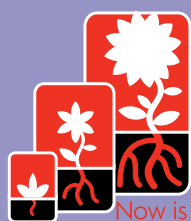


New Church Planter Leadership Institute



New Ideas for
New Churches



**New Church
Leadership**
Now is the Time for New Church Development

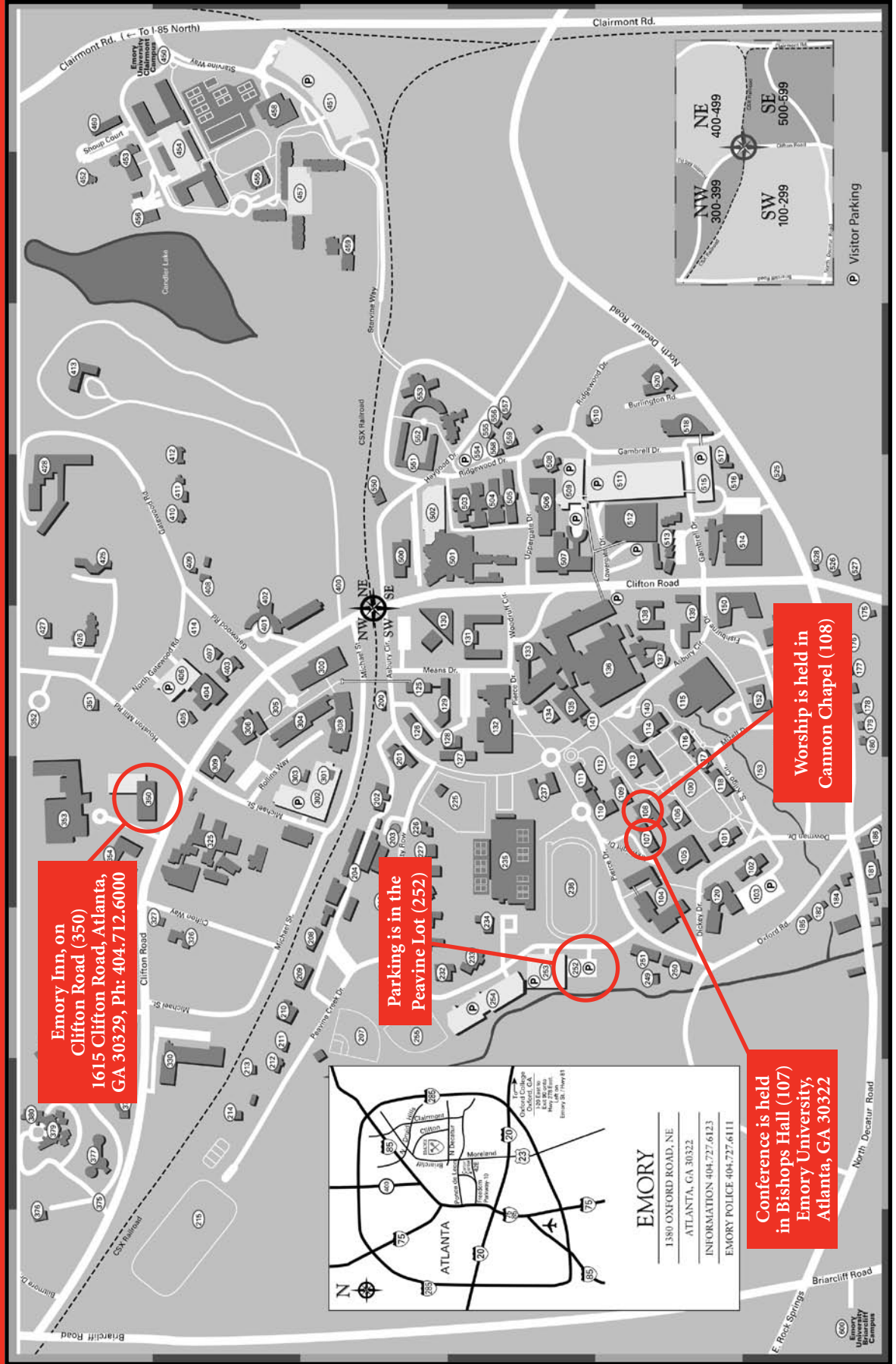
August 13–17, 2007
Emory University,
Atlanta, Georgia

Special Thanks to our Sponsors

Carpenter Foundation



Emory University Visitor Map



WELCOME!

Welcome to the New Church Leadership Planter Institute!



hanks for investing your time to be a part of this very important event. We believe that new churches hold the vision for the future to the United Church of Christ, and the work we will do together this week will take us further on our journey to building this amazing Church. This week, we will hear from gifted leaders, church planters and visionaries serving in our churches today. We will talk about the practical needs, challenges and opportunities facing new church planters in communities across the country. We hope that you will be inspired to:

- Preach boldly the message of love and justice taught by God through Jesus Christ,
- Build churches which proudly proclaim our UCC identity and heritage,
- Develop congregations passionate about future church reproduction,
- Network with your peers this week who can journey with you in your efforts.

This week promises to be one of learning, prayer, challenge and fellowship. May this week be the beginning of a new time, a new vision and a new effort. It is time to build new churches! ■

Rev. Cameron Trimble

Director of the Nehemiah Leadership Initiative

Table of Contents

Nehemiah Leadership Planning Team	5
Conference Cliff Notes	6
Schedule of Events	7
2007 Course listings	8
Facilitators Biographies	14
Spiritual Formation: The Essential Foundation for Leadership, by Richard Peace	16
On The Horizon: 2007–2008	
New Church Development Events around the United Church of Christ	21
Thriving Churches—Chapter Nine of his book <i>Prophetic Renewal</i> , by Michael Piazza	23
Important Information	26
UCC Coaches for New Church Planters	27

Nehemiah Leadership Initiative Planning Team

Nehemiah Leadership Initiative Director, Cameron Trimble

Cameron Trimble began her ministry as a United Methodist minister ten years ago, working as a pastor of a new church start in the north Georgia area. The church quickly grew with the prayer, hard work and vision of gifted leaders and congregation members. In 2004, after hearing about the United Church of Christ and its vision for radical inclusion and commitment to social justice, Cameron left the UMC and became a minister in the United Church of Christ. She joined the staff of the Southeast Conference as their Associate Conference Minister for Church Development in 2005 and today leads their efforts in developing new and renewing churches. In 2006, Cameron wrote the grant that created the *Nehemiah Leadership Initiative* and directs the program today. Cameron lives in Marietta, Georgia with her partner Ann and their two sons, Eric and Kyle.

Nehemiah Leadership Initiative Planning Team

Ron Buford is a consultant with the UCC Congregational Vitality Initiative Team. As the creator of the national Still Speaking Campaign, Ron Buford birthed a brand and marketing strategy for the UCC that has changed the face of denomination. Ron, who enjoyed a distinguished career in corporate marketing before joining the UCC's national staff in 2000, brought organization and vision to the marketing strategy of the UCC in ways that will be felt for years. A 1977 graduate of the University of Rochester in New York, Buford first served as the denomination's public relations and marketing manager. Ron currently lives in Cleveland.

Timothy Downs is the Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. Elected as Conference Minister in 1996, Tim served local congregations in Pennsylvania and New England for 22 years prior to coming to the Southeast Conference. Tim's deep commitments to strengthening the life and witness of local congregations, and to social justice and mission, have ushered in an era of renewal in the Conference, bringing a dramatic increase in attendance at Conference events, in contributions to OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) from our congregations, and in new church development. Tim lives in Decatur, Georgia with his wife Carol and their two sons, Christopher and Andrew.

Pérsida Rivera-Méndez is a graduate of Andover Newton Theological School, Newton MA. She was ordained by the UCC on July 28, 2002. She is Minister for Local Church Development and Renewal with the Evangelism Ministry of the Local Church Covenanted Ministry in Cleveland, OH. She is fully Bi-lingual (English/Spanish) and she has served as a solo pastor of a small Hispanic Congregation in East Hartford, CT. She has served in many settings of the local church, conference and National Offices. She has served as President of the Council for Hispanic Ministries of the UCC. She has co-chaired the COREM table of the UCC. She received the Laywomen's Award from the Coordinating Women Ministry of the UCC at the 21st General Synod. She has received the Valiant Woman Award from Church Women United of CT. She has received the Church Leadership Award from the Christian Activities Council in Hartford, CT. Persida lives in Cleveland with her husband. Her husband is Heliodoro Mendez (Charlie, and their children are Robert Reyes, Raymond Reyes, Heliodoro Mendez, Jr. (Junior) and Francisco Mendez.

David Schoen is the Team Leader of the Evangelism Ministry Team and Coordinator of the Congregational Vitality Initiative. The Evangelism Ministry Team is mandated within the United Church of Christ to work in partnership with Conferences to start, develop, strengthen and renew local congregations. As Team Leader, David is a strong advocate for planting and welcoming new congregations (having been born while his father was starting a new congregation!) and is the principle author of "The Time is Now!" a call for new church development in the United Church of Christ. Before joining the national ministries in 2000, Dave served in UCC congregations of large and small membership in urban and suburban settings for twenty-two years. David lives in Cleveland with his wife, Stella.

Joanne Thomson is Associate Conference Minister for the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, with responsibilities in evangelism and church development, new church initiatives, and stewardship. Before joining the Conference staff, she was for nineteen years a local church pastor in the United Church of Christ, serving congregations in Wisconsin and Massachusetts. Prior to entering the ministry, she worked in local government as the director of an elderly services agency in Massachusetts. She is a graduate of the Harvard Divinity School and Tufts University. Joanne lives in Madison, Wisconsin with her husband, Don and her two teen-aged children, Paul and Jessie. ■

Conference “Cliff Notes”

Here is what you need to know for our
conference this week

Big Things:

1. The schedule for the courses is included in this booklet on page 7. Please be prompt, present and participatory! All of the main courses will be held in Room 311 (the main lecture hall) in Bishops Hall.
2. We have a shuttle that will take you back and forth between the hotel and the campus.

