

MOVING *FORWARD* SERIES PART II –

“BASIC TIPS FOR PASTORAL SEARCH”

APRIL 18 (SUN.), 9:15AM/APRIL 22(THU.) 25, 7:00PM, 2021
ST. JOHN'S UCC, NORWOOD YOUNG AMERICA, MN

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MOVING FORWARD SERIES PART II –

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Gathering Hymn

What is this place

Text: Huub Oosterhuis, Zomaar een dak boven wat hofden, 1968;

Tr. David Smith, ca. 1970

(Music: *Nederlandtsche Gedenckclanck*, 1626)

1. What is this place where we are meeting?

only a house, the earth its floor.

Walls and a roof sheltering people,

inches of sunlight on the floor.

Introduction – Moving *Forward* Series

- **“Church Fundamentals” (Part I)** features several general traits and practices present in healthy and thriving churches. Although not specific to St. John’s, those “fundamentals” likely help prevent common problems that often plague many churches of different types from occurring.

Part I – Summary

- ❖ Getting the Priority Straight: God First (and Everything Else Second)
- ❖ The Church Does Not Exist for Its Members*
**Note: Caring for its members is extremely important.*
- ❖ Sense of Ownership vs. Privatization of the Church's Purpose

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- ❖ Acquiring a (New) Common Vocabulary – Beyond Personal Needs and Wants
- ❖ Ministries Belong to the Church, Not to Particular Individuals
- ❖ Alignment
- ❖ Gift Discernment (or Inventory) over Personal Histories/Connections

- **“Tips for Pastoral Search” (Part II, in April, 2021)** features several specific “tips” for churches in a transitional phase seeking a new pastoral leader. Although not specific to St. John’s, those tips likely help prevent some of the common pitfalls from occurring in many pastor-parish relationships.

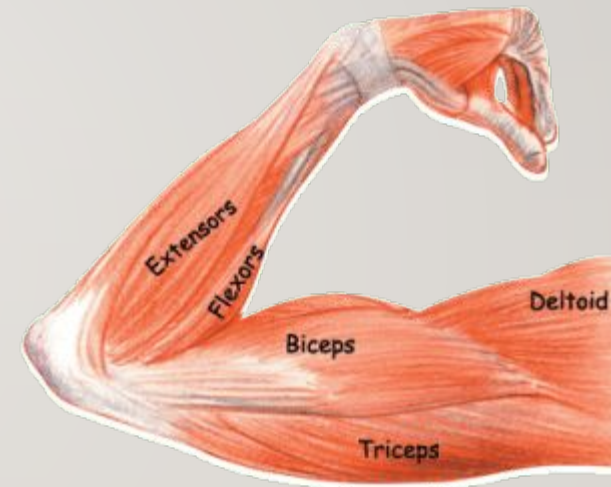
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I. SYNEREGY

I. Synergy

[From Greek *synergos* working together]



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I. SYNERGY



- What does the synergetic relationship of the pastor and the congregation look like?
- What does it feel like to be a part of it?

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I. SYNERGY



Producing Power Generating Energy Accomplishing Tasks

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I. SYNERGY

Opposite:

“I am not going to change; you need to adjust to me!”



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II. WHAT IMAGE IN THE PASTOR?

II. What Image in the Pastor?

A pastor in a church wears many “hats”
(roles)...what is your image (or metaphor)
for your pastor?



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II. WHAT IMAGE IN THE PASTOR?

Example A:

“**A hired hand**” who takes care of the members’ needs and performs basic pastoral tasks (e.g., preaching, teaching Sunday school, presiding at funerals and wedding, etc.).

“We ask our pastor to do things for us (because we are paying him/her to do so.)”



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II. WHAT IMAGE IN THE PASTOR?



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II. WHAT IMAGE IN THE PASTOR?

Example B:

A “**spiritual guide/coach/trainer**” who assists the members of the church in spiritually growing in devotion, discipleship in Christ, and witnessing to the gospel.

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II. WHAT IMAGE IN THE PASTOR?



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II. WHAT IMAGE IN THE PASTOR?



- What do you want to achieve with your pastor?
- Where do you want to go with your pastor?
- Why do you need a pastor in the first place?

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III. RE-THINKING OF “GOOD FIT”

III. Re-Thinking of “Good Fit”



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III. RE-THINKING OF “GOOD FIT”

Identify basic fit factors

- What are your “non-negotiables” (e.g., “The next pastor is a practicing Christian.”)?
- What are your “negotiables” (e.g., “The next pastor can be male or female”)?

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III. RE-THINKING OF “GOOD FIT”

Remember...

1. There is no “perfect fit” and
2. “Not a perfect fit” is not necessary bad, because...

Q. How do our muscles grow stronger and more flexible?



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III. RE-THINKING OF “GOOD FIT”

