

Easum, Bandy & Associates

REPORT FOR Milford UMC January 2008

INTRODUCTION

This report is prepared specifically for Milford UMC by Bill Easum, co-founder and Senior Consultant of Easum, Bandy & Associates, Inc. This report is designed as a learning and planning tool. It presents you with some of the best thinking and most effective strategies for ministry from across the church today. Use it to inspire dialogue and discussion for the leadership of Milford UMC. Since the Audit was done by mail and I wasn't actually on your property to speak with you person to person, some of the observations may need to be fine tuned or even corrected when you receive this report. That's okay. When an issue can only be addressed by being in person I will ask you a question and try to respond in a way that you will know the answer depending on how you respond to the question.

Most important of all, move ahead as quickly as possible so you can ride the wave of enthusiasm your leaders feel at the moment. The key to doing this is to develop an ever-widening group of leaders who capture, embrace, and work passionately to help your church accomplish God's vision for Milford UMC.

The more people you involve along the journey, the better your chances are of success. Pray for and process this report. Through it all pray earnestly, ***“Lord, make us part of what you are doing in your world. Put us within the flow of your Spirit. Help us to do the things that you are blessing in this present age.”***

Note: If you do not wish to read the teaching material in Section One, proceed directly to Section Two. Do not skip Section Two. If you wish, you can skip Section Three and Four and go directly to the recommendations in Section Five.

The Purpose of This Consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to assist Milford UMC to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Raise the congregation's awareness of the cultural context in which ministry must occur at the beginning of the 21st century.
2. Re-affirm your clear Mission/Purpose Statement that expresses God's vision for Milford UMC. This statement defines the heart and soul of the congregation.
3. Begin or strengthen the process of becoming a mission driven, permission giving congregation where everything the congregation does serves its Mission Statement and helps to accomplish God's vision for Milford UMC.
4. Assist the congregation in understanding the demographic and psychographic makeup of the community in which Milford UMC serves. This information helps us answer the questions: Who is in the congregation's ministry area? What are they like? What are their needs? How might the congregation minister to their needs?
5. Recommend specific ministries and action items that are appropriate and essential to the congregation's future spiritual and numerical growth.
6. Encourage the pastor(s), staff, lay leaders, and congregation to commit themselves to a systematic, focused, and sustained approach toward accomplishing God's vision for Milford UMC.

SECTION ONE

THE VISION

There is a classic line in one of Charles Wesley's best loved hymns that describes the challenge before the church today. The hymn is "*A Charge to Keep I Have*" and the line is "*to serve the present age, my calling to fulfill.*" The challenge to the church is that our present age keeps changing, and it is changing more rapidly now than ever before in history. The changes are so enormous and rapid that they are causing a metamorphosis in every area of life. Fewer people today have a Christian memory than at any time since the founding of America. As a result of such change, many of the ministries and methods that once worked so well no longer achieve the desired results.

We may not like many of the changes, but if we want to be effective in fulfilling our

calling to offer Christ to the world, it is essential that we understand what is happening in *this present age* and develop effective ministries that will put the people of our day in touch with the timeless Gospel. As a new age dawns, the Gospel will not change, but the package in which the Gospel is shared is rapidly changing. In such times as these, vital congregations cannot continue to simply manage what exists. We must forge a new vision for ministry without compromising the Gospel. That is what this report is about.

In his book, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, Bill describes this new age as the “pre-Christian” world, a time when the age of Christendom is coming to a close and a pre-Christian world, much like the first century, is emerging. The book, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, describes the present churches, which he calls “*Spiritual Redwoods*.” These Spiritual Redwoods have grown head and shoulders above the other churches and, if we see the world from their vantage point, we can see where God is leading the church in the 21st century. These churches are spiritual giants because they have discovered how to grow people into spiritual giants. Each of these churches has focused its entire ministry on making disciples of non-religious people.

Principles of Today’s Disciple Making Church

1. People who are not disciples of Jesus Christ are missing the primary reason they were created.
2. Unchurched people matter to God as much, if not more than, those within the church.
3. Their church is primarily a mission station for passing on new life in Christ to the unchurched.
4. High expectations for their people are essential.
5. Some things must be changed and some things must be preserved.
6. It is important to understand, love, accept, and like, secular, unchurched people.
7. It is more important to use music that unchurched people understand and are interested in to spread the Gospel, than it is to teach people to appreciate "good" music.
8. It is important to start new churches and be involved in missions at home and throughout the world.
9. Their back yard is the primary mission field.
10. Nothing works today like it worked yesterday.

Our studies also show these same churches do several things that dying churches do not do:

1. They are as familiar with the unchurched population around them as they are their own members.
2. They strategically target the unchurched.
3. They have a clear vision and mission plan for the future.
4. They develop and implement a strategy for reaching unchurched, secular people.
5. They equip their members to actually serve in ministries to others and witness for Jesus Christ instead of sitting on committees.

6. They design worship so it is sensitive to the needs of the unchurched.
7. They challenge people to commit their lives to Jesus Christ instead of becoming members of a church.
8. They are open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and develop prayer ministries.
9. They want other churches to join them in reaching out to secular people.

The needs in the world are many and great. People outside the church are spiritually hungry at the same time that they are alienated from, or simply ignorant of, traditional Christianity. The signs are clear... God is raising up a new kind of church to meet the challenges of *"this present age."* **The question is: Will Milford UMC be a part of what God is doing? Can Milford UMC claim the promise of Isaiah 43:16: "Cease to dwell in the days gone by...for I am doing a new thing in your midst."? Can Milford UMC earnestly pray, "Lord, lead us to what you are doing and blessing and help us to do it."?**

Churches that put themselves at God's disposal will emerge as the spiritual redwoods in the 21st century. *Please understand that being a Spiritual Redwood is not about growing a big church, but about growing BIG people.* It's just that experience is showing us that the churches that do an exceptional job of growing disciples of Jesus Christ also happen to be growing numerically. We believe that God wants to send seeking people to congregations where people will be loved and nurtured into discipleship.

Strong, healthy churches that are described as Spiritual Redwoods exhibit the following characteristics:

1. They are biblically grounded.
2. Jesus Christ is Lord.
3. They are culturally relevant.
4. They exist to make disciples.
5. They are lay led.
6. They are a trusting community.

The following information and recommendations are simply to help Milford UMC discover ways to respond to the challenge of the future. You may disagree with some of the information or recommendations. Since I was not on site with you in person, I may have misread some of the information you sent me. If so, correct it.

However, if you find yourself disagreeing with the results of the information, before you react negatively, ask yourself this question: "Do I not like what I am reading because it goes against my Biblical foundations, or because it goes against my personal opinions or sacred cows?" Knowing the difference is the primary task of leadership in changing times.

SECTION TWO

PRIORITY COMMENTS

Milford has many things in place to be a strong church for a long time. Your past ten years of worship attendance has gone against the tide of what most UMCs have experienced especially in your area of the country. Your willingness recently to require more land and expand is commendable. You have adequate land and parking which are two of the basic barriers to growing past the 200 barrier. The only inadequate space I see that is cramped is educational space. But keep in mind education is no longer the key to growing a church or discipling people, and educational space never pays for itself. Today on-the-job training is replacing teaching. Small groups disciple more people today than Sunday School. Hands-on ministry discipless more people than classroom settings.

