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ready, set, grow!

the ucc... **NEW**



Times

New Ideas for New Churches

The New Church Leadership Team

Volume Two * Number 1



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NEW TIMES: New Ideas for New Churches

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UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



New Church Networking



James S. Scovil, Organizing Pastor,

Mashpee Congregational Church, UCC, Cape Cod, Massachusetts

My coach, Jim Griffith, says it's all about networking. So, as I landed in the middle of Mashpee Commons fourteen months ago and started to gather up my parachute, the Starbucks' logo in front of me was a welcome sign. Coffee shops with their sweet smelling lattes and wi-fi are a perfect place to get into the heart of a mission field. One conversation leads to another, and with persistence and regularity, the locals begin to connect to a new church start pastor who is sincere and who listens well.

Before long, I was getting leads. The new municipal center just down the road was full of folks anxious to talk about their town. By appointment, I went to visit most of them, one at a time, and asked three questions:

- What can you tell me about the town?
- How could a new church make a difference in town?
- Could you suggest other people I should meet?

I was amazed by the results. Most of the time the interviews lasted more than a half hour giving me plenty of notes to analyze when I got back to my office at Starbucks. Most people were anxious to talk about their work and their views of the town. In some ways it was a crash course in town history; in other ways it was a window into the very heart of a community.

About six months into the immersion, something new started to happen: the answer to my third question was evoking names of people I had already interviewed. I was beginning to have some trouble

and clergy. I am now such a regular at these meetings that I have even been asked to start them when the Director runs late. Networking in this group is something akin to a chain reaction because networks are now networking with networks.

During my second meeting as a new member of the Mashpee Rotary Club, the President announced that she was unable to attend a Chamber of Commerce meeting that evening and asked if anyone was available to attend as her representative. My hand went up before she finished the question! Not surprisingly, the people at the mixer I had already met through my interview process were anxious to introduce me to folks I had not already met. Later that night, I arrived home with over a dozen new business cards for my rolodex.

The last example involves my interview of the Director of the Boys and Girls Club. After my second visit there, I inquired about ways our new congregation Launch Team might help with programs. We ended up volunteering to prepare dinner for 120–140 children ages 7–12 on Friday nights throughout the entire school year. Over 25 Launch Team members have signed onto the rotation.

There is simply no substitute for intentional networking. One contact leads to another and within a few months' time information about the mission field begins to grow exponentially. Themes emerge and the new church start pastor begins to catch glimpses of where and how the new congregation can begin to make a difference.

On May 4th, when we launch, our worship bulletin will speak of Friday nights and many other outreach opportunities which have all grown out of 16

Coffee shops with their sweet smelling lattes and wi-fi are a perfect place to get into the heart of a mission field.

keeping my list going. But, by the same token, my networking was expanding into more of a group mode rather than an individual one. Let me give some examples:

After having met with the town's human services director, she suggested that I attend one of her monthly meetings with area agency representatives

months of networking. What is really great is that the mission field will know who we are.

In the meanwhile, some folks have suggested that if this new church doesn't work out, I should run for mayor. After all, I have met a few folks along the way. Watch ucc.org/newchurch for more information. ■



Steve Jewett, Pastor,
Northwestern Association of the Iowa Conference
of the United Church of Christ

NEW HORIZONS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

A Brief History of a Two-Year-Old Congregation

The roots of New Horizons began in January 2006 when a group of good Christians gathered together around a kitchen table in a rural farm house to share their vision of a new church. After a few meetings they were confident that their vision was possible. That is when they contacted me.

I am Steve Jewett, a bi-vocational licensed lay pastor for twenty years, in the Northwestern Association of the Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ. After the group shared their vision for a new church, they asked me if I would be their pastor. Their vision was clear: church should be fun, it should be a safe place to celebrate worship and it should be mission driven. Since I was in the process of ending my time as a pastor to another congregation, I prayerfully considered their offer and soon enthusiastically said yes.

This set the wheels in motion to find a place to worship and begin the process of being recognized as a congregation. All of the state and federal paper work was promptly filled out and submitted and a request was made to the Northwestern Association to become a congregation in covenant with the Association. When our Conference office in Des Moines was informed of our request to become a congregation in the United Church of Christ, the Conference minister called me and said that there were no funds available to support a new church start. We would need to continue with the process by ourselves.

I had seen the tab on the national UCC website for new congregations and downloaded the file titled: *A Guidebook for Planting New Congregations in the United Church of Christ*. This resource was very valuable to us as we began the process of formalizing our congregation. For the first year of our existence we gave a copy of it to everyone who attended one of our celebrations of worship so that they would have an opportunity to understand how a congregation is formed and all of the expectations that were required of its members.

