

American Baptist Churches of New York State  
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# PARAGRAPHS FOR PARTNERS

2021 – Issue #3



From the Executive Minister  
Rev. Dr. James Kelsey

## A Future That Fits Your Church

Wanting a Good Future: I saw an advertisement on the internet for a T-shirt with “I’m old I know things” printed on it.

I think of that T-shirt sometimes when I am talking with churches that want a young pastor. There is the exaggeration of denominational staff everywhere about churches saying: “We want a pastor in her/his early 30s with 15 years of experience, a seminary education, good with the elderly and small children, and can sing and play a musical instrument—the cello would be nice.”

I get this, I really do. This is about a great deal more than the age of the pastor. Churches are looking for a sense of a future. After the present members are gone, they want the assurance that the church’s ministry will continue. They want to know that they are investing their lives and resources in something that will outlast them. The sense of a good future feeds commitment and sacrifice in the present. This is a good and noble sentiment, one that should be honored and nurtured.

The future of a church grows out of its present choices and circumstances. This does not mean that God does not do new and surprising things among us, as Jeremiah reminds the exiles in Babylon (Isaiah 43:9). It does mean, however, that we need to consider the present facts on the ground in the community as we plot the future. A younger pastor with children will not change the facts on the ground.

Fact One: There is no *evidence* that hiring a younger pastor with children will *necessarily* attract younger members with children. This, I know, is counter intuitive. One thinks that if a young family visits and sees a younger pastor, they will be more prone to return. Experience and evidence do not bear this out. If a church calls a younger pastor with the expectation that this alone will attract young families, the congregation is setting themselves up for disappointment; and disappointment can lead to conflict and blaming.

A search committee asked a candidate, a friend of mine, what he would do to bring young families into the church. The candidate responded by asking what initiatives they had already undertaken. He was met with silence. His point was that pastors alone cannot make this happen. This arises from the congregation and the context of the church (see below). Hiring a younger pastor with children will not *necessarily* bring in more young families.

Fact Two: Congregations cannot change the economics and demographics of the world around them. Allen T. Stanton writes about this in *Reclaiming Rural—Building Thriving Rural Congregations*. The way a church grows in ministry and membership is a product of the community in which it sits.

If GM opens a factory in your community and Amazon builds a warehouse, new houses will be built and your church will grow. If the major employer in your town shuts down, this will likely over time negatively affect your church. Congregations must play the best they can the hand they are dealt. They do not have the option of turning in their cards and asking for a new hand.

Fact Three: Youthfulness is not the exclusive source of vitality. The conventional wisdom is that civic and faith communities where young adults abound are vital places. Stanton writes “The logic of young adults and families being key to vitality is born out of the suburban experience, which primarily draws on young families [p. 29].” Many of our congregations are not in a suburban setting.

Stanton points out some differences between younger and older people that are relevant to the life of a congregation. Young families today typically have less disposable income, more debt, and less free time to volunteer. They bring life and good gifts to a church, but they are not the only ones bringing gifts that contribute to vitality. Older adults have more disposable income and more free time to volunteer and are more prone to join an organization. Older folks also bring good gifts to congregations.

Stanton worked with a church in Clay County NC where the economy has shifted toward recreation over the past few decades. The over-65 population has grown by 6%, and the under-18 population has shrunk. Retired people are moving there for the weather, the lakes, and the mountains. Churches there are still vital, but they look a bit different than they did 30 years ago. Like the community around them, they reflect the changing demographics and economics of the area.

I met with the leadership of a church several years ago to talk about how they could grow their ministry. They had a vision for ministry to children and showed me a room of recently purchased child-sized tables and chairs. We then talked about who they knew with young children. All of them had adult children. No one in the church had young children. Among their friends, neighbors, and coworkers—mostly single adults—they did not know anyone with young children.

