

American Baptist Churches of New York State
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PARAGRAPHS FOR PARTNERS

2020 – Issue #2



From the Executive Minister
Rev. Dr. James Kelsey

Dear ABCNYS Partners in Ministry:

On behalf of Executive Minister Dr. James Kelsey, I bring you greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I thought I would start with some familiar and normal, as we have found both in short supply these last few weeks. Our churches have been stretched in new ways, adapting with little warning to “social distancing” needs to help “flatten the curve” of the COVID19 virus.

There is much heartache and loss due to COVID19 around our nation and world. I pray for our own churches as I have heard reports of congregants who have tested positive or lost a loved one. Our pastors are working long hours to help congregations stay connected, and I give thanks for the resiliency they have evidenced in these times. Our thoughts and prayers are especially with our sister NY Region the American Baptist Churches of Metro New York. Such times call us to prayer, to service and to be a people of both lament and hope.

So what will be “familiar” or “normal” in the time ahead of us?

The Region’s operational values are “honesty, connectedness and hope”. These three things will see us through the time at hand and help us be faithful to God and one another in the long run. Indeed, if you like, jot these three values down on a sticky-note and place it somewhere around the house where you will see it daily. You will feel encouraged as you remember them!

As part of our Region’s efforts to support our churches, the ABCNYS Board of Mission’s Executive Committee met shortly after Easter to discuss COVID19 response efforts. We are concerned for our churches, and we will be offering funds drawn from the Region’s PSALM Fund (Pastoral Salary And Local Ministry). For churches and pastors who are experiencing hardship, we encourage you to contact the Region to receive a grant application. More details will follow, though in the meantime, certainly get in touch with me (jhugenot@abc-nys.org or 518/380-4510) to alert me to needs as they arise.

Helping churches through difficult times is actually a familiar and normal part of what a Region does for its member churches and leaders. In turn, we hope that you will continue to fund our Region through your church mission budget (a percentage of each dollar given comes back to ABCNYS: United Mission Basics [ABCNYS receives 65 cents] and the America for Christ Offering [ABCNYS receives 28 cents) or give directly through the Region Offering, the proceeds of which stay 100% in the Region for the Region to serve our churches through our staff and programs.

Helping local churches with their challenges and encouraging local church leaders is our sole reason for existing. We are honored, especially now, to serve our partner churches in these times.

Rev. Jerrod H. Huguenot, Associate Executive Minister

Reminder: Rev. Kelsey will return to the office from his sabbatical on May 26 . Keep Jim in your prayers!)

CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS: James Peterson (Pastor, FBC Whitehall & Granville BC) died 01/31/20



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 Hugenot, Associate Executive Minister, at 518/380-4510 or jhugenot@abc-nys.org.



LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

Correction from last issue: Keith Marlett to Interim Pastor, FBC Endicott 11/1/19
Pamela Bolton to Interim Pastor, FBC Whitehall 2/15/20
Barry Kerner to Interim Pastor, Delphi Falls United Ch
Jeffrey Lamphear to Interim Pastor, Granville BC 2/15/20
Letta Palmer from Interim to Pastor, FBC Rome 3/15/20
Kelly Farrell to Pastor, Comm BC Wappingers Falls 3/23/20
Karen Sundland to Pastor, FBC Penn Yan 4/1/20
Peggy Norton, Ft. Edward Village BC, Lay Pastor Certification 3/10/20
Junito Roman, Duanesburg-Florida BC, Ordained 3/15/20

DATES TO REMEMBER

June 7, 2020 -- Adirondack Association @ Ft. Edward Village BC
July 5-11, 2020 -- Mission Partnership with Tuscarora Indian Mission
September 19, 2020 -- Niagara Area Baptist Association @ FBC East Aurora
October 16-17 2020 -- ABCNYS Biennial @ Tabernacle BC, Utica
November 6-8, 2020 -- ABY Convention @ Holiday Inn Liverpool/Syracuse
November 20&21, 2020 -- Embracing God's Future Without Forgetting the Past @ Good News Center, Utica

