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When you read these verses and look at the world around you, it is easy to recognize the times in which we live. As nation rises against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, it is inevitable that some of our members will join the military and serve their country in special times of need.

So how can pastors support their members who serve in the military? Here are seven suggestions:

**Read More.**

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**Chaplain Garry Losey recently retired from the US Army Reserves**

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**Stories We Tell: Make Me Like Joe**

by Bruce Nicola

Joe was a drunk who was miraculously converted at a rescue mission. Prior to his conversion, Joe had a reputation for being a miserable, dirty wino from the ghetto for whom there was no hope. Following his conversion to a new life with God, everything changed. Joe became the most caring person those at the mission had ever known.

Joe spent his days and nights hanging out at the mission doing whatever needed to be done. There was never any task that was too lowly for Joe to take on. There was never anything that he was asked to do that he considered beneath him. Whether it was cleaning up vomit left by a violently sick alcoholic or scrubbing the toilets after careless men left the bathroom filthy, Joe did what was asked with a smile on his face and gratitude for the chance to help.

One evening when the director of the mission shared his evening evangelistic message with the usual crowd, a man came down the aisle to the altar and knelt to pray, crying out for God to help him to change. The repentant drunk kept shouting, "O God, make me like Joe! Make me like Joe! Make me like Joe! Make me like Joe!"

The director of the mission leaned over and said to the man, "Son, I think it would be better if you prayed, 'Make me like Jesus!'"

The man looked up to the director with a quizzical expression on his face and asked, "Is He like Joe?"

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**Bruce Nicola is the associate pastor for visitation and senior ministry for the Paradise Church in Northern California**

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**New Parenting Resource**

By Claudio and Pamela Consuegra

NAD Announces the Release of a New Parenting Resource:

Help! I'm a Parent: Christian Parenting in the Real World

What if someone gave you a block of the finest marble with the task of creating a masterpiece that would be displayed in the most prominent place for all the world to see? Unless you are a gifted sculptor, and hiring one is not an option, what would you do? And what if you were given only seven years to create this monument which will last a lifetime?

Parenting is like that, except that instead of a block of hard, cold marble we are given the delicate life of a child for us to begin to shape and mold so they can become lifetime disciples of Jesus Christ. What an awesome task and responsibility! Where do
we begin? When you face this momentous mission, do you feel like screaming, “Help! I’m a parent?”
Read More.

Join the discussion on facebook.

Claudio Consuegra is director of the NAD Church Ministries department and Pamela Consuegra is the associate director of the NAD Church Ministries department.

Let’s Talk

Join our Best Practices conversation. Share your best sermon illustrations. Tell us the subjects you’d like us to talk about. Float an idea you would like to write about. Raise a question that you would like answered by a seasoned pastor. Contact us today!

Ideas, Events, Resources, Announcements

In Pornography: The New Narcotic and Hijacking Back Your Brain From Porn, John Piper, the pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota tells us that pornography is just as addictive as cocaine and heroin.

Like cocaine, pornography is a stimulant that increases the dopamine levels in the brain. Like heroin, pornography is an opiate, which conveys a relaxing effect. Pornography delivers both chemicals in a single punch with the power to actually change the physiological makeup of the brain.

The good news is that when we fix our eyes on Jesus, we are equipped with spiritual weapons that are more physiologically powerful than porn. The presence of Jesus in our lives will renew the entire life and reroute our neural pathways for true intimacy.

Previous resource links:

- Adventist People Connected
- All Creatures of Our God and King Offertory
- My Way to Jesus
- Prodigal Pastor Kids: Fact or Fiction
- The One Project
- Just Claim It 4

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3 Tools for Your Religious Liberty Campaign

By Melissa Reid

There’s no doubt that religious liberty faces dire circumstances in many areas around the world today. In North America we’re seeing the line separating church and state grow ever more diminished, while religious discrimination in the workplace continues to skyrocket. Freedom of practice and belief fares even worse on the international landscape. You only need to spend a few minutes on a news website or cable television channel to see the violence, destruction, and persecution that is dealt to religious minorities around the globe.

As we approach our annual Religious Liberty Sabbath – that’s January 25, 2014 – We thought it would be helpful provide some tools for highlighting and protecting religious freedom in your local church and community.

Your first tool in a religious liberty campaign is knowledge. Take time to educate yourself and your members on the very real threats to religious liberty. Become a frequent visitor to the Liberty Magazine website, where each issue is published in its entirety. “Like” the Liberty and NARLA Facebook pages, and repost stories from their feeds. Start following Liberty, as well as the International Religious Liberty Association, on Twitter: @Liberty_Mag and @IRLA_USA. Those resources will keep you abreast of religious liberty developments as they occur.

