



PARAGRAPHS FOR PARTNERS

2020 – Issue #3



From the Executive Minister
Rev. Dr. James Kelsey

I have been hearing about the “new normal” for years now. When I hear those words, I instinctively think here is something I am not going to like but have no choice about. I will accept it, adapt and go on; but I probably won’t like it as much as the “old normal.”

These days we hear a lot about the new normal as we adjust to a world with COVID19. As I think about quarantine and the changes we all have had to make and the changes that may endure into the future, I am reminded of the Hebrew exile in Babylon.

Babylon: The Promise Land, in this case the southern part Judah, has been overrun by the Babylonians. Many of the people had been carried off to Babylon as captives. Their loss was incalculable.

The land that God had given to the descendants of Abraham was now in the hands of a people who did not know or worship the God of Abraham. Jerusalem, the holy city, the city of God’s glory, lay in ruins. The Jewish Temple, the place where God’s unmediated presence dwelt, had been ransacked and stripped of all its precious treasures. The Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant containing the tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments with God’s own finger, was leveled. The Ark was carried off, never to be restored to the Temple again.

Their loss was more than material. This tragedy raised theological questions. Are the gods of Babylon greater than the God of Abraham? The question was unavoidable.

The Psalmist captures the pain of the exiles:

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.
There on the poplars
we hung our harps,
for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
How can we sing the songs of the LORD
while in a foreign land?
If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.
May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you,
if I do not consider Jerusalem
my highest joy [137:1-6].

The exiles came to accept their situation, but they were never reconciled to it.

Quarantine: Quarantine for us may function as a type of exile. (I am not suggesting that COVID19 is God's punishment, as was the exile. That is not where I am going; forget that.) We may feel there is no end in sight as we await the peak and then wince at talk of a "second wave." I like Dr. Anthony Fauci; we compact people must stick together. But every time I see him on TV, I wince with apprehension that he is going to send us all back to our bunkers.

Much of what we have lost will be restored to us someday, but not everything. On Fridays, PBS NewsHour ends with pictures and brief descriptions of people who have died that week of COVID19. It drives home the reality that some of the loss will never be restored. Financially, some of us will never recover, personally or our businesses.

Hebrews Going Home: The Hebrews did go home after 40 years, but as the Hebrews returned to the Promise Land they never got back all they had lost. Apart from a brief period during Maccabean rule, when the great powers were preoccupied with bigger things, the Hebrews were never a free people in their own land. They were ruled by pagans.

Initially upon their return the Temple was a very modest structure. Over time, it grew in size and splendor. Herod built a magnificent structure, but Herod was not a true full-blooded Jew and ruled as a Roman flunky. The Ark of the Covenant, the central symbol of their relationship with God, was absent. It wasn't the same as before.

Nonetheless, the Hebrews came home from exile with valuable gifts. In Babylon, the reading of scripture came to substitute as a type of Temple sacrifice. Now they had a faith that could be practiced any place in the world, a worship that was not tied to a purpose-built building or a regimented liturgy that required a special class of clergy, priests not Rabbis. This created a future for their faith that could survive in all paces under all circumstances.

Out of the exile period came the Synagogue system. As long as you had 10 adult Jewish males, you could form a faith community and worship, educate your children, and care for one another. (If you did not have the 10 requisite males, you could gather at the closest water—river or lake. This was an accommodation that enabled Jewish worship anywhere.) Christian communities in the New Testament were modeled on the synagogue. Our church structure and practice are the fruit of the exile.

Our Going Home: For us "going home" will happen when a vaccine is found and effective drugs to treat the infection are developed. Until then, none of us will really be home the way we used to be. Being back together in worship will be great; but hand sanitizer, getting your temperature taken at the door, 6 feet of separation, masks, and entering and exiting by pew alone will give it a different feeling.

In the meantime, God is working in us and among us. In a recent survey of our churches, a majority of them noted losses they have experienced during the pandemic, but a majority of them also listed new ministries and opportunities they have discovered during this period. Our congregations will come out of this better prepared to practice ministry no matter what the circumstances. Why do I believe this? Because our God is mightier than any virus. This virus and the gods of Babylon are no match for the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Moses—the God we have come to know in Jesus.

Let us listen to what God said to those exiles sitting in Babylon. The God who brought them out of Egypt with power and majesty is now doing a new thing among them.

Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert (Isaiah 43:18-19)

God is always doing new things among us. Use these days well. Listen closely.

Jim Kelsey

CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS: Sarah De Bourg (Cornerstone Community Ch, Endicott) died 05/26/20 *
Shirley Pooler, wife of Rev. John Pooler (Broome-Tioga Association) died 06/30/20



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



LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

Pablo Rivas Perea from FBC Poughkeepsie 7/12/20
Stephanie Wyatt from West BC Oswego 4/12/20
Jeff Lamphear from Interim to Pastor, Granville BC 7/12/20

DATES TO REMEMBER

September 18, 2020 -- Thrive in Ministry: Developing Resilience for the Long Journey (Session 1)
October 2, 2020 -- Thrive in Ministry: Developing Resilience for the Long Journey (Session 2)
October 14-17 2020 -- ABCNYS Biennial
October 23, 2020 -- Thrive in Ministry: Developing Resilience for the Long Journey (Session 3)
November 6-8, 2020 -- ABY Convention
November 20&21, 2020 -- Embracing God's Future Without Forgetting the Past

Dear Men of NY State

In the best interest of the men in our Region, the leaders of ABMEN NYS have decided that we will be canceling our annual men's conference in August. Even as our state begins to reopen, Keuka College is behind in its school-related activities, so that we may not even have a venue. ABMEN NYS would also like our men to focus on their home churches and community as we go forward from this crisis. We prayed hard on this decision and feel it is the best way we can protect the vulnerable members of our churches. We will continue to keep all our churches in prayer during this difficult time.

God bless you all.

Leroy Woodruff

President, ABMEN NYS

The message below was in the 07-02-20 edition of Region Notes (bi-weekly email). More information on "Out of the Box Camping", the summer program offered by VP Ministries can be found at:
<http://www.vpccministries.org/out-of-the-box-camping/>. VP Ministries is a Validated Ministry of ABCNYS.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF VICK & PATHFINDER CAMP & CONFERENCE MINISTRIES

(VP Ministries): *Over the last 3 months the Board of Directors has been meeting every week. We have explored a number of innovative ways to re-imagine the camping program during this pandemic. Due to many factors, including a mandate from the state of New York, we will not be able to have a traditional overnight camp this year. However, thanks to our amazing staff, we are excited to introduce a new way to experience camp from home for summer 2020.... staff and board will share content on our [social media channels](#)... We look forward to seeing you in person in 2021 when we return to our overnight camping program.*

OGHS FUNDS FOR COVID19 RELIEF

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) has launched the process to apply for Covid19 related One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) grants. Its goal is to raise and disburse OGHS funds totaling \$1 million dollars to American Baptists in the US and Puerto Rico, in order to provide COVID19 emergency assistance and award grants of \$1,000-5,000 on a quarterly basis (April-June 2020, July - September 2020, October - December 2020, January - March 2021).

OGHS COVID19 funds will be processed by ABHMS, preferably by applicants applying online at this link: <https://abhms.org/abhms-covid-recovery-grant-application-form>. The password is: COVID1920

Priority for awarding grants will be given to organizations who are first time applicants. Questions? Contact GrantsAdmin@abhms.org.

FINANCIAL HELP

ABCNYS offers assistance to pastors in need through the Psalm Fund. The Region's Executive Committee designated up to \$25,000 of the Psalm Fund to provide for pastors who are experiencing budget cuts to pay and benefits. To receive an application form, please contact Rev. Jerrod Huguenot (jhuguenot@abc-nys.org). We also welcome donations to support our pastors during COVID19. You can donate to the Psalm Fund (noting "COVID19") by sending a check (payable to ABCNYS) via: ABCNYS, 3218 James Street, Syracuse, NY 13206.

MMBB offers assistance to ABCUSA pastors who are members of the Comprehensive Benefits plan (the most common plan MMBB offers). They will consider applications up to \$3,500 in one-time grants. Please contact MMBB directly for this application form: 1-800-986-6222 or contact Grace.Cruz@mmbb.org. Rev. Gradia McKinney is also glad to work with ABCNYS pastors (Gradia.mckinney@mmbb.org or 347-703-1582).

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.**

SUPPORTING OUR PASTORS

Since mid-March, churches and pastors have been adjusting to many challenges in offering church services virtually or other means. Then came Holy Week and Easter. Then came the realization that we would be waiting awhile before "in person" worship would happen. And now, we are learning that the reverting back to "in person" will be a slower and more safety-minded experience than we first thought back in the early Spring. And will our time off be only a "stay-cation" at best?

