

MISSION MATTERS IDAHO

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we are **CALLED**
to make disciples in our
communities **SHARING**
the distinctive, Christ-centered
Seventh-day Adventist message
of Hope and Wholeness.

to **EQUIP** and **EMPOWER**
pastor-coached, lay-driven
churches that reflect Jesus' love,
passionately live the gospel and
grow spiritually and numerically.



Let's Go Fishing!

David Prest Jr., President, Idaho Conference

Many people find the sport of fishing relaxing and exhilarating. Perhaps you have experienced the excitement of each new catch. Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon attract fishermen and women from around the world. Our rivers and lakes entice travelers, sightseers, and new residents who love the thrill of the catch.

Have you experienced the excitement of snagging a rainbow, cutthroat, or brown trout on your fishing line? What about chinook, sockeye, or steelhead salmon?

I have had very little experience with sport fishing. However, I had the time of my life commercial fishing in Alaska during the summer of 1978. My friend, Gary, and I had concluded a year serving as taskforce workers for the Alaska Mission of Seventh-day Adventists, and we needed to earn money to return to college. So, Douglas Cooper, an Anchorage businessman and commercial fishman, hired us. He provided the all-important commercial fishing license, setnet site, equipment, and lodging for us. In return, Gary and I gave him fifty percent of the catch, and we each kept twenty-five percent of the catch. It was an offer that two young, adventurous, college men could not turn down.

To this day, I treasure memories of that summer in Nushagak, Alaska. Our commercial fishing was the setnet version. It involved fifty fathoms of fishing net anchored on each end, perpendicular to the shore. I still recall the absolute anticipation and excitement when the authorities opened the first window of the season for fishing. I remember the thrill of seeing the sockeye salmon hitting the net. Every fish meant a five-dollar

bill at the cash buyer. During the five weeks of the humpback salmon run, Gary and I each fished a skiff. We each kept fifty percent of the catch. We caught king, sockeye, chum, and

humpback salmon throughout that summer. I was hooked on the thrill of the catch. After eight weeks of hard, disciplined work, I grossed about \$7,500.00.

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If there was ever a time that the world needs Jesus and His loving gospel, it is now
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The Gospel of Matthew records the story of Jesus calling His disciples. He was walking by the Sea of Galilee when He saw Simon Peter and Andrew fishing. He called to them and said, “. . . Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Although Jesus spoke those words two thousand years ago, they are still potent for us today. We need a growing cadre of fishers of men and women in Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon to experience the thrill and joy of bringing a soul to Christ. If you allow Him, the Holy Spirit will equip and empower you to reach men, women, young people, and children with the loving Gospel of Jesus Christ. He will give you souls for His Kingdom.

If there was ever a time that the world needs Jesus and His loving Gospel, it is now. In this environment of the coronavirus pandemic, hurricanes, floods, wildfires, racism, earthquakes, protests, and fear, Jesus and His church need modern-day disciples to fish for souls.

One of the strategic priorities of the Idaho Conference for this quadrennium is exponential growth. I invite you to join me in passionately reaching the people of Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon with the loving Gospel of Jesus Christ and invite them to join your Seventh-day Adventist Church family.





Financing a World Church, Part Three

John Rogers, Vice President, Finance & Administration, Idaho Conference

If you were to walk into a church, other than a Seventh-day Adventist church, and pull out a giving envelope you would likely see a significant difference compared to ours. Many denominations envelopes simply have one line entitled, "Tithes and Offerings" whereas our envelopes have multiple lines for tithe, world offerings, conference offerings, and local church offerings. In this part of the Financing A World Church series I want to explore why our church differentiates between tithe and offerings.

In the Garden of Eden the test of faith and loyalty to God was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. By respecting the restriction God placed on this one tree the first couple demonstrated they believed God was the owner and ruler of this world and that He was able to provide for them. After the fall of mankind the system of tithes and offerings was instituted as a way for us to demonstrate to God that we accept Him as owner and ruler and we trust Him to provide for us even though we give back to Him a portion of that which He has given us.

Leviticus 27:30 tells us, "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord." This verse points out that the tithe "belongs to the Lord." In other words, even though material blessings come to us, ten percent of what comes to us already belongs to God. It is not ours to give to God, it is already His. That is why Malachi 3:8 talks about robbing God of tithe. This is also why we speak of "returning" tithe as compared to "giving" offerings.

If my dad let me borrow his screwdriver it would seem silly if I offered to return it to him on the condition that he not use it to scrape, pry, or chisel and it was only to be used on flat head screws. Yet how often do we want to direct the use of tithe when we return it to God? In Malachi 3:10 God tells us tithe should be returned to the storehouse so there will be food in

His house. Just as with the tree in the Garden of Eden, giving God's tithe back to Him to use as He sees best allows us to demonstrate our recognition of Him as the owner and authority in our lives and trust Him to provide for us with the remaining 90%. This is part of the faith experience of giving a tithe of your increase back to God. Not only are you recognizing that everything belongs to God by giving a tithe back to God, but you are acknowledging God's omniscience and authority by letting God guide in how that money is spent, rather than directing its use yourself.

