

CONNECTION

A person is silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky, juggling several red balls. The scene is set on a beach with waves in the background. The sky is filled with colorful clouds, and a bright light source creates a lens flare effect.

JUNE 2016 ■ VOLUME 35 ■ ISSUE 1

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE

***Pastors:
Different Focuses.
Different Personalities.
Same Mission.***

Message From The President

BOB CUNDIFF



WELCOME TO THE NEW CONNECTION MAGAZINE!

We are so pleased to introduce you to this new format for the Conference CoNNEction. The theme for the first edition in this new format is about pastors. In these pages, you will find a celebration of the pastor that is informative, honest and engaging.

We will answer questions such as, what does it mean to be a pastor? What is so special about those upon whom we confer this title? How does one become a pastor? What is a pastor's training like? Finally, we will address the issue of how to get a better pastor.

Though the Seventh-day Adventists' manual for ministers says that ministry requires "the heart of a dove and the skin of a crocodile," the truth is that pastors are still real people with hearts that ache,

article continued on pg. 14

THE SECRET TO GETTING A BETTER PASTOR



Some years ago, I was interviewing at a church when an inquisitive member asked the inevitable question, "What are your strengths?" This had always been the interview question I hated the most because I did not know how to answer it without feeling as if I was bragging. However, this time I was ready. I pulled out a list I had compiled of all the things a pastor is expected to be proficient at. The list looked something like...preacher, teacher, theologian, supervisor, historian, AV technician, administrator, counselor (pre-marital, marital, family, parenting, divorce, conflict, teen, drug abuse, physical abuse, finance), facilities manager, office manager, statesmen, Bible worker, leader, conflict resolution specialist, chaplain, manager, vision caster, maintenance man, evangelist, writer, IT specialist, finance wizard, boss, servant, writer, community relations specialist and disciple maker.

The church was somewhat taken back when I told them that was just the short list and I had compiled it in less than 5 minutes on my way to the interview. I

assured them that I could write a longer list if I were to sit down and give it serious thought.

Then I said; "Now if you think I am good at all that stuff, then you are either very kind or naive. The truth is there are several things on the list I am good at, a bunch of stuff I'm OK at, and a several things I'm lousy at." I then went on to explain that I was interested in working with a church, a board and a team of elders that would be fully engaged and help round out the ministry that would take place if I were to come. They seemed happy with that answer, and my wife and I enjoyed nine wonderful years in that congregation.

As I reflect on that experience and the many roles, skills and proficiencies that are expected of the pastor, I have concluded that there is not another profession, which straddles so many professional disciplines and requires such a varied skill set. I mean, if you work for the widget factory you are expected to know about widgets. Outside of widget world, it is acceptable to be a simple layperson, and others

article continued on pg. 12

GOD PROVIDES

Trevor Schlisner
NNEC Education
Superintendent

**Brothers and sisters, why worry?
“But seek first the kingdom of
God and His righteousness, and
all these things shall be added
to you.” Matthew 6:33**

The phone call I dread is the beloved teacher who has decided to move to another school or has decided to retire. I understand that we are all replaceable, but it is a tough pill to swallow when a first-class teacher decides to move on. It is not just that the teacher is moving, but about everything they bring to the table - stability, consistency, patience, professionalism, energy, excitement, work ethic, and most importantly, a Christ-like character. The NNEC education system is losing for the upcoming school year what seems to be an abnormal amount of full-time and part-time employees. To my colleagues who are in this transition, I want to extend my heart-felt thank you

for your dedication to God's children. The constituent churches, NNEC office, and families you have ministered to are eternally grateful for your daily sacrifices for the cause of Jesus Christ.

I often have to go back to Matthew 6 as a reminder not to worry about finding an outstanding teacher. I think of stories from friends, acquaintances, or even my own experience with teachers that did great good and great harm. The influence of the teacher has won many to the Lord but has also been an obstacle as well. That is why the book of James gives a warning to those considering this calling by stating, “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” James 3:1.

I received that dreaded call about two months ago, when Temple Reed, teacher at Brownell Mountain School (Williston, VT), called to let me know that she would not be returning next school year. Temple, born and raised right here in NNEC, is considered by her peers, students, constituents and this office as first-class as they come. Her



planning, curriculum development, teaching, activities, field trips, and church programs are a testament to her love for her students and God. I actually received a similar call from Temple a year ago, and after much prayer, she clearly felt that the Holy Spirit convicted her to stay another year. God had a plan to fill our future needs.

Diane Gardner, a veteran teacher for over 30 years, knew something was missing in her life. Through the ministry of Pastor Bruce Wilkerson and the church family, Diane became a baptized member of the Williston church. Convicted to take a year off from teaching to do whatever the Lord laid on her heart, and unable to escape her gift of teaching, she offered her expertise to Temple for the entire year. Like Temple, the kids simply adored Diane, and she has been an incredible blessing to the Brownell Mountain School (BMS). With Temple stepping away, we believe that God provided Diane at just the right time, as she has recently accepted the head teacher position at BMS for the 2016-2017 school year. What an answer to prayer! Why worry, God provides!



Diane Gardner (L), Temple Reed (R)



SPIRITUALITY MISUNDERSTOOD

Ted Huskins
Conference
Executive Secretary

Pastoral ministry is widely recognized as one of the three most difficult professions alongside University President and Hospital CEO. One element that makes a pastor's job particularly difficult is when members celebrate a distorted view of spirituality.

