21-media-obsession
Preaching is Performance Art

The way it’s delivered is part of the message.

Clayton Schmit

Monday, May 23, 2011

I once heard a preacher who sorely tempted me to go to church no more."

Nearly any churchgoer could have said this, and in nearly any period of history. But in this case the listener was Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American essayist and lecturer (1803-1882). He went on to explain that "the capital secret of [the preacher's] profession, namely, to convert life into truth, he had not learned... there was not a surmise, a hint in all the discourse that he had ever lived at all."

We have all heard preachers with that problem. Their sermons employ an artificial set of communication skills divorced from ordinary human life. These preachers assume that the purpose of the exegesis they learned in seminary is to spring-load sermons with technical data that will impress and subdue listeners. Or they spend all their time working on what to say and no time at all on how to say it.

T.S. Elliot said the purpose of literature is to turn blood into ink. In preaching, we're called to turn ink back into blood. Yet so many preachers speak only abstractly, as if they were devoid of humanness. There's no flesh, no blood, no tension, no mystery, no life in their sermons. No dialogue, no communication, and no eye contact with those looking at them expectantly every Sunday morning. Only words drawn from commentaries or a thesaurus. These are the preachers that tempt us "to go to church no more."

But the opposite temptation also exists: to deliver the sermon in such an animated way that all attention is drawn to the preacher and away from the Word.

We could make a long list of such preachers: The wannabe comedian, the preacher obsessed with cultural awareness, the narrator that strings together poignant but pointless stories, the media maestro who spends hours mastering digital techniques and only minutes on the message, the preacher with an affected pulpit tone, the awkward speaker who has plenty to say but no confidence in delivery, the masterful presenter whose message is a string of banalities, the preacher who becomes convinced that personal experience and "life message" are more interesting than the gospel. The list goes on.

Such preachers also tempt us to give up on sermons altogether. In the end, it does not matter which of the temptations is displayed in the pulpit. The result is the same: the people are kept from an encounter with God.

Groucho Marx once humorously complained to his comic foil, Margaret Dumont, "I can see it now: you bending over a hot stove. But, I can't see the stove." I can see it now, too, in our churches: preachers filling the pulpit with, take your pick—hubris, clich, comedy, digital mastery, fumbling
speech, pointlessness, flowery language, super-animation—but I cannot see Jesus.

Redeeming a dirty word

How can preachers present the gospel message to their listeners without getting in the way? How can they communicate the Word of God in such a way that it wins a hearing?

There are many answers to this question, and they relate to the multiple skills preachers learn in their theological education: understanding of ministry context, knowledge of Scripture, theological discernment, development of pastoral wisdom, and more. But there is one component that is often overlooked: preaching is performance. Preachers bring their messages to life in the hearing of God's people when they understand that preaching is a type of performance art.

Preaching is not merely the art of textual exegesis, contextual analysis, and creative writing—though it involves all of these. Performance lies at the heart of proclamation.

In literal terms, the word performance means to bring a message through (per) a form. It is a tool for expression, not a means of drawing attention to the performer. Our suspicions of performance are based on a caricature of the real thing, a performance pathology.

Ultimately, if the preacher's words are to become the Word of life, they must be presented in a way that creates a world for listeners to inhabit. This has to do with delivery, but there is more. To truly understand performance requires a theological understanding of human responsibility in the equation of incarnation.

It also means accepting that the call to preach demands submission and humility. Preaching is always about God; preachers must keep it from being about anything else, especially about them.

But performance has become a dirty word in the church. In most settings, to call a sermon a "performance" is hardly a compliment. Let's begin by acknowledging some common misconceptions about performance that make people in the church nervous.

When people think of preachers and performance, they might envision a preacher with a "diva syndrome." The diva takes greatest pleasure putting his or her talents on display and constantly seeking the limelight. Often this kind of preacher is arrogant and judgmental. We see this on stage all too often. The diva steps forward, the consummate perfectionist. He (as often as she) is impossible to please and is hard on the "supporting cast." The diva has a sense of entitlement, an insatiable desire for appreciation and applause. Nothing can be allowed to mar the perfection of the diva's performance. It becomes clear that whatever is transpiring is entirely about that person, and not essentially about God or God's people gathered for worship. We are rightly fearful of the diva in preaching.

The second misconception is that performance is mere playacting. It's easy to assume that theatrias is about manipulating people for mere entertainment, that is, entertainment for entertainment's sake. When this is done with preaching, the delivery is embellished and actually impedes the communication of the message. Bad performances in the pulpit are as obvious as bad acting on the stage or screen. The only time we usually notice actors acting is when their craft is poor. It's the same with preaching. When it's done masterfully, the preacher almost disappears.

Good preaching comes alive and speaks to the heart precisely because it is well presented, with proper gesture, vocal technique, and bodily presence. People in the performing arts call this "stage presence." We might call it liturgical presence, or pulpit presence. All effective communicators realize that they must master numerous techniques in order to impact their audience.