As Summer is underway, how will pastors take a Sunday off? (Or better said, has your pastor taken a Sunday away from preaching and leading worship since March?) ABCNYS is here to help our pastors have some time away to renew and rest from week to week worship duties. Jim Kelsey and Jerrod Huguenot are willing to serve as guest preachers by joining your worship service virtually to offer pastoral presence or to provide YouTube or mp4 files of sermons to "edit in" for your weekly worship planning. We welcome your invitations and will do our best to accommodate the variety of different needs of our churches and pastors with the common goal of helping our pastors find some well-earned Sabbath!

Contact: Jim Kelsey (jkelsey@abc-nys.org) or Jerrod Huguenot (jhuguenot@abc-nys.org)

Thrive in Ministry: Developing Resilience for the Long Journey



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

What is This About?

Resilience is nothing more than the ability to rebound, and even thrive, during challenging circumstances, adversity, conflict, failure, or even positive events. This three-part workshop focuses on developing simple tools and practices which enable pastors to build their resilience in midst of rapid and constant change.

Who Will Lead Us?

Rev. Dr. Mike Oldham is a Ministry & Mission Coach for the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains, working with churches and pastors in that Region. His passion is to see these churches and pastors thrive, not just survive. Mike believes as pastors and churches learn to observe how systems keep them trapped in old ways of thinking, they will be able to allow the Spirit to break into their ministry context and breathe new life. Mike recently completed a DMin thesis at Denver Seminary entitled *Empowering American Baptist Pastors of Pastoral-Size Churches to Develop Psychological and Theological Resilience in an Age of Disestablishment*.



When?

We will meet from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. online on September 18th, October 2nd, and October 23rd.

How Much?

Cost is \$10. The event is underwritten by the Region's "Preparing for God's Future" Palmer Grant. This meeting is part of the ongoing Region series: **Preparing the Church for God's Future**

Please register by September 4, 2020.

ONLINE REGISTRATION: https://ministrelife.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcld-2prTwpGdY_VBxebtZEpbHtljBwH1Vo

Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Church _____

Email _____ Phone number _____

Return to: ABCNYS, 3218 James Street, Syracuse NY 13206 or jkelsey@abc-nys.org. Checks payable to ABCNYS or 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 "Thrive in Ministry".





**ABCNYS 2020 Biennial
October 14-17
Online**

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

With each passing week plans for our upcoming Biennial become more and more clear. Our Biennial will consist of both pre-recorded and live-stream sessions and will include both presentations as well as opportunities to share and connect with one another. You can expect, as in the past, both opening and closing worship, a number of breakout sessions, a time of fun and fellowship; and a business meeting including a state of the Region address, recognition of new pastors, and election of leadership of the Region.

Our special guests for this event are:

- 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
- Rev. Dr. Eddie Cruz, National Coordinator of Congregational Mission and Discipleship from American Baptist Home Mission Societies.
- Ruth Fox, International Ministries' Global Coordinator for Education
- Dr. Kathleen E. Moore, Certified Consulting Meteorologist, representing the Creation Justice Network.

We have asked each of our participants to include in their addresses their own unique perspectives in the context of what is happening in our nation regarding racism and its many manifestations and the pandemic with all of its implications, all the while using the broader theme of Civility.

The Biennial will begin on Wednesday, October 14, at 7 pm with an opening session and worship with the Rev. Eddie Cruz.

Thursday, October 15, at 7 pm we are planning live-stream seminar/breakout sessions with a brief introduction by each of four presenters.

Friday's program at 7 pm on October 16 will also be a live-stream event. It will include a fun event for the whole family and a time of fellowship in chat rooms.

Saturday, October 17, from 9:30 - 11:30 am we will conduct our business meeting and have a closing worship with Dr. Mouw, followed by a Communion of the Lord's Table.

Stay tuned for further details, brochures, and registration materials. Blessings for a safe summer!

Faithfully Submitted,

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



ABCNYS LAY STUDY PROGRAM FALL 2020

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

MINISTRY TO INDIVIDUALS – STARTING SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

When: Wednesday evenings 6:30pm

Where: Online only.

Instructor: Rev. Dennis Christiansen (dennischristiansen@htva.net)

Textbooks:

Lay Shepherding: A Guide for Visiting the Sick, the Troubled, and the Bereaved by Rudolph E Grantham. Judson Press.

