



# The Faster Pastor Express

Newsletter of the Association of Disciples  
Intentional Interim Ministers

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## Future : Reflection on the Fifth Focus Point

Fifth of Five Articles

Leigh C. Earley Chair of ADIIM Steering Committee

Over the last several issues I have attempted to make a few points about the movement from Developmental Tasks to Focus Points. For the most part Focus Points are an expansion or broadening the concepts addressed by Developmental Tasks.

**Heritage** includes remembering denominational history, and major

events of the community where the congregation is located, as well as congregational history.

**Mission** not only on current identity but the call that grows out of founding core values, vision, and goals not only inside but outside of the congregation.

**Leadership** is about all forms of congregational leadership and the need



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## From the Editor's Laptop

Norman Stolpe



The 1953 song by "The Four Lads" *Istanbul (Not Constantinople)* referred to renaming of Constantinople to Istanbul. By harking back to a time when the Church's strength was in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa, it unintentionally reminds us that churches have been closing and opening for the past two millennia.

Churches in North America have also followed social movement, opening new congregations and leaving others behind: westward movement into the frontier – rural to urban to suburban. Studying and advising churches for optimal growth has dramatically increased in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. With it has come an

awareness of typical congregational life cycles, including their demise. Leigh Earley's article in this issue recognizes that in some cases a congregation's legitimate future may mean calling an end to the congregation's visible ministry.

The congregation in  
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## Future

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to engage the spirit, as well as recruiting, training, mentoring, and supporting volunteer leaders.

**Connections** do not ignore denominational relationships, but include ecumenical connections, and a broad range of community, social service, social action networks and volunteer groups.

So in this article we turn to the fifth Focus Point: **Future**. Intentional Interim Ministry is *always* about the future. We come when there has been a vacancy. Our work is to assist the membership to regroup, reaffirm, renew, and sometimes address conflicts, and realities. But our purpose is always to leave the congregation in a healthy place – ready for the future.

As Interims preach, lead worship, work with committees, boards and program groups we lift up the future God is calling the congregation to discover and live into. In earlier days, I remember asking the congregation to prepare “for a new future with new leadership.” Some of that new leadership, of course,

came from within the congregation. But the biggest piece of that new leadership would be the new pastor.

That has been true for all of the 23 congregations I served as Interim. However, we are hearing more and more about congregations that must adjust to the reality of no new pastor.

The Future for many congregations includes an adjustment to:

- Sharing a pastor with one or more other congregations.
- Part-Time ministerial leadership.
- “Lay Ministry” which can take several forms.
- Selling a building and relocating to smaller quarters.
- Deciding to “live off our endowments” as long as they last.
- Reshaping the congregation as a house church or some other different structure.
- Redefining what it means to be “church” in this place.
- Find a new sense of calling in this place at this time.
- Calling an end to the

congregation’s visible ministry.

The future may also include a different sense of value and purpose. Often congregations have put all their hope of finding the “right pastor” who will come in, attract all the inactive members, appeal to the young adults and youth, and make the church like it was in (you fill in the time). Most of us know that is not going to happen. Even if they had a clone of the pastor from the golden age there would not be the same sense of success. The world has changed. Our expectations of faith communities have changed.

Remember all these Focus Points are the work of the congregation. Our task is to help raise questions and provide resources for their work. So as we assist a congregation’s look to the future, we must be open to all God might have in mind for these people; and pray that *we and they* can stay faithful while listening.

## Editor’s Laptop

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which I grew up and two of the congregations I served in “settled ministry” no longer exist. At one point I wondered if I would become a “hospice chaplain” when another congregation I served as a “settled pastor” went through a serious crisis. Some folk in congregations I have served as interim pastor have asked me how long I thought they could survive. While I do mourn the losses of congregations I have loved, I have also been thankful I have not had to preside over the demise of a congregation on my watch.

Every interim pastor tries to help the people of congregations grieve as they let go of treasured memories so they can celebrate embracing a new future. Often that future may seem small compared to memories of a glorious past or start-up congregations that seem to be flourishing in a style uncomfortable and incomprehensible. I try to bring a spiritual director’s question to the congregation: where can you discern God’s hand in this transition? If God goes ahead of us, we can proceed with hope and joy, even into unfamiliar and uneasy places.



