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church financial statements for the last 5 years?

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**Read More**

**JOIN THE DISCUSSION ON FACEBOOK**

**Let's Talk**

*Best Practices* is looking for articles about what is working for you in ministry. Articles that are one-subject focused and tightly written - 300 to 700 words. We are also looking for top-flight sermon illustrations. Together we can make *Best Practices for Adventist Ministry* a go-to toolbox for NAD pastors and church leaders.

**Ideas, Events, Resources, Announcements**

Roger Hernandez, ministerial director for the Southern Union
Conference, offers some friendly advice on **How to Kill Your Job Interview in Four Easy Ways**.

The United Methodist Church is offering a free webinar - **Pastors: Making a Good Move** on Tuesday evening, April 22, 2014, at 6:30 pm CDT. This webinar is for pastors moving to a new appointment. It includes ways to say good-bye to the current congregation and hello to a new place and new people. This webinar will provide tips and advice from several sources for this change which impacts your well-being, your family and friends.

Chip Dizzard is offering a free **Podcasting for Pastors** webinar on Thursday, April 24. The webinar can be viewed at 4:00, 7:00, or 10:00 pm Eastern Time.

**Previous resource links:**

- How to Get a Wow (Not a Scowl) from Kids (Part 1)
- How to Get a Wow (Not a Scowl) from Kids (Part 2)
- inSpire's 2014 Facebook
Photo Contest

- Leadership Conference
- 7 Tips for Introverted Pastors
- Let's Talk

Best Practices for Adventist Ministry is published by NAD Ministerial. Opinions expressed belong to the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of NAD Ministerial.

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In the old days pastoral placement was a top-down operation. Decisions were made in personnel committee meetings and announced to the pastor over the phone or at camp meeting. The first time the local congregation met their new pastor would be the Sabbath the conference official showed up to make a formal introduction.

Obviously things have changed! While every conference has their own process, most pastoral placement protocols provide for an interview between the pastor candidate and the search committee. Here are seven things I think will help you to interview well:

1. **Go only if you are sincerely interested.** If after prayerfully considering the position you feel God may be calling, take a closer look. Do the interview. Don’t waste your time and the church’s time/money if you are not sincerely interested.

2. **Do your research.** Check out the church. Look over the community demographics. Look at the church website and see what the church is doing. Find out if the church has a mission statement and a clearly defined set of goals. Ask the conference administration what the calling church is looking for in their new pastor. See if the church has debt. Put your finger on the spiritual pulse of the church. Identify their focus in outreach. Compare their attendance numbers with their membership numbers. Do your research.

3. **Keep your interview answers spiritually focused.** Even when answering questions about the overall operations of the church, keep your answers gospel commission focused.

4. **Be honest about your gifts and talents.** Share your strengths with the confidence that God has given you those gifts and you only wish to use them for His glory. Share your weaknesses as well, and encourage them to provide ministry partners to help strengthen the life and ministry of the church.

5. **Use your research in the interview.** It is good to let the search committee know what you have learned about them. Share with them what you have noticed and let them verify and clarify that information. It is also a good idea to see how their self-perception and your research compare.

6. **Ask your own questions.** Many times the questions you will ask the search committee will reveal more to them about who you are and your ministry focus than the questions they ask you. Ask them questions about their church mission, funding for outreach, funding for children’s ministries, funding for Christian education. Ask them questions about the personal involvement of members in the ministry of the church.

7. **Be willing to relax and laugh.** You are human. Be willing to let them see that you are authentic. Let them see that you are willing to enter their world and share life with them.

The pastoral placement process in most conferences today involve a three-way conversation between the church, the conference administration, and the pastoral candidate – all under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. I hope that these practical points will help you to interview well, to clearly identify God’s call, and to serve well in your new church community.
Doug Bing is vice-president for administration in the Washington Conference
Strategies for a Successful Interview

We recently asked 5 pastors to share important strategies when interviewing and considering a call to pastor a new church — Here’s what they shared with us:

Ask the Right Questions
By Mark Witas

When I interview with a church, these are the questions I usually ask:
1) May I see a copy of your church financial statements for the last 5 years?
2) Has the church grown, stayed the same, or shrunk in attendance in the last 5 years? And why?
3) Detail how your church is a part of what is going on in your community.
4) When did the church last host an evangelistic series? Was it successful?
5) What kind of small group ministries does your church offer?
6) Where do the people who attend your church come from? (If it’s not a true community church but a destination church, I’m usually not interested.)
7) How many pastors have led this church in the last 20 years? Why did they leave?