On January 29, 2006 we celebrated our first worship service in the community room of a bank in Akron, Iowa. We did not have a federal tax ID number yet so we could not collect an offering. I asked the congregation to keep their offering money until such a time that we could receive an offering and deposit it into our checking account. After seven weeks, we had our account

established and were able to receive an offering. Many folks had been saving their weekly offerings, and on March 12th we received an offering of \$3,428.00. This offering came from a group of about thirty folks.

From January 29th until September 3rd of 2006, we celebrated worship at either the community room of the bank, the chapel of the local funeral home or in the city park in Akron. Not once were we unable to celebrate worship because we had no space or because there was inclement weather. On April 8th 2006, we requested to be a congregation in covenant with the Northwestern Association at its annual meeting. Since there had not been a new church start in the Association in forty-nine years there was some discussion about the process. Gratefully, the vote was unanimous to welcome us.

At that time we had already completed three mission projects and would ultimately complete forty-two mission projects in our first year. We did receive support from individual congregations in all parts of Iowa and three other states. Their contributions included a communion set, offering plates, hymnals, Sunday school resources and monetary gifts. We also purchased altar furniture and a piano from a UCC congregation that was closing. In late July of 2006 we had the opportunity to rent a space on the main floor of the Opera House in Akron. This space had been vacant for many years and needed much renovation. At an ACT (all church team) meeting we decided to rent the space. We took occupancy in August and members of our congregation began the process of cleaning and remodeling. On September 3rd we celebrated our first worship service in our new church home that had 1,200 square feet, which included a space for our Sunday school. Our numbers continued to grow and our mission projects increased. In 2007 we completed fifty mission projects — our goal for 2008 is to complete sixty mission projects. Since we are located on Main Street in a store front in a smaller town, we enjoy the advantage of high visibility and always do our best to positively represent not only our Still Speaking God but also our congregation. We are active in almost all community events.

At the 2007 annual meeting of the Northwestern Association on April 21st we received full standing as a congregation in the Northwestern Association. Our congregation continues to grow, and at times we have more celebrate worship with us than we

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**Their vision was clear:
church should be fun, it
should be a safe place to
celebrate worship and it
should be mission driven.**

AND GOD SAID. . .



Rev. Rose Wright-Scott,

Founder & Pastor of Victory Christian United Church of Christ Petersburg, Virginia.

When our new planters read in Philippians 4:13 that they could do all things through Christ who strengthens, there was no stopping them! That's when I believe God said, "Let there be the Nehemiah New Church Leadership Institute." And it was, and it is good, providing the tools that planters need to be successful. Nevertheless, the question that I've asked since beginning this coaching experience in August of 2007, is where was the Nehemiah New Church Leadership Institute nine years ago? What an awesome opportunity our planters have been awarded. Those things that took so much time and effort nine years ago, I've observed these new planters moving forward. In just a few short months, I've witnessed church planters having measurable goals, a thorough ministry plan, and beginning to

just one person, but an entire team.

With that kind of accountability the planter, coach, and the conference begin a course of action, remaining true to their individual role. In the planting process, when so many things are unavailable from laborers, resources, and a place for worship, coaches and the support system help to create a sense of "You can *still* do all things through Christ who strengthens."

When initially asked if I'd be willing to become part of this great revolution of new churches, my first instinct was, "where will I find the time?" Immediately God spoke and shared how could you not find the time? There were those that found, and are still finding time, for Victory Christian, the church I founded and currently serve.

Performance and results are so critical initially that it requires planters to be accountable, not to just one person, but an entire team.

build strong relationships with their conferences and associations. This coaching relationship has allowed me to be in prayer and celebration with some of the finest new pastors that anyone could be acquainted with. I am elated and proud to be part of a denomination that continues to seek out ways to welcome and provide support for individuals that are responding to their call, and those that have a strong sense of ministry and covenant.

When planters begin the planting process, it is ultimately important that they not feel alone. As coaches we realize that encouragement is vitally important. Performance and results are so critical initially that it requires planters to be accountable, not to

Ministry in the United Church of Christ for me is expressed in this quote by Henry Ford, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success." New planters need all of us working together. I am grateful for the opportunity to share my story, trials, experiences, and successes with new planters. I count it a privilege to engage in relationships with such energized, knowledgeable, and focused individuals. Coaching has rejuvenated me, by being part of the energy and excitement around the New Church Leadership Institute as it creates new life for all. It's about walking with another and asking critical questions that will provide clarity to move forward. ■

New Horizons continued from page 3

have chairs. In December of 2007 we were given the opportunity to enlarge our space as the tenant next to us was leaving. At our January 2008 annual meeting we agreed to rent the space and in so doing our space for worship doubled. On February 3rd we took possession of the space and immediately began to remodel it into our new sanctuary. All of the remodeling, except the laying of the carpet, was done by our members and friends.