In Performing the Word, Jana Childers calls preaching and drama "first cousins" and asserts that preachers need to know a good deal of acting technique if they are to communicate what she calls a "lively homiletic." We don't usually expect our preachers to act, but we do hope they grasp
enough of what actors know about voice, body control, and presentation, that they communicate their messages with naturalness and meaning.

Of course employing acting techniques can be taken too far. As described above, when performance becomes merely showing off or pure entertainment, it reveals that the wrong people are performing and that they are doing it poorly. When it is done well, it is not to be noticed: like pixels in a digital picture, performance ought to create the desired impression while being so fundamental to it that it becomes invisible.

We are right to avoid diva preachers or those who merely entertain. However common those mistakes are, they do not represent the real meaning of performance.

Performance that does not point beyond itself does not achieve its goal.

The incarnational element

John writes, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Jesus as the Word was the first of his grand metaphors, except that it wasn't actually a metaphor.

A metaphor functions only when we say that X is Y, yet we know that X is not Y. A metaphor is actually a lie. That is why metaphors have power; they make our imagination work.

But, to say that Jesus is the Word is only metaphoric on the surface: X (a man) is not Y (an element of speech). But when Jesus spoke, as the incarnation of God, each of his words was Word. Everything he uttered was God's Word. Thus, X (God speaking with a man's voice) is Y (the message of God).

If Their Carefully Wrought Human Words Become God'S Word, They are Playing With Dynamite.

The Word of God delivered through the voice and person of a woman or a man, also has an incarnational quality, similar to Jesus' incarnation. Karl Barth urges preachers to understand that their words become God's Word when God shows up to inspire them and bring them to life as Word.

Similarly, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that when the preacher speaks, it is as if Jesus himself stepped down from the pulpit and walked among the people. The power that this implies is mindboggling.

If their carefully wrought human words become God's Word and the vehicle for the spiritual presence of Jesus, they are not merely playing with language. They are playing with dynamite. What may push us toward sheer terror is the final step in this equation. If the preacher's words become the Word, then he or she is the physical bearer of the Word, a partner in the incarnation of Jesus.

This weighty realization ought to foster, in addition to seriousness and prayerfulness, a desire to convey the message well so that the Word has meaning and reception. That means more than using the mind and voice. It requires bringing the entire body into service as a living, breathing, instrument of the Word.

If the preacher writes a meaningful word in the study, the next step is to turn that ink (or those computer pixels) into blood in the pulpit. The blood courses through the entire person of the one called upon to be that moment's incorporation of the Word of God.

How do preachers accomplish this? How can we bring our entire person into service of this task? How can we stand and read a message prepared during the week and make it come to life? We employ techniques; mastering voice, breath, gesture, and movement. And we succeed in this endeavor by committing to the rigors of the craft while engaging in them with submission and humility.

Submission and humility
The first thing the preacher must submit to is Scripture. Proclaiming the Word requires a sure source. Typically that means allowing a Bible text to be the soil out of which the sermon grows.

The preacher also submits to the practice required to bring these words to life. It is often recommended that preachers internalize their sermons by reading them aloud 10 times. Don't do the math; it will only scare you. A 20-minute message requires a lot of time for practice. But reading aloud is necessary. That is where the preacher learns to turn written language into spoken language. We write for the eye, but the sermon is for the ear.

To be more accurate, one does not actually read the sermon. One rehearses it aloud and slowly moves it from ink to blood. The word *internalize* is the key here. We do not attempt to memorize the words we have written. We seek to so internalize them through rehearsal that they flow freely from us through our personalities.

Submission is a close cousin of humility. It was certainly so for Jesus, who "being found in human form, humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross" (Phil. 2:8)

Preaching as a performance art places the preacher in a tough spot. Performers are often in the limelight, admired and appreciated. Effective preachers also find themselves recipients of admiration and gratitude. The temptation to pride can be strong.

Perhaps this image will help: A group of worshipers gather in the dark for an evening service around a small table that will bear a candle. The candle will represent the light of Christ. The assembly gathers in darkness and waits for the entrance of the candle.

At the appointed time, it is brought into the room by a person who moves slowly and gracefully to the table, lest she stir the air and extinguish the candle. All eyes are fixed on the entrance. But whom do they see? They see Christ, as represented by the light. He is the focus of their attention and the object of their worship. Is anyone else seen? Yes, the candle bearer. She does not appear to them as the object, but only as a necessary bearer of the object. She will be seen, but only in the afterglow of the light.

And what happens if she fails? Suppose she does not inspect the space in advance or plan out her route? She trips over a cord or a backpack. Whom then do the people see? They see the candle bearer, but they cannot see Jesus. The light has been snuffed out.

The humble preacher lets the light be seen. She submits to all things necessary to bear the Word to God's people. When she succeeds, the people are brought into an encounter with God. They see Jesus, as he walks among them. Yes, she too is visible. But, she is not the object of the people's attention, only the bearer of the Word, seen dimly in the afterglow of the light of Christ. For such preachers, we express our admiration and gratitude. Thanks be to God!