A Pastor in Every Pew: Equipping Laity for Pastoral Care by Leroy Howe. Judson Press.

Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart: How to Relate to Those Who Are Suffering by Kenneth C. Haugk. Stephens Ministries.

You Are One of Us: Successful Clergy/Church Connections to Alzheimer's Families by Lisa P. Gwyther. Duke University Medical Center.

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.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS – STARTING SEPTEMBER 21 . 2020

This will be an interactive course focused on thinking through contemporary issues and moral questions from a Christian perspective.

When: Monday evenings 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Where: Online only.

Instructor: Rev. George Stefani (Stefani.George@gmail.com)

Textbook: An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues by Robin W. Lovin. Abingdon Press, 2010.

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)

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.

**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.

Embracing God's Future without Forgetting the Past

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



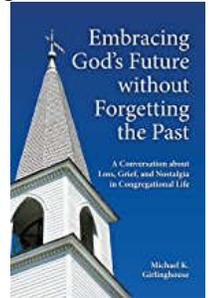
November 20 to 21, 2020

This experience has been changed
to an online meeting.

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 on Friday evening at 7:00 pm. We will meet on Saturday beginning at 10:00 a.m. and will finish at 1:15 p.m.

How Much?

There is no cost. This event is underwritten by the Region's "Preparing for God's Future" Palmer Grant.

This meeting is part of the ongoing Region series: **Preparing the Church for God's Future**

Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Church _____

Email _____ Phone number _____

I would like a complimentary copy of Girlinghouse's book _____. (You must register by October 23rd to get the complimentary book.)

Return to: ABCNYS, 3218 James Street, Syracuse NY 13206 or office@abc-nys.org or Register online: https://ministrelife.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYtdeuhqDsjGtD5_4awOSBRr7ushWY9mTkk

AMERICAN BAPTIST
MISSION SUPPORT

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

	United Mission	Annual Offerings	Institutions, Specifics & Targeted	Total ABMS
Received 2020	107,871	81,906	81,845	271,622
Received 2019	134,184	96,760	91,371	322,315
\$ Ahead (Behind)	(26,313)	(14,854)	(9,526)	(50,693)
% Ahead (Behind)	(19.61)	(15.35)	(10.43)	(15.73)

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.

Motivating New Volunteers

The Case of the Puzzled Pastor

“I just don’t get it,” pastor Randy Gallo commented, while holding the cell phone closer to his ear. “During the announcements this morning, I clearly laid out a challenge to our people to get involved in some way. I described how it was their duty to serve, and then presented statistics that demonstrated a clear need for several of our ministries. I even talked about how good it would feel to accomplish something for Christ.” There was silence for a moment as he listened to what the other person was saying. Then he continued, “Yes, I gave a passionate plea to get involved in serving. I asked people to come and talk to me after the worship service if they’d like to volunteer.” Pastor Gallo paused again to listen to his caller. “You guessed it. No one talked to me about serving. I felt like some people were even avoiding me. I’ve done everything I know of to motivate people to serve, but it’s not working. I just don’t get it.”

Pastor Gallo’s puzzlement is common among pastors and church leaders. Every effort to recruit and motivate new volunteers is met with silence, if not outright cold shoulders. People are so busy they don’t have

time to serve, at least at church. They have time for work, friends, working around their houses, and, of course, their children’s activities, but little time for church ministry. Fortunately, there are some keys to help.

First, begin with prayer. At one point in his ministry, Jesus observed the fact that people were distressed without a shepherd. Instead of sending his disciples to meet the people’s need, he called them to prayer. “Beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38), he told them. This is where you must begin, asking God to raise up workers, leaders, and volunteers so you can fulfill his mission through your church.

Second, build a solid foundation. Recruiting begins with building a biblical theology of giftedness. Teach others that no one has all the gifts necessary to build a church. Let them know that everyone has at least one spiritual gift to use in serving the body (1 Pet. 4:10). Encourage them to discover their gifts, and to start using them.

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

Third, analyze your process. Ask questions. “Has the church erected conscious or unconscious barriers that discourage people from volunteering?” Do people understand the need? Is there a clarity about what is to be done? Is there a support system in place? What is God saying to you through this vacancy? Work hard to discover what possible volunteers are saying beneath the surface when they refuse to participate. For example, are they rejecting the role because they don’t like the leader? Or are they too busy? Or are they misunderstanding what the role entails? Talk through the opportunity with them. If you let them talk long enough, and don’t stop at their initial rejection, their true reason will become clear. When you find out the real reasons behind the rejection, you’ll be able to address them.