To make special arrangements for shuttle pickup,
call Emory Inn at **404-712-6000**.

3. Volunteers and Team members are wearing white shirts. If you have any questions, they are the people to ask. And please take a chance to thank them for their service this week.
4. Please be respectful of the facility and do not leave trash in the rooms.

Smaller Things:

1. Food: The hotel will provide you a light breakfast. Lunch and dinner are on your own; there are a number of restaurants just off the campus within walking distance. Snacks will be provided and there are drink machines in Cannon Chapel.
2. Restrooms are usually located in the middle of the building. There are only men's restrooms on the first floor. Men's and women's restrooms are on the second and third floors. ■

For more information, see page 26

Schedule of Events Nehemiah Leadership Institute August 2007

Monday, August 13

- 8 a.m.** Registration begins in Room 212
- 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.** Coaching Training with Paul Nickerson
Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Break and Lunch
- 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** Coaching Training with Paul Nickerson
Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Break
- 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** Coaching Training with Paul Nickerson
Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** Arrival and Check-In for Planters
Emory Inn

Tuesday, August 14

- 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.** Office open / Room 212
- 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.** Theological Basis of Evangelism —
Richard Peace / Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Break and Lunch
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Breakout with Andrew Kim and
Susan Mitchell / Room 101
Breakout with Ed Aponte / Room 113
Breakout with Richard Peace / Room 311
- 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** Spiritual Development of the New
Church Planter — Richard Peace
Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Break
- 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** Church Planting in a Multi-Cultural
World — Ed Aponte, Susan Mitchell,
Cindy Andrews-Looper, Andrew Kim
Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** Dinner
- 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** Church Planting Village: An Evening of
Networking / Bishops Hall

See Page 13 for information about the Church Planting Village”

Wednesday, August 15

- 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.** Leadership for Vital Congregations —
Ken Samuel / Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Break and Lunch
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Breakout with Cynthia Andrews-Looper
Room 101
Breakout with Ron Buford / Room 113
Breakout with Ken Samuel / Room 311

- 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** Church Planting 101: Vision and
Mission — Cindy Andrews-Looper
Bishops Hall / Room 311

- 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Break

- 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** Church Planting 101: Discovering
Your Mission Field — Ron Buford
Bishops Hall / Room 311

- 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** Night off

Thursday, August 16

- 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.** Church Planting 101: Engaging the Mission
Field — Ozzie Smith / Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Break and Lunch
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Breakout with Mike Piazza / Room 101
Breakout with Yvette Flunder / Room 113
Breakout with Ozzie Smith / Room 311
- 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** Church Planting 101: Fundraising
and Stewardship — Mike Piazza
Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Break
- 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** Church Planting 101: Worship and
Discipleship — Yvette Flunder
Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** Connecting with Coaches and Pastors
Bishops Hall / Room 311
- 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** Seminary students meet with Dean
Ed Aponte / Room 113

Friday, August 17

- 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.** Church Planting: Ten Challenges, New Starts Face
— Paul Nickerson / Bishops Hall Room 311
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Break and Lunch
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Breakout with Paul Nickerson / Room 311
- 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Closing Worship, Cannon Chapel

Monday through Thursday

- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 to 3:00 p.m.**
Office open / Room 212
- 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2:30 to 3:00 p.m.**
Bookstore open / Room 110
- 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** Dinner
- All Rooms and event locations are in Bishops Hall
unless otherwise noted.**

Nehemiah Leadership Initiative for New Church Development

2007 COURSE OUTLINES

● Evangelism in a Post-Modern Era

Facilitator: **Richard Peace**

Evangelism is the process of communicating the Good News to those who have not heard it or who have not yet responded to it. As such, evangelism is a prime responsibility of the Church. Unfortunately, in North America evangelism is often conceived of (both inside and outside the church) as something that is coercive, manipulative, and bad mannered. In fact, genuine New Testament evangelism is characterized by a warm-hearted, loving desire on the part of “one beggar to tell other beggars where to find bread” (D. T. Niles). In this course, students will be challenged to:

- Rethink evangelism with broader understandings of sharing the Good News,
- Rethink our ideas of conversion which often define our methodologies of evangelism,
- Look at possibilities of evangelism in our post-modern age

Students will be asked to reflect upon how we have historically approached evangelism and then look at new ways of engaging in the ministry of evangelism that are more wholistic. We will examine New Testament evangelical practices and imagine ways we might recapture a deeper understanding of sharing the Christian story in a post-modern age.

Suggested Reading:

Abraham, William J. *The Logic of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989, 233 pp.

Finney, John. *Emerging Evangelism*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 2004.

Kallenberg, Brad. *Live to Tell: Evangelism for a Postmodern Age*. Grand Rapids, Brazos Press, 2002.

Peace, Richard. *Conversion in the NT: Paul and the Twelve*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999.

Peace, Richard. *Holy Conversation: Talking About God in Everyday Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.

Stone, Bryan. *Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness*. Brazos Press, 2007.



TRAINING

for New Church Developers



The Nehemiah Initiative
A Ministry of the United Church of Christ

● Spiritual Formation in a Post-Modern Age

Facilitator: **Richard Peace**

Spiritual formation has become a catch-phrase for the modern church wrestling with ways to connect people to practices of discipleship. Yet the practice of spiritual formation has roots that go back to the founding of our faith. Spiritual formation points to the forming of one's soul into the likeness of the God who created us. In this course, students will be asked to explore:

- Spiritual formation in the early Church,
- Spiritual formation of church planters,
- Spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines

We will explore the idea of evangelism not only being grounded in the outgoing, robust telling of the Christian story, but also in the silence of reflection, meditation and contemplation. We will look at practices of spiritual formation that provide a foundation for progressive evangelism as well as keep church planters rooted in the passion and vision that drives them to plant a church.

Suggested Reading:

Chase, Steven. *The Tree of Life: Models of Christian Prayer*. Baker, 2005.

Chittister, Joan. *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today*. HarperCollins, 1991.

Collins, Kenneth, ed. *Exploring Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Reader*. Baker, 2000.

Holt, Bradley. *Thirsty for God*. 2nd ed., Augsburg, 1993, 2005.

Peace, Richard. *The Spiritual Formation Series: Spiritual Journaling; Spiritual Autobiography; Contemplative Bible Reading; & Meditative Prayer*. NavPress, 1998.

Rolheiser, Ronald. *The Holy Longing*. Doubleday, 1999.

Thompson, Marjorie. *Soul Feast*. Westminster/John Knox, 1995.

● Church Planting in a Multi-Cultural World

Facilitators: **Edwin Aponte, Cindy Andrews-Looper, Susan Mitchell, and Andrew Kim**

In a world which is increasing in its diversity, we must pay particular attention to creating Christian communities sensitive to the needs, traditions, and practices of all the people in our communities. While there is still reason to argue that Sunday mornings are the most segregated hour in our week, the United Church of Christ honors a commitment to bring radical inclusion and welcome into its worshiping communities and experiences. We truly believe that “no matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome” in the United Church of Christ.

In this course, students will hear from presenters about the challenges and opportunities they face in their diverse settings. Students will have the chance to dialogue with the presenters, ask questions and learn from one another as we seek to understand our differences.

Suggested Reading:

Anderson, David. *Multicultural Ministry: Finding Your Church's Unique Rhythm*. Zondervan, 2004.

Cone, James H. *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation and Black Theology*. Eerdmans, 1986.

Francis, Hozell C. *Church Planting in the African American Context*. Zondervan, 1999.

Lee, Jung Young. *Journeys at the Margin: Towards an Autobiographical Theology in American Asian Perspective*. Liturgical Press, 1999.

Ortiz, Manuel. *The Hispanic Challenge: Opportunities Confronting the Church*. InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Recinos, Harold. *Who Comes in the Name of the Lord? Jesus at the Margins*. Abingdon Press, 1997.

● Leadership for Vital Congregations

Facilitator: **Kenneth Samuel**

We have learned over the years of planting new churches that the key to successful church starts is leadership. The leader is the vision-caster, spiritual guide, motivator, organizer and director. The leader sets the tone, pace and health of the new church in the ways that she or he develop the church from the very first day. Having the skills and talents to lead effectively are essential. In this course, students will:

- Examine the key qualities of effect church planting leaders,
- Learn about practices of discernment as we listen for the call of God,
- Determine methods of efficient service which furthers the vision and mission of your new church,
- Explore creative ways to engage the community in worship,
- Envision articulate ways helping your church members share their faith with others.

Through looking at the Old Testament story of King Solomon, students will learn modern leadership principles vital to Christian leaders today. They will use biblical models from several different versions of the Bible to understand the dynamics of good leadership so they can become more effective leaders and grow their congregations.

Suggested Reading:

Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books, 1995.

Samuel, Kenneth L. *Solomon's Success: Four Essential Keys to Leadership*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006.

Wood, Stanley. *Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006.

● Church Planting 101: Vision and Mission Field

Facilitator: **Cynthia Andrews-Looper**

Proverbs tells us that “where there is no vision, the people will perish.” Vision is important to the success of a new church. In fact, a compelling vision grabs hold of people and will not let them go. They have a clear sense that not only could this new church exist; they feel a moral obligation that this church should exist. But most churches share similar visions, values and missions. Their effectiveness in growing and connecting with the community comes from two things – an ability to communicate their vision and sensitivity to the mission field. New churches must be rooted and connected to the communities in which they are planted. In this course, students will learn:

- How to articulate their vision and mission,
- How to connect with the people living in their mission field,
- The basic lifecycle of a church and the types of church starts.

Students will engage in interactive exercises that allow them time to experiment with talking about their church with people who might be potential members. They will also receive feedback from their facilitator and fellow classmates on ways to improve their vision expressions and ideas for connecting with the people in their demographics.

Suggested Reading:

Buckingham, Marcus. *First, Break All the Rules*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999.

