



PARAGRAPHS FOR PARTNERS

2023 – Issue #2



From the Executive Minister
Rev. Dr. James Kelsey

FREEDOM AND ROGER WILLIAMS

Baptists have a rich convictional history, including a great deal more than congregational church governance, baptism upon profession of faith, and a commitment to the centrality of Scripture in life and faith.

Freedom is one of the core values of our Baptist identity. It is encoded in our DNA.

Like all traits, however, freedom has its limits. No characteristic is to cancel all others. Freedom is often in tension with other traits, and we find our place on a continuum.

We owe our freedom gene to Roger Williams, our Baptist forbearer in America. He founded Rhode Island as a refuge of freedom, both religious and otherwise. It was to be an escape from the rigorous religious and behavioral conformity demanded in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Williams simply could not conform. John M. Barry writes:

{Williams} abhorred any power which would force conformity, and he championed a new kind of individualism almost by default...William's ideas nonetheless became quintessentially American. So did Winthrop's [the governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony that Williams had fled]. Williams saw the individual standing alone with God, in glorious isolation, and so independent of the state as to be almost outside it. Winthrop saw a state committed to Christian ideals, demanding conformity and imposing community standards upon individuals. Between William's view on one side and those of Winthrop on the other was a tension, and that very tension was also quintessentially American. It was in that tension that the American soul was being created (*Roger Williams and the Creation of the American Soul—Church, State, and the Birth of Liberty*, p. 346.)

William's commitment to freedom was put to the test by his next door neighbor, Joshua Verin. In this case, Williams moderated his commitment to freedom for the sake of another equally compelling value: justice.

Verin moved from Salem, Massachusetts seeking some space to breathe. He moved in right next door to Williams. He was initially given a warm welcome as he complained about the oppressive atmosphere in Salem.

Before long it became clear that Verin was a disagreeable man and beat his wife. Verin maintained that his wife, Ann, spent too much time at church and was getting what she deserved from his hand. The Rhode Islanders tried to convince Verin that he was imposing on Ann's conscience by trying to control her church participation. Verin countered that it was God's will that wives obey their husbands. He was simply helping his wife live a life pleasing to God.

The controversy finally came to a town vote, and Verin lost. He packed up and moved back to Salem. He decided in Salem he had more freedom to live out his convictions than in Rhode Island.

Richard Mouw points out that Williams started out with a strict dichotomy between public behavior and private religious convictions. Williams did not want governments interfering in matters that should be decided by individual conscience. Mouw writes: "And he [Williams] was inclined to subsume all religious beliefs under the category of 'the private.'" Williams embraced some flexibility by accepting that the Verin's abuse of Ann, grounded in Verin's religious convictions, was not a purely "private" affair. Williams "was more concerned about Ann Verin's pain than about Joshua Verin's conscience, and he was willing to adjust his principles to fit the situation (Mouw, *Uncommon Decency—Christian Civility in an Uncivil World*, pp. 176-177).

The pursuit of love and justice sometimes requires that we compromise one value for the sake of another. It means that we sometimes become flexible in our convictions as life confronts us with unanticipated situations.

Jesus responded to people with flexibility based upon who they were, where they had been, and what they had done. He told the rich young ruler, who was apparently leading a pious life, to sell all that he had, give the proceeds to the poor, and leave his life behind to follow Jesus (Luke 18:22). When Jesus was presented with a woman caught in adultery, he simply told her to stop it (John 8:1). Did the values of Jesus change? No, he saw both people through the lens of God's unconditional love that deals with people where they are and who they are.

Love requires some flexibility.

And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love (1 Cor. 13:13).

Jim Kelsey

CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS: **Rev. Carl Schultz**, Former Pastor, Ischua Union Ch (Allegheny-Cattaraugus Association) died 8/18/22



ABCNYS reminds member churches to pray for one another, especially in times of pastoral transition. If your congregation wishes to invite ABCNYS to provide support to your church's search committee needs, please contact Rev. Jerrod Huguenot, Associate Executive Minister, at 518/380-4510 or jhuguenot@abc-nys.org.



LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Christopher Davis to Interim, United United Ch of Auburn 2/1/23
Rachel McGuire to Pastor, FBC Penn Yan 2/1/23
Lee O'Brien from Busti Fed Ch Jamestown to Retirement 1/31/23
Phyllis Granger from FBC Geneva to Retirement 4/1/23
Andrew Morrison from Interim, Cornerstone Comm Ch Endicott 3/31/23
Richard Reed from Bliss BC to Retirement 3/26/23
Cedric Cooper from FBC Hornell 4/23/23
Warren Scott to Pastor, New Hope Institutional BC Tarrytown 4/2/23
Brian Wheeler to Pastor, Kenmore BC 4/16/23
Nate Watkins from FBC Walton 6/30/23
Mark Dorr, Burnt Hills BC, Ordained 3/18/23
Bonnie Seitz, Meridian BC, Certified Lay Pastor Recognition 3/20/23

DATES TO REMEMBER

May 7, 2023	-- Adirondack Association @ FBC Whitehall
May 16-18, 2023	-- NYS Ministers Council Retreat @ Stella Niagara
May 21-23, 2023	-- Spring Youth Retreat @ Pathfinder
May 29, 2023	-- ABCNYS Office Closed
June 23-25, 2023	-- ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit
July 4, 2023	-- ABCNYS Office Closed
September 4, 2023	-- ABCNYS Office Closed
September 24-26, 2023	-- NYS Ministers Council Retreat @ St. Margaret's Retreat Center
October 8, 2023	-- Adirondack Association @ FBC Jay
October 9, 2023	-- ABCNYS Office Closed
October 26-29, 2023	-- Community Missions of Niagara Frontier mission trip

Changes to New York Baptist Annual 2023

Page 11	Albany Chin Christian Church: Add phone: 414.553.1247
Page 12	Burnt Hills Baptist Church: New email: burnthillsbc@gmail.com
Page 13	Preston Hollow Baptist Church: Add: Pastor Reay Mahler, Pastor
Page 22	Madison Baptist Church: Add email: lasitts@twcny.rr.com
Page 28	Fowler Baptist Church: Change email: aadams.2013@yahoo.com, Delete web site



ABCNYS LAY STUDY PROGRAM FALL COURSES 2023

Check out this link: <https://www.abc-nys.org/lc-courses.html>

BASIC CHRISTIAN BELIEFS – STARTING DATE TBD

When: Evenings 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. – Online via Zoom.

Instructor: Rev. Greg Staples, pastorgreg@cliftonparkcenterbaptist.org

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION – STARTING SEPTEMBER 6, 2023

When: Wednesday evenings 7:00 – 9:00 pm. – Online via Zoom.

Instructor: Rev. Steve Reynolds, consultingpastor@gmail.com

To Register: Complete registration form and postal mail with payment (payable to ABCNYS) to ABCNYS, 3218 James St., Syracuse NY 13206. You can also pay online at <https://www.abc-nys.org/lay-study-program.html>.

Fees: The tuition is \$110. For family members living in the same house, the course fee is \$110 for the first person and \$60 for each subsequent person. Students may audit a course, without credit, for \$60. The cost of the textbooks for each course is in addition to the tuition.

Questions: Rev. Leon Oaks-Lee (315.637.0023, leon.oakslee@gmail.com)



NEW YORK STATE MINISTERS COUNCIL
MINISTERS RETREAT
SEPTEMBER 24-26, 2023
ST. MARGARET'S ECUMENICAL
& RETREAT CENTER
47 Jordan. Road
New Hartford, NY 13413
Ph. 315-724-2324



**The Church in Global Society:
*Becoming the Beloved Community***

We are privileged to welcome this year's speaker: The Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, President of Sojourners, author of: *A More Perfect Union: A New Vision for Building the Beloved Community*.

