Why Not Try This? - New Year’s Resolutions for Your Worship Ministry

By Nicholas Zork

There is something about a new beginning - on a calendar or otherwise - that inspires us. We are invigorated by an opportunity to “do better this time around.” We all know, of course, that January 1 rarely ends up being the watershed moment we had envisioned. But making New Year’s resolutions continues to seem like a reasonable idea. We realize that there are at least two or three simple things we could do every day - exercise, chip away at that long-term project, read the Scriptures - that would drastically change our lives. So what happens between January 1 and our failure by the end of February (or, more likely, January 4)?

The reality is that even the most important and least time-consuming activities are impossible in a life that is already too full. Looking at your worship ministry, here are two things I suggest you resolve to remove. This intentional inaction will not only create needed space in your personal life but help you prioritize in your ministry as well:

1. Give yourself and your worship team several weeks of extravaganza-free worship gatherings. The Advent and Christmas Seasons are generally the busiest in the church year. Between special events and all the additional work that goes into seasonal worship services, December is hardly a vacation month for church leaders and musicians. With little time for restful renewal, the human resources in your leadership team have likely been depleted. The ecology of a worship ministry cannot
sustain the effort required in high liturgical seasons. Enjoy a few weeks of simplicity as a matter of ecological ethics and justice. In the process, you might just discover things you can permanently remove.

2. Set aside at least one Sabbath morning to simply participate in your community's worship gathering with no leadership responsibilities. If the intrinsic value of restorative rest is not reason enough to take a break, view it as an essential learning exercise as well. Those of us who are always leading from the platform need to be reminded of what worship is actually like for participants in the pew. And more importantly, we need to practice a truth that is obvious but sometimes overlooked: worship is an encounter with God, not with us. Worship ministry is important, but we are not necessary mediators of God's gracious presence. God wants to use all of us, but Jesus is the true worship leader who draws people to himself (John 12:32). As we take time to rest in the sufficiency of God's work, we can relearn the true, intrinsic value of what it means to be human - to be beloved daughters and sons of God. Sometimes we have to set aside our "to do" lists to recognize the magnitude of what we already have.

Share your thoughts in the Facebook dialogue.

Soul Winning - GYC Annual Convention Wraps up in Seattle

More than 2,500 young missionaries boarded 50 buses on Dec. 30 and blanketed Seattle, one of the most secular cities in North America, with more than 25,000 flyers. This outreach activity was part of the grassroots gathering of the annual Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC) convention which drew thousands to Seattle, Dec. 28, 2012 to Jan. 1, 2013. This conference, characterized by its leaders as the largest youth-led movement within Adventism, took the theme of Revolution to encourage Christ-filled believers to define culture rather than letting it define them - hence the large scale community outreach effort on Dec. 30. The youth were encouraged to take the same spirit home with them to their communities throughout North America and around the world. Read more at the GYC website or on their Facebook page.

Momentum - 2012 Newsletter Stats

The WordPress.com stats helper monkeys prepared a 2012 annual report for this blog.
Here’s an excerpt:

4,329 films were submitted to the 2012 Cannes Film Festival. This blog had 41,000 views in 2012. If each view were a film, this blog would power 9 Film Festivals.

Click here to see the complete report.

**Changed Lives - Excitement in Jesus**

by Byron Corbett, Pastor of the *Spokane Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church*

I met Dena Stewart (pronounced DEE-na) and her daughter Deanna a little over two years ago. They came a few times to our reaping series in the fall of 2010. As we visited with them, we discovered they had become Seventh-day Adventists about 15 years. Unfortunately, after a couple of years in the church, they got discouraged by things happening both in their family and in the church, and with no one responding to their cries for help, they left the faith. But the Holy Spirit kept working on them, and they finally began searching for God again. After our series, Carol Bryan, our Bible Worker Coordinator at the time, began studies with them, and they attended our church sporadically. However, the pressures of life got in the way, the studies were discontinued, and eventually their attendance at church stopped as well.

Then they got the brochure advertising the new series we did this fall called, "Destroy Debt and Find Freedom." That brochure aroused Deanna’s interest, and this time they attended almost every one of the meetings. Not only did the Christian financial principles open their eyes, but this time the Adventist message captured their hearts as well. Jesus became real to them once again and faith began to revive. They have not missed a Sabbath attending church since, and both Dena and Deanna are preparing to be rebaptized in the new year. Anyone who talks to them can sense a new faith and excitement in Jesus, and a new determination to walk with Him until He comes to take them to the New Earth.

**H.K.W.H.T.A. - Sam Levenson**

For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.
For lovely eyes, look for the good in others.
For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.
For beautiful hair, let a child run their fingers through it once a day.
For poise, walk with the knowledge that you never walk alone.
People, more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed. Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you will find one at the end of each of your arms.
As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself and the other for helping others.

~ Sam Levenson

**Upcoming Events - NW ASI Chapter Convention and WestPoint 2013**

**Northwest ASI Chapter Convention Set for Seaside**

The Adventist-laymen’s Services & Industries (ASI) Northwest Chapter convention has been scheduled for May 2-5, 2013 in Seaside, Ore. The keynote speaker will be Randy Maxwell, well-known author and current Kuna (Idaho) Church pastor.

**WestPoint 2013**
We welcome Aboard WestPoint 2013! The Queen Mary Hotel, Long Beach, California $99.00 room rate. Internet, parking, and breakfast included!

We’re getting excited about WestPoint 2013 March 31 to April 3, 2013. You will hear great speakers and enjoy this fabulous venue. And the fellowship and networking with others who share your passion for a "finished work” of the Kingdom is priceless. Get all the details at our event website AdventistWestPoint.

