



## ***People Spot Missile: Church 101 part 1***

***It is hard to believe this is the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> year for the missiles. Thanks for allowing me to invade your privacy.***

Any church that is serious about advancing its ministry must creatively and effectively address 4 critical ministry areas. There is no choice in this matter. These are requirements. To ignore one of these areas will hinder the ministry of your church. To be lacking in two of them can be fatal.

***Requirement #1: A ministry of affirmation.*** This takes a dual track. One is to affirm the body as a whole. Second, is to affirm individuals who make up the body. Affirmation breeds affirmations. It is so important to understand that unless the people in a church feel good about their church they will not invite others to attend no matter how they may be badgered from the pulpit.

Many individuals have been battered in life. They have been beaten up in their home, the school, the marketplace and possibly in a bad marriage. The church needs to be a sanctuary where they can come and be safe. Every affirmation has to be the truth. False affirmation is manipulation. That is unacceptable.

Build a victory list of everything your church has done well in the last five years. Share that list with the governing board. Let them add to it. Describe the manner in which your church provides affirmation for the congregation as a whole and for individuals who make up the congregation.

***Requirement # 2: A ministry of absentee care.*** John Smith has missed for 17 consecutive weeks. Has John's absence triggered because of John's absence? In most churches they don't even know John has been absent 17 weeks. To resolve this, attendance has to be taken at worship so that you can legitimately know who is there and who is absent. Basically if your attendance is less than 200, use a spread sheet to take attendance.

However, it is not enough to just take attendance. I was at a church and they showed me 15 years of perfect records of the people who had been in attendance. I asked, "This is great. What have you done with this?" The response was simple. "Nothing!". That was a shame.

Once you have the record of attendance, what do you do? For a number of years I have been recommending what I call "the bulletin ministry." Simply stated it is writing a personal hand

written note on a bulletin and mailing it to any family totally absent the previous Sunday. Persons under 35, you may make the contacts by texting or email. Most of them prefer the electronic touch.

**Requirement #3: A ministry of welcoming.** Harry and Mary attend your church this Sunday for the first time. What follow up action has been triggered in the life of your church because of their visit? The pastor should invite a perceptive family who she thinks no one in the church knows and have them write a report on what they experienced. You may not like what you hear, but you need to hear.

We need to be certain that every person who walks through your door is touched by one of the regulars in some significant way. I hear regularly that a visitor can't attend our church and not be touched. I am here to tell you visitors can attend and not be touched unless you are intentional in making sure it happens.

My current recommendation is to have a gentle person approach any visitor and request their name and address. If you get it, then on Monday evening a lay person delivers to their home a coffee mug with the picture of the church and contact information. It is wrapped as a present. Just tap on the door and say, "Thanks for attending our church this past Sunday. Please accept this gift as a token of our appreciation." We are attempting to work harder to get people through the door. So we have to work harder to get them back for a second visit.

**Requirement #4: How does your church identify and pursue prospects?** Prospects are persons your church may chase with the hope of reaching them for the cause of Christ and involving them in the life of your church. We need many prospect families. It is a challenge but a requirement. I ask, "Anybody make your living on commission?" If there is someone I follow-up with, "How long will you be in business if you have no prospects?" Inevitably the answer is, "If I have no prospects, I am already out of business." I ask churches, "Please show me your prospect list." Almost invariably there is no such list.

We have to constantly be looking for potential attenders. Who are the people who might begin to attend our church? The question can be simple. Can we send you some mail about our church? If yes, can we have your address? Then we have a constant struggle to build our list of potential attenders. Mail can be sent once a month inviting our prospects to something specific offered at the church.

These four requirements are essential: affirmation, absentee care, welcoming atmosphere, and prospecting. You may do something very different than what is suggested here and that is okay if it works. All four of these areas must be addressed. Doing nothing in any of these four arenas is not an option.

***A Thought: It is not enough for a church to say that it loves people, it must show people by its actions that it loves them. Jim Moss, Sr.***

*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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***Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4—“A History of the Civil War as Presented by the Church Advocate!” are now available. It is a history without the varnish of revision.***

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