

Cultivating Best Practices in Our Congregations (1)

For the Augustine Presbytery Retreat (5/1/2018)

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- I. Church Growth through a Passion for Christ and His Reign
 - A. We must consider practical mechanisms below, however, the real means of church fidelity is “better men” (E.M. Bounds).
 - B. Be the kind of man that everyone, but especially God knows to be a “man of God.” Owen said, “a man is what he is on his knees before God, that and nothing more.”
 - C. Lead everyone in your sphere of influence to know Christ and make Him known.
- II. Church Growth Principles
 - A. Facilities: The congregation will not grow beyond 80% capacity of the worship facility.
 - B. Faculty: The congregation must have high confidence in the pastoral/administration team to grow.
 - C. Funds: The congregation must see good stewardship and financial stability (such as regular/monthly budget reports).
 - D. Future: The congregation must be led in a vision for the future of the ministry in relevant ways to their own values and needs.
 - E. Faith: People must be won to the 1) Christian orthodox, 2) evangelical, 3) Reformed, and 4) the distinctive views and practices of the church.
 - F. Face/Visibility: Those outside need to know about the church and have no barriers to access.
- III. Church Growth Skills to Teach
 - A. Evangelistic Training
 - B. Evangelistic Prayer
 - C. Evangelistic Events for Community
 - D. Evangelistic Service
 - E. Evangelistic Hospitality
- IV. Orienting Our Process of Outreach
 - A. *Simple Church* (book by Thom S. Rainer) argues for this process: Worship (of the mega-church attractational variety); then Community (small groups), then Service (service team).
 - B. All Saints’ worship is not “attractational” and many will not come until they experience the community; given our unique Lancaster Co. context our order needs to be rearranged.
 - C. Service (visibility of service) and Community (growing relationships), then Worship (and commitment to our congregation).
- V. Leadership Principles
 - A. Infuse each event with spiritual care: Create an atmosphere of spiritual care in business meetings, since elders and deacons also need spiritual care.
 - B. Lead men to lead: Get more people around the table:
 1. Use a consistory (elders and deacons together) model for ministry activity.
 2. Use elders/session meetings to focus on shepherding people.
 3. Encourage annual nominations for officers.
 4. Take a year or so for training of a new officer (elder/deacon).
 - C. Lead responsibly: Show financial accountability through regular financial reports to the congregation (All Saints makes a basic income/expenses and assets in a short monthly heads of households (h/h) meetings, after the first Sunday of the month worship service).
 - D. Lead organizationally: Create an agenda for each session, consistory, h/h meeting, etc., and supply pre-written motions when possible.
 1. Keep accurate minutes for officer meetings and good records of all actions (other meetings, pastoral visits, leadership events, etc.)
 2. Post to officers a Unified Decision List (a document with all actions pasted in from minutes).

3. Post to officers a Unified Policy Document (including all church policies).
 - E. Lead “actionally”: Move through the meetings (elders, deacons, consistory, etc.) by “actions” (e.g., motions which require a 2nd, unless from a committee, then discussion, then votes) or “reports” which can be “received” without a motion or “adopted” by a vote if the report is to be included in the the official record or actions are contained in the report.
 - F. Lead “electionally”: specify in a constitution, policy, etc., the required count (majority, supermajority, unanimity, etc.) and use the requirement of unanimity very sparsely, if at all.
- VI. Marketing Principles as Applied to a Church
- A. Create a “Brand” which is an incarnation of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 1. Get a good logo.
 2. Create a good, visual website and update it regularly.
 3. Capture the content by good recordings, videos, photos, etc.
 4. Put your sermons and on WordMp3.com.
 5. Create a brochure or video (website) for first-time attenders which explains more about your church.
 6. Create a usable bulletin that is professional, visual, and helpful.
 7. Consider print media/newspaper, etc. in your area.
 8. Put a sign outside (if you are renting a facility).
 - B. Get some visibility as a minister/elders/leaders:
 1. Community - get involved with your local folks
 - a) Basketball
 - b) Gym
 - c) Rotary
 - d) Christian School
 - e) Pub
 - f) Civic organizations
 - g) Activism
 2. Online Visibility - write a book, a blog, post to a youtube channel, etc.