

# Transition Times

For Intentional Interim Pastors, LCMS

Volume One Issue 2

Ascension, 2017

---

BROTHERS,

As the Easter edition of *Transition Times* is about ready to be published, be conscious of the fact that many of us are in transition, personal and perpetual. From an active ministry among God's people we face the losses of retirement – loss of purpose, loss of significance, loss of the expectation to be “on deck” week after week. Interims help, but they come to a quick end, while we are enjoying the “honey moon period.” Those endings are punctuated with the down times between assignments.

Retired since 2001 I am still driven to find a purposeful future. Though I am constantly busy, have served many interims and am active in the community, I am often asked about my plans for the future, both personal and for the Lord. Loss of significance, especially in the body of Christ is unsettling. To be significant in His service is never at a loss for opportunity among the relationships of the community and the community of believers. It has all to do with living in the Resurrection of Christ. Eugene Peterson (Message) reflects on this:

*“The resurrection is the final piece that together with his birth and death, sets the Good News in motion and creates the Christian life. Everything necessary for the Christian life is now laid out before us and put into action in us. There is no living worth its salt that is not the consequence of the action of God in Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Rom. 8:11...*

*“The do-it-yourself, self-help culture of North America has so permeated our imaginations that we don't give much sustained attention to the biggest thing of all: Resurrection. And the reason we don't give much attention to it is because the resurrection is not something we can use or manipulate or control or improve. It is interesting that the world has had very little success in commercializing Easter, turning it into a commodity the way it has Christmas.*

*“Just before his crucifixion, Jesus had an extended conversation with his disciples that prepared them for his death and resurrection. Throughout that conversation with his disciples he promised them over and over again, with variation, that when he was gone physically he would be present with them in the Spirit.*

*“On the day of resurrection He made good on that promise: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ (John 20:22). He replaced Himself with Himself.” [CT Pastors, pg. 28 “Learning to Love the Church,” Eugene Peterson.]*

Rev. Robert C. Reinhardt, Editor

[bobjoarein@wowway.com](mailto:bobjoarein@wowway.com)

+++

## Your Best Practices in *TRANSITION*

Shepherding a congregation in transition into the pasture of God's Word and to the Great Shepherd of the Sheep is in my mind most important. Important as you guide them through the arid wilderness of their conflicts, grief, and loss. I have found that Paul's two letters to Corinth are most helpful especially in larger urban parishes. You will know best from your experience how it fits.

### Paul Apostle of Transition – 1 and 2 Corinthians

Signs of the times - "In the Fullness of Time" Paul at Athens – Speaking of the Resurrection was rejected (*athenasia* was not the goddess consort to the newly proclaimed God, Jesus) So, Paul spoke first of the "crucifixion" at Corinth. The Resurrection chapter 15 correctly followed later as the capstone of the First Letter.

#### I Corinthians

- Ch. 1 & 3 Conflicted Church with personality cults within the Body.
- Ch. 2 Crucified Christ & Wisdom from the Holy Spirit deflates the arrogance of the "elite" in the Church.
- Ch. 4 Apostles "You are kings...we are fools" Apostleship (the pastoral office) is the teaching/ mentoring example of humble servanthood for the congregation.  
Critical Incidents
- Ch. 5-8 More Critical Incidents
- Ch. 9 Support (spiritual and physical) for apostles and those in ministry of the Gospel "I am all things to all men." Paul keeps returning to the call for respect of the office.
- Ch. 10-11 Worship and the abuse of the "privileged."
- Ch. 12-13 Spiritual Gifts prescriptive or descriptive – having served their purpose, are eliminated in the end. Love prevails.
- Ch. 14 Charismatic self-indulgence. (cf. self-help spirituality self indulgence. Think of Romans where "tongues" is not mentioned for good reason.
- Ch. 15 Resurrection issues – opposing the gnostic influence rejecting bodily resurrection. I believe that the charismatic gifts gave the impression that the Greek's 'spirits' already "died and went to heaven."
- Ch. 16 The Mission

## 2 Corinthians

- Ch. 1 Authority of his Apostleship is challenged in the face of criticism over his “flip/flopping visitation plans,” and the implied wimp factor concerning his upcoming visit.
- Ch. 2 Connection with the OT Covenant
- Ch. 4-5 Reconciliation in terms of our role on this earthly stage and our heavenly hope. Practicing true “reconciliation” is the key to being the church.
- Ch. 8-9 Focusing outward in fulfilling mission-minded promises.
- Ch. 10-12 Paul’s call, commitment, and commendation. “You are our letter of recommendation.”
- Ch. 13 “Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you? -- unless, of course, you fail the test.”

