



THE PRESIDENTIAL VISION – ONE YEAR LATER **ELDER D.C. EDMOND** **REVIEW OF 2009-2010**

ALMOST EXACTLY 13 MONTHS AGO, WE STARTED DOWN A ROAD TOGETHER. WE SET A DIRECTION THAT WE SAID WOULD GOVERN THE THINGS THAT WE WOULD RECOMMEND BE DONE RELATIVE TO MINISTRY IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

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A WATCHWORD FOR MY OFFICE IS INTENTIONALLY. WE BELIEVE THAT SUCCESS IS RARELY ACCIDENTAL; IT IS ALMOST ALWAYS INTENTIONAL. WE BELIEVE THAT WE NEED TO ASK GOD TO HELP US TO FORMULATE A PLAN, ASK GOD TO HELP US WORK OUR PLAN, ASK GOD TO HELP US TO ACCURATELY EVALUATE OUR PLAN AND THEN WE ASK GOD TO HELP US TO PLAN AGAIN.

THE 7 E'S PHILOSOPHY

- 1. EVANGELIZING OUR CONFERENCE**
- 2. EQUIPPING OUR PASTOR**
- 3. EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN**
- 4. ENGAGING OUR YOUNG ADULTS**
- 5. ENUNCIATING OUR EXPECTATIONS**
- 6. EVALUATING OUR RESULTS**
- 7. ENTREATING OUR GOD**

SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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The Presidential Vision-One Year Later

Thank you for joining us on this historic occasion-the first Presidential Webinar, and we believe, one of the first Webinars in the history of our conference.

I would like to begin by offering a special thank you to our Communications Director, **Elder Michael Harpe**, for all of his work in setting this up. Additionally, I want to thank our Treasurer, Philip G. Palmer, for his involvement in the setting up of this Webinar as well.

Treasurer Palmer and I have been together in Administration in the South Central Conference during the most challenging time in the history of this great conference. Only a very few people are aware of the stands that he took to help our conference through those challenging days. I am very grateful that he was there.

Lastly, I am grateful to our Youth Director, **Elder Vandeon Griffin**, who brought this idea to me as a way of me being connected to and accountable to the people of this very special conference.

Almost exactly 13 months ago, we started down a road together. We set a direction that we said would govern the things that we would recommend be done relative to ministry in the South Central Conference.

We sent out a 35 page document, a document that took 2-3 months to write and edit. It was based on our core values-we called them, "**The E's**:"

- 1. Evangelizing Our Conference***
- 2. Equipping Our Workers***
- 3. Educating Our Children***
- 4. Engaging Our Young Adults***
- 5. Enunciating Our Expectations***
- 6. Evaluating Our Results***
- 7. Entreating Our God***

At the end of the process of putting together the 35-page document that outlined how we intended, by the help of the Lord, to go in a specific direction that was undergirded by those core values, one of the first persons who read the Presidential Vision (which is on the Conference Website), asked me if I were really serious about what we said-whether, ultimately, it was all "just talk".

After I got over being annoyed that someone would actually think that I took **2-3 MONTHS OF MY LIFE, TO WRITE (and , re-write, and re-write: I had four editors) 5-PAGES, WITHOUT BEING VERY, VERY SERIOUS**, I realized the way to *ensure* that I would *remain* serious was to hold myself publicly accountable. To say to you the people, to which I

am ultimately accountable: This is what we said by the grace of God we would do, with your support and prayers. Here is what has actually been done. Here is the difference between what we said we would do and what actually got done.

We are going to do that in two places: Here, in the first ever Presidential Webinar, and then again on *Sunday, January 30, 2011* in Birmingham, Alabama at the close of Church Officers Convention, in what is called *The State of the Conference*.

But for now, let's get started.

INTENTIONALITY

A watchword for my office is *Intentionally*. We believe that success is rarely accidental; it is almost always intentional. We believe that we need to ask God to help us to formulate a plan, ask God to help us work our plan, ask God to help us to accurately evaluate our plan and then we ask God to help us to plan again.

We said we intended to ask God to help us to be *intentional* even about starting and ending meetings on time. We put a clock in the place in the conference office where we have staff worship and staff meetings and said "Meetings will start on time and end on time", and by the grace of God, in the main, that has occurred.

We said that during Sabbath Services at conference events, that while we would not, in *any* way, rush the Spirit of the living God, that we desperately crave His presence, that we would not tax the patience of the saints with long announcements of things that were already printed, that we would do away with multiple people giving multiple greetings.

Early on, we needed to say goodbye to our former President and First Lady, Elder and Dr. Browne—and I shall *never* forget what they meant to this conference and to me—and to introduce our new Conference Executive Secretary, Elder Auldwin Humphrey, and his wife—and this is a good time to thank him for the blessing that he has been since he joined our team.