If you do nothing, you will probably continue growing for a few years. However, 36.8% of those people in worship were born before 1945. This percentage means that 4 out of 10 of your regular worshippers on Sunday will no longer be with you in 17 to 18 years. So Milford has to grow by almost 40% over the next few years just to stay even with today's health.

Milford is bumping up against the 200 barrier in worship which is the hardest barrier to grow through because it takes a major change in the mindset of the church leadership. The basic change is to quit thinking like a small family where everyone knows everyone and begin thinking like a large business that has to work hard to know the needs of its clients and welcomes new people with open arms.

One of the major barriers to growing through the 200 barrier is the congregation's view of staff. In a church over 200 the staff has to be equippers who equip the congregation to do most of the ministry. This is a major mind-shift.

Another barrier to growing past the 200 barrier is the number of staff. At the moment you are not staffed to grow past the barrier. You have the equivalent of ½ program/pastoral type person (I'm not referring here to an associate pastor). You need to break out the program director into two of three positions and add a person. More on this later.

Another barrier to grow beyond 200 is the joy and concerns section of both services. As you grow, it will be impossible to open up the joys and concerns to random people in the congregation, especially things like "traveling mercies." What you have to do is think of your church as twice its size and ask, "If we were that size could we still be doing this and not be here all day?" If you continue to allow people from the congregation to speak out and share their joys, your services will find it hard to grow much beyond their present size. I know this isn't what you want to hear but it is the truth. Churches over 200 don't open the service up for anyone to share their joy or concern. As you grow it goes on far too long to keep the unchurched connected to the service. You will have to decide - do we want to remain small and keep the joys and concerns as we have them, or find another way to achieve the same goal?

As you go through this report, keep in mind that the issue before you is not church health or even church growth. The issue is what does it mean to be a faithful church? A faithful church is one that is intentionally seeking to carry out the Great Commission of “making disciples of all nations.” To be faithful means that Milford UMC is doing everything that it can to win people for Jesus Christ. A faithful church is one that is intentionally seeking to be salt, light, and leaven in the world, both at home and abroad.

SECTION THREE

CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

The following items are extracted from the 20 growth principles of the Ministry Audit that was filled out by your leadership prior to my arrival. Each item is considered essential to the strategic plan in Section five.

1. 38.8% of the worshipping congregation was born before 1945.
2. Controversy is not perceived by the leadership as being dealt with openly.
3. There has been major controversy the past five years. How well this controversy has been dealt with will determine much of your future. If you have not settled it, then you need to do so before attempting any of the recommendations in this report.
4. No single staff person or volunteer concentrates on assimilating new members and it is not done with three months. Membership class is spotty.
5. Small groups do not equal one for every ten people in worship.
6. Outreach is mostly, if not all, social justice with little to no redemptive forms of reaching out.
7. There are two services of worship – 8:30 (73) and 10:45 (98). The problem is the contemporary service is too early to reach unchurched people. You need to move it to 9:30 or switch it with the 10:45 service. Has anyone talked about moving the early service to later or switching them?
8. There is a praise band and multimedia is used.
9. The average attendance at worship over the last ten years has increased by 33%. This is excellent for your area of the country and with your demographics.
10. The worship leader of the contemporary service has an excellent presence.
11. The choir only sings 44 times a year. It is never good for the chancel choir to take a vacation. Changing this policy will result in more new members and a larger attendance in worship.
12. The present pastor is in the 11th year. Studies show that usually the best ministry of a pastor begins the 11th year of ministry. The church has done very well over the tenure of your present pastor and you would do well to continue this relationship. It's not many churches in your area of the country doing as well as Milford. I say this because the scores on your pastor aren't very good which means some of your leadership is not happy with your pastor. With only 16 people filling out the subjective part of the survey it could be that one or two people severely affected the overall score. I suggest you look at the individual score sheets to see if that is the

case. You can do this without violating any confidence since the score sheets are not numbered or signed. If it is just one or two people affecting the score then they need to get on board. If it is more than that, you need to have a discussion about why people are unhappy when the church is doing so well. Keep in mind that often when a pastor pushes church to grow it offends some of the long time members. Since I am doing this audit from a distance there is no way for me to know the situation.

13. The program staff, including the pastor, equals 1 $\frac{3}{4}$. I include Music Director, Organist, Chapel Choir Director, Pianist or Cherub Choir Director as support staff. I always place organists, pianists and children's choir directors in the support category. Music Director is considered program only if the person or persons work the equivalent of full time. This is certainly not a value judgment. It is just the way I measure the number of staff and keep apples to apples from church to church. As support, they are very important, just playing a different role.
14. Staff meets monthly. This needs to change to weekly as you add another person. More on this later.
15. The scores on the lay leaders are very good.
16. Keep in mind it is not good to use lay speakers to replace the regular sermon. This will cause your church to decline. It is good to use lay testimonies at the end of the message if they are on point with the message and are less than 5 minutes.
17. There are no attendance figures for the Nursery. This needs to change if you are to grow past the 200 barrier.
18. There are two church school classes over the 80% capacity.
19. There are no consistent figures on the Sunday School. This has to change if you are going to grow through the 200 barrier. Large churches find it necessary to track numbers because numbers are people and in large groups you lose people if you do not track them
20. Every classroom is used.
21. There is a need either for educational space, starting a second Sunday School, or starting a small group ministry that meets in homes. Of the three the small group ministry is usually the most productive if it is staffed.
22. Milford UMC has eleven acres of land. This is excellent.
23. There is ample parking off-street for growth to continue.
24. There is debt of \$865,990. This is high debt for your size church. Still I commend you on your courage.
25. The public schools are full.
26. 3-4 first time families visit each week but they are not routinely responded to with 24 hours by the pastor. In a church this size the pastor needs to contact the new people on Sunday afternoon and see if a visit is possible.
27. No one spends 20 hours a week with the unchurched.
28. Visitors are not put on the newsletter mailing list the first week they attend.
29. No visitor parking.
30. The budget is \$242,641.
31. The average pledge is \$2,660.
32. No one analyzes the giving patterns. Someone should do this quarterly.
33. There is a mission statement – The Milford UMC exists to help people discover the

- joy of knowing and serving Jesus Christ.
34. The average age of the person filling out the Ministry Audit is 50.7.
 35. The average length of membership of the persons filling out the Ministry Audit is 14.8 years.
 36. The number of people asked to fill out the congregational questionnaire was 20. 16 returned the questionnaire.
 37. Milford makes some drastic and harmful changes in the summer - moves second service to 10:00 and drops Sunday School. This is terribly destructive to visitors who don't have a clue you have made this change and it makes it doubly hard to restart Sunday School. You really need to discontinue this practice.

SECTION FOUR

WHAT MUST WE DO NOW TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION?

Consulting with more than 500 churches has taught me that strategic action requires identifying and focusing on the leverage points. A leverage point is the one thing that, if changed, makes it easier to change everything else. A leverage point is the number one priority on everyone's agenda. I include these only for you to see the way in which I analyze a congregation and to see some of the best material on the subject to be found. This is not the recommendation section.

I. Leverage points

A. A Solid Community consists of:

1. Leaders who know the Bible and have a prayer life and are growing daily in their devotional life.
 - a. Is the pastor a spiritual and strategic leader?
 - b. Does this describe the attitude of your key leaders: *"I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might win some."* 1 Cor. 9:22
 - c. How many spiritual giants do you have among the key leadership?
 - d. Are most of your leaders respected throughout the congregation?
2. The church has a solid plan for discipling people from where they are to their potential.
3. The church is a community that functions around trust rather than rules or

policies.