Your second tool in a religious liberty campaign is to establish relationships with individuals and offices that affect change in your community. Join your local clergy organization and establish relationships with your area’s fellow spiritual leaders. Make them aware of any religious liberty situations in the community, and partner together for shared causes. Work with your congregation’s religious liberty leader to hold a Liberty subscription drive, and encourage church members to identify and sponsor subscriptions for community decision makers. Hand deliver the first issue of the sponsored subscription, or include a letter introducing yourself, your church, and the magazine.

Your third tool in a religious liberty campaign is to hold a religious liberty rally during the Religious Liberty Campaign season (January – March). Or, work with your conference or union religious liberty director and other nearby congregations to develop a larger religious liberty festival. Invite community leaders to attend, and highlight any work they’ve done to preserve religious freedom or the separation between church and state. Ask church members who have experienced discrimination or persecution because of their religious beliefs to share their story. Lead a prayer vigil for those who are currently unable to publicly practice or share their faith, and for those who are imprisoned for doing just that.

The God in heaven who created us is the originator of freedom of belief. He never forces His will on us. He never impedes our ability to choose to serve Him, or not. May the tools we shared with you today help maintain freedom of conscience in your community.

Melissa Reid is associate editor for Liberty Magazine
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So how can pastors support their members who serve in the military? Here are seven suggestions:

1. Assure your military member that you support their decision to serve, and that you will pray for them and their family. Your military member needs to know that you are there to support their family while they are away. This is especially true if the military member is on a hardship tour far away from home.
2. Notify Adventist Chaplain Ministries (ACM) that a member of your church has joined the military, and where they are stationed. ACM can then stay in contact with them and provide support where needed.
3. Send a gift Bible Kit to your military member from AdventSource.
4. Find out what installation the soldier is going to and contact a pastor near that fort or base. The local pastor can then contact the military member and provide support while they are in the area.
5. Stay in touch with the family members back at the home church. See how they are doing. Ask if there is anything you can do for them, especially when their loved one is directly in harm’s way and family anxieties are high.
6. Put your service member’s address on the church bulletin board and encourage the church family to write letters and send care packages, especially if the service member is in an area of conflict.
7. Remember the most important thing: Keep your service member and their family in your prayers. As it says in Ephesians 6:18 –

   And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.

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In a national survey of the state of families in America*, parents reportedly believe that raising children today is more complicated than it used to be. Along with that, most perceived that the quality of American family life was declining. In addition, 55 percent of the parents surveyed expressed a concern that they were not doing a very good job of parenting. In essence, the study concluded that, “for today’s mothers and fathers, there is no clear map that charts the path for nurturing the next generation of adults.”

We bring you good news! There is a “how-to manual” in God’s word. The principles of parenting in scripture are timeless and still relevant to parents today. Help! I'm a Parent: Christian Parenting in the Real World is a new parenting resource released by the North American Division. It is produced by the Family Ministries department and authored by the department directors, Drs. Claudio and Pamela Consuegra, to help parents carry on this eternally important task. This resource is in response to hundreds of surveys conducted throughout the North American Division territory. Each chapter represents a response to felt needs of parents with children birth to age seven. The resource is comprised of three major components:

1. Manual – The manual has 10 interactive chapters that include an undergirding scriptural principle, group activities, discussion questions, ideas for practical implementation in your home, and Spirit of Prophecy counsel made relevant to today’s parents.

2. DVD Set – Each of the 10 chapters contained in the manual have an accompanying DVD segment. The segments are hosted by Drs. Claudio and Pamela Consuegra and have guest appearances with experts such as Drs. Leslie and Prudence Pollard, Dr. Cesar and Carolann DeLeon, Katia Reinert, Mike and Gail Tucker, and more.

3. Web Support – Ongoing web support will provide updates, additional resources, parenting e-newsletter, and opportunities to submit questions and prayer requests at www.HelpImAParent.org. There is also a Facebook page, "Help! I'm a Parent."
This resource may be utilized in a variety of ways including parents in their home, a large church group, prayer meeting, a Sabbath School class, or a small group in your home. In addition, the principles discussed are applicable to a variety of family make-ups including single parents, blended families, divorced couples who are co-parenting, and grandparents raising their grandchildren.

The manual and DVD set is now available through AdventSource or by calling (402) 486-8800. Additional manuals may also be purchased separately for those wishing to use this resource in a group setting. Plans also include the release of this entire package in Spanish before the end of 2014. Development will then continue with a similar resource for parents of children age 8-12 and ages 12-18.

The purpose of this resource is to inspire and encourage you, as parents, on your journey to be the disciple-makers of your children. You will be motivated to take up the exciting challenges and blessings of parenthood. We invite you to journey with us as we explore your God-given role of parenting.

Claudio Consuegra is director of the NAD Church Ministries department and Pamela Consuegra is the associate director of the NAD Church Ministries department.