

EVALUATION SYNOD OF NORTHEAST PARTNERSHIPS GRANT 10/09

The Reverend Judy Lee Hay

The Synod awarded a Partnership Grant to the Western NY, Geneva, and Genesee Valley Presbyteries for transformation. Left to the discretion of the presbyteries was how the monies would be spent for transformation. Programs within the partnership differed because of context, leadership skills, and where the respective presbyteries were in the transformation process. The presbyteries have seen their role and commitment to resource churches, but how and what skills were needed varied. **What is clear is that the dynamics of transformation are consistent, yet how a presbytery chooses to engage in a strategy varies.**

An evaluation process was to occur at the close of the grant cycle. In preparation for the partnership evaluation, Judy Lee Hay was contracted as the consultant. She had a conversation with Clint McCoy Synod Executive and met separately with the executive staff of the presbyteries: Joelle Davis (Geneva), Linda Badger Becker (Genesee Valley) and Janita Byars (Western NY). *The intent of meeting with presbytery staff was to identify how the grants were utilized, outcomes, participants, and by-in on a process for evaluation.* On October 7th 18 representatives of the three presbyteries attended an all day evaluation session led by Reverend Hay.

Each Presbytery was asked to participate in a joint evaluation session and to provide a written and oral report. *Attached are the individual reports that addressed the following questions:*

- How did each Presbytery use the grant money?
- What were the outcomes?
- What was transformed? How did you measure that?
- In what way is the program transferable to another Presbytery?
- Are there specific ways the three Presbyteries can strengthen work together on transformation?
- What recommendation would you make for future use of Synod PPG funding?

Several Observations by the Consultant:

- To jump start transformation each presbytery chose a different program.
- The grant allowed the Presbyteries to hire **outside consultants** to equip their leaders for change. The consultants provided training, advice and identified purpose and strategies for change. (Western NY hired Paul Nixson, Geneva contracted with Dr. Laurie Ferguson. Genesee Valley had three differing program consultants: Natural Church Development training, coach skills training with Dr. Laurie Ferguson, and Martha Grace Reese's program Unbinding the Gospel which provided a coach). The consultants were not stakeholders in transformation therefore provided outside consulting and or coaching to empower the leaders to develop programs for change.
- Presbytery transformation is an important ingredient in church transformation. If a presbytery does not have purpose and direction it is

difficult to resource churches. Unless a presbytery is equipped for change it is difficult to empower church leadership.

- The spiritual energy within the Presbyteries is evident in the commitment and excitement of key leaders in transformation that were present for the evaluation session.
- The grant gave the individual presbyteries valuable resources to train key leaders who have developed specific skills for transformation such as coaching in Natural Church Development, skills in team coaching working with churches, or in utilizing Paul Nixson church analysis.

Summary of Outcomes

Geneva

- Coaching skills empowered the Council of Geneva to move toward defining its purpose and to identify initial action steps toward the development of a strategy. "The Presbytery of Geneva flipped its understanding from churches serving the presbytery to the presbytery serving the churches".
- The grant gave the presbytery the resources to develop a new website to enhance the capacity to use the site to share transformation resources. The tools for church transformation for churches are yet to be developed for the site.
- The greatest impact of the website redesign was on Camp Whitman and its capacity to use the Internet for summer programs. The Camp is major mission of the presbytery and affects hundreds of youth both in Genesee Valley and Geneva. The presbytery saw the investment in website design as part of its transformation strategy.
- Five coaches were trained and continue training with Dr. Ferguson. They've utilized their skills in working with three churches, two pastors and two presbytery ministry teams. In the process the coaches were spiritually enriched, deepened in skill development and in their capacity to resource churches and the presbytery itself. The coaching unveiled the readiness of a church for transformation. Transformation works best when a church is ready and willing to engage in change.
- 75 people underwent Level One Coaching Skills.
- A ministry team on finances and mission included the chairperson and members of the finance committee who have significantly revamped the process of budgeting and the 2110 budget.
- The presbytery is becoming a learning community.

Genesee Valley

- Two coaches trained in coaching skills with Dr. Laurie Ferguson worked with one pastor. The transformation of the pastor was remarkable from being stuck to working on several areas: Sabbath taking, building renovation, leadership engagement and speaking a new truth.
- 4 coaches trained in Natural Church development coached 9 congregations. The coaches meet quarterly. The testimony from three participating churches demonstrates the honesty of the coaching process and the complexity of moving a congregation toward passionate spirituality. Through

the Natural Church Development process the churches have tried new ideas from change in Christian education program and experiments in worship.

- 6 churches partnered in Unbinding the Gospel Program. Renewed spiritual energy is evident in deepened prayer lives within members of the congregations. People gave personal testimonies during worship and shared their faith stories. Several creative worship experiences occurred such as prayer wall, and involvement of youth groups in sharing faith. The session and deacons studied Unbinding the Gospel for nine months and shared faith experiences. Pastors core team studied Unbinding the Church. During Lent each of the six churches had small groups that studied Unbinding the Heart for six weeks. All six pastors met monthly and have continued to do so. The six churches are now engaged in Unbinding the Soul. New mission has emerged through this process of faith sharing for example in Lyndonville with monthly meal program.
- Relationships among the pastors and churches has been built.

Western New York

- **Transformation is a focal point of the presbytery.**
- In February the presbytery hired a Poet of Transformation Janita Byars.
- The Transformation Team in the presbytery has energy and direction as evident in their oral report to the partnership team.
- 14 churches have been engaged in working with Paul Nixson in a retreat, through individual consultations and follow-up sessions. Worship vitality and mission clarity are emerging from the respective participating churches. The churches have experienced encouragement, hope and identified next steps.
- The testimony from Randolph United Presbyterian Church (Leslie Latham) and Lafayette Presbyterian Church bore witness to the impact the Paul Nixson framework and consulting did for their churches and for them as pastors.
- As the next step Janita Byars, presbytery staff, is now working with several of the churches in strategy development.
- The consulting empowered one church to come to terms with its dying, and consequently closed.
- Closer relationship among the pastors, laity and churches has been established.

General Observations

The Synod Partnership money was well spent in empowering the presbyteries to provide resource people in equipping the leadership both at the executive level and the leadership level of the presbytery and individual churches. Each presbytery itself is in the midst of transformation to see its role as equipping the congregation for spiritual energy, mission and ministry. The focus of the grant in one specific area –transformation—was a built in accountability system. The presbyteries could not use it to simply fill a hole in operating budget. **It did give the presbyteries added resources to dream, to step back and analysis where new energy needed to be unleashed.**

Western NY, Geneva and Genesee Valley heartedly support future block grants to presbyteries with similar perimeters and with the capacity of the presbytery to decide how to meet the criteria. As can be seen in this report the presbyteries all engaged in transformation activities but from very different angles. Transformation energy was evident in their oral and written reports. The Synod should consider seriously using PPG grant monies to develop the presbytery's capacity to resource its congregations and to continue the presbytery transformation.

The process of requiring an evaluation session among the three recipients is a delightful way to build relationships and to share resources. Through the process representatives could hear first hand what worked, what didn't and insights into future programs and resources that can be utilized within their own context. The presbyteries support a yearly gathering for community building and sharing.