Yes, preaching is performance art. Do it humbly, but do it well.

Clayton Schmit is professor of preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

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Joplin churches suffer heavy storm damage, several destroyed

Written by
Linda Leicht
2:10 PM, May. 23, 2011

Churches in Joplin are reaching out to storm victims, but some churches were victims, too.

St. Mary's Catholic Church, with little more than a frame topped by a large cross still standing, and its attached elementary school were destroyed by the tornado.

The Rev. Justin D. Monaghan serves as priest for the parish, which serves nearly 650 families. Monaghan sought safety in a bathtub when the tornado hit. The residence was severely damaged, according to a spokeswoman from the Catholic diocese, but parishioners can and helped dig their priest out. Monaghan was not injured and spent the night with a church family, Recy Moore reported.

St. Peter’s in Jopin and the high school there were not hit by the storm. The school was used as an overflow triage center last night. The Rev. J. Freidel, pastor of the church, left these words on his Facebook page:

“Just got back from closing down the Catholic High School which was opened as an overflow triage center. Our area of town was untouched, though the neighboring parish (20 blocks away) has probably lost their entire physical plant...I know you’ve all seen the footage of St. John’s, our Catholic Hospital, which is probably also a total loss! Please keep our community in your prayers...there has been and will be much suffering. Such destruction and violence.... Thanks, everyone, for your calls, texts, and messages of support. Going to sleep now, so we can be at it again in the morning.”

The Rev. James V. Johnston Jr., bishop of the Springfield-Cape Girardeau Diocese, posted a message on the diocesan website, http://home.catholicweb.com: “Please keep the people of Joplin in our prayers, especially those whose lives were taken as well as those who lost loved ones. We pray especially for the people of St. Mary’s Catholic Church and school who...
suffered a total loss as well as St. John’s Mercy hospital which sustained major damage.”

Four of the eight Assemblies of God churches in Joplin were in the path of the storm, according to a spokesman for the Assemblies of God national office in Springfield. Second Assembly had minor damage, and Faith Assembly is a total loss, said Dan Van Veen. The office has heard that the pastor of Cathedral Assembly is safe, but there is no work on the church, nor has there been an assessment of damage at First Assembly.

The Assemblies of God is working through Springfield-based Convoy of Hope to assess and meet needs in Joplin, Van Veen said. Any updates will also be posted on the Assemblies of God website.

The Southwest District office of the United Methodist Missouri Conference was hit by the tornado, according to a spokeswoman for the conference. “We can’t get into the area yet,” said Sherry Habben. “We’re not quite sure what the situation is.”

Southwest District Superintendent Sandra Nenandal has confirmed the safety of all of the United Methodist pastors and their families who are in Joplin. St. James UMC has been destroyed. St. Paul UMC, located near St. John’s Hospital, has extensive damage to the sanctuary, worship center and fellowship hall, and the children’s wing is damaged to a lesser extent.

The conference is asking people not to “self deploy,” but to work through their local church and the conference Office of Creative Ministries. She said that efforts are in the “beginning stages,” and plans are not likely to come together until later this week or early next week. News is posted on the conference website: www.moumethodist.org.

Bishop Robert Schnase released the following statement: “Our hearts and prayers go out to all those who grieve the loss of loved ones and who have suffered the destruction of homes and businesses following Sunday’s devastating tornado in Joplin. Several United Methodist churches have been directly affected. We pray for God’s comforting presence among those who feel completely overwhelmed. And we give God thanks for all those ready to help and serve and give and pray so that people can rebuild their lives. I invite United Methodists to respond prayerfully, courageously, and generously during these weeks to come. May God’s grace be known through our serving.”
Related Links

Joplin: “You couldn’t... see the edge of destruction”
Mid-American Adventists respond in wake of Joplin tornado

Church sustains minor damage; one non-attending member unaccounted for

24 May 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
ANN staff

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Community Services-Disaster Response for Mid-America is coordinating with federal and local agencies in the wake of a tornado that struck Joplin, Missouri on Sunday.

The single deadliest twister to hit the United States since 1950 left 117 dead and leveled homes and businesses, including the southwest Missouri city's hospital.

While the Joplin Adventist Church sustained minor roof damage, the structure itself is sound, said Dwight Seek, who pastors the church. His wife, Jenny, said several church members' homes incurred damage, and the church treasurer's home was destroyed.

While all regular members have been accounted for, one non-attending member is missing, Jenny Seek said. "It's possible that she is out of town with family. We are praying she is OK," she said.

"Our hearts go out to our church family and indeed the whole community of Joplin," Thomas Lemon, president of the Mid-America Union, said in a statement. "It is at such times that the church community must become again the hands and feet of Jesus to carry His healing touch to people whose lives have been so devastated," the statement continued.

