

PASTORAL MINISTRY
2023 Year End Meeting Breakout Session

LAKE UNION

1. MISSIONAL CHALLENGE

- a. Many young people don't see a pastor's role in a missional way due to typical Adventist homes not really seeing Adventism with a missional lens.
- b. With the latest surveys showing that a large percentage of homes don't emphasize daily Bible reading this may therefore explain why so few youths would choose to go to a profession where a devotional life that includes scripture reading would seem unappealing.

2. REASONS WHY PEOPLE ARE NOT CHOOSING TO GO INTO PASTORAL MINISTRY - HOW CAN WE ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS?

- a. Compared to other professions pastoral ministry is not viewed with a high regard.
- b. One Gen Z person explained that her generation currently has a high distrust of pastors so our challenge will be how to overcome that distrust.
- c. One person thought that part of the reason why the ministry is not attractive to youth is due to the church not addressing issues that young people see as relevant and important.
- d. The pastoral role is seen as a difficult one which young people may see as not worth the effort, especially since they can get employed in a different profession for more money and less work.
- e. The financial debt that is usually initially incurred to pursue the ministry and the modest wage pastors earn makes the profession less appealing.

3. HOW CAN ALL LEVELS OF THE CHURCH HELP WITH THE NEXTGEN INITIATIVE RECRUITING PROCESS?

- a. Current Pastors should consider identifying young people in the homes where they show an inclination to ministry.
- b. We should look for those past seminary graduates who were not hired into the ministry ten years ago and see if the call to pastoral ministry is still burning in their hearts.
- c. Young people should be encouraged even in their earliest years to be involved and active in the church so that they can see how the church needs their involvement.
- d. Current pastors should see one of their responsibilities to look for someone to mentor.
- e. Encourage strong young adult programs in the church.

NORTH PACIFIC UNION

- 1- More training in social work for young pastors to do community work.
- 2- Putting young pastors in small churches that are toxic is very discouraging.
- 3- Have elders trained to take care of the churches so ministers may focus on their community.
- 4- Churches are not welcoming of females in ministry.
- 5- Start earlier to influence children for ministry. Start in the home to love and respect pastors instead of being critical.
- 6- Teenagers are disengaging from church just as they are at the point of making decisions for vocational choice.
- 7- Women's ordination vote / LGBTQ discussions / have been hurtful and young adults are discouraged by them.
- 8- Too many toxic churches.
- 9- Young Adults do not like organizations that are oppressive toward vulnerable people.
- 10- Cultural divide in the churches – like in our country - make people speak loudly and harshly on things they are against.
- 11- Need to lean into media ministry to show youth/Young Adults all the good things the church is doing for people and communities.
- 12- Young people want to make a difference in people's life. They see Jesus as a revolutionary who changed people's life.
- 13- Church needs to have more love and respect for people they differ with – or disagree with.
- 14- Need to affirm our youth and young adults.
- 15- Get involved in more social issues in the community that youth/YA are interested in.
- 16- Put young pastors in safe churches – or let them plant churches.
- 17- The role of pastors needs to be reviewed. Used to be they planted churches and spent time doing evangelism. Now expected to meet church needs.
- 18- Prayer conferences – in past many young people made decisions for Christ and for being pastors and teachers.

PACIFIC UNION

1. Reasons people are not choosing to go into the pastoral ministry

- a. Young people want to be challenged to do new things in new ways.
- b. We get what we expect and challenge people with – we need to challenge them with church planting, etc – rethink and reconfigure.
- c. Start with mission – how are we going to move it forward
- d. Young people want to be challenged with mission and do something significant to make a difference in people's lives.
- e. We may not be the best promoters of our occupation.
- f. Fear of not having a call.
- g. No encouragement from conference to go into ministry – need to have an encourager through our journey of education, early on etc. This will lead to quality .

- h. Their own mental health and questions of.
- i. They don't see the church concerned about justice or world/community issues.
- j. They want to be able to have balance with family, etc. – they see it as unhealthy.
- k. Lack of equality in ministry for women.
- l. Only 45% of pastors graduating hired?