What does real spirituality look like? How is it quantified and reproduced from one believer to the next? That should be our goal for our church, should it not? All too often, however, we misunderstand true spirituality, and what we end up celebrating and reproducing is anything but true, Godly character.

Author Sheldon Vanaucken wrote, "The best argument for Christianity is Christians, their joy, their certainty and their hope." He goes on to write, "The best argument against Christianity is Christians when they are



somber, joyless, self-righteous, smug, narrow and repressive."

Sometimes Christians and even entire churches get off center and they actually celebrate people as spiritual giants who are in truth devoid of real spirituality. In my 28 years of ministry, I have seen many of those people, upheld as spiritual icons and elected to leadership positions within their church who should not be because they are examples of spirituality misunderstood. The following represent some hypothetical characterizations of those individuals.

She was the most feared person in her congregation. She was controlling, manipulative and scheming. She involved herself in the lives of people but she really did not love them, she only wanted information so that she could control and manipulate and gossip. Everyone knew that she wore the pants in her family, but ironically, she loudly

proclaimed the idea that men should be rulers in their household. In her home, her husband was the boss because she said he was the boss. Heaven help him if he did not boss the way she thought he should boss. She submitted him right into a miserable life. Her church praises her for involvement and spiritual leadership. Those she does not chase off seek to emulate her.

He fancies himself a writer, theologian and defender of the truth. He publishes an "independent paper" and sends out videos and emails in which he presents himself as the only righteous man in Israel. Those who disagree with him are denounced as ungodly or misguided. He alone is a voice of unadulterated truth. Though knowledgeable, he has become arrogant. He prefers to believe the worst about those who disagree with him and he makes his livelihood out of fear mongering, slander and by twist-

article continued on pg. 11

THE GRAY WAVE IS COMING: IT SHOULD FOCUS US ON OUR MISSION

The CoNNEction Editor



About half of the pastors in the North American Division (NAD) will reach retirement age in the next ten years, creating a “pastor squeeze” that will affect the entire Division. The impact of this “gray wave” may be even more strongly felt in the Northern New England Conference.

The retirement age for full Social Security benefits in 2026 is 67, and about half of the roughly 4600 ordained, commissioned and licensed pastors in NAD will reach that age in the next ten years. If all the pastors who reach retirement age actually retire, that would mean some 2300 positions would open up, creating opportunities for young pastors. The problem, though, is that the division is graduating new pastors from seminary at a rate of about 100 per year, or 1000 over the ten years. This is less than half of what is needed and creates a potential short-

age of some 1300 pastors. Put another way, pastoral retirements and graduations are currently so mismatched that the division may be headed for a situation where almost 30 percent of pastoral positions are unfilled.

Nevertheless, hold on - do not throw your hands up in the air just yet. You see, it is highly unlikely that the division will ever get to such an extreme situation. Gaps have a way of being at least partially filled. Some older pastors who have reached retirement age will stay on a few years longer out of love for the Lord’s work. Lay pastors will step in to fill some part of the gap. Recruiting efforts and expansion efforts may create a bumper crop of seminary graduates for a time. Still, all of these responses combined probably will not completely close a gap as large as the one looming, and the impact will likely be

significant in the Northern New England Conference (NNEC).

When there is a shortage of pastors, competition for pastors increases (actually, it has already increased) and NNEC is at a disadvantage.

The first reason is that most of the conference is rural, meaning that pastors are assigned multiple churches. Some pastors have four churches, meaning a heavy travel schedule for preaching, board meetings, prayer meetings, Bible studies, etc. In a competitive situation, young pastors just graduating from seminary will be looking at NNEC’s rural churches alongside other opportunities where they will have one or perhaps two churches and will spend far less time traveling.

The second reason NNEC is at a disadvantage is because over the years, pay freezes necessitated by budget shortfalls in the conference have added up and now NNEC lags the division pay standard by a couple percentage points. A young pastor who is assessing multiple opportunities will ask himself why he should take a heavier workload for less money.

So, what should the sisterhood of churches that make up the conference do in response to this challenge? The answer is both simple and encouraging: be the kind of churches that pastors dream about leading. If we do this, older pastors will not quickly leave a dream job here and younger pastors will stand in line to join the conference.

How do we become “dream churches” for pastors? We become dream churches by each of us living for Christ and pursuing our mission of proclaiming His love to our communities. If we do this, we become:

- More outward looking and mission-focused. In other words,

article continued on pg. 11

TWICE BLESSED

Coreen Irving
Harrison, Maine Church



It is a hard thing to see your pastor go on to a new challenge. Such was the case for the Harrison, Maine and North Conway, New Hampshire churches last year when Pastor Stanley and Tammy Luntungan left to pursue his Bachelor's degree in Theology at Andrews University. We miss them both and we pray God will continue to guide them as they advance His kingdom with their devoted service.

Nevertheless, in their leaving there was also a blessing in store because Pastor Jesse Santos, wife Amy, and daughter Emily came to serve the Lord in the district. Pastor Jesse is a Master of Divinity graduate from Andrews University. Previously, he was the pastor of the Warsaw & Wolcottville Churches in Indiana. Pastor Jesse is ardent in evangelism. Both the Harrison and North Conway churches are quite blessed to have Pastor Jesse as their leader, and the Santos family as a part of their church family. In pastors Luntungan and Santos, our churches have been twice blessed.