4. The absence of major and/or ongoing conflict.
 - a. If conflict exists, this is always the place to start BEFORE trying anything else. Eliminating the conflict and or the ones causing it is essential first. If the leadership is not biblically based, then you could work on this while doing one of the following.
 - b. Churches are like rivers and estuaries, remove the pollutants and the river rebounds because all things are tied together.
5. Several good resources could guide you here.

- a. Community

Alpha (15 weeks) - level one. For a brief description and how to reach Alpha, go to the FAQ's section of our website. Alpha (15 weeks) a new member study course that takes people into the basics of faith. It centers on Jesus, not denominationalism. Cook Communications Ministries, 4050 Lee Vance View, Colorado Springs, CO, 80918, 888-949-2574.

Disciple Bible is a United Methodist publication but is suitable for any mainline denomination. It includes videos, but requires training first (36 weeks). P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202. www.abingdonpress.com

Vital Christianity: A Manual for Teaching the Basics of Christianity. This is basic curriculum for any level of Christian. Ginghamburg United Methodist Church, Tipp City, Ohio, 513-667-1069. www.ginhamsburg.org

The Marks of A Disciple, Price of Peace Lutheran Church and Changing Church. www.changingchurch.org

Contagious Christians, Zondervan. 800-727-3480. www.willowcreek.org

Experiencing God (13 weeks), Mike Rogers and Claude V. King, Kingdom Agenda Ministries, 1595 Michigan Blvd., Dunedin, FL 34698.

Mind of Christ (18wks), is a follow up to "Experiencing God". Lifeway, Southern Baptist. <http://www.lifeway.com>

Emmaus, Emmaus Journey. 6960 Snowbird Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80918, Telephone: 719-599-0448, info@emmausjourney.org

Discovery from www.joyonline.org

Kicking Habits, Tom Bandy, Abingdon

Danger In The Comfort Zone, Judith Bardwick

b. Leadership Development

Leadership Without Easy Answers, Heietz

Leadership On The OtherSide, Bill Easum

Coaching Change, Tom Bandy

Diffusion of Innovation, Rogers

Five Star Leadership

Reinventing Your Board, John Carver

Leadership And The New Science, Margaret Wheatley

Waking To God's Dream, Dick Wills

Leadership, James Burns

c. Conflict

Two good books on conflict are *Clergy Killers* and *Antagonists In The Church*

Our associate, Jeff Patton, is very good with conflict. You can reach him at www.easumbandy.com

The FAQs section of our website has a section on Conflict Management.

B. Owned and Managed Mission, Vision, and Value Statements, or Purpose Statements, or Core Values:

1. These instruments come out of the people's growing spiritual awareness of God, not from a planned retreat setting.
2. If no conflict exists, this is always the place to start because it is the foundation for all else.
3. Owned means that the leadership:
 - a. Can recite the statements from memory;
 - b. Uses them for all of its decision making, staffing and budgeting;
 - c. Teaches them to all new members.
4. Core values can be a purpose statement, a list of core values, or it can be the Mission, Vision, and Values Statement to which I refer.
5. Several good resources could guide you here.

- a. Tom Bandy's book *Moving Off The Map* as well as the workbook "Vision Discernment."
- b. See the FAQs section under the Free Resources on our website www.easumbandy.com, then go to Resources, then Faqs, then Mission statements
- c. Ken Blanchard's *Managing By Values*
- d. Laurie Beth Jones *The Path*

C. Indigenous Worship

- 1. In the language, technology, and culture of the people the church is trying to reach.
- 2. Worship is a relevant, safe place to hear a dangerous gospel. It does no good to equip people to bring their friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors to church if worship is boring or irrelevant to their lives.
- 3. Several good resources could guide you here.
 - a. "Worship For People Of The Heart", Bill Easum www.easumbandy.com .
 - b. See the section on worship in *Growing Spiritual Redwoods* by Easum and Bandy.
 - c. *Worship Evangelism* by Sally Morgenthaler.
 - d. See the FAQ's section of our website for a long list of worship helps.
 - e. Tex Sample's *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World*
 - f. *The Wired Church*, Len Wilson
 - g. *Out On The Edge*, by Michael Slaughter
 - h. Tex Sample's *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World*
 - i. The Power of Teams, Video from Ginghamburg UMC www.ginghamburg.org
 - j. How To Start A New Service, Charles Arn
 - k. www.midnightoilproductions.net, Jason Moore and Len Wilson provide

worship graphics

D. Lay Mobilization

1. The church sees Christianity is a journey as well as a destination. That means it is always trying to grow people as well as introduce them to Jesus Christ.
2. This involves a process for identifying new people, helping them find their gifts and passion, equipping for ministry, placing in actual ministry, and coaching them in their chosen ministry.
3. Accountability is required so this is not volunteer management. People serve as servants, not as volunteers.
4. Multiplication of leaders is one of the key issues of the church.
5. Several good resources can guide you here.
 - a. "The Equipping Church Guidebook" is one of the best resources for lay ministries. Contact Leadership Network - 800-765-5323
 - b. *The New Reformation*, Greg Ogden
 - c. See our website, Recommended Resources under Laity
 - d. See the FAQs section of our website for subjects such as Lay Pastors, Lay Ministries, and Permission Giving
 - e. *Witnessing Without Fear*, by Bill Bright
 - f. *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels
 - g. *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples*, Charles Arn and Win Arn
 - h. *The Lay Driven Church*, Steinborn
 - i. *Doing Church As A Team*, Wayne Cordeiro
 - j. *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren

E. Redemptive Missional Opportunities

1. Mission is always redemptive, never just social. Churches are not service organizations and what they do should not be seen as a "service to the community." This is what happened to the church in Canada. What the church does is mission, not service. The mission is to transform people, not offer them a

service or meet their need. The only reason to meet their need is to offer them Christ. Any group can meet their need; only the church can offer them Christ. "Our preschool is a service to the community."

2. Ministry, outreach, and mission are all seen as the same. However, the primary mission is now in the backyard rather than overseas.
3. The mistake most churches make is that they try to involve people before they disciple them. They skip Lay Mobilization and go directly to this one with new members. This turns them into "doers of good" works who often have no idea why they are doing good works. It has led to churches filled with biblically and spiritually bankrupt good people.
4. Several good ministries are available.
 - a. Week Day Children's Ministries such as Logos, Kids Club, Pioneer Club. See The FAQs section of our website for addresses of these and much more.
 - b. Servant Evangelism, see www.kindness.com
 - c. Sidewalk Sunday School
 - d. Habitat for Humanity
 - e. Week Day Children's Ministries
 - f. Social justice issues of the area
 - g. Books to help you understand the world today

RetroFuture, Gerad Kelly
Leadership And The New Science, Margaret Wheatley
The Birth of The Chaordic Age, Dee Hock

F. Organized around the DNA

1. Is the church organized to carry out its agreed upon mission?
2. There is no one form of organization since the DNA should dictate the organization. This is why top-down, imposed denominational organizational structures seldom work.
3. Restructuring usually comes toward the end of any transition. Seldom does it do any good to begin by restructuring.
4. Some good resources are:

