



# PARAGRAPHS FOR PARTNERS

2021 – Issue #2



From the Executive Minister  
Rev. Dr. James Kelsey

## Loving Our Neighbor When Our Neighbor is Not Very Fond of Us

We all, I hope, want to be kinder to one another. We all, I hope, long to be more understanding, patient, loving, and nurturing. Yet we find we always have room to grow. We look back at our day, our conversations, or our interactions with people in line at the store— particularly the rude ones— and see how our speech could have been more “gracious, seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6). We did not set a good “example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

Even when we swallow our criticism and offense in silence, we still have not yet met the goal Jesus set before us. We are to love our neighbor, not simply tolerate them. This is the second commandment, in some ways synonymous with the first commandment to love God. All the law and prophets hang on these two imperatives (Matt. 22:34-40). The task Jesus sets before us is even more demanding than that; we are to love our enemies (Matt 5:43).

This enjoins us to welcome to the table people who wish we were not there. It requires us to listen to people who choose not to give us the time of day. It constrains us to be engaging and caring to people who are rude and insensitive to us. It means we seek to understand, although we may never agree with, people whose convictions or behavior we find objectionable.

This is hard. Let us admit. One way we can make progress, I believe, is by fully humanizing that other person, by being curious about why they are the way they are and how they have come to hold the values and loyalties they espouse. This creates empathy within us, and empathy opens the door to loving our neighbor—even our enemy. Admittedly, the possibilities for this are limited with the rude person at the post office; but as we develop our capacity for imaginative empathy, we will find ourselves more favorably disposed toward the rude person at the post office. As we wait in line, we ask ourselves what difficult experiences might have engendered rudeness in this person.

The more curious we are about how others have come to be the way they are, believe the things they believe, the more human they become. And the more human they become, the easier they are to love.

Frederick Buechner makes Brendan the Navigator the hero of his novel *Brendan*. Brendan was a late 5<sup>th</sup> to early 6<sup>th</sup> century Irish saint who sailed the seas looking for the “Land of the Blessed.” He may have sailed as far as Newfoundland or even modern day Florida.

In Buechner’s novel Brendan meets the Welsh monk Gildas one day. Buechner describes the encounter in this way:

For the first time we saw that he [Gildas] wanted of one leg. It was gone from the knee joint down. He was hopping sideways to reach for his stick in the corner when he lost his balance. He would have fallen in a heap if Brendan had not leapt forward and caught him.

"I'm crippled as the dark world," Gildas said.

"If it comes to that, which of us isn't my dear?" Brendan said.

Brendan then observes: "To lend each other a hand when we are falling. Perhaps that's the only work that matters in the end."

Perhaps this is a piece of loving our neighbor, even when our neighbor is not very fond of us. We are all wounded in some way. We all wear our brokenness, sometimes on the outside and sometimes deep within; but if we look, we will find it. We can see loving those who do not love us or those who espouse views we find objectionable as lending them a hand when they are falling. We all need a hand now and then.

The woman caught in the act of adultery in John 8 had made a poor choice. Jesus never denies that, but he says to those who would accuse and stone her: "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:1-11). Jesus was wanting them to be kinder, more understanding, patient, loving, and nurturing people. Humility goes a long way in sowing grace in our hearts.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-3).

Jim Kelsey

**CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS: Adam & Susan Svereika** (Hannibal Community Church) welcome baby boy Coleman Adam, born 4/14/21 \* Iroquois Association congregations **Fay Road Baptist Church, Syracuse and Camillus Baptist Church** have been worshipping together for several months and are now officially **Mission Hope Community!** \* **Rev. Daniel Calvin San**, Tabernacle BC Utica (Mohawk-Oneida Association) died 1/27/21 \* **Rev. Jim Stone's** (Iroquois Association) mother, Helen Stone, died 1/12/21 \* **Pastor Ann Wicks** (Retired, Mohawk-Oneida Association) died 3/7/21



**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](mailto:jhuguenot@abc-nys.org).



### **LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS**

Daniel Ferritto to Pastor, Chinese Christian Ch Albany  
Gary Spraker to Interim, Lebanon Fed Ch  
Paul Bailey from Eastwood BC Syracuse to Retirement 4/18/21  
Leon Runner from Lowville BC 5/2/21  
Barry Davis from FBC Burlington 4/18/21  
Nic Charlton to Pastor, Westport Fed Ch 5/1/21