Synod Executive Clint McCoy Observations

- The vision in 2007 led to the authentic gathering at the session.
- The Mary Wallingford Fund at the Synod for continuing education is a great resource for consultants.
- Leaders have become learners
- Participants were honest and vulnerable.
- A question emerged in how to bring Committee on ministry on board with transformation.
- What is said about the readiness of congregations can be said about COM.

Reports from the Presbyteries

1. The Presbytery of Geneva - PPG Grant Evaluation

1. In order to put shape and form to our priority of facilitating congregational transformation, the Presbytery of Geneva chose to use the \$20,000 grant in the following ways:

- a. \$10,251.26 for coaching skills training with Laurie Ferguson
- b. \$ 6,950 for updating the presbytery's website
- c. \$2,604.14 for activities to explore a working strategy

Our intention was to provide greater access to learning experiences and tools that would nurture and support life-giving changes in both our presbytery's and congregations' capacity to discern and implement our mission.

2. Outcomes

a. As we implemented the activities and began using the tools identified in 2008, we discovered that we were not yet ready for the step of creating a strategy. As we move through subsequent action in 2009, we can see progress, most visibly in a significant shift in the process of developing a budget for 2010 and in budget proposal, itself. This shift came about, in part, through the use of coaching skills in the life of the presbytery.

b. In 2008 and the beginning of 2009, website resources and energy were focused on the design and building of a new website. The website has been reformatted and is easier to use. The fuller development of the website has been slower than anticipated and we are just reaching the point of being ready to develop some links and connections that will make congregational transformation tools, including a blog, accessible.

Meanwhile, the Camp Whitman website has been completely redone and is much more helpful and interesting to visitors, thus modeling a potential path toward re-entering our communities. The Camp Whitman website is also modeling more interactive capabilities, which may help us in reaching younger generations. Facebook pages for both Camp Whitman and the pastors of Geneva Presbytery evolved out of our exploration of new technology tools and our desire to experiment with new forms of community building.

c. From the coaching skills training has emerged a team of five coaches who have done two levels of coaching training, meet regularly and are coached via telephone by Laurie Ferguson, have done coaching in three churches and with two pastors. Two work groups of the presbytery have also experimented with using coaching skills in their work. In addition, 75 people experienced an introduction to coaching skills and about 15 of them have continued to work in groups of three

to refine those skills. A second level of skills training will happen in November 2009 for that group of coaches.

3. What was transformed? How was it measured?

- a. The council's insight into the complexity of developing a strategy was transformed. Through an attempted coaching event with presbytery leaders, it became clear that a common sense of purpose had not yet emerged. This led the members of General Council to request coaching for themselves, this time focused around discerning purpose. Out this coaching, the use of coaching skills was requested for work that needed to be accomplished in two places in the life of the presbytery that are central to the formation of a strategy: Camp Whitman and Mission.
- b. Our understanding of the potential and limitations of coaching skills was also transformed. We discovered the importance of role definition, both for coaches and clients. We also saw that the value of coaching is most fully realized, not in the coaching conversations themselves, but in what happens between coaching conversations. We are still working into deeper insight around the relationship between readiness and purpose in coaching.
- c. Perhaps the clearest sense of transformation has come from the group of five who have done the most work with coaching skills. This has been clear from the personal testimony each has given, and in the commitment by these people to work with churches, teams, and individuals in the presbytery utilizing coaching skills.
- d. Through the use of this team's coaching skills, key leaders in Geneva Presbytery...
 - participated in a series of conversations that deepened and broadened our understanding of some of the shifts we are moving through, as a presbytery
 - surfaced new energy for our future
 - found a sense of shared values and ownership around our purpose as a presbytery and the mission of our congregations
 - practiced what it means to come together and work through challenging material in an atmosphere of encouragement and experimentation
 - began to identify action steps to move the content of the coaching into the life of the presbytery and toward a strategy
- e. After participating in coaching sessions the Finance Committee developed a 2010 budget that clearly reflects the

priorities of the Presbytery and shows a new understanding of the mission of the Presbytery.

- f. The websites have been transformed. The impact of this transformation has not been easy to measure. Information is more easily available, which should help congregations and members of the presbytery in their ministry. The potential for additional transformation is great should the website be used to its full capacity.
 - g. As the coaches have struggled with gaining access to more churches, pastors, and presbytery leaders and groups, the reality of inertia becomes obvious and the significance of personal, corporate and systemic readiness for transformation becomes paramount.
4. The programs are certainly transferable to another presbytery. The use of coaches for transformation has been a very successful tool in the Presbytery of Geneva and could be an additional tool in any other presbytery willing to commit to the training and application of the skills. The use of the website as a tool for transformation could also be an interesting point of discussion in other presbyteries.
 5. One way to strengthen the three presbyteries working together on transformation may be the sharing of resources and tools via our websites. Making our coaching skills teams available to other presbyteries, along with reading lists or other tools we have found helpful would be easy to do. The other presbyteries could share similar tools with us and have them posted on one another's websites under resources for transformation. As all three presbyteries arrive at the point of having trained coaching skills practitioners, it may be valuable for the coaching teams to have a shared learning experience. There may also be significant learning potential in an invitation to Laurie Ferguson to coach the PPG toward the most effective use of their shared resources, with presbytery coaches in an observers' role.
 6. Our recommendation would be to continue to offer block grants to presbyteries. These grants should be allowed to be applied to any major emphasis identified by the presbytery requesting the money, with appropriate documentation as to why this is an emphasis of the presbytery.

2. Presbytery of Genesee Valley PPG Grant, Priming the Pump **Synod Consultation – 10-07-09**

How did the Presbytery use the grant money?

In Genesee Valley, we used the money for three different transformation opportunities which have been made available to all congregations. They are: training of Natural Church Development Coaches to be used throughout the presbytery to assist congregations in the Natural church process (our presbytery currently has 16 congregations using Natural Church Development so this seemed like a wise investment); training of coaches in the PC(USA) Transformation Coaching Skills discipline (coaching pastors/committees for transformation); and funding for six congregations to participate in the Unbinding the Gospel program. There is still money left to keep parts of these programs going.

What were the outcomes?

The possible/hopeful outcomes identified in the original grant application were as follows: *stronger leadership/coaching, more members, new adult baptisms, stronger faith base for individuals, and better ability to articulate one's faith.* As for *stronger leadership/coaching*, we have trained 6 people in two different coaching skill sets. All 6 coaches have done, or are currently, involved with coaching within the presbytery. In the Transformation Coaching Skills program, two coaches were trained in both phases (I and II). So far, they have worked with one pastor in the presbytery, coaching that person for about 6 months. In that experience, there was a clear movement of the pastor from a place of being "stuck" to a place of freedom. In the process, the pastor being coached identified a couple of areas which were important to work on. This pastor was able to move forward in those areas. With the Natural Church Development coaching program, we have 4 coaches trained. Currently we have approximately 9 congregations using these coaches. The coaches meet regularly to discuss their work and important issues. We have developed a presbytery web page to help participating congregations connect with each other and with the coaches. Overall, with these 6 people trained and active, we have gone a great way toward improving the leadership/coaching inside our presbytery. (see testimonial #1 below).