Rev. Taylor previously led the Faith Initiative at the World Bank Group, served as the Vice President in Charge of Advocacy at World Vision U.S. and was the senior political director at Sojourners. He has also served as the executive director of

Global Justice, an organization that educates and mobilizes students around global human rights and economic justice. He was selected for the 2009/2010 class of White House Fellows and served in the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs and Public Engagement.

Rev. Taylor is a graduate of Emory University, the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology. He serves on the Independent Sector Board, the Global Advisory Board of Tearfund UK, and is a member of the inaugural class of the Aspen Institute Civil Society Fellowship. Taylor is ordained in American Baptist Churches and the Progressive National Baptist Convention and serves in ministry at the Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, VA.

Retreat Begins:

Sunday Afternoon

Registration: 4:00 p.m.

Dinner: 6:00 p.m.

Retreat Ends:

Tuesday After Lunch

Lunch: 11:30

"Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." (Jeremiah 29:7)

MINISTERS COUNCIL RETREAT · SEPTEMBER 24–26, 2023 · REGISTRATION
Registrants of this retreat may be required to show proof of vaccination.

Name: _____ E:mail _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Any Special dietary needs? _____

CEUs? _____

Fees include all meals from Dinner on Sunday through Lunch on Tuesday.

	MEMBERS	NON-MEMBERS
PRIVATE ROOM <i>All rooms are private</i>	_____ \$250	_____ \$300
COMMUTER	_____ \$160	_____ \$200
MONDAY ONLY:	_____ \$ 80 (includes Lunch)	

EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT (before August 1st): DEDUCT \$30.

To Register please enclose \$60 deposit [by August 1st for discount] made payable to:
Ministers Council of NYS. Please Note: *Sept. Retreat 2023* in memo.

REGISTRATION BONUS: IF YOU ATTENDED THE MAY RETREAT AND THIS ONE WE WILL CREDIT \$50 OFF YOUR 2024 DUES!

Mail registration to: Cedric A Broughton, 706 N. George St., Rome, NY 13440
Registration Deadline: August 21, 2023

Grants to attend this retreat are available:

1. *Lynnette Martin Fund*: Contact Pat Ludwig (see below)
2. *Grant Application for D.Min. or Mission Trip*: Office of Financial Aid for Studies, ABHMS, 1-800-ABC-3USA - Ext. 2067 or email: Carolyn.Majeed@abhms.org
3. *Cultivating New Life*: Office of Financial Aid for Studies, (see above)

Questions? Contact: Rev. Patricia Ludwig, President ABC-NYS Ministers Council
Email: butterflypreacher@juno.com, Phone: 716-433-0976



Spring is here! It's time to plan to go to camp!!

CAMP VICK

Work has begun for the upgraded water system. Volunteers are moving mountains of gravel and dirt to fill in old tanks and prepare for the new system. We continue to work closely with project partners to design a system that will meet both our immediate water needs and budget. Volunteer efforts are crucial to ensure that when the design plans are finalized, our site will be prepared for Phase 2. This work saves us both time and money. A third of the funding has been provided, but we need more financial partners and many volunteers to make this happen.

We also need volunteers to help us prepare the family camp area, so we can meet our goal to actively promote and increase the usage of family camp at Camp Vick.

Do you know someone who might consider living in the house at Camp Vick and help with overseeing the property? This can be a summer position or year round. Please forward ideas to VPCCM.

PATHFINDER LODGE

Pathfinder's water system also needs significant repairs, but completion isn't required until fall and we can be fully operational in the summer. Some other outstanding needs include a new freezer for the kitchen and repair or replacement of our vehicles. Both the camp van and the golf cart are not currently operational.

It takes a good amount of work to clean the winter debris and prepare buildings and grounds. Work days will be held Saturdays in May and early June.

