If you are a pastor who works your heart out teaching, nurturing, and equipping your congregants to experience the grace-filled, gospel-oriented, Christ-centered life, you probably have felt the frustration and angst when someone contacts your church office wanting to insert a flyer or announcement in your Sabbath bulletin inviting your members to an event,
seminar, on-line symposium and the like. Worse yet, you show up in church one Sabbath morning and find flyers, posters and invitation cards in the hands of your members. Sometimes you recognize the group sponsoring the event; at other times you don't.  

Books on Emotional Healing  
By Pablo E. Gaitan  
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Funerals: A Significant Threshold  
The Honorable Gift  
By John Grys
As a pastor, perhaps one of the most sacred moments I find for ministry is the opportunity to be a part of a funeral for a bereaved family. I describe this as a "threshold" for a number of reasons. For the family and friends of the deceased, it is the moment where there is a shift from what was to what will be. There is this momentous reality that for the family, presence is now replaced by absence. This residual void now finds fulfillment through the sharing of significant memories.

And finally, there is the closing of the door of possibility and the experience of finality. Indeed, regardless of culture, this serves as one of the most profound transitional moments in the life of any community. Read More

Talbot to Speak at Pastors Experience

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to help focus on Evangelism

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Cortes, Jr. replaces Shawn Boonstra who transitioned as the new director for the Voice of Prophecy media ministry.

Read more Read a brief interview with Jose Cortes, Jr.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION ON FACEBOOK

Ideas, Events, Resources, Announcements

General Conference Evangelism - General Conference Ministerial has just launched a brand new website with evangelistic sermons that are fully editable in PowerPoint and Keynote. Each presentation is complemented with professional graphics created by Carlos and Maria Marta. If you wish to submit your evangelistic sermons, mail them to Robert Costa.

GenU.tv - Roy Ice and the Loma Linda University Church have just launched a great new young adult ministry resource - GenU.tv. It's perfect for churches that are looking for young adult resources in the form of free videos and downloadable Bible
study guides. This website positions the Adventist church as one of the largest producers of young adult ministry resources on the entire web. Roy Ice has been working closely with marketing experts from Google who estimate from their historical data and algorithms that GenU.tv will draw an average of 4000 visits and video views per day in North America alone. Enjoy a Quick Video Tour.

The inSpire Songwriting Contest is in full swing, and if you are a songwriter, we'd love to hear from you! Submissions are being accepted through November 19, 2014. The best news is that you can submit your song for FREE! An iPad and cash awards will be given!

Previous resource links:

- Five Trends Among the Unchurched
- "We Miss You" Greeting Cards
- Reach Out. Persist. Invite
- Asian Americans: Silent No More
- Enter the Deep
- Scientists Are Beginning to Figure Out Why Conservatives Are...
- Conservative
If you are a pastor who works your heart out teaching, nurturing, and equipping your congregants to experience the grace-filled, gospel-oriented, Christ-centered life, you probably have felt the frustration and angst when someone contacts your church office wanting to insert a flyer or announcement in your Sabbath bulletin inviting your members to an event, seminar, on-line symposium and the like. Worse yet, you show up in church one Sabbath morning and find flyers, posters and invitation cards in the hands of your members. Sometimes you recognize the group sponsoring the event; at other times you don’t.

It is legitimate for you to be concerned about the impact that many of these groups have within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They often leave behind a trail of fear, confusion, suspicion, and distrust, robbing people of the joy and assurance of the Gospel. Often the role of the local pastor is undermined and marginalized.

How do you respond to these uninvited incursions into the life of your congregation by these many groups that have evolved within the Adventist Church? Is there anything you can do to minimize their influence within your congregation?

In today’s global environment, technology allows anyone, anywhere to connect with anyone, anywhere, to market any idea or spread any message. This is a reality that we must acknowledge. The church can no longer control the flow of information to its members. While you or your church might deny access to those wishing to market their events or products within the walls of your facility, you cannot keep information from reaching your members via direct mail, the internet, cable, or other media.