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

May 14-16, 2021 - Jr./Sr. High Youth Retreat @ Pathfinder Lodge  
May 31, 2021 - Region Office Closed  
June 24-26, 2021 -- Biennial Mission Summit (ABCUSA)  
August 14, 2021 - AB Men Conference  
September 12-14, 2021 -- Ministers Council Retreat @ Notre Dame Retreat Center, Canandaigua

## Changes to New York Baptist Annual 2021

- Page 3 **Mid-Hudson/Union:** David Trasoras – Correct email: dtrasoras@yahoo.com
- Page 11 **Broome-Tioga Association:** New Moderator: Bill Starring, 3611 Lott St., Endicott NY 13760, 607.752.2991, billstarring@sigmentcorp.com
- Page 12 **First Baptist Church, Hoosick Falls:** Add web site: www.firstbaptistchurchhf.com
- Page 13 **Mt. Ida Community Baptist Church:** Change mailing address: c/o B. Bryan, 29 Marvin Ave. Apt. 1C, Troy NY 12180, Ph: 518.268.7533
- Page 14 **The United Church, Canandaigua:** Chelsea Emmal, Youth Director & Virginia Holroyd, Visitation Director
- Page 17 **Hannibal Community Church:** Email: [Hannibalcommunitychurch@gmail.com](mailto:Hannibalcommunitychurch@gmail.com), Web: Hannibalcc.org
- Page 24 **First Baptist Church, New Hartford:** Facebook: first baptist of new Hartford
- Page 29 **Lowville Baptist Church:** Email: dmc4858fm@gmail.com

### PASTORAL ZOOM CALL - SECOND TUESDAY MORNINGS - THIS SPRING!

Challenges remain from 2020, and pastors continue to navigate matters mundane and unprecedented alike. As part of ABCNYS' care for the Region, Jim Kelsey and Jerrod Hugenot offer a call to connect with colleagues around the Region, via Zoom (by phone or webcam). Log on for a time of collegial support and prayer as pastors, one to another. Questions? Contact [jkelsey@abc-nys.org](mailto:jkelsey@abc-nys.org) or [jhugenot@abc-nys.org](mailto:jhugenot@abc-nys.org)

### Next Call: Tuesday, May 11 at 10 AM

American Baptist Churches of New York State's Zoom Meeting

Time: Feb. 9, 2020 09:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ministrelife.zoom.us/j/8926678150?pwd=ZEITaUJ4dU5PenItQkpBaVcxVGIndz09>

Meeting ID: 892 667 8150

Password: NYSABC

Phone: 1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 892 667 8150

Password: 748311



### REGION OFFERING 2021

#### "GIVING YOURSELF FIRST TO THE LORD"

There are materials (printed and video) that can be used for in-person worship or online.

More information here: <https://www.abc-n.org/region-offering.html>

### ONLINE BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT - JUNE 24 TO 26, 2021

To learn more and to register go to: <https://web.cvent.com/event/1a5b67cb-fe2a-4415-b5d6-31877d46ef9c/summary?rp=00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000>

## NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM MINISTERS COUNCIL



1.) It is still not too late to become a member which affords you discounts to any of our events, a monthly newsletter from NATIONAL MC, and an occasional newsy letter from me! If you need the membership form, please email me at: [butterflypreacher@juno.com](mailto:butterflypreacher@juno.com)

2.) Our Fall retreat dates are CHANGED to September 12, 13, 14 (Sunday 5:00 PM to Tuesday, lunch). Please mark those down.

Our very own Jim Kelsey is the keynote resource person, on the topic of: "**Practicing Civility: The Spirit is Willing but the Flesh is Weak.**" This program will augment any of Jim's other programs on Civility - but will **not** be a duplicate. It will offer an opportunity for practice and role playing, introspection and personal application.

Place will be Notre Dame Retreat Center in Canandaigua just off Route 20. Every room is private and there will be plenty of time to "retreat" in free time, and to meet, greet and get to know your colleagues.

Discount for members of MC but all clergy, lay pastors and church educators are welcomed. Spouses, too.

Right now, we will ask that masks be worn, and you bring your own sanitizers and wipes.