Then we went on to talk about what needs might lie among the people they knew in their community and their families and coworkers. They talked about the isolated and sometimes impoverished senior citizens around them. They talked about the social and support needs among their coworkers. Some of the people in the meeting participated in book groups; there seemed to be an interest in that among the people they knew. We talked about how they might minister to the people they knew and others who they knew lived in their community. One woman said: “I guess we bought the wrong sized chairs.” They came up with some outreach ministries that were tailored to the community and lives they actually had.

Eagerness Breeds Vitality: Key to a vital life for a church is an eagerness to address the needs and interests of the people in the community in which the church lies and in not seeking to address the needs and people of a different community, such as the idealized suburban community that so preoccupies our vision of vitality.

Churches want a sense of a future, and this is healthy. This motivates us to dedicate ourselves to and sacrifice for our congregations. That future, however, will be a good and achievable future if it is tied to the needs and interests of people actually present in the church’s community. Our eagerness to serve must take into account the facts on the ground.

Blessings, Jim Kelsey



**REGION OFFERING 2021  
"GIVING YOURSELF FIRST TO THE LORD"**

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

**CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS: Horace Stoddard** (Retired, Living Waters Association) died 6/1/21



**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 CHANGES**

Michael & Nancy Krembs to Pastors, FBC Norwich 5/9/21  
Richard Reed from Interim to Pastor, Tully United Comm Ch 4/25/21  
William Tatum to Interim, Eastwood BC Syracuse 5/2/21  
PJ Holcomb from Granville BC  
Louise Barger from First United Ch Fulton 6/13/21  
Leon Runner to Pastor, First United Ch Fulton 6/20/21  
Wayne Grow to Pastor, Bartlett BC  
Htee Gay from Associate FBC Rome to Co-Pastor, Tabernacle BC Utica 6/1/21  
Jeffrey Lamphear from Granville BC 6/24/21  
Jeff Miller, FBC Watkins Glen, Ordained 4/28/21  
Kymberly McNair, Antioch BC Bedford Hills, Ordination Recognized 5/10/21

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

September 6, 2021 -- ABCNYS Office Closed  
September 12-14, 2021 -- Ministers Council Retreat @ Notre Dame Retreat Center, Canandaigua  
October 11, 2021 -- ABCNYS Office Closed  
November 5-7, 2021 -- ABY Convention @ Holiday Inn, Liverpool/Syracuse  
November 11-14, 2021 -- Mission Trip to Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier  
November 25&25, 2021 -- ABCNYS Office Closed

**Changes to New York Baptist Annual 2021**

Page 14 **First Baptist Church, Manchester:** Web: [manchesterfbc.org](http://manchesterfbc.org)  
Page 18 **Syracuse Karen Baptist Church:** Email: [syrkbc.ny@gmail.com](mailto:syrkbc.ny@gmail.com)  
**Tully United Community Church:** Email: [tullyunitedcc@gmail.com](mailto:tullyunitedcc@gmail.com)  
Page 19 **Living Waters Association:** New Moderator: Steve Dygert, 23 Tioga St., Waverly NY 14892, 607.565.9593, [stevedygert@gmail.com](mailto:stevedygert@gmail.com)  
Page 20 **Searsburg Community Church:** Email: [csuitos@ottcmail.com](mailto:csuitos@ottcmail.com)  
Page 26 **Hosanna Zomi Christian Church:** New name: Hosanna Mission Church  
Page 29 **First Baptist Church, Malone:** Email: [firstbaprog@central.ny.twcbc.com](mailto:firstbaprog@central.ny.twcbc.com)  
Page 30 **WEGO Association:** New Moderator: Tom Tharp, 190 Oak St., Batavia NY 14020, 585.343.4905, [tomstharp@gmail.com](mailto:tomstharp@gmail.com)

**Hello Fellow Pilgrims and Pastors along the journey of faith and life,**

I hope you are planning to begin your fall with colleagues at the CLERGY RETREAT Sept. 12-14 at Notre Dame Retreat Center in Canandaigua NY. Details on the registration form.



Our own Jim Kelsey will lead us on "Practicing Civility" and how to use it in our personal lives as well as in our churches' lives.

SAVE yourself \$30.00 and register before August 1st.

Hope to see you at Notre Dame.