Despite the direct access that people have to your members, there are ways in which you can screen these affiliated or non-affiliated groups to determine whether or not you will endorse, or even permit, their communications and materials within your church facility. I will state them as a group of overlapping tests. However, these are also teaching points that you can use to equip your congregation to make informed and wise decisions.

1. The Gospel Test: Does the group’s message, mission, methods, and influence align with the central tenet of the Christian faith – the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? Our experience is that most of these groups are fixated on behaviorism, legalism, and perfectionism rather than on the benchmark of salvation through grace alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone.

The Apostle Paul was rigorous in applying the “Jesus only” litmus test on individuals and groups that attempted to infiltrate the church of his day. He declared, “If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed” (Galatians 1:9, NLT). Ellen White summed it up as follows: “The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary” (GW 315).

A well-grounded and informed congregation is more likely to be able to screen out these groups and their messages that do not align with the center of our faith. Your repeated efforts, therefore, to reinforce the core message of the Gospel, and the core values, purposes, mission and vision of the church will equip your members to make informed and rational decisions.

2. The Credibility Test: Does the group convey credibility in the kinds of claims it makes, materials it produces, and the
people it mobilizes to be its spokespersons? If its speaker roster is populated with self-proclaimed, self-appointed “experts” and authorities on a subject, or with presenters who clearly do not have the education or scholarship to address the issues substantively, take it as indication that what it has to offer will be weak, shallow, distorted, and unreliable.

3. **The Missions Test:** Does the group’s efforts result in extending the Kingdom of God on earth, or does it merely have an inward focus aimed at making ourselves more acceptable to God, convincing ourselves as to how right we are, or at unveiling some “insider information” known and understood only by them?

4. **The “Good Fruit” Test:** Does the group’s efforts result in people being more joyful, loving, confident of their faith, eager to engage their communities, or more fearful, judgmental, confused, and guilt-ridden?

Ultimately, you as pastor cannot be responsible for where your members go, what they read, or what they listen to or watch. You can, however, equip them to be discerning in their choices and informed about their decisions.

*Raj Attiken is president emeritus for the Ohio Conference*
Lately, I have stumbled upon some good reads on emotional healing. Today’s churches are filled with people who became Christians, but never let Jesus completely heal their heart and mind from the past. Yes, Jesus promises to make us new. However, if we don’t give Him complete access to our most inner place – our spirit – as cleanser of our souls, we will never experience real peace. So I want to introduce you to four books on emotional healing for those whose past experiences have left them emotionally scarred, whose present is blurred, and whose future is intimidating.

1. **Captivating**, by John and Stasi Eldredge. This book talks about issues many girls have encountered while growing up. It is a must-read for every girl who wants to get her life going again.

2. **Emotionally Healthy Spirituality**, by Peter Scazzero. This man absolutely nails it. As a successful pastor, he advises us to take ourselves into a journey of self-discovery through the light of what Jesus has done for us on the Cross. You won’t be able to put this book down!

3. **Dangerous Calling**, by Paul Tripp. Tripp is a pastor of pastors. If you are a church leader or pastor, this book will change your life. This book will strip you to your naked core.

4. **Cleansing the Sanctuary of the Heart**, by David Sedlacek. Sedlacek is an Adventist pastor and Andrews University professor. Though his work is a bit technical, his concepts about cleansing your life through our Only High Priest, Jesus, is captivating and liberating at the same time.

Enjoy your reading!!!

*Pablo E. Gaitan is senior pastor for the South Gate Spanish Church in Los Angeles and Hispanic youth coordinator for the Southern California Conference*
As a pastor, perhaps one of the most sacred moments I find for ministry is the opportunity to be a part of a funeral for a bereaved family. I describe this as a "threshold" for a number of reasons. For the family and friends of the deceased, it is the moment where there is a shift from what was to what will be. There is this momentous reality that for the family, presence is now replaced by absence. This residual void now finds fulfillment through the sharing of significant memories. And finally, there is the closing of the door of possibility and the experience of finality. Indeed, regardless of culture, this serves as one of the most profound transitional moments in the life of any community.