### Share What’s Working!

**Transition Times** wants your input. Share your Interim experience with your colleagues in this important transition ministry. Drop us a line, tell us what works and what does not.

- A Biblical application of study
- An experience whether it is successful or not.
- An approach or pastoral “ministry of presence”
- An itinerary of action.
- Whatever!

Give us a paragraph, a chart, an insight that is formulated in as complete a way as possible, yet maintaining confidentiality.

We appreciate your name and contact address, so others can explore ways to benefit from your ministry.

Cf. [bobjoarein@wowway.com](mailto:bobjoarein@wowway.com)

+++

Schedule of Publication  
Of  
*Transition Times*  
May, October, and January

+++

# IMC Board Meeting Notes

## April 27-28, 2017

The Conference **finances** are strong. Interest in **credentialing** is growing.

A sub-committee met with representatives of **Concordia Plan Services (CPS)** before the Board convened. The board learned that a Small Employer Exemption may help retired Intentional Interim Pastors (IIPs) stay on Medicare Part B as primary provider when serving full time. Pension paperwork could be streamlined for retired IIPs if the Council of Presidents can define who qualifies. CPS representatives can do little for pre-retirement IIPs who frequently change employers. After discussing these issues, Indiana District President Dan May agreed to meet with fellow board member Marty Schroeder and Michigan District President David Maier to discuss the feasibility of a Recognized Service Organization to give continuity of benefits to IIPs.

Board Member **Marty Schroeder manned a booth** at the February best practices conference in Phoenix AR. He will work with Peter Alexander and Ron Moritz to develop materials and presentations for future conferences in Columbus Indiana and Phoenix.

The issues being brought to the board have increased its workload beyond the capacity of its governing documents. **Ron Moritz will form a group to review roles, duties and responsibilities and draft possible revisions.** They will report to the September 2017 IMC Board meeting.

The Board spent significant time discussing **NALIP**. It recommended to the Coordinating Council that they set executive director' annual compensation based on research into similar non-profits. The Interim Ministry Association (IMA) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has shrunk in recent years. The NALIP Coordinating Committee will bring a proposal for changes in the organization to the annual conference. Meanwhile the IMC will watch with interest as NALIP and the IMA work to set future directions.

+++

### Events and Notes

### IMC Membership

**Is your IMC membership Current?** If you have yet to renew your current membership, you may do so at the NALIP Conference – with your pre-registration or at the conference it self.

or

Send your check of \$70 payable to "Interim Ministry Conference – LCMS" to  
Michigan District, LCMS  
Attn.: Chad Woltemuth

3773 Geddes Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-3098

Your partnership in this vital in this post-millennial age. The benefit of our team work in this ministry is evident in our collegiality and increased professionalism.

- **Credentialing** – Informs District President of your efforts to improve your IIM professional skills. Contact your district office of the status of your professional growth in updating your PIF. DP's refer to your data when looking for well equipped pastors doing transition ministry.
- **Ongoing Credentialing** – Three year accumulation of earned CEU's and IIM experience renews your credentials. You must take the initiative to update your PIF [info@interimministrylcms.org](mailto:info@interimministrylcms.org)
- **The interim Ministry Website** – Where general information is available...log on to [www.interimministrylcms.org](http://www.interimministrylcms.org)
- **The interim Ministry Forum** – A confidential chat room where pastors in transitional ministry can share joys and receive collegial support and guidance. Go to the Forum link on the website to join.
- **NALIP** – See below:
- **Constant Contact** – A mass email website that allows us to contact all IIMs at once. And
- **Transition Times** – This newly published e-news for all LCMS interim pastors, of which this is the second issue.