Hope to see you there on this very important topic and just to take time away at the beginning of a new church year to prepare your heart and soul for the work of the Kingdom.

Blessings to all,

Patricia (Pat) Ludwig  
President  
716-433-0976



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- Click on the subscription button at the bottom of any page.
- Choose your subscription

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#### Important to Note

- MinistrElife works best using Chrome or Firefox browser
- If you plan on using the same e-mail address for your MinistrElife Zoom account as you Free or Paid subscription you have through Zoom directly, you will need to use a different password.
- Please do not sign up using alternate logins such as Facebook
- If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Meg Biddle, National Coordinator for MinistrElife and ABPS ([megan.biddle@abhms.org](mailto:megan.biddle@abhms.org))



## **ABCNYS LAY STUDY PROGRAM COURSES SPRING 2021**

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

### **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT – STARTING APRIL 20, 2021**

**When:** Tuesday evenings, 7:00-9:00 pm. – Online via Zoom

**Instructor:** Rev. Sabrina Smith, Pastor of Pine City Baptist Church (Living Waters Association)

### **OLD TESTAMENT – STARTING APRIL 29, 2021**

**When:** First class: Thursday, April 29, 2021, 7:00-9:00 p.m. – Online via Zoom

**Instructor:** Rev. David Waldo, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Ballston Spa (Capital Area Association)

**To Register:** Complete registration form and mail with payment (payable to ABCNYS) to ABCNYS, 3218 James St., Syracuse NY 13206. You can also pay online at <http://www.abc-nys.org/giving-to-the-region.html>. In "Write us a comment" indicate that it's for a lay study course and give name of course.

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

**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.



The 2021 American Baptist Men of NYS Joe Folckemer Memorial Scholarship Application is now open. American Baptist Men of NYS offers scholarship aid to mainly assist men in obtaining further education. Female applicants will be referred to AB Women for scholarship applications. We also endeavor to encourage continuing relationships through prayer, correspondence and "care boxes". There are two \$500 scholarships available this year.

Our prayerful goal is to help educate the American Baptist Men of tomorrow. We hope to encourage young men with the words of 2nd Timothy 2:15: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

For more information and application, please visit the web site [baptistmennys.weebly.com](http://baptistmennys.weebly.com) If you would like to assist our efforts in New York State by making a financial contribution to our scholarship ministry, please send your check made out to "ABMen NYS" to:

AMERICAN BAPTIST MEN of NYS

c/o Karl Hanson

17 Linden Court

Clifton Park, NY 12065

Please write "College Scholarship" on the memo line.

**LAY STUDY PROGRAM  
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW YORK STATE**

**STUDENT REGISTRATION FORM**

Course Name \_\_\_\_\_ Starting Date \_\_\_\_\_

Credit \_\_\_\_\_ Audit (no credit) \_\_\_\_\_ Online (if offered) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Street, City, State, Zip Code) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Present Church Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

*If you haven't already done so, please complete the following information. This needs to be completed only once, but you may update when appropriate.*

Place and Date of Baptism \_\_\_\_\_

Education: High School \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_ Degree & Year \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Position or Title \_\_\_\_\_

Activities in your local church, your denomination and other religious activities *(use the back of the page if necessary)* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Activities and/or honors in other organizations \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My goal in completing these courses is to seek to be a Certified Lay Pastor.

I would like more information about being a Certified Lay Pastor.

# YOUTH GROUP RETREAT JR. & SR. HIGH

May 14-16, 2021

@ Pathfinder Lodge, Cooperstown, NY

Registration begins Friday @ 5:00 pm

Program starts Friday @ 7:00 pm

Ends Sunday @ 12:00 pm

“God’s Reckless Love”

Speaker: Pastor Peggy Norton

First Baptist Church, Hudson Falls

**Worship with: Signs On Earth**

**Cost: \$45.00 per person**

**For Information or To Register  
by May 9th - Call Keith Griffin @ 518-747-4838 or  
e-mail: [griffink74@gmail.com](mailto:griffink74@gmail.com)**