I begin this essay with these rather abstract beliefs for a reason. What I hold as a theological/philosophical assumption regarding this moment implicitly guides me as I enter into the life of the family and community during this most solemn of occasions. My inner world as a servant influences the externals I bring to the table in this sacred moment. The finality of the moment for all has a way of seeping into the inner worlds of all involved in the process of planning. This includes me. There are internal considerations that I carry into this moment. These moments have a way of bringing to the surface my own worldviews and unspoken considerations. These internal realities influence the external practices I bring to the table of ministering to all involved. Am I open to factors, practices, and other considerations as I engage with the community in this sacred journey?

For this reason, the planning and implementation of the service creates a window into the soul of the family and community as well. Thus, this "inadvertent" access into the soul of both family and community can reveal the levels of anxiety that may be latent in both. It is this dynamic that compels me to "listen" to what stirs – especially with those who are closest to the deceased. For it is precisely this listening that provides the substance of the message that I will present (if I am the one chosen to speak) or provides the broken place to where I can most effectively minister. This brokenness reminds me of the brokenness of both the world of which I am a part and my own brokenness. And it is precisely from this place, as painful as it may be, that I can best minister.

A Few Recent Learnings

As part of this internal world I bring to this moment, a few recent learnings emerge. The age and "era" of the person and what the era represents both to the family and the wider community must be remembered. I was reminded of this recently when I led the service for a centenarian. As I prepared and shared the world in which she experienced the formative years of her life, it would've been incongruent for me to make her sound as if she were of this epoch. I wanted the family and friends present to recognize the gift of not only her life but what her epoch means for our world today. In our highly multigenerational world, I must honor those upon whose shoulders I now stand.

Which gets to another learning. I must always remember that I am being "asked" to mediate and minister between the family and the wider community, including close friends, acquaintances, and in many cases, an ecclesiastical community. This can be a tricky situation at times where the desires of those closest to the deceased may at times conflict with the desires of the wider communities. And depending on the levels of anxiety and the capacity to manage the anxiety, there can unfortunately be moments where conflict becomes rather intense. I have found this especially true where siblings and grieving spouses conflict on the components and/or the order of the service. I know as a pastor I am walking into a living, breathing, dynamic family system. And the invitation to engage with that system at a moment where it is possibly the most vulnerable is a gift that we pastors rarely gain access. And as such, is a sacred trust.

Another learning surrounds the circumstances of the death. How to approach a suicide versus a stillborn versus an elderly saint versus a murder would all contribute to the tone and feel of the service. Again, this reminds me that I must be
attuned to the family and circumstantial dynamics involved leading all to this moment. Having led a service for a visiting foreign teenager tragically killed in a car crash as well as a service with an elderly person with a long-term illness (where death was almost a relief), these speak volumes into the tone and texture of the planned service. To believe there is a one-size-fits-all service can lead me down a path of violating the context of the person’s life and passing.

Thus, at the core of my own presence is the continual reminder that I am there not as a servant of my particular congregation nor of my own denomination. I am there as a servant to the family, specifically the immediate family and then the extended family.

Two practical learnings I've discovered. First, the use of video as a vital part of the community memory celebration can be very effective. I have been part of services where a video clip of the deceased has been used. There is a difference between a video of a slide montage and the use of an actual video cut. The second is a much more visceral experience and as such, I've found I must be very careful how it is used. I usually will ask the family to watch the full video cut as a family before the day of the service.

Secondly, as well, I have found more and more people appreciate where we as a church can provide a DVD copy of the service itself. This contributes to this necessity of keeping the memory of the deceased alive within the family. It also provides the family with a tool they can pass along to family and friends who were unable to be there at the service. Finally, as will be addressed below, it provides closure to this threshold moment of ministry to the family.

**Presence vs. Space**

Now, to some practices. Again, depending on the situation, there may come the call that a death has occurred. The dynamics of the larger system will kick into high action. I have found some do not want the pastor present immediately after the end of life. They want the space to be able to mourn as an immediate family. Death has a way of revealing the myriad of ways people deal with this most unwelcomed guest. Thus, there may be the necessity of providing space for the family to engage their grief without an "outsider" present in the moments immediately following the end of life.

