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# A Preaching Strategy Toward Spirituality, Renewal and Unity at the Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church

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## ABSTRACT

A PREACHING STRATEGY TOWARD SPIRITUALITY,  
RENEWAL AND UNITY AT THE CORNERSTONE  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Adviser: Daniel L. Graham

# ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Professional Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A PREACHING STRATEGY TOWARD SPIRITUALITY,  
RENEWAL AND UNITY AT THE CORNERSTONE SEVENTH-  
DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: Normand Louis Cote

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Daniel L. Graham, DMin

Date completed: May 2021

## Problem

In September 2015, I was assigned by the British Columbia Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as sole pastor of the Cornerstone Adventist Church. Upon arrival and surveying the congregation it was clear the church was in a state of decline. There was a high percentage of inactive membership, as evidenced in low Sabbath worship attendance, lack of ministry participation, and members failing to invite others to church. There was also conflict due to a lack of spirituality, unity, and renewal. This had also negatively affected the church membership.

## Method

The professional dissertation project utilized conflict resolution literature, preaching practices relating to conflict resolution, and congregational renewal literature. Using these strategies, I formulated a series of seminars— preaching revival and renewal sermons—to assist in resolving the current conflicts and prepare the church to resolve future disagreements while growing successfully.

## Results

The results of the method used reveal that this project was an effective means in bringing renewal to the Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church, thus laying a foundation for future conflict resolution. The research was helpful, for it enriched the seminar series. The survey questionnaire helped guide in the selection of the seminar content and made it more relevant to the participants. In addressing the specific concerns of the congregation, greater unity and spirituality were realized.

## Conclusions

Being a part of this project was satisfying. The opportunity to preach relevant sermons in a seminar format, informed by extensive research, demonstrated that there are resources available to bring unity to a group and set the stage for future conflict resolution strategy. Involving the congregation in the project reaped positive results. The surveys provided opportunity for participants to suggest desired sermon topics or scripture passages for clarity or understanding. This increased the congregation's spirituality through the spoken word of God and created greater unity among the members.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A PREACHING STRATEGY TOWARD SPIRITUALITY,  
RENEWAL AND UNITY AT THE CORNERSTONE  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

A Professional Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

Normand Louis Cote

May 2021

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Description of the Ministry Context**

The Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church, located in the British Columbia Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is in the Metro Vancouver region in the city of Coquitlam, B.C., Canada. During my first two years in this congregation, there was good church growth of approximately 3% in 2016, but in 2017, it increased to 4-5% church growth. Originally this church tended to be traditional, but overtime began to be more progressive. There are approximately 24 different nations represented among the 189 members of whom 85 attended regularly. Some members served both homeless and disadvantaged families in the community in monthly ministries. After my arrival, the Cornerstone church initiated an English as a Second Language (ESL) program ministering to mostly Asian, German, Moldovian, Iranian and African immigrants.

Coquitlam is the largest of the three cities that the Cornerstone Church ministers to, with a population of 126,456. The church serves another 32,975 in Port Moody, and 56,342 in Port Coquitlam and a small town of Anmore, 2,092, totaling 217,865 based on the 2011 Census (Statistics Canada, 2011).

The cities represented by my church members are Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Langley, Surrey, Burnaby, and Vancouver, which are multi-cultural, with minority groups consisting of Canadian born, Chinese,

Taiwanese, Filipinos, Koreans, Brazilians, Sir-Lankans, South Africans, West Indies, Iranians, Armenians, Africans, Trinidadians, Jamaicans, Dominican Republicans, St. Lucians, Iranians, Belgian, among others.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Cornerstone Adventist Church has a high percentage of inactive members. This is seen by low Sabbath worship attendance, and lay ministry participation over the past few years prior to my arrival. Through interaction with various church members and church leaders, I learned that there had been systemic conflict and lack of unity among the members. This conflict and disunity had negatively impacted the spiritual life of many members. Despite the growth under my pastoral leadership there had been no churchwide initiative for unity or renewal in the congregation to address this spiritual concern.

### **Statement of the Task**

The task of this project was to prevent further decline of Cornerstone's active membership and to reclaim inactive members. The church had in the past experienced conflict. The task was to implement a revival and renewal seminar of biblical preaching sermon series, to bring about demonstrative change in the attitude and conduct of members towards each other. To accomplish this task, the plan was to implement preaching methods using deductive and topical forms of sermons. Prior to the seminar, a survey was used to determine the specific biblical questions and topics to be addressed to create an atmosphere where spirituality, unity and renewal can be best achieved in the church.

## **Delimitations**

The project was implemented at the Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church. The process was limited to all adults who attend, including non-attending church members, visitors and interests. This professional dissertation is an implementation of a strategy limited to a specific congregation (Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church), to establish a foundation for current and future conflict resolution based on biblical precedents.

## **Description of the Project Process**

The theological reflection uses Scripture, and the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary* in its discussion. We will also be reviewing the writings of Ellen White, who was one of the founding pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The reflection also consulted the works of various experts on renewal (revival), preaching practices, and conflict resolution. The purpose of this reflection was to implement a biblically sound understanding of the following topics of concern: conflict resolution strategy, biblical preaching, revival, and renewal.

Literature in the areas of effective conflict resolution, effective biblical preaching, revival and renewal was reviewed. A survey was given to church leaders, church members, visitors, and in-active members to complete before and after the seven-part sermon series entitled *Fire-Proof Revival Series*. The concept of Fire-Proof is a message to prevent and protect the Christian from the Satanic attacks and thus help to bring spiritual renewal. Prior to the seminar, the survey solicited sermon topics related to the congregation's biblical and spiritual interests. After the seminar, a survey was administered to evaluate how the seminar impacted the church members personally and

corporately toward resolving conflicts, to achieve unity, spirituality, and personal renewal. The *Fire-Proof Revival Series* was launched February 2, 2019 and completed on February 23, 2019.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

#### **Introduction**

The discipline of a theological reflection requires the researcher's exploration of a religious and biblical heritage. The following theological reflection focuses on three major topics: (a) conflict resolution, (b) effective biblical preaching, and (c) transformation of church and community. The Bible and Ellen White's writings (a founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church) underpin all the principles for each topic. This theological reflection confirms that an integrated analysis of these three topics formed a powerful cohesive theological foundation for implementing the sermon series to facilitate the Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church's efforts to bring unity and renewal. The desire was to create an environment of renewal, spirituality, and a greater sense of unity among our community of faith.

#### **Conflict Resolution Principles and Strategy**

We will be reviewing biblical narrative in order to analyze the principles and strategies of conflict resolution. Further research is needed for a more extensive understanding of a theology of conflict.

Everyone on this earth has experienced conflict and it began with the first family God created . . . conflict among Adam and Eve and their offspring . . . and it is still being experienced in homes today, as well as in workplaces and churches and among nations. Who hasn't at times wanted to throw their hands up in the air and exclaim, "Why can't we all just get along?" *Well, we can*—with the empowerment of God and through our

obedience to Him. His Word provides principles for peace that can bring about the supernatural result of reconciliation and resolution, from the boardroom to the bedroom. *“Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing”* 1 Thess. 5:11. (Hunt, 2008, p. 15, italics added)

The reason for dissension in the church can be narrowed to the congregation’s lack of understanding of the requirements of Matthew 18 and other scriptural references to conflict resolution. There may also be various cultural dynamics within a given context. Olson (2010) quotes the apostle Paul, who writes, “but you have not so learned Christ” (Eph 4:20 NKJV). One must be renewed in the spirit of one’s mind, so that the new person reigns and not the old carnal human nature with its lust (p. 6). Sometimes there may be the perception that there is a problem because there may be heated arguments, but perhaps the issue being discussed is not the problem on the surface, but rather the deeper issue is in the heart, which needs to have spiritual surgery. I have noticed people sometimes like to argue for the sake of winning an argument. The problem, according to Thomas (1990, pp. 65-74), they are discussing may not be their focus, but rather the aggressor is pushing to win the argument. This leads one to question, “is there anything wrong with anger?” The answer to this inquiry is biblically, “no,” if handled respectfully, according to the admonition by Paul to “be angry and yet do not sin” (Eph 4:26 NASB). Anger, as most counselors conclude, is the second basic emotion, but the first basic emotion is when most people experience hurt, or fear, or pain, according to Olson (2010, p. 12).

When it comes to responses in conflict, people will seek to escape the situation. There are three common reasons people choose to escape, asserts Sande (2013, pp. 18, 19): (a) Denial – as seen in the story of Eli and his sons (1 Sam 1:22, 23), (b) Flight—sometimes running away in extreme cases may be necessary as with David (1 Sam



1:19:9, 10); on the other hand, in most cases running away like Hagar was not wise, but the angel went after her (Gen 16:6-8); (c) Suicide—this is never a good option, as Saul did (1 Sam 31:4).

People often deal with conflict by attacking the offender. There are three reasons for this attack mode of response:

1. “Litigation: Some conflicts may legitimately be taken before a civil judge for a decision” (Acts 24:1-26:32; Rom 13:1-5; Sande, 2013, p. 19). Christians are expected to settle their differences within the church rather than the civil courts (1 Cor 6:1-8) and so “it is important to settle out of court whenever possible” (Sande, 2013, p. 19).

2. Assault: Some people will attempt to overcome an opponent by using intimidation with verbal attacks, physical violence, or efforts to damage a person financially or professionally (see Acts 6:8-15); (Sande. 2013 p. 19).

3. Murder: this extreme case is that people will be so desperate to win a dispute they will try to kill and sometimes succeed those who oppose them (see Acts 7:54-58); (Sande, p. 19).

In response to the attack mode of response, conciliation provides six possible alternatives (Sande, 2013, p. 20).

1. Overlook an offense: Some offenses are so minor that they may be resolved quite simply by forgiving them. “A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is his glory to overlook an offense” (Prov 19:11, 12:16, 17:14; Col 3:13; 1 Pet 4:8).

2. Discussion: If a personal offence is too serious to overlook, it can be resolved through confession or loving confrontation (see Matt 5:23-24; Prov 28:13; Matt 18:15; Gal 6:1-3).

3. Negotiation: When the conflict includes money, property, or other rights, this can be resolved in a bargaining process. In which both sides try to reach a fair settlement (Phil 2:4).

The first three are resolved through personal peacemaking responses, but when this cannot be done one should use one of the following three “assisted responses” (Sande, 2013, pp. 20, 21):

4. Mediation: If two Christians cannot reach an agreement in private, then bring one or two more to resolve the issue (Matt 18:16).

5. Arbitration: When the two cannot come to a voluntary agreement, then a person may appoint one or more arbitrators to listen to the arguments and render a binding decision to settle the matter (1 Cor 6:1-8).

6. Church discipline: Often the final step in this process is church discipline. When other avenues of conciliation have been unsuccessful, occasionally the church, as a body, must step forward and administer redemptive discipline. This should take place only when all prior steps are unsuccessful. In each case, the end goal should be repentance, justice, and forgiveness (Matt 18:17).

### Examples of Jesus’ Response in Conflict

Jesus is the perfect example on how to approach conflict. In dealing with the issue of Sabbath observation, Jesus was challenged on the regulations imposed by his opponents in the synagogue. He used rhetoric in questioning them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill? But they kept silent” (Mark 3:4 NKJV); therefore, Jesus “looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts” (v. 5). Notice, He looked at them with an emotion of anger. He was not smiling.

In fact, He was grieved, thus it offended Him. He was hurt. Furthermore, if that were not enough to provoke them, Jesus said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored, as whole as the other” (v. 5). Jesus’ reaction impresses me, as well as surprises me. From the perspective of my phlegmatic personality, I would try to avoid the conflict by just healing him nicely and being kind. Yet, Jesus spoke with authority, with an expression of grief and anger. He healed the man right in front of other people. From the example of Jesus, one can see that righteous anger and an expression of emotion can and should take place in certain situations. I believe His response is, of course, the type of response they needed because of the “hardness of their hearts” (v. 5). This was the only way they were going to understand the message. They needed to learn that resolution does not always come with a soft approach. So, when “we watch His use and experience of anger in conflict, we see them as potential gifts, friends, and instruments for personal and church growth” (Olson, 2010, p. 11).

Pastors are called to be peacemakers and to encourage the blessing of reconciliation with Christ. “First, too often pastors view peacemaking as only a tool of ministry rather than a habit of being. Instead of being ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19-20), we confine peacemaking to special crisis situations within the church” (Poirier, 2006, p. 13). Yet, interestingly, God has reconciled all things to Himself through the death of His Son on the cross (Col 1:19, 20), then we who are the children of God are redeemed to be reconcilers (p. 13).

Being reconcilers for the kingdom of God will mean the whole church can be proactive by being positive, compassionate, and constructive ministers for the kingdom of God. The church can indeed operate with a biblical and theological foundation and be

very functional, and not dysfunctional.

Moody (1997) boldly states, concerning the Corinthian church division, who had “the first symptoms of sectarianism in the early church” (p. 92):

Now I beseech you, brethren . . . that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” There in the house of Chloe, “that there are contentions among you.” Some say, “I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas (Peter); and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” 1 Cor 1:10-13.

The lack of training in conflict management for pastors and leaders of churches is certainly a problem that the Christian church must take under serious consideration, in order to be a functional family unit as brothers and sisters in Christ. Ephesians clearly points this out and admonishes the brethren “to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until all come to such unity in their faith and knowledge of God’s Son” (Eph 4:12, 13 NLT) (Jackson, 2019). Much of the problem arises from having a mind-set of being neutral; thinking “just don’t worry, in time the problem will heal itself” or “God will fix the problem, stay out of other people’s business.” Spiritual neutrality is a spirit that must not reign in God’s church. Barthel and Edling (2012) support this idea: “The Bible condemns spiritual neutrality and requires Christians to take a stand for truth. When conflict develops in the church, every member is called to the duty of being a peacemaker by “making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (p. 189, Eph 4:3). To further support these strong principles from the Bible, Barthel and Edling add, “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins” (Jas 4:17). “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold” (Matt 24:12). “And to the church of Laodicea, the Lord says, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either the

one or the other!” (Rev 3:15, 16; p. 190).

White (1911) gives great insight and shares important steps toward unity and reconciliation. The first step is reconciliation with God.

It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God’s law. “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Romans 8:7. But ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son,’ that man might be reconciled to God. Through the merits of Christ, he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus, “he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (p. 467)

The second step is reconciliation with humanity. “We have a law-court type of model that seeks to direct the mediation process toward issue settlement rather than aiming at the reconciliation of relationships” (Poirier, 2006, p. 13). “To put it more vividly, current conflict resolution practice looks more like four hours in the emergency room than a month of home recuperation therapy” (p. 13). When the church family begins to realize their God-given responsibility towards each other and begins to see the need to encourage one another in the pro-active process of making peace with one another for the glory of God and His church, then the church will experience unity. White (1955) also counsels,

‘Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.’ Colossians 3:13. The religion of Jesus Christ means progress; it means to be ever reaching upward to a holier and higher standard. The Christian whose heart has been touched with the beauty of the Saviour’s character, is to put into practice that which he learns in the school of Christ. (p. 90)

Therefore, “we must see ourselves as a more holistic ministry, expanding the ministry of the Word to include not only preaching but counseling, teaching, and

equipping God's people in the pursuit of peace" (Poirier, 2006, p. 14). As people contemplate the counsel presented (and some might be thinking they can escape their duty to the church family and the Lord), it would be good to read Paul's letter to the Galatians. "Brothers and sisters, if someone in your group does something wrong, you who are spiritual should go to that person and gently help make him right again. But be careful because you might be tempted to sin, too. By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of Christ" (Gal 6:1, 2 NCV).

So far, the need for reconciliation between God and humanity has been discussed (see p. 5 of this document). This certainly will be foundational for conflict resolution. Management strategies are especially important to achieve healing and unity, thus helping the congregation be restored. "Jesus was a preacher and teacher ... He managed men." (Poirier, 2006, p. 21). The three ways people normally respond to confrontations is to avoid, attack, or ambush (according to literature reviewed), but the example of Jesus teaches a more effective manner of managing conflicts. Jesus, in dealing with the false accusations and the lies, would rebuke and would speak with authority. He was not timid, yet neither was He one to avoid issues that needed correction. In fact, sometimes He would address the issue quite blatantly, but with love for the sinner. For example, He stated, "You are like whitewashed tombs" (Matt 23:27 NIV), "which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside, you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (vv. 27, 28). Then He would expose men's sins, not by ambushing, such as the Pharisees who caught the women in adultery (John 8:3-11), but by using rhetoric to convince people of their own foolishness and sinfulness. He would

often speak in parables, a way of speaking subtlety to His audience who were the culprits in the parable. Furthermore, the Apostle Paul did not avoid speaking directly with the stepmother and stepson about their open sin (1 Cor 5:1-5; 9-13). The congregation was hoping that the sin of sexual immorality would disappear on its own. He sternly rebuked the congregation for not judging the fornicators, so that their souls could be saved, and He exhorted them to “to deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh” (1 Cor 5:5). Paul seems harsh. He seems uncompassionate towards the erring ones, yet in this instance, how he treated the issue was God-like. This strong authority and direct approach were just the remedy the sinners needed. This was the same approach Jesus employed at times.

As we see these examples of Jesus and Paul, we notice that pastors and church leaders need to be intimately connected to the lives of their people (Poirier, 2006, p. 21). Visitation will be an avenue to reach the body of Christ, even as important as the ministry of preaching and teaching (p. 21). White (1915) asserts, “People are easily reached through the avenues of the social circle. But many ministers dread the task of visiting; they have not cultivated social qualities, have not acquired that genial spirit that wins its way to the hearts of the people” (p. 338).

### Unity Through Behavioral Change

Many times, I have observed that those who are unable to accept change in their lives have a difficult time being unified. Bannister (2014) shares insight on how change of behavior can occur.

When individuals can embrace change to a higher degree, it causes transformation to the overall working of the body of Christ. As people come into the church, they are asked to adapt to the order of the church. If this is not done, it brings tension to the

system. If the system does not change, individuals finally leave the system for a congregation where they feel comfortable. This movement is classified as first-order change and second-order change. (p. 8)

Ray Anderson is credited with this unique process:

First-order change is a change from one behavior to another within a given way of behaving as a response to a new environment or a new stimulus. First-order change has a high degree of continuity through the transition of change. Second order change on the other hand, produces a new system and a new way of thinking within the same system. . . In second-order change there is less extrapolation out of the past and more of an attempt to restructure the present in terms of a perceived goal. (as cited in Bannister, 2014, p. 8)

So how does the example of Jesus relate to these orders? Bannister (2014) says that change is necessary for one to be moved from a place of ease to invite them to a state of purification to follow the pattern set by Jesus (p. 9). This is what happened to the young ruler who was proud of his accomplishments, he thought he was meeting the expectations of the Lord by keeping the commandments (p. 9). Interestingly, Jesus did not leave him in his ease, but caused him to consider moving to higher ground. “Jesus had read his thoughts, and there were some avenues in his life that needed to change” (p. 9). In a tactful way, Jesus lovingly showed him his shortcoming with respect to the higher order of the law: the law of Love (p. 9). Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me” (Mark 10:21).

Bannister’s (2014), second change order demonstrated wonderfully by Jesus, provides opportunity for all to take courage from His example. The young ruler was breaking the 10th commandment, which is “you shall not covet.” Even though the rich young ruler resisted this change, he was offered the opportunity to be changed to the



glorious image of Christ.

To add one more counsel regarding an impasse, a biblical example of this is with Paul and Barnabas taken from J. LaGuardia (2017).

Acts 15:36-41 recalls a sharp disagreement between Barnabas and Paul on whether to bring John Mark on a second missionary journey. They did not come to a compromise and arrived at an impasse. Paul and Barnabas parted ways. A close reading of the text reveals four effective strategies in managing a church conflict in which irreconcilable disagreements did not spell the end of friendships but exposed a new season of ministry inspired by the Holy Spirit. 1. The Bible clearly outlines that Barnabas and Paul had different personalities.

LaGuardia (2017), further asserts that:

Barnabas was a bridge-builder who longed to keep everyone together. Mark was family, so there was a willingness to give him a second chance. Paul was all business. He was not as forgiving, and God's mission was at stake. This strategy shows that when churches do conflict resolution well, they emphasize the mission of the church rather than resorting to personal attacks. 2. Paul and Barnabas valued communication. Paul could have easily gone along with Barnabas only to flirt with resentment if things went sour later in the journey, but Paul was honest with his friend. He trusted Barnabas with his concerns, and the "sharp disagreement" shows a deep sense of honor between the two men. (paras. 9-10)

The discussion by LaGuardia (2017), also includes his opinion that:

There was mutual respect, and in Paul's later letter to the Corinthian churches (1 Corinthians 9), Paul still considered Barnabas his peer and equal after the division. They may not have agreed, but they still affirmed each other's mission. 3. Paul and Barnabas understood God's sacred time: There is a season for everything. What may appear to be discomfort, disagreement, or discord to us may simply be the Holy Spirit's way of inspiring a new season of ministry. In this season of ministry, Paul recognized that Mark was not the right person for the job. Later, after Mark matured in the faith, Paul recruited him to minister to churches in Colossae as Paul remained in prison (Colossians 4:10). (paras. 11-14)

A final explanation from LaGuardia (2017), is captured in the following:

The focus remained on the mission, and Mark was not necessarily the problem; sometimes, the problem is with our sense of timing. When seasons of ministry shift, change and discomfort result from that restless anxiety that tips our hat to the movement of the Spirit. In times of discomfort or disagreement, we need to stop, listen, and assess where the Holy Spirit may be at work to break us into a new level of revival, mission, zeal or ministry. 4. In parting ways not by discord but by effective

conflict resolution, Paul and Barnabas expanded God's mission. God's mission does not collapse or implode or falter. When we resolve conflict by our own strength and design, churches split and bring some ministries to an end. When God's mission remains our focus and we make decisions because we are in tune with the Holy Spirit, God replicates and multiplies church communities. (paras. 15-20)

LaGuardia (2017) reported also that "As a result of their parting of ways, Barnabas and Mark ministered in Cyprus while Paul began a second missionary journey that ventured as far as Macedonia" (para. 24).