Mark Witas is lead pastor for the Pacific Union College Church in Angwin, CA

Find Chemistry
By Ron Aguilera

Every effective pastor – church relationship requires great chemistry. To find out if you have it with a church that has invited you to interview, you need to ask the right questions and you need to listen carefully to the answers, not only to what is said, but to what is not said or left out. Here are some important approaches, questions and statements to your conversation together:

- Cast a big vision. Look for their reactions, listen carefully to their responses. Especially pay attention to the tone of the responses.
- Ask them to describe the culture of their church and the things the church particularly values.
- Ask them, “What does this church offer a new pastor?”
- Ask them how they determine whether or not there is chemistry between the pastor and the church.

Ron Aguilera is vice-president for administration in the Illinois Conference

Speak to Your Passion
By Don Smith
The ability to effectively communicate your ministry passion and how it will impact the church and community in an interview is important for two reasons. First, we often assume we know what our passions are but fail to actually sit down and process through the areas of ministry that we are passionate about, give us energy, and define the areas in which we truly love to work.

Understand, ministry requires that we work in areas that may not be our strengths, but it is important to have a healthy balance of ministry passion to avoid burnout. It is also important to understand how your passion has impacted your ministry, church, and community in the past. This process alone is helpful in self-assessment and if you are honest with yourself it will help you grow as a minister as well.

The second reason this is important it will help you and the interviewers see if there is a connection/resonance or a non-connection/dissonance with the potential church community you are interviewing for. Once you know who you are and what gets you really excited about ministry and where you are most effective you can now communicate that with the potential church team/leaders and share a vision for how that aspect of your ministry will impact the church. It should feel like “vision casting” and you should be able get a sense if it is inspiring to them or is a fit for their community.

Don Smith is transitioning from associate pastor of the Palo Cedro, CA Church to senior pastor of the Santa Rosa, CA Church

Cast Vision
By Jennifer Scott

Every church has a different ministry personality. We all share the same Great Commission, yet there are distinctions in each congregation that create unique congregational vision. They are thinking about those visions in an interview and those visions are defining their desires for the next steps in ministry. When a pastor steps onto the holy ground of the interview, it is really helpful to get clear and be intuitive to that vision. Is it about growing their schools? Is it about evangelism? Is it reaching out into the community? Is it a church building project? Is it inspiring worship services? Is it reaching their youth? Being able to talk with them about their passion can create a beautiful, holy ground, connection. Like a great conversation, they must be understood. Listen to them, ask questions that invite them share where they are at in that vision, why it is important to them, what has been their obstacles.

Then it is the Pastor's opportunity, with all sincerity, to reveal your personal gifts, experiences and passions that speak to their vision. You'll need to know yourself. You'll know that you are sharing your true passions when you "light up" in your sharing. Tap into and share those divine appointments in your ministry past where God has blessed you in like missions. It's inspiring to everyone to hear where God has lead in the past. This inspires hope to imagine, that what God has done in your past, he can do again in their future! May the interview be left with a desire for more, with a question of intrigue... What might God create next if a connection between this special congregation and YOU be linked for a time such as this?!

Jennifer Scott is the senior pastor of the Keene, TX Church

Experience Worship
By Stephen Richardson

Prior to being interviewed, a Sabbath morning visit to the prospective church affords a pastor the opportunity to learn
good information by being observant. The visit can be particularly effective when anonymity is maintained, with no undue attention influencing the normal church environment. The pastor should examine the physical appearance of the property, viewing it through the eyes of a first time visitor.

Greeters and ushers strongly influence first impressions. How warmly is one greeted upon entering the church? What temperament does the congregation display? How well executed is the Sabbath School (Adult and children’s divisions)? What characterizes the worship style? What constitutes the demographic composition of the congregation and its immediate community? Are there any exemplary church ministries? How effective is the use of media (print, visual and audio)? Are the church’s mission and vision clearly communicated?