Others will reach out to the pastor immediately. For them, their close community (especially if you are in a culture where pastors hold a high authority) includes the pastor. Some will ask that you be there at the end of life. Others, just after the person has passed but before the body is removed. Again, as a pastor, I cannot take it personally how some people grieve. Part of this grieving process will include or exclude the immediate presence of the pastor. I have found this moment to provide a window into the possibilities of what the future planning and participation will hold.

I will usually try to be with the family as immediately as possible. A quick phone call can stand as a moment to begin entering their world. This way of communicating brings into the play the ways of communication that exist within ministry today. For younger generations, because of the unbelievable overload of incoming calls or emails or even FB comments, I sometimes have found a simple text will suffice. Usually, I will express sympathy and then ask what time would be good to call them. I then will try to follow up with what is the most effective way of communicating for this moment: presence.

I have found that the less I speak, the better, when I make that initial visit with the family. I doubt that the family will remember any words I’ve said at these initial moments weeks or months later. What they do remember is that I was there. Presence matters far more than words. Which means for me as well that I must commit my anxiety to God and not allow the anxiety to make me an unnecessary chatterbox. This sacred moment is about the family and not my own anxiety as a servant.

**The Service**

As far as the service itself, again there are a variety of ways to approach it. Again, circumstances will guide. I've found some families want me involved in the whole process of planning (including urn/casket selection) while others prefer to plan it out themselves and then inform me what I will be doing. Others will plan it and then contact me to solicit my
input. One of the points where I've found quite a divided opinion: Should there be an opportunity for the audience to give open-mic testimonies about what the person has meant to them. My experience is that if you do something like this, you will need to make sure the person moderating the mic can move the group along. The other issue as well is whether or not the family is at a strong enough state to hear what will be said – even though it is very good. Some families are at a point in the grieving process where that will work and others are not. I have found the circumstances surrounding the death may give wisdom.

Generally, the following is an order of service I will start with:

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Opening Song

Favorite Scripture (if the person is a believer; if not, I still will use a more known Scripture here like Psalm 23): Many find that if the person had a Bible, it is a powerful moment to share this Scripture with that particular Bible. Some will even have notes written around the text that can be quite moving to share.

Song (this can be a special performance selection or a congregational song)

Eulogy: Usually read by a family member. Sometimes the local obituary is read and sometimes a much more personal and extensive eulogy is read. I have found with the latter I discovered many things I did not know about the person.

Song: Again, usually here will be a more performed song rather than a congregational song.

A Life to Remember: Here is where some kind of visual presentation is used. Most families will create or have someone create a slide montage of the person. This is usually one of the most emotional moments of the service, especially if real video is used rather than a slide presentation. Also, I have found that some want to use this at the end of the service, kind of leaving a last visual-audio impression of the person's life.

Message: I always focus on the reality of Jesus and the hope his life and death has brought to reverse the curse. I also seek to remind the audience that God is the judge and not man, especially in the cases of an unbelieving relative or a suicide.

Musical Selection: Again, another song to kind of bring all things to conclusion. Whether it is performance oriented or congregational oriented.

Here would be a good time to interject some issues that arise throughout this process. One may be the choice of songs. I've been involved in funerals where the individual was not a practicing believer nor part of any specific congregation. Family members wanted music with a video that was not "religious." This again may challenge some congregations. I am glad to say the congregations where I've served have been open to such experiences. The songs that were selected were songs that still shared the sentiments that did not contradict our values as Jesus followers. So yes, in these moments, the value of sacredness in the sanctuary (which largely goes undefined) and the value of serving families mourning the loss of a loved one may compete. This is where staying close to congregational leadership and prayer can be helpful.