Learning from our early pioneers on how the Holy Spirit was working even during conflict will benefit the modern church. Rather than becoming personal, the early apostles were about the mission of preaching the gospel. They were not agitated over some issues that could have hindered the work. Instead, they looked with the vision of God, led by the Holy Spirit and the mission of the church expanded. To spread the gospel was the awesome purpose of the church. Despite disagreements, the church can move forward by the grace of God

### **Effective Biblical Preaching for Spiritual Renewal**

This second section begins with a study of the Greek words, for the words to "preach" and to "proclaim." The *New Bible Dictionary* gives clear insight into the meaning of the words.

The choice of verbs in the Gk. NT for the activity of preaching points us back to its original meaning. The most characteristic (occurring over 60 times) is *kēryssō*, 'to proclaim as a herald'. In the ancient world the herald was a figure of considerable importance (cf. G. Friedrich, *TDNT* 3, pp. 697-714). A man of integrity and character, he was employed by the king or State to make all public proclamations. Preaching is heralding; the message proclaimed is the glad tidings of salvation. While *kēryssō* tells us something about the activity of preaching, *euangelizomai*, 'to bring good news' (from the primitive *eus*, 'good', and the verb *angellō*, 'to announce'), a common verb, used over 50 times in the NT, emphasizes the quality of the message itself. It is worthy of note that the RSV has not followed the AV in those places where it translates the verbs *diangellō*, *laleō*, *katangellō* and *dialegomai* by 'to preach'. This helps to

bring into sharper focus the basic meaning of preaching. (Mounce, 1996, pp. 950-951)

“Our Calling as preachers is to proclaim the Bible, plain and simple. Jesus clearly testified that the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him to preach” (Morris, 2012, p. 9). This anointing ought to help “deliver God’s word in an engaging and authentic manner” (Heisler, 2007, p. 10). To transform the lives of the listener, the Spirit and the Word of God come together in the heart and mind of the preacher who is moved to inspire the mind and heart of the listener. Like Heisler, Atcheson (2018), opines that God’s Word is sharper than any two-edged sword which is living and active according to Hebrews 4:12 (pp. 34, 35). Furthermore, the sword of the Spirit is likened to the word of God according to Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus (Eph 6:17; Heisler, p. 10). Jesus told His preaching students to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father (Morris, 2012, p. 9, Acts 1:4, 5, 8). White (1915, p. 152), confirms Heisler’s and Morris’ assertions, “The preaching of the word should appeal to the intellect and should impart knowledge, but it should do more than this. The minister's utterances, to be effectual, must reach the hearts of his hearers” (as cited in Gibbs, 1951, pp. 107, 108). Heisler emphasizes, when the word of God is a fire in the heart of the preacher, he [or she] cannot, but tell it. Jeremiah puts it this way, “I was weary of holding it back” (Jer 20:9). This will ignite the seekers of God (Heisler, 2007, p. 10). The story about the disciples and Jesus along that dusty road to Emmaus speaks clearly to what Heisler is pointing out: “Were not our hearts burning within us, while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32).

## Capturing the Audience's Attention

One important discussion is the preacher's method to capture the audience's attention. Some preachers believe that using less of the Bible and more common and local stories is attractive. Yet, Andersen (2006, p. 37) states, "Don't fall into the trap of believing that you have to choose between the Bible and the audience. . . . Too often we hear that if we want to reach unchurched audiences, we must back away from the Book" (MacArthur, Mayhue, & Thomas, 1992, p. 6). White (1915) exhorts preachers: "He should not bring amusing stories into his preaching. He must strive to understand the soul's great need and longing" (p. 152). So, here are two ways in interactive preaching to prevent from falling into the trap of inappropriate humor. Firstly, telling stories will certainly help to keep people engaged in the message. Reid (2007) observes that "Paul is described twice as discussing the matters with his audience" (p. 37). Secondly, the speaker must remember how Jesus intertwined parables into His preaching to bring forth profound truths that were stories to which they related. He engaged the audience and left a positive impact on them. Somehow, some pastors seem to believe that each need to be more creative, to tell more stories, to be entertaining, as though being interesting is incompatible with the Bible (Andersen, 2006, p. 37). If this is so, how can one preach and be interesting and speak to the heart? White (1915), explains the need for the preacher to remember the congregation, "that there are among his hearers those who are wrestling with doubt, almost in despair, well-nigh hopeless; those who, constantly harassed by temptation, are fighting a hard battle with the adversary of souls" (p. 152). Therefore, as speakers, as important as it is to reach the head, it is as important to reach the heart, but let us not neglect the preaching of the word while telling stories.

One of the reasons conflicts arise, I believe, is because of the lack of Spirit-empowered preaching, and a lack of the listeners' understanding their need of the Holy Spirit. As the apostle Paul said, "Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14 NRSV). White (1915) wrote about what the preachers' sermon content should entail. She writes, "Let them leave out of their discourses matters of minor consequence and present the truths that will decide the destiny of souls" (p. 148). Rosecup (as cited in MacArthur, Mayhue, & Thomas, 1992, p. 123) further explains,

The expositor needs to observe every clue regarding what a context says explicitly and also what it does not say. He [or She] should seek proof in the biblical context as the TV detective Columbo probes for clues in his [or her] context. From properly handled clues the preacher will get his [or her] points, not from jumping to conclusions originating with his [or her] own imagination about what is necessary.

Inspirational preaching "leads to transformation in Christ" (Larsen, 2012, p. 6). Many can hear dynamic preaching, but if it does not cause people to obey God's word then pastors need to rethink how they are preaching. May it not be said of any one preacher, "Lord, Lord, did we not hear wonderful inspirational sermons in your name? Did we not have our hearts feel deeply about great themes of the Bible?" Larsen (2017) also added that Jesus responded, "Depart from me; for I never knew you" (Matt 7:21-23) (p. 6). Reid (2006) said preaching in the teaching voice is needed today. He also said that as for Paul, with an all-day to midnight sermon, but "this was teaching vindicated by a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1 Cor 2:4 - p. 37). Paul was using a didactic method of teaching, and later "Luke shifts the word to say that Paul was 'homileo-ing' until morning light. He compares this word with Jesus' conversation with Cleopas and his

traveling companion on the way to Emmaus” (Luke 24:27; cf., Acts 24:26; Reid, p. 38). Furthermore, “this is the word that the church eventually adopted to describe the act of giving witness to the Good News that is in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Cor 5:19; p. 38). Paul’s homiletical example concerning the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness of sins was particularly important to the rebirth of homiletics in the 21st century. Reid wrote that this example is so important in helping the church recover preaching’s “distinctive dynamic” (Reid, 2009, p. 14). Randolph (2009) agrees, with Reid’s assessment, he adds, “A homily is a passionate conversation relating the things that pertain mostly to the Bible in which Jesus Christ becomes present in a transforming way” (p. 14). White (1911) encourages the preacher to speak with passion on the theme of Christ, for example,

Untiringly they [disciples] dwelt upon His teachings and His miracles of healing. With quivering lips and tearful eyes, they spoke of His agony in the garden, His betrayal, trial, and execution, the forbearance and humility with which He had endured the contumely and torture imposed upon Him by His enemies, and the Godlike pity with which He had prayed for those who persecuted Him. (p. 157)

The inspired passage Paul alludes to, on the significance of preaching the cross is as follows: “It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe” (1 Cor 1:21 ESV). The content of preaching ought to be filled with the message of the crucifixion. Jesus said, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32 ESV). This type of preaching will be more effective and is confirmed by White (1915):

It is the efficiency of the Holy Spirit that makes the ministry of the word effective. When Christ speaks through the minister, the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of the listeners to receive the word. The Holy Spirit is not a servant, but a controlling power. He causes the truth to shine into minds and speaks through every discourse where the minister surrenders himself [or herself] to the divine working. It is the Spirit that surrounds the soul with a holy atmosphere, and speaks to the impenitent through

words of warning, pointing them to Him who takes away the sin of the world. (p. 155)

When the “wow” moment (Larsen, 2012), comes for the audience as a result of God’s word being illuminated by the Spirit, they will exclaim, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor have entered the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him, but God has revealed them to us by His Spirit” (1 Cor 2:9-10 NKJV). Eclov (as cited in Larson, 2012, pp. 46, 47), explains that our need is to pray and search for the wow factor, yet he simplifies the search, when he further adds that people need to find the logic of God’s mind in the passage. Of course, this is not easy for the natural mind to discern. However, spiritual things can be discerned through the imagination and colorful content of good narrative preaching and will aid others in seeing these important “wow” moments (Larson, 2012, pp. 46, 47). White (1911) encourages the preacher to “ask the Savior to give him words to speak that will strengthen these souls for the conflict with evil” (p. 152).

### Studying Jesus’ Sermonic Method

Perhaps the foremost and famous discourse of Jesus was His message known as the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matt 5-7). During these teachings, there were many topics that were covered. At the end of His sermon, the people who heard Him were astonished at His teachings, for He was teaching them as one who had authority, not like the scribes (Mark 1:22). By studying the homiletical practices of Jesus, the biblical preacher can learn important lessons to help bring the scriptures alive and inspire reconciliation where a breach in relationship exists. The prophets of old had prophesied of the law of God becoming one, that is in the heart as well as the head, and would be spread to all the nations through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Jer 31:33, 34; Hull, 2006, p. 39). His many

topics kept them engaged. There are other areas of his homiletical style we know little about. I would love to have been there to see His body language and observe His gestures and style of delivery. Did He pace, did He walk around among the crowd or stand in one spot on a platform facing all of them? How was His eye contact, His hand gestures? How did He use His voice? Was He loud and dynamic or did He inflect His voice? Did He start with a more conversational voice, then transition into a more direct preaching voice?

While we have many unanswered questions regarding the discourses of Jesus, it is important to understand that each preacher's uniqueness impacts their homiletical style. Willimon (1987) states, "Each one of us have a distinct homiletical style in the pulpit, which is developed from our personality, this style will stamp our ministry in general, even as it puts an indelible mark on our sermons" (p. 27). Thus, depending on what type of personality, this will dictate our style. Willimon outlines five pastoral styles: (a) the problem solver, (b) the super helper, (c) the power broker, (d) the facilitator, and (e) the fearful loser (pp. 28-31). Each has advantages and disadvantages, but pastors need to study this matter more in detail to receive more understanding regarding their own personal style.

#### Preaching That Preserves the Remnant

In the context of preaching that preserves the remnant there is need for preaching the law and the gospel. Bradford (1974) says, "highly speculative preaching is out of order when the real issues are understood, when the 'chips' are down, when the crisis looms" (Bradford, 1974, pp. 105, 106). "The people must understand that the law of God is a wall of protection, while the Spirit of Prophecy is the eye of detection" (p. 106). The above is in the biblical context of Isaiah 1:9; Ezra 6:8, 9:8; and Revelation 12:17. The



saints need to hear the Word of God for it is “to be the pillar of cloud and fire to the marching remnant” (p. 106). The things that happened to God’s people in the Exodus movement and subsequent history of Israel was for them a warning, but also “were written down for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor 10:11 RSV; p. 106).

Sometimes, fanciful preachers who speak words of eloquence, words so nice to hear, but the message, though creating an emotional response, barely makes an impact upon the mind. White (1915) confirms,

He who in his preaching makes eloquence his highest aim, causes the people to forget the truth that is mingled with his oratory. When the emotion has passed away, it will be found that the word of God has not been fastened upon the mind, nor have the hearers gained in understanding. They may speak in terms of admiration of the minister’s eloquence, but they are not brought any nearer to the point of decision. They speak of the sermon as they would of a play, and of the minister as they would of an actor. They may come again to listen to the same kind of discourse, but they will go away unimpressed and unfed. (p. 153)

Stratman (1983) adds, “Our preaching is rooted in something deeper than brilliant flashes of insight. The truth we proclaim is made known in Jesus Christ” (p. 39). “The preacher is not only a herald, but also a witness. “He” (Wiersbe, 1986, p. 19), has personally experienced the power of God’s truth in his own life and therefore can share it with others.” White (1915) specifies the message of Christ, “Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ ascended into the heavens, Christ coming again, should so soften, gladden, and fill the mind of the minister that he will present these truths to the people in love and deep earnestness. The minister will then be lost sight of and Jesus will be made manifest” (White, 1915, p. 159). Furthermore, about Acts 20:27, John Calvin (as cited in Stratman, 1983, p. 39) said, “The whole counsel of God is included in His word and must not be

sought anywhere else,” and the Bible is the necessary starting point for telling the whole truth.

The preaching elements of logos, pathos, and ethos reiterate the art of preaching with these three essential elements: namely, persuasion, earnestness, and personality (Lybrand, 2008, pp. 27, 29, 36). “At its heart preaching is about persuasion, it is about individuals being convinced about a truth, not only in being valid, but also important, yet demanding action before the sunset” (pp. 27, 28). White asserts, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine” (2 Tim 4:1, 2; 1915, p. 147).

In these direct and forcible words is made plain the duty of the minister of Christ. He is to “preach the word,” not the opinions and traditions of men, not pleasing fables or sensational stories, to move the fancy and excite the emotions. He [or She] is not to exalt himself [or herself], but as in the presence of God he is to stand before a dying world and preach the word. There is to be no levity, no trifling, no fanciful interpretation; the minister must speak in sincerity and deep earnestness, as a voice from God expounding the Sacred Scriptures. He is to bring to his hearers those things which most concern their present and eternal good. (White, 1915, p. 147)

People can discover, in the book of Proverbs, sound wisdom from the father in appealing to his son on how to persuade him from following the competing voices of the world. This sound wisdom will guide the son from the ways of greed, easy money, violence, and sexual gratification. Pemberton (as cited by Bland & Fleer, 2010) points out that, although those voices may lure a person, they lead a person to no good and eventual destruction. When one gives himself or herself to wisdom, these words will bring that one to health and true happiness. The benefits that are spoken in the Word are the rhetoric that will hopefully persuade in preaching (pp. 67-69).

## Preaching to Understand Prophecy

Another important topic of the Bible in preaching is to understand Bible prophecy. The question that comes to mind for a people who believe in the Three Angel's Message of Revelation 14 is, "should this content be sounded out over the pulpit and, if so, how much is enough?" Perhaps there is not enough of Jesus and the cross. White (1915) asserts,

Let the science of salvation be the burden of every sermon, the theme of every song. Let it be poured forth in every supplication. Bring nothing into your preaching to supplement Christ, the wisdom and power of God. Hold forth the word of life, presenting Jesus as the hope of the penitent and the stronghold of every believer. Reveal the way of peace to the troubled and the despondent and show forth the grace and completeness of the Saviour. (p. 160)

How is a person to balance all these topics? Hear what the Spirit says through White (1911), confirmed for those Bible-believing preachers:

Ministers should present the sure word of prophecy, as the foundation of the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be carefully studied, and about the words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew is presented to me again and again as something that is to be brought to the attention of all. We are today living in the time when the predictions of this chapter are fulfilling. Let our ministers and teachers explain these prophecies to those whom they instruct. (p. 148)

## Power of Effective Prayer

To conclude, Ravenhill (1959) learned from his father, who was a pastor, the effective prayer life for a preacher and how to have personal and corporate revival in his ministry. He eloquently sums up the concept of what insight the Scriptures express saying,

But the Spirit will neither spare us, nor cheat us if we will expose ourselves to His infallible scrutiny. Jesus said unto [the blind man], 'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? [He] said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight' (Mark 10:51)."

Ravenhill's appeal is:

Let us, too, pray for sight-upward, inward and outward! Then, like Isaiah, as we look upward, we will see the Lord in all his holiness; as we look inward, we will see ourselves and our need for cleansing and power; and as we look outward, we will see a world that is perishing and in need of a Saviour! Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps 139:23-24). Then only will there be unction in the pulpit and action in the pew! (Ravenhill, pp. 35, 36)

### **Biblical Revival and Transformation**

This section is specifically addressed to people wanting to understand the meaning of revival and transformation or true spiritual renewal. More specifically, it is intended to help others comprehend the power of a true biblical revival when it occurs in conflicted churches. The history of the Bible will show that indeed revivals occurred. There will be better understanding where revivals began and how to be an influential leader who can inspire and unite others for revival and transformation. Putney (2003) asks, "Am I longing for that revival to come? Is our church developing a hunger for revival? How important was that desire for revival in Bible times?" (p. 6).

"Finally, the Holy Spirit is sent in order to produce revival and religious re-awakening" (Lloyd-Jones, 1973, p. 38). The only way to live a truly Christian life is to have the Spirit live within. "Man cannot do it. Man needs a new nature. He needs to be changed; and the Spirit of God alone can do that. Man needs to be 'filled with the Spirit'" (Lloyd-Jones, 1973, p. 39).

The Psalmist makes an appeal to God, "Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, O Lord and grant us Your salvation (Ps 85:6, 7; as cited in Engelkemier, 1998, p. 94). Turner (cited in Scotland, 2013) says

that in the New Testament there is no Greek word used for the term “revival,” but a couple of words that are closely related are (a) *Anakainou*=renewal and (b) *anapsychis*=refreshing (p. 121). The revival spoken of is one of renewal of the mind, spirit, and body, the whole person (3 John 1:2-4). For example, 2 Corinthians 4:16 speaks of “our inward man being renewed day by day.” Romans 12:2 refers to “the renewing of our minds” and Titus 3:5 refers to “the renewal of the Holy Spirit” (Scotland, 2013, p. 121). Then the word *anapsychsis*, which means “refreshing,” occurs in Acts 3:19. “Most people though would subscribe to Piggin’s definition of the term ‘revival’ that it is ‘a powerful intensification of God’s saving work in and through his people’” (p. 121).

Bright (1995) defines revival by two statements:

First, *revival is a sovereign act of God*. The Holy Spirit used Evan Roberts to trigger a revival in 1904 that the people of Wales had earnestly prayed for since 1901. The praying believers had been cooperating with the Holy Spirit by responding to His work within them. The apostle Paul writes: “Glory be to God who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—ininitely beyond our highest prayers, desire, thoughts, or hopes” (Ephesians 3:20, TLB). Second, *revival is a divine visitation*. In the end, you discover that spiritual renewal was God’s idea in the first place. Believers find they were only responding to Him. Sometimes God comes in power and you have no idea what you said or did to prompt it—and, indeed, it probably had nothing to do with your piety at all. (pp. 82, 83)

Understanding prayer is important in revival. White (as cited in Rice & Wilson, 1991, p. 58), states the conditions of the outpouring of the Spirit are confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer. Engelkemier (1998) cites White saying, “A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer” (p. 94). Literature review shows that too often people have not felt the need for prayer or really understood how to pray for revival. Before praying, it is especially important to know how to pray, as did the disciples who appealed to Jesus saying, “Teach us how to pray.” Jesus taught them

principles as outlined in the most famous prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13. In the book of Ephesians, the apostle Paul encourages prayer: “for through Him we both have access by One Spirit to the Father” (2:18). According to this teaching, people discover “two things that are essential to prayer. . . . There are two truths we have to grasp, two doctrines to lay hold of— ‘Through Him’: ‘by one Spirit’” (Lloyd-Jones, 1972, p. 258). Both principles are necessary to meet the conditions of answered prayer; one comes through Jesus and has access both by the Holy Spirit to the Father. In this manner, “you have immediate contact with God, you get directly into the presence of God, and nothing more is necessary” (Lloyd-Jones, p. 258; Harvest Prayer Ministries, 2019).

With this understanding in mind, let us review some samples of stories from both the Old Testament and New Testament. “The story of Jacob’s encounter with the Lord at Bethel as told in Genesis 35. This is the story of personal revival. Revival often begins in the heart of an individual” (Aubrey, 2014, p. 31). It was at Bethel, where he had this encounter with the Lord God, where God gave him promises. This experience at Bethel was a time of spiritual cleansing and preparation for the journey (p. 31); but it was when he wrestled with the Angel of the Lord that his revival began. He sought Him for this blessing because of sincere remorse for his sin of betrayal for the rite of the blessing from his father. Because of this repentance, God could now speak to him more intimately (Gen 32:24-26). Amazingly, he received the blessing of a name change to Israel, “for you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed” (v. 28). Then Jacob named “the place Peniel: ‘I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved’” (v. 30). People will never have a revival without spending private and corporate time with God, as Aubrey (2014) exclaims, “Time transformed in the presence of God meant revival for Jacob and

is the hope for revival for any individual church” (p. 32).