**Sponsored by: Adirondack Association  
and Vick & Pathfinder Ministries**

**A retreat designed for youth groups of 1-12 in size.**

**Time for large group worship with other youth groups from around central New York.**

**Time for smaller group discussion on topics where our youth live.**

**Time for looking into God's word in a vibrant and life-changing way.**

**Time for games, campfire, fellowship, good food and plain old fun with youth groups.**

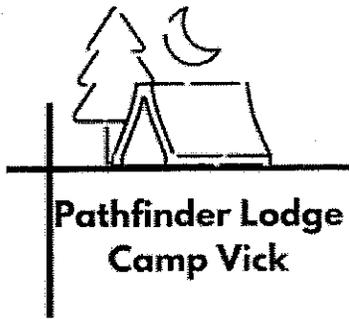
**UPDATE**

**AMERICAN BAPTIST  
MISSION SUPPORT**

**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW YORK STATE  
THROUGH MARCH 2021 & 2020**

	United Mission	Annual Offerings	Institutions, Specifics & Targeted	Total ABMS
Received 2021	60,120	46,527	46,075	152,722
Received 2020	64,743	52,365	45,005	162,113
\$ Ahead (Behind)	(4,623)	(5,838)	1,070	(9,391)
% Ahead (Behind)	(7.14)	(11.15)	2.38	(5.79)

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



# Vick & Pathfinder 2021

## FAMILY CAMP

### CAMP VICK

### PATHFINDER LODGE

Camp Vick (Freedom, NY) and Pathfinder Lodge (Cooperstown, NY) offer camping opportunities all summer long nestled in the rustic outdoors with either a peaceful pond or lake as your backdrop. Consider starting a new family tradition and enjoy God's creation by camping together from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. Tent/camper sites and/or cabin rentals are available.

## YOUTH & SPECIAL CAMPS

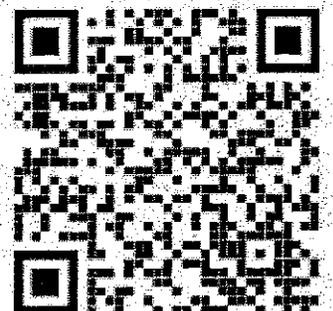
### VICK

- July 18-23 • Frontier Boys/Vick Investigates/Wet & Wild
- July 25-30 • Mission Possible/Frontier Girls
- July 25-28 • Beginners-Vick Style
- Aug 1-6 • Splash Camp/Surviving Frontier

### PATHFINDER

- June 27-30 • Beginners I/Leadership Training
- June 27-July 2 • Xtreme Outdoors
- June 28-July 2 • Special Needs Week I
- July 5-10 • Jr & Sr High Challenge/Pathfinder Investigates/Discovery
- July 11-16 • Sailing/Life-Sized Games/De-Stress Week
- Aug 8-13 • Water Adventure/Exploration Explosion
- Aug 9-13 • Special Needs Week II
- Aug 15-20 • Replay Week
- Aug 17-20 • Begin Again (Beginners II)

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# GROWTH POINTS

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

## A Mark of a Mature Church

The marks of a church are normally described as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. However, a mark of a mature church is also seen in its hospitality.

### Hospitality is an ancient expectation.

Early stories of hospitality in the Old Testament often found the hosts in close relationship with God. One of the most important stories is found in Genesis 18 where Abraham and Sarah welcomed three strangers, one of whom was the Lord. They welcomed the strangers as part of the ancient social custom of care, aid, and protection. Special recognition is given to Abraham by the writer of Hebrews: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2).

### Hospitality is part of the sacred Law.

After the nation of Israel left Egypt, among the many laws God gave to them was to be hospitable. “When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as

yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:22-24).

The concept of a being a stranger was fundamental of Israel’s identity. God told Abraham his descendants would be “strangers in a land that is not theirs” (Genesis 15:13). Their experiences as strangers reminded them to depend on God, which resulted in the need for gratitude and obedience.

Hospitality in the Old Testament is closely connected to the recognition of God’s lordship, as well as his presence and provision.

### Hospitality is modeled by Jesus.

Jesus is seen as both a stranger and a host in the New Testament. After his birth, his mother “wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7).

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for full details.

As he began to preach and teach, his own towns people “got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff” (Luke 4:29).

The apostle John records his rejection as a stranger: “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him” (1:10-11).

As a host, Jesus welcomed all who desired to come to him. Tax collectors (Luke 5:27-32), sinners (Luke 7:36-50), and the lost (Luke 19:1-10). His words, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest,” take on a powerful emotion when compared to his own rejection as a stranger to his own people.