Regarding the goal of *more members and new adult baptisms*, these outcomes have not necessarily been reached in a significant or noticeable way. No congregation has reported an increase in either category due specifically to the programs of this grant. However, we are not sure of the longer term effects of the programs sponsored by this grant. While perhaps we have not achieved that particular pair of outcomes, we have made wonderful progress on the outcomes of *stronger faith base for individuals and better ability to articulate one's faith.* The feedback and comments from pastors and laypeople regarding the Unbinding the Gospel program has been overwhelmingly positive. One pastor wrote that "new relationships were being built, and faith deepened and the leaders became spiritual leaders in new ways." And regarding the church's leadership this pastor wrote: "they were enthusiastic and their prayer patterns grew." All of the pastors involved acknowledged the growth of the congregation members' faith and ability to talk about their faith, particularly around prayer. (see testimonials #2, #3 below)

What was transformed? How did you measure that?

According to conversations and emails with involved pastors and congregation members, the hearts and lives of many involved with these programs have been transformed. Both individuals and congregations experienced some level of transformation and renewed energy around faith. As mentioned above, many folks came away from the programs with hearts that were set more on God than they had been before. In some congregations, new ministries and mission opportunities were begun. One congregation started a ministry working with women, and in several places new small groups were formed, particularly around Adult Christian Education. It feels like for the programs we are using, some of the anticipated transformation is still coming.

Unfortunately, the measurements for these types of outcomes are less than scientific. Much of our conclusions on effect came from discussions with folks involved and their individual perceptions and enthusiasm. We also looked to see if any new ministries or outreach opportunities, as well as internal groups, began. We felt that for our congregations new energy and new opportunities was a sign of personal and corporate transformation. In nearly every congregation which participated in these programs, there was some new program or faith effort which was created/renewed.

In what way is the program transferable to another Presbytery?

All three of the programs we used in Genesee Valley are easily transferable to another presbytery, if you are willing to finance the program. All of the programs are administered and taught by an outside source who is an expert in that discipline. AS leadership of Genesee Valley, we would certainly be willing to offer whatever guidance or help was needed.

Are there specific ways the three Presbyteries can strengthen work together on transformation?

It would be helpful for the presbyteries, although different in constituencies, to get together regularly to share what is working and how we can partner together on any projects involving transformation. Perhaps we could get a group together to examine the possibilities and make recommendations.

What recommendation would you make for future use of Synod PPG funding?

These one-time, project specific grants are very valuable and exciting for a presbytery to receive. It would be good to have these type of grants rolled out on a yearly basis. The Synod PPG could design the grant to target specific outcomes or disciplines, such as congregational transformation, leadership development, passionate spirituality, worship, etc. It would be good to find out from the presbyteries what they are in need of, training and program wise.

Testimonial #1 - I have continued to consult with several congregations with regard to Natural Church Development. Here are some of the outcomes that I have seen:

1. The NCD coaches have met roughly once each quarter to give ourselves some standardization in working with congregations. This has been very helpful to me as I consult with congregations. The group has included Garrett Anderson, Nancy LePort, Linda Badger Becker, and an elder from Webster PC. From this group, Nancy and I have been recruited to present a workshop on Resource Saturday in October on "Wholistic Small Groups", one of the eight quality characteristics named in the NCD surveys.

2. Most congregations that have taken the NCD survey have seen Passionate Spirituality as the minimum factor that a congregation can address to become healthier. For this reason, coaches have generally focused on this minimum factor in their work with congregations. Keep in mind that the minimum factor does not mean that our congregations are without spirituality! It suggests that our spirituality tends to be somewhat invisible to the wider world, and even within our congregation and our own families. So much of our work encourages congregational leaders to develop opportunities for church participants to share, speak, demonstrate and model passionate spirituality in worship and other gatherings.

3. I have personally worked with the following congregations since being trained:

a. Caledonia FPC - the congregation has had a church health team in place for about two years and has taken a second survey. While the health team has encouraged some new initiatives in worship and congregational life, the second survey results were disappointing, especially with Passionate Spirituality lower than before. Garrett Anderson substituted for me in interpreting those results, focusing on the likelihood that greater familiarity with NCD vocabulary may have caused the congregational leaders to more honestly assess the true state of the congregation's health. The health team continues to work, and I will be meeting next with them on OCT 13. Initiatives taken within the church include a shift from standing committees responsible for worship and education to the development of seasonal teams that blend these concerns in a single design. Devotional prayer booklets were produced during Lent using the prayers and concerns of church members. The congregation initiated a wonderful worship experience involving church members sharing testimony about their favorite hymns (an idea I have borrowed with great success in my own congregation). I think that the health team has learned the importance of not simply giving a brief report at Session meetings about its work, but taking significant time with elders and other committees to engage everyone in the process, where the tendency is to delegate the responsibility to a small group. This is the first group with whom I have consulted, and I have been reflecting that I need to improve my methods for encouraging the health team to set goals, to act on them, and then to reflect on the experience in preparation for the next plan.

b. Brockport - I have been actively working with the Stewardship Committee here, as they have been assigned the responsibilities of a church health

team. The congregation took the survey in June 2008, which indicated a minimum factor of Passionate Spirituality. The major initiative of the committee was a spring retreat that provided a blend of outdoors experience of nature, a warm fire in a shelter, and guided activities around spiritual insights about ourselves and how we see God in the world around us. The event drew people of all ages, and concluded with a time of sharing that was very powerful. The Committee has been making plans for further such retreat experiences. Because of some scheduling difficulties and attention to some other pressing matters, a fall retreat has been rescheduled for the spring. The retreat will use the theme of water, as it touches Bible stories about creation, healing, baptism, salvation, etc., and may lead to an experience of baptismal renewal. As a coach I have been encouraging the members of the committee to expand the retreat experience into worship so as to build anticipation for the next retreat. I have also tried to encourage the committee to engage session and other church leaders in the process of NCD. The group itself has been an experience of Passionate Spirituality with the members discovering the joy and wonder of sharing spiritual experiences that are often hidden from others. We are meeting monthly, most of the time.

- c. I saved my own congregation for last. Linda Badger Becker has agreed to coach us, with the understanding that I will do most of the work with the Membership Committee (our church health team) and Session. Linda has met with our leaders on two occasions to review the survey findings and to offer encouragement.

What follows is an excerpt from the church 2008 Annual Report:

[Case Study: Passionate Spirituality at First Presbyterian Church of Byron](#)

In May, 2008, the Membership Committee of [First Presbyterian Church of Byron](#) invited 30 church participants to participate in a Natural Church Development Survey.