POWER OF PRAISE – THE JOURNEY TO WHOLENESS

Cheryl Johnson
Concord, NH Church

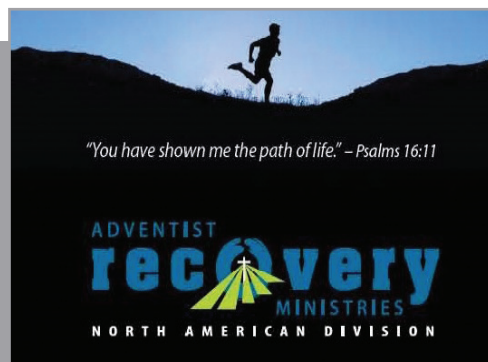
Power of Praise (POP) is a successful outreach ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Concord, New Hampshire. Within the POP programming, "The Journey to Wholeness" program has been developed, which is a Christ-centered "12-Step" type recovery group. Guidelines of the group were adopted from Adventist Recovery Ministries of the North American Division of Seventh-Day Adventists, (ARMin-NAD).

Adventist Recovery Ministries will educate church leadership around topics such as prevention of addictions among all age groups, emotional healing, healthy relationships, the process of forgiveness, using this "12-steps" type program "The Journey to Wholeness."

Leadership for 2016 is Eddy Travis (Personal Ministries Leader and Adventist Recovery Minis-

try Coordinator for the Concord Church) along with Mark Lacerte, Personal Ministries Assistant. Cynthia Travis and Amy McEntee are also ministry assistants who have been certified as facilitators for the program. Eddy works closely with Pastor Cliff Gleason in order to keep Personal Ministries programs relevant and timely for the Concord church family as well as members of the community.

"The Journey to Wholeness" group meets on the second and fourth Sabbaths of every month. The program begins with uplifting music and praise at 12:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of the Concord church. We are pleased to offer this program to all who want to partake in the good news of healing and victory over sinful addictions through the Power of Jesus Christ.



Northern New England Conference
Prayer Ministries
Presents:

"And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the World for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
Jesus Christ
Matthew 24:14



Pastor
Carl Behrmann
Northern New England Conference



"This Gospel"

The **ONLY GOSPEL**
that has the power
to prepare
humans for translation...

Don't Miss This
Powerful Prayer Retreat Experience

Print Registration form at
www.nnecprayerministries.com

Oct 6-9, 2016
Camp Lawroweld,

Pastor
Gary Belhomme
Maritime Conference





SO, WHAT DOES MY PASTOR DO ALL DAY?

Bob Cundiff
Conference President

I have heard this question a thousand times. "Pastor, what do you do all day?" My standard response is, "Which day?" By that, I mean, give me a specific day and I will answer your question. A specific day is necessary because every day is so vastly different (See my introductory story in *The Secret to Getting a Better Pastor*). However, the question is an honest one and deserves an honest answer. Let me take a stab at it by sharing some of the highlights of the pastor's job description that has been suggested by the Atlantic Union Conference.

The job description includes the five following major sections:

1.) Personal Spirituality - I like that this comes first. It seems to communicate the importance of the "First Things First" principle. First is spirituality; not performance, or preaching, or

teaching or any of the myriad of things we expect from the pastor. In truth, if the spiritual component is properly developed and is in its proper place then many of the other elements naturally align themselves in a way that leads to effective ministry.

2.) Family Life - Once again, I like that family comes before performance. This is paramount if the pastor is going to maintain a solid marriage and raise children who are not angry because they feel dad or mom placed them on the proverbial "altar of sacrifice" known as the ministry.

3.) Personal and Professional Growth - Pastors are expected to be lifelong learners. Rather than give you everything you need for a career in the ministry, formal theological training is designed to teach the pastor how to study and how to stay current with the theological, cultural and

academic trends that are relevant to ministry.

4.) Effective Ministry - This section is broken down into four areas.

- Preaching and Teaching
- Nurturing the congregation
- Soul winning and church growth
- Inspiring leadership and administration.

Here is where we find the details of what most members think of when they think of their pastor. Each of these four sections has numerous bullet points that flesh out how each section is best accomplished.

5.) Professional Ethics for the Pastor - In this part we find words and phrases like, confidentiality, doctrinal purity, honesty and fairness, managing relationships with colleagues and administration, and even a reminder from Matt 7:12 "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them..."

The job description of the pastor can be used to bludgeon the pastor who is struggling or simply not liked by a segment of his or her congregation. I hope you will not use it that way. Nevertheless, for the sake of discussion let us say that a member finds a particular point here that is not their pastor's strong suit. How should they respond? Perhaps this statement from the preamble of the job description would be helpful. "Each pastor is special and unique, and should have the freedom and encouragement to reach fulfillment and joy in ministry." This statement hints to the fact that pastors have different groupings of spiritual gifts. That is a polite way of saying that each one will have their strengths and weaknesses. As such, pastors will do their work differently and will

article continued on pg. 12

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PASTOR

The CoNNEction Editor



So what do pastors do with their time?

To answer that question, we asked two of our pastors - Cliff Gleason of the Concord, New Hampshire district and Cornell Preda of the St. Johnsbury, Vermont district, to write down an average weekday for this year. Here is their averaged response (averaged - not added).