On February 29, 2008 we had a "Leap" service to begin using our new space. Both times that we have remodeled, the projects have been completed on time and under budget. We have very dedicated givers in our congregation, and we were a "Five for Five" congregation in 2007. At our annual meeting in January of 2008 we voted to raise our OCWM giving from \$200.00 to

\$3,000.00 and continue to increase our mission projects. I believe that this is incredible since we began with a core group of less than ten and now have at least forty in our celebrations of worship every week.

I would recommend to any group considering a new church start that they know that their Conference and Association are willing and capable to support them in every way before beginning the process. I would also recommend that every new church start actively pursue supporting even newer church starts the best that they are able so that our denomination will continue to grow and prosper. Our mission statement is, "Go Forth, Share His Name". I believe that if everyone actively does this we will continue to grow as we worshipfully work to glorify our Still Speaking God. ■

Rev. Cameron Trimble, Director of the New Church Leadership Initiative.

2008 New Church Leadership Institute

Training

The time has come to begin registering for the 2008 New Church Leadership Institute hosted in Atlanta, Georgia from August 12–15, 2008. The cost of the event is \$550 for general participants and \$850 for seminary students. Seminary credit is available through Lancaster Seminary. Each participant is responsible for paying for their hotel, meals and transportation to and from the event. Scholarships are available for those who present a need. Please see the website (<http://www.ucc.org/newchurch/newchurch-training.html>) for scholarship request forms.

This year we have an exciting lineup of some of the finest presenters in the United Church of Christ who will teach you the basics of planting the new church. The courses for this year's Institute include:

- Top 10 Challenges New Church Starts Face
- Models, Timelines and Latest Trends of the New Church Planting
- How to Lead your Congregation through the ONA Process
- Vision and Mission Development
- Discovering Your Mission Field
- People are Coming! Now What?
- Developing your Leadership Team
- Fundraising and Stewardship
- Marketing and Advertising

Our presenters this year include Revs. Paul Nickerson, Cameron Trimble, Cindy Andrews-Looper, Ozzie Smith, Michael Piazza, Cesar and Lisa DePaz and Steve Sterner just to name a few. Most of our presenters have personally started new churches and understand the challenges and opportunities involved in new church development. They will teach you the basic, "how to" practices and principles you need to be a successful church planter. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to network with other church planters from around the United Church of Christ who can serve as a support team for you as you begin your church birthing process.

At the conclusion of the event, church planters will be asked to develop a New Church Ministry Plan. While much of church planting feels spontaneous and unpredictable, strong new church starts actually begin with a detailed blueprint and a clear vision from the very first day. In the United Church of Christ, we need churches with clear vision and realistic plans for success. As a participant in the New Church Leadership Institute, we expect that you will leave this training with the ability to develop a sound, articulate and cohesive Ministry Plan for your new church including a compelling statement of vision and mission, biographical statements about the pastor and leadership team, demographic research focused on the area of the church plant, a timeline of church development with benchmarks for numeric growth, a fundraising strategy and a detailed



budget. If you are participating in our coaching program, this Ministry Plan will be the blueprint that will guide and define the conversations between you and your coach in the first year of your new church. This Ministry Plan will also be a helpful tool for your conference to gauge the ways that they might further support your work.

Coaching

For those of you who are actively engaged in a new church start, you will have the option to sign up for our UCC Coaching Program. We have 12 trained coaches who work with planters coaching them through the very basics of church development. Most of our coaches have planted churches themselves or have revitalized existing churches. The coaches will be present during the New Church Leadership Institute where you can meet and talk with them at that time. Assignments are based upon natural affinity and church development models. To sign up for our UCC coaching program, you will need conference endorsements. The cost of the coaching program is \$300 paid by your conference. For more information about our coaching program, see our website at <http://www.ucc.org/newchurch/coaching.html>.