- a. Christian Chaos, Tom Bandy
- b. How To Reach Baby Boomers, Wm. Easum, Chapter Four
- c. Books on Organizational Theory

Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers, Wm. Easum
Images of Organization, Gareth Morgan
Christian Chaos, Tom Bandy

G. Staffing

1. The goal is to hire equippers and mentors, not professionals.
2. Staffing issues are always related to something else.
3. The two most important staff positions, other than the pastor, are the worship leader (old music director) and the Lay Mobilizer.
4. Some good resources are:
 - a. Multiple Staff and the Large Church, Lyle Schaller
 - b. The Role of the Senior (Lead) Pastor and Staffing A Church, by Bill Easum on our website by download
 - c. See our website www.easumbandy.com

H. Logistical Issues

1. Parking
 - a. This is only a logistical issue always related to something else in one of the first five leverage points.
 - b. Parking never helps a church grow, but it can hinder the growth of a church. Uncommitted people will seldom walk more than 600 feet to the door of a church.
 - c. The optimum goal is one parking space for every two people on the premise at the peak hour.
 - d. Another issue is the friendliness of the parking for non-Christians or unchurched people.

- e. A good resource here is Growth Principle Thirteen in *The Complete Ministry Audit* by William Easum.

2. Facilities

- a. Logistical issue always relate to one of the first five leverage points.
- b. Do not build unless it is absolutely necessary.
- c. Some of the keys issues to consider
 - (1) Nursery is one of the most important areas in the church. For more, see the Nursery section in *The Complete Ministry Audit*, by Bill Easum.
 - (2) Lightness and Lighting. Stage lighting is now important. For more, see the FAQ's section of our website.
 - (3) Stairs. The fewer the better.
 - (4) Location. Does not mean as much as it once did, but it is still important.
 - (5) 80%. Avoid ever going over this percent in anything. For more, see the 80% section of *The Complete Ministry Audit*.
 - (6) Bathrooms. One of the ways Boomers measure the comfort of any building. Do you have diaper changers in the men's room?
 - (7) Amount of land. In the year 2000, to purchase less than ten acres is always a mistake, unless you are a downtown church.
- d. A couple of good resources can guide you here.
- e. Ron Bowman's book, *When Not To Build*.
- f. See www.easumbandy.com for several resources under Architect, Audio Consultants, Church Security, Facilities, Improvements, Renting Space, Sound Systems, Office Space, and Strip Malls. *When Not To Build*, Bowman and Hall

I. Finances

- 1. Finances are seldom an issue in the growth of a church.
- 2. Finances are always an issue in the growth of people. If the people are growing, the church usually has the needed money.

3. Goal: either 4% of the total average household giving or tithing.
4. A logistical issue always related to one of the first five leverage points.
5. Several good resources can guide you here.
 - a. See the FAQs section of our website for Bonds or Loans, Budgeting Around The Mission Statement, Finances, Grant Proposals, Money, Offering Plates, and Stewardship and Tithing.
 - b. The Missing Piece Stewardship workbook by Bill Easum www.easumbandy.com.
 - c. Effective Church Finances, by Kennon Callahan.
 - d. Consecration Sunday, by Herb Miller at www.Netresults.org.
- J. When these leverage points are addressed in the above order, everything is much easier to accomplish.
 1. Failure to honor the order of importance often ends in failure in whatever is being attempted, not to mention an inordinate amount of unnecessary pain.
 2. Most churches can work with only one leverage point at a time. When it is firmly addressed so that it is no longer a need or problem, they can move on to the next leverage point.

The primary strength of the following recommendations will be in direct proportion to how the leadership and congregation feel toward the "yet-to-be-committed," and how willing it is to discover new "wineskins." The people of Milford UMC are being asked the following: "How much do you care about God's unchurched people?" "How much are you willing to sacrifice to reach those not yet actively participating in the Body of Christ?" "Can you stand with Jesus as He looked out over Jerusalem and wept because, like a mother hen toward her chicks, He could not gather them in under His wing?" No strategy can take the place of such spiritual passion for the souls of human beings. My prayers and the prayers of all God's people are with you as you entertain the following recommendations.

The following information and recommendations are born out of the nine leverage points and are offered to help Milford UMC discover ways to respond to the challenge of the future. You may disagree with some of the information or recommendations. The use of the alphabet within each section designates a new action item within that section. Help can be found in the Resource Section for those recommendations that are so noted. Respond to these recommendations only as prayer moves you. If some of the information is incorrect, correct it. If you find yourself disagreeing with the information, before you react, ask yourself this question: "Do I not like what I am reading because it goes against my biblical foundations, or because it goes against my personal opinions or sacred cows?"

Knowing the difference is the primary task of leadership in changing times.

A consultant can recommend strategies based on proven information from scripture, tradition, experience, and reason, but in the final analysis, all spiritual growth occurs because God's people are inspired by their spiritual leaders and their own inner spirit to reach out in love and compassion to those who are not yet in love with Jesus Christ.

The following recommendations are strategic pieces of an overall plan. The use of the alphabet within each section designates a new action item within that section. Help can be found in the Resource Section for those recommendations that are so noted. Respond to these recommendations only as prayer moves you.

Every consultant has some biases. Milford UMC needs to know those of Bill Easum. One, the purpose of the church is to give life away to those inside and outside the church in the name of Jesus Christ. The purpose of the church is not simply to take care of itself. Those who merely care for their members are clubs, not churches. Two, the purpose of the church is to win the area in which it is located to Jesus Christ. The purpose is never to build an institutional church, so size is never the issue. The issue is whether or not God's people are spreading scriptural holiness throughout the area. Three, I do not believe that God wants any church to be closed. Some churches choose not to be churches and therefore close themselves in spite of God. Four, if the above is true, then where the church is located and what ministries the church should be engaged in are determined by the felt needs of the community as much as the felt needs of the present members. Five, where the institutional church is located does not matter to people who understand that their ministry is to reach out to people in the name of Jesus Christ. Six, God wants every church to grow. Seven, social justice is a natural ministry of an authentic church. Eight, recent history shows that circuits seldom work. Nine, the smaller the church, the more likely a local pastor will be able to grow the church easier than an ordained clergy. Ten, worship designed for unchurched and pre-Christian people is essential for ministry in the 21st century. Eleven, worship that reaches pre-Christian people born after 1946 must include indigenous music as well as multimedia.

In preparing to interpret and implement this report, Milford UMC will be wise to have its leaders read *Unfreezing Moves* by Bill Easum. This book will give you immense guidance in not only how to proceed, but also in understanding the dynamics of a faithful congregation.

SECTION FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MILFORD UMC

Based on the above, Bill Easum and Easum, Bandy & Associates, Inc. offer the following observations and recommendations.

- I. The number one decision Milford UMC has to make is whether or not you are willing to do what is necessary to grow beyond the 200 barrier in worship.**

Few congregations make it past 150 in worship. One of the reasons congregations never break this barrier is the “small church syndrome” or as some call it the “single cell phenomena.” The two hundred in worship barrier is the hardest barrier to overcome. Why? Because it challenges many of the things that have made Milford successful to this point – like the joys and concerns, the level of quality, the closeness of congregation, the lack of discipleship methods, and the lack of concern for reaching out beyond the sanctuary to the unchurched who visit and who drive by without stopping in. **For more details on the 200 barrier see Appendix B**

So here are a few things you will need to decide.