6:00 am - 8:00 am - Personal devotion and absorbing current events

8:00 am - 9:30 am - Read and write emails, start to phone members about projects, concerns, committees, etc.

9:30 am - 10:00 am - Respond to or initiate phone calls, respond to requests for prayer from church members and community members, etc.

10:00 am - 11:00 am - Visitation to members and shut-ins, community Bible studies

11:00 am - 12:00 pm - Pray through church membership list and church prayer list

12:00 pm - 3:00 pm - Lunch, if there is time, followed by preparation for sermons, board meetings, funerals, weddings, baptisms, counsel-

ing sessions, children's stories and school devotionals. Fitted into this time is research and prayer on what to say to the person who is walking away from God, etc., sometimes counseling marriages, pre-marriage couples, youth with trauma, adults in depression, etc.

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Prepare for evening Bible study group or give community Bible studies

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm - Continue sermon preparation

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm - Drive to Bible Study Group

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm - Bible Study Group

8:15 pm - 9:15 pm - Drive Home

9:45 pm - Go to bed

In addition, where there are gaps to do so, pastors must read through materials that people have questions about, answer calls from the public, attend interdenominational community meetings, attend or interact with men's ministry, women's ministry, their Bible worker, and do anything that the deacons might have forgotten to do. Oh and where they can wedge it in they try to get some exercise.

HOW PASTORS BECOME PASTORS

The CoNNEction Editor

First, a pastor is called of God to serve Him. Every pastor has a story about the moment they knew they had been called of God. My moment came during an after-dinner discussion in the home of Pastor Leon Twitchell in Bryant Pond, Maine. It was 2007; I was 47 years old and had not previously served as a pastor. Leon was talking about the difficulties he was having finding a lay pastor to serve at the Harrison, Maine, church. To my astonishment, words came out of my mouth and they sounded like “have them call me. I’ll do it.” Now, nine years later, the Lord has guided my path and I am serving as a departmental director in the conference. I am joyfully working for the Lord but if you had told me ten years ago that this is how things would work out, I never would have believed you.

The typical path to pastoral ministry for a younger candidate is a four-year bachelor’s degree in religion followed by a 1-year internship. These four years are then followed by 2 years of seminary training to acquire the MDIV (Masters of Divinity) followed by three more years in the field. This ten-year track then position the pastor as a candidate for ordination.

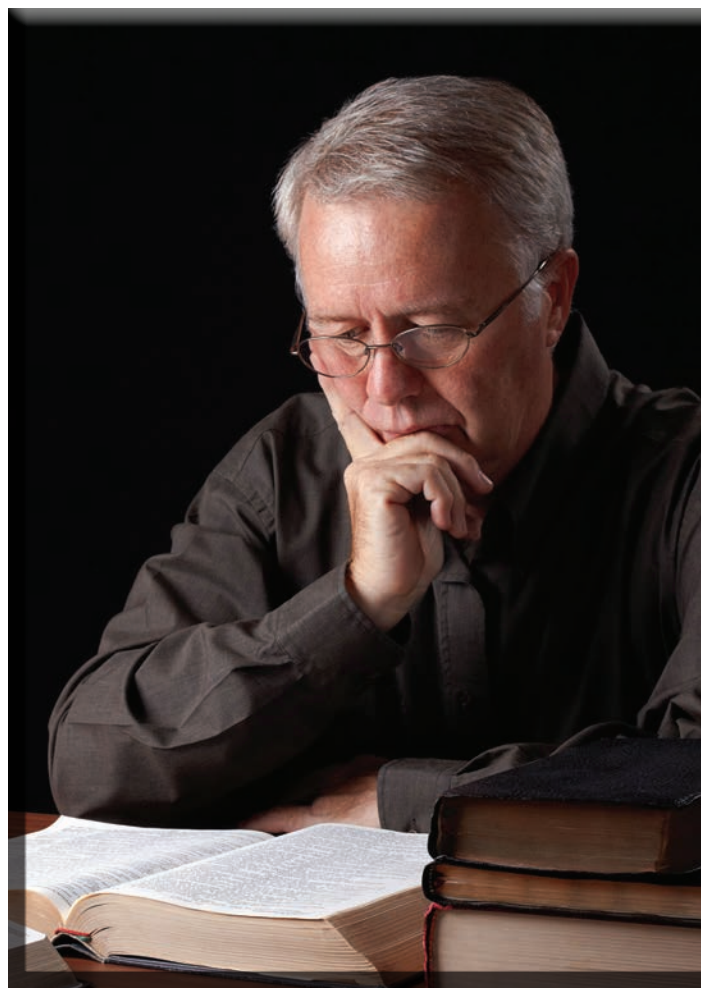
Those who sense a call to ministry later in life will likely follow a different track. First, they need to convince a conference ministerial director and president that they have been called to serve. That is not always easy, nor should it be, but let us say they and the Lord work it out. One option would be for the conference to bring them

in as a lay pastor. This is the most basic pastoral position and it usually has no ordination or license to go with it. Quite often, a lay pastor is a bi-vocational pastor, which is to say that the pastor has a regular job that is either part-time or full-time, and is a pastor as well. Sometimes lay pastors will serve for years or decades and sometimes for a limited time, filling a gap between pastors, for instance. Sometimes lay pastors will plant a church and serve until the church grows enough to become part of a district.