# ADIIM Training Opportunity with Hope Partnership

## Fundamentals for Transitional Ministry:

### The Work of the Congregation

September 21-25, 2015

ADIIM is again sponsoring an Interim Ministry Track as part of the Hope Partnership Event in Indianapolis September 21<sup>st</sup> through September 25<sup>th</sup>. This time we are offering the second course, also known as the “Five Day Course.”

The first course focuses on the Work of the Transitional Leader (Pastor). The second course focuses on those things the Congregation needs to address during a time of transition. Of course, as Intentional Interim Pastors, our role is to resource and equip the congregational leaders.

Attending the second course is open to anyone who attended the first course either last September or February 2015 **or** any Interim Ministry Network sponsored Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry: The Work of the Leader event. **So tell your friends and colleagues.** In fact it is not too late for a person to take the 3 day (Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry: The Work of the Leader) course through Interim Ministry Network in order to join us in September. Contact the Interim Ministry Network at <http://imnedu.org/> or 800-235-8414.

Cost of \$1,200 includes IMN Tuition, materials, faculty (an ADIIM member), and Fieldwork plus Room and Board (Monday Dinner through Friday Breakfast). Our course starts Monday at 1:00 p.m. so you have Monday morning for travel and concludes Friday at Noon (lunch will be on your own).

The cost is just a few dollars more than tuition alone for an IMN course. In addition there are scholarships of up to \$50.00 available to ADIIM members.

Any questions may be directed to Leigh Earley at [leighearley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:leighearley@sbcglobal.net) or 316-945-8005.

## Interim Ministry Network

35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

June 15-18, 2015

at the Conference Center at the Maritime Institute

Linthicum, Maryland

Details and Registration

<http://imnedu.org/annual-conference/>

# Association of Disciples Intentional Interim Ministers



## We're on the web!

ADIIM Information website

<http://www.adiim.org/>

Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/disciplesinterims>

### Who We Are:

We are ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who have received specialized training to assist congregations during the “in between times” of called pastorates.

### What We Do:

We assist congregations transitioning from one called pastor to the next. We help congregations work through the five Focus Points of transitional ministry.

### Send \$50 per year membership dues to:

Disciples Home Missions  
130 E. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
attention Lonna Owens  
with ADIIM dues in memo line

## May-June 2015 Webinar Schedule

We continue to offer Free Webinars each Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. Eastern, 2:00 p.m. Central, 1:00 p.m. Mountain, and Noon Pacific Time. The topics for May and June are listed below.

May 5<sup>th</sup> -- **Interim 201-B Worship and Preaching during the Interim** Preaching relating to Developmental Tasks, and other unique interim issues; developing worship which supports the work of interim.

May 12<sup>th</sup> -- **From Depression to Discernment: Tailoring Appreciative Inquiry for Spiritual Renewal (General)** Like the economy, many of our religious organizations are depressed and do not feel hopeful

about their futures. Learn how to use Appreciative Inquiry, integrating spirituality with other tools, to bring organized, values-driven renewal into a variety of transitional scenarios. This exciting presentation, which has been given previously, will include reflections on benefits realized, as well as limitations experienced in actual case studies.

May 19<sup>th</sup> -- **Interim 201-C Leadership Issues in an Interim.** Working with staff, volunteer leaders, and encouraging leader development during the interim. Addressing power issues.

May 26<sup>th</sup> -- **Interim 201-D Contracting for an Interim.** Questions to ask, issues to discuss, and essential items

for agreement and written contract. We will also discuss Covenants

June 5<sup>th</sup> -- **Beyond the Résumé (general)** A Power-Point based introduction of yourself, the nature of Interim ministry, developmental, and other tasks, and what you can do to help an interim search committee make a decision.

June 9<sup>th</sup> -- **Spiritual Leadership** Identifying your own and your congregation's Spiritual Type. Addressing how leadership and worship needs to differ to address a variety of Spiritual Types.

June 16<sup>th</sup> -- **To Be Announced**

June 23<sup>rd</sup> -- **Self-Study Strategies** When an Interim

or Transition Team is responsible for identifying methods for a congregational self-study, many of us are limited in what we have to suggest. We will look at several proven strategies for approaching this important subject.

## How do I Access these Free Webinars?

All Webinars are Free. **However Space is limited to 20 for each webinar**, and you must sign up. **To sign up:** Go to [adiim.webex.com](http://adiim.webex.com) and do a search by date to register for each individual webinar. After you sign up you will receive an email with the link to join the event.