

# TRANSITION TIMES

A QUARTERLY OF THE INTERIM MINISTRY CONFERENCE

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## SEEKING SUCCESS By Robert C. Reinhardt

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“We want our new pastor to be a success.” How do we define what that means? In terms of our culture’s view of success, it usually means - for the church - a growing number of members, a fully funded budget, a congregation that gets along, adequate facilities, etc. Don’t forget, we are reminded in Scripture, the call is for a pastor to be “faithful” and that God brings any “success.”

Today, we find that churches are not growing, there is often conflict, budgets run into deficits, and buildings are not adequate. Some years ago when religious schools were in decline, I had a conversation with Bishop Gettelfinger (Diocese of Evansville) on why he thought so many Catholic schools and churches were consolidating. His response was that there were fewer and fewer baptisms. Also, in our circles, fewer and fewer Germans have migrated to the US. In addition, interdenominational marriages have softened loyalty, thus eroding participation in the Kingdom’s mission.

So what do we look for in our new pastor? How does he define his call to God’s mission? How does he see God at work in us, in our witness, our devotion to the risky business of engaging the world around us, even our definition of those to whom we are called to bring the Gospel of God’s love in Jesus? Before we call our new pastor we should:

Define our mission.

Ask what it is we want our congregation to look like as God’s people.

Ask how we can glorify God by making more and better fully devoted disciples of Jesus.

Who will make up our focus group as we approach the world?

Will our new pastor have a clear vision of purpose and is he able to cast that vision?

Four Focus Groups make up our agenda for actions:\*

Churched and Christian—people who are fully participating members of a local church (Emmanuel). They know Christ as Savior.

Churched but Non-Christian – They attend church, but they have not come to authentic faith in Jesus.

Christian but Non-Churched – They know Christ as Savior, but they are not connected to a church – “Untended Sheep.”

Non-Churched and Non-Christian -- They don’t go to church and they don’t know Jesus as their Savior.

Will your new pastor be welcoming to the Non-Churched, the Non-Christian? Will he train us on ways to be sensitive and welcoming when the stranger visits? Will he make choices in music, in worship practices, in teaching and preaching that will be sensitive to the needs and circumstances of guests as well of the faithful? Will he do all of this without jeopardizing the truth of Scripture, the source of the Gospel of Christ?

\*Resource for these thoughts come from “The Un-churched: Understanding Them to Reach Them” Jim Dethmer, Pastor’s Update 1992, Fuller Evangelistic Association.

*Rev. Robert Reinhardt has served in Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio since 1960 and as an IIM since 2003. He served on the IMC Board of Directors since 2009, convened the Credentialing Committee, and chaired the Board through the end of his term in 2016.*



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## PRACTITIONERS TOOLBOX

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### Implementing the Vision

By Scott G. Sommerfeld

The key to good ideas, even great ideas, is acting on them. Current teams or new teams begin to implement the recommended actions from the Transition Task Force Report. If the congregation is ready for it—one new team to be formed is the Pastor Call Committee, according to the congregation’s organizational docu-

Cont'd from page 1:

-ments. During this phase of the IIM process, staff, leaders, teams and boards may move forward by taking next steps regarding best practices, engaging consultants or connecting with model ministries. Members and Leaders work together to move the mission forward. The following activities are representative of this phase:

- Acting on Identified Needs
- Acting on Identified Opportunities
- Implementing Best Practices
- Connecting with Model Ministries
- Assembling the Call Committee
- Starting the Call Process

*Rev. Dr. Scott G. Sommerfeld unleashed the power of teams as a settled pastor for 30 years in Kentucky, Indiana, and Michigan. He is now revitalizing existing teams or launching new teams during the IIM process in his 3rd Michigan District IIM assignment.*

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## NEWS

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### 2019 NALIP Annual Conference: June 18-20

This Summer's annual conference highlighted a number of NALIP "firsts":

1. The NALIP conference did not "piggy-back" off the IMN meeting, as the IMN meeting was moved to November.
2. The NALIP conference presentations were on several topics presented by NALIP's own faculty members,

rather than five sub-topics presented by one "featured speaker."

2. During business meetings at the NALIP conference, a final decision was made to change NALIP's name to LuTMA. This decision has triggered changes to NALIP's constitution and bylaws, as well as changes (transitions) in the day to day operations of our IMC (as well as IMA).
3. A cake reception was held on Wednesday, June 19, to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of NALIP and the birth of LuTMA. Dick Mathisen and Peter Alexander cut the cake as the longest tenured members of NALIP in attendance, having both attended their first meeting in 2001.
4. Since part-time (and very experienced) NALIP Executive Director, Ken Ruppap, stepped down due to health reasons, conference attendees stepped up to help as they saw the need. Ken sent well-wishes to the conference. Cards, letters, and prayers for Ken are much appreciated and his status is available through the "CaringBridge" app/website. Ken Ruppap's excellent service to the NALIP community will be missed.
5. Sherrie Hofman has been filling in as acting Executive Director in Ken's absence, and will continue in that capacity until the Coordinating Council finds a permanent replacement.



**Last NALIP/First LuTMA Conference**