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.

Stanly, Andy. *Visioneering. Sisters, Oregon*: Multnomah Publishers, 1999.

● Church Planting 101: Discovering Your Mission Field

Facilitator: **Ron Buford**

Knowing who God has called you to reach is among the first steps to building a new church. Many times, planters assume that they know a community if they get to know a few people and walk around for a weekend. But knowing your mission field is more than just assumptions and good guesses. It involves demographic research, interviews, census research and building personal relationships. In this course, students will learn:

- How to use basic demographic research services,
- How to discover social patterns, stories and values of your mission field,
- Ways to connect to the stories of those living in the area you feel called to serve,
- Developing promotional material that speaks to your mission field.

Students will reflect on the development of the national Still Speaking campaign and the learnings from its implementation. They will also hear stories of how churches are creatively living into marketing and promotion of their congregations around the country.

Suggested Reading:

Barna, George. *Growing Your Church from the Outside In*. Ventura: Regal Books, 2002.

Stevens, Tim and Tony Morgan. *Simply Strategic Growth: Attracting a Crowd to Your Church*. Loveland: Group Publishing, 2005.

Easum, William and Bandy, Thomas. *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

Hunter, George. *Radical Outreach*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.

Patton, Jeff. *It Could Happen Here*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.

● Church Planting 101: Engaging Your Mission Field

Facilitator: **Ozzie E. Smith, Jr.**

So now you have a small group of people signed on to help you birth a church, you have studied your mission field and have a sense of the people living around you, and now you need to start pulling together a new church. Where do you start? How do you connect with the people in your community and introduce them to your new church? How do you move this from being a “dream” to being a real, worshipping Christian community? In this course, students will:

- Learn how to host “umbrella” events that attract the community,
- Learn how to create a culture of “inviting” in your church,
- Determine when is the best time to “launch” your church,
- Develop timelines for the first phase of a church launch,
- Learn the basics of networking and connecting to leaders in your community,

Students will have the opportunity to develop timelines for their own church planting projects and receive feedback from the facilitator and their peers. They will also learn the basics of assembling a launch team and gathering the needed resources to have a strong launch.

Suggested Reading

Barna, George. *Evangelism That Works*. Ventura: Regal Books, 1995.

Hunter, George. *How to Reach Secular People*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.

Reese, Martha Grace. *Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006.

● Church Planting 101: Fundraising & Stewardship

Facilitator: **Michael S. Piazza**

As church planters, you are working to promote growth – both in the number of people attending and in their spiritual development. Growth takes place in the real world of practical plans and mundane activities. Growth occurs in spite of the imperfections of individuals and groups. As your community grows, the needs of the group will change and the financial needs and obligations will grow. One of the greatest skills of a new church start pastor is the ability to raise money and to teach their members about stewardship. In this course, students will learn:

- Effective strategies for finding “virtue” capitalists
- Ways to ask for money and raise money within your community
- Ways to expand our understanding of stewardship beyond money,
- Techniques for teaching stewardship from the very beginning of your church.

Students will have the chance to brainstorm with one another funding strategies for their new churches. They will also learn about the UCC commitment to OCWM and ways they can teach their members about the various forms of Christian stewardship.

Suggested Reading:

Ahern, Tom. *How to Write Fundraising Materials That Raise More Money: The Art, the Science, the Secrets*. Medfield: Emerson and Church Publishers, 2007.

Searcy, Nelson and Kerrick Thomas. *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch*. Ventura: Regal Books, 2006.

● Church Planting 101: Worship and Discipleship

Facilitator: **Yvette Flunder**

People today are ready to hear the Good News of God’s love through Jesus Christ from a church that can show them how it matters to their lives. Relevancy has been a challenge for the Christian church in this century. But it should not be this way. As Yvette Flunder says in her book, *Where the Edge Gathers*, “It is not necessary to choose between a Spirit-filled oppressive church and a cold, dead, liberal church. Church can be very effervescent and joyful while simultaneously being theologically liberating, justice oriented, culturally appropriate, and inclusive.” Worship and discipleship are at the heart of creating this kind of church. In this course, students will discuss:

- The importance of relevant, Biblically-based, inclusive preaching,
- How to prepare for the preaching moment in worship,
- The power of music in a worship experience,
- Ways to intentionally strengthen discipleship within your community,

Students will be challenged to create vibrant, life-giving worship experiences for the people within their mission field. They will be inspired by the stories of transformation through Christian worship. Through the synergistic relationship between the pastor and congregation in call and response, the students will learn to listen for God’s call to new ways of preaching, teaching and leading the people of God.

Suggested Reading::

Flunder, Yvette. *Where the Edge Gathers: Building a Community of Radical Inclusion*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005.

Mitman, Russell. *Worship in the Shape of Scripture*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001.

● Church Planting 101: Ten Challenges New Church Starts Face

Facilitator: **Paul B. Nickerson**

Every church start pastor makes mistakes in the process of birthing a new church. This is high-risk ministry with great rewards and great dangers. The key to navigating this adventure wisely is to learn from the successes and mistakes of those who have gone before. In this course, we will look at the top ten challenges that many new church start pastors face in their first three years. In this course, students will:

- Learn about the common mistakes church planters make,
- Hear stories from research gathered from new church start autopsies
- Learn how to put warning systems in place to protect your new church

Students will learn the basic “dos” and “don’ts” as they get their new church off the ground. They will also have the opportunity to talk with pastors who have birthed churches in the past 10 years and learn from their experience.

Suggested Reading:

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Planting Growing Churches*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

Moore, Ralph. *Starting a New Church: The Church Planter’s Guide to Success*. Ventura: Regal Books, 2002.

The Church Planting Notebook for the Local Church Ministries Evangelism Team, UCC

Church Planting Village Tuesday, August 14, 7–9pm

Coaching — Coaching is a critical tool to help you in the church planting process. Meet with our coaching trainers and learn about our extensive UCC coaching network.

New Church Bookstore — Staying informed about our latest learning in new church development will strengthen your work in church planting. Visit our bookstore and view some of the latest books published.

Networking Groups — Do you want to be connected to a small group of church planters in the coming year for support, ideas and fellowship? Here you can sign up for a networking support group based on region and learn about ways of connecting with new church planters across the UCC.

Presbyterian Resource Connection — Through our ecumenical partners we have access to important educational resources at minimal cost. Meet with Mardee Rightmyer from the Atlanta Presbyterian resource connection to learn more about this program.

Still Speaking — We have a gift to offer in the United Church of Christ. The Still Speaking Initiative helps us clearly communicate who we are as a Church. Meet with David Harsh, consultant with the Still Speaking Initiative, and learn about ways the wider church can support your work.

Stewardship — many people think that stewardship is just about asking for money. Meet with a member of our stewardship team and learn about the ways A broader understanding of stewardship can change the life of your church.

Technology — Understanding the power of technology in a new church is a great tool to getting your church off the ground. Meet with a representative from Lightworks Media who can provide your church with basic website design, logo design and online communities. ■



NETWORKING

for New Church Developers

The Nehemiah Initiative
A Ministry of the United Church of Christ

Facilitators Biographies



In January of 1996, **Cynthia Andrews-Looper** moved from Greenville, South Carolina to Nashville, TN. In August of that same year she started a Bible Study that grew into what is today Holy Trinity Community Church, an affirming Christian community, the largest predominately gay and lesbian congregation in Tennessee, with 350 members. Locally, she is on the board of directors of the Interfaith Alliance of Middle Tennessee.

She considers the events of the past several years to be of great significance in her spiritual journey. “Today I live with hope, peace and joy that I only dreamed of in the past. I came face to face in spirit with a Holy God and found an unconditional love that inspired me to share this hope. We serve a God whose arms are open to anyone who will walk into them. Discovering that love is truly life-changing. We want people to find God’s loving embrace at Holy Trinity. If we accomplish that, we have succeeded in our mission.”



Ron Buford is a consultant with the UCC Congregational Vitality Initiative Team. As the creator of the national Still Speaking Campaign, Ron Buford, birthed a brand and marketing strategy for the UCC that has changed the face of denomination. Ron, who enjoyed a distinguished career in corporate marketing before joining the UCC’s national staff in 2000, brought organization and vision to the marketing strategy of the UCC in ways that will be felt for years. A 1977 graduate of the University of Rochester in New York, Buford first served as the denomination’s public relations and marketing manager. Ron currently lives in Cleveland.



Yvette Flunder founded the City of Refuge Community Church UCC in 1991 in order to unite a gospel ministry with a social ministry. Preaching a message of action, the church has experienced steady numerical and spiritual growth and is now located in the south of Market area of San Francisco at 1025 Howard Street.

A native San Franciscan, Rev. Flunder is a third generation preacher with roots in the Church of God in Christ. In 1984 Rev. Flunder began performing and recording with “Walter Hawkins and the Family” and the Love Center Choir. Rev. Flunder is an ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ and a graduate of the Ministry Studies and Master of Arts programs at the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California.

She received a Doctor of Ministry degree from San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo California.

In June 2003 Rev. Flunder was consecrated Presiding Bishop of Refuge Ministries/Fellowship 2000 a multi-denominational fellowship of 50+ primarily African American Christian leaders and laity representing churches and faith-based organizations from all parts of the country and Africa.



Paul B. Nickerson is an ordained UCC Minister of 27 years and serves on the Massachusetts Conference Staff working on evangelism, vitality and new church starts. Paul is also a Senior Associate with Griffith Coaching of Denver, Colorado, the leading coaching outfit in the country. Paul trains coaches, sets up new church start systems, and works with new and

turnaround pastors.

Paul resides in Beverly, Massachusetts with his wife, Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt and he has two sons, Kyle 24 and Blair 20, as well as a 9 year-old golden retriever named McAuley.



