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James W. Moss, Sr.  
Church Consultant

### ***People Spot Missile: Renewing***

Churches are constantly facing the prospect of renewal. Anytime a church thinks it has arrived, the game changes. Sometimes there is an extended period of time between the time a church has felt like it has arrived and it becomes aware the game changed. A coach works successfully for years. Then there are whispers. The game has passed him by. We have to work constantly to stay current.

**Watch** what is happening in your church. Be alert to changes. What is happening to the people participation? Who is growing spiritually? Who seems to be regressing? Who is excited about their faith in Jesus Christ? Who has lost their first love? What is happening in leadership roles? Who is stepping up to the plate? Who is backing away from leadership roles? Sometimes the changes are so subtle that it is almost imperceptible until it seems too late to reverse the pattern. What changes are there in attendance patterns? Who are the new people? Who has stopped attending regularly? Why? Who is giving faithfully? Who has stopped giving? Are any new groups being formed? What groups are closing? What is happening to the facility? Is it being well cared for? Or is it slowly and almost imperceptibly deteriorating? What is happening in the community around the building?

**Trust** God, the skills of your people, and yourself. Always remember that God is in control. God is capable of taking care of His church and us regardless of the situation or time. We have to remember that it is not our church but God's church. We have to put our faith totally in Him. We also have to trust and love the people God has given us. They are special in his sight. We have to see them the same way. Sometimes we wish we had more talented people or in some cases more people but we have to work with what God has given us. As progress is made more gifted people may arrive. We have to train them and set them free to serve. We have to trust ourselves, our gifts and abilities. God has called us to specific tasks. He has gifted us to do those tasks. Something that has truly troubled me over the years is the lack of self-confidence displayed by many Christian leaders. We have to trust God, others, and ourselves. We have to earn the trust of those we want to follow. I don't believe you are a leader because you have a position. You are only a leader when people follow. They won't follow unless they trust you.

**Hope** is the root of all progress. If you want to destroy someone, take their hope away. Hope is the belief in a positive future. Hope is absolutely essential. Churches that lose all hope turn downward in a hurry. In fact, when the leaders lose hope they begin to peel away one at a time. Sometimes there can even be a mass exit. However, our hope has to be placed in that which will

never fail. Only God will never fail us. Our hope is in Him. It is in Christ born, crucified, and raised to new life. That will never fail. Systems fail. Organizations fail. People fail. Equipment fails. Technology fails. Our hope is in the Christ who will never fail us.

**Vision** is the capacity to look into the future and see what good might potentially be accomplished for the Kingdom. One of my favorite questions of pastors that I am helping to evaluate their ministry is this: “Can you still dream positive dreams about the future of your church?” If the answer is no, then it is time to call u-haul. The capacity to develop vision is rooted in hope. Without hope there can be no vision. What can you picture for your church 3 years from now, 5 years from now, 10 years from now?

**Implementation** is the action strategy that accompanies the vision. Without this the vision becomes only a fantasy. I know some people who develop phenomenal visions. They just don’t have a clue how to make anything happen. What are the strategies required to enact the vision? What are the skills and resources needed to make the vision a reality? Who do you need to enlist along side of you to help make the vision a reality?

I believe these are significant steps that build upon each other. First, is watching what is happening all around. The second is building trust in God and each other. The third is the fostering of hope. The fourth is vision. The fifth is the implementation of the vision. Go for it!

*Most of the People Spot Missiles may be viewed at [www.newlifeministries-nlm.org](http://www.newlifeministries-nlm.org) Click on People Spots*

*My newest book is now available. A little different than anything I have done before. It is A History of the Civil War as Presented by the Church Advocate. It is volume 1. It covers from May of 1859 to May of 1862. It is what was printed at the time. It is 400 pages The cost is \$40.00 plus shipping. I am also available to make a 1 hour presentation on the material.*

*I am now available to present “Starting a New Service”, “Churches Have Personalities”, “People Spots”, “Does Your Church Really Care About People?” and “A Christian Perspective on Leadership Skills.” “Stewardship and Managing Debt” jm*

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