A second point made in Leviticus 27:30 is that the tithe is "holy to the Lord." Leviticus 27 as well as Numbers 18 tell us that the tithe was to be used exclusively for the Levites. The Levites had not received a tribal inheritance in the land of Israel, but as the full-time ministers of Israel tithe was to be their means of sustenance. In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul showed that this principle continues to apply to those who dedicate themselves to full-time ministry even though the Levitical priesthood ended at the cross.

Larry Burkett makes the following observation, "The tithe is the minimum testimony of our Christian commitment. Nowhere in scripture does the Lord suggest that less than a tenth is His." Beyond tithing, the Bible lists numerous examples of free-will offerings being given. Paul tells us in 2nd Corinthians 9:7 that, "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." That is what a free-will offering is, "not reluctantly or under compulsion."

In Exodus 36 and 1 Chronicles 29 we find examples of free-will offerings being given to build the tabernacle and temple. In Exodus 30 and Nehemiah 10 we find examples of offerings given to maintain these places of worship. In Matthew 25 Jesus calls us to support the less fortunate. The Bible mentions a variety of other offerings such as thank offerings, sin offerings,

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Why We Felt It Was Important To Reopen Schools

Patrick Frey, Superintendent of Schools, Idaho Conference



In the decision for most schools to reopen this fall we had to look at the whole spectrum of benefits and risks when comparing in-person learning and distance learning. Parents, teachers and students across the Conference had concerns about students returning to the classrooms. Here in the short form are evidences that were taken into account.



Evidence from studies from around the world indicate that children are far less likely to contract COVID-19 and less like to have severe symptoms if any at all and death rate are very low. (Note we said "less likely" not exempt.)^{1 2}



Using physical distancing, face shields and/or masks, barriers and high levels of hygiene lowers the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19.



Extended school closures can lead to high levels of learning loss. However, the situation should be better if schools have to return to distance learning for a period of time, because teachers have become better at teaching online.³



Not all students do well with distance learning. Separation for students and teachers has caused mental stress in some students.⁴

One of the effects we noticed in children this summer at Camp Ida-Haven was that the campers were in the worst physical shape the camp staff had ever seen. This was most likely because of too much screen time while on their rear ends. While PE in schools this year will be different than in the past due to physical distancing requirements, students will get plenty of exercise.

Face to face education provides more social development even at a distance. Cohort grouping during some activities will allow some interaction on projects and small group activities.

Our schools are part of the infrastructure of churches and community. They provide a place for quality learning while parents need to be at work and students can be at school. We believe that our safety standards will help to keep everyone healthy. We are encouraging parents to continue their children's limited interaction outside the home and monitoring their own and their children's health so they will not send any sick children to school.



If there should be a problem with COVID-19 in a school, the schools have set up protocols to deal with it, even if they need to shut down the school for a short period of time or longer if necessary. For children's sake, practice safe distancing and hygiene to keep you and your churches healthy.

Opening our schools is an opportunity to provide children with the best education possible.



¹CDC COVID Data Tracker available at <https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>. Accessed on July 21, 2020

²<https://www.kidsdata.org/blog/?p=9348>

³<https://healthier.stanfordchildrens.org/en/learning-in-the-age-of-covid-19-how-to-help-kids-with-distance-learning/>

⁴<https://www.kidsdata.org/blog/?p=9348>



Pastors Meet at Gem State Academy

Eve Rusk, Director of Communications, Idaho Conference

Idaho Conference pastors met on the campus of Gem State Adventist Academy for fall meetings. They have been meeting on Zoom since the beginning of the lockdowns in both Idaho and Oregon. Safety protocols for the pandemic were in use as they met in person in the GSAA church for a day and a half. Each morning, one of the student worship teams led the pastors in worship songs. Steve Echlemeier, new pastor for the Eagle and Middleton churches, shared a devotional on the small things and how they impacted his life and journey into ministry. Pastors heard from Andre Wang, North Pacific Union Conference general counsel and Public Affairs/Religious Liberty director on the legal landscape for churches in 2020. Pastors had many questions on how to safely navigate worship and outreach during the pandemic. Wang shared his 10 guidelines for social media for churches.

Various ministries and departments gave reports. Brian Yeager, general manager and president of Barefoot Media Ministries (KTSY, Project 88.7, KTFY) reported that their recent fundraiser event was a huge blessing. They achieved 120% of their goal. He also shared a new awareness tool – yard signs. Pastors were invited to take signs: I Choose Hope, with the various stations information and place them in their yards or at the church. In a year with a lot of uncertainty and turmoil, people can find hope in the music and messages on the radio stations.