+++

## Basic Education Events

**NALIP** offers a 60-hr classroom training, Basic Education of Intentional Interim Ministry. A description of the course is available on the NALIP website. The training focuses on theory and skills proven helpful for interim ministry. The training will benefit pastors in settled ministries as well.

Training events scheduled by NALIP are listed on the NALIP website ([www.nalip.net](http://www.nalip.net)). Annually we have classes at Luther Seminary and Concordia Seminary. We schedule additional classes at other venues as opportunities arise. We encourage synods and districts of our denominations to host training events for the benefit of their pastors and congregations.

Our scheduled training for 2017 is as follows. Additional dates will be posted on our website as we schedule them.

Ken Rupp, NALIP Administrator  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Phase III— Nov. 13-17, 2017

Luther Seminary  
Mt Olivet Retreat Center,  
St. Paul, MN

Phase I – October 16-20, 2017  
Phase III – April 16-20, 2018

St. Francis Retreat House  
TBA

Florida Georgia District (LCMS)  
Phase I – August 14-18, 2017  
Canterbury Retrtr Ctr, Oveido, FL  
Phase III – February 5-9,2018  
FL/GA Dist. Office, Orlando, FL

Northeast Ohio Synod (ELCA)  
St. Stephen Luth. Ch. Stow, OH  
Phase I — May 8-12, 2017  
Phase III — Nov. 6-10, 2017

## **Advanced Courses**

*New for 2017...*

### **ADVANCED TRAINING IN TRANSITIONS: A WORKSHOP FOR INTERIM PASTORS**

**When:**

Thursday, June 1, 2017  
10:00AM to 8:00PM

**Where:**

Pacifica Synod Office  
1801 Park Court Place Bldg C  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

**What:**

Learning Topics to be included:

- Five Focus Points and the Developmental Tasks
- Vision and Mission During the Interim
- How the Interim Process Tasks Have Changed
- Overview of Best Practices and Trends
- One or Two Topics Additional Topics Requested by Early Registrants

Learning methods will include a balance of direct instruction, shared materials and group discussion.

NALIP offers this event with supporting co-sponsors: The Pacifica Synod, ELCA, and the Pacific Southwest District, LCMS.

This event is limited to trained and experienced Intentional Interim Pastors who have completed training under NALIP, IMN (or equivalent 60 hours) or pastors who have synod or district training

along with a minimum of one interim assignment completed. Limited to 25 participants.

**Pre-reading:**

Norman Bendroth, editor, *Transitional Ministry Today*, 2015

Peter Steinke, *Teaching Fish to Walk*, 2016

**Cost:**

\$75.00 (includes lunch and dinner meals)

**Registration deadline:**

May 15, 2017

If you have questions about registration, please contact Terri Robertson at 714.352.8732 or by email at [terrirobertson@pacificasynod.org](mailto:terrirobertson@pacificasynod.org).

+++

## 2017 NALIP Conference

June 22-24, 2017

Maritime Institute

Baltimore, MD

Cf. [www.NALIP.net](http://www.NALIP.net)

### 2017 NALIP Conference Presenter

Mr. Ted Kober,

Senior Ambassador Ambassadors of Reconciliation

- A six-part study on reconciling relationships and resolving conflict.
- Reflect Biblical teaching for reconciliation.
- Reviewing the six chief parts of the Small Catechism.
- Participants will learn practical ways to apply their Christian faith in family, business, legal and church conflicts.
- Help for themselves as well as for assisting others respond to conflict in a biblically faithful manner.
- Ability to access materials and present this study to the congregations they serve.

### FOR REGISTRATION

For more information on conference and hotel and to register for the conference check our NALIP website at [www.nalip.net](http://www.nalip.net). If you have questions about the conference please email [NALIP.net@outlook.com](mailto:NALIP.net@outlook.com) or call our Executive Director Ken Rupp at (804)564-5389.