Richard Peace is the Robert Boyd Munger Professor of Evangelism and Spiritual Formation at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Dr. Peace is a graduate of Yale University (B.E.) and Fuller Theological Seminary (M.Div.). He earned a Ph.D. in biblical studies at the University of Natal (South

Africa). A prolific author, Dr. Peace has over a hundred and fifty titles to his credit including *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), which proposes a new paradigm for evangelism. His most recent book is entitled *Holy Conversation: Talking About God in Everyday Life* which seeks to help lay people learn how to talk about their faith in natural, non-confrontational ways (InterVarsity Press, 2006). He has been involved in starting three church-based outreach and training ministries.



Michael S. Piazza is a spiritual visionary, author and social justice advocate who currently serves as Dean of the Cathedral of Hope as well as President of Hope for Peace and Justice, a non-profit organization whose mission is equipping progressive people of faith to be champions for peace and justice. A native of Georgia,

Rev. Piazza has served in ministry for more than three decades, pastoring churches in Texas, Georgia, Oklahoma and Florida. He holds Bachelor Degrees in history and psychology from Valdosta State College in Georgia and a Master of Divinity from the Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta.

Rev. Piazza has six published books, *Holy Homosexuals*, *Rainbow Family Values*, *Mourning to Morning*, *Growth or Death*, *Queeries: Questions Lesbians and Gays have for God*, and the recently released *The Real antiChrist: How America Sold its Soul*. He is currently at work on *Prophetic Renewal*, a book designed to help restore vitality to liberal congregations. Rev. Piazza and his partner Bill have been together since 1980 and have two daughters.



In March of 1987, **Kenneth Samuel** organized the Victory for the World Church which has dual standing as an independent Baptist Church, and an active congregation of the United Church of Christ. Situated in a growing eastern suburb of Atlanta called Stone Mountain, the Victory Church seeks to address the total needs of the total person through a

broad array of ministries and services which promote the spiritual development, educational enhancement, physical fitness and social empowerment of every child of God – regardless of race, gender, culture, class or sexual orientation. In 2001, Dr. Samuel and the Victory Church completed construction on a 3000 seat Worship Center, replete with classrooms, offices, a library, a bookstore, a

recording studio and a 500 seat Fellowship Hall. In addition, the Kenneth L. Samuel (KLS) Community Life Center houses a full court gymnasium, additional classrooms, offices and a computer lab. The 25 acre Victory campus also houses the Victory Christian Academy, which serves grades K3 through 5th grade. Doctor Samuel is the proud parent of one daughter, Kendalle Marye, and resides in Lithonia, Georgia.



A music scholar and teacher who answered God's call to ministry would be an appropriate description of the life of **Ozzie E. Smith, Jr.** Having earned a Masters of Education in Music, and the Master of Divinity and the Doctor of Ministry degrees, Dr. Smith has established a wonderful way of using his music and the Gospel message to bring hope

and encouragement to God's people everywhere.

Ordained in 1994 at Trinity United Church of Christ, Dr. Smith served this congregation as Associate Pastor/Music Staff Supervisor for six years. In 1996 Dr. Smith was called to organize Covenant United Church of Christ, a new church start in South Holland, Illinois. It is there that he serves the congregation of Covenant and its surrounding community through affiliations as an Executive Board and Board Member of Advocate HealthCare, Chair, Governing Council Advocate Trinity Hospital. He shares his life with his wife, Barbara, of 32 years, and their three children, Luran, Dr. Ozzie III, and Brian. ■

Church in a Multi-Cultural World: Panel Members



Edwin Aponte is Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he also serves as Professor of Religion and Culture.



Susan Mitchell is the co-pastor of Sankofa UCC, a new church start in Atlanta, Georgia. Susan offers a "shared leadership" model for church birthing, focusing on empowering lay leadership in her church.



Andrew Kim is the co-pastor with his wife, Sarah, of Salim UCC, a Korean congregation in Roswell, Georgia. Andrew also works as a financial planner.

Spiritual Formation: The Essential Foundation for Leadership

Richard Peace

Who you are is how you lead. It is that simple—and that difficult. If leadership were merely a mechanical process—feed in the data, compare it to past situations, and come up with the best way forward—a computer could be built to take on this task. (Think how much cheaper a computer would be than the salary of a CEO!) But as it were, leadership is far more complex and far less straightforward. It takes a human being (or a group of human beings) in the context of a community of interested parties to forge the best next step.

And in this process, character matters—as Max DePree keeps reminding us. The decisions one makes as a leader emerge out of a matrix of inner realities: one's professional training, past experience in similar situations, external constraints, expectations of stake-holders, and the core-values of the leader. It is the issue of core values that I wish to address.

I want to argue that on-going spiritual formation is vital for a leader.¹ It is as we pay attention to the spiritual world that our core-values are formed, shaped, developed, and honed every more closely to the values of Jesus. Core-values are all about those deep inner realities that define the essence of who we are.

So, for example, for those of us who call ourselves Christians, a core value would be the Great Commandment to love. We are called upon to love God in a wholehearted, all-encompassing sort of way. And we are also called upon to love others with agape-love, which is a kind of love-in-action regardless of what we may feel. But it is one thing to affirm this value; it is another for that value to become so central to who we are that we act instinctively in this fashion. How do we become the kind of people who not only affirm the Great Commandment but are fully shaped by it?

This is what spiritual formation is all about: the on-going process whereby we open ourselves to God and to the way of God so that over time we are shaped by God. Our core-values emerge out of this on-going encounter with God.

Spiritual formation is all about putting ourselves in those places where we are most apt to encounter God. Spiritual formation is all about engaging in those practices that help translate our Christian ideas into reflexive action in our daily life. Spiritual for-



mation is all about seeking to be ever more closely conformed to the image of Jesus. The kind of person we become, over time as we engage in spiritual formation, enables us to be not just competent leaders but leaders who lead from a thoroughly Christian world view.

Let me give you an example of what I have in mind when it comes to the impact of on-going spiritual formation. We have a new minister in our church. I do not know him well but in just the short time that he has been our pastor I sense that he is leading out of a vital relationship with God. Sure he has all the

professional skills a pastor needs. He knows how to prepare a sermon. He has a good sense of liturgy. He is warm, out-going, and engaging—the kind of person you would turn to in time of crises. But there is something underneath all that professional skill and experience. He is reflecting something (or better still, someone) deep within him. He is ministering out of his on-going encounter with God. It is this formational factor that makes his ministry not just competent but spirit-enhanced.

So I want to think with you about how our spiritual life forms us and forms our values and hence shapes our leadership whether it be in business, ministry, the home, or a career. To this end I want to do an extended case study. I want to look at how Jesus was prepared by God for his ministry.² I think that the challenges that Jesus had to face and the equipping that came from God raise the very questions that we need to confront as men and women who desire to be effective leaders. After this case study I will end by describing a way to access this kind of material in our on-going formation, based on The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

The Preparation of Jesus for Ministry

How was Jesus prepared for his ministry? Even asking this question sounds odd. Jesus was the Son of God. As such he brought unique DNA to the whole process of ministry. He could draw

1. Actually I would argue that on-going spiritual formation is vital for everyone. Attention to the spiritual world in which we live is crucial least we be overwhelmed and over-determined by the natural world that is so present to us. We need to learn to listen to the still, small voice of God so as to become all God calls us to be.

2. I admit to being wary of seeing Jesus through a particular lens since there is a history of making Jesus into our own image. For example, in his 1925 book *The Man Nobody Knows*, businessman Bruce Barton portrays Jesus as a salesman, publicist, and role model for the “modern businessman.” And in a more recent example, Laurie Beth Jones has written a book entitled *Jesus CEO* (Hyperion, 1996). Jones, a management consultant, draws on the leadership techniques of Jesus Christ to provide tips on how to inspire and manage others. My own stance is that Jesus must be allowed to be Jesus and must be understood in his own context. Hence I will make extended comments on the baptism and temptation of Jesus as found in Matthew 3:13-4:11 before trying to glean some applications to the whole question of leadership and spiritual formation.

upon perspectives and realities unavailable to anyone else. But still, Scripture talks about Jesus not just as divine but also as human. And as a human being he grew from childhood to adulthood and in the process he learned various skills (such as driving a nail), he lived in a community (and so learned how to negotiate life with siblings and others), and developed physically over time. I do not think it is out of order to suggest that he underwent preparation for ministry.

I want to argue that in his baptism and subsequent temptation in the wilderness, *Jesus was given all he needed for ministry*. I will also argue that in these two experiences he *confronted the key issues that had the power to undo his ministry*.

For 30 years Jesus lived, as far as we know, quite an ordinary life in a peasant village in Israel. During these so-called “hidden years” he most likely worked as an artisan/carpenter with his father Joseph. He learned Torah from the local rabbi. He participated in the religious and social events of his community.

But clearly he had, from an early age, a sense of his mission. In the one glimpse we have of Jesus as a twelve year old, after his anxious parents journey back to Jerusalem and find him in conversation with the teachers in the temple, he seems surprised that they were worried about him. “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49).

At about age 30 he leaves Nazareth and journeys to the river Jordan to be baptized by his cousin John. Following his baptism, Jesus is led into the wilderness for a forty-day fast during which he confronts the key issues of ministry. These two events that take place at the start of Jesus’ ministry serve to focus his ministry.

The Baptism of Jesus

It all begins with his baptism. Let me single out three important elements in the baptism of Jesus that define and enable his ministry: the meaning of his baptism itself, his empowerment by the Holy Spirit, and the affirmation and blessing by God.

First, by choosing to be baptized (“John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you...’” Mt 3:14) Jesus identifies with those he will seek, serve, and ultimately save. John is preaching a baptism of repentance but Jesus has lived a sinless life and so has nothing to repent of. Rather, by his baptism Jesus identifies himself with the people of Israel and in particular with their sins (and through them with the sins of the world) prefiguring his death for those sins. By this act he announces to whom he will minister and the core issue he will confront and he does so in a way that connects him to the deepest of their needs.