After a delicious lunch in the cafeteria (or outside), John Soulé, principal of Gem State Adventist Academy, took the pastors on a tour of the academy. They were treated to a selection by SoundWave, the advanced bell choir, and visited the Student Residence, the classrooms upstairs and the gymnasium.

Elder Marvin Moore, editor of Signs of the Times, presented information on the coming final crisis on the first day, showing how current world events and trends in politics and religion are fulfilling prophecy. He followed up the next morning with how pastors can be prepared for the final crisis and how to help their church members be prepared as well.

Chris Evenson, Nampa church pastor, provided the devotional on the last day, sharing how God's love is a priceless treasure and that He puts that treasure in jars of clay, in each one of us. The morning ended with prayers of dedication for two pastors who are leaving at the end of October. Troy Haagenson, pastor of the Cloverdale Church in Boise, is staying in the area and transitioning to work with a startup company which is working on an app for discipleship. Howard Williams, pastor of the Payette/Weiser/New Plymouth district, is retiring at the end of the month.

Pastors will continue to meet monthly through the end of the year by Zoom video conference and look forward to meeting in person again at Camp Ida-Haven in early January 2021.





Elder's Retreat

Eve Rusk, Director of Communications, Idaho Conference

In the midst of a pandemic, elders from several Idaho Conference churches made their way to Camp Ida-Haven in November for the bi-annual Elders Retreat. Safety protocols including required face coverings, physically-distanced seating and hand sanitizer stations in convenient locations provided a safe environment. Pastor Dan Serns, English Evangelism director for the Texas Conference, shared tools for evangelism with the elders. Many took copious notes and have already shared their knowledge and enthusiasm with their churches!



evangelism” by leaving them on benches in public transportation, parks and other sites. He said that evangelism is something anyone can do when we allow God to use us. The whole weekend was about learning how to change a church culture from evangelism being an event to developing a culture of evangelism in a church and an evangelism lifestyle for each member.

David Prest, Jr., Idaho Conference president and Don Klinger, assistant to the president, shared how the conference's vision for helping our churches have exponential growth in discipleship, spirituality and baptisms. An upcoming series with Bill

McClendon, Vice President for Administration at the North Pacific Union Conference, begins on February 5, 2021 at both the Caldwell and Nampa churches, with

While the group of elders was smaller because of the coronavirus, the engagement and enthusiasm for learning how to share the gospel and Jesus' love was anything but small. Elders from churches large and small had the opportunity to share what their churches are doing to impact their communities. Pastor Serns told stories to illustrate he and his churches used the various tools to bring people to Jesus and the Seventh-day Adventist church.



the meeting at the Nampa Church live-streamed for any of our churches to show. Prest is hoping that all of our churches will take advantage of this evangelism opportunity. Plans will also include how to have the series even if there was another lockdown due to the spread of the coronavirus.

The tools he shared included using GLOW literature, from sharing it specifically with a person to doing “chicken



Prest also shared that our Hispanic churches are also making plans to have a series of meetings in 2021. In times of uncertainty, people are looking for hope and peace. 2020 has been a tough year all around and it has been a year of opportunity. Churches have gone online and many people who wouldn't or haven't come to a church have found fellowship and God's love online.

Karen Pearson, Idaho Conference Prayer Ministries coordinator, asked the elders to work on having prayer ministry leaders in each of their churches. She reminded them that all of our plans need to be started with prayer. God's power and presence is needed in everything we as a church do to reach our communities. Eve

Rusk, Idaho Conference Communications director, showed the elders that communication is a ministry. She reminded elders that recording and remembering how God has worked in the past serves a purpose of reminding us that He is with us and will empower us. It also serves as inspiration for other churches, providing ideas for ministry that a church can adopt or adapt for their own situation.

While the coronavirus has changed some of the ways we can interact with our communities, Pastor Serns showed that we can still reach people for Jesus. In the final session, Serns shared the rest of the tools, emphasizing that one doesn't need to use all the tools at once. Pick one or two that will work for you, utilizing your spiritual gifts and skills to share Jesus' love.



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and peace offerings.

Here we see the distinction the Bible makes between tithes and offerings. Tithes are the basic test of our commitment to Jesus. The tithe belongs to Him and we demonstrate our faith and trust in Him when we simply return it to Him and allow Him, through His chosen ministers, choose how to use what is His. Free-will offerings, on the other hand, show how much we love God. We are free to give as much or as little as we choose and we may give to a variety of purposes as we feel God directing us.

We read in Proverbs 3:9-10, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine:" Here, as in other places, the Bible promises a special blessing to those who return tithes and offerings to God. I can testify that God has been faithful to me as I have been faithful to Him. I invite you to test God in this area.



Happy Fall Friends!
May this season bring many blessings to you all.