2. How can we address these concerns?

- a. Showcase the lives of pastors.
- b. We forget in this world there is a calling but also the practical side of the job and demands.
- c. Reconsider pastors benefits.
- d. Hire qualified personnel to support pastors.
- e. They need to have a more clear understanding of what ministry is – we have romanticized it.
- f. The professors make a difference - attracts people to that profession that speaks into their lives “Have you thought about this” Invite people to explore.
- g. We need to add in the element of prayer – we may be convinced this is not for us – but God can convict this is His calling in our lives – pray fervently that The Spirit will change the minds of our young people to be the powerful young leader God intends them to be – God can do what we can't do!
- h. We need to prime the pump when we have opportunities – bible conference with young leaders, etc.
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- k. We need to prime the pump when we have opportunities – bible conference with young leaders, etc.
- l. Follow the Next Gen model locally – every time we are talking to young people.
- m. Exposure – these are GPS thinkers – they need mentoring and young people.
- n. Show up, tell and encourage.
- o. Brand the church for this – the inequality is an issue for young women- create a difference image of equality – have the union develop videos and social media messaging.
- p. There aren't many churches that will accept women as pastors – so create a different culture.
- q. Invest in younger generation churches that young pastors would be excited to go to– address the churches that need to die .
- r. Mentoring – carefully pick pastors to mentor the young pastors – give them compensation.
- s. Call our churches together as a union to pray over this one day/Sabbath.
- t. Give scholarship through education process – mentoring.
- u. Start early – middle school.

3. How can all levels of the church help with the NextGen Initiative – Recruiting process?

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Reasons people are not choosing to go into pastoral ministry, how can we address these concerns? How can all levels of the NextGen Initiative - recruiting process?

1. Lower commitment to Adventist Christian education by parents and churches to ensure that our people are in our schools.
2. Need more Pastoral encouragement to young congregants to consider ministry.
3. Need more converted to increase the pool of those who would be called.
4. Fewer young Church members are being disciples into ministry opportunities at their local church.
5. Need more career guidance in our academies.
6. Begin pastoral recruitment much earlier than undergraduate, but rather during their academy years.
7. Pastoral scholarship.
8. Certain ethnic scholarships for graduate school, could be made available for undergraduate school.
9. Create advertisements to communicate positive points of a career in ministry.
10. Furthermore, We are happy for this opportunity to discuss these important items, but we request a timeline for a response as an action item. When do we plan to do something about these important issues.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN CANADA

Why aren't people going into pastoral ministry? How can address this?

1. Vacation and salary – these answers do not look good in pastoral ministry, therefore people are less inclined towards pastoral ministry.
2. A lack of respect towards pastors. If you are going to be criticized and not paid much, why would you do it?
3. generation – no longer about rules and regulations and are more about relationships. If I am not seeing relationship in the church I am serving then I won't want to do it. Lots of useless red tape. Getting ideas started runs into a lot of red tape. the mission people want to get involved is not appealing because they don't want to check all the useless boxes that do not actually contribute to the ministry.
4. Opportunity in pastoral is greater if you have a degree. Lots of people overlooked and did not get a job. Historical issue of people holding on too long that there are no chances for younger ages. Not accepted until certain age or experience.
5. Relationship. Pastors are less connected with members and less members being inspired by the pastor. No monetary rewarding of pastoral work – no incentive. We

don't present the positive aspect of a soul coming to Christ to encourage students; the joy of bringing salvation to people.

6. Pastors families viewed by the church, neglect of family, people don't want to sacrifice their family. "How am I going to change the world". Big changes that are very specific, pastors leaving to chase specific world changing ministries. Leaving to pursue passions (instead of caring for a flock).
7. How do we know we are called to ministry – pastor told me that I am fit for that – pastors/teachers are not engaging in conversation with young people identifying people who would be good pastors. Pastors telling members that being a pastor is hard – killing the ministry (be authentic in a helpful way). Exit interview: its too much/can't handle – expectations. Impassioned at the ed level (unrealistic), placed in churches and go back to tradition, not happy in the context of the church. Pastors should be church planters, not just the maintainers of churches. Train church planters in the seminary.
8. Expectations placed on clergy is crushing (over filled plates). Red tape. Neglect of family.
9. 40 years ago expected to be a colporter before being a theo student – if you could sell books you could sell the gospel. Matrimonial degree when getting your degree. Expectations placed on them by family, church, office. Not a lot of support. Ministerial directors can only do so much. Young pastors think that success by the church standards = 60+ hours a week. Expectations are deep and wide. Things are changing – wives are also employed, conference moves pastors, not just moving pastors, moving wives etc.
10. Society is changing too much for us to follow. We have not defined "what is a pastor". Time management of new pastors? Do we need less pastors and involve members as disciples and laypersons.
11. Young people are looking at pastors not having a good relationship with their family. Pastors have lost connection with congregations. This Generation = money is a priority. How can pastors live on what they are receiving = not attractive. We don't respect pastors the way we used to.
12. Rob: we don't feel valued. Millennials will not stay if they don't feel valued. Pairing of new pastors with senior pastors, this can make or break a pastor, mentorship is important. We don't see what a healthy example of success looks like (what do the pastors who are 10 years ahead of us look like). Retirement plan is a struggle. Generational gaps, gender expectations that have changed since 40 years ago (what wives accepted 40 years ago they do not now).
13. SDA church takes a long time to transition and adjust and we are still irrelevant in many ways. Pastors role should be defined. Delegation of the type of work ; professionals in many areas, pastors are not delegating (mental health, construction) congregations think that pastors should be doing all these duties, should reduce the expectations and the load, pastors cannot fill all the needs. W can't run down our pastors.