Second, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus. The text says “like a dove.” We do not know what this means. Clearly the word “like” signals that this is a simile but we are so far removed from the event that it is hard to know just what such a simile would have conjured up in the minds of first century readers. But the main point is clear. Jesus was empowered for ministry. He is not alone.

It will not be up to him, unaided, to do the will of his father in the world. There is a new inner reality of some sort; a new kind of relationship upon which he can draw.

Third, a voice from heaven declares: “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17). The nature of this commendation is important to note. Jesus’ identity is declared. He is the Son of God. There is conjecture on whether Jesus knew fully who he was prior to this declaration. No matter what the case might be, at this point there is no doubt. He knows his identity and thus his calling and destiny. His ministry emerges out of this reality. Furthermore, Jesus is affirmed. God the Father is well pleased with him. As he starts his ministry Jesus does so with the strong blessing of God.

And so the Trinity is complete: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, together, one yet separate, the divine mystery is active at this special moment in time.

The connections to what we need as leaders about to embark on new ministries, new ventures, or new callings is almost too obvious to point out. What a clear-sighted, focused ministry we would have if it arises out of:

- **Identification** with the people with whom we will work, with their needs, interests, and issues. Such identification stands in sharp contrast to other motives for work or ministry: self-interest, our own needs and desires, the wish for affirmation, using people to meet our goals or the goals of a corporation. So the question becomes: what is our stance towards those we lead, serve, sell to, interact with, and work with? Jesus was so identified with the needs of his people that he was willing to die for them. This is an impossibly high standard for us but it does point us in the right direction.

- **Empowerment** from within and from beyond. Sure it is vital to be well-trained, knowledgeable, and experienced but we are still left with our limitations. This is just the nature of our human condition. We get tired, we fail to see crucial factors, we make bad decisions, we make self-serving decisions, we are at the wrong place at the wrong time, etc. We need all the help we can get. This help comes from within and without. From within, when we are in touch with our genuine feelings, deep motives, true calling, and unconscious reality we are able to live a more integrated life and such an integrated life brings with it energy, wisdom, and authenticity—all of which we need in order to lead. From without, well the Holy Spirit is still active in the world, a gift from God, a gift of God, an empowering force that takes our meager offerings and multiplies their impact beyond recognition.

- **Identity and affirmation.** We need to know who we are in order to activate our gifts, skills, and calling. With a strong sense of self—which includes knowing where we have come from and whose family we are part of—we can go into situations and not

be threatened or diminished by the forces that come against us. And if identity gives us the base from which we operate, affirmation gives us the energy to keep going. When we know that he or she who has given us birth and life finds us to be wonderful, this blessing empowers far more than we can imagine.

What a powerful grid this provides for leaders to assess their own motives and vision as they begin a new ministry, a new company, or a new job.

The Temptation of Jesus

And so on this gloriously high note of an empowering encounter with God, the very next thing that Jesus must do is to go off into the stark, forbidding Judean wilderness for a forty-day fast. His preparation involves not just epiphanies and infilling but desolation and challenge.

Jesus meets the devil in the wilderness. This was, apparently, the purpose of this 40-day sojourn. The devil comes at the end of the fast when he is “famished” (Mt 4:1)—not the best possible situation. Jesus has reached the limits of human existence and it is then he must face the three temptations that will shape who he becomes. We have to believe that these are real temptations for Jesus and not just sort of morality play in which we know the hero will brush aside these faint jabs of his enemy.

The first temptation has to do with food, of course. Jesus is famished. From reports out of prisoner of war camps we know that after a while all you think about is food—not success or power or even sex, only food. “Turn these stones into bread.” Plenty of stones. What is wrong with using his power to meet his pressing need?

But, of course, this temptation is not just about bread. The challenge to turn stone to bread is preceded by the deeper challenge: “If you are the Son of God...” This is the real issue. Jesus was declared to be the beloved son at his baptism, but now, 40 hard days later, how could this be true? How presumptive! The whole question of his identity is raised. Will Jesus own who he is? This is central to his mission.

So why not prove that he is who he has been declared to be? “If you really want to know that this is true, do something that only the Son of God could do. You need bread. You have power to make bread—or do you actually have any power? Are you really the Son of God? If so, show me. No one could ever fault you for doing this: creating bread by which to break your fast and give you energy.”

Jesus answers with a quotation from Deuteronomy 8:3. In its original context the statement that “one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” is about the 40 years that Israel wandered in the desert and the manna that God gave them when they were hungry. During the 40 years the people of Israel were tested, tried, and humbled as God sought to know what was truly in their hearts. Hunger, too, was part of their test. Would they really keep the commandments? Would they be God’s special people in the world, a light to others, a demonstra-

tion of what God wanted to do in the world? Or would they use their “chosen-ness” for their own ends?

No, Jesus will not use his power for his own ends or even for his own needs. “One does not live by bread alone ...” so he will say No to his famished state. Instead, he will abide by the promises of God—to “every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Jesus has just heard a word from the mouth of God. That word declared him to be the beloved son. He will own that reality. He has no need to prove that what God said is true.

The whole question of materialism is lurking in the background of the first temptation. Will Jesus use his power to satisfy his material needs? It does not matter that these needs are legitimate or that no one would be harmed or disadvantaged if he turned a few stones into bread. Jesus refuses to use his power for ends not intended. His firmness during the first temptation sets the pattern for the rest of his ministry. He did no miracle that served him and his needs.

The second temptation moves on to new ground. The devil takes Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem. This is the very heart of the city and center of the faith of Israel. “So you want to start a new religious movement? Well, here is the place to do it. Throw yourself off the pinnacle. You know what will happen. The angels will catch you. No harm will come to you. Hey, it says so in the Bible.” (If Jesus wants to quote Scripture at him, well the devil can quote Scripture right back at Jesus.) “And think about the spectacle. Everyone will know you are the Son of God. Your ministry will be off to a flying start!”³

Jesus can choose recognition, honor, a special place, a special ministry if he wants. Why stay in obscurity, on the margins of society? Would it not be better to start at the center, to be recognized for who he really was? Think of how much good could be done from this high-profile position.

Again Jesus answers from Deuteronomy. (In fact, all three of his responses will come from Deuteronomy 6-8.) This time his response/quotation is quite direct. “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” Of course the angels would protect him. Once again the temptation begins with the phrase “if you are the Son of God.” Apparently this whole issue of self-doubt is a real temptation for Jesus. But even more, such a bizarre self-serving display of special power and place is not the way God has chosen to work. This is not God’s way. This is not the mission of Jesus. Recognition is not his way. (Interestingly, hereafter Jesus goes out of his way to hide his power, for example, urging those whom he has healed to tell no one. The so-called Messianic secret is a key theme in the Gospel of Mark.)

The third temptation brings up the issue of power. The devil now takes Jesus to “a very high mountain” and offers him “all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.” Presumably the devil can make good on this offer which gives us an interesting insight into the “principalities and powers” behind world systems. In other

3. Sorry, I could not resist the pun.

words, he is saying to Jesus “You can become King of the World. Think how much good you can do with all that power. And why bother with the cross. It can be all yours now.”

Jesus responds, again from Deuteronomy, “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” Presumably, if Satan is able to offer Jesus the world, Satan would remain the power behind the world system and thus Jesus would give Satan the “worship” due only God. Now Jesus banishes the devil with a word and he leaves and it is all over. Suddenly the angels appear. The temptation is finished. They minister to Jesus. And Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee.

For Jesus the easy path is the path pointed out to him by the devil. Use his power to satisfy his needs and the needs of others. Be recognized for who you really are and work from that place of honor. Seize power. It is yours to take and use. But this is not the path God would have him take.

Again, the connections to the call to leadership are obvious.

- **Meeting the devil:** The devil comes in many guises, even at times as an angel of light. The first task is to name the devil. What is it that tempts us, challenges us, calls who we are into question? Is it our flawed self-image that gives room for the negative to speak? Our un-named desires? Our un-noticed needs? We will be tempted, of this there is no doubt. But will we recognize this as temptation when it comes? Is our moral compass firmly in place so that we will be able to choose the “best way” over again the “good way,” much less the “easy way”?

- **Owning our identity:** When times get tough we doubt our calling, our ability, our mission. What was clear in the light should not be doubted in the darkness. Moving back from our true identity will sabotage our mission.

- **Materialism:** Will we use our calling and mission to serve our own needs and ends? Will it be riches that motivates our mission or calling? Will it be reward (even legitimate reward) that makes the job worthwhile? Or is it faithfulness to our calling that is key?

- **Honor:** Do we labor so as to be recognized and honored? Is “being thought well of by others” what drives us?

- **Power:** Is this what we crave? Many do. Many find the path to power through work, mission, or ministry.

The desire for riches, honor, or power each have the ability to do in our otherwise worthwhile mission in life, as does the failure to recognize our temptations and name them for what they are or the inability to own who we are and what we are called to be and do.

Spiritual Formation

But how do we access all this for our own lives as leaders? It is one thing to notice the beginning of Jesus’ ministry and to see the connections to our own lives. It is another to make these insights our own. How do we do this?

I want to suggest a way of formation, drawn from The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. I draw upon Ignatius for several reasons. For one thing, I have found the way of Ignatius to be personally powerful for me in my own life over the last decade. I know this works. Second, the spiritual exercises have served as powerful formational tools for ministry for hundreds of years. This is a proven way of formation. Third, I think that the way of Ignatius newly resonates with our cultural circumstances. As we move ever more deeply into a postmodern mindset, away from the purely rational and into the world of imagination, art, and community, Ignatius gives us the tools to activate the right-brain way of imagination and story while at the same time honoring our left-brain rational processes.