The Lord used Moses to start a revival. When Aaron oversaw the people, he allowed them to worship their idol Baal with the formation of the golden calf. The Bible says that Moses saw that the people were out of control, for Aaron had let them get out of control, and he did not resist them, and by their actions they would become vulnerable to their enemies (Exod 32:25; Aubrey, 2014, p. 32). “And Moses stood at the camp’s entrance and said, ‘Whoever is for the LORD come to me.’ And all the Levites gathered around him” (Exod 32:26; Aubrey, 2014, p. 32).

Elijah desired to spark the fires of revival among God’s people as he prayed to the LORD in the battle with the false prophets of Baal. Putney (2003) affirms, calling out to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to turn the hearts of the people back to Him, Elijah prayed— “I am your servant and have kept your word. Respond to me, O Lord, respond so that the people will know that you are doing this” (1 Kgs 18:36, 37) (p. 7). After his prayer, the Lord heard him and consumed the sacrifice with fire. Because the people saw a miracle before their very eyes “they fell on their faces and they said, the LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!” (1 Kgs 18:39).

Another emphasis is highlighted by Williams (2006, p. 112,113) in the story of the Israelites’ reaction to Ezra’s prayer.

Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly. And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, “We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this. Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise, for this matter is your responsibility. We also are with you. Be of good courage and do it” (Ezra 10:1-4).

The Holy Spirit speaking through the prophet Joel to God's people in the last days, is evident in the first and second chapters of his prophetic account (Van Dolson, 1991, pp. 12, 13). The alarm trumpet has been blowing in Zion for some time now, challenging Christians to prepare for the coming of the Lord, which is more "nigh at hand" (Joel 2:1) today than ever before. "'Revival now' must be the constant response to God's challenge" (p. 13). Finney refers to Hosea when explaining how he promoted revival through telling the Jews "to break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you" (10:12; Wiersbe, 1995, p. 123). He used farming terminology to illustrate to the Jews for this was their main occupation of the time, thus they were familiar with these terms (p. 123). They had been "a nation of backsliders," and therefore he "reproves them for their idolatry and threatens them with the judgments of God" (p. 123).

There are two major aspects to revival, one to reach the believing church members and secondly to reach the unbelieving community (p. 123). Here we focus on the church, thus that which had laid waste and became hardened now "needs to be broken up and mellowed" for it "to be suited to receive grain" (p. 123). The fallow ground represents the heart, and thus the mind needs to be prepared "to bring forth fruit to God" (p. 123). In other words, "to break up the fallow ground is to bring the mind into a state that is fitted to receive the word of God" and it will soften the heart to bear the fruit of righteousness (Wiersbe, 1995, p. 124).

Revival in the New Testament occurred when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost and when God moved so powerfully in the person of the Holy Spirit; as a result, 3,000 people were baptized and saved (Aubrey, 2014, p. 35). Remember that these



were Jewish believers in God, who converted to Christianity and simply heeded the conviction of the Holy Spirit as the inspired preacher spoke words of prophecy and exhortation to illuminate the mind and heart (Acts 2). What made the difference was the outpouring of the Spirit upon the disciples who had been waiting for the promise for ten days in the upper room as they got their differences sorted out through confession and forgiveness. The barriers were broken down, so that they were all in one accord (Acts 1).

Philip, later in Acts 8, was preaching under the influence of the Holy Spirit with great effect. He went to a city in Samaria and preached the Messiah to the people (Aubrey, 2014, p. 36).

The crowds paid attention with one mind to what Philip said, as they heard and saw the signs he was performing. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed, and many who were paralyzed, or lame were healed. So, there was great joy in that city (Acts 15-18).

Later in the same chapter, Philip was led by an angel to go south from Jerusalem to the desert of Gaza to a chariot, and he began to speak with a eunuch who was a chief treasurer of Egypt under the queen, Candace (Acts 8:26-29; Samaan, 1990, p. 146). Philip then began to explain and expound the scriptures from Isaiah, of which the eunuch asked to help him understand. When the eunuch inquired of whom Isaiah was speaking about, then Philip preached Jesus to him. The eunuch, convicted by the Spirit, asked what was hindering him from being baptized, and Philip replied, “do you believe with all your heart, and he affirmed, and so he was baptized” (vv. 30-38).

People need to understand the biblical principles of revival. The idea then is that revival leads to reconciliation with God first then others, which is clearly outlined in 2 Chronicles 7:14: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven

and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” The need is for God’s people to become humble and pray and seek God’s face. Then God can pour out His Spirit to send forth a revival that will have lasting effects for transformation. Some may think that in God’s sovereignty He will have a revival when He wants it and how He wants it, but no one can control God and begin to pray for it because He will have it on His terms, not when anyone says so, or how it should be done or look like (Edman, 2000, pp. 81, 82).

In some people’s opinion Edman’s idea is faulty because they believe God’s sovereignty will not allow Him to do what the people want. In fact, revival is conditional. In the scripture text above, the word “if” signals a condition that begins a promise of God’s blessing, His blessings are conditional; therefore, as much as God wants revival for His church and the nations, He cannot override what the people want. If they desire to be in a state of indifference and lacking zeal, He cannot force His will upon them. Certainly, He will do all in His power to stir up the hearts to be drawn to Him through His loving kindness (Jer 31:3). Therefore, when is the best time to have a revival? Anytime there is a lack of spirituality or there is a coldness among the brethren, or worldliness is creeping into the church, or when there is hardly a desire to reach the unchurched, the backslidden. White (1911) confirms,

Notwithstanding the widespread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of Christ in these churches. Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word ([GC] p. 464). (as cited in Venden, 1986, p. 75)

What is the great need for the church today? The answer is revival and transformation, especially like that which occurred 2,000 years ago. “The baptism of the

Holy Ghost as on the day of Pentecost will lead to a revival of true religion and to the performance of many wonderful works” (White, 1958, p. 57). How can a person know for sure that a revival that people are saying is happening is truly a genuine revival, as opposed to a false or counterfeit revival? Finley explains that though there is excitement among the people they cannot rely on their emotions. The best source and safeguard for knowing whether a revival has occurred is that the Word of God is not lightly regarded, and that everything is tested by the Bible and the law of God (Isa 8:20; Finley, 2013, pp. 73-76). People can read what White (1958) says:

Heavenly intelligences will come among us, and men will speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Spirit of God. But should the Lord work upon men as He did on and after the day of Pentecost, many who now claim to believe the truth would know so very little of the operation of the Holy Spirit that they would cry, ‘Beware of fanaticism.’ They would say of those who were filled with the Spirit, ‘These men are full of new wine.’ (p. 57)

It is interesting that when God moves upon the people others will claim that they are fanatical. The reason the naysayers claim this as fanaticism is because the word of God is highly regarded, and the Spirit is combined with prayer and labor for souls. Finley (2013) confirms that when the people are involved in false revivals they will “often place their major emphasis on spectacular signs and wonders. Genuine revivals focus instead on ministry and self-sacrifice. They recognize that the greatest miracle is a changed life” (p. 79).

In the decade after Jesus’ ascension, the early church revivals that occurred had four elements. In the book of Acts, it says that (a) they confessed their sins, (b) they forgave one another, and (c) they sorted out all their differences, after a short time of (d) focusing inward (Acts 1). They did not spend one year or six months focusing inwardly. There was an intense ten days of prayer where people confessed to one another, and then

the next 40 days became a time to prepare and wait for the Holy Spirit. God moved miraculously with a mighty out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The church, with about 120 disciples who were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in other languages. This caused the Jewish believers to begin to wonder about these believers in Jesus. As Peter preached there were many who in their hearts were convicted to believe and to be baptized in the name of Jesus. In following this revival, they began to meet in homes because as an early church they had no synagogues to call their own. The following four elements were the stronghold of the church: (a) they studied the apostles' doctrine, (b) had fellowship, (c) they ate together, and (d) experienced many prayers (Acts 2:42-44; Easum, 2010, p. 48).

Cho (2014) has done extensive research on the Christian church in Korea on how to recognize the need for revival. In his discovery he wrote,

Certainly, the very desperation of our times can give us hope of a revival in our day. In the revival that must come, Lewis A. Drummond lists three awakening signs that precede revival. They are (1) social, political, and economic crises; (2) feelings of hopelessness within the church; and (3) a concern for world evangelization and missions. These signs are evident in our day. Also, he suggests several things to promote revival. They are (1) walk in personal victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; (2) commit to personal prayer for revival; (3) become part of a revival prayer group; (4) wait upon the Lord with persistence for revival; and (5) protect the results of revival. (pp. 4, 50)

There were three principles of a continual thriving church:

1. To be united in the faith and doctrine (Eph 4).
2. To love one another by sharing their possessions with the needy (Acts 6), thus they were a missional church, as they went out ministering to the poor and the widows.
3. To be focused outward by being an evangelistic church while the apostles proclaimed the Word with signs and wonders. The church grew and members began to focus outwardly, on others. They longed to see transformation occur in Jerusalem and

beyond (Acts 1:8), ever fulfilling the great gospel commission of the Lord Jesus to teach and baptize (Matt 28:18-20).

Therefore, a thriving church is united, is missional, and is focused outwardly based on the principle of love. “God is Love” (1 John 4:8), Rampton asserts that “the world does not know what this true love is except the church of God demonstrates this love in the life of the Christian” (as cited in Mansell, 1974, p. 130), without this principle shown, many will be lost. One of the signs of the end is when “many will lose their faith and will betray and hate each other. . . . Because of the spread of wickedness, the love of most men will grow cold, though the man who holds out to the end will be saved” (Matt 24:12, 13 Phillips NT). “Love is the most sublime definition of God. It is the epitome of His character. It is the summary of the motivation behind all that he does” (Mansell, 1974, p. 130).

This love will lead preachers to speak boldly against those principles that are opposed to love. White wrote very clearly about the type of preaching that will lead to spiritual renewal.

Repent, repent, was the message rung out by John the Baptist in the wilderness. Christ’s message to the people was, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:5). And the apostles were commanded to preach everywhere that men should repent. The Lord desires His servants today to preach the old gospel doctrine, sorrow for sin, repentance, and confession. We want old-fashioned sermons, old-fashioned customs, old-fashioned fathers, and mothers in Israel. The sinner must be labored for, perseveringly, earnestly, wisely, until he shall see that he is a transgressor of God’s law and shall exercise repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. --Undated Manuscript 111. (White, 1958, p. 179)

Often it will be that many preachers will be opposed for preaching a higher standard, just as Korah and Dathan spoke against Moses for preaching holy things. What does God say or do about such things? One can learn that God is not pleased, and He will

avenge His servants and be against those who do so (Num 16:3). Korah, Dathan, and Abiram “complained and influenced the people to stand with them in rebellion, and even after God stretched forth His hand and swallowed up the wrongdoers and the people fled to their tents in horror, their rebellion was not cured” (White, 1999, p. 125.3). O’Ffill (2007) says, “We must resist the tendency of our culture to bring everything down to the same low level. Not until we see God for who He is and relate ourselves to Him as He deserves (see Isaiah 6:5) will our relationship with Him be what it ought to be” (p. 56).

In conclusion, this chapter reflected on the theology of conflict resolution, biblical preaching principles, and the theology of revival and renewal. By understanding these important theological insights, our preaching seminar can be designed to help serve as a catalyst for positive renewal to come in the life of a congregation. The theological grounds for a resolution are important, for example, we learn that when there is conflict within a faith base, there is hope because both sides of a conflict believe in Jesus and should be willing to make a mends and compromise that is honorable to both God and His church. The applied biblical principles make for facilitating reconciliation always possible by carefully exercising sensitivity to the issues at hand. Lastly, the hope of all churches is a revival that is legitimate and through the power of prayer each believer may be transformed in the light of His word and the Holy Spirit.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

The literature review focuses on three major topics: first, to understand various issues of conflict resolution. Second, how effective biblical preaching can provide a foundational platform for reconciliation and unity and lay a foundation for future conflict resolution. Third, how a need for revival and transformation of character is so necessary for church reconciliation and unity. Attempts will be made to cover varying types of conflict in the literature relating to the Christian church, such as conflict with theology, church doctrine, and specific church family disputes. This research, on conflict resolution, is intended to resolve a problem in my local congregation, the praxis of which will not constitute a comprehensive conflict resolution approach. Further research on social science issues and strategy will be needed for such an endeavor.

#### **Common Conflict Resolution Approaches**

Often during poorly managed conflict resolution when there are two or more sides to a given problem, people can feel as if advantage is being taken of them. As a result, a disgruntled person or group may leave the church because of the unresolved offense, thereby severing relationships and creating a major problem. No one wins, and even the church at large feels the effects of the loss and separation. Although time seems to heal the problem(s), yet another problem will arise involving different people and/or issues potentially resulting in yet another separation. In response to this situation Olson (2010)

opines that many people will be hurt, “Antagonism between congregation and pastor; friction between those of varying worship style preferences; differences as to who can be ordained; discord over theological, ideological, and lifestyle issues—all this and more are part of the church scene today” (p. 6). The conflicts that arise mute our witness to young adults, the newly converted, the teens, and they trouble even the mature Christians.

Gunther (2011) observes that conflict itself is not the problem, but rather unresolved and poorly managed resolutions are the problem (p. 7). Christian Bible colleges and universities have done rather poorly in preparing church leaders and pastors on how to deal with church conflict. Gunther states, “My ministerial training provided no resources to deal with conflict once I became a pastor” (p. 7). This problem has escalated to the point of pastors being disillusioned with ministry and then quitting. It has also resulted in members leaving the church. If only church leaders had consistently taught at least a course on managing conflict in church, perhaps many would have stayed in ministry and in their respective churches (p. 9). Gunther prepared his dissertation to resolve the problems mentioned above and produced a course with resources for ministers at Trinity Bible College where it became one of the core courses for ministerial training (p. 9). In his article in *Christianity Today* (Poirier, 2006, p. 10), agrees with this notion. In a series of surveys, researchers discovered evidence that pastoral training is deficient, because pastors listed conflict management as the training they needed the most, but lacked in their seminary or Bible college studies.

Two surveys of pastors clearly show the lack of training in conflict management thus leading to many unresolved issues and termination of employment. Poirier (2006) mentions how pastors confessed that “the two chief contributors deemed as low points in



their ministry were internal church problems or conflicts and poor relationships with their leadership board” (p. 10). He asserts that in comparison in “another survey, ominously titled *Forced Exits*, reveals that conflict causes many pastors to leave their churches (or get fired) and that churches, and leadership, are unprepared to respond to conflict” (p. 10).

Bannister (2014) believes that Scripture does show how to remedy the effects of conflict through personal convictions. Furthermore, we must implement a resolution with humility, for the offended and offenders (pp. 1-3). He concludes that active listening and applying Matthew 18 aided in the process of resolving conflicts that were affecting his church, the Hackettstown Seventh-day Adventist Church (pp. 1-3). He produced six biblical studies (one per week) on managing conflict in this New Jersey church (pp. 3, 4). Barthel and Edling (2012) add, “Of all of the problems in a severely conflicted church, one of the most devastating is the common habit we have of refusing to admit when we are wrong” (p. 185). One must agree that owning up to our wrongdoing may be one of the biggest reasons’ conflicts will dissipate. Furthermore, Barthel and Edling add that a spirit of humility will motivate and influence the other side on a decision in being peacemakers, as opposed to being part of the controversy, and thus hopefully ending a conflict and bringing reconciliation and healing (p. 186).

Following a conflict, the church may be in denial. Perhaps they deny the problems because they think the problems will take care of themselves. When a cross-section of members is affected by the conflict, people evidently fear confronting the new issue; as such, people quietly gossip about the persons involved but do nothing to resolve the conflict, in effect creating more conflict.

The following are some helpful confrontation strategies by Everist (2004):

1. When confronting, confront in the first person
2. Do not confront on behalf of others
3. Be direct and gentle
4. Keep confrontation in the present
5. Confront the behavior not the person
6. Do not interpret behavior (p. 92)

When choosing confrontation remember:

7. To consider how the person you are confronting may perceive your position of authority
8. To anticipate a various range of reactions to the confrontation
9. To understand frustration, which builds from a series of irritations
10. To try not to undermine another person's integrity or make them feel small or outnumbered
11. To carefully select words, tone of voice, location, and time of confrontation
12. That action without reflection causes more harm than good, and reflection without action is futile (p. 92). Moore agrees and adds to Everist (Moore, 2009, pp. 70, 71)

Leas, (as cited in Hunt, 2008, p. 12), relayed a story of an organist in a particular church who was painfully “missing her cues,” but for fear of offending her, no one wanted to tell her it was time for her to give up playing and let some younger people play. On the other hand, it was offending the members who had to listen and endure her

mediocre playing “to the embarrassment of the congregation, pastor, visitors, leaders, and sometimes the organist herself” (p. 12). Yet, when the church avoids confrontation—whether in the case of the organist or even more serious matters—it can be a sign that the church has just faced serious conflict and members go into a type of depression because they are nervous about “it” happening again. Furthermore, church leaders tend to resist any “challenge to the general sense of peace and order” (p. 13). Hunt agreed that avoidance only creates even more problems in the future. “If you are involved in a conflict requiring confrontation and you realize it, you need to be aware that you may make the mistake of using one of three negative strategies: avoiding, attacking, or ambushing” (Hunt, 2008, p. 14).

The need to understand how to bring about a resolution during the battle can be rather scary and yet a privilege—if we believe that we can be problem solvers rather than serve as trigger points for more friction. Some people may be surprised to discover that anger and conflict are part of growth. When a person sees anger and conflict as a negative—namely, that no positive outcome is possible—the person begins with a wrong assumption. Should people make a false assumption that conflict can lead only to negative outcomes? They need to learn the lesson that conflict can lead to new knowledge and can thus increase wisdom. Conflict can also develop, refine, and potentially transform the character of the people involved. Thus, all the people involved should learn to expect positive results from seemingly bad experiences. Olson (2010) assured that positive results are possible by saying, “If anger and conflict are entirely normal and natural, then they are considered gifts; for as individuals and as a church to

possess potential for great good and to present us with important ethical decisions and dilemmas” (p. 11).

Many Christians tend to view conflict as a bad thing and infer that the enemy must be working in their midst, yet “the Gospels describe Jesus as a person who freely engaged in fitting anger and conflict” (Olson, 2010, p. 11; J. Morris, 2001). As pastors attempt to resolve church conflict, there are strategies or keys they can implement. Sawyer (2007) suggests three keys in the mystery of congregational conflict: (a) the organization development key, (b) the communicational and theological keys, and (c) the family systems keys (pp. 16-21). As one takes the role of leader of the congregation (generally, the pastor), the person must ascertain how he or she should approach church conflict. Sawyer (2007) found that “three obvious alternatives presented themselves to fight, flee, or lead. Depending on personal preferences, emotional involvement, and spiritual foundation, a case can be made for any of the three” (pp. 25, 26). He argues a number of key points in facilitating and managing resolution between the parties. He states that prayerful discernment about taking the role of leadership is particularly important, making sure one’s motives are pure. If he or she decides to take that role, then the person may proceed by inviting the conflicted individuals or groups to a conversation. Next, the leader can facilitate resolution by creating a congregational conflict taskforce and, finally, deciding to bring in outside help (pp. 25-31).

In the life of Jesus, one can see anger and conflict as gifts to individuals and collectively to the church. Of course, conflict defaults to being negative when people do not manage it and themselves in an appropriate way. In sensitive and intense situations, Jesus was passive, but at times defensive, and yet at other times He went on the

offensive; therefore, it shows from His actions that he was very understanding, flexible, and wise.

The key is to recognize when people are abusing their right of expression and allowing emotions to drive the situation. The offended one must confront the offender in a respectful manner about how his/her actions offended him/her. The problem often arises when the person does not do this and will often gossip of their hurt(s) to others. This development can be extremely negative. The offended must never share with others who are not the solution to the problem. Gossip has dangerous consequences when proper procedures for reconciliation are not properly followed. The goal should be to work on resolving the conflict and the anger the person is dealing with, so it does not poison the rest of the church. “If God expects us to confess our sins to Him to have fellowship with Him, certainly the principle applies to our human interpersonal relationships. If there could be something of real openness among ourselves, if we could embrace one another in the arms of confession in the context of a true binding of our lives in love and forgiveness, our homes, our churches, and our nation could be revolutionized” (Drummond, 1975, p. 148).

How can it be that conflict rises above unity if God’s Spirit is there? Should followers of Christ not be able to come to an understanding of one another, so that there is peace amidst the controversy? Jesus knew and was prepared to deal with conflict, yet many “leaders are not prepared for conflict (even though they should be). Many followers are not prepared for conflict (even though they should be)” (Barthel & Edling, 2012, p. 31). Yes, perhaps, as the authors asserted, “Both leaders and followers are caught in worldliness, and many have bought into a postmodern philosophy” (p. 31), which could

be part of the problem of why conflicts continue to hurt “churches” influence in the communities they serve. Managing conflict directly and effectively is a process, and if not dealt with intelligently, the conflict can explode into a chaotic mess. Therefore, effective strategy and peacemaking is necessary for church transformation to be able to take place in a crisis. One chief aim of a leader, according to Hunsinger and Latini (2013) “is to restore a sense of belonging in the community by facilitating connection among all its members. The anxiety, isolation, and alienation that typically grow from relentless conflict are often its most destructive fruit” (p. 176).