Jesus also challenged the normal understanding of hospitality during his time on earth. Rather than welcoming family, friends, and the wealthy, i.e., those who could pay one back, he said to be hospitable to those who are poor, thirsty, hungry, lame, blind, crippled, the ones who cannot pay one back. (Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 14:12-14).

The practice of hospitality is clearly linked to Jesus in his incarnation, life, and teachings. His giving and receiving of hospitality led many to recognize him as their Lord and Savior.

## Hospitality is key to church growth.

Church growth in the early church was linked directly to the practice of hospitality.

The birth of the church, as recorded in Acts, resulted in 3,000 people added in one day to the community of faith. Hospitality was immediately needed to host the numerous new believers in Christ. They devoted themselves to “fellowship,” met “house to house,” were “taking their meals together,” and “began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need” (Acts 2:42-46).

Spiritual growth and evangelism took place through hospitality in homes. Paul reminded the early believers he “did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). Stories of salvation, e.g. Cornelius (10:1-48), Lydia (16:14-15), and the jailer (16:25-40), all took place in relation to hospitality in the homes of those converted.

Mature churches place a high value on being hospitable to those inside and outside the church. Mature churches contribute “to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality” (Romans 12:13). They are “hospitable to one another without complaint” (1 Peter 4:9). And, they especially seek to “Let brotherly love continue.” They follow the admonition “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers” (Hebrews 13:1-2).

Now is a good time to reflect on your church’s practice of hospitality. How well are you doing? Do newcomers to your church sense the love, care, and welcome they should?

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# GROWTH POINTS

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## Thoughts on Directing

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One of the fun elements of watching high school and college football games is the half-time band performance. Traditionally, bands march in lockstep across the football field playing their school's fight song. The sound of the drums and horns energizes the fans, but it's the intricate formations that delight them.

Sophisticated maneuvers and dance moves cause audiences to clap with joy, but they don't happen by chance. In front of the band is a director who has selected the band members, chosen the music, designed the various maneuvers, and led them in practice. Occasionally, the director marches along with the band in a visible position, while at other times, it's difficult to see where the director is marching.

Without a director, it's unlikely that any band's performance would happen, and it surely would not happen as well as it does.

As a pastor, you work with people of numerous talents, abilities, and skills. Directing people so that they work together in unity brings out the best in your church. Orchestrating the body so that harmony flows out of action is necessary to reach the church's mission of making disciples.

As director, you promote an environment that inspires people to serve and motivates

people to participate. The essence of the director's job is to recognize ability in people and get them working in harmony with others.

## Keys to Directing Well

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First, know your mission. We are all aware that businesses have a financial bottom line. At first we might think that churches don't have a bottom line, but that's incorrect. Churches do have a bottom line; it's just different. The bottom line of a church is changed people. While businesses seek to satisfy the customer, churches seek to change the person. When you think of it, that's what all non-profit organizations seek. A hospital seeks to change sick people into healthy ones. Schools seek to change students into educated adults. Churches seek to change people into followers of Christ—disciples who change their values into God's values and change their lives into godly ones.

Second, stay on mission. You have to learn to say no. There is always too much good to do and not enough resources to do it all. Any

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organization can only do a certain number of tasks. A major danger in smaller churches is to attempt more ministry than what resources can support. A major danger for larger churches is to take on things that don't fit its mission. Remember, God's kingdom encompasses both heaven and earth. Most non-profit organizations focus all of their efforts on the earthly side of the kingdom. The church is the only organization that focuses on the other side of the kingdom— heaven. For that reason, many good causes and needs should not be your primary focus. The church has to keep touch with God's whole kingdom, but the church is not a food bank, or counseling center, or housing shelter, or any other strictly social service entity. Yes, you must keep touch with humanity and provide assistance where needed, but as a church, your focus is on changing lives, particularly bringing people into right relationship with Jesus Christ. If you allow yourself to get involved in too many good things, you'll lose focus.

Third, get others on mission with you. Pastors typically use five primary appeals to recruit and motivate volunteers: duty, logic, accomplishment, belonging, and caring. Last on the list today are duty and logic. Pastors using duty as a motivator usually talk about the importance of loyalty, commitment, and the obligation to use one's gifts. Using logic, pastors present statistics and analyze data, hoping it inspires others to serve where there is verifiable need. Next is motivational attempts based on challenges to accomplish something good for Christ and his church. Unfortunately, neither duty, logic, nor

accomplishment of something valuable for Christ is a good motivator today. On the top of the list are caring and belonging. Recruiting people to care for others while becoming part of a caring group works the best.