Natural Church Development is a new approach to improving the health of Christian congregations, and it has been used by a wide variety of churches around the world with notable success. Their pastor, Jim Renfrew, received NCD training in Chicago and has been consulting with other congregations in the Presbytery about using NCD. Our survey indicated that the “Maximum Factor” is “Loving Relationships”, which means that the healthiest part of Byron’s ministry involves the positive experiences people in the congregations have in forming friendships that demonstrate the loving nature of Jesus Christ. The “Minimum Factor” was “Passionate Spirituality”, and the NCD strategy invites the congregation to focus its attention on fostering “Passionate Spirituality” in the life of the church. Upon hearing this information in July, Session acted to introduce a series of worship enhancements that would allow different people to more deliberately express their faith—and in so doing increase our Minimum Factor. A first change was adding a series of opportunities for church members to share personal stories about their faith during worship. In September, five people

shared wonderful stories about their favorite church hymns. In October, three people were invited to share personal stories about how their faith has led them to participate in different important community projects: the Genesee County Fair, Alcoholics Anonymous, and a Community Health program.

More opportunities were offered for worship participants to share their spiritual passions during the year. Recently testimonies about "My Bible" have been woven into Sunday worship. It seems people are more willing to share when asked to speak about a specific topic, like: My favorite hymn, a mission project that I love, the story of my Bible, My prayer life, or my calling as an elder/deacon. These are often scattered through the service.

A second change in worship involved a major reconfiguration of Christian Education. Beginning in September the program shifted from weekly Sunday School for children to a monthly "Growing in Faith" program for all ages. The "Growing in Faith" program schedule on the second Sunday of each month begins with a 45-minute worship service, followed by a one-hour program that includes children and adults. During the first year, the theme of these programs was based on significant stories found in the Old Testament Book of Genesis. The educational portion of each day is led by volunteers. The reasons for making this big change were:

1. difficulty in recruiting enough teachers to run a weekly program;
2. the desire of teachers to participate in worship with their spouse and/or family;
3. the recognition that there not enough educational opportunities for adults;
4. a concern that children may grow up thinking that worship is only for adults; and
5. a desire, instead, to offer worship for the whole family.

With children regularly in worship, leaders are now challenged to offer a worship experience that not only tolerates their presence but celebrates their involvement.

A third change in worship involves the way the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

The most obvious evidence of change is there is no longer a bulletin insert with a set Communion liturgy. Instead, Communion is a theme that is part of the service from the opening Call to Worship to the final Blessing. In this way, the congregation can enjoy Communion without needing to focus on the printed words in the bulletin, but instead focus on the table, bread and cup, and the faces of other people around as the sacrament is celebrated together. On several occasions the congregation has been invited to come forward to stand around the table. The congregation has come to enjoy communion as much more than a liturgical routine, but a real celebration of Jesus Christ.

A fourth change involves the presence of the choir during worship. The Choir no longer sings every Sunday, but two or three times a month. Because the commitment is not so heavy now, additional new singers have joined. This spring

a Lenten Study and Prayer booklet was developed. There were a variety of thoughtful and prayerful entries from worship participants.

Here is an update since the 2008 Annual Report:

1. We continue to blend opportunities for personal testimony into our worship service. This has pulled us out of a worship "rut", so that there is greater anticipation for worship, rather than an expectation that each service will be the same as the last. We have tried to cultivate the idea that "you won't want to miss the next cool thing we will be doing on Sunday".

2. We have redesigned our stewardship design to be on-going with "living budget" presentations throughout the year, instead of simply focusing on October as before. The church entered 2009 with a deficit from 2008, and an anticipated deficit for 2009. The church membership has rallied to overcome this deficit with an "Extra Mile" appeal, and some successful fundraising. A staff position that had been reduced was brought back to its full hours.

3. We have further "tweaked" our CE program, by stepping back from the Growing in Faith program followed last year, to one that offers Sunday School about half of the year to K-6th graders, with a middle/high school faith journaling program once each month on Sunday evenings. Faith journaling takes the virtues named in Colossians 3:12-16 one by one as they intersect with the lives of youth. A second Sunday evening is a more conventional youth group meeting. Therefore, Middle and High School youth participate in Sunday worship. This continues to be a challenging arena for transformation, with lots of ideas, but not enough volunteer teachers, and very busy youth. But we also have a great group of spiritually and missionally energized youth, and adult leaders with ideas and vision, so these are great challenges to have.

4. The adult part of our CE program has been much improved, with a monthly Nooma group following Sunday worship since 2008, and now an adult faith journaling group that meets on Sunday evenings in parallel to the youth faith journaling. We have just begun a monthly lay-led Bible study on the 4th Tuesday. For quite a few years we had virtually no opportunities for adult education and growth.

5. Finally, we took our second survey in May 2009, and the results were astounding. We raised our average score about twenty points, to an average of slightly over sixty. Every category improved. Passionate Spirituality is still our minimum factor, but we nearly doubled it! These numbers can be partly explained by our greater awareness of what is at stake with NCD, our comfort with NCD vocabulary, and our experience that there are spiritual wonders happening in our church.

Testimonial #2 - The Unbinding the Gospel program strengthened the spiritual life of the parish. Several outcomes: started five small groups for people to share their faith, several members developed a daily spiritual practice of prayer and a greater capacity to articulate faith within the congregation and to folks outside the church. Everyone in the congregation at least is aware of the need to share their faith--they may still be reticent. The program brought us into partnership with five churches that entered the program. The joint retreat was exciting and empowering as people prayed with one another and began to envision what it would be like to connect the dots between daily life and God's activity around and in them. Being with a diversity of churches from urban, rural, suburban was a true partnership model. As diverse as we are one thing was evident--we all need to find ways to empower people to talk about their faith. The monthly pastors gathering has been a supportive, enriching spiritual experience that has given pastors courage to try new ideas and to learn what has worked or failed in each congregation.

Within CSA we can identify specific people whose spirituality has shifted from benign neglect to intentionality.

Their quality of leadership and enthusiasm for Christ has sharpened and deepened. Presently we're preparing three adults for baptism. Four youth studied Unbinding Your Heart and were confirmed on Easter as members. Our core leadership of session, deacons and hospitality team studied both Unbinding the Gospel and Unbinding program Your Heart. Throughout the Unbinding the Gospel we developed a prayer wall that is an active part of our weekly ritual and had weekly faith testimonies that were heartfelt and honest examples of sharing the Gospel. We're ready to launch Unbinding the Soul in November. CSA thanks the presbytery and Synod for this terrific opportunity to deepen in faith.

Testimonial #3 - The Unbinding the Gospel (UBG)- Unbinding the Heart UBH program came to Scottsville Union Presbyterian Church and to me their Pastor at very teachable moments. It was like a stone thrown into the water with ever expanding concentric circles. Beginning with the planning with the Pastor's group (for me March 2008) as we worked with UBG, my own heart opened in a new way to the congregation I had served for 9 years, to the community around the church and to my relationship with God as we pastor's first embodied the small group discussion process. When UBG was introduced to the session in the summer of 2008, they became enthusiastic about it and the prayerful sharing opened up these long time colleagues and leaders to one another in new ways. The excitement began to build. As leaders in the UPC congregation were identified and attended the retreat with our coach Nancy Wood and colleagues from the other churches in Nov. 2008, I watched the same opening occur with them. This also built a foundation for cooperative ministry and expanding our relationships with the presbytery. Our stewardship campaign in the midst of this was very successful - the best in several years. New relationships were being built, and faith deepened and the leaders became spiritual leaders in new ways.