If you are interested in participating in the New Church Leadership Institute, contact your conference staff person who can register you for this event. All participants must have the recommendation of their conference staff. For more information or questions, please contact Rev. Cameron Trimble at ctrimble@secucc.org. We hope to see you in Atlanta! ■

New Church Planter Basic Training

Aug. 12-15, 2008
The New Church Leadership Institute
at Emory University, Atlanta

Intensive training event: Learn
about the latest theories and tools
for church planting

General registration: \$550
Seminary credit: \$850
Housing: \$450

Contact your conference about attending

For more event information, or to
donate to the UCC New and Renewing
Churches Endowment Fund: ucc.org/newchurch



A UCC New Church event sponsored by Evangelism Ministry Team, Local Church Ministries; UCC Southeast Conference; Lancaster Theological Seminary; and the Candler School of Theology.

NEW WINESKINS



Rev. Karen McArthur Affiliate Minister of Stewardship and Finance at First Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts and a stewardship consultant

No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.

(Luke 5:37-38)

How refreshing to be able to think about setting up a financial system in a brand new church!

I recently met with the leaders of a 294-year-old congregation who were seeking advice regarding their long-standing financial reporting practices. Over the nearly three centuries of their history, they had accumulated an endowment, along with a multitude of traditions, policies, practices, and expectations regarding the various financial activities and funds of the congregation. It's not easy to change the way things have "always" been done.

How refreshing to be able to think about setting up a financial system in a brand new church! Unlike a church with centuries of history, a new church can begin simply and clearly with 21st century tools and 21st century assumptions about how things might be done. These include both current financial accounting standards as well as computerized recordkeeping. What are these standards? And how can technology help?

In 1993, the Financial Accounting Standards Board overhauled financial reporting formats for non-profit organizations. Wanting to make sure that restricted gifts were used properly, they added new vocabulary and concepts that work simply and clearly, once we understand them.

First, FASB required all non-profit organizations to classify their contributions as either unrestricted, temporarily restricted, or permanently restricted, depending on the donor's wishes. Temporarily Restricted funds may only be used for a specified purpose, such as One Great Hour of Sharing or

organ repair, or they may be restricted by time, as are prepaid pledges. Permanently Restricted funds may never be spent, but must be invested, with the income used according to the donor's specifications.

Second, the accountants developed standard financial reporting formats and required these formats for all external financial reporting. This means that if a church ever applies for a grant or a bank loan, it will need to be able to produce financial statements in this standard format. Finally, they clarified the rules regarding the investment of permanently restricted funds.

These accounting standards have simplified and clarified non-profit recordkeeping. However, since churches are exempt from most governmental reporting and audit requirements, many churches have not yet become familiar with these new standards. Further information on these "new" reporting formats is available at www.stewardsprophet.com.

What is the easiest way to keep church financial records in compliance with these accounting standards? A good accounting system should produce reports that are complete and concise, transparent and trustworthy. For the past twelve years, I have used *QuickBooks Pro* (<http://quickbooks.intuit.com/>) for dozens of congregations. I have found that it provides a solid financial system that can be as simple or complex as needed, depending on the church.

Ten best features of *QuickBooks Pro*:

- **Low Cost:** under \$200, with updates needed only every three years
- **Accessible:** requires no bookkeeping knowledge of debits and credits
- **Clarity:** capacity to track fund balances and to customize reports so that they are consistent with non-profit accounting standards. Each income or expense transaction is tagged with both an account (such as Contribution) and a fund (Organ Fund). Or Postage expense / Operating Fund. Or Flower expense / Flower Fund. One report shows the balance of every fund at any moment. There is an additional feature that can track grants.
- **Detail:** direct and immediate double-click links from reports to the itemized detail for that item, all the way back to the initial data entry of a payment or deposit
- **Collapse/Expand:** one click toggles between a detailed budget and a summary budget
- **Integrated payroll:** for a fraction of the cost of an outside payroll service, including printable IRS tax forms (941s, 944, W-2, 1099, etc.)
- **Efficiency:** prints checks, paystubs for a clear paper trail of all disbursements
- **Customization:** reports can be customized and memorized, and can be exported into Excel or Word
- **Memorized transactions:** recurring transactions can be scheduled
- **Shortcuts:** many features reduce keystrokes and increase speed and accuracy

QuickBooks Pro can make a significant contribution to the faithful stewardship of your financial resources. Its capacity to track budgets, produce succinct reports, and delineate complete detail can boost the congregation's confidence and increase contributions. A list of customized reports and features useful to churches, as well as a beginning *QuickBooks* file template, is available at www.stewardsprophet.com/Technology.html ■

Leveraging the Online World

Rev. Cameron Trimble, Director of the New Church Leadership Initiative

Last week I found myself Skype-ing with an old high school friend I reconnected with on Facebook who is airing a podcast on iTunes about setting up webinars. Did you follow that?!? Skype-ing? Webinars? Podcasts? How the world has changed! Technology is rewriting the way that you and I communicate, do ministry and stay connected. Technology and enhanced communication tools are tremendous networking assets — if you learn how to use them. Today you have the capacity to send emails to hundreds of people updating them on the developments of your church with one click of the mouse. You can leverage online giving through a well developed website. You can have visual uniformity through branding and logo designs at relatively low costs. You can even hold weekly bible study classes, council meetings and prayer meetings online through conference calling or video calling.