Questions? Call/write me at 716-433-0976 or [butterflypreacher@juno.com](mailto:butterflypreacher@juno.com)

Patricia (Pat) Ludwig

President of ABCNYS Ministers Council

**SAVE THE DATE FOR ABY 2021**

**FINDING JOY**

**James 1:2-3**

**November 5-7th, 2021**

**Holiday Inn, Liverpool\***

**Mission: VPCC Ministries**

**Supporting Camp Vick & Pathfinder Lodge!**

**\*We are preparing for an in-person experience  
with the possibility of moving online**

**f @ABYofNYS #ABYCon2021 Instagram @aby.nys**



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

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

### **CHURCH ADMINISTRATION – STARTING SEPTEMBER 21, 2021**

This course is designed as an introduction to the basic functions of Christian leadership and oversight of the organizational aspects of an American Baptist church. The course will be divided into two main sections: 1) An overview of leadership development in an American Baptist context, 2) The everyday “nuts and bolts” of leading a church in which a variety of tasks of administration will be explored

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

**Instructor:** Rev. Steve Reynolds. [consultingpastor@gmail.com](mailto:consultingpastor@gmail.com)

### **NEW TESTAMENT – STARTING SEPTEMBER 15, 2021**

This course is designed to introduce the student to: the historical and cultural context of the New Testament, the concepts of scriptural inspiration and canon, the types and characteristics of the literary genre and corresponding methods of interpretation of the books of the New Testament, the purposes for writing the various books of the New Testament, the theories of authorship of each of the books of the New Testament, and the major themes of the books of the New Testament.

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

**Instructor:** Rev. Marlene Ciranowicz, [pastormpbc1013@gmail.com](mailto:pastormpbc1013@gmail.com)

### **BASIC CHRISTIAN BELIEFS – STARTING OCTOBER 18, 2021**

This course is designed to help students explore their own beliefs based on Scripture as illuminated to him or her through comprehensive study and interaction with others. Topics to be studied are: the nature of scripture and revelation, God, creation, humanity, salvation, the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, and the church.

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

**Instructor:** Rev. Jason Hladik, [pastorhladik@icloud.com](mailto:pastorhladik@icloud.com)

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

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

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

**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.

LS.4

**UPDATE**

**AMERICAN BAPTIST  
MISSION SUPPORT**

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

	United Mission	Annual Offerings	Institutions, Specifics & Targeted	Total ABMS
Received 2021	127,009	98,896	88,530	314,435
Received 2020	107,871	81,906	81,845	271,622
\$ Ahead (Behind)	19,138	16,990	6,685	42,813
% Ahead (Behind)	17.74	20.74	8.17	15.76

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

Thriving in Ministry:  
Part-Time Pastors and ABCNYS Churches  
Friday/Saturday, October 29-30, 2021  
Good News Center, Utica, New York



*Most ABCNYS churches are served by part-time pastors. Sometimes churches and pastors share struggles and frustrations with this model. Others have found a ministry model that works for them! So.... What makes the difference? Let's talk!*

Join our facilitator, Rev. J. Steven Reynolds (4T...I-40 Consulting) in exploring part-time ministry, particularly with insights from the recent book *Part-Time is Plenty: Thriving Without Full-Time Clergy*. We will look at the increase of part-time pastors and what key conversations and commitments are needed to balance realistic expectations with smaller budgets. We will also look at working collaboratively in a shared ministry model that has ancient roots in Christian history but may seem like a recent development.



Rev. Steve Reynolds  
4T...I-40 Consulting

This overnight workshop will explore strategies for identifying adjustments and how to make the most of part-time ministry. We will examine existing part-time pastor/church relationships to see what works and what needs rethinking!

**When & Where?** The Good News Center (<https://www.thegoodnewscenter.org/>), 10475 Cosby Manor Road, Utica, NY 13502. Starts Friday night with dinner at 6 PM followed by the first session at 7:00 pm. Overnight lodging (single occupancy with limited double occupancy for married couples) and breakfast/lunch will be provided on Saturday, departing home at 3 PM.

