The Unique Challenges and Opportunities of Preacher's Kids

By Dave Gemmell

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Wise Words: Resurrection Voices
Compiled by Ray Tetz

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Put it back, and you have a faith that can take on the postmodern world that looks to Marx, Freud and Nietzsche as its prophets, and you can beat them at their own game with the Easter news
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The Unique Challenges and Opportunities of Preacher’s Kids

By Dave Gemmell

If raising children in today’s world wasn’t hard enough already, preachers and their spouses face unique challenges as their children grow up in the world of the pastoral family. Preacher’s Kids (PKs) have expectations placed on them by their congregation that few other children have. Yet growing up as a PK also provides opportunities that are seldom available to other children. These challenges and opportunities affect PK’s well into adulthood. Fortunately resources are available for pastoral families that can assist them as they help their children navigate the turbulent waters of the parish.

Ed Stetzer, president of Lifeway Research, discovered some of the challenges as his team interviewed 20 adult PK’s. Because some pastors are so highly invested in their churches, kids can feel neglected by their parents. Sometimes PK’s rebel against the unrealistic behavioral expectations put on them by the congregation and their parents. At times parish quarrels leak into the home exposing children to complex conflicts that they are not equipped to deal with. PK’s sometimes have to deal with what they view as the hypocrisy of a preacher parent who acts one way in church and another way at home. Added to that is the confusion of roles, ‘is my dad my pastor or my parent?[i]

James Black, Youth Director for the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has similar observations. “Through no choice of their own, your teens experience life as a preacher’s kid. They must wrestle with questions such as ‘what happens to me when we have to move to a new town?’ ‘why does everyone think I have to act different just ‘cause I’m a PK?’ ‘how can I develop my own relationship with God?’ and many more pressing questions.

On the other hand, growing up in the spotlight of the parish can provide an opportunity for the nurture of a future celebrity. Denzel Washington, Aretha Franklin, Arsenio Hall, The Jonas Bros, Katy Perry, Nat King Cole, Jessica and Ashlee Simpson, Condoleezza Rice, and Alice Cooper all grew up as PK’s.

The Ministerial Spouses Association of the Seventh-day Adventist Church under the direction of Donna Jackson continues to create resources for pastoral families that give them the tools to help them turn the challenges into opportunities, while avoiding the pitfalls of the parish.

One of the first resources created by Jackson’s team was a two hour national TV special entitled Keeping it Real that focused on some of the unique challenges of the pastoral family.[ii] One segment featured an interview with Dr. Martin Weber who wrote his doctoral dissertation on some of the challenges faced by children of Seventh-day Adventist clergy. In his study he interviewed many adult PK’s who were no longer active in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. From his study he has developed some helpful advice for clergy parents on how to give their children the best chance of thriving in the pastoral home.[iii]

Jackson is about to complete the next landmark resource in which eleven experts in a variety of fields combine forces to create a comprehensive guide to ministerial families. The multi-media book will feature the topics of communication skills, marriages in crisis, forgiveness, parenting pastoral kids, dealing with depression and stress, and stewardship. Each article will contain video segments that draw the viewer into the subject. The resource should be available at no charge to all pastoral families by summer 2014 through the North American Division Spouses Association of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and will be released as a tablet application.[iv]

James Black believes that it is helpful to gather PK’s together as a peer group to help them realize that they are not alone, and that other kids share similar journeys. He is planning the largest gathering ever of Seventh-day Adventist PK’s in North America. His goal is for every PK to attend the PK convention to be held June 28-July 1, 2015 in Austin Texas. In his invitation to parents he says “Through no choice of their own, your teens experience life as a preacher’s kid. The
challenges and opportunities are unique. But now, perhaps as never before, they will have a chance to connect with hundreds of other pk’s as we teach them how to prosper in their unique setting.”

Preacher’s Kids, through no fault of their own, are thrust into an environment filled with complexity and paradox. Yet many PK’s not only survive but thrive in the parish. As more discoveries emerge in the study of this niche family setting, pastoral parents are becoming more equipped than ever to guide their PK children.

[v] https://vimeo.com/88020244
Happy Sabbath: Routine or Heartfelt?

By Keith Hackle, Jr.

There is no way you can step into a Seventh-day Adventist Church between sunset Friday and sunset Saturday without being greeted with *Happy Sabbath*. Many of us have used the words since infancy. Some of us merely speak the words out of habit. Still others share the Sabbath greeting to simply fit in, whether they are happy or not.