- A. Begin asking “What if our church was twice its size? Would we be able to do what we are doing and what would we have to stop and what would we have to start doing? If you ask this question you will see why I recommend you drop your present form of joys and concerns and find a way to accomplish the same goal in less than two minutes.

- B. You need to staff the church to be able to connect with the new people who will be coming in. The rule of thumb for the appropriate number of program staff in a traditional church is the equivalent of one for every one hundred people in worship. **For more information see, Bill Easum, *The Church Growth Handbook, Abingdon*.** At the moment you rely on the closeness of the congregation to achieve this, but beyond 200 you have to begin relying more on the intentional relationships between the staff and the new people since the number of people will outstrip the congregation’s ability to recognize the visitors. We know from history that one staff can relate well with 100 to 125 people. That means you are understaffed by at least ½ program person. My suggestion is to either make the contemporary worship leader full time or add another person in this area and to hire someone to develop a serious children’s ministry. These two positions are keys to your future.

If you have an adequate number of the right staff in the right ministry, you will have all or most of the volunteers you need. Staff members do not replace volunteers. Staff identify, recruit, equip, and deploy laity into ministry. They do not perform ministry on behalf of or for the congregation. They do not serve the congregation. They should not be thought of as the “hired gun.” Most program people should be able to pay for themselves within two to three years in additional people they bring in.

More staff is needed today than in the 1950's because the world we live in today is far more complicated. In the 1950's the nuclear family of mom, dad and the kids came to church. Today, there is a vast area of different types of families. In the 1950's, the church had very little competition for the lives of children and youth. Today, the church finds itself competing with a variety of things that pull children and youth away from the church. In the 1950's, the Judeo-Christian value system was reinforced in the home, the schools, and the church. Today, only the church

reinforces the Judeo-Christian value system. Drugs and gangs were not widespread in the 1950's. Today, people are more mobile and most often do not have an extended family nearby to help in times of crises. In other words, it is far more difficult today to minister to people and equip them for a life that follows Jesus Christ.

C. All staff need to learn how to go to the next level and handle twice the number of people. The primary paradigm shift today in the area of church staff is the movement from staff doing ministry to staff equipping others to do ministry. Instead of going to work thinking about what one must do, staff goes to work dreaming about who they might meet, transform, and mentor. Instead of trying to get a ministry done or a task performed, staff look for new people to mentor, equip, and send out into ministry. This means:

1. How to function as specialists rather than generalists
2. How to function as a team
3. How to equip people to do ministry rather than doing ministry
4. How to improve skills and quality of ministry

D. You need to develop a year round mindset toward ministry.

People look for a church around two periods of the year, July and August, and Christmas Eve night. Most people still move around the school year and after getting settled, start looking for a church in July, August or Christmas Eve. The number one time unchurched young families and singles go to church is Christmas Eve. Easter is not nearly as fertile a field for reaching the unchurched as Christmas Eve.

A signal is given to people when the church cuts back in the summer on programs. When schedules are reduced in the summer, people are told that it is okay to take a vacation from the organized Body of Christ. This translates to many that faith is not really the most essential part of our life. Unless faith is presented as the most important aspect of our lives, people born after 1950 do not take the church seriously.

1. The Chancel Choir needs to sing 52 Sundays out of the year.
2. The worship service times shouldn't be changed in the summer.
3. Sunday School needs to be continued in the summer even if you have to combine classes or find another form of discipling children. If you have a large space that could be used for children's Sunday School consider using the new form of discipling that involves all of the elementary children in one room to hear a story, see a video, and enjoy good music for children and then break into small groups with a facilitator rather than a teacher. You can see this material and settings by going to our website Free Resources, Children, and then reading through the various sections under Children.

E. Start keeping better records. As you become larger strategic decisions begin to

become more difficult unless you have accurate records of the coming and going of people.

F. Until you reach 500 in worship your pastor needs to call every new visitor within 24 hours and attempt to make a personal visit with them.

G. Don't open the contemporary service with a greeting. Instead use your best music piece. Also, work on the dead spots (those times with more than 5 seconds of dead air where nothing happens. Both services have a lot of these dead spots. Just listen to your service and clock the number of times nothing happens for more than 5 seconds. Dead spots are like the tv going blank - when that happens unchurched people under 35 check out mentally.

II. Consider moving the 8:30 service to either 9:45 or switching the times of the two services so the contemporary service is later.

To be a biblically sound church means that you must give first priority to unchurched people. That means making the worship service as convenient as possible to them so you can have them long enough to move them into a discipling mode and grow them into Christ like people. Your contemporary service is your future. You may not know that but it is. To put it at any time other than the prime time for reaching unchurched people is a fatal mistake over the long run. Fewer and fewer people are attending traditional worship all over the U.S. In time most forms of traditional worship will be obsolete. So in order to replace the 4 out of 10 people who will not be with you in 17-18 years due to age it is imperative that you set the contemporary service up at the prime hour which is between 9:30 and 11:00 on Sunday morning.

I know you won't want to do this and may not. But failure to do so will bite you over the long haul. And it won't hurt you to run this service at the same time as Sunday School unless your key leaders of the service go to Sunday School. But the number of people in Sunday School is so small as to make little to no difference in your future. Either run Sunday School and the contemporary service at the same time or move it to 11:00 and move the traditional to 8:30. You will upset less people by running it at the same time as Sunday School. If you do that then Sunday School should start at 9:45 also.

Holding worship and Sunday school at the same hour results in more people spending only one hour in church on Sunday, i.e. most of these will opt for worship, not Sunday school. However, most of these people would never be in Sunday school anyway and would not be in worship without an additional service. This arrangement results in more young adults attending worship and leaving their children in the nursery or Sunday school. Do not worry about a worship service during the Sunday school hour hurting Sunday school attendance. It will not. In fact, it will increase overall attendance. Some adults may drop out, and some youth may wish they could go to that service (this can be solved by another hour for youth Sunday school). But the number of children will increase more than any decrease experienced. Some people will go to worship while their children are in Sunday school instead of going home. In time, some will commit to

two hours.

III. Beginning in 2008, enlarge the nurturing and equipping systems of your church to provide the best quality care and leadership development possible for all ages.

Milford UMC needs to establish an intentional ministry that nurtures and equips laity to minister to one another and to the visitors. Keep in mind that the major change of our time is that people come to church now without any Christian memory. Many have grown up with little or no introduction to Jesus Christ and the Judeo-Christian value system. To disciple many of these new members will be far more complicated today than at any other time since the first century.

- A. Assign one staff primarily responsible for the Lay Mobilization Process. This could be a new person or you could redirect the present program director. Keep in mind that programs don't disciple people today – hands-on ministry does.

Four broad components are found in some form in every effective lay ministry system - Assimilation, Discovery, Deployment, and Coaching. This system can be used as the framework for any of the discipleship ministries listed in this recommendation.