**How Much? The cost to residential participants is \$25 per person.\***

*\*The majority of the cost of this event is underwritten by your church's contributions to the ABCNYS Region Offering, America for Christ and United Mission Basics, as well as the Region's "Preparing for God's Future" Palmer Grant received through the American Baptist Foundation.*

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

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**Registration Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_ I wish to attend in person \_\_\_\_\_ Online only \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary/allergy needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: ABCNYS, 3218 James Street, Syracuse NY 13206 or [office@abc-nys.org](mailto:office@abc-nys.org)

**REGISTRATION DUE: OCTOBER 4, 2021.**

**REGISTER BY SEPTEMBER 17 AND GET A FREE COPY OF THE BOOK "PART-TIME IS PLENTY"!**

(This conference is recommended for fully COVID19 vaccinated participants.)

We will offer livestreaming for those unable to attend and/or a recording for later viewing.)





**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES  
NEW YORK STATE MINISTERS COUNCIL  
MINISTERS RETREAT  
SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2021**

**NOTRE DAME RETREAT CENTER**  
5151 Foster Road, Canandaigua, NY 14424  
ph. 585-394-5700

**PRACTICING CIVILITY:**

**The Spirit is Willing but the Flesh is Weak**

*Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:8-9)*

Presenter: Rev. Dr. James Kelsey  
Executive Minister, American Baptist Churches New York State

Dr. Kelsey will use information and strategies from his ongoing research on civility, begun during his sabbatical. If you have attended some of Dr. Kelsey's other programs on civility, this Retreat will provide you with a safe space and opportunity to practice those skills. We will look at practical daily ways to develop our capacity for civility. Also, this Retreat will give greater attention to our own personal experiences and struggles in an interactive format and will introduce us to additional material.

If you have not participated in one of his prior trainings, this Retreat will give you a chance to hear about his work and develop real life strategies for meaningful and productive dialogue with people who do not necessarily share your views.

Regardless, through this time together it is hoped that collectively we will discover the power in civility.

*In lieu of formal breakout sessions we offer the following opportunities at the Retreat Center grounds, as well as the beautiful area in and around Canandaigua:*

*AT THE RETREAT CENTER*

- Walk the trails
- Spend time at the water front
- Visit the Chapel for a quiet time of prayer
- Pray the Stations of the Cross
- Spend time catching up with friends and colleagues
- Take a nap, read a book, do a puzzle, color, paint, needlepoint...

*IN THE COMMUNITY* - also just Google *things to do in Canandaigua, NY*

- Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion Historic State Park
- Kershaw Park - a community park right on the lake
- Pat Rini Rohrer Art Gallery - right on Main Street
- And for those who love ice cream, there is Cheshire Farms Creamery on Parrish Street
- Also - Don't forget to bring books you no longer use for our free book exchange!

**Retreat Begins Sunday Afternoon**

**Registration: 4:00 p.m.**

**Dinner: 6:00 p.m.**

**Retreat Ends Tuesday After Lunch**

**Lunch: 11:30 a.m.**

***MINISTERS COUNCIL RETREAT • SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2021 • REGISTRATION***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E:mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Any Special dietary needs? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you want to receive CEUs? \_\_\_\_\_

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

	MEMBERS	NON-MEMBERS
PRIVATE ROOM <i>All rooms are private</i>	_____ \$275	_____ \$325
COMMUTER	_____ \$175	_____ \$200

EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT (BEFORE AUGUST 1ST): DEDUCT \$30.

To Register please enclose \$60 deposit [by August 1st for discount] made payable to: Ministers Council of NYS. Please Note: *Retreat 2021* in memo.