Dan Jackson, president of the church's North American Division, is expected to visit Joplin this week to encourage and pray with church members.

For updates on the developing situation, including Adventist response efforts, visit www.outlookmag.org.

ANN World News Bulletin is a review of news issued by the Communication department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church World Headquarters and released as part of the service of Adventist News Network. For reproduction requirements, click here. The opinions expressed by Commentary authors and sources in ANN news stories do not necessarily reflect those of Adventist News Network® and/or the Seventh-day Adventist® Church.

2 Comments

I attended many years ago, and am asking about Joe & Lori Roberts, Jim & Shirley Mathis, Jess & Jean Simmons of the Joplin, SDA Church.

830-890-5310, 102 Cedar Way, Kerrville; TX,

Carrol Ann Bivins

Carrol Bivins  |  May 24, 2011 2:07 PM  |  Reply

I am glad there was little damage to the Joplin SDA Church or its members. I was pastor there during 1946 before we went to Thailand. I remember a few families, the Gahagans, Clinch and Holier. Probably there is no one there to remember me. Greetings to all. Wayne A. Martin

Wayne A. Martin  |  May 28, 2011 4:52 PM  |  Reply
Joplin Tornado Relief (Update #6)

News | May 22, 2011 by Martin Weber | 2 Comments

The multiagency warehouse in tornado-ravaged Joplin, Missouri, is currently serving as a sorting center for mountains of spontaneous donations. It is staffed by Adventist members working alongside fellow volunteers from AmeriCorps. Local directors of Adventist Community Services-Disaster Response, Roy Weeden (Missouri) and Jody Dickhaut (Iowa), co-manage the facility as they continue to pastor their respective church districts. They report that additional warehouse facilities may soon be in operation. Cash donations to purchase specifically needed materials and resources would be appreciated. Visit www.communityservices.org and click on the “donate” button.
Adventist disaster relief workers from around the nation have responded to the Joplin tragedy. Among them in Mid-America are James White and Darriel Hoy from Central States Conference.

Among North American Division leaders who have visited Joplin is Vice President Ernest Castillo (pictured with microphone, next to Dan Jackson, NAD president). He accompanied Sandra Juarez and her New York City-based Esperanza TV crew in bringing spiritual encouragement to local Adventists and their neighbors while also providing them opportunity to tell their stories of suffering and survival. Joining them was Pastor Juan Acosta, Hispanic coordinator for the Mid-America Union.

###

[Content below was previously posted]

“I am here to pray with you,” Elder Dan Jackson told Joplin Adventists and tornado disaster responders at an informal evening meeting May 25, which was held at the mostly undamaged church facility. The North American Division (NAD) president (pictured at center) conferred with Mid-America Union vice president for administration Maurice R. Valentine II (left) and Iowa-Missouri Conference president Dean Coridan about addressing the spiritual needs of Adventist members and their neighbors who suffered the devastation of houses, jobs and lives. Although no Adventists died in the most deadly single tornado of America’s officially recorded history, there was loss of life in the nearby neighborhood.

Coridan conferred with local Adventist pastor Dwight Seek about the possibility of opening their church facility to neighborhood congregations whose buildings were destroyed, so fellow Christians in Joplin could continue their own worship service. Pastor Seek is meeting every morning for prayer with other community pastors.

Also present at the Wednesday evening meeting were Gaylord Hanson, leader of Mid-America Union Adventist Community Services-Disaster Response (ACS-DR) and his NAD supervisor Sung Kwon, along with other ACS-DR leaders from as far away as New York, California and Washington State.

Local conference ACS-DR leaders Roy Weeden and Jody Dickhaut could not be present at the Joplin church meeting because they were working with government officials setting up a multiagency warehouse to be run by Adventists. [See yesterday's post below.]

Present at the church prayer meeting were Richard and Shirley Bernings, local members who suffered the total devastation of their house as family members took refuge in a bathtub. They provided the evening’s only moment of humor after Pastor Seek invited anyone who didn’t have a place to stay that night to come to his house. “We don’t have much to offer, but our home is open to you,” the pastor said. Richard immediately quipped, “Our house is open to you too!”

The meeting ended with out-of-town visitors hurrying away before the 9:00 p.m. curfew established by police to quell looting. President Dan Jackson had to drive five hours to
St. Louis with NAD communication director George Johnson so they could make it to a Thursday telecast taping at 3ABN studios in Illinois.

###

[Content below was posted previously]

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been tasked with operating the official multiagency warehouse for tornado relief in Joplin. The Missouri branch of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (MO/FEMA) has entrusted that responsibility to Adventist Community Services-Disaster Response (ACS-DR), reports Gaylord Hanson, Mid-America Union coordinator for that church agency.

Iowa-Missouri Conference ACS-DR leaders, who have established an excellent collaborative relationship with local FEMA officials in previous disasters, are working hard today to organize the warehouse operation in Joplin on behalf of the various charities and government agencies officially involved.