A. By applying sufficient stress!

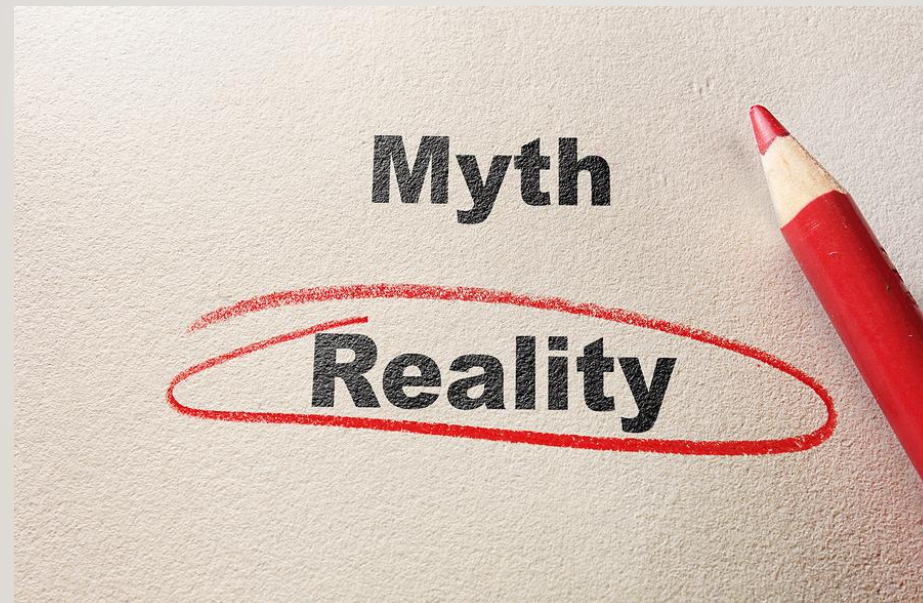
(Without agitation and stimulation, muscles will deteriorate.)

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IV. SOME COMMON MYTHS

IV. Some Common Myths



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IV. SOME COMMON MYTHS

Myth #1:

“A young minister will bring young people into the church.”



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IV. SOME COMMON MYTHS

Reality:

- ✓ There is no data that consistently supports that hiring a young minister will bring more young people into the church;
- ✓ many ministers (in mainline Protestant churches) are not simply interested, motivated, or trained to engage in evangelistic outreach at all;

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IV. SOME COMMON MYTHS

- ✓ It requires of multiple factors and coordinated and long-sustained efforts (and some hard decisions) to bring young people into the church; and
- ✓ A new, young pastor might bring new, young people into the church *temporarily*; so often they end up leaving the church when their new ideas face resistance from the long-time members.

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IV. SOME COMMON MYTHS

Myth #2

“If the pastor delivers good sermons...”

“A charismatic pastor will...” (more people will come to the church)”

Reality:

- ✓ There is no single “magic bullet” for healthy church growth and revitalization.

(Note: The church must expect excellence from the pastor, and the pastor must be highly gifted, certainly more than “above average,” in order to mutually thrive in today’s cultural environment surrounding American churches.)

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IV. SOME COMMON MYTHS

- ✓ Both the pastor and the congregational need a mutual vocabulary to objectively assess their performances and progress (beyond “He/she just rubs me the wrong way...” “We just hit it off...” “I like/don’t like him/her...”).

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IV. SOME COMMON MYTHS



Who the congregation chooses as its pastor definitely matters, both on the grounds of 1) what he/she brings and 2) what the choice reveals about the congregation itself.

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V. THE CONGREGATION’S PLEDGE

V. The Congregation’s Pledge (Your Part to Play)



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V.THE CONGREGATION’S PLEDGE

- The congregation can put anything they want in the profile as looking for a new pastor (e.g., “The new pastor must be good at interacting with kids...” “The new pastor is someone interested in visiting the sick...” “The new pastor must have good communication skills...”).

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V.THE CONGREGATION’S PLEDGE



- What would the congregation expect from itself for mutual well-being and collective success?
- What would the congregation pledge to doing as it begins a new life with a new pastor?

Behavioral Standard within the Congregation

Example: Area of Communication

- ✓ Direct Communication
- ✓ Timely Communication
- ✓ Proactive Communication
- ✓ Honest Communication



Direct Communication:

- ✓ Go to the “source” (avoid “triangulation*”).
- ✓ Use social media judiciously.
- ✓ Go to the proper authority first (avoid creating your own “shadow” committee/department to by-pass it).

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V.THE CONGREGATION’S PLEDGE

Direct Communication:

- ✓ Use “I” language (“I feel...” “I believe...”), instead of non-identifiable entities (“There are *lots of people*...” “*Some people* are saying...”).

Timely Communication:

- ✓ Don’t wait until next committee meeting (or next annual meeting, etc.), if you have questions or comments; and
- ✓ You might want to “sit on” your immediate emotional reactions (for a day or two) before expressing them.

Proactive Communication:

- ✓ Don’t assume that other people know what you want and how you are doing.
- ✓ If you want/need something specific from someone (including the pastor), express it in one way or another, sooner than later.

Honest Communication:

- ✓ Is there an “elephant in the room”? Can we name it? (or do we tip-toe around it?)
- ✓ Is there a “skeleton in the closet”? Can we name it? (or do we practice “See no evil...”?)

Disagreements and Conflicts:



- Having conflicts is human (so we can postpone facing them only for so long);
- how to engage in them shows our character. (Do you want to get what you want with any means necessary, at any cost? Means are a measure of our character.)

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V.THE CONGREGATION’S PLEDGE

- Turning your “enemy” into your friend is a greater reward than defeating him/her in a conflict.



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Think of how we communicate with one another (especially over disagreements) as a spiritual exercise, how to engage in it graciously, humbly as “justified sinners,” as occasions to know yourself as much as others, to lift up the body of Christ (as opposed to tearing it down), and to witness to Christ’s compassion and God’s glory.

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CONCLUSION

These are just some tips for the churches looking for new pastors.

These are no “perfect manuals” or “revolutionary ideas.” And yet, these basic tips prepare churches (like St. John’s) for mutual well-being and collective success along the way.

Let’s keep the conversation going...

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heave...”
AMEN.

Shuji M.

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CONCLUSION

Sending Hymn

The church's one foundation

AURELLA

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1886

(Music: Samuel S. Wesley, 1864)

2. Elect from ev'ry nation

yet one o'er all the earth,

her charter of salvation:

one Lord, one faith, one birth.