***Grants to attend this retreat are available.***

1. *Lynnette Martin Fund* - Contact ABCNYS, Pat Ludwig (see below)
2. *Grant Application for D.Min. or Mission Trip*: Office of Financial Aid for Studies, ABHMS, 1-800-222-3872 - Ext. 2067 or email: [carolyn.Majeed@abhms.org](mailto:carolyn.Majeed@abhms.org)
3. *Cultivating New Life*: Office of Financial Aid for Studies, ABHMS (see above)

Questions? Contact: The Rev. Patricia Ludwig, President ABCNYS Ministers Council  
E-mail: [butterflypreacher@juno.com](mailto:butterflypreacher@juno.com) Phone: 716-433-0976

Mail registration and check to: Cedric A Broughton  
706 N. George St.  
Rome, NY 13440

Registration Deadline: August 21, 2021

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW YORK STATE  
CONTINUES ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH



NOVEMBER 11-14, 2021

(Thursday afternoon through Sunday morning)

**WHAT WILL WE DO?**

We will be working with Community Missions of Niagara Frontier and will do things like:

- Work in the kitchen preparing meals and then serving them
- Work in the community food pantry sorting and distributing food
- Do gardening and landscaping at the mission center as our skills permit
- Paint and do maintenance to the center as our skills permit
- Work in the clothes closet sorting and distributing clothing

There will be many opportunities to become acquainted with the clients at the center. You already be doing these types of things at your church. Here you will see them done in a different context and learn how you might build your local ministry.

**WHERE WILL WE STAY?**

We will stay at the Stella Niagara Retreat Center ([www.StellaNiagaraRetreats.org](http://www.StellaNiagaraRetreats.org)). If you cannot stay the whole time, your cost will be adjusted. The trip is flexible so participants may arrive and depart as they need.

**WHAT DOES IT COST?**

Cost for the full trip is \$270.00. This covers lodging, 3 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners. It also covers some project/material costs as well. If a person is present for less than the full time, they may request that their cost be reduced proportionally.

**INTERESTED?**

Contact the Region office (315.863.7148, [mschwarz@abc-nys.org](mailto:mschwarz@abc-nys.org)) and you'll be sent an application. Deadline for completed application: October 21, 2021. The trip is limited to 10 participants by Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier. We will create a waiting list in case Community Missions liberalizes their policy.



*This mission trip is a ministry of American Baptist Churches of New York State. Your gifts to ABCNYS Region Offering, United Mission, America for Christ Offering, and direct gifts to the Region make this experience possible.*

# GROWTH POINTS

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

## Lead Yourself First!

What is the major challenge of every leader?

It is leading yourself!

Pastors can't lead until they've led themselves. What got them to where they are today, will not get them to where they want to be tomorrow.

In the concrete world, this means the truly faithful pastor never graduates but is a perpetual student. They know they must continually upgrade their knowledge, skills, and abilities on a regular basis.

It's true! Growing churches are led by growing pastors.

## Five Reasons to Lead Yourself

*First*, people holding the position of pastor in today's or tomorrow's church find it necessary to upgrade their knowledge and skills on a regular and continuing basis. Once upon a time (like many mythological stories begin), a three- or four-year seminary or Bible college education prepared a pastor for a forty-year ministry career. The root of the

word seminary is from Latin *seminarium* meaning "seed bed." The idea is that a seminary education provides the seed that will grow into a life-long ministry. This was true for many years when life changed at a slower pace. In the rapid-paced, changing world that pastors function in today, it's not possible. Changes take place at breakneck speed. Each week, innovative technology emerges to challenge the way we relate, communicate, organize, and plan. The passive learner quickly falls behind. At best, today's seminary or Bible school education prepares pastors for ten years of ministry.

Remember: You must reeducate yourself every decade to stay current with life and ministry.

*Second*, you have to take responsibility for your own growth and development. It'd be helpful if your church took responsibility to

Put Dr. Gary L. McIntosh on your church's research team.

Email [cgnet@earthlink.net](mailto:cgnet@earthlink.net) for full details.

help you learn and grow. Regrettably, this rarely happens. While businesses spend billions of dollars a year to train and retrain their people, only the best-of-the-best churches invest any money in the training of their pastors. If you don't take responsibility for your own growth and development, likely no one will. Thus, ask yourself questions: Do I know what I'm doing? Do I have a sense of where I'm going? Do I feel out of touch with ministry today? Stop being passive about your own personal growth.