+++

## **Continuing Ed. Credit**

For a fee of \$10 you may apply for continuing education credit (CEU) available from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

For complete information about Basic Ed. and the NALIP Conference Cf. [www.nalip.net](http://www.nalip.net)

+++

## **CREDENTIALING**

For  
Interim Ministers – LCMS

**Credentialing** serves several purposes. It creates a highest trained, experienced, and successful list of Intentional Interim Pastors for our Synod's district presidents to access when there is a need. It demonstrates to our Synod's leadership that, with this process of Credentialing, we have an interest in and a mechanism through which to improve and elevate the level of competence of our LCMS intentional interim pastors.

Together with IIM's carried out well, Credentialing is helping to create an increased esteem for this specialized ministry. We encourage you to apply for credentialed status after you have completed your first interim. You can download the need form from our IMC website at: [www.interimministrylcms.org](http://www.interimministrylcms.org) Click on the "Credentialing" tab. You will see the available downloads. If I can assist you, contact me at [crgteg@hotmail.com](mailto:crgteg@hotmail.com).

In Him, Craig Patterson

+++

### BOOK REIEW

## **The Relationship Cure**

*John M. Gottman, PH.D.*

### **I. Analyzing the Bidding Process and Response Styles**

Dr. John Gottman noted in his apartment research the significant “work” in relationships did not take place when individuals mustered great feats of self-disclosure, but instead in the mundane exchanges or simple “bids” to connect. He theorized, “Maybe it’s not the depth of intimacy in conversations that matters.



Maybe it doesn't even matter whether couples agree or disagree. Maybe the important thing is how these people pay attention to each other, no matter what they're talking about or doing." In his clinical research Dr. John Gottman observed, "Everybody wants (1) to be included, (2) to have a sense of control over their lives, or (3) to be liked. When such needs are met, people experience feelings of well-being and a sense of purpose to their lives." For Gottman these goals are achieved through a "bidding" process; that is, any attempt to connect with others. From his research, Gottman gleans that there is hope for relationships between people who consistently bid and respond to bids in positive ways. For example, in counseling one wife Gottman explained, "Feeling connected to your husband isn't going to fix all your problems...but it will make the two of you feel closer as you go through this transition together. And that's as good as it gets." He explains, "It's by weathering conflicts that marriages, families, friendships, and work teams grow strong."

Ultimately, Gottman's research showed relationships live and die based on the bidding process and style, how people approach one another and receive one another's advances to connect. He determined, "By choosing to *turn toward*, *turn away*, or *turn against* each other's bids for connection – no matter how ordinary or small – they established a foundation that could determine the future success or failure of their relationships." Bids come in many different shapes and sizes. Gottman describes them as follows: *affectionate touching, facial expressions, playful touching, affiliating gestures, and vocalizing*. Ultimately, to build long-term successful relationships, you've got to learn to be willing to turn toward each other's bids in all sorts of circumstances. He adds, "Habitually turning away can eventually destroy relationships;" but even worse is habitually turning against, which can make the bidder feel hurt and rejected.

## **II. Avoiding the Conversations You Need to Have**

Gottman describes six bid busters: *being mindless rather than mindful, starting on a sour note, using harmful criticism instead of helpful complaints, flooding, practicing a crabby habit of mind, and avoiding the conversations you need to have*. In my last four IIM assignments, the most significant bid buster has been number six, *avoiding the conversations you need to have*. People in churches may want to be "nice" or they may lack the courage or know how to speak about their feelings directly to those with whom they hope to make connections. Reinforcing this point Gottman adds, "More often [than what is said] it's the things people don't say that harm their relationships." He recommends, "If you're in a relationship where there seems to be an inordinate amount of conflict, you may want to take a look at the issues that aren't being discussed."

Avoiding the bidding work leads to conflict. Psychologist Dan Wile explains, you typically have three choices when faced with conflict: 1. Attack and defend, 2) avoid or deny, and 3) self-disclose and connect. Gottman's studies reveal that "a full 69 percent of all marital conflicts never go away." He concludes then, "Most conflicts don't arise from pathology." Instead, Gottman concludes conflicts are due to people assigning

different meaning to the same situations. The solution for Gottman is to keep talking, hang in there, explore rituals, and “focus less on the conflict itself and more on the dreams, goals, or wishes that underlie each person’s fixed position within the struggle.”