Retreats

First a word about time and place for spiritual formation. It is all well and good for us as followers of Jesus to have a regular time of Bible study, reflection, prayer, and meditation each day. This is foundational to our ongoing formation as Christians. But I have come to believe that we also need times away, in retreat, characterized by silence, worship, and focused reflection. Most of us do not have enough silence in our lives. Most of us have little time for active reflection on the things that matter. So we have to carve out times of retreat. At first it seems impossible to find a whole morning to spend at a retreat center. But when we do, we find that a morning is not enough. We need a whole day and then a whole weekend. Perhaps, in time, we can even do an 8-day retreat or even a 30-day retreat. Remember that it was during the 40 days in the silence and solitude of the desert that Jesus faced his own deepest temptations and found the insight and strength to resist. This is not accidental. We too need time in the desert.

It is on retreat that we encounter God deeply. This gives us the base from which to draw in our daily reflections. And by retreat what I have in mind is not the activist, word-filled, speaker-oriented retreats common in Protestant circles. Such retreats are of value but we need even more silent retreats in which we can learn to listen to God.

But how can busy leaders find such chunks of time in their schedules? Well, I would argue that we do find time for professional seminars, business conferences, and other multi-day events. And once we have experienced the shaping power of retreat we find that they are not an option but a necessity. Who we are is how we lead and in retreat we have time and space to work at the question of who we are as followers of Jesus.

What do we do on such retreats? Here is where Ignatian Contemplation comes in. St. Ignatius developed a variety of ways to pray.⁴ One of the most useful methods is something he called *contemplation*.⁵ The process is simple. Go to a gospel passage (or other narrative). Read through the text several times. Take notes on what you see and hear. What questions do you have about the passage? Think about what the passage means. Consult a commentary if you wish but only after you are thoroughly familiar with the passage. And go to the commentary with questions to which you need answers (e.g. about a particular cultural custom mentioned in the passage, such as the use of water in first century Jewish religious practices and its relationship to the baptism ritual by John). Use the commentary. Do not let it use you.

Then it is time to enter into the passage with your *imagination*. This is the distinctive part of Ignatian contemplation. Close your eyes. Consciously relax. Let your breathing slow down. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your meditation. Then begin to imagine the scene you have read about. What was the wilderness of Judea like where Jesus went after his baptism? What did it look like? Smell like? Feel like? Imagine that you are there with Jesus, weary day after weary day with only water and little or no food to eat. Be with him when the devil comes. You are an un-noticed bystander. Listen to the temptations as they unfold. Enter into the temptations. As they are presented to you what do they sound like? Which temptation resonates most deeply with you? Riches? Fame? Power? How do these temptations come to you in your own life?

- If your temptation is riches, how is this desire expressed in your life? How do you resist it? How do you give in to it? How much does it control what you do, the decisions you make, and life you lead? What is God saying to you about riches?

- If your temptation is fame, how is this desire expressed in your life? How do you resist it? How do you give in to it? How much does it control what you do, the decisions you make, and life you lead? What is God saying to you about your need to be recognized and honored?

- If your temptation is power, how is this desire expressed in your life? How do you resist it? How do you give in to it? How much does it control what you do, the decisions you make, and life you lead? What is God saying to you about power and control?

Ignatian prayer has three parts to it: preparation, prayer, and review of prayer. In the case of Ignatian Contemplation the preparation is the Bible study you do as you get ready to enter into the world of the text. The prayer is the imaginative entering into the scene or the event and the listening to what is being said to you. The review of prayer is stepping back from the prayer and considering the whole experience. What did you learn? What did you hear? What did you feel? (Ignatius was particularly concerned that we get in touch with our feeling states, as these gave valuable clues to what the Spirit is seeking to say to us.) How were you aware of God's presence? What issues did this time of prayer raise that you should consider in your next time of prayer?

By the way, a journal is vital to spiritual formation. You need to write down what you hear, see, and feel. You need to capture the whole experience in words so that you can continue to process it. A journal is especially necessary when it comes to review of prayer.

It is this kind of imaginative exercise that forces us to consider who we are, how we live life, what motivates us, and what it means in actuality to follow Jesus in our ministry, mission, job or business.

I use the example of Jesus' baptism and temptation because these raise issues that relate directly to those in leadership. The same process can be followed with any story from the life of Jesus. In this way we can make real our commitment to Jesus. Thus we allow ourselves to continue the process of being formed ever more closely to the image of Jesus. And as our core values grow more in accord with the image of Christ, so too our leadership evolves. Who we are is how we lead. May we, indeed, lead from the way of Christ. ■

4. Actually Ignatius did not claim to be an innovator when it comes to prayer and spiritual practices. He adopted and adapted various methods already in use. However, it is in the very adaptation that his own innovation is found.

5. In fact what Ignatius suggests is a form of meditation, not contemplation. Meditation is active reflection (which is what he is urging) whereas contemplation is usually used to describe a state of passive openness to the moment and to how God will fill it.

On The Horizon:

2007–2008 New Church Development Events around the United Church of Christ

● Growing Vital and Relevant Churches

October 5–6, 2007

Southeast Conference UCC Office, Atlanta, Georgia

Friday, 6–9pm; Saturday 9–2pm, Cost \$99.00

Our national Still Speaking campaign has reminded us once again of the importance of making our churches warm and welcoming places for people to come both on Sunday mornings and throughout the week.

Facilitated by Ron Buford, the creator of our national Still Speaking campaign, this seminar will look at creative ways that every church — no matter what the size — can extend hospitality to those seeking a new church home. Examining the existing church structures, we will look at new ways of reaching out to the community.

- Marks of a Hospitable Church: Radical Welcome
- Follow up with Visitors
- Ideas around branding
- Developing Community connections

For more information, contact Rev. Cameron Trimble in the Southeast Conference Office or email her at ctrimble@secucc.org. You may register for this seminar at <http://secucc.org/development/leadtrain.php> or by emailing our Church Development Administrative Assistant, Jo-Ann Trott (jtrott@secucc.org).

● Calling All Church Development Conference Staff – Let's Network!

January 16–18, 2008

Atlanta, Georgia

You are invited to a gathering of conference and national staff for training and coaching on new church development in the United Church of Christ. We will be joined by Rev. Rick Morse of the Disciples of Christ who will talk to us about real-life challenges facing judicatory staff in working with new churches.

- Reflect with Rick on topics like assessment, leadership, funding, training, coaching, and the role of judicatory staff, working from cases brought by participants.
- Share our own best practices, learning what's happening in UCC church development around the country.
- Spend time connecting with each other to strengthen the network of relationships among us

To register, contact Jo-Ann Trott at the Southeast Conference office at jtrott@secucc.org or by calling 800.807.1993. For more information, contact Rev. Cameron Trimble (ctrimble@secucc.org), Rev. Joanne Thomson (JThomson@WCUCC.org), or Rev. Paul Nickerson (NickersonP@MACUCC.org).

● How Can My Church Win Grants?

March 7–8, 2008

Southeast Conference UCC Office, Atlanta, Georgia

Friday, 6–9pm; Saturday 9–2pm, Cost \$99.00

Writing a grant can often feel overwhelming and intimidating. Where do you start? How is a grant different from a loan? Who do you ask for money? What does a good grant look like?

In this seminar, Susan Anderson, a professional grant-writing for an Atlanta non-profit organization, shares her insights, tips and strategies for writing winning grants. We will talk about:

- How to find funding possibilities for your ministry
- How to obtain grant applications
- How to writing good grants
- When you win a grant, then what???

For more information, contact Rev. Cameron Trimble in the Southeast Conference Office or email her at ctrimble@secucc.org. You may register for this seminar at <http://secucc.org/development/leadtrain.php> or by emailing our Church Development Administrative Assistant, Jo-Ann Trott (jtrott@secucc.org).

● New Ideas in Youth Ministry

May 23–24, 2008

Southeast Conference Office in Atlanta, Georgia

Friday, 6–9pm; Saturday 9–2pm, Cost \$99.00

A vital church gives special care and attention to how they care for and teach their young people. Youth are not the future of the church—they are the present. In this seminar, Associate Pastor of Children and Youth at Pilgrimage UCC in Marietta, GA, Rev. Kristin Gerner Vaughn, will lead us through some of the basics of developing a vital youth program. Rev. Gerner Vaughn has served churches both in Southern Conference and in Southeast and brings a delightful spirit to this work.

- The basics of a youth ministry
- New ideas emerging in the field

- Creative ways to teach our young people about their history and scripture
- Working with volunteers
- Resources for youth ministry formation

For more information, contact Rev. Cameron Trimble in the Southeast Conference Office or email Rev. Gerner Vaughn at associate@pilgrimageucc.org. You may register for this seminar at <http://secucc.org/development/leadtrain.php> or by emailing our Church Development Administrative Assistant, Jo-Ann Trott (jtrott@secucc.org).

● **New Church Leadership Institute**

August 11–15, 2008

Atlanta, Georgia

Cost: \$550.00 for general registration (not including housing or coaching), \$850.00 for seminary credit (not including housing or coaching)

Church planting is a priority of both our conference and our denomination. Thanks to a generous grant awarded by the Carpenter Foundation, we will be offering our second Leadership Institute in Church Planting at Emory University. This Institute will gather potential and practicing new church developers for one week during the year for an intensive training in the latest tools and theories for evangelism and church planting.

The instructors for the courses are seminary professors or seminary trained consultants who specialize in church development and coaching. In partnership with Lancaster Theological Seminary, these courses are offered for graduate level credit as well as continuing education credit. The following areas will be covered in our training:

- Developing a foundational theological framework for evangelical ministry with social justice values as evidenced by coursework, readings and presentations,
- Understand the basics of developing new churches in dynamic, multi-racial, multi-ethnic environments as evidenced by course project or paper,
- Understand and apply a framework for organizational strategic leadership,
- Increase their personal strategic leadership effectiveness in three key areas: thinking strategically, spotting opportunities in alignment with the strategy, and influencing others' commitment to long-range visions and objectives,
- Strengthen their personal spiritual practices so as to encourage an articulate, passionate faith experience while deterring long-term burn out.

For more information, contact Rev. Cameron Trimble in the Southeast Conference Office. You may register for this seminar at <http://www.ucc.org/newchurch/>.