Changes to New York Baptist Annual 2020

Page 3 **Pastoral Care Team:** Cathy Hamilton ph: 315.408.3152, Donald Howard ph: 716.679.0366
Page 9 **Westport Federated Ch:** Email: westfedchurch@westelcom.com
Page 15 **FBC Penn Yan:** Web: firstbaptistchurchpy.com
United Ch Canandaigua: Web: uccdga.org
Wayne Village BC: Remove phone 607.292.3420
Page 20 **United Ch Genoa:** Web: unitedchurchofgenoa.com
Page 21 **Howard Union Ch:** Remove phone
Page 22 **FBC Watkins Glen:** Phone: 585.447.2759
Page 29 **Calcium Comm Ch:** Email: calciumchurch1@gmail.com
Page 31 **FBC Ontario:** Phone: 315.524.7651, Email: mwyse@rochester.rr.com
Page 32 **FBC Akron:** Web: firstbaptistchurchofakronny.wordpress.com

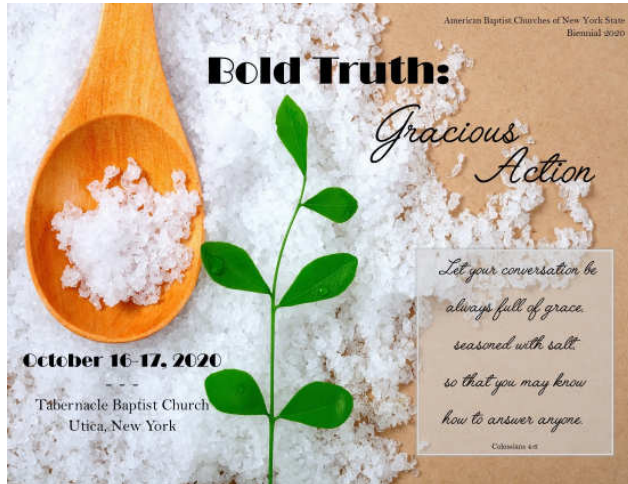
THE 2020 ANNUAL is on the ABCNYS website (www.abc-nys.org) (Resources drop-down menu). If you wish to receive a printed copy you must request it. Contact the Region office (315.863.7148, mschwarz@abc-nys.org). Thank you!



ABCNYS LAY STUDY PROGRAM SPRING 2020

All courses will be online only Check out this link: <http://www.abc-nys.org/lc-courses.html>.

- **MINISTRY THROUGH THE SMALL CHURCH – STARTING APRIL 20, 2020**
- **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – STARTING APRIL 22, 2020**
- **PREACHING – STARTING APRIL 30, 2020**



ABCNYS 2020 Biennial
October 16 & 17
Tabernacle Baptist Church
Utica, New York

Bold Truth - Gracious Action

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Colossians 4:6

Planning for our 2020 Biennial is underway! Thank you, Christy Siau, for our beautiful logo!

Our special guests for this event will be Dr. Richard Mouw, Professor of Faith and Public Life at Fuller Seminary and author of the book *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World*; and the Rev. Dr. Eddie Cruz, National Coordinator of Congregational Mission and Discipleship from American Baptist Home Mission Societies. We are also pleased to welcome Ruth Fox, International Ministries' Global Coordinator for Education, as our missionary speaker.

A Pre-Biennial event will be hosted by St. Paul's Baptist Church, Utica, on Friday during the day. This event was in the planning stages when our meetings were cut short by the current health crisis, but it looks as if this day will be a family/cultural interest day with several options for participation at local sites in and around Utica.

Friday evening's offerings, in addition to beginning worship with Dr. Cruz, will include ABCNYS's *Got Talent!* and a light supper. Watch for more information on how YOU can participate in this fun-filled experience! We hope it will be a time of fun for the whole community, providing awe as well as laughter at the gifts and “talents” present among us in our ABC/NYS family. We will top off the evening with an ice cream social.

Accommodations have been arranged at *St. Margaret's Ecumenical and Retreat Center* in New Hartford (<https://www.stmargarethouseny.org>). A list of alternative family-friendly places to stay will also be made available in our registration materials.

Planning for our breakout sessions carrying the themes of civility and reconciliation is underway. Exhibitors are being solicited. A book list is being compiled for the bookstore. Hope to see you in the Fall at this year's ABCNYS Biennial!

