

**A Written Update Report by the Children's and Young Adult Ministries Ad-Hoc Team
for the November 5, 2006 Congregational Business Meeting.**

(By Larry Gibble on behalf of the C-YAM Team)

At the April 23, 2006 Congregational Business Meeting, the following recommendation was nearly unanimously approved.

"that an Ad-Hoc Team be formed to (a.) develop recommendations regarding what steps First Church needs to take to develop a leading edge ministry to Children and Young Families and (b.) provide an interim report to the November 5, 2006 Congregational Business Meeting."

The team met four times since the April CBM (5/24, 6/21, 8/8, 10/4).

In looking at the team's mission, we determined there were three approaches to take:

1. Continue as is.
2. Develop a strategy via an internal ad-hoc team.
3. Recommend hiring a consultant to help us.

We didn't consider options 1 and 3, and are here today as a First Church Ad-Hoc Team.

Team Members: Beth Hollenberg, Bob Wetzel, John Anderson, Larry Gibble, Pat Gibble, Stephanie Stoolmaker

This November 5, 2006 C-YAM report will be in two parts.

1. This written report.
2. A presentation that will be given during the November 7, 2006 CBM.

(Note: Please bring this written report along to the meeting for reference purposes. The presentation will begin where this written report ends.)

The process: We - - -

! looked at our strengths.

! then looked at what areas need improvement.

! researched many churches, searching for elements that perhaps we could employ.

! are currently identifying the elements that First Church could implement at some point in time.

Churches Researched:

Fourteen leading edge churches were evaluated,

9 Churches of the Brethren and 5 other non-Brethren churches. They are:

COBs

Elizabethtown
Free Springs
Gettysburg
Hempfield
Spring Creek

Lancaster
Lititz
Midway
Palmyra

Non-COBs

Aldersgate United Methodist
Christ Church United Methodist Church, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Hyde Park United Methodist Church, Tampa Bay area, FL
Living Word Community Church
Stillmeadow Church of the Nazarene

We have not yet consulted our District Executive for his input.

Techniques employed:

- ! Internet Reviews.
- ! Personal Contacts, both formal and informal.
- ! A presentation by one of the ministers of a thriving church in York.
- ! The Book, *"You Only Have to Die: Leading Your Congregation to New Life"* by James A. Harnish.
- ! The Book, *"Widening the Welcome of your Church - Biblical Hospitality and the Vital Congregation"* by the Oakland OH COB Pastor Fred Bernhard and Steve Clapp.

What we have learned from the other churches:

Christian Nurture:

- ! One church hired a Pastor of Christian Nurture to bring young families into the church, The pastor said, "My job was to help bring young families into the church. We had virtually no young families six years ago when I arrived. We are now thriving!"
- ! Several other churches have paid staff whose focus is on youth and young adults.
- ! One church earlier this month (October, 2006) added a half-time children's director after the previous very skilled children's co-directors attended a seminar and learned that their programming efforts were falling short of the current thinking related to Children's Ministries.

Child Care Centers:

- ! Ninety new families came into a church as a direct result of their Child Day Care Center (over the past nine years).
- ! New families started coming to church because of a recently started Child Care Program.
- ! Work hard with your CDC. They are a major inlet to your church.

Book clubs:

- ! When a new neighborhood surrounded the church over the past few years, a senior citizen started a book club. The group has grown and some new families now attend as a direct result.

Adding Additional Worship Services:

- ! The trend will be to add services to meet the needs of people, and not consolidate services to have a sanctuary more full of worshipers.

! A Methodist Church sees a need for a time of worship on Saturday evenings, and they are in the process of starting a Saturday Evening Contemporary Worship Service.

Fellowship:

! Fellowship is the glue that keeps the congregation together. As more worship services are being added, there has to be an opportunity to come together as a church family.

! Wednesday Night Out is another way to have the total congregation share with each other.

Hospitality:

! One Methodist church just recently spent \$10,000 to install, and now hosts a Visitor Center in their Narthex.

The Four C's of an organization:

Communications Cooperation Common Purpose/Mission Common Goals

Web Site:

Enhance your church's web site. Young people use the Internet today just as routinely as telephones were used as they emerged in the 1940s and 1950s.

Technology Director:

A director of technology is very important to their ministries to young families. Young people may be a valuable resource in this area.

A Concept Has Emerged: A Church With a Future (CWAF) (at a point sometime in the future)

It will require:

- ! A belief in our Vision Statement and the Statement of Purpose found in our Constitution.
- ! Common goals and purposes.
- ! Improved communications throughout the congregation.
- ! Improved cooperation and collaboration throughout the congregation.
- ! Time. This process will take time, resourcefulness and commitment by the total congregation to be accomplished. ***Do not look for a quick fix!***
- ! Prayer and study.
- ! Paradigm shifts in all of our thinking.
- ! Patience and understanding.

All that being said - - -

Following are some of the "what",

but not the "how" or "when" dimensions to carry this opportunity to fruition.

The Eight Points - A vision of sometime in the future: The Church With a Future:

1. **Our focus has shifted more toward Christian Nurture.**
2. **As a congregation, we have become more inclusive and have provided more opportunities for children, post high/college age and young adults, both single and married with or without children.**
3. **The congregation actively supports our children's and young adult ministries.**
4. **Most of the congregation has learned about, and regularly employs hospitality techniques.**
5. **Most major organizations and groups within our ministry have established mission statements or statements of purpose, goals and annual objectives and regularly review them and adjust accordingly.**
6. **The congregation knows itself better as a total congregation beyond the small group levels than it did in the past.**
7. **Our Witness and Stewardship Ministries will benefit. The positive impacts on them are beyond the scope of this C-YAM team's charter at the present time.**
8. **We are an "Experimenting Congregation". New ideas are tried. If they are successful, they continue on. If they are not, they are dropped with no hard feelings or blame placed on the one/s providing the suggestion.**