Fourth, focus on people rather than programs. Examine the church looking at the various parts the Holy Spirit has given. Then imagine how the church might function if the various parts of the body served based on their gifts. Gradually start redeploying the people who are already volunteering, according to their spiritual gifts. As you do, people will become more resistant to burnout, confident that they are doing God’s will, and fruitful in ministry.

Fifth, trust people with ministry. If you’re going to see results from your recruitment, you have to put your

reputation, and the church’s, on the line. New recruits may not do ministry as well as you or other leaders in the church, but if you don’t release control you’ll miss the life-giving power that comes from others involved in serving. Additionally you’ll have to give up feelings of perfection. Yes, you’ll want to do ministry so it brings honor to God, but volunteers can’t live under the tyranny of perfection.

Sixth, establish reasonable qualifications. Don’t expect volunteers to be elder qualified to get started. All churches desire mature volunteers who are walking closely with the Lord. But, the reality is churches set the requirements to serve so high that hardly anyone can reach them. Remember the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy and Titus are for elders and deacons! Not for beginning servants.

Seventh, Get people involved early! It’s a little risky, but not doing it poses greater risk. If newcomers sit too long, you actually are teaching them NOT to serve. It’s better to recruit newcomers into service quickly—by their third or fourth visit if possible. Ask for their help putting Bible’s out on tables, fixing coffee, setting up chairs, making name tags, distributing programs/bulletins, or anything that says, “We want you to serve.” Letting newcomers assume some small degree of responsibility says two things: you are valuable and needed.

Which of these ideas might help you recruit and motive new volunteers? Which will you begin to use?

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GROWTH POINTS

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

Pioneer into the Community

As North American culture glides toward secularism, significant numbers of church attendees view their church as a place to gather in safety with others who hold similar beliefs and values. To them, the church is a home where they come each weekend to be healed, comforted, and encouraged before they venture back into an unfriendly world. Instead of venturing out to reach a lost world, numbers of churches have settled down to maintain their home away from home.

Your church may be so comfortable the people have lost their pioneering spirit. Face it! If you and your church have stopped pioneering, you're settlers. It's time to start pioneering again. Here's how to do it.

First, believe in the power of the gospel. Paul described how the Thessalonians received the gospel: "For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1 Thess. 1:5; see Rom. 1:16). The gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ is powerful because God is in it. When it's preached, God works through it to

bring people to salvation. Yet, Paul makes it personal when he says, "our gospel." He had made the gospel his own, and so must you if you hope to preach it with power. You must preach the gospel out of your own experience of saving grace.

Second, expect the gospel to bring growth when it is proclaimed. A metaphor the apostle Paul used throughout his epistles was of *seed that grows*. "I planted, Apollos watered," Paul declared, "but God was causing the growth" (1 Cor. 3:6). There is a living seed to sow—the gospel of salvation through the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (see 1 Cor. 15:1-11). When it's sown, God makes it grow. Luke reminds us "the word of the Lord continued to grow and be multiplied" (Acts 12:24). Paul noted that the same gospel was "constantly bearing fruit and increasing" (Col. 1:6). Bearing fruit is an agricultural expectation. A sower always plants in anticipation of the seed growing.

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

Third, encourage everyone in your church to demonstrate the gospel. The most powerful testimony to the gospel's power is loving people. Jesus affirmed, "all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:34-35). Part of what gave the gospel power when preached to the Thessalonians was the loving relationships among all concerned. Paul noted. "Having so *fond an affection* for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also *our own lives*, because *you had become very dear to us*" (Emphasis added. 1 Thess. 2:7-8).

Fourth, cultivate a sending mentality in your church. People outside of your church have no interest in your world. You must connect with their world. Christ didn't say, "Hey! I'm up here in heaven. I hope you get interested in it." Rather, he came down to earth, entered our world, spoke our language, and felt our pain, so that he could take us up into his world (See John 1:14; Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15). We need to do the same with people outside our church.