The next option open to mid-career pastors is a pastoral position that is served while undergoing training. Usually this would mean that the pastor is part of the MAPMIN program - the Masters in Pastoral Ministry program - offered at regional sites by Andrews University. Our own conference office hosts the program for the Atlantic Union. The MAPMIN consists of a series of two-week intensive courses (with lots of take-home assignments) offered twice a year. During those two weeks, the meeting rooms in the conference are filled with pastors who have traveled from throughout the north-east for the classes. For those with a college degree, the MAPMIN Masters allows people called from other occupations to become an ordained pastor. The entire program usually takes four years to complete. This is a good thing

because there is an increasing demand for pastors (see the “Gray Wave” article on page 5).

Nevertheless, whatever the path taken to serve, the important thing about pastors is that they are a people called of God to fulfill a special purpose for Him. The Lord Himself has appointed each, whether a bi-vocational lay pastor or a seminarian with a doctorate, to a special series of tasks, and each will be the constant target of Satan’s roadblocks, torments and snares. Your pastor is deserving of your prayerful support because the task is so great and the hurdles so common. Next time you see your pastor, they will light up if you are able to tell them “I prayed for you today!”



SEEKER PROJECT LAUNCHED

Scott Christiansen



After more than a year of preparation and steady work, the Seeker Project has finally launched. The Seeker Project is an innovative evangelism effort pioneered by NNEC with funding from the Union and Division. The concept behind the project is simple; local church members in their communities proclaim the Word of the Lord. The actual carrying out of this concept is quite a bit more complicated.

When a church joins the Seeker Project, the first thing that happens is that a video team sets up at the church and records some dozen church members giving eighteen 20-minute Bible studies (written by Ty Gibson) at various locations around the church. Before the Bible study, the church members introduce themselves and makes comments about how long they have lived in the area, what they do for a living, etc. The church ends up with a whole

series of excellent Bible studies given by and for local people. These Bible studies are placed on a website specific to that individual church. The website also has a number of other features, such as links to local sermons, links to additional study materials, a virtual tour of the local Adventist school, etc.

However, the project does not end with the creation of a website. In fact, the website is not even the main feature of the project. The main feature of the project is an 18-month social-network evangelism campaign that is powered by the Bible study videos. One video is placed onto electronic media, such as a DVD or flash drive, and accompanying that video is an introduction of the study by the local pastor, who also invites people watching to call or write him if they have any questions. Church members then commit to distributing X copies of Bible study #1 in the first month to members of their social network (friends, neighbors, casual contacts, etc.), then again distributing X copies of Bible study #2 in the second month, and so on through the full 18-month campaign, when they finally distribute Bible study #18. Each of the DVDs points viewers to the website to access all Bible studies and additional material.

The project proclaims the word of God and claims the promise that His word will not return to Him void. It also intentionally highlights the members and pastor of the local church and features videos shot inside the church, all of which helps familiarize members of the community with the church and church



family. Finally, the effort positions the pastor as a community spiritual resource and encourages people to call or write him directly with any questions they might have.

Preparation at each church for the video shoot is intense and the shoot itself usually takes two days, with several more days spent editing video. For several months, churches in both conferences have been engaging in video shoots and now the work on the website itself is complete, allowing churches to begin their evangelism campaigns in earnest. Over the next two years numerous churches are expected to join the project, which itself will probably go through several refinements as learnings are applied and revisions made.

To see the websites of the churches that are engaged in the program so far and see how it works, go to www.connectwithchrist.com. As the project director, I anticipate that when churches are fully participating, as many as ten percent of its members will be giving video Bible studies to their communities, and a much higher percentage of members will be distributing the studies to their social networks. That is very exciting because "the word of God does not return to Him void" (Isaiah 55:11).

The Gray Wave...

article continued from pg. 5

we are focused on telling the world of salvation through Christ and His soon return. We should be doing this creatively and stubbornly, even in the face of an apathetic response.

- More focused on Christ and, as a result, more joyful. We are on the last leg of a painful journey that humanity began in the Garden of Eden. Soon and very soon, this journey will be over and we will get to meet our Savior face to face!

- More in accord with one another. We will grow more and more closely aligned as we focus more on our mission in our communities, and as on Christ as our example. Frictions and disagreements will become less and less noticeable and we will stop asking pastors to arbitrate petty disagreements (something they really, really, hate doing).

What is striking about this short list is that all the items on it are things we are supposed to be doing anyway as a function of growing closer to Christ. And this growth in relationship is mostly on a personal level. So, in the end, to create a dream job for pastors in NNEC, what we as individuals really need to do is doggedly pursue our relationship with Christ, and this relationship will affect our churches, which will affect our communities.

Would it really make a difference to pastors if everyone in the conference were keenly focused on Christ and our mission in our communities? Ask your pastor.

Spirituality Misunderstood

article continued from pg. 4

ing the words of scripture and prophecy. Many think of him as a spiritual leader.

He is an angry man. He is angry with his wife, his children,

the people he works with and the people he goes to church with. He fights and argues about everything from points of doctrine to which janitorial option the church chooses. His main reason for listening to the sermon is not to see where he might encounter God or need to seek repentance in his own life, no; he listens to sermons to find their flaws or areas where he might attack the pastor. In fact, he has found fault with every pastor the church has ever had and has made it his personal mission to discredit each one of them. People outside the church will not tolerate him but inside the church, his obnoxious behavior is interpreted as zeal for truth where he is upheld as a paragon of virtue.

