

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Planning a Key for Today's Congregations

(Continued from page 1)

But not all congregations and members are comfortable with the concept of strategic planning in the church. In *New Church Strategic Planning Process*, authors George Thomasson and

Gerald Colbert state, "Many feel that planning in the church is 'unspiritual.' They say that we should simply be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and follow Him. Certainly we

should maintain an intimate walk with the Spirit and follow His direction at every turn. This does not, however, negate the need for planning."

Biblical precedence for the process

Is there Biblical precedence for planning in the church?

Again quoting Thomasson and Colbert: "The Bible teaches planning implicitly and explicitly. In studying creation, it is obvious that Creator God worked with a master plan. Each element needed at one stage of creation was provided in the previous stage. The Father understood from the beginning to the end. The Bible tells us that He knew that creation would call for His Son's death to deal with the issue of sin. (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:38b)"

They continue, "God Himself does planning on behalf of His people! Jeremiah quoted God when he said, 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jer. 29:11). The writer of Proverbs lifted this to the next level by

affirming, "We should make our plans — counting on God to direct us." (Proverbs 16:9)

McNamara in *Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation* said, "The Bible encourages planning and the involvement of others in the process," citing as references:

- Proverbs 29:18 — "Where there is no vision, the people will perish...."
- Proverbs 15:22 — "Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors, they are established."
- Proverbs 19:20 — "Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days."

Many resources are available to congregations and other groups and organizations in the church to help with strategic planning. Please see the accompanying story for assistance available to Florida-Georgia District congregations. □

CPH Announces New Lutheran Study Bible

In October of 2009 Concordia Publishing House will release *The Lutheran Study Bible* — "the first study Bible in English to be developed from the ground up with notes that are exclusively and distinctively Lutheran," according to the announcement release.

The Lutheran Study Bible will include more than 26,500 study notes, with 2,000-plus application notes and prayers for every part of the Bible; more than 80,000 center column cross-references and 900 cross-references to 120

full- or half-page maps, charts and diagrams; and more than 220 articles and introductions to biblical books and topics.

Notes for *The Lutheran Study Bible* are being prepared by Lutheran theologians, scholars and pastors from 12 Lutheran church bodies.

The Lutheran Study Bible will use the English Standard Version® translation, which CPH officials say is considered one of the most precise English translations available.

"*TLSB* is a truly unique offering in the study Bible market,"

said Gretchen Jameson, CPH's corporate communications manager. "It combines a personal, devotional and practical application approach to Bible reading alongside solid scholarly study notes. There is, quite simply, nothing else like it available today."

Detailed information about *The Lutheran Study Bible* will be online at cph.org/lutheranbible in October 2008.

The Lutheran Study Bible will be available for internet pre-sale in March 2009. □

District Offers Strategic Planning Help for Congregations

Ministry Assessment and Planning is an important aspect of congregational life.

The Florida-Georgia District's Division for Congregational Services provides assistance to congregations in the assessment of their ministry needs and opportunities through the use of strategic planning resources.

Congregations that have worked through a planning process and developed a

focused mission statement with measurable goals and objectives tend to move forward with purpose in the ministry to which God has called them. It is much easier to formulate a plan for ministry if the congregation has a strong sense of its purpose and vision.

Florida-Georgia District congregations have a variety of options available to them in seeking assistance with ministry assessment and planning.

Option A - District Executive Consultation

David Weidner, Executive Director for Congregational Services, is available for consultation with congregations seeking assistance with ministry assessment and planning. This may include a meeting with the pastor and key leadership to determine congregational needs and development of a planning strategy as well as facilitating a

visioning process in a one-day or two-day retreat setting. This introduction to planning is best suited to congregations that have not done extensive planning in the past.

There is no cost to the congregation for this level of assistance. Contact the District Office at 877-457-5556 to explore this option.

Option B - Strategic Ministry Planning

Lutheran Church Extension Fund has put together a faith-based process for strategic ministry planning through its partnership with Rich Brumfield of Orange, California. Rich and his staff of facilitators are available to come and work with congregations in a fully participatory planning process asking God to reveal His Calling and Plan for the congregation. Meetings are held through three weekend congregational events where everyone is invited to come and participate in determining mission, values, vision, strategies, etc.

Contact the LCEF national office in St. Louis for more information or to request a preliminary consultation. The contact phone number is 800-843-5233.

Option C - Cornerstone Consulting

Kurt Bickel of Cornerstone Consulting in Orlando is available to assist congregations with their planning process.

He has extensive experience in helping congregations and Lutheran organizations move ahead with a systematic planning process that focuses on mission and vision for ministry. He can also assist congregations that would like to move their operational boards to a policy-based governance model. Bickel, a member of Prince of Peace-Orlando, may be reached at 407-423-1752 or at bickelkurt@aol.com to discuss options, costs, etc.

Option D - Real World Results Consulting

Bill Jantz of Real World Results in Miami is available to consult with congregations in their planning process. He brings a wealth of strategic planning experience from the corporate world to his consulting efforts with congregations in the District. A member of Holy Cross- North Miami, Jantz has provided Holy Cross with a vibrant planning process that has helped them find a new focus for their ministry. Contact him at 954-385-2756 or BJantz@RealWorldResults.com for more information on his qualifications, costs, etc.

NOTE: For more information and assistance in selecting the appropriate planning resource for your congregation please contact Executive Director for Congregational Services David L. Weidner, CMP, Florida Georgia District 7207 Monetary Drive, Orlando, FL 32809; 877-457-555, ext. 118 or dweidner@flga-lcms.org. □

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