Hunsinger and Latini also offered numerous suggestions for restoring a healthy community:

1. Share information about the crisis as accurately and transparently as possible on a regular basis.
2. Remember that everyone is a needs matter, including those of children, teens, and the homebound.
3. Remember to attend to your own needs for self-care, making time for rest, renewal, support, inspiration, and prayer.
4. Balance care for self with care for others.
5. Take time to process feelings as they arise, remembering to connect your feelings with underlying needs and then to find strategies to address them.
6. Find methods for collaboration and support from those outside the system: ask for help from other clergy, therapists, skilled chaplains or caregivers, church officials and denominational organizations.
7. Plan any prayer services or gatherings for worship with a leadership team,

remembering that worship provides pastoral care for the entire community.

8. Consider inviting a denominational official or clergy colleague to preach for several weeks after a crisis to give the regular pastoral staff members time to work through their own shock and disorientation.

9. Develop a highly, respected planning team that will together envision a healing strategy for bringing all those affected by the crisis into constructive dialogue (pp. 176, 177). McSwain and Treadwell (1981, pp. 91-102), also affirm this concept.

### Avoiding Conflicts Through Proclamation

When the pastor or speaker is developing and preparing sermons, it is important that he or she does not allow intrapersonal conflicts to become a pet peeve to get a message across perhaps out of anger or a selfish personal agenda. Willimon (1987) wisely advises that “intrapersonal, interpersonal conflict, because they tend to be deeply personal and individual, can best be handled in counseling, therapy, personal confrontation, or other individualized and personal means rather than through the more public forum of the pulpit” (p. 11). For example, the chair or the preacher may gain advantage by using the pulpit to promote an idea that the board is turning down.

Hypothetically speaking, the chair may want to expand the church, increase the size of the sanctuary and the fellowship hall, but the board said “no” based on not having enough money and not enough people to fill the venue. Yet, the chair or pastor can counter by taking advantage through using the pulpit by preaching on faith and manipulating the congregation by giving a guilt trip. For example, he/she might say, all that is needed is more faith and belief for God to work a miracle. By stepping out in faith God will provide the means for the expansion, not before.

Preachers must be catalysts for reconciliation, Craig (1999) writes, “The clergy, seeking to be peace makers, also advises people to pray about problems, their own and the other individuals involved, so that they all grow in spiritual grace” (p. 19). In counseling for improved relationships, one course of action is to come together and make confessions and perhaps suggestions for therapy. If necessary, this is “especially appropriate in very sensitive cases where people’s inner conflicts are concerned” (p. 19). Poirier (2006) interjects the Scripture beautifully, “yet, interestingly, God has reconciled all things to Himself through the death of His Son on the cross (Col 1:19, 20), then we who are the children of God are redeemed to be reconcilers” (p. 13). The pastor can certainly encourage the congregation to be ministers of reconciliation, pointing people to Christ, who is the solution to people’s inner struggles, to their addictions, and their strife.

### How to Deal With Controversial Subjects

Edward Dobson (1992) encourages the use of preaching controversial subjects (p. 56). Even though the preacher knows it may create some anger towards himself, providing what one preaches is truth, one will have no need to fear because preachers have this obligation to the truth (p. 56). He continues by saying that they also need to fulfill an obligation to people because they are dealing with issues that the Bible answers and this will give them principles to learn how to handle their affairs (pp. 56, 57). Also, on how to keep conflict out of controversy Dobson counsels, “To affirm truth more and condemn error less,” be fair to each side, so you are dealing with the issues and not biases (p. 58). Furthermore, he counsels preachers to make careful use of surprise, be fair to opposing views, and keep their ultimate focus on God and not people (pp. 58-60). Leas (1992, p. 29) says tension is not all that bad. Conflict has benefits, if handled wisely and



humbly. Many greater problems can be kept to a minimum when church groups ask the hard questions in a respectful and thoughtful way. Many businesses fail or are in decline because “they cannot readily adapt to their changing environments” (p. 31). Learning this principle will open the avenues to a more successful church growth program because leaders are dealing less with conflicts. Therefore, conflict in the church is not necessarily a sign of an unhealthy church, because the recognition of the need to mediate a conflict rather than avoiding the issue can often bring more healing than it does harm. Thus, the church learns lessons and understands better how to mediate and prevent future conflicts from the incident (p. 31). Pascale (1990) says:

The essential activity for keeping our paradigm current is persistent questioning. I will use the term inquiry. Inquiry is the engine of vitality and self-renewal. . . . Contention fuels the ‘engine of inquiry’ and is a cheap and abundant fuel. Yet contention carries a stigma: managers are uncomfortable with it, and it is often misconstrued as a sign of organizational ill health. This need not be the case. (p. 31)

His point that “contention carries a stigma” in my experience is correct; so, if one can recognize the problem as an invitation to a potentially healthier organization, then this will be beneficial. Too often, contentious issues are considered negative, yet if the problem is dealt with objectively, this may lead to a resolution for the betterment of the organization.

In summary, the discussion has been on how pastors and leadership could effectively and pragmatically bring resolutions through purposeful management of the conflicts within a given church. Biblical reconciliation and unity are the goal because Jesus prayed for this; certainly, this should also be His disciples’ goal.

### **Effective Biblical Preaching for Spiritual Renewal and Unity**

This section reviews literature that will help the pastor know that preaching is important in bringing spirituality, reconciliation, and renewal in the church. In general, a

pastor may often ask the question: Is preaching making a difference? Is it getting through to the hearts and minds of the congregation(s)? I propose that effective biblical preaching can create a revival and transformation can lay a foundation for future conflict resolution within a church. The key though, is when people have given their heart to Jesus Christ and are revived and transformed that they are in a position or state of mind to prepare for the steps involved in conflict resolution in a humble and honest manner.

Poirier (2006) asserts that pastors are ordained by Christ “to be preachers of the gospel of peace—a gospel that alone can uproot the sins of bitterness, envy, pride, and covetousness” (p. 12). The law court model fails to reach the heart, and this is the challenge for a secular mindset in dealing with conflict. This method mediates with the intent to resolve the issues through settlements rather than aiming to reconcile relationships (p. 13). God has called pastors not to run away from or to avoid the conflicts in their church, but to face them by considering the cross. Jesus knew His calling, and He knew the challenges pastors encounter while caring and shepherding the people of God, yet it was His business to love people, to show the way, and to reconcile people to God (pp. 19-22).

A-peacemaking pastor should not be solely a pulpit preacher and a manager, but should shoulder the responsibility of ministering God’s love, mercy, and the biblical faith. Opposition will come and will not be a most desirous part of the pastoral ministry. If opposition is not dealt with then the pastor will fail to be a pastor who makes peace, proclaims the gospel, and comes to grip with the need to love his or her parishioners who internally may be at odds with Christ and/or their brothers and sisters in Christ.

There are times when a pastor will have to deal with strong criticism of their sermons. On the other hand, there will be, in many cases, incredibly positive affirmations of the sermons. As a result, the pastor feels lost as to why some like his/her sermons and some do not; the responses can be so contradictory, and the pastor is left, feeling confused. As Andersen (2006) explains, “Many a preacher feels lost along the way, [and] many have given up the journey altogether” (p. 16). The Preacher must be able to decide which road or roads he or she will take. There are so many different forms, styles, approaches, and methods a pastor can apply to the art and science of preaching. In addition, all the technological advances have turned what used to be simple into something more complex (pp. 15-17). Preachers try to conform their style to their specific audience, but within that same congregation are groups who prefer old-fashioned preaching, while other groups love to be tantalized with entertainment in making them laugh, cry, or be motivated to live life with some sizzling charisma. Randolph (2009) explains that there must be a renewal of preaching in the 21st century, unless pastors want visual art studies, in particular, “films, to take its place” (p. 5). He further adds, “New media and technology offer enormous resources to communicate the Christian faith and to meet the challenges to faith and culture—and more” (p. 7). That said, no technological developments, including televangelists can replace authentic, genuine examples of the gospel from a real, live preacher (p. 12).

### Defining Preaching

Preaching is proclaiming, telling a story, speaking truth, and inspiring an action. To define preaching, it would be good to read what Phillips Brooks (as cited in Reid, 2006, p. 20) stated,

Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has two essential elements, truth and personality. . . . Preaching is the bringing of truth through personality.” With these three words, “truth through personality,” Brooks succinctly balanced preaching’s essential truth claim with its human medium of communication. According to Brooks, if either of these dimensions is sacrificed, then it is not preaching.

In January 2005, at a training conference for pastors in Toronto, Canada, evangelist Mark Finley spoke about how pastors could learn to reach others for Christ in a more effective way through preaching. He passionately communicated that they need *pathos*, *logos*, and *ethos*, and provided explanations for each of those original Greek words. Reid (as cited by Finley, 2006), concurred that there should be passion (*pathos*), the Word of God or “wise counsel” (*logos*), and the preacher’s character (*ethos*) should reveal one of Christlikeness (p. 17). Resner (1999) confirms, “For Aristotle, there are three artistic *pisteis* (beliefs): *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*” (p. 19). As much as these are excellent points, there is more to the essence of preaching than these three profound points. Thus, the following research will cover the important values and principles of preaching.

The modern age of homiletics requires that the old art of preaching be discarded because it does not affect the audience like it used to. The old style of preaching does not stimulate the emotions like it used to or does not put the fear of God into the heart like it used to. What should the modern preacher do with such opposition and criticizing? Stott (1982) explains, “There are three main arguments which are being advanced against preaching—the anti-authority mood, the cybernetics revolution and the loss of confidence in the gospel” (pp. 50, 51). The attitude of the modern person is that they are educated, “now everybody has his or her own convictions and considers them just as good as the preacher’s. ‘Who does he [or she] think he [she] is,’ people ask—silently if not aloud—

‘that he [or she] should presume to lay down the law to me?’” (p. 52). “To preach has come to mean to give advice in an offensive, tedious or obtrusive manner while to be sermonistic is to inflict someone a patronizing harangue” (p. 52).

How then should a Christian respond to such opposition to preaching that appears to be boring, obtrusive, and offensive? One cannot react with dogmatism; for the more someone protests; the louder the preacher becomes, or to add insult with injury this would not put the preaching mood of the day in its place, but rather entice furthermore the opposition (Stott, 1982, p. 56). The greatest testament to the approval of preaching is to live and demonstrate Christ’s character as set forth in the early pages of the book of Genesis. In God’s image we were made not to be forced to love and obey His commandments but from a willing heart we choose to love and obey, this is the only attitude God accepts, as honorable and exceptional (p. 56). Theodore Ferris (as cited in Stott, 1982, p. 57) writes with persuasiveness, the best means of responding to insults is to preach in the indicative mood rather than the imperative mood, “the power of the religion of the Bible is to be found in its affirmations. The same is true,” he continued, “of the great proclamations of the New Testament like ‘I am the way, the truth and the life’ or God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (p. 57).

#### Preaching Methods for Revival and Transformation

There are several preaching methods that could be effectively used that could help facilitate spiritual renewal and congregational unity. Based on the congregational survey feedback, I chose topical preaching with a deductive approach.

According to Williams (2018), citing *The New Interpreters Handbook of Preaching*, “a deductive sermon is logical and linear, as it develops a concept. Its

reasoning begins with a general proposition and moves to the particulars” (p. 90). Since the topics are familiar with a particular denomination, then deductive reasoning is best. Furthermore, Williams (2018) states, “deductive preaching is best used when preaching the doctrines of one’s denomination or tradition” but cautions, “in such cases, can be more susceptible to the reading into or proof text method of expounding Scripture” (p. 90).

The need for topical preaching, is best suited to cover a subject or topic not needing to focus on one biblical passage, that have been raised by parishioners. Williams (2018), informs that “it [topical preaching] is concerned with a particular subject or topic of current significance and has all the essential characteristics of textual and expository preaching, but bears no analytical relation to any one particular passage of Scripture” (p. 83). There are at least three types of topical expositions: (a) Theological, (b) Biographical and (c) Conversational/Relational issue (Williams, 2018, pp. 85-89). For the purposes of this project theological topical exposition was used. Two examples of this type of preaching for the sermon on the topic-how to prepare for the second coming of Jesus and the power of the Cross and Forgiveness. Both sermons give passages that concern the specific subject and topic which relate to expository preaching, yet no analytical relation to one specific passage.

### The Call to Preach

The significance of the call to preach must be understood, for without this conviction, without this assurance, without the affirmation, one will be as a sheep sent to the wolves, only to be overtaken. Ford (1979) expresses that “preachers are not made, even by the preachers themselves, they are born. ‘Before I formed you in the womb, I

knew you for my own; before you were born, I consecrated you, I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jer 1:5; p. 197). These were the words given to both Jeremiah and Isaiah (p. 197). Therefore, “the preparation for a sermon does not begin when there is a preaching assignment to be filled, but way back in the counsels of God” (p. 197).

The need for preaching is paramount for every soul that exists. The apostle Paul affirms in Romans (10: 14-17), how can one hear the word except one proclaim the faith, but if no one is sent to preach how will they believe. Even literature related to the teachings of the Bible can act as silent preachers. Though literature is important, “no substitute is offered, either in the word of God or in human experience, for the preaching of the gospel” (Evans, 1938, p. 17). Evans (1938) shares the list of things that churches have attempted to substitute for preaching.

All the devising’s of men, such as recreations, games, athletics, clubs and social organizations, many of which may of themselves be of some worth physically or socially, are really unsatisfying to the need of the soul, and leave it destitute of what is essential to satisfy the hunger of the human heart. Education, philosophy, culture cannot meet the need. Human wisdom cannot find God. Human strivings cannot atone for sin. The transgressor cannot make himself either clean or sinless. Help must be provided; else man is hopelessly lost. (p. 18)

It is true that God uses other agencies such as literature, music, personal influence, schools, the ministry to the sick and the suffering; He speaks through nature and in many other ways (p. 61). “But the mightiest soul-winning influence that has ever been set in operation in the world is the preaching of the Word of God by consecrated men” [women] (p. 61).

Bounds (1982), contends that though preaching is explaining truth and giving feelings of enthusiasm, and being passionate. He also underscores another element of the art of preaching that must be considered, which element is whether the preacher is

anointed. He posits that “The preacher who has lost this anointing (or unction) has lost the art of preaching” (pp. 74, 75). What is the meaning of this anointing? Bounds says it “makes God’s truth powerful and interesting, draws, attracts, edifies, convicts and saves... [It] vitalizes God’s revealed truth, makes it alive and life giving... Without this anointing, the message may be truth, but it will be light, dead, and deadening... [Therefore] the anointing pervades, convicts the conscience, and breaks the heart” (pp. 75, 77).

Bailey and Wiersbe (2003, p.58), affirms that the anointing comes from time alone in prayer, when the preacher’s heart is in tune with God’s divine message. Bounds (1982) adds, “this anointing is that undefinable, indescribable” (p. 76). Except it comes upon the preacher who is consecrated to God, whom God has ordained to preach His precious word, the word preached will not have its full affect. Forbes (as cited in Bailey & Wiersbe, 2003, p. 58) says, “The anointing comes out of the experience of the presence of the Spirit and if we prepare and preach out of that experience, we will have nurturing from and collaboration with the Spirit, so we can expect to receive from the text and message that is sent by God.” Bounds (1982) posits that “It inspires and clarifies his intellect, gives insight, grasp, and projecting power” (p. 77). Azurdia (1998, pp. 116-117) affirms this statement by Bounds (1982, p.77) “It gives the preacher’s heart power, which is greater than head power.” To understand from where the anointing comes or how it comes, one can only give credit and praise to God. This is the thing that can frankly speak to the heart and mind of the listener, this is the preacher’s responsibility to ask and let God use him or her to allow that “tenderness, purity, and force flow from the heart by



it” (Bounds, 1982, p. 77). Nothing can substitute the anointing, not even “earnestness” (p. 78).

Meditation upon the message “is not merely an intellectual exercise,” but “rather it is an employment of the mind on spiritual objects for spiritual purposes, by which we arrive at a clear and permanent conception of truth” (Haynes, 1939, pp. 60, 61). The need is for the preacher to cultivate this habit of meditation, for this will have an especially important bearing upon the general efficiency of the message (p. 60). This will form the character of the preacher, as the minister nourishes himself or herself with God’s word, when he or she lives by the word which will make a huge difference for the listener (p. 60). The pastor’s thinking will be clearer and will guide him or her into the most effectual method of presentation (p. 61). The meditation will help dig for deeper truths of scripture that will not be revealed if the pastor does not meditate upon the Scripture and the message (Haynes, 1939, p. 61).

When preparing the sermon, expositor H. B. Charles (as cited in Larue, 2002, pp. 42, 43), explains the first principle to one’s priority is to understand the meaning of the text by asking questions of the text, “I even argue with it when there is something I don’t understand or with which I disagree.” Second principle, the pastor can go through secondary sources and go into as many translations as possible, even though this can be tedious, but “I do not want someone who is reading outside of the NKJV to trump my interpretation of the text” (p. 43). “I then study the cross-references of the text. Indeed, Scripture is its own interpreter” (p. 43). “We often misinterpret the text because we often read the oriental text with an occidental mindset” (p. 44). Furthermore, the preacher must take care to avoid reading things into the text; principles must be clear by the meaning of

the text within the context of all Scripture (Hamilton, 1992, p. 70). The last part is the reading of the commentaries, the ones pastors love and even those the pastor disagrees with at times; they will help a person create unique and important revelations of the text (Larue, 2002, p. 44).

Stories are told relating to the topic or theme. They have the power to persuade as nothing else can. Jesus was articulate in presenting His messages. He used stories, parables, love, truthful Bible knowledge, and He had a passion to see more individuals come to the faith. The disciples caught Jesus' enthusiasm in due time, and as soon as the promise of the Holy Spirit came upon them, the disciples were never the same. Kidder (2015) has a top twenty list of preaching tips and in one of them, he says telling a story is more effective than reading one (p. 89). Following are a few tips:

1. "Visualize the characters and setting so fully that the listeners can see in their mind's eye what you are seeing. Allow them to put themselves into the story.
2. Do not be afraid to move and gesture.
3. Use your voice the way an actor would. Change voice characterizations as you convey the words of the different speakers in your story. Vary the speed, tone, and volume you use" (Kidder, 2015, p. 89).

How can sermons be so inspiring that hearts are transformed and moved by the Spirit, just as Jesus moved hearts when He spoke. Augustine stated, "The preacher's life should be one that embodies the threefold goal of delighting, teaching, and moving to persuasion" (Resner, 1999, p. 56). Wogman (1998) said that in winning your audience through delighting them with things that appeal to their heart and mind, the speaker paves the way for teaching and persuading them (p. 22). "The intent of the sermon must be

made clear. When the pilot does not know what port he is heading for, no wind is the right wind; and when the preacher does not know what he is trying to accomplish in his message, no service is a good service. Have a specific aim for each message and be sure to tell your congregation what it is” (Wiersbe & Wiersbe, 1986, p. 25).

The preacher will be much more effective if he or she loves and cares for the flock. When preachers go out of their way to serve where needed, the congregation will take notice that the preacher indeed believes and lives the Word of God, not just talking the walk, but walking the talk. In addition, pastors become more effective when they are keenly aware of their parishioners’ mental state, their values, their uncertainties, the life experiences through which they will refract whatever they hear, their prejudices, and their nobler instincts (Wogaman, 1998, p. 22). Preachers can have a major influence; in fact, for Woodly, preachers are “utterly infectious” (Larson, 2012, p. 2). In summary, Woodly saw the potential for people to catch something profound from inspirational preachers, to catch their passion for the biblical text or theme, catch their love for God, and catch a spiritual reality in their lives. Preachers ideally know the beauty of the gospel, so by the time members are finished listening to their sermon, their minds are informed, and their wills have been quickened (Larson, 2012, p. 2).

Furthermore, Woodly shared about a pivotal time when he was ready to quit seminary, until he met “Doc” (C. Philip Hinerman) (Larson, 2012, p. 1). Then Hinerman cited the example of the story about the disciples and Jesus along that dusty road to Emmaus: “Were not our hearts burning within us, while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32; Larson, p. 2). By having His presence burning in our hearts, this will make way for excellent inspirational preaching. Is informational

preaching pre-eminent to inspirational preaching? Woodly argued no; inspirational preaching taps into our hearts and gently expands our desire for the right things. If someone gave us a million dollars and we could do what we wanted with it, there is no catch, just freely given, where would our hearts lead us? Some of us would first donate tithe and offerings to our church and favorite non charitable organizations. Others may like to clear all debts. Perhaps, if we do not own a house we would want to buy one and finally put some money in the bank for a rainy season or retirement. Money can change things for the better or for the worst. Sometimes it makes people do some awful things. Inspirational preaching will also change things for the better when heeded. This will cause us to behave godlier, to desire the knowledge of God and His will for our lives, but if the message is rejected, which can result in doing nothing that would be awful. This illustrates what ultimately inspirational preaching will do for people who are positively infected by such gospel preaching. It causes a desire in humans to “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (see Matt 5:6), namely, to be better men, women, and children (Larson, 2012, p. 4). The key for the preacher to be infectious, according to Larson, is to “ask the Holy Spirit to speak to my heart about a passage first before I tell anyone else, for God will use it to stir others’ hearts as well” (p. 5). This kind of preaching is emotional, for it awakens the conscience and arrests the attention of the soul, and the feelings of anger, fear, or joy will come to the forefront. The perception of many people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that it is taboo to show emotions because it is considered a weakness. It appears to be like when a favorite sports team loses or wins, the discovery of whether they lost or won can exude many emotions.