The Queen Mary Hotel is our destination for 2013. In this historic setting of a literally floating hotel you will be blessed from the very first night when Elder Dan Jackson, NAD President, is our keynote speaker for opening night. He'll be staying by for the next morning for a more informal question and answer time with us. Not to be missed.

The rooms will be snapped up quickly so don’t be disappointed-make your reservations today. You can find everything you need to know at our website AdventistWestPoint.

Bradford C. Newton, D.Min.
Executive Secretary/Ministerial Secretary
Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Media & Adventist Benefits - Using Social Media to Build Your Church

In this video Vicente Lopez, member of the YG church in Arlington Texas, shares how he uses social media to build an awareness and appreciation of his congregation in his social media world. This is just one example of how media can be used to strengthen adventist congregations in North America. Using media is one of the building blocks that the NAD would like to use to help build up local churches in North America.

Lifelong Learning - Blood-dimmed Tide

by Bill Knott

Newtown is actually a very old place, made older now by the persistent sounds of weeping. A tercentennial milestone just celebrated, the small community seems closer to 2,000 years old as the sights and sounds of Nativity are mingled with the horror of brutish, violent death inflicted on children.

"A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more" (Matt. 2:18, NKJV).

On the eleventh day before Christmas, and just two weeks before the December 28 Christian liturgical commemoration of the first-century Massacre of the Innocents in Bethlehem, a disturbed 20-year-old christened with the name of the first human being took his mother's sporting guns, killed her, then took the lives of 26 others, 20 of them 6- and 7-year-olds.

We are appalled. We cannot understand.
Weeks later, our culture is still reeling, rattled to its core by the unspeakable horror visited upon the youngest members of our community. The starkness of the imagery is unforgettable: solemn hearses passing beneath festive Christmas decorations; churches filled at Christmas to hear Continue Reading...

**Resources - Called to Launch Soon**

A Digital Magazine for Adventist Clergy

The NAD Ministerial Department plans to launch a new digital magazine for Adventist clergy in North America in first quarter 2013. This electronic magazine will be available at no charge for all the pastors in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist church to download on their iPad, Android, and Kindle Fire tablet devices according to Dave Gemmell, Associate Director of NAD Ministerial.

**CALLED** will deliver timely text articles, video, audio, and web interactivity. The new delivery system will replace the Pastor's DVD which has served pastors of the NAD for the past ten years. Gemmell anticipates that **CALLED** will get pastors the resources they need faster, and more economically. "With 60% of pastors currently owning iPads or other tablets, the time is right to make the move," says Gemmell. Read more...

**Health & Temperance - Health for a New Year**

Now is a great time to start a regular exercise program. In a 10-year study, researchers followed 654,827 people and tracked their exercise habits. Researchers found that the life-expectancy of participants increased as exercise time increased. People who walked 75 minutes each week lived 1.8 years longer, those who walked 30 minutes per day lived 3.4 years longer, and those who walked 1 hour per day lived 4.2 years longer. You can read more about the study at Wellsource.com. To start a regular exercise program, make sure to set a specific, manageable goal and use a variety of daily reminders. WebMD.com has some more great tips for starting your new program.

**Advent Movements - Torkelsen, Staddon, Schreven, Birch**

**Remembering Max C. Torkelsen (1926-2012)**

Max C. Torkelsen, longtime husband, father, church pastor, educator and administrator, passed peacefully to his rest at home in Portland, Ore., on Saturday evening, Dec. 8. He was 86. Torkelsen's service for the Seventh-day Adventist Church began in a five-church district in North Dakota, moved into educational work as a principal and superintendent, and continued into conference administrative posts. He served as North Pacific Union Conference executive secretary from 1971-1974, and as president from 1976-1980. In later years he was a world church general vice president. He is survived by his wife, Ardis, sons Max and Monte, daughter Myrna Smith, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Services will be private, but information on how to direct memorial gifts and condolence cards are available online. A Facebook page, Honoring the Life of Max C. Torkelsen Sr., provides an opportunity to share thoughts and memories with the family online.

**Staddon will be New Montana VP**

Sharon Staddon will join the Montana Conference office at the end of January as vice president for finance. She replaces Ray Jimenez who recently moved east to work with the General Conference. Staddon and her husband, Theron (pictured here) are moving from the Alaska Conference where she has held a similar position since 2007. She brings a wealth of experience to Montana, including owning her own CPA company, serving as a financial officer for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency and working as a General Conference auditor.
Leo Schreven Remembered

Our prayers are with the Leo Schreven family, following his death at the age of 51. Schreven is survived by his wife Tamara, daughter Cierra, parents Leonardus and Johanna, brothers John, Herman, sister Nellie, their spouses and children. With his All Power Ministries based in Kettle Falls, Wash., Leo Schreven was widely known for evangelistic meetings and seminars he presented around the world.

Alf Birch Remembered

Alf Birch, long time Northwest pastor and administrator, passed away Friday, Jan. 11, 2013, after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer. Birch, who retired as Oregon Conference president in 2001, was serving as a part-time associate pastor at the Meadow Glade Church in Battle Ground, Wash. Originally from South Africa, he came to the Northwest in 1989 and held various positions for the remainder of his career in both the Oregon and North Pacific Union conferences. A memorial service will be held at the Meadow Glade Church on Sabbath, Feb. 16 at 3 p.m. His family invites you to share personal memories of Birch at this Facebook memorial page. Read more about him at GleanerOnline.org.