As church planters we would do well to leverage the conveniences that technology provides us to connect people with one another. While nothing will ever replace a personal invitation to church and face-to-face interaction, e-mails, video conferencing, websites and social networking sites can provide you

additional exposure to people throughout your community. Websites are the new “front door” of churches — if you do not have a well-designed website, chances are good that you are failing to connect with hundreds of potential members. Likewise, people expect churches to produce quality print material that has a similar look and feel to the website — this lets them know that they are, in fact, in the right place when they show up on that first Sunday morning. Here are some resources that I have found helpful:

- **Skype**
- **Constant Contact**
- **Facebook**
- **My Space**
- **SurveyMonkey**
- **Plaxo**
- **Box.net**

And there are many more! If you would like to know more about website development or have questions about ways your new church can leverage technology, e-mail Rev. Cameron Trimble at ctrimble@secucc.org. ■

Last week
I found
myself
Skype-ing
with an
old high
school
friend I
reconnected
with on
Facebook
who is
airing a
podcast
on iTunes
about
setting up
webinars.
Did you
follow
that?!?
Skype-ing?
Webinars?
Podcasts?
How the
world has
changed!

Resources in New Church Development

Please note: Our national and conference staffs have found these resources to be helpful in our ministries. We do not advocate or support all positions of the authors, especially if they are exclusive of women and minority peoples. If you have resources that you would like to suggest, email them to Rev. Cameron Trimble at ctrimble@secucc.org or Rev. Persida Rivera-Mendez at riverap@ucc.org.

WEBSITES

<http://religions.pewforum.org> Based on interviews with more than 35,000 Americans age 18 and older, this extensive survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life details the religious affiliation of the American public.

<http://www.theamericanchurch.org> The americanchurch.org seeks to provide accurate religious research for a comprehensive picture of the church today.

www.allelon.org Allelon is a 501(C)3 non-profit foundation located in Eagle, Idaho. They are a multi-generational network of missional church leaders, schools and parachurch organizations which envisions, inspires, engages, resources, trains and educates leaders for the church and its mission in our culture.

<http://fact.hartsem.edu/CongGrowth.pdf> Facts on Growth is a publication developed by Kirk Hadaway from Hartford Seminary.

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT BOOKS

Unbinding the Church, by Martha Grace Reese. Published in 2007 by Chalice Press, St. Louis, MO.

Places of Promise: Finding Strength in your Congregation's Location by Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce. Published in 2008 by Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY.

Planting Fast-Growing Churches, by Stephen Gray; Published in 2007 by Church Smart.

STEWARDSHIP RESOURCES

● *The 7 Habits of Highly Ineffective / Effective Churches*

For church boards, committees, pastors and leaders: anyone trying to run a church! A brief but penetrating look at what makes a church run the way it should (and shouldn't). For example: #1: "Elevate mediocrity to a spiritual discipline."/#1: "Strive for excellence in service to Christ." \$7.50/50.

● *The Big Secret of Giving: Hidden Treasures in Life and Church*

A 30-day personal devotional by William Green focused on giving and finding the overlooked treasure in your life and church. Perfect for stewardship season. \$3.00 each; 50 or more, \$1.50 each.

● *The Gifting God: Change the Way You Look at Giving*

A small group stewardship study by Rochelle Stackhouse that takes a new look at the kind of giving God does, provoking thought about the nature of our own giving. 5 sessions; includes discussion questions. \$2 each; 10 or more, \$1.50 each.

● *Are You Ready to Talk About Money in Your Church?*

Take the quiz in this little stewardship booklet and find out. Just in time for stewardship season... a humorous but to-the-point way of highlighting that money should not be a forbidden topic around the church. \$4.00 for 50.

To place your order:

By phone: call United Church of Christ Resources, toll free, at 800/537-3394. UCCR will bill local churches, or you can pay by credit card: MC/VISA/Discover/AmEx. Or go to UnitedChurchPress.com. Questions? Call UCCR toll free at 800/537-3394.



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NOW FOR
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