PROGRAMS (all are located at Pathfinder)

There will be 4 weeks of children's camp sessions this summer and several additional weeks available for group rental. The theme is "Love Ur Selfie; Made in God's Image", Psalm 139:13-18.

The good news is that most of the supervisory staff have been hired, including a Camp Director, Program Director, Aquatics Director and Kitchen Supervisor. We have 3 volunteer Health Directors and need one more (August 6-11). We are still looking for a cook, counselors, lifeguards and maintenance workers. Some of these positions can be filled by volunteers. Spread the word!

BE A PART!

What we need most to have a successful summer program is CAMPERS! All the registration information is on the website, vpccministries.org. Please encourage children & youth to come to camp! There is a Wilderness Adventure in the Adirondacks for young adults too!

We need YOU! I have noted several volunteer opportunities at both sites, and you may know of more. This is your invitation to join this ministry. Please don't wait to contact us at vpccministries@gmail.com for more information, to volunteer, or to offer financial support.



Thank you for your prayers and your participation in this ministry!!!

In Christ's service,

Marilyn Malone
VPCCM Interim CEO

The ABCNYS 2023 REGION OFFERING IS UNDERWAY!

You can access all the promotional materials (bulletin inserts and videos) on the Region website: www.abc-nys.org/region-offering.html. You can request the inserts and offering envelopes from the Region office (315.863.7148, office@abc-nys.org)

This year's Offering takes its focus text as 2 Corinthians 9:6-7: "Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (NIV).

Encourage your church and Association churches to participate in this year's offering. The more we receive in donations, the more benefit will be reaped in the form of services and support to our 269 congregations!

OCTOBER 26 to 29, 2023



Lending a Hand in the Name of Jesus



American Baptist Churches of New York State
working with
Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier



We will arrive Thursday evening for dinner and depart after breakfast on Sunday. If you cannot be present the whole time, we can work that out and your fee will be adjusted accordingly.

The cost will be \$295 per person, which includes everything except transportation.

Grants are available for youth through the ABCNYS Ministry and Mission Fund. Go to <https://www.abc-nys.org/grant-opportunities.html> and complete the Keith Griffin Youth Leadership Fund portion of the "ABCNYS Grant Application" found in the upper right hand corner of the page.

More here: <https://www.abc-nys.org/community-missions-niagara-falls-mission-trip.html>

This mission experience is made possible by your church's gifts to United Mission, the ABCNYS Region Offering, the America for Christ Offering, ABWM Love Gift, and direct gifts to the Region.

AMERICAN BAPTIST
MISSION SUPPORT

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES
OF NEW YORK STATE
THROUGH MARCH 2023 & 2022

	United Mission	Annual Offerings	Institutions, Specifics & Targeted	Total ABMS
Received 2023	43,894	49,261	42,905	136,060
Received 2022	55,859	53,812	42,617	152,288
\$ Ahead (Behind)	(11,965)	(4,551)	288	(16,228)
% Ahead (Behind)	(21.42)	(8.46)	0.68	(10.66)

A listing of church-by-church giving is currently unavailable.

GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Face Your Fears: 2

Pastors do have fears (see last issue), so let's get right to it. How may pastors redeem their fears. Here are a few ideas.

Lead yourself.

It's axiomatic. If you can't lead yourself, you can't lead others. Start with asking God to transform you. Read books, interview effective pastors, take classes on leadership, and lead your own church right now. Start where you are and notch up your skills a little every year. In five years, you'll be five years older no matter what you do. By investing in yourself today, you'll be better in five years.

Focus on your strengths.

You may improve your weaknesses, but you'll never be as good in your weakness as you are in your strengths. A pastor quipped,

"You may teach a dog to ride a horse, but he'll never win a rodeo." Solo pastors must work from weakness, but it's best to recognize your strengths, and stick with them as closely as reasonable.

Practice biblical humility.