The Rev. Wendy Depew Partelow
Chairperson, ABCNYS 2020 Biennial Planning Committee

Embracing God's Future without Forgetting the Past

A conference brought to you by American Baptist Churches of New York State



November 20 to 21, 2020

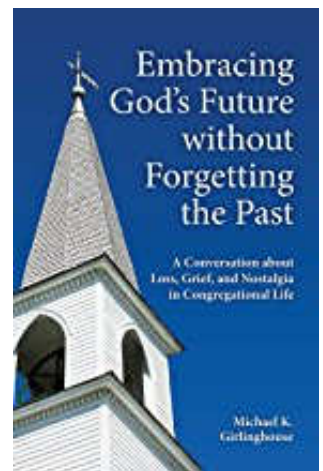
The Good News Center
10475 Cosby Manor Road
Utica NY 13502

<https://www.thegoodnewscenter.org/>

As we face challenges and changes in the present, our yearning for the past can trap us. As we consider our past, we can attempt to re-create it, we can try to forget it, or we can tap into our nostalgic memories in order to learn from it. As we consider the future, we can fear it, try to avoid it, or adapt to the changes that have brought the future to our doorstep. [p. xxii].

So writes Michael Girlinghouse in his book *Embracing God's Future without Forgetting the Past: A Conversation about Loss, Grief, and Nostalgia in Congregational Life*.

Reverend Girlinghouse has been the bishop of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod of the Evangelical Church in America since 2011. Prior to that he was a pastor and oversaw a student ministry in Norman OK. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis in 1983 and a Master of Divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 1987.



When? We begin with dinner on Friday at 6:00 pm. We will finish up at 3:30 pm on Saturday afternoon

How Much? The cost is \$20 per person (payable to ABCNYS) for meals, room, and program.

This event is underwritten by the Region's "Preparing for God's Future" Palmer Grant.

Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Church _____ Are you willing to share a room if necessary? Yes ___ No ___

Email _____ Phone number _____

Return (with \$20 payment) to: ABCNYS, 3218 James Street, Syracuse NY 13206 or office@abc-nys.org

To make payment with PayPal go to:

<http://www.abc-nys.org/embracing-gods-future-conference.html>

PSALM FUND HELP AVAILABLE

For many decades, American Baptists in upstate New York have supported local church ministry and our pastors in times of need. With COVID19 impacting our churches, ABCNYS is concerned for our pastors and the potential financial challenges they encounter along the way.

The ABCNYS Executive Committee has authorized use of the Psalm Fund for special needs arising for our pastors over the next six months (May 1 to October 31, 2020). Pastors serving ABCNYS churches are eligible to apply for a one-time grant, up to \$500, based on their need due to a financial shortfall at the church impacting the pastoral budget.

To get an application contact the Region office (315.863.7148, office@abc-nys.org) or Rev. Jerrod Huguenot (518.380.4510), jhuguenot@abc-nys.org). Submit completed applications to Rev. Huguenot by email or postal mail (115 Hazelhurst Ave., Albany NY 12203). **ALL REQUESTS ARE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.**

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Following World War II, Baptists in the United States worked through the Baptist World Alliance and Church World Service to help bring refugees from Eastern Europe to the United States. Some of these Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians came to upstate New York where they were sponsored by churches and church members. A few of them ended up in my hometown of Wolcott, New York, and one family came to Cooperstown where I live now. Places as diverse as Buffalo, Ogdensburg, and Endicott welcomed these refugees, who were forced to leave their homes due to Nazi and then Soviet aggression. I would like to know more about the experiences of both the immigrants and those who offered assurances to bring them to the United States. If you remember these relocation efforts or heard stories from family members about them, I would love to talk to you. I am hoping to write an article so that others know more about this forgotten aspect of our Baptist history. I can be reached by email at cynthia.falk@oneonta.edu or by phone at 607-547-2586 (office) or 607-643-8284 (cell).

Very best, Cindy Falk

AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION SUPPORT

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES
OF NEW YORK STATE
THROUGH MARCH 2020 & 2019

	United Mission	Annual Offerings	Institutions, Specifics & Targeted	Total ABMS
Received 2020	64,743	52,365	45,005	162,113
Received 2019	62,302	45,349	43,894	151,545
\$ Ahead (Behind)	2,441	7,016	1,111	10,568
% Ahead (Behind)	3.92	15.47	2.53	6.97

For listing of church-by-church giving, go to <http://www.abc-nys.org/abms-summary-reports.html>.