She has been in the church all her life and her most obvious character attribute is a complaining spirit. She complains about the troubles of her life, her health, her neighbors, and her children who do not visit her. She complains about the pastor and his wife. She complains about change. In fact, anytime someone mentions doing anything she complains that it will be too expensive and is unnecessary or that it will not work. If anyone brings a guest to church, she complains that they are not dressed appropriately or that they brought a coffee container to church. Her icy attitude makes everyone feel uncomfortable and later she says, "I don't think it is right to fellowship with these people who don't know the truth." Many in the church uphold her as being righteous.

I am not troubled by the fact that there are people like that. I am not even troubled that people like that are in church. That is what church is for, to help people who struggle with sin, problems, and brokenness. What troubles me is that we celebrate these types of individuals

as paragons of virtue. They are upheld as being spiritual examples for the church. Spirituality wrongly understood produces people who are smug, self-righteous, unable to love, unable to laugh. They live inauthentic lives that are repulsive to people who are truly searching for truth. Spirituality misunderstood results in human misery and rebellion towards God. Churches don't grow, they become irrelevant and toxic. They make the pastor's job infinitely difficult.

What does real, true spirituality look like? It looks like the disciples after the Holy Spirit came upon them in the upper room. They were sinful, broken people who just did not get it. However, when they came face to face with their brokenness and they were determined to be united in love with each other and truly emulate the spirit of servant leadership exhibited by the master, they were changed. Formerly filled with envy, hatred and selfishness in that upper room they became filled with love for others and filled by the Holy Spirit. His presence in their life changed everything—it changed their lives forever! Does that sound like something you want for yourself and for your church? It can be! The book of Acts is a case study of how lives can be transformed and churches can be havens of love where broken people are welcomed and given true examples of spiritual and emotional health.

In *Acts of the Apostles* page 12, Ellen White writes, "God's church is the court of holy life, filled with varied gifts and endowed with the Holy Spirit; members are to find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless."

As we seek to become more like Jesus and truly embrace the emulation of his character may the Fruit of the Spirit characterize our lives and churches!

PINE TREE ACADEMY WINS SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD



Janel Tyson
Vice Principal PTA Elementary

On February 27, 2016, the PTA Breakers Boys' Basketball Team received the Class D sportsmanship award. This award was presented in Portland, Maine. Pine Tree Academy is proud to support a team with integrity and honor. Organized sports should bring out these qualities in our young people. Coach, Trevor Schlisner, emphasizes the importance of a positive attitude on and off the court. The spiritual growth of these students is his number one concern.

So, What Does My Pastor Do All Day?
article continued from pg. 7

The Secret To A Better Pastor
article continued from pg. 2

have different areas of emphasis, different programming, different successes and different failures.

The pastor who mentored me when I first began ministry once told me, "Bob, you have to learn to work out of your own harness." These many years later, I understand the truth of his words more than I did then. Therefore, I am not particularly bothered with the occasional comment that someone is not happy with a particular aspect of his or her pastor's job performance. My usual response goes something like this, "How can you support your pastor and be a part of the solution?"

As a church pulls together to be a part of the pastor's ministry, rather than just a spectator of that ministry, they will gain a clearer picture of the joys, triumphs and challenges of daily ministry. Then he or she will not have to spend as much time answering the question, "So what do you do all day?"

do not fault you for your lack of knowledge. However, when it comes to the position of a pastor many members have unrealistic expectations. They believe that their pastor should be up to date with every new book, old book, church periodical, theological trend, be at every meeting, be at the office 40 hours a week but always visit members, be 30 years old but have 35 years of experience, exercise and have an exemplary family life. The expectations can be daunting.

Here is my point...in pastoral ministry there is always something else that needs urgent attention. As such, there will always be something to criticize about the pastor's performance in ministry. Even the best pastor in the world has a list of things that, at best, are done late, and at worst, are never done.

So how can your church get a better pastor? It is simple. Pray for the one you have.

Pastors, like all of us, thrive when they are in supportive environments where members jump in and help out, rather than stand on the side and point out when something is not done to their liking. Affirmation and encouragement brings out the best in all of us. Positive environments juice up our brains with creativity and flood our lives with energy that self-perpetuates and instills life and vision in others. In this way, the pastor's ministry is reproduced in the lives of others and the impact on God's Kingdom grows exponentially.

Here in Northern New England I will go on record for saying that we have a fine pastoral team. In fact, I think we have the finest team with whom I have ever had the pleasure of working. Pray for your pastor, affirm them and commit to being a part of what is working right in your local church. Only then will you have discovered the secret to getting a better pastor.

TAKING BACK MY LIFE

Jennifer Hernandez
Assistant Director Trust Services
and Planned Giving

In the Trust Services and Planned Giving department, it is normal for members to share significant personal information with me so that I can help them with estate planning. Well, today that whole model is reversed because I am going to share some of my personal information with you. In doing so, I have to admit that I feel a bit exposed, but God's glory and being an encouragement to others is my motivation.

One of the most cumbersome experiences that I have as a Christian is feeling powerless. To give a few examples, I feel powerless when someone comes to me with a problem I cannot resolve, when a ministry needs funds and I cannot supply the need, and when I deal with struggles that are too large for me to overcome (most of them are whether I admit it or not).