Jacobsen (2017) relays an inspired statement in which he observed and heard a pastor who preached a powerful sermon. The preacher who was inspired said, “God can do some things if we pray, that he cannot do if we don’t pray” (p. 42). He continues to tell how this preacher, whom he had previously heard preaching very well, but on this day preached with such forcefulness, conviction, and authority, that it was profound. People were tearing, shouting amen, and giving appropriate applause. God was up to something and he felt, if he had looked up during his sermon, that he would have seen tongues of fire. By the end of the sermon there was an extremely specific appeal, and scores of people streamed to the front indicating they had made a great decision and then were asked by the preacher and others how best they could pray for them. As a result, the population of the kingdom of God was undoubtedly expanded that day. Most importantly, some background gives an understanding of why this specific service was so powerful. He discovered that a pastor and his wife from the conference had spent all night in prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit without measure and that God would anoint the preaching. Moreover, he would confirm His word in their hearts, that addictions would be broken, that marriages would be healed, that prodigals would come home, and that a revival would be conceived (Jacobsen, pp. 42, 43).

Regarding styles of preaching, Jones (2005) had an interview with Walter Pearson (evangelist and former Breath of Life Director). He asked him how he developed his style. He responded, “I am my most severe critic. This may surprise people [but] I have never preached a sermon with which I was pleased. Always, I leave the pulpit saying to myself, ‘I’ve got to do this better. I must improve on that’” (Jones, 2005, p. 97). He continues to explain about having role models that he liked and analyzed by determining

what they did well. Often people would say he preached with a mixture of Cleveland and Bradford (p. 97). “Four or five years into my preaching ministry, I started praying for excellence in preaching” (p. 97). Then he concludes, “I do not want to be a great preacher, only to be an excellent exponent of truth and one adept to uplifting Jesus Christ (p. 97).

Lowrey states that the sermon introduction needs to convince the audience that what is about to be discussed is somehow of interest to them (as cited in Carter, Duvall, & Hays, 2005, p. 28). An interesting, well-designed introduction generates interest on the part of the audience. Lowrey said the process of evocation begins in the introduction (p. 28). Inexperienced preachers sometimes imagine that every person in the congregation is, in fact, excited to hear their sermon, but if it were so then their task would be significantly easier (Carter et al., p. 28). Therefore, those first few minutes of a sermon must grab the congregation’s attention because they know the preaching is going to be about 30 to 45 minutes long and they want to know immediately if sitting there will be worth their time (p. 28). The preacher should formulate an introduction based on the content he or she is using from the Bible. Andersen (2006) claims, “The Bible works; preached faithfully, the Bible will require the listener’s attention. It will persuade the postmodernist and reach the reluctant. It needs only to be preached” (p. 40). So, when a pastor is deciding what Bible passage to preach about, Eclov (as cited in Larson, 2012, pp. 43-44) states, he needs to pray for the passage to give him the “wow” moment. Further, when the person receives it, it must be that which permeates her [or his] heart so that when it is time to deliver the message she [or he] will deliver it with power and great glory to God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit (pp. 44-45).

For example, about five or six years ago, I was struggling with how to introduce the subject of the Holy Spirit making a difference in our city for evangelism, as well why the church exists as a congregation from Acts chapter 2. Well, I knew the message and eagerly got up to preach asking a question: What will make the difference in this city (naming the city)? Before answering, my wife blurted out, “Walmart” (people laughed audibly)—well, this fit perfectly into my message. The congregation, understanding that the construction of a Walmart was just about to be completed, this gave an excellent segue into claiming that as much as Walmart will make the difference for our city for shopping, likewise claiming the Holy Spirit could make the difference spiritually for the city. At that point, attention moved to the sermon of that morning. There were several positive compliments on the sermon that day. Because of this experience, I learned that a good attention-grabbing introduction goes a long way in making a sermon so much more effective and persuasive. This moment will be a reminder that if I am struggling to think of just the right introduction, that it will be worth the effort to persist and not give up until a good introduction is developed.

The importance of strategic preaching is crucial, especially for being relevant to the audience. As Hull (2006) attests,

Preachers need to understand the setting of the biblical text as they prepare sermons and to devote careful attention “(a) to the specific situation that the text sought to address, (b) to the ways in which this particular setting shaped the strategy that impelled the text, (c) to the results that the message of the text sought to achieve in the lives of its recipients. (Hull, 2006, p. 33)

In hermeneutics class, the instructor stressed the point that understanding the setting of the author and audience of the biblical context will enhance one’s preaching. Yet how can a pastor build a bridge from a time 2,000 years ago to today and make that

setting relevant to their own congregational context? How is a preacher in the 21st century, going to take his or her congregation—without boring them—on a journey of life with Christ. How can a pastor make the Bible come alive for his or her audience? When Heisler (2007) was new in the ministry he learned from his instructor to “never forget cardinal rule number one: it’s a sin to bore people with the gospel of Jesus Christ!” (p. 9). To allow parishioners to leave a church gathering bored “will be your own fault,” he said (p. 9). The key is to engage them with things they are aware of concerning events, stories, and current news. When doing this, somehow the people will sit up and take notice and begin to believe what the pastor is saying is a life-changing message.

Webb (2017, pp. 111-112) and Kidder (2015, p. 93), tell how the preacher, when doing evangelistic preaching, is to be Christ centered and to uplift Jesus, for Christ is the center of all preaching, whether the preacher is speaking on the law, the prophecies, or doctrine. Webb (2017) states, “Too often the simple gospel is buried beneath a preacher’s pet theories or proposed new interpretations that are proved through fanciful eisegesis rather than Biblical exegesis” (p. 111). Furthermore, Christ can be obscured when pastors use church jargon such as: “messages,” “a blessing,” “the truth,” “the call,” “I gave my heart,” “to consecrate all that we have and are” (p. 112).

### Sermon Delivery

There are different manuscript preaching styles. For example, Carter et al. (2005) state that many preachers write or type out their manuscript and carry the whole thing into the pulpit (p. 153). Some read word for word, while others read the more familiar parts with some variation or freestyle delivery (p. 153). Probably the most difficult style to develop, yet some can do it and do it well, is the memorization style: the preacher



memorizes the entire sermon and normally takes no notes to the pulpit, which requires much time and a great talent for memorization (p. 154). Although there is a risk of getting rattled and forgetting portions of the sermon, most will need to carry a key-idea outline into the pulpit as a safety net (p. 154). User of an extemporaneous style may have a written manuscript by bringing it with them in the pulpit, or at least an extensive outline of the sermon; in this manner, they speak from their study, but also include other thoughts that coincide with the subject (p. 155). The written work is studied and reduced to notes, sometimes there are few notes and other times quite extensive (p. 155).

Although Lybrand (2008) promoted “preaching on your feet” often, he quotes Buckley who names this as “extemporaneous oratory” (p. 22). This he defines as, “the delivery, in an arrangement of words, sentences and paragraphs, entirely the birth of the occasion, of ideas previously conceived and adopted with more or less fullness and precision, together with such thoughts and feelings, as may arise and obtain utterance.” This happens to be my style most of the time, with the exception that I typically bring a manuscript. But when inspired to preach on my feet, I completely pull away from the manuscript, using the manuscript more as a tool to keep my thoughts in order, and in case I cannot remember some names and uncommon terms. I will read select parts of the manuscript, as well as quotations from authors I feel will give more impact to the sermon. Lybrand (2008) claimed that doing so is “actually preaching” (p. 20). I agree with him, although that is not to say that other styles of preaching do not qualify as preaching—this is perhaps the highest form of preaching. First, because it permeates from thinking, meditating, and living the message, and second because it is from the heart and not from rote memory, which I believe gives more impact in the sermon delivery.

Having preached as a pastor for some 19 years and observed others preach, I have noticed that there are times a person can hear a different preaching voice from the same individual depending on how they present the message and what their purpose is. Reid explained about the preaching voice, and according to Reid there are four specific voices:

1. In the Teaching Voice, preachers seek to *explain* meaning by making an *argument*, to affirm what I/we believe.

2. In the Encouraging Voice, preachers seek to facilitate an *encounter* with God/Spirit/grace/empowerment by *advocating* a perspective in a way that listeners will respond by saying, “Lord, may this be so in my life.”

3. In the Sage Voice, preachers seek to invite listeners to *explore* possibilities of meaning by offering critical reflection or *analysis* with the intention that listeners would respond, “Whoa! What will I do with that?”

4. In the Testifying Voice, preachers seek to *engage* listeners in a formative conversation with their faith tradition, their culture, and their own identity as followers of Christ by *articulating* possible ways of building community together with others, so that listeners might respond, “Yes! This conversation matters. Let’s keep talking.” (Reid, 2006, pp. 24, 25)

This section of the chapter covered the broad topic of effective biblical preaching by showing pastors how they can communicate the Word of God in a meaningful way that will engage, inform, inspire, and persuade the audience. The preacher absolutely must proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, the relevancy of the truth of His word, with a passion that coincides with that of the pioneers of the early church, and with the godly character of Jesus Christ.

## **Revival and Transformation**

The discussion of revival and transformation is particularly an important topic for the Doctor of Ministry degree because there is a need to encourage a revival in one's personal life, in the global church and for the North American continent. Renewal in the Christian church globally may potentially reach all the world. I want to emphasize that it is not my intention to suggest that revival is the only response to church conflict. However, revival and transformation are essential for the local church to minimize conflicts, to be a channel for healing relationships, to bring unity, spirituality, renewal and to be the means of bringing more souls to Christ. As such, pastors are propelled to ask, as Finley (2013, p.11) puts it, "[what is] a genuine spiritual revival?" Pratney (1984) agrees and answers saying, "It is the reawakening of the dormant spiritual faculties of the soul." Wallis (as cited by Pratney, 1984, p.13) is quoted as stating that "Revival is necessary to counteract spiritual decline and to create spiritual momentum." Is there a need for revival in the church in North America? The Barna Group reported the following:

While tens of millions of Americans attend church each weekend, the practice has declined in recent years. According to Barna Group's 2014 tracking data, overall church attendances has dipped from 43% in 2004 to 36% today. But beyond a dip in attendance numbers, the nature of church going is changing. Regular attenders used to be people who went to church three or more weekends each month—or even several times a week. Now people who show up once every four to six weeks consider themselves regular churchgoers. (as cited in Aubrey, 2014, p. 16)

A look into Christianity in Canada reveals a worse decline in church attendance:

Two-thirds of Canadians (including adults and children) identify either as Catholic or as Protestant, but both Christian groups have seen substantial erosion in their shares of the Canadian public, according to the analysis by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life. The percentage of Canadians who identify as

Catholic has dropped from 47% to 39% over the last four decades, while the share that identifies as Protestant has fallen even more steeply, from 41% to 27%.

Concurrently a comparison into other religions in Canada gives insight into the growth of

Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism and Eastern Orthodox Christianity—is growing. Collectively, these smaller religious groups account for more than one-in-ten Canadians (11%) as of 2011, up from not quite one-in-twenty (4%) in 1981. In addition, the number of Canadians who do not identify with any religion has been rising rapidly in recent decades, going from 4% in 1971 to nearly a quarter (24%) in 2011. (Pew Research Center, 2013)

Therefore, there certainly is a need for revival in the Christian church. In

understanding the need for revival and transformation let us begin by defining revival,

Aubrey exclaimed,

Revival is the sovereign act of a holy God who intervenes and interrupts the normal affairs of people with an overwhelming sense of His presence, His person, His power, His righteousness, His judgment, His mercy, His grace, and His love. Truth resounds, for the word of God is truth. Lives are changed, communities are transformed, and nothing is ever the same. (Aubrey, 2014, p. 1)

“The basic idea of revival is the returning of something to its true nature and purpose.

It is a special movement of the Spirit of God in which He renews the hearts of believers”

(Moreau, Netland, & Engen, 2000, p. 831). Earle Cairns, (as cited by Moreau et al., 2000)

defines revival as “the work of the Holy Spirit in restoring the people of God to a more

vital spiritual life, witness, and work by prayer and the Word after repentance in crisis for

their spiritual decline” (p. 831); as also affirmed by Everette (2019).

Let us see historically what the church did to fan the flames of revival that caused this type of change in the affairs of people.

Finney is considered by many as one of the greatest revivalists ever; he soaked himself in the Word of God, and prayer happened before daybreak. Cook writes, “He (Finney) always prayed and preached with such conviction as to convince his hearers of the extreme and eternal importance of his words. (Edman, 2010, p. 14)

He believed that revival in the sense of a real stirring among God's people was based squarely upon certain unchanging principles, and he was far too much of a realist to suppose that any amount of fancy religious talk or praying could take the place of ruthless honesty and sacrificial obedience. (Edman, 2010, p. 12)

Finley supported this view, submitting that revival and transformation cannot happen by preaching alone, unless the preacher is praying and being revived in his private time alone (Finley, 2013, p. 7). He further asserts, "The greatest revivals in the history of the world have been the result of earnest, heartfelt intercession. The sparks of revival are kindled on the altar of prayer" (p. 7). "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, and the present declining health of the church indicates that we are breathing more and more feebly" (Fish & Conant, 1976, p. 50). "Where are those burdens of prayer for the church and those agonized yearnings over the lost that our fathers knew?" (p. 50). Finley (2010) says, "One of the greatest revivals in history was the Welsh revival in 1904," but little is spoken about 26-year-old Evan Roberts who "often prayed late into the night" (p. 10). The Welsh revival began at his church in the youth meeting where they were. The Holy Spirit touched the hearts of the youth there and 16 young people were converted (Finley, 2010, p. 10). As a result, transformation happened through the power of God's grace, the crime rate dropped, drunkards and prostitutes were converted, pubs reported losses, hardened miner's hearts softened, and profanity no longer came from their lips, never to return (p. 10).

To embrace transformation means "the 'persuasive account of a new world' . . . is now available because God's purpose, God's intent, God's rule is now in effect" (Brueggemann, 2014, p. 39). How then, does transformation occur?

The means of transformation can happen by seeing the writings of the Word of God as a look into the human nature and mind of humanity, even as Pemberton, attests that

“wisdom is a conversion of thought and action that results in character transformation.” (Bland & Fleer, 2010, p. 66)

To be able to understand the wisdom of the Bible in bringing about conversion, I believe this is important before even trying to attempt a revival and transformation. How can one persuade the secular mind or, for that matter, the religious mind so that people accept the Bible as wisdom for life’s daily storms and battles, unless the one who preaches has been transformed by His Word? The preacher must be challenged to preach the gospel in a new way and creatively, so that the message does not lose its power to transform. As Brueggemann (2014) states, “The new land must be shown as if it had never been seen before” (p. 40). He adds, “That fresh telling and that new showing requires discipline, and diligent imagination on the part of the preacher” (p. 40).

Transformation will only happen, as Finley (2010) claimed, “during prayer, as the Holy Spirit x-rays our souls. We see hidden sins and defects in our characters that keep us from being the powerful witnesses, He longs for us to be . . . in prayer. . . We seek His wisdom, not our own” (p. 13). Given that such a significant transformation needs to take place, what kind of rhetoric will accomplish something positive out of something negative? What argument can persuade the simpleton, or the wayward, to go onto the straight and narrow path? After being told they must leave a life of pleasure, enjoyment and little rules, these simpletons, and wanderers, end up with less incentive to be motivated to transform to a life that requires much resistance. Furthermore, the simpleton must give up selfish purposes, also to turn feelings of guilt to shame, and to live with humility. Pemberton, (as cited in Bland & Fleer, 2010), agrees, “How does one persuade when the central message is a cross not a crown” (p. 67). Listen to Aubrey’s (2014) claim:

How did the land of Finney and Moody become so dry to the Gospel? How did the area that formerly blazed with revival fires, lose its fire? . . . The thing that puts out fire in hearts is fear, but as Barnett claims, “fear cannot own you when a great cause rules your heart (p. 3).

Ruthie Jacobsen, a prayer warrior for a Christian church, had many of her prayers answered without her mentioning them to anyone except God, such as funds to help pastors who were living on one salary (Johnsson, 1997, pp. 41, 42). There are many principles for answered prayer. One of the most important principles to answered prayer as Jacobsen (2017) writes is that “When prayers are not answered as I wish, or in the way I would like, it might be because God wants me to examine my heart, to face my spiritual poverty and my need of Him in every area of my life and work” (p. 42).

The passages in Isaiah 45:18-19 and Isaiah 65:17-25 speak of a new world. Therefore, an important aspect of reaching the community, outside the church walls, is to offer them hope. We live in a world that is in a hopeless predicament because of the original rebellion in heaven by Satan who continues to make chaos. What a privilege of bringing them good news and restoring humanity to the original plan of our Creator for a new world, who has the power to revive the hearts that have been dried up in a desert land (Brueggemann, 2014, pp. 40, 41). An earnest desire to revive a community will take more than hope, as mentioned earlier, and prayer, but also the character of humility. Finley (2013) agrees, “It requires us to listen in humility to the voice of the Savior so that we know Him intimately and follow wherever He leads” (p. 12).

Yet, to take the gospel to a community, there are four things one can learn from the early church as they endeavored to revive and transform the community that they lived in. The church focused on these four principles, which held the church tightly together by “devoting themselves to the apostles’ teachings, to fellowship, to Holy

Communion, and to prayer” (Easum, 2010, p. 48). In case a person somehow feels or believes that through much and more praying this will bring on revival, let them ever be cautious. Tozer warns, “It is especially important, however, that long prayer vigils, or even strong crying and tears, are not in themselves meritorious acts. . . . No creature can ‘earn’ anything in the usual meaning of the word. All things are by and of the sovereign goodness of God” (Tozer, 2016, p. 61).

This gave them a solid foundation, so that when the church would go through persecution, facing adversity, and overcoming almost impossible obstacles, they would thrive through it all. Yet, they never would be dissuaded by the enemy’s tactics; they took the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), as their mission to fulfill God’s divine purpose for themselves. This command to “go” comes with a promise as Spurgeon proclaimed in one of his great sermons of the mid-19th century, “a promise of God is the essence of truth, the soul of certainty, the voice of faithfulness, and the substance of blessing” (Wiersbe, 1995, p. 45).

The Laodicean church is the last of the seven churches in the book of Revelation. This is a church in great and desperate need for revival, yet as “a symbol of the last day church” (Finley, 2013, p. 12), the message God gave John the Revelator is one of hope amid the church being lukewarm. The church is lacking the Holy Spirit, which is needed for the church to be influenced positively, for the Spirit wants to invigorate the heart and minds of the believers. Finley agrees with this sentiment, “it is a church that has lost its passion for lost people; a church whose members need a spiritual revival” (p. 12). Today for the church to even begin to think about having a positive influence in its community,



it needs to recognize that revival is its greatest need. Putney agrees with the evaluation of the Laodicean church.

Self-reliance was a mark of the church and was seen in its failure to recognize its own church wide spiritual poverty. While they continued from day-to-day, believing they were fine, Christ became more and more nauseous as He witnessed their condition. They needed revival in their church. (Putney, pp. 65, 66)

It is important to ask the right questions, as to what the characteristics of church members are who are empowered with the Holy Spirit. Some think if they have a strong will that enables them to make significant lifestyle changes—is this not Christianity? (Hohnberger, 2002, p. 20). No, the Bible speaks of this experience as “having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof” (2 Tim 3:5; p. 20). Osgood (2006) exclaims, “God cannot give His Spirit in large measure to lukewarm people who are under the illusion that they are rich and have need of nothing” (p. 126). The repentance must be complete; this is what is called for, to cleanse us of “pride of opinion, sensitiveness to slights, unholy ambitions, soul-and-body destroying lusts, and selfishness in its varied forms—to literally root them out of their lives” (p. 126). There are some who have said that it is in working for others that revival comes, for people should never wait until the Church is fully revived but begin by ministering to the community.

The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing but planning work for them. Give each one something to do for others. Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God. (White, 1909, p. 82)

These principles of revival and transformation are important to the spiritual health of the church and can help lay a strong foundation for conflict resolution strategies.

While waiting for revival and transformation each member should be encouraged to be involved in and to prepare for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

## **Conclusion**

The literature revealed the importance of effective biblical preaching, revival, and transformation in the context of the Christian church. By understanding these issues and speaking to them, important foundations can be made for church unity and future conflict resolution. I believe that effective biblical preaching along with faith and praying for revival and transformation can help lead to stronger unity within the church.