The Iowa-Missouri Conference is collecting information from those who are interested in volunteering at the warehouse. To inquire or to make cash donations, email pewagley@ucollege.edu or call 515.223.1197.

[Content below was posted previously (Tue 5/24)]

Community service and disaster relief coordinators from across Mid-America are responding to tornado devastation on behalf of fellow Adventists and their suffering neighbors in Joplin, Missouri. Among them are James White and Dariel Hoy from Central States Conference.

Local conference Adventist Community Services—Disaster Response (ACS-DR) leaders Jody Dickhaut (Iowa) and Roy Weeden (Missouri) are coordinating with Gaylord Hanson of the Mid-America Union.

Dickhaut reports: “We are hard at work here in Joplin. The set up for the multiagency warehouse is in process and should be a reality soon. We will keep you posted with our progress and let you know as soon as we can when this will be open for use. We expect the details of this to be finalized today (Tue). Depending upon logistics for supplies and staffing, hopefully operations could start before the weekend.”

Weeden adds: “It is amazing that our church suffered apparently little structural damage while the houses around it are almost uninhabitable.”

[Added to the following previously posted:]

The tornado that struck Joplin, Missouri on Sunday afternoon passed very close to the Adventist church facility, reports Pastor Dwight Seek. It received roof damage, but the structure itself is sound. All members who live within the disaster zone are accounted for and safe, but the house of one church family was destroyed.

Gaylord Hanson, leader of Adventist Community Services—Disaster Response
(ACS-DR) for the Mid-America Union, is working with federal and local agencies to assess and implement relief activities, in cooperation with local conference efforts.

Elder Dan Jackson, president of the North American Division, plans a visit to Joplin this week to visit church members and pray with them.

Thomas Lemon, president of the Mid-America Union, has made the following statement: “Our hearts go out to our church family and indeed the whole community in Joplin as they must confront the tragedy that occurred this past weekend. The fragility and often the helplessness of humanity are most clearly felt in the aftermath of disasters of this kind. It is at such times that the church community must become again the hands and feet of Jesus to carry His healing touch to people whose lives have been so devastated. The prayers and encouragement of the Mid-America Union family join together on their behalf.”

The damaged church structure in Joplin is part of the Iowa-Missouri Conference. Leaders there are grateful for expressions of prayer and offers of help. Financial donations (only) are welcome, and a list of potential volunteers is being compiled. For information on donating cash or time, email pewagley@ucollege.edu.

The Central States Conference has no members or church facility in Joplin, according to the headquarters office.

Updated information on the Joplin disaster and Adventist response efforts will be posted here as available.

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About Martin Weber

Martin Weber has written 43 articles for Outlook.

Martin Weber, DMin, is editor of Outlook magazine and director of the Mid-America Union Communication Department. He lives in Lincoln, Nebraska with his wife, Darlene, and their Siamese cat, Louie.

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2 Responses to “Joplin Tornado Relief (Update #6)”

1. Roger Doering, webmaster
   May 25, 2011 at 10:46 am #

   I noticed in my search of the web, that Pastor Seek was pastor of the Granby Mo church when a tornado destroyed the church, which has been replaced. Pastor Seek is now pastor of the Joplin Adventist Church. Fortunately this storm did not cause as severe a damage to the Joplin Adventist church although this storm caused much more severe damage to the overall community. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the residents of Joplin.

   Reply

2. Michelle Miracle
   May 28, 2011 at 7:02 am #

   Thank you so much Martin for providing such timely and detailed updates. I appreciate you keeping everyone posted in my absence.

   Reply

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Latest Tweets

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- RT @TheNextWeb: A Guide to Mobile Blogging http://tnw.to/18aqT by @TGW_Paul on @TNWsocialmedia 6 days ago
- Joplin Tornado Relief (Update #5) | Outlook Magazine http://t.co/K9G3Bvn 6 days ago
- North American Division Report on Joplin | Outlook Magazine http://t.co/t94jbmJ 6 days ago

Photos on flickr
Where is God (and the Mormon church) in a natural disaster?

Years ago, in the early 1980s, Ronald Reagan made an offhand comment that for some reason has stuck in my mind for 30 years.

He was visiting a cannery operated for the benefit of the needy and run mostly by volunteers. After spending some time there he reflected (as near as I can recall) that “there is nothing in the world as generous as American good works.”

Perhaps it struck me at the time because I’m a British immigrant, and I wondered if it was really true that Americans were more innately generous than Brits or Australians or Japanese or anyone else. I can’t answer that question, but I do think that the American public is capable of quite extraordinary self-sacrifice and generosity.

We have seen it over and over again in the past few years, with donations from ordinary people pouring into Haiti and Indonesia, into Japan and New Orleans. The devastation in Joplin, Missouri, from a mile-wide tornado and the wreckage and flooding across the southern states is merely the latest in this calamitous chain of events. And now that hurricane season is upon us, we may well see more.

