"I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them, 1. To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy: 2. To speak no evil of the person they voted against: And, 3. To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side."

- John Wesley

The Adventist Church is only a means to an end

By Rich DuBose, Pacific Union

The main point of Gospel ministry, whether it be in a local church setting or in a larger sphere, is to connect people with Jesus. The Gospel Commission, as outlined in Matthew 28:19-20, is about connecting people with Jesus, and this is what every Seventh-day Adventist church should be doing.

Now, if you're not careful, you will completely miss what I'm about to say. You will read something into this that simply isn't here. So please, read carefully. Some Adventist churches and individual members seem to have other agendas. I don't believe their misdirected emphasis is intentional, but it is unfortunate just the same.

Based upon their actions and words, they believe that our primary mission is to connect people with prophecy, or Ellen G. White, or vegetarianism, or veganism, or whatever. They won't come right out and say it, but if you visit their churches and spend time with them, it becomes obvious that in their view, how you connect with Jesus is just as significant, if not more so, than the fact that you are connected with him.

Further, they will tell you there are prescribed ways to "do ministry" that must be followed if we are to have a legitimate calling and connection with Christ. And often their formulas for ministry create an unrelenting gauntlet of rigorous study and reform that adherents are required to go through before they can find the blessed assurance of forgiveness and cleansing.

I was raised in a Seventh-day Adventist home - my dad was a pastor. I have served as a pastor in churches in Florida, Colorado and California. I believe in Ellen White and read her writings. In fact, it was through reading Steps to Christ that I found my connection with Christ - which caused me to want to dedicate my life to sharing God's love! I understand the importance of prophecy and biblical truth. Having a right knowledge about God tells us a lot about his character. But everything that we as Adventists teach and model should only be viewed as a means to an end - with the end declaring the Sonship and Lordship of Jesus Christ. Adventism is not the end - only a means to an end.

Our message is not about Adventism! It's not about us - but about Jesus! Do Adventists have a unique calling and place in the 21st Century? Yes! We have been raised up to declare the everlasting gospel of grace and forgiveness, and to let the world know that the hour of God's judgement has come (Revelation 14:6). With third angel power Seventh-day Adventists are to declare that Babylon is fallen! Babylon not only represents religious concepts that are spiritually bankrupt, but the failed ideologies of capitalism and consumerism that promote the pursuit of ever-expanding consumption as the key to happiness and prosperity. The popular...
American notion of unlimited market growth is unsustainable. Eventually the bubble bursts, things wear out, debts pile up, and environmental issues reach a breaking point. Many of the critical issues that we face today are related to the insatiable appetites we have developed for a lifestyle that requires huge amounts of resources, particularly energy and water, that are rapidly being depleted.

Ultimately, all of our problems stem from our alienation from God and his plan for our lives. The only way out of this mess is to hear and follow what he says. As Adventist Christians our mission is to tell the world that we are more than consumers, more than pawns for politicians and quasi religious leaders to use as they wish. 

"But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy, now you have received God's mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10 NLT).

What do you think? Discuss this with me on the Best Practices Facebook page.

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**IN CHURCH PLANTING, MOTIVATION MATTERS**

by Roger Hernandez

Many pastors aspire to plant churches. A seldom discussed aspect of starting a church is the motivation behind the desire. Let's be clear on something: none of us come to the table with completely perfect motives. Yet, the chances that a church plant won't crash and burn increase with a healthy approach to life, spirituality and relationships. Anything less than God-inspired motives can cause issues. There are many reasons why you should plant a church. Here are 5 reasons you should wait:

1. You want to "show them" at (insert denominational institution, church, or person's name here) how it's really supposed to be done. You have an ax to grind or a wrong to be avenged. It's starting a church for what you are against, instead of what you are for. We should carry something on our shoulders: a cross, not a chip.

2. You just want to be the boss. To be in charge. To do things your way. No longer the associate, I am now the "man". It's important to remember who you are: you are not "the man", "the messiah", or "the manager". You are a servant leader. The fastest path to failure is inability to admit you don't know everything. One thing you will quickly realize: being "the man" is not as glamorous as it seems!

3. You think it would be nice to "try this". Great motivation for a new restaurant, not so much for a new church. Many have tried church planting before. There are resources available. Get them. There are proven methods in place to help you. Use them. Before you jump in with both feet, make sure you are jumping in the right pool.

4. Your spiritual life has been down for a while. This seems like the adventure you need. Church planting is not remedial spirituality. It will take everything you have, and then more to see it through. Sometimes when things are stale, we think a change of scenery is exactly what we need. Maybe, the change needs to happen inside first, instead of letting your surroundings determine your spirituality.