1. Management of conflict resolution requires the understanding of the importance of dealing with every conflict as Christ would. When conflicts are left to be solved on their own, they can be detrimental to the health of the church. Proper management of conflicts will bring unity and peace in the congregation.

2. Effective biblical preaching requires a good understanding of what an inspiring sermon can do for a congregation. The preacher who is well prepared will share knowledge that is relevant for the church's need and the individual's need. Finally, the sermons will be effective in convicting and bringing positive change to the church.

3. Revival and transformation for the congregation comes by God's Spirit and through prayer. Yet, saying this does not mean the Christian has no part in the revival and transformation. In fact, an inspired believer is contagious and soon others may catch the revival. This revival and transformation will then begin in the heart of every Spirit-led believer.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE:

### METHODOLOGY OF INTERVENTION

#### **Introduction**

The principles in chapters 2 and 3 will form the foundational basis for the implementation of my project. The problem is to discover what was and is continuing to cause some church members to leave the congregation prior to April 2018. In addition, the aim is also to discover whether there are conflicts presently between active church members and to address the issues and challenges listed in the membership records, including visitors who are not members. Then one can clearly ascertain whether the problem is cultural, structural, spiritual, theological, and/or some other reason. The intention is to use preaching, spiritual renewal and interactive methodology to help lay a solid foundation for unity future conflict resolution.

#### **Description of Intervention**

The initiative is to make peace in a conflicted church, but there are issues that need addressing before the pastor and church leadership can consider attempting intervention. The need is to discover the root causes of the conflict. Leas (1992) says tension is not all that bad. Conflict has benefits, if handled wisely and humbly (p. 29). In my 20 years of pastoral ministry, I have noticed a dilemma that too often leaders only deal with the surface of the problem but have difficulty seeing the bigger picture. In

previous chapters these issues were covered extensively.

The project was bathed in prayer, because unless this takes place, a church can expect failure. Prayer groups were already initiated to meet for two weeks during the first two weeks of February 2018; once every day and twice on Fridays. The focus of our prayers was for revival to affect people personally in the church and the community. After the two weeks, the groups continued to pray twice a week on Thursday and Friday evenings. God blessed the church and now new people were joining for prayer. The implementation of this project occurred, following specific prayer, for approximately one year. These prayers were implemented in the hope that the project would bring forth fruit for His glory and lead many souls to a renewed and transformed walk with Jesus. As a result, there were fewer conflicts and much less attrition. Our hopes were fulfilled in that the church became on fire for Jesus, as well as committing to His cause more seriously with the determination and inspiration to serve rather than to be served. The fruit of the ministry resulted in a church filled with disciples who were empowered with the Holy Spirit living out the will of God.

After preparing the IRB protocol application and having the project approved by the church board, it was forwarded to the project coach because he had to prepare it for the Andrews University IRB committee. Once approval was acknowledged, I began making announcements of my plans to be initiated in the fall of 2018. A problem-solving method would be decided upon to reach out to every person 18 years old and over who comes to the Cornerstone Church, who attend regularly, attend at least once or twice a year, and for members who do not come to church. Since it would be difficult to meet personally with 150 or more people in such a short time, I proposed to write a letter, thus

I invited everyone to respond with specific topics, themes, and/or questions they had and would like to hear in a revival series. The results of the responses were evaluated, assessed, and prioritized to determine what the most common requests were and to categorize them, and to cover as much of the subjects as possible in each sermon. I kept the sermons from 25-30 minutes and 45 minutes for Q & A to follow. This Q & A session can be especially helpful for those who have a post-modern or secular mindset.

### **Purpose of Intervention**

1. The main purpose of the intervention was to initiate a revival seminar as a precursor to laying a foundation for dealing with conflicts. For in this manner souls are more prepared to surrender their sins and faults to God. Souls are more willing to make peace with the brethren after the Spirit has softened their hearts.
2. The second purpose of the intervention was to bring conflict resolution to the church community, resulting in becoming more intimate, united in one cause, one mission, and vision. The reason for the intervention was to set up a church culture that would be a healthier and safer church, where everyone can grow spiritually and be more fruitful in disciple making.
3. To help bring a spiritual revival that rooted out the cause(s) of church conflicts. For this reason, a church may be a beacon in the community and be a strong witness for the proclamation of the messages of Revelation 14.
4. The long-term dream is to use this intervention as a template for helping other churches to be revived, which will bring unity to God's churches. As a result, to

bring revival and unity to every church community, to grow God's church spiritually and numerically and to build healthier and safer churches.

### **Development of Intervention**

The plan was to develop a questionnaire which was used to help create the sermon series (see Appendix A). The leaders, including the pastor, desired to serve the needs of their church community. This survey instrument/questionnaire was sent to every member and attendee of the Cornerstone Church, either by mail, email, or handout if necessary. This survey attempted to get input from every person, whether a regular attendee, irregular attendee, or one who no longer attends the Cornerstone Church. The purpose was to find out what the church community would like to hear if they were to attend a revival seminar given by the pastor at the Cornerstone Church. There was no obligation to come, even if they returned a completed survey.

Every survey was evaluated when completed, then inserted in a pre-stamped envelope, and returned. A letter was sent to the respondents stating appreciation and thankfulness for their time and thoughtful answers to the survey. This was an anonymous survey, but they could write their name on the survey if they wanted to express their requests and questions. Following, is a list (not exhaustive) of some examples of topics or themes given: Jesus' healing & miracle ministry, dealing with guilt, spiritual gifts, social and injustice concerns, and family concerns. The pastor did his best to cover all concerns during the revival seminar that began a few months later. An appeal was made to pray in advance of the Fire-Proof revival seminar for the pastor as he prepared the sermons and

to pray for the participants as they listened to what the Spirit was saying to them personally, and for the church.

Following the survey responses, the pastor reviewed, assessed, evaluated, and began to prepare sermons related to the responses. The purpose was to invite and to bring everyone, active or inactive, together to light a spiritual fire in one's heart, which would help preserve and keep the fire lit. There were seven sermons prepared, although there were many more suggestions, the project's pastor chose to focus on the most important subjects requested for the sermons. He also covered all other subjects not covered by the sermons during the question-and-answer period. The seminar was held on four consecutive Sabbath mornings and Sabbath afternoons to attract the largest portion of people who came to the church that day. The sermons incorporated winsome, biblical preaching messages. The seminar also incorporated topics, themes, and answers to questions that were suggested in the survey. The topics which were chosen were chosen for their relevance to help bring unity and spiritual renewal within the congregation. The two different sermon methods that were used were appropriate. At last appeals were made at the end of every sermon.

### **Training Membership in Conflict Counseling**

A training session was planned but not implemented for the elders and visitation team focusing on the visitation of members, non-members, and guests. Special focus would be given toward helping the congregants find unity and spiritual renewal. The training session was planned to be implemented prior to sending out survey questionnaire #2 (see Appendix A). This would be a two-hour seminar featuring how to visit with those dealing with sensitive issues, whether relational, structural, spiritual, cultural, or

theological to help bring unity and healing among all the members and guests. The visitation team would consist of the elders and others gifted in this area.

Upon further insight, conducting this training session during the revival seminar was not deemed practical, the best strategy would be to use this session as a follow up to the revival seminar. It was noted, the training would be helpful to support the team prior to conflict resolutions that might be needed.

### **Management Strategy to Intervene**

For the first survey, the pastor invited everyone to the Fire-Proof Revival Seminar. His second step was to develop the flyer invitations: He covered all the titles of sermons on the flyer and some of the questions that would be answered during the question-and-answer sessions.

Appeals were made during the revival seminar for recommitments and reconnection to God. Also, many commitments were made through raising hands, standing up to acknowledge commitment and writing down commitments for only pastor, elders, and visitation team to read.

The second survey (See Appendix A) was given towards the end of the of revival seminar. This survey helped assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the meetings. The feedback identified the participants who were in conflict that needed help or had been helped from the seminar. The survey was given to everyone who came to the seminar on the last Sabbath service, and the end of the last question and answer session.



### Method to Measure Church Conflict

The method used was for people to write out their concerns on the survey questionnaire anonymously or if they chose to write their name on the survey they may do so. In addition, if they needed more help they could reach out in person to the pastor, and/or elders of the church to express them verbally.

As a result, the survey revealed that many had already dealt with their conflicts with others, some had not resolved their conflicts, but felt nothing else could be done and were satisfied with moving forward by forgiving their offenders. There were two members who were in conflict that came to the elders and the pastor previous to the survey being handed out, I share in the next section the method to measure church conflict. The ones with theological concerns were able to reconcile the church's beliefs to what the Bible stated. One member, who was opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity, still maintained his belief, but was willing to conform to the Pastor's request not to teach it in the Sabbath School class. He could have been removed from his teaching responsibility but in the spirit of conflict resolution he was privately counseled and received it positively.

### Method of Addressing Issues of Disunity

The church elders were informed prior to giving the last survey, that if we needed to address any issue, to be prepared for cases that may need immediate attention. After reviewing the surveys, all the cases except one, were already dealt with in a satisfactory way prior to the Fire-Proof revival seminar. One of the cases, which was not dealt with completely, the elders and I tried to resolve the problem previously, but one of the members in the conflict felt he had a better method (not biblical) on how to handle his

case. We gave him all the options that we could biblically agree upon, but his reason for not meeting with the other person face to face was that he felt unsafe in his presence. We assured him that three other men (two elders and I) were there to protect him. After pleading with him, he decided still not to meet with all the peacemakers and eventually stopped coming to Cornerstone Church because of his concerns about the other person perhaps becoming violent. I have since heard he attended an Adventist Bible study and was slowly getting over his offence. He also intermittently returned to church.

The visitation team were to divide all the responses and prioritize from most urgent to least urgent. It is amazing what God can do when there is prayer by the church and the leadership for the individuals who were disunified. As mentioned above, the visitation team was not needed for the seminar, but the plan was to prepare for any further areas of division because the focus of the revival seminar was to assist in resolving conflicts.

### **Summary of the Overview of Intervention**

This is a summary of the main points of the description of the initiative, which was implemented in year five, February 2019. The purpose of the intervention was to organize, in a logical order, a strategy to bring unity and spiritual renewal for members and non-members. The seminar was designed to bring spiritual growth and to create a positive, unifying environment among congregants.

The first part of our process began with prayer. The group was praying for the success of the project and was the first essential important step to seeing the fruit of this project. The second step was to send out questionnaire #1 (see Appendix A) to all the church members and visitors 18 years old and older. After which the pastor assessed the

responses and began developing the Fire-Proof Revival Seminar by applying the information into the sermons gathered from the survey responses. When the sermons were being developed and the flyers produced with the dates of the seminar, it was time to send out the invitations to the same list that received the survey questionnaire.

The next step was the continuation of the process of being sure that the sermons were prepared well for the Fire-Proof Revival Seminar. The surveys from the congregation were included in that process and the polishing of every sermon was done by implementing the researched qualities and characteristics of biblical sermons.

During the last day of the seminar there was a request to fill out survey questionnaire #2 (see Appendix A), which was important for knowing how effective the sermons were and to be able to measure the results. Then I gathered the information from the responses and informed the elders. Our hope was that all those with conflicts with people or the church doctrines could begin to find unity and as a result they would be revived.

## CHAPTER 5

### NARRATIVE OF THE INTERVENTION: IMPLEMENTATION

#### **Introduction**

I began with prayer in the year 2015 during the month of July when I commenced the journey of preparing the type of project I would be doing. Through prayer, I concluded that I wanted to do something that related to revival and helping churches that were complacent or not thriving. Later, through my project coach and advisers, I added the element of bringing renewal and unity out of church conflict. This was accomplished through preaching relevant, timely, and biblical messages of God's Word. Over the last several years, I have been researching and learning more about this major subject, the trends within the North American church, and the many resources on this important topic to aid any church wishing for a change for the better.

September 2015 I was moved from my previous district to a new district. In assessing the needs in my new church, I discovered that there were two major issues that had come up. First, several conflicts within the membership and theological conflicts within the church were noticed, and second, repairs to the church were needed. After much resistance to godly resolutions, one member was censored by the church prior to my arrival. The reason was for his unacceptable behavior and not complying with the leadership's counsel, as well he spoke to several members about his side of the complaint, which brought more disunity and murmuring in the church. Therefore, the leaders of the Cornerstone Church brought the matter to a church business meeting, the members concluded that it would be best to disfellowship this member, which occurred in

mid-October 2015. The member continued to attend but in September 2017, the church board finally decided to have him escorted out by the police because of his unacceptable behavior, which created disunity. The church was more than gracious to him, and since that time there has been more peace and the church has grown with newly baptized members and in-coming transfers. In 2018, it was decided that the church needed a revival to help the church return to its purpose of mission. There had been two different floods in the two previous years in the church that slowed the process of the mission of the church. Additionally, the church needed to repair the roof and resolve the problem for the heating and air conditioning systems. Thousands of dollars for maintenance expenses kept the church budget going into the negative. Due to efforts in conflict resolution, by God's grace offerings increased to alleviate financial concerns which were eliminated in 2020.

During this time church leadership-initiated revival prayer meetings and members met twice weekly with two elders leading out in early 2018. Despite these setbacks, church members were encouraging one another. The revival prayer meetings were the catalyst to prepare the members to be filled with the Holy Spirit. There were wonderful times of refreshment during these meetings even though few attended; the ones who did were blessed in many ways. They were blessed in their own personal lives, sacrificing their time to benefit the family of God, by interceding for the church family, praying for the needs of church members' healing both physically and spiritually, and praying for revival for the church community. This continued until June 2018 and then resumed in September until Christmas 2018. Then, as guided by the mission and vision goals that the church had been working on since Spring in 2018, it was deemed best to have a day of

fasting and prayer on Sabbath, January 12, 2019. This would be the catalyst to draw attention to the need of revival and for repentance in preparation for the month of February, the “Fire-Proof” revival seminar.

In looking over the event, the plan to initiate the “Fire-Proof” revival seminar had arrived, which I had looked forward to for more than three and a half years. The plan to have four sessions was found to be helpful to give more time to finalize and polish sermons that were being worked on. The answers to the questions were not too difficult, although some required research that had not been studied before. My hope and prayer would be for an event that would be successful to move the church forward, helping it to become a more loving and evangelistically minded church, laboring for lost souls. The revival efforts, as revealed in previous chapters, are necessary for a church, who with humility, hungers, and desires for God to fill them with the Holy Spirit. For God to work through His church in a powerful way, true revival has been found to be the seed in leading many souls to real, genuine conversion for the Kingdom of God. The following story of Cornerstone Church will inspire people to understand that, indeed, if a church follows the suggested strategy, then spiritual renewal may likely happen. It is my hope that people will see that this simple, but profound method will bear much fruit for the Kingdom of God.

### **Narrative of the Implementation Prior to Revival Seminar Event**

My plan was to send surveys and mail them to the church member addresses during the first week of September 2018, but due to some errors in the survey questionnaire #1, I had to consult with my adviser and then resend the survey

questionnaire to IRB for approval. After some dialogue, we came to a consensus on the survey questionnaire and the changes were approved.

I began mailing them on September 21, 2018. During the process, which took a few extra weeks, 120 large envelopes were mailed. The seven homes that had no mailing address were delivered personally. Due to several households having more than one member, some of the large envelopes had several surveys included in them. Also, due to one to five people living in the home or the member knew where some families lived, they could hand it to them to pass along. In total, from the 120 large envelopes, and from what people handed out to those with no address, a total of 171 surveys were given out. One stamped envelope inserted for each survey was included inside the large envelopes. Eleven of the envelopes were returned because of wrong addresses or because people had moved. Some church members and other regular attendees for whom we did not have addresses were personally given an envelope on the following consecutive Sabbaths (Sept. 22, 29, Oct. 6). There were others at my new interest Bible study group (Oct. 2, 5, 9), who were invited to participate in the survey, that they could fill it out if they wished.

By October 11 I had received 13 completed questionnaires. As I assessed the questionnaires, I found that the respondents had provided excellent material for the February 2019 seminar. The responses to the five questions were written in a shorter form that were listed on a sheet of paper. The challenge was to condense the ideas into seven sermons and four 45-minute sessions for each of the Q & As. Some of the ideas I was not be able to address in sermons, but probably 90% of the suggested ideas were covered. More unrelated topics that I did not use may be utilized as part of sermons that I will do as part of my regular Sabbath sermons in the future.

Amazingly, 33 more completed surveys were returned by the middle of November. Due to late replies, the reduced time would not give me enough time to analyze the surveys and prepare the seven sermons for the planned January seminar. As a result, the date of the revival seminar was changed to February 2-23, 2019. In addition, there were other Sabbath activities in January, which would interfere with the revival seminar. I needed four consecutive Sabbaths that were free of other events; as such, February was my best month.

There was some confusion with the understanding of what documents from the questionnaire needed to be sent to me. Concerning the first 13 responses, about 40-50% of the responders also sent the Consent Form along with the questionnaire. Therefore, on October 11, I decided to send an email to clarify the instructions to rectify any confusion that the responders might have had. It was felt that this might have caused some not to respond because they did not know how to give the completed survey anonymously. The email that was sent to rectify the problem is in appendix A.

The information for both the sermon ideas and question and answer requests were developed from the survey responses. I then gathered them by religious topics and questions in a manner that seemed most logical. Please see Appendix B and Appendix C for details.

I presented my new proposed date for the revival seminar to my church board and they agreed. During this time, my advisor suggested that I invite my church elders to participate in answering questions during the question-and-answer time. I asked them and they agreed. Therefore, I organized the 60-plus questions into three parts for each of



us to cover during the question-and-answer section. This would give the elders two months to do the research prior to answering the questions.

Next, I began to prepare the advertisement before the holidays and asked one of my members who is a graphic designer to produce a flyer. She agreed to do the work, but only if she could do it the early part of January. I then asked her if she could be done by about the second week of January 2019. She said she could, so by January 7, she gave me the first draft, I edited, and she made changes. After three drafts, it was completed.

The flyers were put in an envelope, addressed, and ready to be sent out to the membership, but first I asked the church greeters to hand it out to those attending the Sabbath services on January 19, 2019. The remaining flyers were sent by mail and everyone received their flyers about 10-14 days in advance of the Fire-Proof Revival Seminar.

In thinking about the revival seminar, I considered the need to inform and inspire the members through two sermons (Keys to Revival and Transformation, Part 1 and Keys to Staying Revived, Part 2, on January 12 and 19. These two sermons shared the purpose spiritual renewal and how to stay strong spiritually.

### **Narrative for the “Fire-Proof” Revival Seminar Event**

The first seminar began on February 2, called “The Signs of Jesus’ Return.” There were about 75 people who attended with many good compliments and four people who requested to have the sermon sent to them by email. There was a visitors’ lunch provided and at 2:05pm. the people gathered for a second sermon—“Jesus’ Return and Preparations Needed.” There were about 17 members who attended, and a couple that were not Seventh-day Adventist. When the sermon was over the Q & A period began. It

went smoothly as well, the elders were well prepared, but we were only able to cover the first 11 questions. Following the session, I spoke with the elders and explained that for them to cover 15 of the questions in 45 minutes, they should not make comments on one another's answers, otherwise there would not be time to cover all the questions. They agreed with me.

"The Power of the Cross and Forgiveness" (the third sermon) was preached February 9. Again, there were positive remarks and requests for a copy of the sermon. The fellowship lunch was provided again with the next meeting beginning at 2:10 p.m. The fourth sermon (afternoon session) called "His Peace During Adversity" was finished in 25 minutes; therefore, there was time during the Q & A to cover about 16 questions. Several people commented on how it was a blessing.

The third Sabbath, February 16, began with the sermon entitled, "Loving God Fully." From the body language and affirmations of "amen," I observed that many people engaged very well with this sermon. I am thankful for the privilege of helping people restore their faith as they renew their first love to God. Again, lunch was served for the visitors attending (members who contributed to the lunch were welcomed to stay) and at 2:05 p.m., the next sermon entitled "Knowing God Fully" began. After this, the third session of the Q & A took place where question 27 of 60 began this session and ended on the 40th question.

The final Sabbath of the Fire-Proof Revival Seminar began with the sermon called "Living on Fire in the Spirit," and there were several good responses. The fellowship lunch again took place and then at 2 p.m. the final session began. I decided that for the last week I would not do an eighth sermon but rather would attempt to complete the Q &

A from the 41st to the 65th questions that remained. We were able to complete all the questions in the allotted 75 minutes. Many shared that they were blessed with the responses again.

Before the final sermon, a survey (Appendix A) was handed out in which I added a section for sermon evaluation, thus improving the survey questionnaire.

### Narrative Conclusion of the Implementation

The journey regarding the implementation of the *A preaching strategy toward spirituality, renewal and unity at the Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church* project has come to completion. By involving the congregation in the development of the seminar, their seemed to be more congregational ownership of the process. It can be said that they had their fingerprints on the revival seminar. One quote from an anonymous evaluation affirmed that “This was great because it involved a two-way dialogue to be incorporated into the message.” The engagement of the audience was at its highest due to the survey participation of the congregants.