One of the struggles that has left me feeling powerless in the past is debt. In a sense, it took control of my life. Like many other Americans, I used credit cards as a financial safety net. Nevertheless, regardless of how well intentioned I was, using the card is excessively easy and in my weak moments, I used it far more often than just for "emergencies."

Americans from low-and middle-income families on average hold a total credit card debt of \$7,145, not counting mortgage and school debt. "Among those carrying credit card balances for more than three months, 40 percent used the cards for basic necessities such as food, housing and utilities because they didn't have enough money in their bank accounts." (Quote

from Demos survey on credit card debt of low- and middle-income households conducted in February and March 2012).

Last year I came to a very humbling conclusion about myself. It's not that I don't believe God can provide for me. I do. However, I have taken control completely out of His hands. I do not let Him provide for me. I have allowed my credit card to replace my need to seek Him. I have also neglected to create a financial cushion following His counsel so that I am less likely to be stressed by a real emergency. When I came to this conclusion, I decided to ask God to take back my life. I made a commitment to Him to get out of debt and I closed all credit cards except one, which I pay off every month and only allow myself a low balance.

I have a five-year plan that will get me completely out of debt, which includes credit cards, my car loan and my school loans. This is something that has kept me feeling powerless for years, but today because I have a Biblically based plan and a commitment to God not to spend money on things I really do not need, I can already see God's hand over me. In the last six months, I have been able to pay off about \$7,000 of debt. When I go to the grocery store and get to the checkout, I take one last look at my cart and remove things that are simply impulse buys. (I am getting better at not putting them in there in the first place, but I'm still working on it.) I avoid the mall like the plague. I keep track of my spending on a regular basis so that my commitment is ever before me. Finally, I pray for the Lord to bless my efforts because I know that my success in this area is His will. He blesses me with little tidbits throughout the month to throw at my debt and sometimes-bigger bits.



Jesus is coming soon and my resources need to be available for His cause. If I am in debt, I cannot do all that He wants me to do for His honor and glory. Moreover, the wonderful thing is that He does not condemn me. He is always ever encouraging me to walk with Him by faith. If you are struggling with debt, be encouraged! The Lord is on your side and He will lead you every step of the way.

In the Trust Services and Planned Giving department, we understand that it is sometimes uncomfortable to discuss personal details, such as the details of a living will, or the sometimes-intense family influencing decisions behind who-gets-what in a will. At the same time, we also understand how critical it is to not only do important things right, but to do them in a way that honors God. If you would like to discuss matters regarding your estate plan or living will or other related matter with us, give me a call at the conference office (207-797-3760 ext. 215). In addition, if you would like to find out more about the God-centered plan I am on to get rid of debt, that's fine too. Give me a call and we will chat.

WASHINGTON, NH SDA CHURCH UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST 5, 2016

A Tribute to
Waldo Farnsworth
Summertime Sugar on Snow
Evening Concert on Pond

AUGUST 6, 2016

Designer of Sabbath Trail and
Montana Conference President
Merlin Knowles will speak
at Annual Meeting
Worship Service

OCTOBER 8, 2016

It Is Written Speaker
John Bradshaw will speak at
the 11:30 a.m. Worship Service

OCTOBER 15, 2016

Northern New England
Conference Staff will host
Sabbath Services

OCTOBER 22, 2016

"Great Disappointment and
the Birth of the Seventh-day
Adventist Church"

Presented by Site Director, Ken
Brummel, at the 11:30 Worship
Service

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.firstadventistchurch.org

PASTOR DISTRICT MODEL: NNEC VERSUS THE DEVELOPING WORLD

The CoNNEction Editor

Adventist pastors around the world work in a wide variety of circumstances as they pursue the mission of proclaiming salvation through Christ and His soon coming. While focusing on pastors in the context of the Northern New England Conference in this issue, it is interesting to compare their roles here with some of their international counterparts. One thing that is very clear when comparing models: we are so very blessed to have the pastors that we do!

Place	Churches and Companies	Advantages	Disadvantages
NNEC and NAD	1-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pastor has opportunity to be familiar with each member and provide pastoral counseling - Pastor can attend to church administrative needs - Pastor can give community Bible studies and be engaged with community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost is high compared to developing country model - There is a risk that members will become less engaged and "let the pastor do it" - Church growth is usually low where this model is deployed, though that could be circumstantial
Developing Countries	8-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Churches become self-managing, usually with vibrant lay leadership - Lay ministry and evangelism rises to fill the gap - Low cost model compared to NNEC and NAD models - Church growth is high where this model is deployed, though that could be circumstantial - Pastor visits are a high Sabbath for the church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lay leadership - when it goes wrong, sometimes goes <i>really</i> wrong and can create huge problems - Pastor travels an inordinate amount of the time, creating fatigue and family problems - Pastors are only briefly present so there is an absence of trained pastoral counseling for members - The member-to-pastor ratio is extraordinarily high (sometimes 2000:1) and the pastor cannot be familiar with members or their needs

Welcome ...

article continued from pg. 2

bleed and heal just like the rest of us. That is why 1Tim 5:17 says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." They need love and respect just like the rest of us.

It is our hope that as you read this edition your understanding, appreciation, supportiveness and respect for your pastor will all increase. Your pastors need all of this as well as your prayers.

The “penultimate” page is the one right before the last one. But here it means something extra, as we live in the penultimate age – the one right before the end. This page will feature a variety of writers talking about the fulfillment of prophecy.