GROWTH POINTS

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

New Buildings are Important

A few years ago my friend, Thom Rainer, conducted research to determine what unchurched people said about church buildings. He discovered four key insights. First, church buildings were not the motivating factor that attracted unchurched people. The primary motivating factor was the Holy Spirit working through friends, family members, and personal needs. Second, the worship auditorium was the unchurched person's favorite area of the church building. They often commented on the attractiveness, beauty, and functionality of the worship venue. Third, attractive and well-maintained facilities did attract unchurched people. While, fourth, unattractive or unkept facilities were viewed critically.

Rainer surprisingly found that 81% of churches experienced increased attendance after a building program, and most said it was critical to the church's growth. Looking back, the leaders said if they could do it again, they would build bigger and expend more funds.

Clearly, while not the most important aspect, church facilities are an important part of a healthy church growth mix.

Options for Improving Facilities

There are several options for improving church facilities.

First, upgrade the church's present facility. Assuming that the facility has enough growth potential for the future (see last month's *Growth Points* for insights), a church may choose to upgrade. The most beneficial improvements are found in the worship auditorium (including the lobby), children's classrooms (including nursery), the parking lot, and restrooms (particularly the ladies). [Note: for every 100 seats, estimate one male and two female fixtures in the restrooms].

If you decide to improve your current facility, budget \$40-50 a square foot for improvements. The most costly aspects are the restrooms, bringing fire prevention and handicap space up to code, and larger remodels, such as, lifting or moving the stage (costs around \$50,000), adding an elevator (about \$125,000), or building a coffee shop in the lobby.

For an evaluation of your church, Email Dr. Gary L. McIntosh at cgnet@earthlink.net for full details.

Second, locate new property and build new construction. This option has been taken by numerous churches, but it always seems to take longer than anticipated, costs more money than expected, and often is not finished by the pastor who started the building program.

There is not enough space in this issue of *Growth Points* to discuss all of the details (a church is always wise to obtain the services of professionals), but the following are a few insights on building new construction.

- A church should not allocate more than 30% of its monthly income towards debt reduction. Doing so hampers other aspects of ministry.
- A church can normally borrow approximately \$4,500 for each adult attendee.
- A church can expect monthly payments of approximately \$6,000 for every 1 million in loan value.
- A church will typically need about 25% to 30% cash down payment on a loan.
- A church normally needs three years of audited financial records, three years of attendance figures, complete resumes of leaders, and Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws to obtain a loan.

Third, purchase an older building and remodel it for use as a church. Examples include:

- Retail establishments that have closed, e.g., former grocery stores, big box stores, and shopping centers or strip malls. These facilities are easy to revamp into church space, and have adequate parking space.
- Movie theaters that have closed. While these buildings are often offered at below market rates, the cost of improvements to remodel them into what a church needs can be very high.
- Restaurants that have closed make good facilities for smaller churches, but are usually too small for a church that desires to grow.
- Industrial buildings and complexes are affordable options with lots of available parking space, since most other tenants are closed on Sundays. Industrial building are easy to remodel into church facilities, but need strong marketing to help people find them.

Fourth is to purchase or unite with another church that has a more attractive facility. However, churches that wish to merge or are for sale, may have been neglected for years, leading to costly improvements, such as, upgrading restrooms. However, enlarged space for worship or parking make such acquisitions worthwhile.

What are your best options for improving the beauty, function, and attractiveness of your church facility?

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Host a training event on

Building the Body 12 Characteristics of a Fit Church

A fit church is one that is not satisfied with merely coasting along with no problems. A fit church is actively making disciples, maturing in faith, developing strong leaders, reaching out to the community, and more.

The *Building the Body* training seminar unveils the twelve characteristics of fit churches and shows pastors and church leaders how to move their church through five levels of fitness, from beginner all the way to elite.

This one-day training event, is presented in a way that motivates rather than produces guilt, and the combination of principles and practices applies to churches at all levers of development.

Participants focus their attention on the opportunities for outreach and assimilation.... discover new possibilities...build up their spiritual hope and vitality.