**Remuneration**

Another issue I've encountered is the issue of remuneration. There are some cultures where this is expected, some funeral homes include this in the price of the package for the family. Just recently, the funeral home informed me this was the case and I informed them that I would not be receiving the gift. Usually, I inform the family (if it is a direct inquiry by the family) that I am compensated as a pastor already and that this is my gift and honor to be invited into this moment.
However, this is not always the case. I often have to weigh the cultural component of accepting or rejecting versus the reality of what best serves the family. In those moments where I do accept, I use that money specifically for ministry needs. I know some pastors have a specific account where they deposit those funds. However, I am again under the conviction that it is not my money nor my ministry. This is about honoring people in a moment of high vulnerability in a way that both serves them and honors the God who took the towel.

Probably one of the most personal funerals I've experienced was held at a church in the San Francisco Bay Area where I served on the staff. The individual was a delightful young twenty-something who worked at an animated film studio. Instead of the more traditional sign-in books located in the lobby of our church, we allowed for the studio to locate throughout the lobby large easel's in anticipation that many from the studio community would attend. Along with these easel's, drawings and caricatures of various popular characters the young man had doodled during his time there were located through the lobby as well. Sure enough, as people began arriving (many from the studio), the easel's starting filling up with unbelievably detailed drawings of the popular characters, all with thinking or speaking bubbles expressing love for both the young man and his family. In attendance that day as well were executives from the studio.

The Message
Which leads to the final category (as well as issue) for funeral planning: the message. Having spoken at funerals that were not overtly religious and others that were very much so, I know that there is a wide variety of responses to this issue. Some will advocate very strongly an overtly evangelistic appeal made at some point during the message. Others will advocate a much more softened approach. I seek to try finding a middle ground. With members who have passed, where the primary community is the congregation, I would be much more "religious" in my approach. In places where the person had no congregational connection and/or no public indication of faith, I am much more cautious. Yet, I cannot deny the reality of Jesus and the Resurrection and make no bones about preaching it.

Our corollary to this is the issue of our state-of-death views and how to present those. In places where I know there is controversy in the family (and I've been in a few of those where members do not agree and in these moments can disagree vehemently), I am not going to make myself the center of attention by being controversial. However, there is not one funeral that I've done where I've not presented the texts from 1 Thessalonians. Those texts say far more than I could ever say at that precise moment and, I believe, open the door for the Holy Spirit to do his work.

Bringing Closure
One final learning that I've not done well in and see it as something I've ignored over the years. It is the issue of bringing some kind of closure to this chapter in the life of the community and the family. It is the means of "announcing" a change in relationship. The intensity of the relationship during this time of immediate and high grief requires a strong relational presence. However, that intensity of presence will not be sustainable and the family and friends will soon be continuing through the various stages of grief. So, as implied above, I attempt to contact the immediate family some time during the following week as a way of "exit"ing the process of the funeral. It is here where I can bring a copy of the recording of the service. Rather than make the last contact being the day of the service, I want to follow-up to bring about a more neutral exit. This process is one where my presence becomes diminished over time. The pre-existing support structures of the family begin to kick in and can provide stability once again. A new normal will be born.

A former Adventist had "wandered" into my office one day and we quickly struck up a distinct friendship. While he had not attended an Adventist church in decades, he had been brought up in the house of Adventists through his elementary school years. Over time I had the privilege of building a strong relationship with him and follow him into the baptistry as he and his wife were baptized. He experienced over the course of a year a remarkable journey away from the worship of self to the worship of this wonderful God he had met in a loving community. His family was so thoroughly embraced by our congregational community. They brought an enthusiasm and passion for this Jesus. It was remarkable.

About a year after his baptism he was diagnosed with cancer. Over the course of a few months, it became clear it was terminal. Sure enough, a few weeks later, he passed away. We had the privilege of conducting the service. Over the time
of his transformation, he had fallen in love with our praise team. He made it very clear to me that at his funeral, there wasn't going to be this kind of down-and-out tone to the service. He wanted to make it a time of celebration of the new life he had found in Jesus. And so, with band set up on the platform behind his casket, we opened the service with one of his favorite songs and sang the words with a whole new sense of the divine presence, "Come...now is the time to worship. Come, now is the time to give your heart. Come...just as you are to worship. Come, just as you are before your God. One day every tongue will confess You are God. One day every knee will bow. Still the greatest treasure remains for those who gladly choose you now." And in that moment, the divine mystery of worship at the funeral of a newly impassioned disciple of Jesus made perfect sense. What a gift!