The three major elements that I used throughout the seminar were the Bible, the writings of Ellen White and the Holy Spirit’s inspiration. In the literature review chapter, resources that were read and studied were motivational for the method used for the revival. Knowing all the hours of research and editing, implementing this project has been well worth the effort. There are areas that will need to be refined and there will be needed reconsideration on the survey questions.

## CHAPTER 6

### EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

#### **Method of Evaluation**

On the last Sabbath (Feb. 23, 2019) of the revival seminar, the attendees were given a survey to fill evaluate the morning and afternoon sessions of the revival seminar (see the final survey in Appendix A). The questions were to evaluate if the sermons and question and answer panel helped them find unity and spiritual renewal. Did the messages and questions presented help their personal spiritual growth, did it bring reconciliation or unity, and did it help resolve questions on Adventist doctrine? The evaluations helped confirm the positives of the seminar, identify flaws, and give ways to improve the seminar.

#### **Results of the Evaluation**

The results of the evaluation came from the surveys I received from the congregation following the last sermon and the Q & A. The proportion of returned surveys compared to the attendance of more than about 41% returned. The attendees were to rate each sermon they viewed and listened to by either poor, fair, good, very-good, or excellent. No one marked any of the sermons as poor. There was one vote each for fair on three sermons. Then the remainder of the evaluators either scored the sermons as “good,” “very good,” or “excellent.”

Following is a percentage rating of all surveys\_for each sermon (see Appendix D for details). Sermon 1-Signs of the Return of Jesus—was evaluated as the second best

with an 82% scoring from very-good to an excellent rating. The second -Part 2 Jesus' Return and Preparations Needed- was evaluated 68% from very-good to excellent. The third- The Power of the Cross and Forgiveness- was evaluated at 82% very-good to excellent. The fourth- His Peace During Adversity-evaluated at 53% very-good to excellent. Then the 5<sup>th</sup>- Loving God Fully- and the 6<sup>th</sup>- Knowing God Fully- these sermons scored at 79% and 78% very-good to excellent, respectively. Sermon 7- Living on Fire in the Spirit- the last sermon was evaluated as the best of the seven sermons with 83% scoring from very-good to an excellent rating. Overall, the combined evaluation of the seven sermons was rated very-good- 43.14%, excellent—31.85%, good—22.85%, fair—2.14% and poor—0% (see Appendix D for details).

The Q & A sessions led by the two elders and I were rated, as there were four Sabbath afternoon sessions, the main results can be seen in this paragraph (also see Appendix D for details). These questions were submitted from the congregation a few months before the seminar and of the 33 surveys the elders and I answered about 20 questions each. The panel of elders answered each question alternately. Each session was 45 minutes, except the last session went for 70 minutes, but there was no sermon before the last session. The first session was the most liked, receiving a score of 72%—very-good to excellent rating. The second session received a score of 54%-very good to excellent. The third session received a score of 50% very-good to excellent. The last session was the second-best scoring at 64%—very-good to excellent rating. There were no poor ratings, and only one person rated three sessions as fair. Again, the average was 5.5% for fair, 34.5% for good, 34% for very-good, and 26% for excellent ratings. There were several other questions, for which participants provided answers. The responses of

the statistics are presented in table 1 in a synthesized format.

Table 1

***Results of Survey #2 Questionnaire***

<b>Results of Survey #2 Questionnaire</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Did the sermons meet your felt needs?	0	22	13	0
2. Did the sermons answer your questions that you asked in the first survey or did they address any of the subjects, topics you suggested?	2	13	10	2
3. A. Were you satisfied with the explanations and responses that Pastor N. Cote gave in the sermons?	0	9	0	0
B. If they were not addressed may I and elder visit with you, to address your concerns?	0	14	0	6
4. Did the seminar help you with any concerns or conflicts you had about the 28 fundamental beliefs, Adventist doctrines, or unclear scriptural passages?	0	13	8	4

Table 1 Continued

1. Do you have any conflicts with anyone in the	2	4	0	25
-------------------------------------------------	---	---	---	----

church or outside the church and you wish it could be resolved?				
2. Would you recommend this revival seminar to other SDA churches, if the same strategy was followed?	0	21	<b>Maybe</b> 7	0
3. You have been listening to the sermons of this revival series by pastor N. Cote that incorporated many suggestions from the first questionnaire; how would you rate on a scale of 1 to 5 for this seminar, based on the overall effect on your spiritual walk and journey with the Lord that the seminar had on you, is having on you, and/or will expect to have on you?	<b>Fair</b> 1	<b>Good</b> 10	<b>Very</b> <b>Good-13</b>	<b>Excellent</b> 7

Further responses were given in writing on the questionnaire; the numbered questions below, correspond to the questions in the table above. On #1 the question asked, “please explain how or how not?” The following were the replies, “the sermons helped keep the faith and bring me out of my complacency.” They were reminded of the times they lived in and to prepare for Jesus’ soon coming. They encouraged them to witness and do what God wants them to do right now. On #3 B the question asked, “What were addressed and/or were not addressed?” The gospel and end-times were addressed. One person stated

the/she wanted to know more on how to live in the present world with all its distractions. (Note: perhaps they missed the session that we covered this topic because we had many answers for this during the four weeks). One question addressed the ethics of privacy in which the participants were encouraged to remain anonymous on this survey and asked to call us, to address their concerns. No one called, although two people approached me. One was on the doctrine of the Trinity and the other a conflict with a brother. The details are in the analysis section.

On #4 question, “please explain in what ways they did or did not address them,” 95% did not give a response here, but a couple of people stated that they were okay with the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and they were reminded about the message of Revelation and encouraged to study for themselves. On #5 question, “if yes, would you be interested in having two people from our volunteer trained visitation team come and talk to you about this? Of course, all is strictly confidential. Only those from the trained personnel, whom you speak to will know about your concern.” No one who said yes came to talk to the leadership team. A few stated in writing they had already tried to resolve the issues. One was still working on the conflict. I will share in my analysis what happened regarding a few conflicts amongst members that happened during the term of this project. On #6 question, “please explain what you liked or disliked about the questionnaires or sermons, etc.?” “It was unique to have a two-way revival series;” we could give input into the sermon topics and have our questions answered, thus, not only preaching, but everyone was involved who wanted to be a part of the whole process.” The sermons were timely, motivating, clear, unpacked the verses; it filled me with the Holy Spirit. All need to hear the messages; loves the book of



Revelation; it spoke to the heart. One had a concern that the seminar could be shorter; four weekends is too long.

On #7 question, “In what ways did it [sermons] affect you, or did not? You may share in the space below and on the back if needed.” The survey questionnaire had a positive effect on becoming a better witness for Jesus; it filled the gaps of unanswered questions; wants to review the book of Revelation again; mostly encouraging; was great; and feels Jesus is at the door and “must keep their lamp trimmed and burning;” and finally, one said “they became more reflective on their personal spiritual condition.” On #8 question, “is there anything else you wish to share that was not covered in the above evaluation that you feel needs to be heard?,” 95% gave “no” as a response or put nothing in this space. One stated, “focus on the gospel of Christ and this we need.” On #9 question, “I am also seeking your positive affirmations and constructive criticism in order to help improve this process of having revival in the church and community.” Another stated, “your preaching is relevant and has heart.” Some thought the sermons were a bit long, but good content.

The evaluation responses gave insight to help me identify that this revival was more successful than had been thought. It was very encouraging to know that most of the people had their questions answered satisfactorily and that most either had marked “some” or “yes” to their felt needs being met. They all said, “This was a seminar that other Adventist churches ought to use.”

How does one know that revival has occurred during or after a revival series? People know it is not so much from an excitement of an emotional experience, but they are stimulated in mind and heart to confess sin, forgive their trespassers, and to surrender

to the Holy Spirit. The change occurs because the Word and the Spirit of God worked on their hearts. Some of the people said change for the better happened and were very much appreciative of the revival seminar. Many now are requesting a training class for soul winning; thus, I am following this revival seminar with how to witness more effectively for God. Several people have requested my sermon series in writing so they can learn the biblical principles of revival. One woman who has attended our church for over a year but is not yet a baptized Adventist, said she uses my sermon manuscripts in a Bible study group. She goes through each scripture and explains the verses to her friends.

### **Analysis of Results**

The evaluation shows that 95% have overall positive views regarding the Fire-Proof seminar, indicated by participants on the evaluation.

I believe the success of the seminar was because of the unique strategy to include the congregation in the development of the seminar. Several stated that they had their questions answered, thus giving confirmation that they were satisfied with the method used in this revival seminar. In addition to the seminar, there was also an additional year of groundwork that was done by the elders through revival prayer meetings. Based on my research concerning prayer, I believe that these revival prayer meetings were vital to the success of the seminar.

The seven sermons, as measured in the survey responses, revealed that participants were able to renew their relationship with God and their commitment to the fundamental beliefs of the church. As a result, it is hoped that they will become a vibrant witness for Jesus. The Question & Answer sessions were also a great support for the positive effect the seminar had upon the participants. They were reminded of the

awesome teachings of the Bible that the Seventh-day Adventist Church proclaims, as affirmed in the evaluation section in Chapter 6. The lower attendance at the afternoon sessions was not stated to be because of the content of the sermon and Q & A, but rather that people said it was too much to travel home for 15-20 minutes and be back after lunch. One way that could have resolved this issue would have been to bring a prepared lunch with them to join with the visitors' fellowship lunch, which some did. I think some were too tired to return and felt the need to rest and relax on the Sabbath afternoon. It was interesting that some did regret not coming in the afternoon. One person stated that it was his/her "fault for missing the middle section of the seminar."

With question #1, 63% said the sermons did meet their felt needs and 37% said it met some of their felt needs, while none said no. Regarding how the sermons answered their questions from the survey, 49% said yes, 37% said some of their questions were answered, and 7% said not applicable to them. Notice on this question, from the question-and answer sessions (hereafter Q & A) were not included in the question so there was a lower number of "yes" than the previous question; thus, the combination of both preaching and the Q & A is the best means to cover the questions. For me to answer all the suggestions and questions during a seven-sermon series would be impossible. Thus, the Q & A permitted me to answer them without ignoring their concerns in the shortest possible time. Making the revival series any longer, would have made it too lengthy thus, this strategy was effective.

Regarding the rating of the sermons, the last sermon was considered the best as it spoke to the heart and to the need for more of the Holy Spirit (see Appendix D). This tells me that people love inspiring sermons on how God can have a reviving effect upon those

who wish to be filled and led by God. The second-best sermon was the Signs of the Return of Jesus, which had many positive comments following the sermon. The reasons are several, due to its relevance, the spiritual awakening effect upon the complacent soul and to those who are simply in a right spirit but needed to be motivated once again to witness about Jesus' near and impending second coming.

In question #2 responses, there was a positive response stating that the sermons answered their questions, with 48% yes and 38% some of them did, only 7% said it did not and 7% stated not applicable. To clarify, there was the following question: "if they (issues) were not addressed may I and an elder visit with you, to address your concerns?" Most agreed, but one stated that the concern was not addressed about living in today's world. This person missed the Q & A, thus they would not have received a satisfactory response to their question.

Concerning question #3, "Did the seminar help you with any concerns and conflicts concerning Adventist doctrines and beliefs?" A positive 52% said yes, 32% said some, and 16% stated no, it did not. Again, the "no" responses, perhaps was because of the low turnout during the afternoon sessions and absent members missed the answers to their questions. They may have only heard three or four sermons on Sabbath morning sessions, but failed to attend the afternoon sessions, they missed three 25-minute sermons, three 45-minute and one 75-minute Q & A's with 60 questions answered, thus they missed more than half the seminar.

On the matter of doctrinal conflict, one person did not mention it in the second survey but did mention it in the first survey as a question and approached me about it prior to the seminar and during the seminar. That person has an issue that is theological

concerning the doctrine of the Trinity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He believes in a two-person God (Father and Son, Holy Spirit is represented by the two) as opposed to God in three persons. I tried to work with this member and shared our views, but to no avail. Although, he was respectful, he promised not to bring it up in the Sabbath School class, to keep peace and for the sake of unity.

Question #4 asked if anyone was having conflicts with anyone. I had one individual approach me on a matter related to a conflict with another member after the first Sabbath of the revival seminar. I encouraged him to have the elders and the two of them come together, but he refused. He did not want to be present during a reconciliation meeting because he felt it would be too intimidating and dangerous to be in the presence of his offender. He has stopped coming to church, as a result. He did not agree that Matthew 18, the three-step strategy by Jesus, was applicable in his case. The other party was willing to meet with him, but of course, the plaintiff was not. We continue to pray for a resolution.

In the year 2017, there was an issue between two members and the matter went to court. Because of confidentiality, due to ethical concerns, names and other identifying characteristics are not used.

The last case is a matter with a member who was dropped from membership about a month after my arrival in October 2015, and then in September 2017 the church board had him removed from the church property through a police escort. Reconciliation has not taken place even though I have had conversations with this former member.

Question #5 inquired about the effect the seminar had on their spiritual growth—42% marked very good, 23% marked excellent, while 32% marked good, 3%

marked fair and 0% said poor. I am humbled by these positive written responses, for they affirmed the fact that members were revived, spiritually recharged, and would be more inclined to focus on Jesus than conflicts. What else should a church community revival do? Regrettably, the inactive ones who did not attend missed an opportunity to be revived, and it will be our mission to seek and restore their fellowship with the congregation and prayerfully many will return.

There were 75% or 21 out of 28 respondents who answered question #6. They responded that they would recommend this Fire-Proof Revival Seminar to someone, while the remaining 25% said they may tell them, and no one said “no.” This gives me confidence that this type of seminar can be an effective tool to bringing spiritual renewal to congregations, which leads to conflict resolution.

Question #7 did not have many responses, except that it helped them to be recharged for the mission of Christ and the Gospel. Their advice and affirmation of being relevant is noted and I will shorten future seminars to two or three weeks rather than one month.

It is imperative to remember there is no success without prayer, and the church started to pray for revival intentionally since January of 2018, over one year prior to the actual event. The church members made this a priority during our prayer sessions that began with three evenings per week, one hour each. About a month later, the sessions were rescheduled to twice a week, one hour per evening for a year. I am grateful for my two elders who supported this endeavor and saw it through. It is important that church leaders support the pastor or evangelist doing the revival, as without their contribution the reviving effect would be minimal.

I am happy to read these surveys for they do humble me, to see how God can work through willing and committed vessels. God desires for every congregation to know what revival is and to experience revival right before their very eyes. The results of the survey speak clearly that many were reconverted, transformed, refreshed, or focused on Jesus. Others stated that they would read the Bible again, especially the book of Revelation, to learn more about the signs of Jesus' soon return and to know God and love God more fully than ever before. John the Revelator gave people an inspiring message to encourage the restoration of the first love of converts to Christ and His church and we are witnessing this in the Cornerstone Church.

### **Major Recommendations**

To improve this revival seminar, I would need to shorten the seminar probably to three weekends. I recommend organizing a fellowship lunch not only for the visitors, but also for the regular members. Although they knew they could come, I should have promoted this aspect more and would have probably increased my attendance in the afternoon sessions by 25%. In the initial survey, I should have been clearer in my instructions on what they should do with the signed form. They should have kept it and not sent it to me like some did or put on my office desk as a couple of people did. On the second survey, I should have shortened my last sermon by five minutes to give adequate time to complete the survey, which would have given me more data for my statistical analysis. I noticed for the last two questions that many were unanswered in the space provided thus, I lost some important data for my analysis. Furthermore, for question 2, I did not give a choice to circle *yes*, *some*, or *no*, but only to write it in. This would have been clearer with a choice as the second part of question 2 had a choice. I did not do the

visitation seminar because I noticed from the completed surveys that there were not many attendees with conflicts and most had already attempted to work things out, thus there was no need for a team. Perhaps, for future reference a church doing such a revival would be wise to consider having the visitation seminar, for many would benefit from such, if there were several unresolved conflicts. It would be helpful that the visitations occur as a follow-up to the revival seminar. It might also be good for people to participate in spiritual counseling and sharing their stories of how this renewal process has helped them. It would be good to offer the services of spiritual counseling by the visitation team on a regular monthly basis or quarterly basis depending on the demand.

One of the problems that I encountered was the lack of participation of my members in filling out the surveys. There were only 33 replies received in the first survey from the 171 mailed and given out. The second survey showed that about 45% of the adults who attended had completed the survey. Some may have felt that they needed more time to complete the survey, others may have felt that since they did not attend all the sessions, they would not be able to provide adequate feed-back. Therefore, I should have made my instructions clearer, such as, “if they wish to fill out the survey to complete what they can.” This would give better and more accurate data, even if they missed some of the sermons and afternoon sessions. At the event, I did not notice any inactive members, who were not attending before the seminar. There were visitors who were not members among those who came to the sessions. I would not know if any of them returned the first survey because it was anonymous. For future reference, I will visit these inactive ones before sending them a survey. After connecting with them in person, it would be good to have a deeper relationship with them and then they may be more



likely to respond to a survey and to come to a revival seminar after meeting and visiting with the pastor. The elders and I would do this.

### **Summary of Results**

Summary of the responses to the 31 completed surveys follows:

1. The results for the sermon rating averaged from very-good to excellent (see Appendix D). The respondents stated that this seminar would also prove beneficial to other Adventist churches. The overall assessment of the Fire-Proof Revival Seminar was very good. Many of the attendees wrote, regarding conflicts with people, they had none; a few said they were working on their conflicts and only two stated it was not resolved, even after attempting to resolve it. Regarding conflicts with doctrine, they were almost all satisfied and they were happy with the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. One person (verbally expressed and through texting) only had an issue with the Trinity, as opposed to only a two-person Godhead, Heavenly Father, and Son, but was keeping an open mind.

2. The visitation training that was planned did not take place because I felt, if it was needed, then I would do it at the end of the meetings in 1-2 hours and then delegate the requested visits. According to the survey, only two had conflicts; therefore, extra help was not necessary, so the training session planned was cancelled.

The sermon topics chosen were among the ones responders gave a very-good evaluation, but only one sermon used will need to be strengthened, this was, Having Peace During Adversity. There was no problem with the sermon topic. Though it averaged good to very-good from the survey responses, it could have been stronger.

## **Recommendations**

Although I was trying to shorten the sermons so they would not run into the question-and-answer period, the time for the whole program was 1.5 hours instead of 1.25 hours. In the future, it would be better to take out some of the questions to allow for more time for the more important questions. One thing with regards to having lunch, even though there was a visitor's lunch every Sabbath, some of the members went home after the service and did not come back because most live a 10-20-minute drive away from the church. Perhaps organizing more help to have family lunch every Sabbath during that month of revival would have increased the attendance by about 20%. Most Sabbaths there were between 65-85 in worship attendance, but in the afternoon sessions there were about 10-17 in attendance. Several were away on trips, but many just felt too tired to come back. Another thing to draw out more people is to have a mid-week sermon in the evening along with serving a supper at 6 p.m. I will have to experiment in future churches with this to discover what will work better.

Concerning the visitation, I thought some would have contacted the elders or myself for some guidance, but no one did formally at least on the survey responses. One participant approached me concerning his dispute discussed in the implementation section, we have been trying to resolve for a couple months. To improve the visitation process with regards to helping the participants with their issues, I would hand out a card to all the participants about half-way through the seminar encouraging them to sign up for visits. The visits would occur during the months to follow the revival seminar and the spiritual counsellors would inform the visitation team, if any issues come up. These visits would be 30 minutes long and the purpose would simply be to assess the issues and begin

the process of reconciliation. The visitation team would keep all visits confidential and they would apply the principles of conflict resolution to mediate all concerns.

### **Conclusion**

In the future, I would plan on more revival seminars with some tweaks in the implementation and survey questionnaire, as already mentioned. I can now say confidently that a church in need of revival ought to pursue this type of strategy in order to revive members in churches that are losing their zeal for the commission of our Lord Jesus. The seminar will create a passion for faith in God and renew their lifestyle to represent God's character in a more complete manner than before having attended this seminar.

According to the final survey our hopes were fulfilled. The hope for clarity for truth, a greater desire for Bible study and understanding of scripture, and inspiration for implementation of the teachings of scripture was addressed. A desire for spirituality and unity revealed a revival had begun for almost every participant who heard and applied teachings from this Fire-Proof Revival Seminar. I recommend that other pastors add to this project by conducting their own research on developing approaches to understanding unity, spirituality, Biblical preaching, and revival. Ideally, such research could serve to confirm, expand, provoke more questions, and bring more insights into these vast and complex subjects.

### **My Transformation as a Ministry Professional**

There were several important concepts, which led me to become transformed, namely bringing peace amid conflict, preaching Biblical messages so that people are

drawn closer to Christ, and having revival and renewal to bring unity of which I gained knowledge and improved my pastoral ministry as a professional during this six-year journey. For example, when researching for the theological foundations chapter, I discovered that there were at least six modes of responses for bringing peace and unity. This profound transformational truth opened my mind to more options than when I first considered this topic. Other improvements were in the Biblical preaching section quoted from Ellen White on page 17 of this document which taught that “The preaching of the word should appeal to the intellect and should impart knowledge, but it should do more than this. The minister's utterances, to be effectual, must reach the hearts of his hearers” (as cited in Gibbs, 1951, pp. 107, 108). This gives the balance of informing and inspiring each preacher and listener. I also was given insight on how a revival or renewal according to page 26 of this document can occur, “The revival spoken of is one of renewal of the mind, spirit, and body, the whole person (3 John 1:2-4). For example, 2 Corinthians 4:16 speaks of “our inward man being renewed day by day” (Scotland, 2013, p.121). This subject sorted out for me that revival and renewal elements coincided in the process of transformation. There are many other aspects that gave me insight and strength in my preaching through the research.