Wherever a church lies along a continuum of twelve factors (e.g., outreach, stewardship, worship, disciple making), McIntosh and Stevenson give concrete strategies for advancing to the next level . . . and then the next level . . . and then the next level.

Building the Body training is a practical, informative, doable training event for pastors and lay leaders who want not only to get better but also to get as fit as possible for the good of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Gary L. McIntosh (Ph.D., D.Min.) is a speaker, writer, and professor. Phil Stevenson (D.Min.) is a writer and speaker who has served as a national and district executive, coaching pastors in evangelism and church multiplication.

Schedule this insightful training event right away to help your churches reach maximum health and growth! Your investment in the life-long learning of your ministry leaders will produce results.

To discuss the options and obtain more information email cgnet@earthlink.net today!

GROWTH POINTS

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

Pastors and Preaching

Can pastors become better preachers? Yes, they can. And, if you want your church to grow, you must improve. Good preaching, of course, depends on a number of factors.

First, know your God. Pastors have all been taught, in one way or another, techniques or processes for putting a sermon together. But finding a formula for experiencing the awe or special anointing or work of the Holy Spirit in a sermon is akin to trying to find the smell of a rose by pulling off each petal.

There's a mysterious aspect that older pastors used to call unction. All pastors need some sort of process for putting together their sermons, but if a pastor doesn't know God personally, and deeply, nothing is likely to happen.

Second, know yourself. If we really know God, then we must consider ourselves in the light of his attributes. In doing so we realize our personal failure to live up to God's standards, and our own need of forgiveness and redemption. Thus, we come to the sermon *as one who needs the Savior*. The tone of our sermons inevitably

reflects this knowledge, as we appropriately admit our own struggle with living the Christian life. The sermon then projects an air of authenticity, rather than superiority. It communicates a feel of humility, rather than pride. It presents an aura of reality, rather than pretense.

We also must come to the sermon *as one who has the Savior*. Knowing ourselves means we not only know our weaknesses and failures, but we know the liberty, hope, and joy found from embracing the Savior's redemption. We can stand in the pulpit knowing our frailties, but also the Savior's grace. Thus, we preach as *participants* in the message rather than *performers* of the message. Instead of hiding our weaknesses (performers), we allow our personalities to come out (participants) knowing that God applies his word to human hearts through authentic messengers. It is a glorious thing to be yourself. Preaching really is delivering truth through personality.

Are you searching for a leadership coach? Email Dr. Gary L. McIntosh at cgnet@earthlink.net for full details.

Third, know your text. Pastors typically don't find exegesis hard. They can work their way through the Scriptural text, get the flow of thought, and understand the context. They know the basics of sermon preparation: choose the text, determine what it means, meditate on it, isolate the dominant thought, arrange the material to serve the dominant thought, add the introduction and conclusion, etc.

What's much more difficult, of course, is determining "What does it mean today?" Knowing the text implies both accurately exegeting it, but also letting it touch your own life. Good preaching arises out of truly wrestling with the text—thinking about it and experiencing it in some fashion. How has it touched your own life? Where have you seen it worked out in other's lives? Knowing the text is a two sided coin: Know what it meant to the original writer and know what it means to people today.

Fourth, know your audience. The major league of preaching is seeing people change their lives to become more like Jesus.

Be aware of the questions people are asking. Each generation asks different questions. Younger people in their twenties want to know where to

center their lives—around God, work, friends, etc.? Thirty-year-olds face serious responsibilities—mortgages, spouses, babies, in-law relationships, and work stressors. They have many questions revolving around these aspects of life. For people in their forties, they wonder about career and marriage disappointments. Should they scale back their dreams, or forge ahead? By their fifties, people wonder if they're past their prime. Few friendships, children leaving the home, and less than satisfying jobs force unexpected feelings to the surface. Some fight feelings of loss, search for intimacy in wrong places, and wonder if they bring value to anyone any longer. Those in their sixties wonder what it means to be old, if they look as old as their peers, and how to deal with long-term resentments. For people in their seventies and beyond, questions arise as to how long they have left on this earth, how to maintain their independence as they grow older, and what will happen to the family when they're gone.