These circles then expanded in January 2009 when we invited 14 people ranging in age from 30-80 with a variety of theologies (some from session, many who had not taken on this kind of role before) to be facilitators of the small groups during the UBH Lenten Event. They went through the entire process for 6 weeks

prior to the February-March Event and I coached them thru the prayer exercises and discussions so they could experience it. They were enthusiastic and their prayer patterns grew. They then led their own groups in teams of two. We ended up with 7 small groups each ranging from 4 to 14 people – a total of about 53 people. This is extraordinary in a church that has had very little adult education for years and no adult Sunday Church School program until our Commissioned Lay Pastor students organized one after worship in the Fall of 2008. The participants loved the small groups, the growing intimacy of praying one on one with each other, talking about their faith and doubt, and got very enthusiastic with talking about this with their friends. After Easter, we had a reunion evaluation pot luck dinner, again using the prayer exercises and everybody wanted the program to take next steps. It was joyful. One small group, the largest one meeting Tuesdays at 2:30, chose a new book and continued meeting every other week thru the summer studying Marcus Borg's the Heart of Christianity. It will be completed in October and then the group will continue inviting new members with the Unbinding the Soul. The others adjourned for the summer. Members of this group including newcomers and old-timers absolutely demanded that it continue!

Beginning in September The Adult Education Class meeting after worship chose Shirley Guthrie's book Christian Doctrine and will welcome other former UBH members to the study prompted by the Event UBH faith sharing. In September 2009 we had a Next Steps Potluck, affirmed both of these continuing small groups, and organized a third one meeting every other week on Thursday evenings 6-7:30 beginning in October embodying the Unbinding the Soul.

Although we haven't yet involved totally new people in the congregation, great spiritual growth has occurred, and the congregation is no longer turned in on itself in survival mode. This fall we are beginning a monthly Sharing Sunday special offerings and interpretation of needs of local families and area ministries. Our Stewardship Campaign is centered on partnering with Third Presbyterian Church, Rochester in building a Habitat House in the JOSANA neighborhood in Rochester rather than just meeting our budget. I'm going on my first ever work trip with Rebuilding Hope in New Orleans, and our youth group is talking about their first ever work trip to NYC. We are off and running.

I've become an evangelist for the Unbinding the Gospel program and am very, very grateful for the Synod Grant and the Genesee Valley Presbytery Congregational Development Committee's organizing and support that helped our congregation come alive again when we really were "down" financially and energetically. I'm grateful to my clergy colleagues in the UBG clergy small group in ways beyond words and they are part of my prayer and my heart. The UBG coaching process was a tremendous help and encouragement, and I'm looking forward to continuing it. This is a wonderful program that places the emphasis on relationship building with God, colleagues, church members, community and world, with a theology open enough for everybody to find welcome within – which we needed because my congregation is very theologically diverse! Thanks be to God.

All of the outcomes described in these three testimonials are direct results of the PPG Grant money. Praise Θ!

3. Western New York Participating Congregations and Congregational Transformation Ministry Team Personnel

Cadre 1:

First Presbyterian Church - West Seneca (Bronwen Boswell)
Randolph United Presbyterian Church (Leslie Latham)
Franklinville Presbyterian Church (Jason Cashing)
Lafayette Presbyterian Church – Buffalo (Drew Ludwig)
Bacon Memorial Presbyterian Church - Niagara Falls (Bill Springer and Bob Peck)

Cadre 2:

Hamburg Presbyterian Church (Jim Burton)
Wrights Corners Presbyterian Church (Lew Bigler)
Kenmore Presbyterian Church (Howard Boswell)

Additional (Funded by Congregation):

Orchard Park Presbyterian Church (Dick Young)

Cadre 3:

Faith United Presbyterian Church (Joyce Sirianni)
First Presbyterian Church – Westfield (Stephen Morse)
First Presbyterian Church – Alden (Kathy Evans)
Riverside Presbyterian Church – Niagara Falls (Laura Norris-Buisch)
First Presbyterian Church – Lockport (W. James Hardy)

Congregational Transformation Ministry Team:

Drew Ludwig, Chair
Richard Young, Former Chair
Jim Burton, Adjunct Member
Janita Byars, Poet of Transformation

Lowell Avery	Robert Beach
Lee Clark	Gordon Foster
Wendy Heinz	Karen Sawicz
Lynette Sparks	William Springer
Don Taylor	Barbara Wallace

**PPG Transformation Grant
2008 - 2009**

Synod of the Northeast PPG Grant Received		\$20,000.00
		\$
60 Books purchased "I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church" (net)		(652.50)
70 Books purchased "I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church"	\$ 884.50	
		\$
Less total sales receipts	\$ 420.00	(464.50)

Oct 17-18, 2008 Retreat Costs

Registration fees - 1st 5 churches

West Seneca	\$	250.00	
Franklinville	\$	250.00	
Lafayette Avenue	\$	250.00	
Bacon Memorial	\$	250.00	
Randolph	\$	250.00	
TOTAL REGISTRATIONS PAID			\$ 1,250.00

Paul Nixon

Consultation Fee	\$2,700.00	
Air Fare Oct 17-18	\$376.00	
Travel Expenses	<u>\$307.72</u>	
Total Cost for Leadership		\$3,383.72

Chautauqua Suites

23 Rooms	\$1,655.56	
Food and Beverages	<u>\$2,303.69</u>	
Total Cost of Hospitality		\$3,959.25 -

Barbara Wallace - supplies \$34.82

TOTAL EXPENSES FOR OCTOBER, 2008 RETREAT \$7,377.79

Total Net Cost for Oct 17-18 Retreat **\$ (6,127.79)**

March 6-7, 2009 Retreat Costs

Registration Fees			
	Kenmore	\$	250.00
	Wrights Corners	\$	250.00
TOTAL REGISTRATIONS PAID			\$ 500.00
	<u>Paul Nixon</u>		
	Consultation Fee	\$	3,600.00
	Air Fare, expenses	\$	515.04
	Total Cost for Leadership		\$ 4,115.04
	<u>St. Columban Center</u>		
	35 Participants overnight (includes meals)	\$	3,675.00
	5 Extra Saturday (meals only)	\$	200.00
	10 Extra Friday (meals only)	\$	250.00
	Total Cost of Hospitality		\$ 4,125.00
	Lowell Avery - Nixon Expense	\$	24.97
	Nixon Hotel Bill	\$	440.22
	Barbara Wallace for supplies	\$	270.74
EXPENSES FOR MARCH RETREAT			\$ 8,975.97
Total Net Cost for March 2009 Retreat			\$ (8,47
Unspent Cash Balance			\$4,27
October 24-26, 2009 Retreat Costs			
Pby Grant - Church Growth Fund		\$	4,000.00
Registration Fees Paid:			
	Riverside, NF	\$	250.00
Total Revenues			\$ 4,250.00
	<u>Paul Nixon</u>		
	Consultation Fee (\$3,600)	\$	500.00 deposit
	Deposit - Koteckis	\$	250.00
	Air Fare, expenses (ab \$500)	\$	-
	Total Cost for Leadership	\$	750.00
	Scholarship - NF Riverside	\$	250.00
Total Expenses			\$ 1,000.00
Unspent Cash Balance September 15, 2009			\$7,52

WNY CTMT Retreat Plan

The Congregational Transformation Ministry Team (CTMT) of the Presbytery of Western New York was asked to develop ways for congregations to discover and articulate what they understand to be their God-directed mission, and to provide resources to those congregations willing to engage in transformation so that their institutional life will better reflect the priorities that flow from their agreed-upon mission.