*John Grys pastors the Burr Ridge and Naperville churches in Illinois*
Elizabeth Talbot, speaker director for the Jesus 101 Biblical Institute, has been selected to speak at the general session of the Pastors Experience, a gathering of pastors and their families, in Austin, Texas, June 28-July 1, 2015. Talbot is known for her brilliant exegetical preaching and for illustrating the metaphors of scripture with 3D visual object lessons (as well as her occasional ‘woo hoo!’). Talbot is one of dozens of confirmed speakers for the convention who will bring their best to the pastors of the NAD.

Elizabeth Talbot, most recently the associate speaker for the Voice of Prophecy, is now the Speaker/Director for the Jesus101 Biblical Institute, a new media ministry of the North American Division. She is a PhD (cand.) in Biblical studies, and travels throughout the US and internationally as a lecturer and revival/motivational speaker. Elizabeth is regularly featured in Hope Channel (Jesus101), LLBN (CrossTalk), 3ABNLatino (Jesus es TODO) and Esperanza TV (Cántico Nuevo). For additional information, go to the ministry’s website: www.jesus101institute.org. Among other articles and booklets, Elizabeth authored “Matthew: Prophecy Fulfilled,” “John: God Became Flesh,” “Luke: Salvation for All,” “Mark: Good News” and “Surprised by Love” published by Pacific Press. Elizabeth Viera Talbot was born in Argentina to the home of Adventist missionaries. Since her early childhood her parents instilled in her the love of Jesus and she always envisioned preaching and teaching as she gathered her dolls as an audience. After completing her Bachelors in music education, Elizabeth went on to work in the business world for many years in the accounting and managing departments. She earned a Master’s degree in Organizational Behavior at that time. During this period of approx. 15 years, she volunteered as a part-time youth pastor.

She was then invited by the Seventh-day Adventist church to become a full-time pastor which she gladly accepted as a call from God. She became a young adults/young families pastor and evangelist while earning her Master’s degree in Biblical studies. She has enjoyed evangelism in many forms. Eventually she became a senior pastor for several years and an adjunct Biblical Studies Professor. Elizabeth is married to Patrick Talbot, a Marriage and Family Therapist. Elizabeth’s main identity is her passion about the good news of Jesus Christ: “It’s like fire in my bones” she says, and she means it!
Pastor Jose Herminio Cortes Jr., was born in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. He is the husband of Joanne Maree Cortes, formerly Joanne M. Gillespie, a native of Sydney, Australia. They were married in Silver Spring, Maryland. Jose and Joanne are the blessed parents of Jose Herminio Cortes III, and Joel Benjamin Cortes; both were born in Long Island, New York.

Pastor Jose is a friend of God, who loves his family, a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist and a second generation Seventh-day Adventist Ordained Minister. A graduate of Washington Adventist University (Columbia Union College) and of the Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. He is presently pursuing a Doctor of Ministry Degree (D. Min). His pastoral experience began in 1992 in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area (Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists) where he served for 11 years, as Youth Pastor, Associate Pastor, Senior Pastor, and Associate Youth Director. There he led hundreds of people to Christ, through baptism and planted three new churches. He also served as an Adjunct Professor in the faculty of the Religion Department of his Alma Mater, Washington Adventist University (Columbia Union College). In September 23, 2000, he was ordained to the Gospel Ministry, in Silver Spring, Maryland.

In January 2003, having felt the call of God, Pastor Jose and Joanne accepted the invitation to go to the Greater New York are, where he led thousands of youth, young adults, and kids, as the Director of Adventist Youth Ministries for the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. In this post he has provided leadership, vision, and equipping to leaders in the areas of: Youth Evangelism, Small Groups, Adventurers, Pathfinders, Master Guides, Teens, Collegiate, Young Adults, Adventist Youth Emergency Services (AYES Corps), National Service Organization, Bible Bowl, and Camp. Other youth ministries have been created under his leadership, Youth Media Ministry and the Volunteer Health Corps. He also led the Development Team in the multi-million dollar master planning and renovation of Camp Berkshire.