You must know the people to address these fears, inadequacies, and regrets. If you can't peer into their eyes and see their hurt and lostness, you have little right to preach the gospel to them. You must know some of them well enough to speak to their pains, struggles, and hopes. Let them see that you know and understand what they need to know and do to follow Christ in their world.

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GROWTH POINTS

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

Ideas on Preaching

Excellent preaching is more of an art than a science, but I've discovered a few things over the years.

Good preachers prepare. I have found that the best of preachers spend about fifteen hours each week in sermon preparation, divided over two weeks. In the first week the pastor spends about seven to eight hours exegeting the passage(s) of Scripture in order to understand it. The big idea or eternal principle is defined, and a tentative outline is laid out. Many pastors will then let the message percolate for a week of prayerful reflection. The following week, an additional seven to eight hours are given to filling out the outline with illustrations, stories, testimonies, and other didactic techniques, as well as practicing the delivery.

Good preachers preach 20-30 minutes; bad preachers shouldn't preach any longer. I recall the late Haddon Robinson, a world renowned expert on preaching, writing "Some men preach for an hour and it seems like twenty minutes, and some preach for twenty minutes and it seems like an hour. I wonder what the difference is?" That's a wonderful question. Pastors would do well to seek an answer to it.

Good preachers practice. The great soccer player Pele was asked how he defined success. Reportedly he said something like "Success isn't how many games you win, but how hard you practice after you lose." One pastor I know took Pele's definition to heart. Each Friday and Saturday, he'd go into the auditorium when no one was around and preach his entire sermon to empty seats—six times! Yes, six times he preached the entire sermon making changes, corrections, and adjustments. By the time he stood up on Sunday morning to preach, it was his seventh time! People thought his ability to catch their attention in the introduction, lead them through a well thought-out message, and end with a thoughtful challenge, was a natural gift. What they didn't know or see was his practice. Preachers that wear the speaker's hat well, put in the time. They practice.

Good preachers are interesting. If you're going to bore people, bore them with Shakespeare, not the Bible. Fruitful preachers live with a fear of boring people,

Are you searching for a leadership coach? Email Dr. Gary L. McIntosh at cgnet@earthlink.net for full details.

that is, making the Bible and God—which are relevant—irrelevant. Boredom is a hard thing for people to tolerate. Instead of drawing people to God, boring sermons drive them from him. God is not boring, so why should our sermons be so?

Good preachers entertain people.

I've heard critics say we shouldn't entertain people, but I'd like to file a minority report here. Entertainment means "to hold one's attention," which I think all speakers desire to do. What we should not do is amuse people, which means "to be without thought." Keep people's attention, but make sure to keep them thinking.

Good preachers listen to their people. Some members of a church will tell you one thing while criticizing another. They most likely don't have experience preaching, nor the training to diagnose or prescribe how to help you preach better. Their comments will point out a symptom that you need to hear and address. Listen to what they are saying.

Good preachers offer solutions.

They spend more time giving answers than pointing out problems. I get it. It's easier to show others what's wrong than to offer solutions. It's a problem/solution issue. Many pastors spend twice as much time on describing the problem as on the solution. Make sure your most powerful illustrations and descriptions show people what to do.

An old Christian saint, Francis de Sales once noted "The test of a preacher is that his congregation goes away saying, not 'What a lovely sermon!' but 'I will do something.'"

Good preachers condition themselves.

There's a difference between preparing a sermon and preparing yourself. No good long-distance runner attempts a marathon without conditioning their body ahead of time. Nor should a pastor step into the pulpit, or on the stage, without prior conditioning. Personal submission to the Lord throughout the week is a must. Prayer, journaling, fasting, solitude, reflection, and meditation help condition one for delivering God's word to the people.

Good preachers keep preaching. Many times you won't see anything happening week to week, but, unseen, God is working under the surface in people's lives. It's the Spirit of God that enlivens those who hear your preaching. It's similar to eating three meals a day. Most of us cannot remember what we ate last week, or even yesterday. Sure, we can remember an occasional fantastic meal, but most meals don't create any lasting memories. Yet, we'd be poor people without having eaten three meals a day every day over the last year. It's good to remember that preaching is like that, too. People normally don't change dramatically every Sunday. But your faithful preaching of God's word works over time to move people in the right way.

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