While we had explored multiple strategies to accomplish congregational transformation, we came to realize it is the work of each congregation to discern where God might lead the congregation now and in the future. This journey is one of faith, hope and, let's face it, practical considerations which, we decided, requires a map.

Concerns were raised about the "Mission Study" which churches are required to have before calling a new pastor. The team, along with the Committee on Clergy Recruitment, Retention, & Retirement, believed that study should be on-going and should be something the pastor could work from and agree to, not just a document that had to be written, then shelved once the PNC found a new pastor. To get away from "Mission Study" and its baggage, we call the process a journey which needs a map.

This map is to be designed and implemented by the leadership of a congregation. It should be updated and renewed regularly, becoming a living document and witness to the ongoing mission of the church.

We asked the churches to contribute \$250 to the retreat, partially to offset costs, but also to make sure they had a commitment to the process.

Retreats were held from Friday to Saturday to be time away from family, church and normal surroundings to include worship, individual consultations with Paul Nixon, observations of other churches' interaction with Paul Nixon, a lecture by Paul Nixon, time for reflection and time for team-building.

Follow up sessions were held the Thursday before retreat sessions 2 and 3 for checking in with Paul Nixon, his discussion and commentary.

The CTMT met with Paul Nixon for lunch on Friday to welcome him, give him background on the Presbytery, and to hear his ideas on a variety of topics more related to a Presbytery-level than church-level.

Nuts and bolts:

1. We came upon Paul Nixon's book and decided he had some great ideas which could be explored. He was willing to come and work with our churches.
2. We found out dates Paul Nixon was available.
 - a. Session 1: October, 2008
 - b. Session 2: March 2009
 - c. Session 3: October 2009
 - d. 4 p.m. Friday to approx. 4 p.m. Saturday for retreat
 - e. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. for Thursday reviews
 - f. Noon to 3 p.m. for Friday lunch
3. We found places to hold the retreats. The team member who found the place was responsible for facilities coordination including the menu.
 - a. It is difficult to find retreat space in the fall in the typical places we would go: the Columba Center, Christ the King Seminary, Stella Niagara Retreat Center.
 - b. A new hotel was opening in Jamestown, in the southern part of the Presbytery, in fall 2008 and so was amenable to our needs for the first session.
 - c. The second session was held at the St. Columba Center, south of Buffalo, a beautiful retreat setting on Lake Erie, in the central part of the Presbytery.
 - d. For the third session, we decided to try letting people go home and come back to the meeting place; some who come from too far to go back and forth, will be put up overnight in a hotel. It will be held at Riverside Presbyterian Church, Niagara Falls, in the northern section of the Presbytery.
4. We asked for churches which could bring up to 10 members for a leadership team (not necessarily the Session) and pastor of a church, to participate.
 - a. 1st churches: low-hanging fruit. Wanted to participate as soon as we proposed the idea
 - b. 2nd batch: A couple of churches which could not attend the first session and were still interested; one other church which was recruited through CTMT contacts. Did not get the five we thought we needed for a full session.
 - c. 3rd batch: Recruited through the Poet of Transformation's efforts.
 - d. Orchard Park Presbyterian independently consulted with Paul Nixon, and was included in the follow up meetings
5. We sent out applications/reservations.
 - a. One team member coordinated who was coming and their needs.
 - b. The Presbytery office took the money and disbursed funds from the PPG grant.
 - c. We asked the churches to prepare by doing the following:
 - i. Leadership team to survey congregation, either using form we provided (see packet) or their own survey. Asked pastors to summarize and go over with the leadership.

- ii. Leadership team to have read Paul Nixon's book, I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church.
 - iii. Leadership team to have looked at Percept information
- 6. Retreat timetable Friday
 - a. 3-4 p.m. Check-in. Refreshments provided. Nametags, folders for each team and team member which included a timetable, information from Paul Nixon, and for the team folder, Percept information, distributed. Also gave Percept information to Paul Nixon for each church. Rooms were assigned if part of the event.
 - b. 4-6 p.m. Introduction. Ice breaker activity. Worship. (3 different team members)
 - c. 6-7 p.m. Dinner
 - d. 7-9 p.m. Paul Nixon lecture, overview of his ideas. Open to the Presbytery as previously advertised.
- 7. Retreat timetable Saturday: one member figured it out based on number of churches and workshops
 - a. 7 a.m. Breakfast
 - b. 8 a.m. Workshops began (although not til 9 a.m. in Oct. 2009 session)
 - i. Consultation with Paul Nixon
 - ii. Observation of a consultation with Paul Nixon
 - iii. Prayer, reflection (PWNYP Director of Spiritual Development and Discipleship)
 - iv. Team-building exercise
 - v. In fall, 2008, instead of the team-building exercise, had a workshop on Percept and one on resources
 - c. 3 or 4 p.m.: Concluding remarks by Paul Nixon, concluding remarks by CTMT chair (or designee), worship.
 - d. Snacks were available at sessions two and three all the time
 - i. Home-made cookies
 - ii. Packets of cheese
 - iii. Crackers
 - iv. Chocolates
 - v. Veggie plate (until it ran out)
 - vi. Water
 - vii. Coffee and tea at the 3rd session
- 8. Thursday night follow-up session: time for networking, reacquainting retreat members from the several churches with each other; Paul Nixon led a review of what the churches had done since our previous meeting, then discussed next steps.
 - a. First session held at Orchard Park Presbyterian Church (6 churches)
 - b. Second session to be held in a Buffalo restaurant. (9 churches)

Presbytery of Western New York
 Congregational Transformation Ministry Team
 Mapping the Journey Retreat: St. Columba Center, Derby NY
 March 6 & 7, 2009
 Evaluation Report

Not everyone answered all questions.
 25 surveys returned from 27 participants.

	1	2	3	4	5		Top 2 rankings combined
1a: Worship	0	0	7	6	10	23	
	0	0	30%	26%	43%		69%
1b: Plenary	0	0	1	4	20	25	
	0	0	4%	16%	80%		96%
2a: Connect	0	1	0	9	11	21	
	0	5%	0	43%	52%		95%
2b: Pray	0	0	5	10	10	25	
	0	0	20%	40%	40%		80%
2c: Consult	0	0	0	7	18	25	
	0	0	0	28%	72%		100%
2d: Observe	0	1	1	12	10	24	
	0	4%	4%	50%	42%		92%
2e: Closing	0	1	1	8	12	22	
	0	5%	5%	36%	55%		91%
3a: Check in	0	0	1	4	20	25	
	0	0	4%	16%	80%		96%
3b: Dinner	0	1	0	6	18	25	
	0	4%	0	24%	72%		96%
3c: Breakfast	0	2	0	6	16	24	
	0	8%	0	25%	67%		92%
3d: Lunch	0	0	0	7	17	24	
	0	0	0	29%	71%		100%
3e: Room	0	0	1	5	17	23	
	0	0	4%	22%	74%		96%

Comments:

Worship

- A wonderful way to start (2).
- Unfamiliar songs are sometimes hard to catch onto, especially if it doesn't have a catchy tune.