On June 12, 2011, Pastor Jose was elected Youth Director of the Atlantic Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, during its regular Constituency Session. The Atlantic Union is the Administrative Headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Northeast of the United States and the country of Bermuda. It is composed by over 112,000 members, 535 churches, 73 schools, and 1 college campus, through the following six Conferences: Bermuda, Greater New York, New York, Northeastern, Northern New England, and Southern New England.

Pastor Jose, Joanne, Jose III and Joel Benjamin are a team, they minister together; you will hardly ever see one, without seeing the other three. Pastor Jose is grateful to God for His grace and for the risk God takes to entrust such important mission to a sinner. He believes that young people and adults need each other to finish the proclamation of the Gospel. He believes that the only way to keep the youth and young adults faithful to Jesus and in the church is to give them assurance of their salvation, hope in the Second Coming, and to keep them working on behalf of those who don’t have either, the assurance and the hope. Pastor Jose upholds the fact that Youth Ministries must happen daily at the local church; and definitely, not only within the walls of the church, but outside in the church’s community. He is a firm believer that Youth Ministries produce baptisms and faithful disciples to God and His church. If it doesn’t, it isn’t Adventist Youth Ministries. Pastor Jose is conscious that just as God used Joseph in Egypt, Esther in Susa, Daniel and the three Hebrews in Babylon, John the Baptist by the Jordan, and Timothy in Ephesus, God can also use him and each youth and young adult throughout the Northeast of the United States and Bermuda, in the twenty-first century.
New NAD Ministerial Associate joins to help focus on Evangelism

Pastor Jose Herminio Cortes, Jr. joins the North American Division team as an associate director for the North American Division Ministerial Department. Pastor Cortes, Jr. joins the NAD ministerial team to focus on transformational evangelism, discipleship, and outreach in the North American Division.

Cortes, Jr. replaces Shawn Boonstra who transitioned as the new director for the Voice of Prophecy media ministry.

Pastor Jose Herminio Cortes Jr., was born in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. He is the husband of Joanne Maree Cortes, formerly, Joanne M. Gillespie, a native of Sydney, Australia. They were married in Silver Spring, Maryland. Jose and Joanne are the blessed parents of Jose Herminio Cortes III, and Joel Benjamin Cortes; both were born in Long Island, New York.

Here is a brief interview with Jose Cortes, Jr.

What can you tell us about your role?

"We will be working together with our NAD Ministerial Team, Union and Conference Ministerial and Evangelism Directors, and Pastors in creating a shared vision for Transformational Evangelism in the territories of the North American Division. A comprehensive vision that includes anything that makes us pastors, our churches, and our awesome laity effective in sharing Jesus, not only through words but also through actions. A vision that involves the traditional but that does not exclude the innovative, we must be willing to try and to do anything that works to bring save people and empower them to become passionate and compassionate disciples of Jesus.

We will also work together in helping to create an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and compassion in our local churches throughout Bermuda, Canada, the United States, and the Guam-Micronesian islands. We want to see the people who accept Jesus and come to our churches stay, we need to treat them like Jesus would treat them, after all we are the Eyes, Heart, Hands, and Feet of Jesus in North America. If we do this, our membership retention will experience a boost.

Last but not least, we would like to see the different entities which work directly in Evangelism and Outreach Training, whether an official church ministries or supporting ministries, working in harmony, not necessarily in unison, but together with the same goals. It is OK to go about it in different ways, as long as we intentional about going in the same direction."

What are you looking forward to?

"Leaving the Atlantic Union, after a great 12 years of ministry in the territory, will be hard; however, we are really not leaving, the great thing about this new appointment is that our family has just grown. We look forward to meeting more colleagues in ministry, as well as many more brothers and sisters, young and old, and partnering together in making our churches relevant centers of salvation, healing, compassion and influence, which cannot be ignore by those in need of Jesus and His saving grace. I look forward to the day when our church will be known for our compassion and love for humanity and their salvation rather than for the things we oppose.”