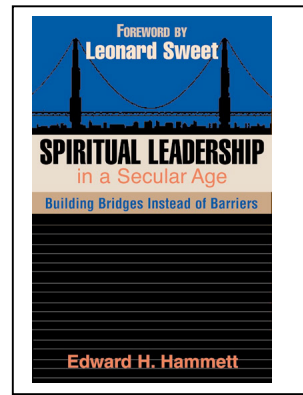


Deacon Ministry Newsletter

July, 2008

By Eddie Hammett, Deacon and Church
Consultant and Leadership Coach,
Author of Spiritual Leadership in a Secular
Age: Building Bridges Instead of Barriers



The Challenges of Ministering to New Members

While many churches across the country, and across denominational lines, are losing membership there are churches who are gaining new members, welcoming new believers to the faith and seeking more effective ways to provide proper new member training, follow up and ways to retain their membership. Issues facing these churches include:

- 1) How do we disciple busy adults?
- 2) What do new members need to know to effectively grow in their faith?
- 3) What is the fast track for new member orientation?
- 4) How do we create an atmosphere that retains membership after they join or visit?

In this age of church shopping and church hopping it is increasingly important that churches have a clear and functional strategy for attracting, assimilating, discipling and deploying new members (I discuss this in greater detail in my Reframing Spiritual Formation book www.helwys.com.) Without a strategy in place to retain members they will likely not stay and will enter the world of church shopping and hopping?

What's working? – Resources/Strategies/Models to learn from

- Attractional Churches are growing. They are built around 'come and go' values. www.externallyfocusednetwork.com;
www.leadnet.org/externallyfocusedresources
- "Helping People Follow Christ Without Walking the Aisle" is heresy to some and an entry point for others. Rick Warren recently wrote about this in July/August '08 of Rev. Magazine. Pg. 26
www.revmagazine.org
- "The First 45 minutes After Worship" is a super article by Tom Bandy to help leaders survey attenders and members about what would make worship more meaningful for them. July/August '08 Rev Magazine www.revmagazine.org
- www.Revealnow.com is a cutting edge research project conducted by Willowcreek about the impact of church programs on the spiritual formation of attenders and members. Great, but often discouraging and certainly challenging research. It's worth your time to visit this site.

- “New Member Training for Busy Adults” by Eddie Hammett
www.discipleshipteam.org
- Fusion: Turning First Time Visitors into Fully Engaged Members by Nelson Searcy - <http://www.churchleaderinsights.com/fusion/>
Practical resource
- Connecting Newcomers – a web-based resource for leaders and churches -
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/leaders/resources/connectingnewcomers.html>
- “What about Sunday Night Church? By Eddie Hammett – overview challenges and ideas for those struggling with this programmatic and traditional avenue for discipling members. www.discipleshipteam.org
- “Cultivating the Soul: Spiritual Formation Without Saying a Word” by Gordon McDonald <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2005/003/25.50.html>
- Four Rules for Starting New Ministries by Rick Warren -
<http://www.rev.org/ArticlePrint.asp?ID=2555>
- “Building Relationships with Non-Traditional Families” interviews with variety of pastors dealing with a the diversity of family ministry related issues
http://www.baptiststandard.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=8141&Itemid=53

Coaching Questions:

What is the current state of your ministry to and with new members?
 What is the retention rate of your new members after 6 months?
 What resources here do you need to share with others and implement?
 Who can help?

Training Without Travel Opportunities in July – October, 2008 :

- FREE Webinars (for persons in NC Baptist Life - \$15/session for those outside NC Baptist life) and teleclasses –(Space is limited – register early) Topics include:
 - Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60
 - Outgrowing an Ingrown Church
 - Moving From Pain to Purpose: A Perspective on Conversion and Post Moderns
 - Dealing with Diversity in Deacon Ministry
 - Building Healthy Relationships Between Pastor and Deacons
 Register for these online at <http://deaconministry.ncbaptist.org>
- (Consider using a *customized webinar with Eddie* for your next deacon’s meeting – contact Eddie at EdwardHHammett@mchsi.com if you are interested.)
- Downloadable Podcasts on leadership topics including: Gift Based Team Ministry; The Triangle of Ministry; Creating Parallel Structures and more go to www.transformingsolutions.org to download free podcasts.