The resultant answers coupled with other first time impressions serve to inform the future interviewee's dialogue.

*Stephen Richardson is ministerial director for the Alleghany East Conference*
Application: The Often Forgotten Part of the Sermon

By Nikolaus Satelmajer, D. Min.
Former editor of Ministry; currently interim pastor of Jackson Heights Seventh-day Adventist (New York); writer and guest professor (including homiletics) at several educational institutions

The sermon was about Daniel, the well-known Old Testament prophet. The preacher listed Daniel’s positive character traits and then told the congregation that they should live just as Daniel lived. Sermon done.

Another preacher focused on Jesus and individuals who were in conflict with Him, such as teachers of the law, who did not accept Jesus because He did not meet their expectations. The preacher told the audience that we should not be like those who did not accept Jesus. Sermon done.

Neither of these preachers focused on the all-important question—what do I want the audience to do with this message? The reality is that all too many preachers ignore that question.

I am writing this article while riding the New York City subway on the way to the Jackson Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church where I am the interim pastor. The car is comfortably full and as I look at the people I ask: what would these individuals get out of either of these sermons? The distance between their world and either Daniel’s or Jesus’s world is great. Remember, your congregation may be further removed from the biblical world than you realize. And that presents a serious challenge for the preacher. How do you want the audience to apply your sermon? It is not enough to tell them to be like Daniel or to not be like some of the people Jesus encountered. What is missing? Sermon application.

Sermon application is vital to sermon preparation and delivery. Your deep study of the Biblical passage (critical for a sermon), reading of other material (vital), praying for the sermon (a must), and outlining the message (if you don’t do it the sermon will come across like a tossed salad), will have little value if the application is missing.

Before we focus on how to design sermons for effective application, I want to mention what sermon application is not. It is not an afterthought tagged on at the end of the sermon. It is not an after-dinner chocolate mint you serve at the end of the sermon, hoping the hearers will have pleasant memories of your sermon. It is not a few words of admonition or advice the preacher shares. These approaches to application will leave your audience in a spiritual desert. Some will wonder what the sermon was all about and others may even ask why they listened at all.

How then does sermon application function in a sermon? Application occurs when the preacher presents the Biblical message in such a manner that the hearer will understand it and decide what to do with the message. The preacher must design and deliver the sermon with this in mind. Let’s focus on how that can be done.

Location of application
Application may be placed at the beginning, middle, or end of the sermon. The most unusual location is at the beginning and yet, if carefully planned it can be effective. For example, in John 6:67 (NIV), Jesus asks the disciples, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” At the start of the sermon, the preacher could ask the audience how they would respond. It can be effective to ask that question at the beginning, and then effective if you ask that question again—throughout the sermon and at the end of it. Application functions best if it is brought to the attention of the hearer several times throughout the sermon. Repetition in a sermon is a basic preaching principal, including repeating the application. Thus, location of the application is not the most important point—bringing the application before the congregation several times makes it more effective.

Types of application
There are at least two application types—direct and indirect. In our John 6:67 example, Jesus used the direct approach. The question was directed to each disciple. On the other hand, a story or illustration may be an indirect approach. The parables of Jesus are good examples of indirect application. The parable of the father and two sons (Luke 15:11; often called the parable of the prodigal son), does not end with a question or admonition. The story is told and the reader must decide how to apply it. Most readers of this parable will ask themselves where they fit into the story. If the preacher shares an effective story or illustration, most hearers will determine how the message applies to them. The direct method works best for some and others prefer the indirect method. For the most effective application, use both.

Language
Preachers need to continually think of the best way to communicate the message by carefully choosing words and expressions. Language skills are developed and improved through reading, listening, and writing.[1] There are several specific language tools that make sermon applications more effective.

The words we choose will, to a large extent, determine if the application will be effective or not. First of all, which is more effective—religious or contemporary language used in daily communication? Many preachers load their sermons with religious words or expressions and yet the hearers may not have the same enthusiasm (or understanding) for them as the preacher does. Words like justification, sanctification, salvation, and righteousness are good, but your understanding of them is often different than that of the audience. Preachers need to use words people use in their daily living. Hope, fear, anger, happiness, joy—both people inside and outside the church use these words. Jesus used everyday language to communicate a spiritual message and we should follow His example.