It’s not easy to find anything good in disasters that rip lives apart or destroy them completely. But for those of us who aren’t directly affected, disasters provide unmistakable opportunities to reach out to those in need. In recent years it’s been gratifying to watch a surge of support, financial and otherwise, make these catastrophes somewhat more bearable for those that suffer them.

The admirable rescuers who give this kind of aid are from many walks of life – people moved by conscience to compassionate action. Not all are religious, of course. But churches and religious charities are often at the forefront of humanitarian relief, motivated to alleviate suffering by their religious empathy.

I have watched my own church in recent decades become increasingly more responsive and sophisticated in its disaster response and its ongoing support for the needy. This year, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints celebrates the 75th anniversary of its welfare program, born in the Depression years to help put people to work and restore their sense of dignity.

Today, the welfare program, which focuses on church members, and its sister programs that direct humanitarian aid mostly to people outside the faith, have become highly sophisticated operations designed to deliver aid to the right people at the right places in the shortest possible time. The church itself bears all the overhead costs, so 100 per cent of donations go to help victims.

As it has grown in size and experience, the church has been more and more active in responding to the needs that arise, until it is now able to respond to most major disasters, often in partnership with other organizations and faiths. Crisis response, in fact, has become a central element of the church’s worldwide humanitarian efforts. (There’s more on this on the Church’s Newsroom website - specifically about Haiti, Japan, Hurricane Katrina, and recently in the southern United States).
What exactly does Mormon welfare and humanitarian response look like? First and foremost, it's preparing for hard times before they hit. **Mormon families generally follow a storage plan for food and essential commodities in their own homes so they are not dependent on others.** Countless families have used those stores to cushion times of financial hardship without having to look to government or other help.

In infrastructure terms, Mormon humanitarian aid is warehouses and trucks, tents and chain saws, hygiene kits and canned food, generators and sleeping bags, flashlights and bottled water. The warehouses, which we call **bishops' storehouses**, dot the country. Their more normal focus is on helping church members who are suffering from temporary food and commodity needs, but in a disaster they take on a much broader role, often serving as staging areas for relief efforts. Even before a hurricane makes landfall, trucks are loaded with relief aid at these regional depots and head to the expected disaster areas, where their contents will be needed and used by victims, Mormon or not.

The human side of the equation is the scores of Mormon work crews who typically converge on a disaster area from neighboring states to clean up, remove debris, repair homes and provide comfort. They are well coordinated with other relief services. They are self-motivated and self-managed, arriving with their own self-sustaining supplies in tow. Mormons who are not normally inclined to break their Sabbath day conventions by mowing their own lawns or visiting a supermarket on the Sabbath feel no hesitation in wielding a chainsaw to clear fallen branches from a hurricane victim’s damaged roof, Sunday or not. Service is every bit as much a part of their religious identity as sitting in a pew.

We are all part of the human family and there is profound value in every soul. Jesus Christ and his disciples healed the sick and helped the needy. Helping or serving others is, the Book of Mormon teaches, also **service to God**. One of the past presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints said it well: “God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs.”

**More On Faith and Mormonism:**

Clayton Christensen: **Stephen Hawking and the experience of God**

Otterson: **Why I won’t see the Book of Mormon musical**

Otterson: **Is this really a ‘Mormon moment?’**

MICHAEL OTTERSON | MAY 24, 2011 12:07 PM
The Divorce Rate is Down

There are still preachers proclaiming that the divorce rate is up, but all the data say otherwise. This week the United States Census released a new report entitled "Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces" (P70-125). It provides several important facts:

The divorce rate peaked in the cohort that was born in the 1950s and got married in the 1970s. From 1996 to 2009, the percentage of divorced people has gone up for Americans over 50 years of age, while it has gone down for those younger than 50. In fact more than 80 percent of married couples today are still in their first marriage. It appears that the divorce surge was particular to one generation, the early wave of Baby Boomers.

But, the decrease in divorces may simply be the result of a change in patterns about getting married. The age at which Americans get married has increased significantly in recent decades. Most now get married in their late 20s and early 30s, instead of in their late teens and early 20s. The majority are married by the time they are 35; two-thirds of men and three quarters of women. (Yes, women are more likely to marry than are men.) The percentage of women still unmarried at age 30 has nearly doubled since 1986.

There has been a large increase in the percentage of inter-ethnic marriages. The portion of Americans in a marriage where each partner is of a different race or ethnicity has more than tripled in the last four decades.

What Does This Mean?

Divorce is less of a problem, but a much larger percentage of young adults are delaying marriage and living together as if they were married for several years before the wedding. Even in conservative, Evangelical churches, two-thirds or more of church-member young adults engage in sex before marriage. (Although a much smaller percentage actually cohabit before the wedding.) This has become such a well-established pattern that most pastors now say privately they are afraid to ask couples who come to them to prepare for a wedding about their situation in terms of sexual activity. Those religions that have historically taught that sex is reserved for married couples must now face a new reality among their own members, furthermore among nonbelievers. Sexuality, family and faith are such basic things in the lives of almost all people that this is not a situation can simply be ignored.