● **How Do We Grow Our Church? A Panel Reflects...**

September 12–13, 2008

Southeast Conference Office in Atlanta, Georgia

Friday, 6–9pm; Saturday 9–2pm, Cost \$149.00

It is the question every church is asking—how do we grow? How do we get the word out into our community about our church? How do we greet people and make them feel welcome? How do we build a strong and vital church?

In this seminar, we will hear from a panel of pastors who are leading growing congregations around the United Church of Christ. They will talk about:

- Ways their churches have used the media, embraced the stranger, welcomed the community and helped people get involved in their church.
- The challenges they have faced in their churches—the resistant members, the scarce resources, and the fear of change.

Following their presentations, we will have time for questions and discussion about the ideas, issues and challenges you bring from your setting.

For more information, contact Rev. Cameron Trimble in the Southeast Conference Office or email her at ctrimble@secucc.org. To register, go to the Southeast Conference website at <http://www.secucc.org/development/leadtrain.php> or by emailing our Church Development Administrative Assistant, Jo-Ann Trott (jtrott@secucc.org).

● **E-mail, Websites & Podcasts — Oh My!**

October 24–25, 2008

Southeast Conference Office in Atlanta, Georgia

Friday, 6–9pm; Saturday 9–2pm, Cost \$99.00

A church engaged in marketing and web development? What happened to knocking on doors and inviting the neighbors to church? Well, those days are gone. So where do you start? How do you wisely spend your limited resources?

In this seminar, our facilitator will lead us through developing a basic marketing strategy. Specifically, we will:

- Talk about basic web design principles
- Online e-mail services
- Blogs
- Podcasts

For more information, contact Rev. Cameron Trimble in the Southeast Conference Office or email her at ctrimble@secucc.org. To register, go to the Southeast Conference website at <http://www.secucc.org/development/leadtrain.php> or by emailing our Church Development Administrative Assistant, Jo-Ann Trott (jtrott@secucc.org).

Thriving Churches

By Rev. Michael Piazza, Chapter Nine of his book *Prophetic Renewal*

“Failure to thrive” is a medical term that denotes poor weight gain and physical growth failure over an extended period of time in infancy. Is it possible that this term can be applied to churches?

Like humans, churches that thrive do not all do so in the same way or at the same rate. Vital, healthy, thriving congregations come in many shapes, sizes and forms. A small congregation in a declining rural community that serves as a connecting force as the area transitions may be thriving as well as a suburban church that is continuously faced with space challenges. Some of the most vibrant congregations in America are located in the decaying inner-city where they meet the needs of the poor, homeless, hungry or afraid. There are congregations that have chosen the less-traveled road that they assume, like Jesus, will lead to their ultimate death, but they have chosen it because they are meeting a need and serving a desperate community.

Thriving churches, like thriving humans, all share a number of characteristics in common.

Vitality

Thriving babies are busy babies. They sleep soundly, but when they wake they are consumed by activities appropriate to their developmental stage. So, too, with thriving churches. There is a palpable energy, vitality and strength. The Cathedral of Hope’s worship is very liturgical, but it is also very energetic. There is always a loud buzz before the service as community takes place all over the sanctuary. During the course of our worship we will laugh, sometimes raucously; we will weep so openly that placed in each pew are small boxes of Kleenex; we will applaud vigorously—sometimes the announcements, sometimes the music, sometimes even the sermons. A writer for “D Magazine” who experienced our service with the overflow crowd in the sanctuary wrote, “They do worship with a capital ‘W.’” Even a stranger is aware when she or he has encountered a thriving church.

That can take many forms. In one of the most secular regions of the country there is a thriving congregation of mostly youth and college students that gathers each night in a gothic building to sing chants and sit in silence. The community of Taizé has certainly provided a model for vital alternative worship. I was recently honored to be the guest preacher at the Metropolitan Community Church of the Rockies in Denver, Colorado. I was surprised when their pastor told me I didn’t need to bring vestments or, for that matter, a clerical



cal collar or tie. Each Sunday, they pack a very traditional building that was once occupied by a United Methodist Church that died. They have taken out the organ and use the space with a band and multimedia screens. The service is filled with energy and with people—a group of people that the church seldom attracts in most cities.

While I believe that vital worship is the heart of a thriving church, I must confess that there are congregations who do it in other ways. Some churches pour their best resources into small groups. The “cell and celebration” model of church became quite popular in the 1990s, and it has proven effective in a culture in which extended family is a memory and authentic community a rarity. Other churches have focused their energies on serving the poor and those in need. There are a few churches that became centers for the arts, or distinguished themselves by their children’s programs, or, perhaps, their programs for seniors.

The point is that a vital church is energetic and passionate about what it does well. No church can do all things well, but every thriving church has a ministry or two that it wants to share with everyone.

A baby takes hold of your finger and will not let go. “What a strong grip she has,” you may say. So, too, thriving churches have a strong grip on the reality of their situation. They know their future, as well as their past. They have assessed their strengths and decided how to best utilize them in contributing to God’s realm coming on earth as it is in heaven.

Healthy DNA

Thriving babies are genetically healthy. So, too, healthy, vital faith communities pay attention to their DNA. In their book *Cracking Your Congregation’s Code: Mapping Your Spiritual DNA to Create Your Future*, Robert Norton and Richard Southern write:

There’s more to your congregation than meets the eye. Just as the human organism inherits certain genetic traits, characteristics, and dispositions that in combination make up the whole person, so your congregation has a complex inheritance. Many factors, including denominational, liturgical, and cultural inheritance, go into making it what it is. Author Ken Wilber says that “to understand the whole, it is necessary to understand the parts. To understand the parts, it is necessary to understand the whole.”

Thomas Bandy is the person who first introduced me to the idea of churches having their own DNA and the importance of each congregation discerning just what theirs really is. Bandy identifies three major areas in the life of a church and 11 sub-systems of congregational life. These are as follows:

Foundational

- Genetic Code: the identity of the church
- Core Leadership: the seriousness for mission in the church
- Organization: the structure of the church for mission

Functional

- Changing Lives: how people experience God in the church
- Growing Christians: how people grow in relationship to Jesus
- Discerning Call: how people discover their place in God's plan
- Equipping Disciples: how people are trained for ministries
- Deploying Servants: how people are sent and supported in the world

Formal

- Property: the location, facility and technology
- Finance: stewardship, budget and debt-management
- Communication: information, marketing and advertising

As a consultant, Bandy has a series of questions in relation to each of the 11 sub-systems. He also asks for: 1) community demographic data, 2) a leadership readiness survey completed by the staff and church board and 3) a church stress test completed by the worshipping congregation, staff and church board. The differences in perception can be revealing. The gaps in the data can be significant indicators. He notes that thriving churches are always looking for extra help. This is a post-modern approach. The modern approach assumes if you are healthy you do not need help. Coaching help—not fix-it help—is the post-modern approach. Thriving churches look for ways to connect with other churches, denominational programs and/or para-church organizations in a way that supports continued learning and development.

He talks about ministry mapping not strategic planning. The strategic planning that he says is dying is long distance, linear, assumes a uniform context, emphasizes technicians, property and programs, and has a chain of command. Mission mapping is micro-macro in approach, explorational, opportunistic, based on the DNA of the organization and done in teams. According to Bandy, effective teams have a mission attitude, a work ethic, a variable plan and a winning faith. Worship reinforces the congregational DNA.

This synopsis of his work doesn't do justice to the insights he offers. Perhaps the greatest contribution that he and his colleague Bill Easum make is to challenge us to think of our congregations in new ways. The healthcare of a non-thriving infant is quite different if the challenge is genetic rather than nutritional. So, too, with our churches.

Relational

Numerous studies have been done that connect an infant's failure to thrive with touch deprivation. Children in Russian or Eastern-block countries during the Cold War often displayed symptoms of marasmus, a severe protein-energy malnutrition characterized by calorie deficiency and energy deficiency, even though they were well fed and kept in a sterile environment. It was later discovered that their disease was rooted totally in the fact that infants need affection and physical touch almost as much as they need nutrition.

This seems an important lesson for liberal and progressive churches to learn. People need to be touched as much as they need to be informed. Our worship, sermons and programs should be shaped to touch people and connect them to God, and one another, as much as to educate them and inform them about God. In fact, we live in a day when people hunger much more for an encounter with God than they do for information about God. Our theological education serves us only in as much as it equips us to help our congregants join hands with one another, the world and the Ultimate.

Dr. Leonard Sweet, talking about the shift from a modern to post-modern world, says, "Someday I will hold up my Bible before a congregation, shake it, and yell at the top of my lungs, 'This is not a book about propositions and programs and principles. This is a book about relationships.'" ¹

He uses the acronym EPIC to describe how the church must function in a post-modern world. EPIC stands for Experiential, Participatory, Image rich and Connected. In his book *Postmodern Pilgrims*, Dr. Sweet makes a strong case for the shifts that our churches must make if we are going to be relevant to the lives of those growing up on Starbucks and E-Bay.

An infant will not thrive no matter how many times a parent tells them they love them. Babies must be touched and so must our congregations. Babies must be nourished and have their needs met and so must our congregations. This is not to say that we need to treat church members like babies; it simply is to say that we must treat them like humans—humans living in the 21st century. They are busy and often hurting people who don't have time to participate in activities that do not add value to their lives. Among the deepest needs modern Americans have are community, connection and contact with one another and, we believe, with God. This is exactly what the church has to offer. So, why aren't our churches thriving? In part, it is because we are still functioning within a 20th century paradigm. The seminaries most of us attended were 19th century institutions that struggled to join the modern world. Unfortunately, the shift had been made to a post-modern reality. As Dr. Lyle Schaller is fond of saying, "If we wake up tomorrow and it is 1950 our churches are ready."