Read the lost son parable in Luke 15:11-31. How many “religious” words or expressions do you find? I find only one such expression—“‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.’” (Luke 15:18, 21). That’s it—the only expression that has “religious” language. Yet, even this expression is easy to understand. The most secular person, who may not believe in heaven, or pretends to be a non-sinner[2], would understand this sentence. Look at the words and expressions Jesus uses: man, sons, father, property, wild living, feed pigs, came to his senses, starving to death, compassion, feast, alive again, older son, music and dancing, angry, alive again, found. These are everyday words. The hearers of the parables do not need to be experts in theological expressions to get the message. The listeners to our sermons likewise should not have to bring a theological dictionary[3] to understand our sermons. The Biblical message must be communicated in words that people use daily. Our mandate is to communicate a spiritual message in modern language.[4]

Secondly, use personal pronouns—I, you, he, she, it, we, they—to increase sermon effectiveness. Let’s focus again on Jesus’ question in John 6:67—“‘You do not want to leave too, do you?’” This question is a golden opportunity for application by repeating the question in various ways, such as:
How would you have responded?
I wonder how I would have responded.
If Jesus asked us, how would we have responded?
You and I must not only read the response of Peter—we have to ask how we would have responded.

By using personal pronouns you can bring Jesus’ question into the present lives of the congregation. The question no longer applies only to the disciples—Jesus asks each of us.

The third language tool is language specificity.
The story is told that U. S. President Calvin Coolidge went to church alone because is wife was not feeling well. When President Coolidge retuned home, his wife asked what the sermon was about.
“Sin,” Coolidge, a man of few words, responded.
Not satisfied with his answer, Mrs. Coolidge wanted to know what the pastor said about sin.
“He was against it,” responded President Coolidge.[5]
This is just one example of the *absence* of specificity. All too often the hearers of our sermons are not sure what we are saying or what is the expectation. Surely it is not enough to just be against sin. If the hearers do not know what we are saying or what we are expecting, application does not happen. Specificity means that we choose language to accurately convey what we have in mind. The hearers of our sermons do not know what we think; they hear our words and interpret them. So, we must carefully choose the words and the manner in which they are delivered.

Specificity must be planned. U. S. President Ronald Reagan was known as an effective communicator. In 1987 he spoke at the Berlin Wall, a symbol of division. Many remember Mr. Reagan’s memorable challenge—“Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”[7] What makes this sentence memorable and a good example of specificity? There are at least three points that make it a classic example of application by specificity:

Who: It clearly states who is addressed—Mr. Gorbachev.

Action: It clearly states the expected action—tear down.

What: It clearly states that the wall was to be torn down.

This powerful sentence is short and to the point, but creating such a sentence takes planning and effort. Preachers need to focus on the audience and the action they expect the audience to take. This can happen if, in the sermon preparation, you focus on questions such as, what do I want them to do; how do I want them to accomplish the goal; when do I want them to do it; and why do I want them to do it.

The authority of application

We have discussed some ways of creating effective sermon application, but there is one more critical issue—what is the authority for the application? Planning and techniques are important, but the Bible is the authority for application. Application must be based on Biblical teaching for otherwise application may only reflect our personal opinions. Sharing our personal opinions is not preaching. Preachers must help the hearers understand how the Biblical message applies to them. That is effective sermon application. In order for the application to be effective, the preacher must keep it in mind throughout the research, preparation, and delivery of the sermon. If you use this approach the congregation will understand and know what do with the message.

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[1] In our age, language skills are taking a back seat. Too many individuals search the Internet for a sentence or phrase and do not focus on the context. Some language scholars even state that we are entering a new age of illiteracy.

[2] Of course, there are also religious people who claim to be strangers to sin.

[3] Many of us have such a dictionary, but should not take the words from such a dictionary into the pulpit. We should use such tools in sermon preparation and not delivery.

[4] After I wrote this sentence, I looked at my sermon outline for the next Sabbath, to see if it passes this test. I think it does, but the final judgment will come from the listeners.


[6] Our ethics and actions also impact what we preach, but that topic is for another article.