### **III. The Brain’s Emotional Command Center**

Gottman describes seven distinct “emotional command systems” believed to be present in each person’s brain. They are: *commander-in-chief, explorer, sentry, energy czar, sensualist, jester, and nest-builder*. This theory was first developed by Jaak Panksepp, a researcher at Bowling Green State University. “According to this theory, people differ in how much they like to have these systems stimulated.” It may be useful during the joining phase to have the lay and staff leadership groups take Gottman’s exercise to identify command styles for various leaders and groups.

During the joining phase there can be a variety of emotions for the many pockets of the congregation. Gottman asserts, “Many factors can affect how comfortable you feel when your emotional command systems are active at various levels.” Using Gottman’s questionnaires to evaluate the emotional command system in key leaders, or leadership groups, may help the congregation see the emotional processes which are a part of their evolutionary history.

### **IV. Developing Skilled Observation and Finding Shared Meaning**

During the one-on-one interviews, staff and members disclose feelings, hopes, goals, dreams, wishes, and even fears. For Gottman, it is valuable to observe and log emotional communication. He notes there are a variety of verbal and nonverbal cues, including facial expressions, movement, gesture, and touch, tone of voice, descriptive words, and metaphors. Gottman developed an “Emotional vocabulary List,” divided into general categories of emotion to help name feelings and to talk about them.

He says, “As an explorer, you may make observations and jot down notes on various topics, whether such details prove to be significant later or not. What’s important is to get it all down on paper so that you can see interesting patterns emerge.” Gottman explains, “The idea is to focus less on the conflict itself and more on the dreams, goals, or wishes that underlie each person’s fixed position with that struggle.”

### **V. Theological Reflection and Application**

The one-on-one interviews may serve as an opportunity to observe the various congregational groups’ bidding processes and styles (men, women, youth, singles, divorced, and children). There is much to observe while walking among God’s people. Jesus made himself available to the bids of others; for example, in Luke 8:44, when a woman reached out and touched Jesus while He was walking. Jesus responded to her bid, turned to her, and healed her. A key behavior for me during the joining phase will

be to make myself available and attentive to the bids of others and to encourage the bidding process.

It will also come as a comfort to the people during this phase to hear that they can be close to each other without having to resolve every conflict. As noted above, Gottman explained to one wife, “Feeling connected to your husband isn’t going to fix all your problems...But it will make the two of you feel closer as you go through this transition together. And that’s as good as it gets.” Jesus says, “I am the vine and you are the branches.” In Christ we are connected to God’s grace, love, and forgiveness. This does not mean we are without problems, fears, and conflicts. But they are reduced in light of God’s mercy and grace in Jesus Christ. Ideally, the one-on-one interviews can be used to create a “feeling” of connectedness, closeness, of individual members to their pastor, and of members to members. As Gottman expressed, “It’s by weathering conflicts that marriages, families, friendships, and work teams grow strong” not by being without conflicts.

As psychologist Dan Wile explains the three conflict choices (attack and defend, avoid or deny, and self- disclose and connect), I would like to observe and document to what extent these three choices are used by the various leadership groups. I would also like to assess, document, and report the different meanings people assign to the major areas of conflict and watch for patterns. As I evaluate, I will remember and reflect back to the congregation that God has a plan and purpose in all things and brings significant meaning to all human conflict.

(New York Times bestseller, the co-founder and co-director of Gottman Institute and professor of psychology at the University of Washington in Seattle. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> Dr. John Gottman, *The Relationship Cure*, (Three Rivers Press, New York, 2001)

+++

**Rev. Martin Schroeder** is a member of the Interim Ministry Conference Board of Directors and is a DMin candidate in the field of Intentional Interim Ministry at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. In so doing he is responsible for book reviews that relate to our calling and work. He has generously shared his reports with us for publication in the *Transition Times* E-newsletter. Following is the second book review. Thank you, Martin.