May 19, 2011 in Family Life, Ministry | Permalink
King James Version Is The Only Bible With Power To Unite

First Posted: 05/23/11 08:04 PM ET Updated: 05/26/11 02:49 PM ET

React

Amazing
Inspiring
Funny
Scary
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By Daniel Burke
Religion News Service

(RNS) 1604. England. Rebellious Puritans, establishment Anglicans and Roman Catholics are (literally) at each other's throats. A new king fears his reign will combust in a powder keg of religious strife and anti-monarchical fervor.

So King James I does what any sensible monarch would do: He orders up a new translation of the Bible.

King James' Bible failed miserably as a peacekeeper -- civil war broke out in 1642 -- but enjoyed smashing success as a book. Published in 1611, the King James Version (KJV) reigned supreme over English translations for nearly three centuries, becoming the best-selling tome in history.

And there may never be another like it.

"The Bible was the cohesive framework for English and American society, and the King James Version was what people meant when they spoke of 'the Bible,'" said Leland Ryken, a professor of English at Wheaton College in Illinois.

Twentieth century advances in technology, language, biblical scholarship and niche marketing gradually dethroned the KJV, leading to a more democratic variety of competing translations.

But as the KJV marks its 400th birthday this year, some Christian scholars are hoping to spark interest in a new Bible translation capable of attaining the KJV's cultural authority, poetic power and theological depth.

Chief among them is David Lyle Jeffrey, a professor of literature and humanities at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and an expert on the KJV.

"The celebration of the KJV has made us realize that there is a job to be done to create something of similar enduring value for
"I see the centrality of the KJV has made us realize that there is a job to be done to create something of similar anchoring value for readers of the Bible in English," he said.

Most of the Bible translations crowding American bookstores lack the KJV's gravitas and spiritual substance, Jeffrey said, and their sheer variety fractures Christian unity.

The need for the KJV itself was prompted by a related situation, Jeffrey argues in a forthcoming book, "The King James Bible and the World It Made."

In King James' England, the Bishops' Bible, favored by Anglicans, prevailed in churches, while the Puritan-preferred Geneva Bible was read in homes. Dissonances between the two versions sowed theological doubts and divisions. Hoping to paper over those divides (and supersede the anti-monarchical Geneva Bible) King James seized on the idea of a new, unifying Bible.

"One could be forgiven for thinking that a similar case for a common Bible in English is far stronger now than it was then," Jeffrey writes.

Jeffrey and other scholars acknowledged, though, that such a task would be difficult.

"Another translation could be created, but it would never have the cultural uniqueness and authority that the KJV had," said Timothy Larsen, a Wheaton scholar and author of a book about the KJV's influence on the Victorian era. "Too many choices would have to be made."

Bible translation is inherently theological, Larsen said, and getting contemporary Christian camps on the same page, so to speak, would be next to impossible.

As a result, Bible use is more democratic today, with no one translation wearing the crown, which some experts say is a good thing.

"The variety of ways in which the Bible allows for different translations demonstrates that it is a living, amazingly enduring document," said Kristin Swenson, a religious studies scholar at Virginia Commonwealth University.

"It allows for people to engage with it in so many different ways," added Swenson, author of "Bible Babel: Making Sense of the Most Talked About Book of All Time."

The KJV is hardly lost in the thicket of translations, according to Robert Sanford, an executive at the Christian publishing giant Thomas Nelson. It annually ranks near the top of the company's sales.

"The KJV is still very much used by Americans today," Sanford said.

Still, some scholars lament the lack of an up-to-date English translation with the majesty and musicality of the KJV, said K. Sara-Jane Murray, a colleague of Jeffrey's at Baylor University.

If there's anyone who could pull that proposal off, it is Jeffrey, she said. "A lot of scholars and artists around the world are dying to collaborate on a project like this, and David is someone who could definitely pull those people together and help them take great joy in it," said Murray.
Desmond Tutu

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HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES
New FACT survey finds 68 percent of U.S. congregations hit with financial difficulties due to recession

The economic slump extends and deepens a decade-long congregational decline

By Yonat Shimron

Holy Toll Report: The Impact of the Great Recession

The decade-long financial decline of U.S. congregations accelerated during the 2008 recession and may pose long-term challenges to some churches, synagogues and mosques already weakened by flagging membership, according to the new Faith Communities Today (FACT) report.

FACT 2010 is a national survey of 11,077 randomly sampled congregations. It found that 68 percent of congregations took a financial hit due to the recession, with nearly 20 percent taking a "big hit."

These figures exacerbate an ongoing decline in U.S. congregations that saw the percentage of congregations in
some serious financial difficulty double to 20 percent in the last ten years.

"The downward trend was in place before the recession hit," said David Roozen, author of the report and chairman of the multi-faith coalition that sponsors the FACT surveys. "But the recession has contributed to extending the decline."