Fifth, teach everyone in your church to be a contagious inviter. Andrew invited his brother Peter to meet Jesus, and Philip invited Nathanael. In both cases, the invitations resulted in them becoming disciples (Jn. 1:40-51). On a

personal level, non-Christians, as well as unchurched people, are open to discussing spiritual concerns. It's invitations to church that are not as well received as in the past. Your people must still invite others, but to dinner in their home, or lunch at a restaurant, or some social event. Ask your people to use these times to share how Christ has changed their own lives.

Sixth, focus your efforts on who you are trying to reach, rather than those you are trying to keep. Narrow your focus from *everyones* to *someones*. You won't have a good outreach plan unless you can specifically say whom you're trying to reach. The best *someones* you should focus on are the folks your church members are already doing life with—neighbors, friends, associates, and family members. Have your people take an inventory of those they do life with but are far from God. Those are your *someones*. The obvious question is, do you know who your *someones* are?

Seventh, make your church highly visible in the community. If non-believers have heard positive gossip about your church, it will help your attendees invite and invest in relationships. In our secular society, around twenty-five percent of people are not predisposed to think of church, let alone attend one. What they are seeking is hope. Position your church as a place of hope, which means a place of healing, restoration, and redemption.

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GROWTH POINTS

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

Coaching New Recruits

Take a moment and think about the people who've helped you in your career or life or family. When I consider the people whom God has brought into my life, I remember those who pushed me to become better, inspired me to work harder, and challenged me to be the best person possible.

One of those people was my junior varsity basketball coach during my sophomore year of high school. He was also my science teacher, and he didn't let me slide by in either place. His challenge to be better spilled over from the basketball court to the classroom, and vice versa. At the time, it wasn't enjoyable. I couldn't get away from his watchful eye and constant pressure to improve. He mandated progress; he was right to do it. My grades improved, as did my play. As a coach, he pushed me to succeed and create a winning attitude, and he made me believe in myself. He instilled a desire to win—yes, win—not at all costs, but to face life with a winning attitude. Even though I never cracked the starting basketball lineup, the lessons he taught have stayed with me for a lifetime.

What do successful coaches actually do? The most successful focus on three

areas: recruiting, training, and coordinating.

Recruiting

Coaches are always looking for new players—especially “A” players. Such players in church ministry are as rare as they are in sports. Take NBA basketball, for example. There are few Kobes, Jordans, or Birds, but lots of Morrisons, Perdues, and Sichtings. The first group are “A” players, while the second group are “B” players. Yet, the teams represented by all of these players would not have won the NBA championship without the “B” players.

Winning teams tend to have at least one star player, but they have many solid middle players. The backbone of all churches is not the star players but the middle workers who show up and serve week after week. When you wear the coach's hat, stop looking just for the “A” people, and recruit more “B” players.

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

Training

Once a person is recruited, he has a right to be trained. All arenas of work or service offer some form of training to their people. Doctors do internships, soldiers go through boot camp, artists apprentice to experts, and athletes are conditioned in training camps.

When Christ recruited his disciples (“Follow me”), he also committed himself to them (“I will make you fishers of men”) (Matthew 4:19). Note, if you expect people to respond positively to your recruitment, you have to commit yourself to train them. See if the following ideas will help. First, teach them. Second, show them. Third, allow them. To train people, you must allow them the chance to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes. No one learns to swim without sinking a few times!

Coordinating

Except in a few rare case, coaches do not play in the game. Their role is to place players where they best fit, where they’ll do the best for the team, and where they’ll give the team the best chance of winning. Placing people in the right positions is an art. Here are some ideas to consider.

First, examine the person’s gifts, talents, or skills. Everyone has a mix of abilities and skills, so narrow down your insights to the primary ones that people bring to the table every day.

Second, determine what contribution a person is making (or will make) to the ministry. Be specific. Ask what would happen if this person wasn’t here? Where would this person be missed the most? Identify what a person brings to the ministry and put him where he can be most fruitful.

Third, separate ability from compatibility. Some people may wow you with their abilities but not fit well on the team. Independent-oriented people are not as helpful as team-oriented people. Place people on a team to foster compatibility.

Fourth, don’t judge people based on what others are doing. The primary issue is what they are contributing to the team. Ask what will make them better. Do they need training, education, or mentoring? Once you know the answers to these questions, do your best to get them the needed assistance.

Fifth, move people around until you find their best fit on the team. However, if a fit cannot be found, it’s time to consider moving them to an entirely separate place of service. They need to be either coached up or coached out of the task.

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