1. www.leonardsweet.com/includes/ShowSweetenedArticles.asp?articleID=86

Please do not hear this as advocating that the only way the church can thrive is to discard or disregard the needs of older generations. The truth is, though, as our older members face the end of their lives they would much rather have a hand to hold than theology to learn. Unlike their own parents and grandparents, this generation of seniors is the first in history to face the ends of their lives NOT surrounded by extended family members. Their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews are scattered to the four winds. The church has the perfect opportunity to be their extended family and to truly be there for them. We must recognize this connectional need and meet it in such a way that the succeeding generations will recognize that church is still the place where they can belong from birth to death.

During the AIDS crisis the Cathedral of Hope suffered greatly. Leader after leader was stricken and died. Six of the 10 people who served on the committee that called me to be their pastor were dead before I celebrated my seventh anniversary. The church itself easily could have died. Many predominantly LGBT churches did. However, our congregation rose up to care for the sick and dying so aggressively that every funeral and memorial became an evangelism event. People would rise to talk about the deceased, but, inevitably, they also would talk about the members of our congregation who had been with him until the end. They would bear witness to the caring grace of this place called hope, and people at the service who hadn't been inside a church in years decided to give it another try. The year when we read more than 180 names on All Saints Sunday, we also received more than 300 new members.

Nourishment

Infants, of course, need adequate nourishment in order to thrive. The Church Vitality program of the United Church of Christ suggests that one of the "Vital Signs" is nurturing faith. They offer an extensive list of educational programs for use in our congregations at www.uccvitality.org/resources. These resources are great, because there is a deep spiritual hunger in this country for spiritual guidance and enlightenment. Notice, I did not say that there was a great need for information. What can we tell our congregations that they cannot learn in seconds by typing a few words into Google? In a recent class I taught on the history of the UCC, I found the information more concisely presented on Wikipedia than in any of the incredibly well written UCC books that I own. More information is really not what most people need.

Like me, you probably grew up going to Sunday School. There, you probably learned things such as how many books there were in the Bible and the names of the four Gospels. There have been a number of articles about the appalling biblical illiteracy that exists in our world today. Bill McKibben wrote a great article for "Harper's" magazine entitled "The Christian Paradox" in which he observed:

Only 40 percent of Americans can name more than four of the Ten Commandments, and a scant half can cite any of the four authors of the Gospels. Twelve percent believe Joan of Arc was Noah's wife. This failure to recall the specifics of our Christian heritage may be further evidence of our nation's educational decline, but it probably doesn't matter all that much in spiritual or political terms. Here is a statistic that does matter: Three quarters of Americans believe the Bible teaches that "God helps those who help themselves." That is, three out of four Americans believe that this uber-American idea, a notion at the core of our current individualist politics and culture, which was in fact uttered by Ben Franklin, actually appears in Holy Scripture. The thing is, not only is Franklin's wisdom not biblical; it's counter-biblical. Few ideas could be further from the gospel message, with its radical summons to love of neighbor. On this essential matter, most Americans—most American Christians—are simply wrong, as if 75 percent of American scientists believed that Newton proved gravity causes apples to fly up.

Asking Christians what Christ taught isn't a trick. When we say we are a Christian nation—and, overwhelmingly, we do—it means something. People who go to church absorb lessons there and make real decisions based on those lessons; increasingly, these lessons inform their politics. (One poll found that 11 percent of U.S. churchgoers were urged by their clergy to vote in a particular way in the 2004 election, up from 6 percent in 2000.) When George Bush says that Jesus Christ is his favorite philosopher, he may or may not be sincere, but he is reflecting the sincere beliefs of the vast majority of Americans.

It is important that we educate people to carry on the faith. However, I have come to believe that people know what is important to them, what helps them get through each day, what improves their life, and what might be helpful to them or their families. The average American's appalling religious education is testimony to the fact that we have not convinced them that what we have to offer can help their daily life and nourish their souls.

My life partner since 1980, Bill, is a certified wine educator. There are a variety of ways to teach people more about wine, and there are a number of reasons why wine classes are so popular these days. One, of course, is that people enjoy learning. If that was the primary motivation, though, he would be out of business pretty fast. Most people who take these classes want to know more about wine so they won't be embarrassed when ordering wine in a restaurant or by serving the "wrong wine" for dinner. Bill recognized early on that most of his students didn't really want to know the various regions where certain grapes were grown or the soil acidity or climate contrasts that produce certain varietals. He had to know all of these things because he was a professional. He also had to learn them to

graduate. Now, his library is full of books he never uses, and his head is full of information that no one really cares about. He could impose this information on his classes because he finds it fascinating or because he thinks it is important. Ultimately, though, his philosophy is to let people taste wines paired with the various foods they might order or serve so that they will know what wine enhances their dining experience. Let those who have ears hear ...

Ultimately, we must offer our members the information that will enhance their spiritual lives. We must help them learn spiritual principles for living their lives. When we do this they will come to value the source of this information: the church, the Bible, theology, etc. I am often asked by members which version of the Bible they should buy. It is a question that warms any pastor's heart because it signifies a spiritual hunger. I have taken to suggesting that rather than starting with a 2,000-year-old writing, perhaps they might read a couple of books about the Bible. I have discovered that people who first read, for example, Marcus Borg's *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* are far more likely to make it out of Genesis chapter one.

Church thrives in a variety of ways. I probably have carried the analogy of infants thriving too far already, but let me offer one last parallel. A thriving infant brings beauty to the whole world. None of us are so cynical that we can resist smiling back into the face of a happy, healthy cooing baby. Having been a pastor for decades to a community that sees the church as the enemy of its civil rights and happiness, I am very conscious of how the community responds to our churches. Do they see us as an asset to the common life of the neighborhood, town or city where we are located? Is it a place to which they would send their children, take their friends, suggest to new neighbors? Do they think we are a thriving, vibrant, relevant place where people go to experience God and join community? Or do they see us as a place where something happens on Sunday mornings, but they haven't a clue what? Worse yet, maybe they don't even see us at all because we are so irrelevant to their lives. Even in a crisis, it would never cross their minds to cross our thresholds. There are lots of ways for a church to thrive, but I think that those that don't want to find at least one way ought to turn their facility into a theater or community center. At least, then, someone's needs are being met there. ■

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

AIRPORT INFORMATION:

Upon arrival at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport you have 3 options:

SHUTTLE: The hotel uses Superior Shuttle (770) 457-4794. Guests can call to make arrangements for pick up. (Usually the shuttles are in the Ground Transportation area of the airport – PLEASE confirm with the shuttle company. \$30.00 per person.

TAKE A TAXI: Most taxi drivers know how to get to major hotels; just give them the physical street address. Average cost \$50.00

CAR RENTAL: Emory Inn offers an onsite Enterprise rental car facility. To reserve your car, please call 404-727-8267.

HOTEL INFORMATION:

EMORY INN

1615 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA 30329
Phone: 404-712-6000

MEALS: BREAKFAST — A light, continental breakfast is provided by the hotel.

LUNCH & DINNER — You are on your own.

EMERGENCY: Cameron Trimble (cell) 404-790-3348 —
Call if you have any problems with your room, etc.

LOCAL RESTAURANTS

Emory Village is located just outside Emory's main entrance.

- **Dave's Cosmic Subs** *hot subs, cold subs, and salads*
1540 N. Decatur Road
- **Doc Chey's Noodle House** *eclectic noodle and rice dishes*
1556 North Decatur Road
- **Domino's Pizza**
1439 North Decatur Road
- **Everybody's Pizza** *pizza, sandwiches, and salads*
1593 North Decatur Road
- **Panera Bread** *deli sandwiches, soups, salads, and pastries*
1545 North Decatur Road
- **Saba** *creative, nontraditional pasta dishes and salads*
1451 Oxford Road
- **Shield's Meat Market** *traditional meat market and deli*
1554 North Decatur Road
- **Smoothie King**
1537 North Decatur Road
- **Starbuck's Coffee**
1569 North Decatur Road

UCC Coaching for New Church Planters

Congratulations on being trained as a new church start pastor in the United Church of Christ. Planting churches is exciting ministry, and we want to do everything we can to support your work. We have learned over these years that support of the church planter in the first year of planting a church is critical to ensuring a successful launch. Therefore, as part of this program, we have trained a network of coaches who are available to walk with you through the first year of the new church start. Our coaches are trained to walk with you and your judicatory leaders with the purpose of bringing clarity and encouragement to the church planting process.

To understand this relationship, the following information might be helpful:

- Coaches are result-oriented partners, helping the planter deliver on the “results” negotiated between the planter and conference.
- Coaches are not trainers, and they assume that the planter has appropriate skill set and training needed to plant a church.
- Coaching relationships are between 12 and 24 months, working with the planter on a bi-monthly basis.
- Coaches operate on a peer to peer relationship model, not parent-child.
- UCC Certified Coaches are those who have either planted a church themselves or have experience revitalizing congregations

Coaches are NOT:

- **Coaches are not supervisors**— they will work with the conference staff on stated goals outlined at the beginning of the coaching relationship.
- **Coaches are not counselors**— if issues emerge in the process of planting the church which are personal in nature or require psychological intervention, the coach is trained to refer the planter.
- **Coaches are not mentors**— Mentors often offer sage advice and focus on character development; coaches focus on performance and results.
- **Coaches are not trainers**— Coaches engage the relationship with the planter assuming that the planter has the knowledge in place to birth a church; the coach simply helps them stay focused.

By participating in the New Church Leadership Initiative, you have the opportunity to work with one of our coaches for \$300.00 per year (or \$25.00 per month) paid to LCM. Our coaches have agreed to work for a one-year period for a minimal stipend of \$500. Through our program, we can provide a \$200 scholarship to offset the cost of this valuable relationship. We are asking that your Conference cover the rest.

Contact Rev. Cameron Trimble (ctrimble@secucc.org) for more information.



COACHING for New Church Developers

The Nehemiah Initiative
A Ministry of the United Church of Christ

New Church Planter Basic Training

Aug. 11–15, 2008

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

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

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FOR NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

UNITED CHURCH
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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.



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