When I looked over my literature review, I found several insights which enables one to understand conflict as a positive element, in a similar way as quoted on page 41 of this document “the Gospels describe Jesus as a person who freely engaged in fitting anger and conflict” (Olson, 2010, p. 11; J. Morris, 2001). Another example from page 46 of this document, by “Edward Dobson (1992) encourages the use of preaching controversial subjects (p. 56). Why? Although, he knows it may create some anger towards himself,

providing what one preaches is truth, one will have no need to fear because preachers have this obligation to the truth” (p. 56). These quotes bolstered my confidence to speak up when it is necessary, knowing when to, takes godly wisdom.

The course studies that were given over the four years were helpful in enhancing my ability to understand the vast subject of preaching. The knowledge gained in the context of the variety of preaching genres, the historical context of preaching, rhetoric on philosophical understanding of communication, and the ample literature we read on how to creatively move church members through inspirational preaching, built a greater foundation for my preaching for a lifetime.

God has been good during this journey of five years (April 2015 - July 2020) of upgrading my education and I have grown considerably. I have added knowledge, wisdom, and understanding to my professionalism in preaching, understanding revival, bringing unity and how to strengthen the brethren. As Jesus exhorted Peter, “then feed my sheep” (John 21:17 NLT). I now have a beneficial revival seminar strategy that will be more successful the next time I use this method. I will be able to advise other pastors and church leaders about the blessings I received from this renewal process. I will be able to help other churches, working with other pastors to help bring this spiritual renewal. I feel other researchers will be able to do the same type of research/strategy and will be able to build upon this study by learning from my mistakes, and thus implement their own revival series. I know I will be able to do this seminar in my future pastoral districts with God’s blessings, and His leading will cause people to be on fire through those whom I may positively influence for Jesus’ sake.

## APPENDIX A

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES #1, #2

#### **Instructions to the Survey Questionnaire #1:**

The following survey is to assess your thoughtful responses and get your input regarding a seminar to be held in the Cornerstone SDA church by Pastor Normand Cote. On behalf of the Cornerstone church, I, Pastor N. Cote am looking forward to your responses. This project is to fulfill part of my Doctoral of Ministry degree.

This survey has been sent out to all members and attendees 18 years old and over. So, whether you attend the church or not, I would count it an honor for your responses, as this will help me to discover what subjects, topics, themes, and questions you are interested in. Then there will be a specific revival seminar held on consecutive Sabbaths for about a month depending on the needs and responses discovered from this survey. I hope to cover and answer all your questions, emotional needs and theological concerns that you may have.

Your timely response to this survey within about two weeks would really be appreciated. I've included an addressed stamped envelope for your convenience.

This is an anonymous survey, so do not put your name on the survey or the envelope. There is no obligation to answer any of the questions, please only answer what you feel comfortable responding to.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this especially important project assignment.

If you need more room, please use the back of this survey and/or if necessary, write on another sheet of paper. Also, please read the attached Informed Consent Form before completing the questionnaire, thank you!

#### **Survey Questionnaire #1**

1. Do you have questions about the Seventh-day Adventist 28 fundamental beliefs, lifestyle, perspectives on certain social, Biblical, moral, and ethical issues?

Please be specific and write all that you can think of below

2. If you could tell your pastor what subject for a sermon to speak on, what would you ask him/her to speak on?

Please list one to three subjects or topics that you would really benefit from and love to hear about:

i. \_\_\_\_\_

ii. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. \_\_\_\_\_

If you need more room, please use the back of this survey

3. Are there one or more scriptural passages in the Bible you would love to clearly understand better? Please list them below:
  
  
  
  
  
4. What do you think believers need to hear more about in our time that we live in today? Think about, if you were the pastor of the Cornerstone SDA church what would you tell your congregation in areas of how to be encouraged, strengthened, and inspired within your daily faith and journey with the Lord?
  
  
  
  
  
5. Would you come to a revival seminar to be held soon at Cornerstone SDA church during Sabbath worship hour and after Sabbath lunch for a total of two sermons per Sabbath for about three to four consecutive Sabbaths, if you knew that your interests and concerns were dealt with? (understanding and providing you were able to and you had no scheduling conflicts for you to come)

Please circle one:      **Yes No Maybe**

\_\_\_\_\_

Again, thank you for your responses and time you have taken to share your thoughts. This will certainly be helpful not only in fulfilling my requirement for my degree, but most of all, this will help me ascertain what Cornerstone SDA church members are asking, and thinking about, which ultimately will help me develop a series of sermons that have your interests engraved into it.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Pastor Normand Cote

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: September 17, 2018

**Survey Questionnaire #2**

The following survey questionnaire is part of Pastor Normand Cote's Doctoral of Ministry project assignment. This is to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the "Fireproof" Revival Seminar that was held during the month of February.

Your input is needed and important, so the pastor may fulfill his requirement and know if this seminar was a success or not.

We have a trained visitation team of two church elders, and a couple of spiritually mature members, and the pastor to address your personal concerns or conflicts and/or struggles you may have, that we may be able to help you navigate and resolve.

This is a confidential survey, there is no obligation to respond, you may keep it anonymous, if you need to, you may contact the pastor or one of the elders by phone or email.

Thank you in advance for your responses to this short questionnaire:

**\*Which sermons and Q & A did you listen to:** Please Circle the no. # to those that apply to you alone:

**And then rate the sermon on a scale of 1-5-Circle the no. 1-5 that applies for each one**

\*Please do not rate the sermons you did not listen to.

**Scale:** 1- Poor (Under 50%); 2- Fair (51-65%); 3- Good (66-80%); 4- Very Good (81-90%) Excellent (91% +)

#1 Signs of the Return of Jesus (Feb. 2)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#2 Jesus' Return & Prep. Needed (Feb. 2)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#1a. Q & A (Feb 2)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#3 Power of Confession & Forgiveness (Feb. 9)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#4 His Peace During Adversity (Feb. 9)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#2a. Q & A (Feb. 9)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#5 Loving God Fully (Feb. 16)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#6 Knowing God Fully (Feb. 16)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#3a. Q & A (Feb. 16)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#7 Living on Fire in the Spirit (Feb. 23)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)
#4a. Q & A (Feb. 23)	Rate: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5- (Circle one)

1. Did the sermons meet your felt needs? Please circle one: Yes Some No  
Please Explain how or how not?

2. Did the sermons answer your questions that you asked in the first survey or did they address any of the subjects, topics you suggested? Please circle one:  
Yes Some No



What were addressed and/or were not addressed?

Were you satisfied with the explanations and responses that Pastor N. Cote gave in the sermons?

If they were not addressed may I and an elder visit with you, to address your concerns?

Please circle one:    Yes       No

If you wish to remain anonymous on this survey please call us, so we can help address your concerns.

3. Did the seminar help you with any concerns or conflicts you had about the 28 fundamental beliefs, Adventist doctrines, or unclear scriptural passages?

Please circle one:    Yes       Some       No

Please explain in what ways they did or did not address them:

4. Do you have any conflicts with anyone in the church or outside the church and you wish it could be resolved? Please circle one:    Yes       No

If yes, would you be interested in having two people from our volunteer trained visitation team come and talk to you about this? Of course, all is strictly confidential-Only those from the trained personnel, whom you speak to will know about your concern.

5. You have been listening to this revival series of sermons by pastor N. Cote, that incorporated many suggestions from the first questionnaire; how would you rate on a scale of 1 to 5 this seminar, based on the overall effect on your spiritual walk and journey with the Lord that the seminar had on you, is having on you, and/or will expect to have on you.

Please circle one of the following:

1- poor-    2- Fair-    3- good    4- very good    5- excellent

In what ways did it or did not—you may share in the space below and on the back if needed.

6. Would you recommend this revival seminar to other SDA churches, if the same strategy were followed?

Please circle one:    Yes        Maybe    No

Please explain what you liked or disliked about the questionnaires, or sermons.

7. Is there anything else you wish to share that was not covered in the above evaluation that you feel needs to be heard?

I am also seeking your positive affirmations and constructive criticism in order to help improve this process of having revival in the church and community.

Thank you again  
Yours Sincerely in Christ,  
Pastor N. Cote

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### **Email Letter to Rectify Problem**

Hi Church family.

Hope you are well! Regarding my DMin project survey questionnaire: I was not clear in the instructions. The Informed Consent Form is not to be sent to me along with the survey questionnaire. By sending the survey questionnaire alone, this demonstrates that you have consented to the form and questionnaire. Therefore, you keep the Informed Consent Form and only send the responses to the survey questionnaire (the stapled 2 pages). By doing it in this manner you keep your responses anonymous. If you have any questions, please let me know. Thank you for the responses and it is not too late to respond, if you have not done so, you may, if you wish. Sincerely, Pastor Normand Cote

## APPENDIX B

### SERMON OUTLINE IDEAS FOR FIRE-PROOF REVIVAL SEMINAR

#### 1. The Signs of the Return of Jesus, Pt. 1

- Chronological order of events of Christ's coming
- The Three Angel's Message
- Signs and wonders
- Daniel and Revelation and prophecies
- Humans suffer diseases, how do you explain the suffering that goes on in the world?

#### 2. The Return of Jesus and Preparations Needed, Pt. 2

- The second coming of Jesus: The Redeemer's promise
- Preparation for 2nd coming: no buying and no selling time
- When should Christians flee to the country to be protected from persecution?
- Consequence of not preparing for Christ's soon coming. Deep Bible explanations of the sorrows of not being prepared and the practical life consequences
- How to wake up and attain to what future we are planning on
- Being in an attitude of prayer
- Importance of fasting and praying

- What is expected of us as Christians to accomplish before Christ's return?
- What does the Bible tell us we should be doing?
- How to maintain Christ as our focus in the face of worldliness

### 3. The Power of Confession and Forgiveness, Pt. 1

- Why Christ died for us? Why Christ died for me? Who am I that He would die for me? About Jesus' sacrifice
- Temptations of Christ
- Forgiveness—The crises at our door—unforgiving hearts. Love one another, love, grace
- The love of Christ, resentments, dealing with hurts, offenses
- Gossiping/criticizing—inside the church: amongst church members or church attendees
- Marriage—spouses must be willing to confess and forgive one another's mistakes and sins

### 4. Having Peace During Adversity, Part. 2

- To be at peace as the Bible tells us
- Having faith when all else is crumbling around you
- Having peace during the storm
- How to live now, not just a light at the end of the tunnel, such as when there are political uncertainties, natural disasters, man's inhumanity

- God’s love amidst the trials, nourishing our faith through stressful and difficult times
- That Jesus has our victory, no matter what we see in the world

#### 5. Loving God Fully, Part. 1

- Obey 1st commandment and all the rest will follow: Love of God, Love of Christ
- How you can get love, joy, peace from God to love and be graceful and peaceful to each other
- What is “sin” and what is “not sin”— Sin is not considered as bad as once thought, so society in general says, don’t worry about it, no need to change your lifestyle
- Loving your neighbors
- What difference does it make? “God is a God of love”; “I’m a good person, so I’m going to heaven.” I’m living common-law but we love each other. It is only a piece of paper anyways, then get divorced anyway—so why get married?
- Holy Spirit; Spirit & Truth
- Obedience

#### 6. Knowing God Fully, Part 2

- How to keep the 4th Commandment holy
- Does God know you?
- Holiness
- What real Sabbath worship looks like?

## 7. Living on Fire in the Spirit, Part 1

- Maintain the faith; strengthening faith
- How can we receive the Holy Spirit?
- To have a close and daily relationship with God; improving relationship with God
- To live a godly life in the modern world with television, electronics, music, tolerance for everything
- Read the Bible: Share the Bible passages you read daily with others by explaining to them how they affected you and inspired you. Live by the principles and learn them
- Keeping God's law and then next in order of importance, the law of the land
- Must love God and others enough to die for them
- How to keep from being deceived? Because there is so much error being brought in, such as the emerging church and the new age movement
- Encourage reading of their Bibles. Have groups of 2-4 people in Bible study searching for answers to questions with their Bibles and a concordance
- Not focused on material things, but on spiritual side of life
- Pray for one another in the Bible study group

## APPENDIX C

### FIRE-PROOF Q&A REQUESTS

#### **Question and Answer Requests**

This section will outline the questions people asked from Survey Questionnaire #1 (see Appendix A). The Elders and I responded with an average of three minutes per question. The letters are the first initial of the elder's name: E is for Edwin; G is for Gentle and P is for Pastor. (These individuals will answer the questions.)

#### Section #1—28 Fundamental beliefs

1. E: Wants to know more about beliefs and how they affect our lifestyle
2. G: Drugs, Sexuality & Electronics
  - Concerning drug use and selling. Decriminalization but not legalization
  - Contemporary issues—drugs, sexuality, electronics
  - Homelessness, drugs, alcohol, and addiction, working together to help serve them, need to know someone cares
3. P: Homosexuality/Transgender
  - How to relate to them
  - How to explain to our children about the practice of it

Is it a sin? yet without judging, but still be loving; many confused messages at the schools



4. P: Tithes and Offerings

- The importance of tithing, even though we do not approve of how tithe may be used (it is God's money, we need to trust Him)
- What is the correct way of tithe paying? Gross income? Net income? Can one use the tithe money for other mission projects, other than through the church, through the General Conference route?

5. E: Belief #26—Death and Resurrection

- The state of the dead

6. E: The Health Laws

- Must we be vegan to enter heaven? May I eat chicken, turkey, and beef. "I hope to not be condemned by Adventist church members or that my practice keeps me out of heaven."
- Taking care of our health
- Healthy lifestyle

7. G: Belief #16—Lord's Supper

- Regarding Foot Washing; for health reasons—don't want to spread fungus, warts, etc.
- Is it ok to take communion without foot washing?

8. G: Jewelry—Is there biblical support for such?

9. E: Belief #22— "Christian Behavior"

- "Christian taste." Some restrict themselves on certain clothing, such as long skirts, no pants

10. G: Belief #24—Investigative Judgment

11. P: Belief #2—Trinity-

- Is Holy Spirit the 3rd person of the Trinity?

Section #2—Subjects and/or topics members would like the pastor to speak on.

1. P: God's blessings to be shared

- This is an important matter to share what God has given to us.

2. E: Latter/Early Rain

- Early Rain
- Pouring of the Latter Rain

3. G: Assurance of our Salvation

4. P: Joy of Salvation

5. E: Relationship of children to the church

6. E: Beatitudes

7. G: Worship (different kinds)

8. P: How to evangelize without judging

- In what way can true Christians show love & concern toward someone who has violated God's moral law such as committing adultery, homosexuals living together, same sex marriage, etc.
- How to relate to worldliness and not be drawn into it, i.e., media, TV, gay marriages, extreme violence, drinking drugs, etc.

9. G: How to live with joy in this world of counterfeits

10. E: Three angel's messages; second coming and mark of the beast

11. G: The Book of Revelation—time-line order

12. P: The unpardonable sin
13. P: Winning souls for Jesus; reaching out to non-believers
14. E: Rebaptism
15. G: Supremacy of Christ
16. P: How to combat the prevalence of depression in society today  
especially among young people
17. E: Sharing God's Word
18. E: Parenting; Parent-child relationship
19. G: Marriage (I think they want to know what makes a good & healthy  
marriage)
20. P: Career

Section #3: Explain Scriptural passages that need more clarity and understanding

1. E: The 1st miracle of Jesus (water to wine)
2. G: Who is Malchizedek?
3. P: Our place in the Great Controversy
4. G: The seven sons of Sceva
5. E: The different Marys in the Bible and their specific role in the life of  
Christ
6. G: 1 John 2:15,16—do not love the world
7. P: Revelation-Beast
8. P: Explain the difference of worldly meditations and of biblical  
meditations to combat the meditation that is being encouraged in the  
secular world

9. E: Proverbs 18:24
10. G: John 14:1-3
11. P: Daniel 9:22-24
12. E: Revelation 8:1—Is God the Father coming with Jesus and the angels? Is that why there is silence in Heaven?
13. E: Luke 23:39-43-Explain
14. G: The woman at the well
15. P: The parable of the fig tree
16. G: Fellowship—social interaction within the church
17. E: Some of the men can have a life for over a few thousand years-explain the confusion
18. G: What about the burning in the lake of fire ‘forever’
19. P: Doing your own pleasure on the Sabbath-What are they?
20. P: Keeping the Sabbath? Why not Sunday or any day of the week?  
Keeping the Sabbath Holy? How to Keep the Sabbath?
21. E: What is the mark of the beast?
22. G: I thought God predestined, so why bother if we are saved at the end, why don’t we just keep on sinning?
23. P: Colossians 3:12-14- righteousness of Christ, attributes of Christ and forgiveness
24. E: 1 Timothy 4 :3-5
25. E: Genesis 2:23-25
26. G: Matthew 6:14

27. P: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Sect. #4—Subjects that members would feel and believe that are necessary for our congregation to hear

1. G: Isaiah 66:18—Can a country/nation be born in a day? In 1947 Israel was declared a nation by the UN. In 1948 the Jews began to come back to Israel—we are in that generation. We cannot know the time or the year or exact time, but the scoffers are proving to be themselves one of the “signs!”

2. E: The sower (the parable explained)

3. G: Reflection on people’s lives in the Bible, and how they abide in the Lord

4. P: Unity as a church, part of one body

5. P: Draw near to God-nourish our faith, shaking will happen

6. E: When you would give love to other people, you will get love in return (explain concept of what we sow we reap).

7. G: Humans suffer diseases, what happens with it?

8. P: Doctrines

Question #5 Will you come to a revival seminar?

Yes-27 replied and said yes

No-due to limited mobility= 1 only stated they would not come

Maybe = 4 stated they might come

Returned blank, but signed=1

Total surveys returned 33

## APPENDIX D

## EVALUATION RESULTS

Sermon #	Ratings			individual sermon totals	individual			Order of Best					
	Poor	Fair	Good		Very Good	Excellent	Poor		Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	
#1		0	0	5	15	8	28	0%	0	18%	53%	29%	Sermons #2 82% Signs of the return of Jesus
#2		0	0	6	8	5	19	0	0	32%	42%	26%	#6 68% Jesus' return & Preparati ons Needed
#3		0	1	3	11	7	22	0	5.00%	13.00%	50%	32%	#5 72% The Power of Confessi on Forgiveness
#4		0	1	7	4	5	17	0	6%	41%	24%	29%	#7 54% His Peace During Adversity
#5		0	1	4	13	6	24	0	4%	17%	54%	25%	#3 79% Loving God Fully
#6		0	0	4	7	7	18	0	0	22%	39%	39%	#4 78% Knowing God Fully
#7		0	0	5	12	13	30	0	0	17%	40%	43%	#1 83% Living on fire in the Spirit
7 Sermon %	Totals	0	3	34	70	51	158	Average 0%	total %	22.85%	43.14%	31.85%	
Questions & Answers	Q & A Totals												
	#1	0	1	4	8	5	18	0	6.00%	22%	44%	28%	72% 1st
	#2	0	1	5	5	2	13	0	8%	38%	38%	16%	54% 3rd
	#3	0	1	5	3	3	12	0	8%	42%	25%	25%	50% 4th
	#4	0	0	5	4	5	14	0	0%	36%	28%	36%	64% 2nd
Totals		0	3	19	20	15	57		5.50%	34.50%	34%	26%	

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## VITA

**Name:** Normand L. Cote

**Background:** Born on March 26, 1963 and raised in Prince George, B.C., Canada. I have two older brothers and one younger sister and was raised in the Roman Catholic Church. At the young age of 19 (1982) I was baptized and joined the Hart Hwy. Pentecostal Church in Prince George. By God's grace, he led me to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church (from Prince George) in November 1992, by POF and was baptized with my wonderful wife on April 1, 1994.

**Family:** I was married on March 27, 1994 to Eva Noemi A. Cote who is originally from Aringay, La Union, Philippines. She became a Canadian citizen in the year 2000. We have 3 children: Daniel (19), Rachel (15), Gabrielle (11).

### **Education:**

2015-2020	DMin Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, USA
2017	MDiv equivalency Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, USA
2007- 2011	MMin degree (Online) Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), Cavite, Philippines
1998- 2000	BA in Religious Studies Canadian University College at Lacombe, AB, Canada

### **Ordained:**

2006	Ordained by and currently hold ministerial credentials from British Columbia/Yukon Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
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### **Experience:**

2015-present	Pastor, Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church (Coquitlam)
2006-2015	Pastor, Campbell River & Comox Valley Seventh-day Adventist Churches (BC/Yukon)
2001-2006	Pastor, Vanderhoof and Lakes District Seventh-day Adventist Churches (BC/Yukon)
2000-2001	Pastor, Hudson Bay & Swan River Seventh-day Adventist Churches (Man./Sask. Conf.)