How to Kill Your Job Interview in Four Easy Ways

As a church employee who served in personnel committees and has conducted hundreds of interviews I have seen pretty much everything. If you are a student/pastor and will interview for a position I want to give you some friendly advice I wish someone had given me:

Here are four things **NOT** to do:

1. **Act cocky.**

   Listen, you might be from Cleveland, but you are not E.E. Neither are you the second coming of H.M. S. Richards or Alejandro Bullon. Be confident, not cocky. No one likes a cocky preacher. Frankly, all it does is reveal some deep seated insecurities. Be yourself. Don’t overdo, you. I once had a interviewee talk non-stop about himself. I couldn’t get a word in.

2. **Name dropping.**

   This is another common one. I hear it all the time. They say, for example: “I know Dr. Carlton Byrd…” My question to that statement is this: “Is Buddy Byrd coming to pastor that 23 member church I am interviewing you for? No? Then why name drop?” Some mention presidents in denominational levels. Why? Name dropping is a dangerous exercise, because it associates you with another’s track record and neglects your own identity. I am hiring for what you can bring to the team. Not ________________ (fill in blank).

3. **Irrelevant statistics.**

   I don’t need to know you taught, as an assistant, Cradle Roll on a Sabbath 5 years ago. Some go to great lengths to list every ministry act that was ever done. Tell me who you are, some of what your gifts in action are. Categories with a couple of specific occurrences are great. (see #4)

4. **Extensive/unimpressive resume**

   I have had a resume with cooking grease on it handed to me. Some have showed up without a resume, with an excuse. Several times, I have had a resume of at least 10 pages, single space, put in my hands. This complicates matters. It does not impress the committee, in fact, can work against you (see #3). A picture is always nice. Color is a plus. Go for functional and readability. Don’t overthink it or overdo it.

*Here is a great resume: [http://www.slideshare.net/RogerHernandezG/published-resume-33050987](http://www.slideshare.net/RogerHernandezG/published-resume-33050987)*

What other ways do potential pastors kill (or at least diminish) their chances? Let me know in the comment section.
Webinars

System Requirements
Windows® 7, Vista, XP or 2003 Server or Mac OS® X 10.4.11 (Tiger®) or newer.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If this is the first time you are using WebEx on your computer, please allow a few minutes to download some necessary plug-ins before you are able to join the meeting. You will need to have JavaScript and cookies enabled for this webinar. READ MORE HERE.

Sort by: Title | Date | Type of Resource
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1 to 10 of 20

Claiming a Missionary Mindset!
Apr. 29, 2014 | Webinar

What does it take to be a missionary in your own community? The Rev. Amy Shanholtzer suggests ways for family churches to build new relationships with not-yet-churched people. Amy serves in West Virginia where nearly 75% of churches have 50 or fewer in worship.

Tuesday, April 29, 2014
Time: 6:30 pm, Central Daylight Time
Duration: 1 hour
Presenters: Betsey Heavner, Amy Shanholtzer
For more information: Betsey Heavner, bheavner@gbod.org

Register for Webinar
Change Requires Something of Us!
May 1, 2014 | Webinar

"Do not say 'Why were the former days better than these?' For it is not wisdom that you ask this" (Eccl 7:10). The Rev. Diana Northcutt, Oklahoma director of discipleship ministries for small-membership churches, urges us to sharpen "wisdom" and look to the future. Diana says we must address change to move our churches from physical death to resurrection.

Date: Thursday, May 1, 2014
Time: 6:30 pm, Central Daylight Time
Duration: 1 hour Presenters: Betsey Heavner, Diana Northcutt
For more information: Betsey Heavner, bheavner@gbod.org
Register for Webinar
Pastors Read: #digitalvertigo, Andrew Keen
May 7, 2014 | Webinar

#digitalvertigo: How Today's Online Social Revolution Is Dividing, Diminishing, and Disorienting Us by Andrew Keen

This incisive and critical look at social media and its creators is an excellent book that challenges the reader to think about the implications of our digital life.

Session date: Wednesday, May 7, 2014
Starting time: 10:00 am, Central Daylight Time
Duration: 1 hour
Presenters: Dawn Chesser, Craig Miller

The Pastors Read series offers discussion among audience members, as well as perspective from the Rev. Craig Miller and the Rev. Dawn Chesser regarding some of the current best sellers.

