

Yesterday

Today

Tomorrow



Robert L. Booker, Editor



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A Closer Look at the Ordinands

A one-on-one interview with the 2009 AEC ordination candidates

By George Johnson Jr., AEC field reporter

The online version of the 2008 Encyclopedia Britannica says that “in Christian churches, ordination is a rite for the dedication and commissioning of ministers. The essential ceremony consists of the laying of hands of the ordaining minister upon the head of the one being ordained, with prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and of grace required for the carrying out of the ministry. The service also usually includes a public examination of the candidate and a sermon or charge concerning the responsibilities of the ministry.”

The 2008-2009 North American Division Working Policy states that “a licensed minister is ordinarily ordained after a period of about four years of field experience. This spiritual rite of ordination constitutes the official confirmation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of his divine call to the ministry as a life commitment, and is his endorsement to serve as a minister in any part of the world.”

Spirit of Prophecy gives great counsel in reference to ordination. Consider the following passages:

“Ministers should be examined especially to see if they have an intelligent understanding of the truth for this time, so that they can give a connected discourse upon the prophecies or upon practical subjects. If they cannot clearly present Bible subjects, they need to be hearers and learners still. In order to be teachers of Bible truth, they should earnestly and prayerfully search the Scriptures, and become conversant with them. All these things should be carefully and prayerfully considered before men are sent into the field of labor.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 439.

“The conversion of sinners and their sanctification through the truth is the strongest proof a minister can have that God has called him to the ministry. The evidence of his apostleship is written upon the hearts of those converted, and is witnessed to by their renewed lives. . . . A minister is greatly strengthened by these seals of his ministry.”—*Ibid*, p. 328.

Listed below is the procedure for ordination as outline by the North American’s Division’s Working Policy:

1. The administration concerned shall arrange for a preliminary examination of the prospective candidate and his ministry.
2. The matter of ordination is then taken under careful consideration by the local conference committee for an individual serving the conference or one of its institutions, and by the union committee for an individual serving the union or one of its institutions.
3. After favorable consideration the local conference committee will submit the name of the candidate with its findings and convictions to the union for counsel and approval.
4. The division and its institutional boards will submit names recommended for ordination to the division committee. The General Conference and its institutional boards will submit names to the General Conference Executive Committee.

Earlier today, the ordinands were asked three personal questions pertaining to their ministry. The following one-on-one interview with each one shows their commitment to ministry in the Allegheny East Conference territory.



David DeFoe

Pastor

Emmanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church – Alexandria, VA

Hadley Community Seventh-day Adventist Church – Washington, DC

What do you feel is your niche in pastoral ministry?

I have a desire to take care of those that the Lord has given me especially the sick, the shut-in, the elderly, the young, the often times the ignored demographics of the church – that’s really a passion of mine. The other calling I feel I have is helping nurture families and couples preparing to get married and helping them find better ways to better deal with circumstances and situations that they are encountering as they prepare for marriage. I also see counseling as a unique call to my ministry, helping those who might be dealing with certain psychological issues.

What is your dream/vision for your local church?

My dream for Emmanuel is to be a place where they can foster community and relationships among themselves and to expand spiritually and financially. I want to see them grow and be the church God has called them to be.

My dream for Hadley is to see them have their own worship center – a place that they call their own. The members there are so faithful and dedicated to God. I’d also like us to make some positive inroads in that Southwest/Southeast DC community which definitely has a need. The community is crying out for help over there.

Why do you feel that you were called into the Seventh-day Adventist Church pastoral ministry?

God has always blessed me with a gift of helping people – it’s my spiritual gift. I’ve developed over the years a more compassionate heart. I know that I was called because that even from a young age that this is something I should have been doing. I was determined in college definitely not to do it until the point that I had stopped praying for about three or four years because it was constantly in my mind that this is what God had wanted me to do. But when I decided to go into the seminary there was such a peace that came over me and that peace has never left me. I know that this is what God called me to do.



Moses E. Eli

Associate Pastor

Emmanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church – Aston, MD

What do you feel is your niche in pastoral ministry?

One specialized area that I am involved in is drama ministry. I am doing Christian plays that expound on the great controversy theme between Christ and Satan. I think it’s a very effective and unique tool that has had a tremendous impact reaching all ages - the young and old.

What is your dream/vision for your local church?