Plenary

- Very motivational. Great way to start the weekend. LOTS of thoughts and ideas.
- Right on!
- Liked the fast paced summary of the book.
- A great session that prompted lots of ideas.
- Well presented; well received.
- Wow! Too bad Paul had to rush through the last chapters of his book.
- Paul excited people about the task in ...(unreadable)

Connect

- Great exercises with LOTS OF INSIGHTS as we worked through the exercises together.
- The circle, square, triangle exercise was interesting and insightful. Leadership, cooperation/teamwork.(2)
- Great exercises!
- Fun! Way to connect! Good questions after the activity.
- Lots of fun: meaningful re: working together
- Fun. Good to get up and move around (2)
- Challenging, but when explained, easily understood. GREAT.
- I think I learned a lot from observing.

Prayer

- For the walk (prayer) and group afterwards a little clearer instruction would have given us more direction.
- The walk was great
- Intimate, enlightening
- Excellent presentation and new outlook for me.
- Relaxing
- Excellent. More time for walking.

Consultation

- I found the process interesting. Paul focused on areas that I had not anticipated and the areas I wanted him to address he wouldn't.
- Was hoping for more clarity on different issues.
- Appreciated insight, creativity and expertise of modern churches and what works and doesn't work. Our challenges are more directed.
- How quickly he honed in on our needs.
- Very helpful.
- I wish we had spent more time in relationship issues
- Gave us a lot to think about.

Observation

- I found it interesting to the process that other churches went through (especially the first church); a great learning tool for how to look at our surround community and being aware of our limitations.
- Very instructive
- The first one was good but the second one seemed slow.
- Amazingly helpful.

- Hard to just sit!
- Fun/creative/noteworthy

Closing worship

- Very creative
- Lovely solo Janita!
- Enchanting music.

Facility

- Excellent place for a retreat (5)
- The additional snacks and water throughout were wonderful and appreciated. (2)
- Very hospitable.
- Very peaceful and relaxing.
- The food was good (2).
- Breakfast: we waited and the food was cold. All carbs.
- Lunch: was great.

Overall/Misc.

- Thank you to all involved in planning and following through. (2)
- Needed more physical activity (2).
- Good amount of time. Any longer would have been too tiring.
- I'd like to hear 6 months later how we all (churches) are progressing. I think Paul Nixon would also. Another retreat?
- It was a long day. Briefer would have been better.
- Extremely helpful. Would like to do it again. (2)
- Would be helpful to know schedule ahead of time.
- Early start on Saturday was too early; not everyone is at their best at this hour. Breakfast at 8?

Summary of Evaluation Responses

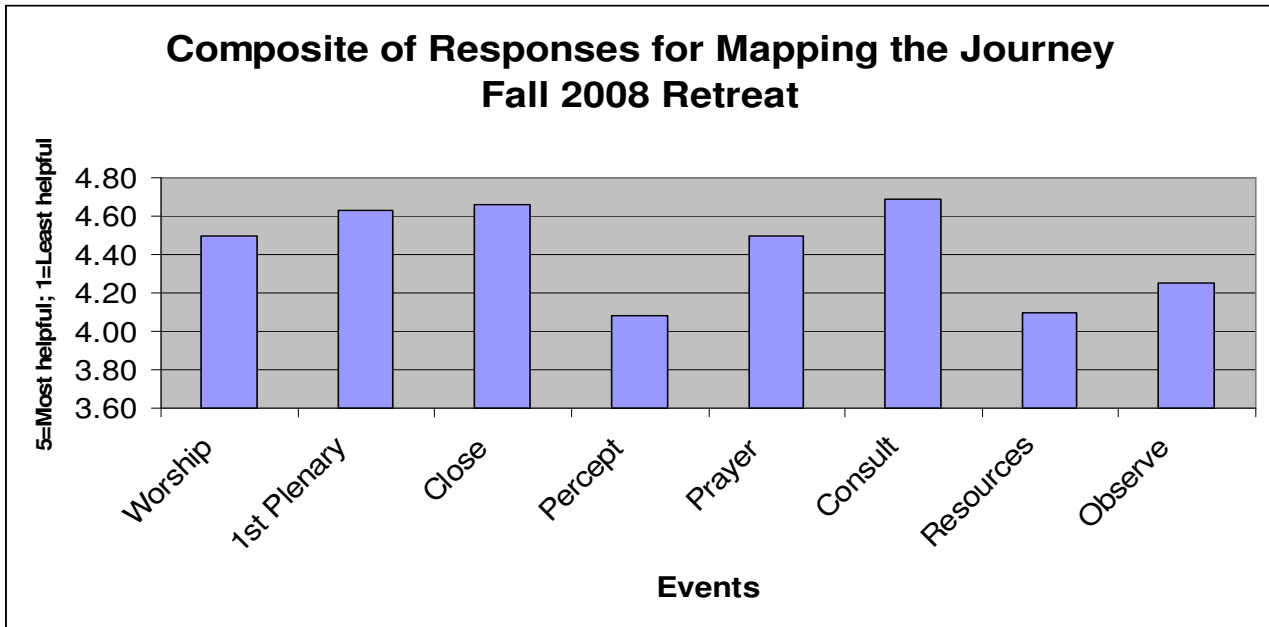
Note: To make numbers with any meaning, I entered 5 for most helpful, 1 for least helpful. 32 respondents. Barbara Wallace, recorder.

In raw numbers:

	Worship	1st Plenary	Close	Percept	Prayer	Consult	Resources	Observe
Average rating on scale of 5 as best	4.50	4.63	4.66	4.08	4.50	4.69	4.09	4.25

Lowest rated were Percept, Resources and Observation. Highest were the Consultation and the Opening and Closing Plenary sessions, the ones in which Paul Nixon provided his expertise.

However, statistically, most people rated most sessions as most helpful with an average score of 4.42 for all eight sessions.



Co

Comments by participants from the 5 churches

Speaker: Paul Nixon

Great speaker! Inspiring. Helped us see our strengths and how to improve weaknesses.

Enjoyed very much. Thought-provoking. Consultation: we didn't feel prepared because we didn't have all the Percept information—but once we got passed that—there was very good conversation.

Thank you for a copy of the PowerPoint! Consultation: good suggestions Helped us to focus on which direction we need to go as a church. Also got some ideas from observing.

Wonderful.

I found Paul easy to talk to and full of good ideas

Very good. Learned a lot from him in just a short time.

Excellent. Made it fun and interesting. Consultation was very personal and pertinent to our situation.