**Why We Say It**

In recent months I have asked a number of my Adventist friends, “What do you mean when you greet people with *Happy Sabbath*? Is it a meaningful attempt to raise the spirit of the Sabbath, or is it a mere habit?”

Surprisingly, most of my Adventist friends admitted that it is a mere habit. Which has led me to two more equally important questions:

1. Is *Happy Sabbath* a statement or a question?
2. How does the sharing of this greeting determine the effect of the greeting?

**More Than Just a Greeting**

I believe that *Happy Sabbath* is both a statement and a question. I believe that every time we share the *Happy Sabbath* greeting, we affirm our appreciation for the gift of the Sabbath given by our Heavenly Father. Furthermore, every time we share the *Happy Sabbath* greeting, we express our ardent hope that our friends and guests at church will experience a Sabbath that is filled with all the love and joy God intends for them.

I also believe that *Happy Sabbath* is a question. It is not enough for us to simply extend a *Happy Sabbath* greeting with others. We must be genuinely concerned enough to inquire if those we meet are actually having a happy Sabbath, and to do our part to fill their day with genuine delight. When we pray with those who have had a tough week, when we invite people to share dinner with us, when we high-five people and smile – we can bring great happiness into their Sabbath experience.

**More Than Vocabulary Building**

Ten years ago I owned and operated a masonry construction company while pursuing a degree in business administration. Every day I met with a great variety of people. Some were vice presidents of global organizations, while others were partners in prestigious law firms. Most of them possessed extensive vocabularies which were used extensively in our conversations.

In an attempt to better connect with these people, I subscribed to a Word-of-the-Day program. Over the weeks I learned a number of amazing words which I put to work in my conversations with my clients. I quickly learned, however, that simply knowing the words is not enough – you have to know what they mean and how to use them appropriately to achieve my goals.

So it is in our Sabbath greetings – We must do more than simply mouth the words. We must greet everyone with a *Happy Sabbath* that is filled with joy and attentiveness. When we do that, the *Happy Sabbath* greeting will be more than a mere routine. It will become a truly *Happy Sabbath* experience.

**More than Mere Routine**

God desires for us to recognize the Sabbath as more than a “mere routine”. Isaiah 58:13,14 proclaims “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of...
the Lord honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

God’s Sabbath invitation here is not only for the church family as a whole, it is also an individual call to action. As you may have noticed, the second person (you, your, yourself) is used 10 times. Thus we are not only invited to experience happy Sabbaths, but to share happy Sabbaths with fellow believers and guests at church. When we embrace this opportunity, we will move beyond routine greetings to the realm of truly happy Sabbaths.

*Keith Hackle, Jr. is a seminary student at Andrews University*
Compiled by Ray Tetz

You see, the bodily resurrection of Jesus isn't a take-it-or-leave-it thing, as though some Christians are welcome to believe it and others are welcome not to believe it. Take it away, and the whole picture is totally different. Take it away, and Karl Marx was probably right to accuse Christianity of ignoring the problems of the material world. Take it away, and Sigmund Freud was probably right to say that Christianity is a wish-fulfillment religion. Take it away, and Friedrich Nietzsche was probably right to say that Christianity was a religion for wimps. Put it back, and you have a faith that can take on the postmodern world that looks to Marx, Freud and Nietzsche as its prophets, and you can beat them at their own game with the Easter news that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. —N. T. Wright

Never let anything so fill you with sorrow as to make you forget the joy of Christ risen. —Mother Teresa

The resurrection is the revelation to chosen witnesses of the fact that Jesus who died on the cross is indeed king - conqueror of death and sin, Lord and Savior of all. The resurrection is not the reversal of a defeat but the proclamation of a victory. The King reigns from the tree. The reign of God has indeed come upon us, and its sign is not a golden throne but a wooden cross. —Leslie Newbigin

Resurrection means that the worst thing is never the last thing. —Frederick Buechner

Every departing missionary is an act of faith in the resurrection. Every peace treaty is an act of faith in the resurrection. Every agreed commitment is an act of faith in the resurrection. When you forgive your enemy, when you feed the hungry, when you defend the weak, you believe in the resurrection. When you have the courage to marry, when you welcome the newly-born child, when you build your home, you believe in the resurrection. When you wake at peace in the morning, when you sing to the rising sun, when you go to work with joy, you believe in the resurrection. Belief in the resurrection means filling life with faith it means believing in your brother, it means fearlessness towards all. —Carlo Carretto

Ray Tetz is president/creative director for Mind Over Media in Silver Spring, Maryland
Reaping the Rewards of Partnership

Adventist churches see greater results in teaming up to serve their communities

By: Lisa S. Lenda

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“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.” Eccl. 4:9

This common-sense Biblical truth has been proven time and again in individual lives, but what happens when it’s not two individuals, but two or three or even eight congregations coming together to serve God and their community?