I would love for Emmanuel to be a central hub within the community just like how Christ lived His ministry. It was very relational to the community - primarily the unchurched. I’d like it to be a central hub where people can feel comfortable to come on in no matter the age, race, background or culture and be received and accepted so they can receive the gospel invitation in a transparent light. Authenticity is something that I strongly advise – to be authentically Christian like Christ. It’s not about techniques and styles. The more that we are like Christ, the more people will be drawn to us.

Why do you feel that you were called into the Seventh-day Adventist Church pastoral ministry?

I believe God choose me for a reason that I don’t understand. I am not worthy and I come to grips with that every day. I am not worthy but I am grateful. He has given all of us gifts and the only way I could use all of my gifts was through ministry. There wasn’t a “lightening flash and thunder roar” scenario. There was a quiet conviction in regards to this is what He wanted me to do. If I were God would I choose me? No. That is the honest truth. But I am grateful and it keeps me on my knees and keeps humble. All I can say is Lord, bless Your name.



Gregory Nelson
Associate Pastor
Capitol Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church – Washington, DC

What do you feel is your niche in pastoral ministry?

Youth ministry and evangelism preaching. I have for the last 10 years been a youth pastor. The Lord has shown me that I have a gift in working with the young people, communicating with them, getting on their level and being able to share with them things that they may hear from another adult but it doesn't seem to resonate the same way. Sometimes a person who is a little closer in their age is able to communicate and connect with them a little better.

I also have a love of preaching the gospel. The Lord has blessed in terms of evangelism and soul winning.

What is your dream/vision for your local church?

The Capitol Hill Church is uniquely situated in terms of its location. My dream is that we will – even as we are a Black church – have a more diverse population. I believe that there are so many individuals in that area – they are the powerbrokers and movers and shakers. We need to connect with them. We need to make a major impact in the area where we are and be a major voice in the political landscape of the greater Washington area. We are a few inches from power and authority. It behooves to really have an impact in what goes on not only in the local government but we can have an impact in the national and international levels.

Why do you feel that you were called into the Seventh-day Adventist Church pastoral ministry?

Initially I didn't know why. Now, in retrospect – after being involved in ministry for ten years, I know I've been called into ministry for my own salvation. God has used ministry to work in and out of me those things that are going to be necessary for my own salvation. I know that I've been called to preach the gospel and to win souls but that's God's way of keeping me nearer to Him. I know I can't do it on my own and if left to my own devices, I know I'm hell bound. I know that this is His vehicle to bring about my salvation and as a bonus there are many others who are going to come to the Lord as well.



Noah Lafayette Washington
Pastor
Bladensburg Seventh-day Adventist Church – Bladensburg, MD

What do you feel is your niche in pastoral ministry?

I have a unique calling in this ministry to deal with young adults particularly in the ages of 19-35 that I feel that they are often times the ones who are left out age group of the church. A lot of the emotional hurts that GenXrs have received its very hard for them to relate to God and to Church. I feel that different initiatives need to be done for that age group to connect them back to God and back to the church.

What is your dream/vision for your local church?

One of our goals right now is to substantiate ourselves in our community. A church is only as strong as its presence in the community that it's in. We are really trying to have a more intentional outreach to our community. Outreach breeds inreach. If we can reach out to our community it will help what is going on inside. My dream for ministry is to be a center for anything that the community desires and if we cannot provide it we can provide resources to show them where they can get it. I want us to be a haven for the community to provide emotional, spiritual, mental and even social revitalization.

Why do you feel that you were called into the Seventh-day Adventist Church pastoral ministry?

I was probably called into the ministry so the Lord could save me. I ask myself this question every day. But sometimes you question yourself to why you continue in ministry based on frustrations. Frustrations in ministry are based largely on a result of spiritual warfare. Once you know that God has called you to ministry, the enemy places attacks on the minister and his family and the church. It's at these times that you realize that you will have peace of mind because you are being obedient to the Lord in continuing in ministry.

God's Instrument

*I see the hands that hold God's word
And fold in prayer to seek His will.*

*I see the feet that walk the path
And offers of praise as from lofty hill.*

*I see the hands that serve Him well,
The ears that seek to hear His call,
The mouth that speaks truth and wisdom,
The busy feet that carry the message to all.*

*I see the heart that was pricked and entered
When God's man answered the gospel call
And yielded His life as a humble servant,
A man who is willing, as was Apostle Paul.*

*I see all of this as he stands in the pulpit,
An instrument through which God speaks
The words of wisdom, of love and peace,
To lead and guide all those whom God seeks.*

by Judy Crowe