Fourth, get others to play well. Musical directors usually know how to play multiple instruments, but can you imagine a band director running back and forth attempting to play every instrument? As crazy as that sounds, some pastors try to do so. Successful pastors are those who know their job is to build an effective team that will outlast them. They are the servants of the team. In place of trying to play every instrument, they recruit others who play better than themselves.

Fifth, get others to play together. The role of a band director is to produce a fine sounding piece of music. The problem is the various band sections see the specifics in different ways. The brass, the woodwinds, the percussionists, and all instrumentalists must perform well in order for the band to produce a unified sound that is beautiful to the ear. The director has to hold everything together. Each instrumentalist must play his particular instrument well, but also in a manner that harmonizes well with the rest of the orchestra.

*Think about it!*

What is your church's bottom line?

Are your resources invested in activities that focus on your mission?

What do you need to start doing or stop doing?

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## Upgrade Your Ministries

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When we first begin to think of welcoming people to church, it's usually the warm fuzzy things that come to mind like smiling and being polite. Positive attitudes and actions are a necessary part of a growing church. But, we can smile all we want, if people don't find they are being served well through our various ministries, they aren't likely to be back anytime soon.

## Rising Expectations

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Anyone who has been around churches for many years realizes that people have higher expectations today than they did years ago. A good example of the rise of expectations can be seen in what today's parents expect from the childcare ministry of a church.

Childcare has always been a contributing factor in growing churches. Parents are naturally concerned for their children and want to place them into capable hands while they participate in church activities. However, our changing lifestyle has meant that childcare has taken on a major emphasis in our society. Today's parents approach childcare with higher expectations than those of just a few years ago.

## Core Ministries

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Serving people inside and outside of your church means we must upgrade your church as much as feasible in all areas of ministry.

Three core areas that you will want to focus on first: facilities, worship and child care.

### *Facility*

How we decorate and present our facilities tells people a lot about our church and our values. It also sends a hidden message that we care and are interested in serving those whom God directs our way. The inherent message from well designed, decorated and kept facilities says, "We care about our church and we care about you." Periodically look at your grounds, buildings and facilities and ask, "Is there anything we need to change?" Look at it like a visitor would. Does it look

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for full details.**

inviting? Is it done in good taste? Does the carpet need to be replaced? Is there anything that looks out of date? Is there anything that would cause people to say, "I like that?" You want people to feel a sort of "wow" factor when they drive up or walk into your church building. The furniture, fixtures, lights—every detail—should contribute to making people's visit to your church a pleasant experience.

### *Child Care*

One place that must be clean and up-to-date is your child care rooms. Parents notice whether these areas are clean or dirty. Provide a hazard free environment. Replace broken toys, books and furniture. Fix peeling paint, protruding nails, leaking plumbing and lighting problems. Use fire alarms and check them on a regular basis. Maintain good ventilation, heating and air-conditioning. Develop childcare policies; Post one near the entrance of all childcare rooms. Train all childcare workers. Explain to them how they are a vital link in your culture of service and how they fit into the overall philosophy of your church. Require workers to take first aid training and CPR for infants and children. Recruit and hire workers who interact well with children. It's even wise to screen all childcare personnel for past history of child abuse.

### *Worship*

The basic principle to remember is that your message is not the sermon; your message is the service. Your entire worship service from beginning to end is sending out a message. Excellent worship services send out a unified message by building the entire worship service around one theme. Once a broad theme has been selected then each aspect of the service— music, introductions, announcements, scripture reading, prayers, drama, sermon—are selected to support the theme.

### *Only One Percent*

It doesn't always take major changes to upgrade your ministries. A few changes can make dramatic improvements. Realistically you can't make big changes all the time but you can make small improvements and make them continuously.

If we don't see small improvements taking place regularly, the quality of our ministries may be heading downward. There is no need to see major improvements take place all at once. Our challenge is to make small incremental improvements each and every year. Raising the quality of twelve key ministries by only once percent each amounts to about a twelve percent increase in a year. Doing that for five years in a row would equal a 60% improvement.

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