NAD ACS: challenges to address, ACS should be a resource in our churches to help lesson load on pastoral leadership.

What can the churches do to help with NextGen Initiative – recruiting process?

1. Pastors recruiting more? Place on laypersons shoulders?
2. Local members doing the pastoral work. Bi-vocational workers in a rural setting. Elders who are in love with the church who are already serving – change policy for these bi-vocational workers.
3. Once we have healthy pastors with a good mental state, they will promote the ministry to others.
4. How can we help current pastors? Delegation. Change the way he is doing things.

MID-AMERICA UNION

1. Reasons people are not going into pastoral ministry.

- Debt after graduation
- Negative messages on social media about pastoral and education ministries.
- Political battles in churches conservative vs liberal.
- Compensation not adequate.
- Other career options are available.
- Not able to do side hustle.

2. Solutions

- Create incentive to help them pay off debt.
- Place positive messages on social media about pastoral and educational ministries.
- Current pastors and teachers should mentor young member and or students and encourage to consider these career options.

COLUMBIA UNION

Question 1 – Reasons People are not Choosing to go into pastoral ministry

1. Could it be the lack of remnant theology, the lower belief that Jesus is coming soon (as noted in the NAD portion of the GC study shared by Petr Cincala), and the lack of urgency that used to be more prominent?
2. Could it be less openness to women pastors? It was reported there are only 4% women pastors employed in NAD. Perhaps an openness to them would help to fill the gap.
3. Perhaps a survey to all the students to ask why they haven't considered ministry. We need data to know more about this.
4. Is it that we do not have enough pastors or do we have too many churches? Many of which are dying but unwilling to close – an issue raised on the floor.
5. Is there a demographic issue? Do we assume that some races can't lead certain churches? For example, why can't African pastors be considered for Caucasian or mixed race churches? Why are they only asked to pastor African congregations? Conferences also report that they receive many resumes, but it was revealed in our group is that they

are getting tons of resumes from South America, Africa, Philippines, and other places. But what they really need is more resumes of eligible Caucasian pastors.

6. Lack of mentorship opportunities?
7. Remuneration – young people want more pay
8. Lack of Respect for pastors and for that profession
9. Conflicts and issues in the churches are a turnoff for today's generations who want no part of it.
10. Are we promoting ministry and service at the local level?
11. Some people prefer chaplaincy ministries because they see more options available
12. Today's generations don't see pastoring as a balanced lifestyle; they see their parents working too much and they want a career that promotes work/life balance.

Question 2 - How can we help with recruiting more people to pastoral ministry?

1. Be intentional about recruiting and encouraging young people to enter the ministry and inspire them by modeling and sharing the benefits and blessings
2. Give them a taste of ministry through service, volunteerism, and short-term experiences where they can get exposure to pastoral ministry working side-by-side with a pastor for a period of time, like a summer internship, etc.
3. Go to our schools and recruit. Offer scholarships.
4. Start younger, create a culture of ministry by giving our children and youth opportunities to work with the pastors, lead out, and become engaged in ministry.
5. Create mentoring opportunities for those who express an interest or show talents in the areas of ministry.
6. At career fairs, invite pastors to speak and share why they are in ministry and why the young people should consider it.
7. Help our young people see the many, many ways they can use their gifts -- from the local church to church administration and many other ways at different levels of church work.
8. Foster passionate spirituality in our churches and among our young people.
9. Write articles, produce interviews, podcasts, other media, about what it's like being a pastor and the many benefits and blessings they experience by following God's calling on their lives. Tell their stories – challenges and joys – so young people can see their authentic testimonies which may make them more relatable.
10. Tap into the lay members to help lead the churches and get them engaged. Some of them may end up becoming full-time pastors too (many already have).