Register for Webinar
Developing Your Ministry Plan 4: Worship, Small Groups, and the Next 12 Months
May 8, 2014 | Webinar

Thursday, May 8, 2014
6:30 pm, Central Daylight Time
Duration: 1 hour
Presenter: Craig Kennet Miller, Director of Pastoral Leadership at GBOD

Building on the previous three sessions, your team will be guided in a process to identify key steps for your congregational development. The focus will be on small groups and worship as well as thinking about putting your ideas into action.

Download Developing Your Ministry Plan Webinars Handout (pdf)

Register for Webinar
Children's Ministry: Weekday Preschool Guidelines
May 12, 2014 | Webinar

The purpose of the Guidelines in Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs in United Methodist Congregations is to connect and support Early Childhood programs within The United Methodist Church and to maintain high educational and ethical standards that are consistent across United Methodist Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs. As a denomination, we believe that churches should follow some process of self-study for their childcare programs on a regular basis. This webinar will take participants through the guidelines and
looks at ways to ensure quality education in a caring Christian environment.

Date: Monday, May 12, 2014
Time: 10:00 am, Central Daylight Time
Duration: 1 hour
Presenters: Melanie Gordon, Lynne Paredes, Gayle Callis

Register for Webinar
Stewardship: What’s New in the Toolbox? Annual Campaign Helps for You!
May 15, 2014 | Webinar

Will your church be planning an annual campaign this year? If so, have you looked at some of the new resources that are available? If not, there are some simple ideas that you might want to try that could increase giving in 2015!

Thursday, May 15, 2014
6:30 p.m., Central Daylight Time
Presenter: Ken Sloane, GBOD

Register for Webinar
Sharing Our Faith
May 20, 2014 | Webinar

As United Methodists, many of us are uncomfortable with the idea of sharing our faith. What if we offend the other person or come across as pushy? How easy is it to talk about where you see God in your life? Have you ever taken the time to think about and narrate your own spiritual journey? Guest presenter Heather Heinzman Lear will help us discover simple tools for identifying and describing our experiences of God, and how to share our faith in a spirit of love. Particular attention will be given to opportunities for practicing "faith talk" in classes and small groups.

Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2014
Starting time: 6:30 p.m., Central Daylight Time
Duration: 1 hour
Presenters: Heather Heinzman Lear, Carol Krau
For Information, contact: Carol Krau at ckrau@gbod.org

Register for Webinar
Safe Sanctuaries for Camps and Retreats – Part Two
May 27, 2014 | Webinar

This is the second in very important two-part series on implementing Safe Sanctuaries abuse prevention policies and procedures within camp and retreat experiences and settings. This training is for local church leaders who do camps and retreats as well as leaders serving at Camp and Retreat Centers. Providing a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults who participate along with the training of leaders who
provide the camps and retreats is a fundamental act of love. This webinar highlights key content areas for developing prudent abuse prevention policies and procedures.

**Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2014**
**Time: 11:00 am, Central Daylight Time**
Duration: 1 hour
Presenters: Melanie Gordon, Kevin Witt

Register for Webinar
Children’s Ministry: Created By God
May 29, 2014 | Article

This interactive webinar will equip participants for either coordinating or leading *Created by God* experiences that teach 'tweens about bodies, growth and development, relationships, reproduction, and God's role and desire for this process. We will discuss how parents and tweens practicing family communication skills can begin to operate from common vocabulary, understanding, and experience, and we will examine how this practice makes a healthy space for asking questions.

Participants should expect to WRITE THE WORDS out loud.

Date: Thursday, May 29, 2014
Time: 10:00 am, Central Daylight Time
Duration: 1 hour
Presenters: Melanie Gordon, James Ritchie

Register for Webinar
Finding Treasure: The Story of Our Newest Stewardship Resource
Jul. 10, 2014 | Webinar

Jacob Armstrong is a young man with a large vision for the church. This pastor & church planter will share with us the story of how he helped his congregation to discover that “where our treasure goes, our hearts will follow.” Join us and uncover how this Treasure might change your congregation!

Date: Thursday, July 10, 2014
Starting time: 6:30 pm, Central Daylight Time
Duration: 1 hour
Presenters: Ken Sloane, Jacob Armstrong
Contact for Information: Ken Sloane, ksloane@gbod.org

Register for Webinar