1. Assimilation: Helping new members understand the church and existing members to extend their involvement beyond Sunday morning attendance or to find more meaningful ministry opportunities. Helping members understand scripture and come to trust that God has gifted and called them to ministry, and helping members to grow spiritually as they use their gifts in service.
2. Discovery: An interview and/or assessment process to help members learn more about the unique gifts, talents, temperament, and experiences God has given them, and allow them to share their needs for ministry and support from the congregation.
3. Deployment: Identifying ministry opportunities where members' unique abilities are needed within the church or community. Matching also involves connecting members with others interested in exploring new ministry outreach. The actual connection of the member with the ministry opportunity involves meeting with the ministry leader and other co-workers, reviewing the ministry description, receiving preparation and training for service, and initiating a regular pattern of service. Placement includes the opportunity to explore other options for service if the initial placement proves to be inappropriate for any reason.
4. Coaching: The ongoing provision of training, nurturing, support, supervision, additional gift discovery, and new placement, as well as opportunities to learn from and through the ministry experience. The celebration of service and the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of ministry for a Christian. Recognition includes exit interviews for those leaving a particular ministry, opportunities for

development for new areas of service, as well as preparation for leadership.

- B. In such a system, the role of staff is to identify, recruit, equip, resource, and deploy all the laity into ministry. When done correctly, the number of volunteers increases dramatically over the years.

The primary paradigm shift today in the area of church staff is the movement from staff doing ministry to staff equipping others to do ministry. Instead of going to work thinking about what one must do, staff goes to work dreaming about who they might meet, transform, and mentor. Instead of trying to get a ministry done or a task performed, staff look for new people to mentor, equip, and send out into ministry. The shift if from doing to finding.

In such a model, job descriptions get in the way. All that is needed is the charge to find new people and equip them to use their spiritual gifts and to take responsibility for ministry. Some call this the “Jesus model.” He was people oriented instead of task oriented. To be the follower of Jesus is to look for people to whom we can say, “follow me and I will make you fishers of people.” The role of staff is the transformation of people, not the taking care of people.

Staff must ask,

NOT “WHAT MUST I DO TODAY?”, BUT “WHO WILL I MENTOR TODAY?”

NOT “WHAT IS MY JOB?”, BUT “WHO WILL I DISCOVER?”

NOT “HOW MUCH CAN I DO?”, BUT “HOW MANY OTHERS CAN I EQUIP?”

- C. Several forms of nurturing and equipping are emerging today in most growing congregations in non-growing areas. These ministries ensure that people reach their God-given potential, don't drop out and become inactive, and that crises in people's lives are addressed.
1. “Bubble Up Ministries” based on people’s interests. Once a year, have a Ministry Sunday where you give everyone in worship a piece of paper and ask them the following: What need do you have with which you need help? What need to you see in the church that you would be willing to fill? What need do you see in your community that you would be willing to fill? What need do you see in the world that you would be willing to fill? Ask them to sign the sheet of paper. Take these and catalogue them into groups. Any need that has three or more people stating the same need is a candidate for a new ministry. These people who recommended the ministry are then contacted to see who is willing to lead that ministry.
 2. Lay Pastors. There are three kinds of Lay Pastor. First, there are Small Group Leaders. Small Groups meet each week for one or two hours. The very nature of a Small Group makes the leaders of that group a logical person to be a Lay Pastor.

Second, there are Administrative Groups like Staff-Parish, Finance, Trustees, etc. which also have Lay Pastors. Money becomes a spiritual issue.

Third, there are Ministry Teams which are led by Lay Pastors. These are groups such as Ushers, Clothing Connection, Prison Ministry, Choirs, Feeding Ministry, Habitat, etc. Each group that meets at least once a month will have a Lay Pastor. The work of a Lay Pastor, then, is to be seen as the basic care giving person in the congregation for his or her group.

Any person who leads a ministry can be a Lay Pastor. Any person who is called by God can be a Lay Pastor. Lay Pastors are not chosen by the church or by the pastor of the church; they are called by God. A person who feels called by God meets with one of the ordained pastors. If the call is in line with God's vision for Milford UMC, then that person is invited to be a Lay Pastor.

There are four simple requirements in order to be a Lay Pastor.

The first requirement is that each Lay Pastor must commit to a daily time of prayer and scripture reading. (You cannot share what you do not have.) This daily time will help Lay Pastors stay spiritually focused. It will allow Lay Pastors to pray for the church and especially for the people for whom the Lay Pastor is responsible.

The second requirement is that each Lay Pastor be intentional in praying in his/her area of ministry. Lay Pastors are to spend at least some of their time getting their group together before they actually begin their work. It could be as little as ten minutes. The Lay Pastor is to gather the group and ask spiritually, how their week has been. Lay Pastors are to note any concerns of the group and that all will agree to remember each other in prayer during the following week. Then each Lay Pastor is to invite the group to be in prayer for their ministry.

The third requirement is ongoing monthly training for Lay Pastors. It lasts one hour. Spouses are welcome, friends are welcome, anyone is welcome to attend. All Lay Pastors must be present. Only when a Lay Pastor is out of town or suffering illness does that Lay Pastor have an adequate reason for missing the session. It is the responsibility of the senior pastor to see that the Lay Pastors are spiritually fed, trained, encouraged, and equipped to lead in their ministry area. Begin the Lay Pastor Training meeting with singing. After a period of singing, have a period of prayer. Then, ask the Lay Pastors to share with all of us what God has been doing in their ministry area. (It is important that this not become a time of promoting events or ministries.) Focus on what God is doing in the lives of our people. Lay Pastors who choose to share encourage all the rest of us. Then the pastor spends about 20-30 minutes teaching.

The fourth requirement is to fill out a brief form each month so that the office knows who has been added or who has left that ministry area or if there is a problem in their ministry area. This cares for the logistical record keeping of our life together, and helps the pastors and staff to continue to be of support to those in need.

Lay Pastors are the basic care givers of the congregation.

3. Telecare ministry to provide a safety net for all the members, visitors, and other regular attenders.

The goal of this ministry is to touch base with everyone once a month without scolding anyone. This call is simply to let people know they are loved. The caller asks if they have any needs that the church can pray for. The call is not in conjunction with anything going on in the church, other than to let people know their church is praying for them. Callers are never defensive when complaints are aired. They should listen and accept whatever the caller says, making notes for pastoral follow up. In no case is the caller to offer counseling. They are to refer any such needs to the pastor and place them on the prayer list. They are encouraged to have prayer for those families in need.

The calls are made in teams of 5 people using 4 lines. Each call will take about 5 minutes, and the paper work about the same. The caller calls for two hours. Each caller should be able to make 12 calls in two hours. Whenever possible, the callers should contact the same families each month, keeping track of each month's call details and special dates, such as birthdays or anniversaries. Select these people carefully. Nothing they hear should be repeated, except to the pastor.

Decide first how many families you want to call each month. Then, form teams of 5 people. Train them in some basic phoning skills. Create practice scripts on the various types of calls they might make: (1) the basic call; (2) a non-member answering the phone; (3) the family is in the midst of a traumatic experience; (4) a hostile family with a complaint against the church; (5) an answering machine; (5) a "do not ever call again" response. **See Resource Section – Lay Ministries.**

4. Small group ministry systems. Additional material has been supplied in the L.I.F.E. Groups workbook included in the consultation. **See Resource Section -- Material from Easum, Bandy & Associates.**

The primary problem in churches is that when they do grow, pastors and staff do most of the ministry and do not develop the priesthood of the laity to the point that the LAITY ARE THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH. This leads to churches with 1000 on the membership role, 240-300 in worship and a host of inactive people, pastors who burnout, and laity who are overworked with things

they may or may not enjoy, thinking all the while that the pastor is responsible for ministry in the church. We must prevent this from continuing to happen.