Humility is not self-doubt or false modesty. It's being clear about your own strengths and weaknesses, while understanding that you need others to help you succeed. Do what you can to bless others. Don't fear gifted people in your church, draw them into ministry with you. Don't criticize pastors of larger churches, bless them remembering that you'll both stand before God to account for your own labors.

Pay the rent.

If you've ever played organized sports, you know that there are basics that form the foundation of all good play. The same is true in

pastoral ministry, the basics form a foundation for fruitful work. The basics of pastoral ministry remain the same: preach, teach, lead, care, oversee, love, etc. Doing the basics well provides courage to innovate and move toward a new future.

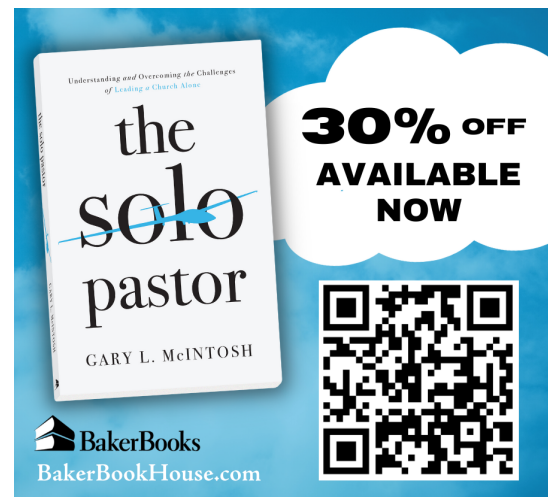
Maximize your leadership.

Churches need strong leadership. In fact, the decline of churches indicates they aren't being led very well. The problem is two-fold. On one side you have people who try to bridle the pastor to keep them under control. Driven by fear, some churches set up internal structures that stop the pastor from leading. On the other side, pastors fail to step forward to provide directive leadership. Driven by fear they recoil from leading as they might. Sadly, both add to the creation of anemic leadership. The Apostle Paul combats leadership fears by challenging leaders to lead with "diligence" (Romans 12:8).

Get in the back of the boat.

Right before Jesus calmed the storm (Mark 4:35-41), he was in the back of the boat—sleeping. It's a part of the story often missed, but Jesus wasn't preaching, teaching, or healing. He was sleeping! He needed the break from ministering to and with people. Like him, solo pastors need a break from ministry activities. It's necessary to take a break to remember why we're in ministry, whom we serve, and that we are valuable for who we are, not just what we do.

Adapted from Dr McIntosh's new book, *The Solo Pastor*. Order today!



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GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Diffuse Arguments: Part I

Pastors take it as a sign of failure if someone argues with them. But, it's not a failure. Indeed, it may be an indication of success.

It's best to recognize that a certain amount of disagreement, tension, and conflict is (or ought to be?) a normal part of a church.

If a church is more than a simple fellowship group, a natural level of debate and disagreement will exist. When a church has a sense of *mission*, that is, it's moving toward a big goal, there'll be disagreement about how to get there.

A church on mission must make choices about values, methods, priorities, expenditures, goals, techniques, and approaches. Debate on such issues is normal.

Disagreement clarifies what the church believes, and signals that something good is going on.

Arguments empower us to get out of our lethargy and force us to look at our deeply held beliefs. Moving forward implies change, and change means movement. Movement creates friction, friction causes heat, and heat results in conflict.

A church with no conflict or disagreement is a weak church, suffering from weak pastoral leadership.

A lack of some argument or conflict means a pastor is failing to inspire movement toward mission or vision. It might also point to a pastor or board who are repressing or avoiding conflict.

If disagreement is avoided or repressed, eventually the tension rises up and creates an explosion of unhealthy conflict.

Thus, if you have some level of disagreement in your church, it's a good sign. It likely means you're taking the church toward a fresh vision or in a new direction.

Fresh Perspective

It may sound counterintuitive, but a pastor and board must commit to seeing conflict and disagreement as good. As leaders model the idea that dissent is okay, it frees the church to acknowledge differences, and deal with them.