5. Your personal/family life is strained at the moment. Church planting increases stress. Its highs are higher and its lows are lower. A strong family unit will help you through those hard times that are sure to come. Invest time in strengthening your primary core group, which is always your family.

If you pass these 5 reasons, perhaps God wants you to start a church. Otherwise, wait!

Let's keep the conversation going on the Best Practices Facebook page.

**READING FOR PASTORS**

Franklin Graham thinks this election may be America's "last call" to repentance. Quote: "When America's leaders actively promote and legislate immorality, restrict the religious freedoms that our country was founded on, and are openly hostile to men and women of faith, then I believe we are ripe for God's judgment." Do you agree or disagree?

Another Graham story: after Billy and Franklin meet with Mitt Romney, the BGEA removed the reference to Mormonism as a cult from their website.

The social networking trend in religion hasn't slowed. In fact, churches say that well-done social networking is twice as effective for evangelism as other methods, if the church has a social networking strategy that is outsider-focused, and is not just for internal communication to members.

Researchers say that a Buddhist monk is verifiably the world's happiest man, and they give the credit to meditation. Quote: The research "shows that meditation is not just blissing out under a mango tree but it completely changes your brain and therefore changes what you are." Does this add anything to our...

**current meditation debate?**

**Interesting meditation by J.R. Briggs**: Why your church must be an airport. Quote: “The role of the airport is to make sure you connect to some place else. That’s the role of the local church.

**Is Hurricane Sandy a fulfillment of prophecy? Here’s a wonderful piece on the topic by Martin Weber.** Quote: “Jesus warned that in the last days “the love of many will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12). Christ wasn’t just thinking about people who break God’s laws with hardened hearts. Believers also can harbor insensitive souls, caring more about the mathematics of fulfilled prophecy than they do about those who are already suffering a time of trouble.” *Do you agree with Martin?*

**TO THE POINT: WINTER**

The problem with winter sports is that - follow me closely here - they generally take place in winter.
- Dave Barry

In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.
- William Blake

O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?
- Percy Bysshe Shelley

People ask me what I do in winter when there’s no baseball. I’ll tell you what I do. I stare out the window and wait for spring.
- Rogers Hornsby

A lot of people like snow. I find it to be an unnecessary freezing of water.
- Carl Reiner

There’s a certain Slant of light, Winter Afternoons-- That oppresses, like the Heft Of Cathedral Tunes--
- Emily Dickinson

One kind word can warm three winter months.
- Japanese proverb

The tendinous part of the mind, so to speak, is more developed in winter; the fleshy, in summer. I should say winter had given the bone and sinew to literature, summer the tissues and the blood.
- J ohn Burroughs

O Winter! ruler of the inverted year, . . . I crown thee king of intimate delights, Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness, And all the comforts that the lowly roof Of undisturb’d Retirement, and the hours Of long uninterrupted evening, know.
- William Cowper

Blow, blow, thou winter wind
Thou art not so unkind,
As man’s ingratitude.
- William Shakespeare

**IDEAS, EVENTS, RESOURCES, ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Hurricane Sandy:**
- ACS Disaster Response Page  
- Donate for specific items  
- Kits needed  
- ACS on Facebook  
- NAD Newspoints Sandy update

**The ADVENTISTS-2 documentary is slated to be released** on World Health Day, April 7, 2013. It will be available on video in mid-March via Amazon.com, according to producer/director Martin Doblmeier of Journey Films.

“Real Family Talk” is a **new series to strengthen family relationships.** From Hope Channel and the GC’s Family Ministries Department. More on Facebook at Real Family Talk.

**The NY13 App has just been released.** It will supply news, information and updates about NY13. Get it at the App store.

Subscribe to The Great Controversy Project e-newsletter for stories of this ministry’s effectiveness.

Previous resource links:
- Summary: mandatory abuse reporting by clergy by state

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/...A2g9ZYVYQDOWO-vHhTQm2E2RcxD-RnWqxjHG47bqkchqF2tKJ4eKZf_9BauAUX4%3D[11/5/2012 3:08:00 PM]

- GraceNotes mobile app
- New PlusLine at AdventSource
- NY13
- Pastor’s convention, NAD Ministerial Department
- The Seven Campaign to stop child abuse
- Family Ministries Facebook page
- It is Written goes on radio, gets a new name.
- Andrews University Press, Homosexuality, Marriage, and the Church
- General Conference International Field School of Evangelism
- NAD Theology of Ordination Study Committee
- General Conference Annual Council response to ordination without regard to gender
- Jesus 101 Biblical Institute with speaker/director Elizabeth Talbot
- Elder Ted Wilson’s book Almost Home
- Breath of Life Reunion Weekend, live stream
- End-Time Hope by Mark Finley
- God’s Love Song by Ginny Allen

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