There are two basic types of churches operating in North America today--program-based and small group-based. Choosing between these two models is the most important decision most churches will make in the next 25 years. This part of the report shares with you what to consider either way you go.

The program-based model is the traditional model that has been used in churches since the 1950s. It relies on programs and pastors who take care of the flock. Example: Lenten programs where people attend, receive information, then go home. The program is not ongoing and is not built on relationships. Program-based churches usually look to their pastors as the ones who do ministry, and see laity as people who receive care from a professional. Program-based model is far more expensive and does not provide very good pastoral care or development of leadership, as testified to by the large amount of inactive members in most of those mainline churches.

The small group model is new to North America, but has been used for two decades now. It is producing the most caring and growing congregations in North America. This model is less expensive and eliminates many of the inactives found in traditional churches. Transitioning to this model is difficult because everything in the church has to change, from the way pastors and staff operate to the way the church is structured. Long-time leaders must be willing to relinquish much of the control they have had in the last three decades. The result is fewer paid staff, shorter and fewer meetings, and much more ministry.

Because you don't have much educational space, small groups that meet in homes seem to be your best option. This ministry is hard to accomplish and needs someone part to full time to make it work.

5. One-on-one care systems such as the Stephen Ministry or its equivalent. **See Resource Section -- Lay Ministries 10.**

IV. As you grow, keep in mind that the following staff positions are keys to your future.

Every time you grow by 100 people in worship it is time to add another full time program person or the equivalent of one.

Lead Pastor - is responsible for casting and guarding the vision, overall responsibility and/or delegation for staffing, ensuring an environment where spiritual leaders arise and are nurtured into leadership.

Worship Leader - is responsible for planning and leading worship, developing singers and musicians, choirs if you have them, the spiritual development of all of these people,

special worship events, anything pertaining to worship

Outreach Person - is responsible for ministries like, Servant Evangelism (www.servantevangelism.com), Alpha (<http://www.alphana.org/>), Membership Training, Decision Booth (places after worship for people to register their faith decisions), Prayer Partners, making sure each group has a mission, Parking Team, Fishing Pools (social events under 100 where people come together, both members and non-members, and where your spiritual leaders and small group people go fishing for potential converts or group members), interpreter of the culture to the staff and especially the way the pastor crafts the message.

Lay Mobilizer - is responsible for creating the list of six systems mentioned in Lay Mobilizing, Adults, Lay Pastors, Equipping Disciples, Discovering God or Disciple or Bethel, etc. (a program), Emmaus, Spiritual Gifts, Children, Sunday School, Youth. Remember this person DOES NOT DO any of these ministries other than create and insure there are systems in place that move people from no faith to deep faith.

Administrator - is responsible for the following: Stewardship drive, wills, legacies, Finance Committee, all property issues including the Trustees, supervises office and maintenance personnel, use of the facilities. This person should be present on Sunday to take all administrative needs off of people-oriented staff. This person assists and represents the pastors at finance, trustees, day care, and pre-school.

Most effective churches are avoiding bringing an associate pastor on the staff in the early stages of developing a staff. I recommend that churches wait until they have over 450 in worship. Larger churches are also reducing the number of associates in favor of lay people who specialize in a specific area. These people are usually more gifted in one or more areas and understand the real world better than most clergy. They also tend to stay longer.

It is also better to bring people on the staff to accomplish certain new ministries or to strengthen certain ministries than to ask them to fill a position that is very general in nature. For example: it is deadly to hire someone to "run the educational program." Instead, hire them to develop the adult ministries by starting new classes every three to six months, or to develop small groups that multiply, or to train a cadre of key teachers to train other teachers, or to start an after-school ministry to children, etc.

Another trend is the reduction in the number of secretaries a church needs because of computers and volunteers. It is not uncommon for a church of 1,000 in worship to have only two secretaries, when it has a strong lay driven ministry. One computer literate secretary with a good network system and the ability to delegate to a cadre of trained volunteers can support ten full-time program people. Of course, this is complicated by the senior citizen who wants to drop in the office for an informal chat with the secretary.

The most influential trend in church staffing is the team concept. In this model, there are no job descriptions for each staff person. Instead, there are goals and objectives for

each team. The teams are organized around a common mission. Instead of a person to do evangelism and one to do assimilation, there is a team with the mission to win people, a team with the mission to disciple people, and a team with the mission to send people. See *The Comeback Church* by Randy Frazee. The team evaluates itself. I would not be surprised in time to see churches paying teams rather than individuals. The team would then decide who receives what remuneration based on their contribution to the team mission.

An exceptional model for interviewing prospective new staff members is included in the Appendix. See **A Team Concept of Bringing Paid Staff on Board**.

V. Develop training programs during 2009 that equip leaders to understand and use the skills needed for large churches to function.

As churches grow, leadership requires a considerable amount of training to keep up with the accompanying dynamics of growth. Leaders in small churches operate differently than leaders in a large church.

I recommend that all leaders of Milford UMC read *How To Reach Secular People*, George Hunter, Lyle Schaller's, *The Larger Church and The Multiple Staff*, and Adam Hamilton's *Leading Beyond The Walls*. These are all in the Resources under "Books". **For help with groups after the seminar, see Resource Section, Easum, Bandy & Associates, *Transforming Congregations*.**

VI. Develop a "guest-friendly" attitude that results in meeting visitors' spiritual needs to the point that you have 6-10 first time visitors and 50% of them join Milford UMC and begin the walk of faith.

The unchurched need to know they are welcome, expected, and wanted back a second time. You must spend more concentrated time focusing on this basic area of ministry.

The Ministry Audit shows that you put very little time, energy and money into intentionally reaching out to the unchurched. To be biblically sound church you must put most of your time, energy, and money into reaching the unchurched. Doing so is what grows the Christ like spirit of your members and fulfills your chosen mission statement.

A. Begin to practice an intentional ministry of "random acts of kindness."

In this model of evangelism, the church designs intentional ways to say to the community that it cares. For example: going to the softball game and giving out free drinks or whatever. When asked why you are doing this you say, "we're just making a practical demonstration of God's love." If they continue to question, you tell them you are from Milford UMC church. For more information about easy ways to reach out to the community see, Steve Sjogren, *A Conspiracy of Kindness*, Vine Books.

They have a web site with many examples:
<http://www.servantevangelism.com/matrix/matrix.htm>.

The key is to look for ways to connect with the community. The church has to make the transition from saying: "here we are; now come to us" to "here we are, we'll come to you." The church has to move from a fortress mentality to seeing itself as a launching pad for new ministries. You must become a delivery system to the community. This will always mean redirecting much of the way the congregation and leadership spends its time.

Another way to show you care is to develop a relationship with Alcoholics Anonymous. Let them use your building, provide them free childcare during the meetings, and encourage your pastor to be available when needed.