The latest FACT report includes the responses from 26 studies conducted in 32 faith groups and Christian denominations. This is the fourth survey the Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership has undertaken since 2000.

On the positive side, 10 percent of congregations reported they were recovering from the economic downturn as early as the spring of 2010. Among the strategies used by congregations to cope with the downturn, digging into savings and investments was the most common, followed by salary freezes or reductions in paid staff. Roozen estimates that these reductions equal about 500,000 lost jobs and salaries among clergy, lay professionals and support staff.

But the recession took its heaviest toll among members. Half of U.S. congregations were beset with requests for emergency assistance. One in four congregations were called upon to provide emergency housing.

"The longer term question is how many congregations got pushed into a really strong deficit situation that tends to create a cycle of decline," said Roozen. "Congregations can lose their capacity to deal with negative forces and that's the bigger worry."

A copy of the report and related materials are available at the FACT web site.

Yonat Shimron is a journalist who covers American religion.

Resources for Dealing with the Recession

A coalition of philanthropic organizations released a study at the end of March of the 2010 fund raising activities of charities across the country. It found that two-thirds of charities held their own or gained some ground last year. Many nonprofits stopped the bleeding, but donations did not rebound as much as predicted. The report is available from the Foundation Center.

The Roundtable on Religion and Social Policy has published a guide entitled Funding Faith-based Services in a Time of
Fiscal Pressure.

Wayne Clark has developed a PowerPoint presentation and provides a collection of eight articles on *Giving in Tough Times* which has been shared with Unitarian Universalist Association affiliated groups and other faith traditions.

PEARL, a Jewish leadership development resource center, provides a guide for *How do we run a successful congregational fundraising event?*

Christian churches that follow the Lectionary can find weekly stewardship education materials in *The Stewardship Companion: Lectionary Resources for Preaching* by David N. Mosser (Westminster John Knox, 2007).

A Muslim resource for dealing with the recession is geared more to families, but can also be used by groups: *How to Face Economic Recession as Muslims.*

Additional Reports from the FACT 2010 Survey

The partnership is working hard on unpacking and analyzing the large amount of data from the 2010 survey and will publish reports as quickly as possible. We are committed to the following schedule.

- **May** -- *Church Growth in the 21st Century*
- **June** -- *Internet Technology in Congregations*
- **September** -- *Key Trends in a Decade*
- **November** -- *Change in Worship Dynamics*

If you want to get prompt announcements as each of these are released, make sure you are a subscriber to this newsletter. If you are a journalist or blogger and want advance information, contact the editor, Monte Sahlin at montessahlin@gmail.com or (301) 325-8095.

For further information about FACT, or to learn how to join the Cooperative Congregations Studies Partnership (CCSP), contact David Roozen at roozen@hartsem.edu.

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From AdventistBookCenter.com

"Thank you for saving my life," wrote Patricia Scott. "I am pleased as punch because I am a nonsmoker after 30 years." Ms. Scott was walking out of a grocery store one day and bought How to Stop Smoking. She took it home, read it, and decided to quit "cold turkey." It helped her to realize that her feelings of withdrawal were perfectly normal, and inspired her to continue her new smoke-free lifestyle.

Revised in 2004, this special issue has the latest diet and exercise guidelines to help make quitting easier, as well as those shocking pictures of a smoker’s lungs.

Share this magazine at health fairs and other outreach activities. Readers will welcome it like a breath of fresh air.

Contents

• Behind the Smoke Screen
News, research and important information you need to know.

• So, You Want to Quit?
Skeletons abound in the tobacco industry’s tightly-guarded closet.

• Inside Out
A doctor’s eye view of smoking’s horrible effects on living tissue.

• View From the Bedside
Caring for ailing smokers isn’t for the squeamish.
• Q&A
Knowledge is power. Find answers to your stop-smoking questions.

• The Ex-smoker's Menu for Success
Enjoy foods that help you quit while keeping your weight in check.

• Fight Back with Exercise
Attack your smoking habit with your whole body.

• Click to Quit
Up-to-date help is as close as your computer.

• No Ifs, Ands, or Butts
Your mind may be your best defense against tobacco's assault.

• Suiting Up to Kick a Habit
Meet a man who stopped smoking and is now helping others do the same.

• Conquering Giants
Sometimes big enemies fall before small soldiers. Just ask David.
Women's Ministries Emphasis Day

Theme: “Love Changes Everything”
2nd Sabbath in June

What is Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day?

Women's Ministries Emphasis Day is an annual event on the church's Calendar of Days and Events. The Women's Ministries leader should meet with their pastor at least six months prior to this day to discuss special plans for this Sabbath. This is an opportunity to plan a full day of activities including Sabbath School, the worship service, a fellowship dinner, and perhaps an afternoon program. The leader may also want to use this time to honor women in the congregation who have done something unusual or outstanding.

*If the second Sabbath in June is not a convenient date for your church to observe Women's Emphasis Day, please work with your pastor to find another date.