The most dangerous type of disagreements are the quiet ones. If a church doesn't allow open sharing of conflicting views, it causes people to bury their perspectives where they can smolder for weeks, months, or years before exploding.

It's far better to acknowledge differences of viewpoint, perspective, and opinion. Doing so opens up avenues for discussion, which at least leads to a realization that there are two ways (or more) of looking at a situation.

Taking initiative to encourage open sharing of disagreement is frightening. Pastors, perhaps most of them, would rather walk away from disagreements (more likely run away). But, it's part of leading and managing a church.

Practical Steps

What's a pastor to do? Here's some basic suggestions.

First, evaluate yourself to determine how you've responded to disagreements and arguments in the past? Do you tend to fight or flee?

Second, take a self-test to learn clues about your personal style in conflict management. What are your natural tendencies?

Three, do a thorough study of how disagreements were dealt with in the Bible? The disciples argued and fussed, but Jesus used them.

Four, read four or five books on this subject. A simple Internet search brings up multiple good ones.

(Continued next issue)



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GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Diffuse Arguments: Part 2

Church ministry is not all sugar and spice and everything nice. As someone put it: “Sheep bite!”

It happens to all pastors: a church person or family takes offense at your preaching, teaching, methods, perspectives, or something else about you or your church, and picks a fight.

When individuals or families pick a fight, what they’re saying is they feel neglected, fearful, or hurt. Often their feelings arise from past hurt. Remember: “Hurting people hurt people.”

When a person or family picks a fight, seek to diffuse the situation with the following steps:

First, Thank Them.

Doing so will surprise them, perhaps even confuse them. Try to remember the attack is not personal (although it occasionally is personal). Breathe deeply and thank them for having the

courage to talk to you about the issue. It’s difficult, but stay as cool as possible.

Second, Ask them.

You can’t ignore their hostility. Doing so sends a message that you don’t care about the issue. Practice these words and let them be the first words out of your mouth: “My, that’s unfortunate. Tell me more.” Or, “I’m so sorry to hear about this. Tell me more.” Or, “Wow! I’m surprised to hear about this. Tell me more.” Then listen. Really listen to what they say. Don’t interrupt, or debate, or deny. Just listen to what they say.

Third, Repeat Them.

Start your part of the conversation with the words, “Let me see if I understand you completely.” Then restate their argument or concern. This accomplishes three things. First, it let’s them know you are listening. Second, it gives them a chance to calm down. Third, it lets them know you are taking their concerns seriously.

Fourth, Agree with Them.

Even if you think their entire concern or argument is nonsense, find at least one thing with which you can agree. For example, say, “I agree the youth meeting shouldn’t have gone so late,” Or, “I see your point about” By conceding a point or two at the beginning, the person or family knows you are not defensive and desire to solve the problem.

Fifth, Rebut Them.

Build off your agreement with the words, “Now, about your other concerns” For example, “**I agree** the youth meeting went too long. **Now, about your concern** that the youth pastor is incompetent, I can’t agree with that. I’ve found him/her to be very competent.”

Tone Down Emotions

Always work to tone down the emotions.

One of the best ways to do so is to use “I” statements rather than

“You” statements. It’s wise to begin any response with the word “I” and not “You.” For example, say, “I sense you’re upset,” rather than, “You are upset.” Or, “I don’t think that’s quite right,” rather than “You are wrong.”

If the person is still upset after working through the five steps, ask “What would you like for me to do?” Answer with one of these options:

- (1) Okay, that sounds reasonable. Then follow through to do whatever you agreed on.
- (2) I’ll consider it. Then actually give it some thought, make a decision, and get back to the person within one week.
- (3) You’ll need to talk to (person) about that issue.
- (4) I can’t do that. Be nice, but direct. Don’t leave any expectation that you agree with the person.

Put this process to use this week.



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