Remember: You can't shrink your way to leadership.

*Third*, the broader the range of your responsibilities, the more significant your continued training becomes. Although it's critical that continuing education be encouraged for children's pastors or youth pastors, it's doubly important that senior pastoral leaders keep learning, too. Lead pastors (senior or solo) regularly are bogged down wearing so many hats that they neglect their own development. Progress begins when you take time to invest in yourself.

Remember: You have to train up to stay up.

*Fourth*, you must have a deliberate self-improvement plan. Such a plan must include getting away from your church and ministry—the daily, weekly, and monthly routine—so you can stand back and view it from a wider and deeper perspective. You must plan and calendar your personal growth as thoughtfully as you do your normal work schedule. Such a plan isn't easy, and it takes self-discipline. Open your calendar right now. Are there scheduled appointments for your personal development? Do you see any scheduled interviews?

Remember: You won't improve until you have a personal improvement plan.

*Fifth*, you can't manufacture the desire to learn. The motivation for continual self-improvement must originate from inside yourself. No hodgepodge of learning techniques, books, blogs, or classes will take the place of your personal desire to learn, grow, and advance in your field of ministry. The pastor who can't motivate himself can't be motivated by any outside forces.

Remember: Leaders are learners!

So, what are you doing (or going to do) to keep growing and learning?

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# GROWTH POINTS

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

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## Best Practices to Lead Yourself

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Pastors lead themselves well by employing some of the following best practices. However, it begins with an internal look to discover your true self. To begin, wrestle a bit with the following questions.

- How much do I understand about what's happening in my church and the world in which we exist?
- How prepared am I to deal with the complex issues that confront my church and ministry?
- Where is my church headed in the next decade?
- What do I need to learn in order to lead my church for the next ten years?
- Where do I need to grow and develop in order to lead my church for another decade?

Answering these questions, and more to come, honestly, will get you started.

The following ideas are some best practices that growing pastors have employed.

## Five Best Practices

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### Number 1: Determine your life purpose.

Close your eyes and imagine you're at your funeral. Now, this is not a morbid exercise— just allow yourself to think about what you hope people will say about you at your funeral. Then in twenty-five words or less, summarize what you hope you'd hear into an overall life purpose or mission statement. As an example, this is my personal life purpose: My purpose in life is to love God, love my wife, and love my children. Obviously, this is just a summary with a lot of emotions, hopes, and dreams packed into it.

Now, write down your life purpose in a book or on your computer. Read it out loud. It sounds like growth, right? Where do you need to grow? In what ways do you need to develop? How must you improve in your skills and relationships to fulfill your life purpose?

**Dr. Gary L. McIntosh is available for personal life and ministry coaching. Email [cgnet@earthlink.net](mailto:cgnet@earthlink.net) for full details.**

### **Number 2: List ten most important things.**

Make a list of the ten things in life that are most important to you right now. It may help to divide up the important things into categories like spiritual/devotional, spouse/family, health/exercise, wealth/retirement, career/ministry, plus a general one. Then, next to each item, write down two or three ways that you can advance or enhance each one. These become self-improvement goals. As you work on them, you are leading yourself.

### **Number 3: Get to know yourself.**

What are your unique strengths? Your unique weaknesses? What makes you angry, sad, or worried? How do you define success?

Once you've determined the answer to these questions, you'll be tempted to work on improving your weaknesses. While that is not a bad decision, it's not the wisest one. We are unlikely to make our weaknesses a strength. Wisdom from successful leaders points out it's best to work on growing your strengths, while staffing people around you to care for your weaknesses. What are your top two or three strengths? How can you begin to design a growth program to enhance those strengths?

### **Number 4: Build yourself broadly.**

Fruitful pastors of the future must be well-rounded people. You might put it this way: Knowledge enriches knowledge, and the more the variety, the greater the enrichment. In particular, a lead pastor must be a specialist plus; that is, he must be a specialist with a wider body of knowledge.