Hulda Roper, a member of the College View Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lincoln, Neb., helped to start the Good Neighbor Community Center in 1973. She and the SDA churches of Lincoln saw a need for basic and emergency services in their community. Since that time, the center has grown to include programs for recent Middle Eastern refugees – surprisingly a large population in Lincoln – as well as classes for GED studies, English as a second language, and computer training.

In 1994, members of the Dayton, Ohio, Seventh-day Adventist community banded together with some leadership from Monte Sahlin (who was national executive director of Adventist Community Services at the time) to fill the gaps of service in their community. While two of the area churches – Ethan Temple SDA Church in Clayton, Ohio and Kettering SDA Church – had Dorcas services in place, there was frustration at the space available and the number of services they were able to provide. A dream was born.

“We had a dream to enlarge it, but we thought ‘Why don’t we expand to where it’s not just operated by one church, but instead by all the area churches?’” said Dan Stevens, administrative pastor at the Kettering SDA Church. “Monte enabled us to find out what the needs were and the niche that wasn’t being filled, which was health issues.”

Today, in addition to food pantry services, clothing, and household supplies, the Good Neighbor House in Dayton also provides medical, dental, and vision services to the working uninsured and underinsured community.

The Walla Walla, Wash., area has a similar community service agency in its nearly 10-year-old SonBridge, which started as the dream of Paul Rasmussen, a member of the College Place Village Church and a local businessman. Rasmussen would often go to events in the community before SonBridge was opened and wonder why he didn’t see more Adventists or Adventist organizations represented there.

“Our churches had been doing community services individually,” Rasmussen said. “Mostly it happened at the church and they weren’t, in the past, highly involved in the community, working with them and collaborating with them. This has brought SonBridge to the table in working together to meet community needs. It’s been a wonderful experience to partner with churches and with other agencies.”

The community center launched in 2004 in partnership with eight Walla Walla Valley Churches. It includes a thrift and gift shop, where community members can buy clothes and home goods and SonBridge clientele can use vouchers from HelpLine, another local service agency, to shop for items they need. But that is only one purpose for the Gift and Thrift shop. The revenue from the shop is also used to offset more than two-thirds of the annual budget for SonBridge. In 2012, the shop brought in more than $250,000.
“That’s a lot of items at 15 and 50 cents,” said Julie Sanders Keymer, a volunteer and wife of Marshall Keymer who helped found SonBridge.

Other services provided at SonBridge include the SOS Clinic, an independent medical clinic, a new dental clinic launched in 2013, and space for a variety of other community service organizations to hold meetings and training sessions, free of charge.

“Mission critical is to have a clear assessment of what is going on in that community,” said Henning Guldhammer, executive pastor at the Walla Walla University Church. “It wasn’t set up with preconceptions in mind. So often, Adventist community service groups do what is needed and work on their own. The idea was to talk to all the other service agencies in town and find out what the needs are.”

In 2012, its ninth year open, SonBridge had 188 volunteers donating time equal to 28 full-time employees – the donated equivalent of $1.3 million in volunteer time according to Independent Sector, a leadership network for nonprofits, foundations and corporate giving programs.

While each of these examples from across the country varies in how it runs, who it serves and what services it provides, the anecdotal and quantitative results indicate that the rewards of “two are better than one” compound even faster when churches partner together – and some of the rewards might surprise you.

Filling the gaps

Just as two workers are better than one, so two heads are better than one. Both SonBridge and Dayton’s Good Neighbor House benefitted from the intentional planning and research of a dedicated group of founders. By researching the services already available and partnering with existing organizations and other churches, these ministries are able to help provide for the unmet needs in their communities.

When a business fills a unique niche, it doesn’t have to compete with other businesses for customers’ dollars. Similarly, when nonprofits fill a unique niche, they don’t have to compete with similar nonprofits for sometimes limited funding.

Dave Hutman, pastor at Stillwater SDA Church in Dayton, Ohio and a multiple-time chair of the Good Neighbor House board of directors, said it’s important to know your community, invest in your community and listen to your community.

“Don’t just run out there with a good idea,” Hutman said. “A lot of people can get offended when you’re competing and that just creates a lot of ill will. People like that the churches aren’t competing, but are cooperating to help people in need.”

Rasmussen expressed a similar sentiment that he’s experienced in Walla Walla.