Another way to show you care is by developing 12-step groups for abusive relationships and/or divorce recovery. These can be led by members of your church who have been through such programs or who are trained in such programs, or you can bring in someone from the outside. User fees are not uncommon for such groups. **For more information about easy ways to reach out to the community see, Steve Sjogren, *A Conspiracy of Kindness*, Vine Books.**

- B. Do not concentrate most of your attention on attracting people from other churches or from your denomination. Real growth occurs when churches reach the unchurched. Very few people today look for a particular denomination to join. Most people shop around until they find a church that meets their needs. The majority of the growth potential is among those 35-45 years old who have mixed marriages or who have no church background.
- C. First-time guests (visitors) should be put on the mailing list the first Sunday they sign in or let you know they are present. They should also be visited by the pastor within 24-36 hours. Studies show that friendly, brief calls on first-time visitors within thirty-six hours after they attend will cause 85 percent of them to return the following week. If this home visit is made within seventy-two hours, 60 percent of them return. If it is made more than seven days later, 15 percent return.

The average person today visits several churches before they decide on a church home. This means they may not come back for six weeks. By then, they decide which church to return to by the friendliness and helpfulness of the members. If you wait until they return the second time, you lose 75% of the visitors.

- D. Concentrate on building your prospect list. This list can include names from Sunday registration, contacts members encounter in the routine of business, real estate transfers, marriage notices from local newspapers, families who move into homes next door to members, welcome wagons, birth notices, and any church programs attended by visitors. Think of newcomers as "guests" instead of "visitors" and members as "hosts" instead of "greeters."

- E. Allow guests in worship to be anonymous if they wish. Do not single them out during worship by asking them to hold up their hand or stand (or having the congregation stand). Also, do not pass the traditional registration pad down the aisle to single out visitors.
- F. Develop five to ten parking spaces for visitors close to the sanctuary door. Paint "GUESTS" on the curb, car stops, or pavement. Erect signs telling visitors that such parking exists.
- G. Include in the bulletin how and when people can become part of the family of faith at Milford UMC. Treat them as members after the third visit.
- H. Add \$10,000 to the budget for evangelism to use with the servant evangelism ministry you will begin. In town the size of Milford doing so will reap great rewards.
- I. Welcome your guests in a prominent position in your bulletin, but do not single out visitors in worship. Design your bulletin so it is directed at first-time visitors rather than the members who already know their way around. The bulletin should offer a wide range of information to help first-time visitors get to know the church. At the moment you have far too many announcements in the bulletin making it too wordy for anyone under the age of 40. **See Resource Section -- Material from Easum, Bandy & Associates #6.**
- J. Conduct two "**bring-a-friend-Sundays**" each year. **See Resource Section -- Evangelism #2.**
- K. Send a book about caring for babies to all new parents in the church. Send a letter to all newborn babies' parents offering help in raising the child. Send a welcome letter to all new residents in your area.
- L. Provide new parents in the church with a lawn sign that shows a stork holding a baby and reads, "THE NEWEST MEMBER OF Milford UMC."
- M. Each first-time family needs to be contacted at least four times the first week and ten times the first three months.
- N. Greeters can either be good or bad for the growth of a church. If all of the greeters are long-term members born before 1946, young adults tend not to return. If all the greeters do is hand out bulletins - they are helpful, but it would be better if the ushers and greeters were part of the worship team. They should be aware that it is their ministry and it does not stop until the service is over. They should monitor things like the temperature of the room, special furniture needs for the various services, the candles, and helping people find their way to or from Sunday school or the parking lot before or after worship, etc. It is also good if the ushers and greeters meet before the service for prayer and perhaps a short Bible lesson. **See Resource Section --**

Ushers and Greeters, #2.

- O. You can improve your bulletin using the following tips: (1) keep it simple and avoid clutter; (2) limit yourself to two fonts, one for headlines and one for the body. Avoid fonts that are hard to read, even if you like them; (3) avoid using all caps. Using all capital letters to emphasize a point is like yelling. No one likes to be yelled at; (4) drastically limit the use of clip art and fancy borders; (5) keep column widths between two and four inches. Anything narrower or wider is difficult to read; (6) keep regular sections in the same place, especially where you welcome guests. Do not make readers hunt for what they need; (7) keep a file of well designed bulletins to stimulate your ideas.

VII. Some financial issues to consider

- A. Establish a cash income flow chart for the past three years. Determine the average percentage of income for each month of the year over the past three years. This will allow you to compare this month to the average of the same month for the last three years. This way, you know after the first quarter of the year how you are going to be at the end of the year if you do nothing new. Using this method, you can compare your quarterly income to the normal giving patterns instead of comparing the income to 12 equal monthly streams of income. Money never comes into a church in 12 equal amounts. If you use a monthly percentage based on past experiences, you can determine ahead of time how much can be spent each quarter. This way, you can avoid over and under spending of the income. If at the end of the first quarter you should have received 19.8% of your income and you have received 18.9%, you know you are 1% short for the first quarter and probably the same will hold true for the rest of the year, making you a total of 4% short for the year. The same is true if you are 1% over at the end of the first quarter. It is not good to have money left over at the end of the year if vital ministries were curtailed out of fear of not having enough income. More money will usually come in during the month of December than any other month. You should plan for it.
- B. Establish an aggressive endowment ministry in which people are encouraged to give to a variety of long-term options such as: (1) giving without any instruction as to how the money can be used; (2) giving with only the interest to be used, designated or undesignated; (3) giving with both the principal and interest to be used; (4) giving where the money can be used only for building or maintenance; (5) giving where the money can be used only to establish or sustain a ministry or staff person.

Use the endowment to thrive instead of survive. Use it in a way that secures the future of the church's ministry. It is not a matter of whether it is used for capital improvements or whether it is used for programs. It should be used so it does not become a crutch. Place the endowment ministry under stewardship instead of trustees, so that it will be understood that the money is for a variety of ministries.

Develop a brochure describing the various areas in which people can donate money.

Send it to every member of the church and make it available.

- C. Consider allowing the pastor to start the **Five Percent Club**. Invite a group of 20 dedicated members who are willing to give 5% of the cost of a special project twice a year. They will receive an explanation of the need and vote on it. If at least 13 approve the project, all 20 are expected to contribute an equal share of the cost, not to exceed \$250 per person per proposal (no more than two proposals a year). The maximum gift in a year would be \$500. These people should be invited by letter.

In addition, invite members to be **Angels**. These are individuals who are willing to be approached individually once a year about a special need. Each angel would determine in advance the maximum amount of the gift. It may be as little as \$1,000 or as much as \$100,000. After hearing the proposal, the donor may decide whether or not to contribute and how much. These people should be invited by the same letter as the Five Percent Club.

- D. Send out monthly statements of what people pledged and what they have given. This will increase your giving by 5 - 7%. If you send them out monthly, the giving will go up 11%. Please do not underestimate the importance of this.

SECTION SIX

CONCLUSION

The leadership needs to understand that any time a church attempts to do anything significant, or make the necessary adjustments in strategy to meet the demands of a new generation, it will always have a few who strongly oppose such change. To give in to these vocal few results in hurting many unseen people by not providing ways to minister to the needs of the present day. Please understand that some people will get upset with these recommendations. Do your best to bring everyone along in your planning and decision-making, but do not allow such efforts to stop the momentum. The vast majority of the leaders of Milford UMC will be ready to move positively on all of the amended recommendations by the time they are asked to vote.

SECTION SEVEN

A WORD OF APPRECIATION

Many members of Milford UMC gave a great amount of time and energy to make this report a reality. Between 40 and 60 hours went into just collating the material used in preparing the final report, not including the time people spent answering questionnaires. The ball is now in your court. You must soon determine what to do with this final report. May God richly bless you as you seek to find ways to faithfully serve God in the 21st century!

Bill Easum
President
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