But by Camp Meeting that process was complete and church service ended at **12:50 p.m.**, on the first Sabbath of Camp Meeting.

HERE IS OUR REPORT TO YOU ON THE 7 E'S:

So that we can maximize your time, from this point forward, we shall simply summarize the things that we said we would ask God—and you—to help us to do. We shall list them under three headings:

- 1. THINGS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN DONE, BY THE GRACE OF GOD**
- 2. THINGS THAT ARE PENDING, I.E., THINGS THAT ARE SCHEDULED TO BE DONE BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF THE YEAR.**
- 3. THINGS THAT WE THOUGHT WOULD BE DONE BY NOW, BUT ARE UNDONE**

1. EVANGELIZING OUR CONFERENCE

THE PLAN: To get away from “event evangelism, to be *intentional* about how and where we used our limited evangelism dollars.

DONE:

Every Church, Every Year- The thinking was that, just as every member is important and needed in some kind of ministry, every church was important. We *intentionally* scheduled someone from the conference office to visit every church in *Mississippi, Kentucky* and *Florida*.

Targeted Areas for Evangelism:

We realized that we could not try to fund every Pastor and every layperson who desired to run an evangelistic campaign; not without dividing the available dollars we had among so many people that by trying to *fund* everyone, we would wind up *underfunding* everyone.

This year, we targeted the urban areas of our conference, and this year, 80% of our appropriations were for at least \$10,000, as opposed to **2009** when 80% of our appropriations were for less than \$10,000.

We are happy to report that we have approximately 25% more baptisms through the first three quarters of this year than this time last year.

Requirement That Every Pastor Requesting An Evangelism Appropriation Present Administration With A Written Evangelistic Plan:

Our decisions on funding were based on the Pastor's year-long evangelistic plan. We are now asking for an evaluation of that plan.

UNDONE OR DONE AT A LOWER LEVEL THAN I WOULD LIKE:

Every member involved in some kind of ministry- I am unsure how we would track that, but I have not emphasized that as I should.

*Training of the laity for soul-winning-*Our conference evangelistic team provided some training: I need to promote it better and provide more opportunities for said training.

More intentionality relative to attracting, ministering to and following up on visitors to our churches. I am not where I want to be on that.

2. EQUIPPING OUR WORKERS

THE PLAN: To be more *intentional* about the training of our workers; specifically, our Pastors.

DONE: *To use the Winter Pastor's Meeting as a "Best Practices" Meeting, where Pastors from inside and outside the conference shared what is working for them in evangelism, church growth, administration, etc.* Additionally, the Pastors were divided into three groups and had a roundtable discussion where each Pastor brought an idea that had worked for him. The ideas from all three groups were written down and sent to all of the Pastors.

Additionally, the Administration and the Ministerial Director met with each of our unordained Pastors individually, to discuss their progress and their challenges.

Each member of the secretarial staff was sent/is being sent to a workshop or seminar of their choice for continuing education, at conference expense.

We have contracted a corporate trainer to train the people in the conference office relative to customer service.

To equip our Pastors to better handle conflict and diversity. This was done by:

A. Providing a seminar on conflict resolution

B. Diversifying the staff by the hiring of the first two female Pastors

Established that the principles of Matthew 18 would govern the Administration approach to member/worker conflict, i.e., the member must go to the worker before the member calls the conference office.

PENDING: *Expanding our Post-Graduate degree program*

Establishing a specific and targeted continuing education program for our Pastors (program due on December 31, 2010)

Additionally diversifying our staff by assigning the Latino Ministries Coordinator as a full-time position and the hiring of the first Caucasian Pastor. We hope to do this in 3-years - pending the ability of the budget to do so.

3. EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN

THE PLAN: To develop specific, *intentional* plans to address the challenges facing our church schools

To address our declining enrollment: Our enrollment had declined for five straight years; the goal was to be no less than even in the *2010-2011* school year. Our enrollment is up approximately 7% this year.

For each school to develop a 5-year plan. We'll put this one hesitantly in the "win" column: having a 5-year plan (which most of schools now have) and implementing them, are 2 different things.

Additional SAC accredited school. We had one; now we have two.

To set in motion having an Adventist Edge School. Those are the "elite" schools in the Southern Union, as measured by some very specific, objective, criteria. The target for South Central to have an "Edge" school is *2011-2012*. Things have been set in motion to reach that objective.

To provide tuition assistance for our parents by setting up a 3-Way Scholarship Program similar to Oakwood University, where the conference, the local church and the local school provide scholarships. 100 such scholarships were provided this year.