Ask, Do I have time for random soul searching? Do I have time for self-renewal not directly related to my ministry? Do I have time for outside activities (art, sports, reading, music, etc.) that will enlarge my personhood? In the end, do you have a plan to strengthen your cultural enrichment and renewal that broadens your entire personhood as well as your skills?

### **Number 5: Manage your time and energy.**

How well do you manage your use of time? How well do you manage your energy (health, fitness, and rest)? How well do you manage your relational time (family, friends, vacations, days off, etc.)?

Here's the truth: Time management is just self-management. No one can honestly manage time. Everyone has the same amount—168 hours a week! Here's a tip. Make space on your calendar for personal development.

So . . . , get started today!

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# GROWTH POINTS

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

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## Managing Your Time

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One of the most difficult challenges for a pastor is to determine what to do with one's time during the day. No one typically holds a pastor accountable for the use of his time. Thus, it's easy for pastors to wallow along ineffectively day after day, just waiting to react—jump into action—when needs arise. No one sees that they are essentially doing nothing in particular most of the time.

Some pastors are proactive when it comes to sermon preparation. They have a set time to study, lay out a preaching calendar, and select topics well in advance. The notion of taking a proactive stance with caregiving and other daily activities, however, never enters their thinking. They are shepherds waiting for the sheep to call in a time of need. Yet, to minister effectively means pastors must take seriously the most precious of all resources—time. Pastors must say, “Given my limited resources, the most precious of them being my time, with *whom* or on *what* should I be spending it.”

## Types of People

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A helpful way of analyzing with whom you should spend time starts with

acknowledging that people in your church are either VIPs, VTPs, VNPs, or VDPs.

Everyone knows that VIPs are *very important people*. They are the ones in your church who lead others to accomplish the vision and goals of ministry. VIPs embody your church's core values and model the way for others to follow.

VTPs in your church are *very trainable people*. Many are engaged in some sort of service, with some in leadership positions. They are those who are F.A.T.—faithful, available, and teachable.

VNPs are *very nice people*. Your church would be a poor place without them. They attend worship services on a regular schedule, give money to the offerings, and support the church's ministry programs. They speak about Christ to their family and friends and invite them to church when the opportunity is open.

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VDPs are *very draining people*. Some are critics of your ministry, while others are highly needful folks who require extra care and grace. Many are those who need special care for a limited time, for example, those seeking pre-marital counseling or ones who just need a short conversation over coffee. What they all have in common is the way they drain energy from most pastors.

Looking at the life of Christ through the lens of this description reveals a fascinating picture of where he spent his time. Admittedly, the Bible only gives a selected perspective on the life of Jesus, but using what we know, Jesus divided his time as follows:

- VIPs: The Twelve Disciples
  - VTPs: The Seventy
  - VNPs: The Crowd
- VDPs: The Saducees and Pharisees

## Following Jesus

Jesus spent little time with the very draining people (VDPs). He listened to the critics and responded to the needy but never let either of them control or divert his time away from larger goals.

Plus, Jesus expended just a little more time with crowds of people

(VNPs). His feeding of the 5,000 is one example. Giving time to larger crowds of people was necessary, as many of them were good people moving toward greater commitment to him and his message. It was the pool out of which trainable people were discovered and recruited.

By far, Jesus dedicated most of his time to those who were open to his message and trainable for future leadership: the seventy and the twelve (VTPs & VIPs). He sent the seventy out on mission, and he lived his life with the twelve.

Fundamentally, Jesus gave most of his time to those who ministered to others (VIPs and VTPs) and less to those who needed ministry (VNPs and VDPs).

Applying this perspective to your own ministry, where are you investing your time? To whom should you be giving your time? For most pastors, the best division of time might look (should look?) something like the following:

- VIPs: Elders, Deacons, etc.
- VTPs: Ministry Leaders and Volunteers
  - VNPs: Sunday Congregation
  - VDPs: Critics and Needy People

So . . . where do you invest your time? Look back over the last month or year and calculate your investment of time with each of these four types of people. What needs to change? How could you invest your time more effectively?

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