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People Spot Missile: Building a Church's Self Esteem

Barnabas was known as the encourager. For a church to have a healthy self-esteem the pastor will have to have some of the traits of Barnabas. Unfortunately, if the pastor does not have a good healthy self-esteem, the church won't. Why? Because, the unhealthy pastor will beat on people in the congregation. Often, they beat on the congregation as a whole because they are attempting to manipulate the people to get the behavior they want. At other times they isolate an individual or two in the church and beat them up again attempting to manipulate. It simply doesn't work. Parishioners who experience spiritual abuse become bitter.

Why is it important for a church to have a healthy self-esteem. It is only when the people feel good about themselves corporately that they will invite other people to attend. You can go to the bank with that.

Affirmation is a key word in building healthy self-esteem. One caution, false affirmation is manipulation and that is unacceptable. A church is a body, a living organism if you will. It is not an organization. The whole body needs encouragement. Every part of the body needs it. Just as spiritual growth in a church is predicated upon the spiritual growth of the individuals who make up that body, healthy corporate self-esteem is dependent upon the good self-esteem of the people who make up that organism.

Pastors, each week during the worship give a word of affirmation to either the body as a whole or an individual in the body. It is called, passing out warm fuzzies. What are they? Kind words or deeds calculated to make someone feel good. They work. All of us need kind words every so often. I believe I have developed a reputation as an encourager. It is amazing to watch someone as I truthfully encourage them. They grow taller. A smile builds on their face. It is especially helpful to compliment someone in front of someone who loves them.

Build a victory list for your church. List everything you can think of that the church has done well in the last five years. Share that list with the governing body. See if they can add some additional ones. Your church is about to make an important decision. Pass out the victory list before the decision is made.

Celebrate wins. It is so important that every time something is done well, celebrate it. It is not being immodest or boastful. It is giving God the glory for the great things He has done. Every

win enables another one. It is hard to take advantage of the wins if many of the people in the church have no knowledge that they occurred.

Attitude is the great watershed in the life experience of the church. Now I'm not talking about pie in the sky stuff that simply has no chance of ever succeeding. But, I have listened as leaders in a church would say, we can't do this and we can't do that to modest and achievable goals. An old timer who I loved and respected years ago shared this saying: "Can't died in the poorhouse trying!" I have on occasion suggested that some churches need to read the old children's book, "The Little Engine that Could."

The absolute key is seeking God's will. Once his will is known then you strive to be obedient. The people of your church need to be gently led and not driven. It is amazing what a positive attitude will generate.

Frankly, in a variety of settings, I am finding myself saying: "It isn't all that complicated. Love Jesus and love people.....!!!!!" In fact, that has become my theme song.

I am now available to present "The Role of the Church in the Civil War", "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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