PROPHECY

John Bradshaw
Speaker/Director
It Is Written

When my wife and I were newly married, we drove several times back and forth across the United States. Leaving from what was our home state of North Carolina, we headed west on Interstate 40 watching along the way for two key signs - mile markers and Interstate shields. Mile markers told us how far we had to go on a certain highway. Interstate shields told us on which road we were.

The prophecies of the Bible relate to us today primarily as Interstate shields, while telling us also we are certainly close to the return of Jesus.

When I read recently of the atheist in Canada who pastors a Christian church, I thought immediately of Jesus' warning of false Christs and false prophets. While the woman in question describes herself as neither, it reminded me that the trend in Christianity is away from the Bible and toward a social gospel that is not founded on and rooted in the word of God.

Jesus warned in Matthew of famines and pestilences, and while the vast majority of North Americans comfortably enjoy three square meals daily it is easy to forget that close to a billion people in the world live in extreme poverty, 35 million people have AIDS and countless others are suffering from mostly avoidable lifestyle diseases. Moreover, while some disease numbers show an improvement in certain areas, we still live in a world that is suffering under a tremendous weight of illness.

Jesus' reference to earthquakes in Matthew 24 seems more rele-

vant today than ever before, with one authority stating that twice as many big earthquakes occurred in 2014 than the average since 1979. In addition, while we have not had a world war since 1945, many serious conflicts currently plague our planet, and multiple terror groups have destabilized the world in a way not witnessed in living memory.

Undoubtedly, these signs speak of Christ's coming. Do they indicate exactly how near the coming of Jesus is? No, honestly they do not. However, they do square with Jesus' insistence that "all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs." (Matthew 24:8, NASB) The increase in frequency and intensity of the signs we are witnessing suggests Christ's return is nearer than when we first believed. Moreover, if we see these signs as Interstate shields rather than mile markers, they tell us we are on the 'right' road, that our belief in the imminent return of Jesus is more than justified.

In 2015, many people were excited that the Pope was visiting the United States, believing the visit to be a sort of fulfillment of prophecy. According to the book of Revelation, the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church will play an enormously prominent role during Earth's final days. Such a position comes as no surprise to anyone who has studied religious history, as Rome has dominated the world politically and religiously - virtually unchallenged - for almost 2500 years. A sitting US President met the Pope's plane at Joint Base Andrews just outside Washington DC in September of last year,



and Francis received a standing ovation from a special joint session of congress. Hundreds of thousands of people flocked to see the Pope at appearances in three major US cities.

No other religious figure in the world commands as much respect as the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Prior to the presidency of John F Kennedy, Americans were generally distrustful of Catholicism, it's disconnect from the Bible and the Catholic Church's long history of persecution and oppression. That is no longer the case, in spite of the Bible's warning that in Earth's last days "all the world marveled and followed the beast." (Revelation 13:3) While we speak of, teach of and look to the Lamb far more than we do the beast, the apathy regarding the rise of Rome in global power and stature suggests that we are nearing a time when end time prophecy will be fulfilled.

Seen as Interstate shields, the signs of the times tell us we are on the right road. While we still have opportunity to share our faith, we must commit to doing so. We live in a dying world. Heaven is our holy hope. Jesus is coming soon.

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE

479 Main Street
Westbrook, Maine 04092-3988
207-797-3760

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 61
Montpelier, VT

Calendar of Events

July

- 3 – 10 Junior Camp
Camp Lawroweld
- 4 NNEC Closed
Independence Day Holiday
- 9 Family Ministries' Day
Concord Church, Concord, NH
- 15 – 23 Camp Meeting
Freeport, ME
- 24 – 31 Teen Camp
Camp Lawroweld
- 29 – 31 Youth Rally
Camp Lawroweld
- 30 Cliff Island Day
Cliff Island, ME
- 31 – 8/7 Family Camp I
Camp Lawroweld

August

- 5 A Tribute to Waldo Farnsworth
Washington, NH
- 6 Washington Church Annual Meeting
Washington, NH
- 7 – 14 Family Camp II
Camp Lawroweld
- 13 Family Ministries' Day
Mountain View Church, Vernon, VT
- 15 – 17 Teachers' Retreat
Camp Lawroweld
- 16 – 18 Pastors' Retreat
Camp Lawroweld
- 26 – 28 Young Adult Retreat
Camp Lawroweld

September

- 1 – 4 Children's Ministries' Retreat
Camp Lawroweld
- 5 NNEC Closed
Labor Day Holiday
- 9 – 11 Women's Ministries Fall Retreat
Camp Lawroweld

- 10 Family Ministries' Day
Bangor, ME
- 16 Pine Tree Academy Alumni
Weekend & Golf Tournament
- 17 Bordoville Church Annual Day
Enosburg, VT
- 18 Adventurer Fun Day
TBD
- 23 – 25 Fall Pathfinder Camporee
Molly Stark State Park, VT
- 27 – 30 Academy Outdoor School
Camp Lawroweld
- 30 – Oct 2 Men's Ministries' Retreat
Camp Lawroweld

October

- 6 – 9 Prayer Ministries' Fall Retreat
Camp Lawroweld
- 9 – 11 Pastors' Bible Retreat
Camp Lawroweld
- 15 Washington NH Sabbath
Washington, NH
- 21 – 23 Family Ministries' Marriage Retreat
TBD