PENDING: *Message Magazine subscriptions to every non-Adventist parent with a child in our schools.* Monies have appropriated; names being collected.

UNDONE: *Minimum educational standards for our schools.* The idea was to share with each school: Here are the minimum standards that we expect for a school to remain a South Central school. I have not been as clear in communicating that as I should.

Cost per pupil. We need to advise each school as to average amount per pupil that it takes to provide each child with a quality education. That has not been done.

Referral Program. We recommended setting up a referral program, where parents would receive tuition credit for referring new students. Some schools have that; some don't.

4. ENGAGING OUR YOUNG ADULTS

THE PLAN: To be more *intentional* relative to getting our young adults involved and engaged in ministry.

DONE:

Using more technology to reach them where they are. This Webinar is a part of that. Also, on *December 12*, we shall hold our Executive Committee on-line. We hope to be able to have the same meeting with our unordained Pastors in person last year on-line this year.

We have updated the conference website.

We held our first Young Adult Town Hall Meeting at Camp Meeting.

We have set up a South Central Conference Young Adult Page on Facebook. I post on that page every 1-2 weeks.

UNDONE: We missed a major opportunity to appoint a young adult as part of our delegation as a delegate from the Southern Union. That was *entirely* on me; by the help of the Lord, that will not happen again. I also have to do a better job of reinforcing the idea of inclusion of young adults on the local church decision making level.

We did add a young adult to the Conference Executive Committee when we had an opening.

Some kind of "Peace Corp-like" service program that allows for the same kind of service that young people do overseas to be done in the South Central Conference. We had one such person this summer, but that is not nearly enough.

5. ENUNCIATING OUR EXPECTATIONS

THE PLAN: To be *intentional* relative to sharing with the workers of the South Central Conference what is expected of them, professionally and personally

DONE:

The Pastors were given a document at the Winter Pastor's Meeting that had been developed with their input outlining the minimum expectations of Pastors in the South Central Conference.

Additionally, after Camp Meeting the Pastors were sent a document outlining Administration's expectations relative to sexual conduct and the likelihood of termination if said expectations were not heeded.

Lastly, the Executive Committee voted, and all employees received, a tithe protocol that would be followed in the event of the unfaithfulness of a worker in tithe and offering. We believe that the ministry is a high calling and a privilege and high standards must be maintained, however painful it is to do so. No one should be unclear relative to Administration's commitment to maintaining those standards in all cases.

Yearly individual meetings with each member of the conference office staff.

PENDING:

Job descriptions for each worker in the conference office (due December 31, 2010)

UNDONE:

Minimum standards for each church. We thought it would be good if each church was encouraged to have a minimum number of ministries. We have not done that yet.

6. EVALUATING OUR RESULTS

THE PLAN: To be *intentional* about measuring where we actually are with where we planned to be

DONE:

Presidential Webinar evaluating where we are relative to the Presidential Vision that was given last year.

State of the Conference document given at each of the Church Officers' Conventions.

Each Pastor who was given an evangelistic appropriation has been asked to evaluate, in writing, the results of his 2010 plan by mid-January, 2011.

Every Principal and teacher evaluated this school year.

Evaluation of Office Staff

Evaluation of Conference President by the Pastors on December 5.

7. ENTREATING OUR GOD

THE PLAN: To be as *intentional* as possible about seeking the Lord God of Israel

DONE:

The appointment of a full-time Conference Prayer Coordinator, one of the few such persons in the North American Division

Staff Worship available to all workers

Institution of a "First Tuesday" Conference-wide Day of Fasting and Prayer

UNDONE:

Sufficient emphasis on the conference reading assignment

Sufficient emphasis on personal devotion and prayer. Both of these are my responsibility.

CONCLUSION: We thank the Lord for bringing us this far on our way". This time last year, we were facing a 43 million dollar lawsuit.

But God delivered us-and, no one should ever doubt that it was God-those of us who were involved *saw* God move and confuse and defeat the enemy.

We still have challenges; we have schools to build in Huntsville, Alabama and in Jackson, Mississippi. We still operate with a narrow financial margin in a time of the greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Our challenges are great, but our God is greater. And if *anyone* should know, *we in this* conference should know, that we have nothing to fear for the future except we forget God's leading in our past.

Thank you for your time tonight. Thank you for your support and prayers. I am very thankful for my wife of 32 years, the First Lady of our conference, **Mrs. Jill Edmond**, for all the sacrifices she makes for me to serve in this capacity.

Please do not allow a single day to pass without praying for Mrs. Edmond and for me.

May God bless each of you; and may God continue to bless the South Central Conference.