



## AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF OHIO

### Southeast Area

Cambridge, Lawrence, Marietta, Rio Grande,  
Zanesville, and Zoar Associations

April 2008

#### Congregational Development Insight -

Herb Miller, an author and consultant on church issues, recently said that approximately 175,000 of the 350,000 churches in the United States average fewer than 100 in worship. He went on to say that about 50% of those small congregations have experienced a gradually declining worship attendance for several years. Another 35% of those small churches feel locked on a size-plateau that prevents them from achieving several hopes and dreams. Implying that nearly 150,000 small churches across the country are underperforming.

There is a response ... Yes, small churches, any church, can move toward their maximum effectiveness. To take the initial steps in this direction a congregation must know that there are many methods involved and that it is a process and not a quick fix.

It is helpful to realize that in the process of growth that there will be change - before, during and beyond - that is as plans are made there will be a change in thinking, during the process changes will be seen in attendance with more people and new faces, and in the future there will be new opportunities for ministry.

Strategies to move to effectiveness can involve physical changes in the church building, alterations in the kind of ministries offered and transformations in the Spiritual life of the current members as they encourage others. Here are just a few sample strategies ...

- Take out any ministry inhibiting barriers in the building. That is, if there is way too much sanctuary seating for the number who attend, remove or block some pews. Take a close look, in a new way, at the nursery, women's restroom, main entryway, and hallways to the nursery and children's classrooms.
- Look for ways to emphasize a genuine concern for children through community service ministries. This can include adopting a school, a Parent's Day Out, Home-Game Child Care, or other ministry to young adult households in the community.

- Increase the number of congregation members/attendees who pray daily. Prayer is a powerful resource and few things increase insights and spiritual maturity in adults more than prayer.

These strategies and many more can be explored as your congregation looks for ways to make a difference for Jesus Christ within the church, the community and the world. If I can be helpful in that discussion through our own ABC/Ohio congregational initiative process, let's talk together.

- ☑ April 22-25 - **Fanning the Flame** - a national pastors' renewal conference at the Green Lake Conference Center. Included will be inspiring worship, workshops taught by cutting-edge practitioners, and fellowship with national ABC leaders and pastors. Scholarships are available from ABC-USA National Ministries. ABC-Ohio is one of 12 sponsoring Regions. Your ABC-Ohio staff are all planning to attend along with other pastors from across the state. Encourage your pastor to be a part of this special opportunity. Information on Fanning the Flame can be found at [www.abc-ohio.org](http://www.abc-ohio.org)
- ☑ May 16-18 - ABCUSA International Ministries - **World Mission Conference** at the Montgomery Community Church in Cincinnati. International guests, missionaries, IM staff and music leaders will be there for the weekend to share, and to encourage us all. Make this event, in our own Region, a "must attend event" for this year. The schedule, registration, and other information is online at [www.internationalministries.org](http://www.internationalministries.org)
- ☑ August 29-31 - the **ABC/Ohio Missions Conference** will be held at the Heartland Retreat and Conference Center. The theme - *Overflowing with Hope* - will be explored by our guest speaker, Dr. Reid Trulson, Executive Director of International Ministries. Hold these dates and watch for more information.
  - ❖ **Remember Pastoral Search Committees in your prayers:**
    - First Baptist Church of Zanesville
    - First Baptist Church of Martins Ferry - Zoar Assoc
  - ❖ **We Welcome** - Rev. Doug Brown as the new pastor of the Newport Baptist Church, Marietta Association. He began his ministry there on Palm Sunday. Rev. Brown and his wife, Barbara, come from Osage, Iowa.

Rev. Dan Taylor - 740-587-0804 - [mms4ohio@aol.com](mailto:mms4ohio@aol.com) [www.abc-ohio.org](http://www.abc-ohio.org)  
**Minister of Congregational Development - Southeast**