“We didn’t try to start a food bank because we knew that was taken care of,” he said. “But we learned that many nonprofits were struggling for space, so we provide space at no cost to many other groups and many of them are of various different faiths or no faith at all.”
Maturing members
In addition to the obvious benefits of service to the community and those in need, many pastors reported that the partnerships have opened up more opportunities for church members to get involved – promoting spiritual growth within the support congregations.

“It’s really exciting to see our people engage and get involved in the community,” Guldhammer said. “We didn’t have a vehicle for that before SonBridge. To see their eyes light up and get involved is really good.

Guldhammer estimated that the Walla Walla University Church, which has about 2,400 members, has a couple hundred members who have volunteered in some capacity at SonBridge. Volunteer opportunities include working in the dental clinic, sorting items for the Thrift and Gift shop, and teaching classes and seminars that range from parenting and finance to addiction recovery and Bible studies.

As Stevens pointed out, service is an important component of spiritual growth. “Anytime you deal with mobilizing membership beyond just financial support, it’s healthy for the congregation.”

Hutman agreed. “This is really the calling that Jesus gives the church is to be salt and light in the community and do good,” he said. “For us, this is a normal kind of expected behavior from those who claim to be Christ followers.”

Strength in numbers
As these community service centers have grown over the years, each of them has drawn the attention and support of non-Adventist organizations in the community.

“From our inception, we wanted the Good Neighbor House to be more than an Adventist-sponsored organization,” Stevens said. “It has grown so much that there is no way the churches could support it on their own any longer. [Kettering Medical Center, flagship hospital of the Kettering Health Network] has gotten involved plus other organizations and other charity donors.”

While the local churches do provide a subsidy for Good Neighbor House, Stevens said those subsidies make up only about 25 percent of the community center’s annual budget.

The dental clinic at the Good Neighbor House is just one example of how the increase in support has improved and grown the service capabilities there. Winston Baldwin, senior pastor at the Centerville Seventh-day Adventist Church, estimated that when the clinic opened with a single dentist volunteering a few hours each evening, there was a one-month wait for patients in need of not preventive treatments, but critical care. Since that time, the availability of services has increased thanks to the financial support of the many different organizations involved. The center is able to handle a greater capacity of patients with three dentists and a new, larger building with additional dental chairs and medical facilities.

“We held the grand opening earlier this summer,” Baldwin said. “The building, also located in..."
In Lincoln, the Good Neighbor Community Center distributed 1.6 million pounds of food in 2012. According to Terry Bock, administrative pastor at the College View Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Adventist churches in the area work along with the food bank of Lincoln and Feeding America to help supply that need.

Baldwin summed it up well: “It’s not denominationally restrictive. It’s helping the poor; we’re all supposed to do that.”

**A fresh perspective on Adventism**

As a result of the growing partnerships to support the Adventist-started community organizations comes perhaps the most surprising result: improved perception and increasing awareness of the Adventist community.

Rasmussen reported that nine years since SonBridge opened, Adventists are now better represented at community events.

“That was one of the driving things,” he said. “Now, virtually every organization in town knows who we are and what we do and has a positive relationship with us. It’s fun to see, in eight to nine years, the huge difference in the community.”

In Dayton, the Good Neighbor House that started as a partnership of eight SDA churches now partners with about 130 agencies in the area, Hutman said.

“If we had not partnered with other churches, I believe instead of increasing services, they would have diminished,” Baldwin said. “This partnership with other churches has infused new life through enthusiasm in those churches and sparked a new interest in the Seventh-day Adventist community as well.

Pastor Terry Bock in Lincoln said the Good Neighbor Community Center has been a good advertisement to the community for the Adventist church because the churches are not always well-known in the community.

But while some communities just aren’t familiar with Adventist churches, others have a downright negative perception of the faith.

“Some people had the view of Adventists that ‘They’re here to tell us how to live, how to eat,’” Guldhammer said. “But when you come and ask other people questions and tap their knowledge and opinions, that turns everything upside down, or should I say right side up? Everyone has a high respect for SonBridge and the whole crew. It has had a significant influence on how Seventh-day Adventists are perceived.”

Guldhammer said the SonBridge board includes Adventist members and others from the community, which has become a way of staying tuned in to what’s going on in our town.

“We don’t just go out to the community,” Rasmussen said. “Many people come here to us; it breaks down the wall of separation that was there before.”

But one of Rasmussen’s goals in starting SonBridge is an ongoing hope to inspire others.

“One of the thoughts behind SonBridge,” he said, “has been that if the Lord is leading, it would give courage and hope to others who would be thinking about starting something like this.”