Paul was very engaging. Excellent insight, motivating. Offered alternative insights; gave me hope for the future of my church.

Gave us a good overview of his book which we can use in our community and our church. Great consultation. Gave several ideas to follow up as well as his mentioning of possible concerns.

Paul was a very good speaker and I thoroughly enjoyed hearing his insight and encouragement. I plan to read some of his other books. I hope to have some positive response back to him when we meet again.

Top notch: bringing him is an excellent decision.

Fantastic: to the point, factual, able to relate to all kinds of churches. Very knowledgeable. Great use of humor! I was glad we had prepped and had questions in hand. We're ready to get to work.

Excellent presentation

Good job but spent too much time on a "book review."

We will welcome you back in March. Great insights into our needs. Consultation very good. Helped us see things through clear glass as opposed to cloudy glass.

We are taking back a lot of tangible ideas that we CAN and will do.

Excellent: hit key points and connected them to us in ways we can understand. Made us really look at how much we really have done and how to finish and pull together to the end!

Lots of insight. Very interesting, eye-opening, motivating.

Awesome! Great summary of your book. Love that it was applicable to young adults in the church. We are leaders and appreciate being recognized as such. Consultation was helpful. I was happy that we got to the core issues and did not beat around the bush.

Helpful, encouraging, spot-on and thought-provoking. Session was quite helpful, but we ran out of time to talk about worship. The time here went the fastest.

Brilliant! Thank You! Very helpful. Wish we had more time.

Very good, clear. Could have used more time. Was very helpful and specific.

Excellent. It is very helpful to have read the book first. Paul was very engaging. Consultation was helpful, inspiring.

I felt Rev. Nixon was extremely helpful but I wish we had more time with him.

Great job. Good ideas and insight.

Really have enjoyed Paul. It's nice to have someone who can objectively speak the truths we are sometimes unable to voice (or afraid to). Straight forward, down to earth. Session with Paul was helpful: enables us to find ourselves on the same page, looking ahead together. A safe place for conversation.

Great job: too little time, but we have the book... Wish we'd been more prepared with financial position of the church, but received some good insight.

Great insight. Nice to have the set up the night before as an overview for those who read the book earlier or skimmed it—so we're all on the same page. Nice to have an outsider with experience examine our case with us and gives us some fresh suggestions.

Oh Gee but I'm glad he came! Book filled with words that are necessary to hear—God's kid deluxe. Revealing of self, fellow pilgrims and Presbytery.

Outstanding!!! Keep writing! We should have known what questions were going to be asked so we had data...budget, attendance, etc.

CTMT sessions

In general

Very energizing and provided me with much hope for the future

Sharing around the tables at the end very helpful

Resources

good ideas. (2)

Love the movie reference

Percept

our Percept did not match the session leader's; it was insightful but was also not consistent

Interesting, but not sure how to apply it

Observation

Would be very beneficial to have observed all of the other churches' session, but I realize it would require too much time.

Picked up some more good points

Very interesting to hear another church's situation

Facility

Excellent all around, except the meeting rooms were extremely chilly (many complaints!)

Needed to have more water and non-coffee options available

Check-in, meals all excellent

Some complaints about early hour to start and need to check out so early.

The "Good" things the churches said about themselves (during Percept session)

Bacon

Youth group open

Sunday School

Stained glass windows

Big open area

Location

Size of building

Lots of long-time members

Lots of younger adults

Strong core membership

Sense of family

Good leaders

Right pastor for this time

Sense of community

Hope

Open to new ideas

Youth in community

Neighborhood church

Franklinville

Fellowship

Lasted so long

History

Kids

Music (past) good new

1 person became enthusiastic after personal attention

People energetic and vital

Open and welcoming
No way to go but up
Community ready for change
Nice location
Luncheon to elderly
We're ready for change
Warm and welcoming
Hope
CSI: Community Spirit and Involvement
Safe place

Lafayette

We love each other
Energetic pastor
Good community outreach
Adult Bible study
Entrepreneurs in neighborhood
Music director: diverse repertoire
Theologically diverse congregation
Walkable community
Fantastic website
Core leadership
But shares work
Lots of space to grow
Fun over drudgery
New room for young adults
Open to change
Appreciate older members
Good coffee hour
Accepting but not squishy
Grown into family
Focus on Jesus
Use Bible
Connect the past of the Bible to today
Awesome personnel
Growing
Location location location
Interactive worship
Multiple entrances to the building

Randolph

Choir
Friendly
Mission program
Pastor
Dinners
Great cooks
Potential

Reginald & Louise Reed (great energy, doers)
Hard-working, spirit-filled, enthusiastic Deacons
Prayer group
Empowerment for mission
Lord's acre
Pie bakers at drop of hat
Participation, support
Talents: used widely and well
Ecumenical
Caring
Volunteers
Kids bring friends to church

West Seneca

Supportive
Great new pastor
Great Faith Ed committee
Caring community
New ideas
Like to eat
Great organization
Lots of usable space
Beautiful music
Pretty grounds
Great location
Greatest secretary

Closing Plenary comments from the churches, team

Bacon

Discovery: We shouldn't be afraid to be bold
Like to receive: Prayer and encouragement
Like to offer: Prayer and encouragement

Franklinville

Discovery: Renewed approach, more hope, more insight
Receive & Offer: Prayer and updates
Partnering with another church for accountability
We will act as a sounding board for another church

Lafayette

Discovery: Youth have a place in the church: not just as the future, but also the present

There is hope for our congregation

We've already started the work we need to do.

Receive: Coaching and prayer

Offer: Prayer, love, and friendship on Facebook

Our building for an urban service retreat

Randolph

Discovery: NCD—we're going to do it.

We are going to be the friendliest church in Western New York, regardless of denomination

Receive: Quarterly progress reports—which we are willing to coordinate

Offer: Prayer for all the churches here

West Seneca

Discovery: A new attitude: we can do anything with God's help

Receive: Dialog and feedback from this group

Give: host a meeting for updates in six months

CTMT

What you can expect from the team

Ongoing care and communication through a liaison specifically appointed for your church

A March meeting with Paul for 5 other churches is being planned, with the possibility that the 5 churches participating in this fall 08 retreat meet with him on the evening before for updates, consultation

RUPC Envisioning Worksheet

(Purpose) We are here to (do):

(Core Values) because we believe:

(Core Competencies) and because we excel at:

(Vision – envisioned future) therefore, the future of this congregation and its programs will look like:

Church _____
 Committee/Team _____
Planning and Follow-up Coversheet

Date Created _____

Program/Project _____

Team/Committee Member(s) Responsible for Implementation

Note: This sheet is designed to assist committees and teams in planning congregational transformation programs and related projects. It connects planning to specific objectives that lead to congregational health. Contact Janita Byars (janitab@pbywny.org or 668-1995) for further information or to design a planning coversheet that includes the stated goals and objectives for your congregation. Worksheet formats are available to guide follow-up activities.

Objectives for Congregational Transformation and

***PC(USA) - 5 Basic Dynamics for Congregational Transformation (Check All that Apply)**

As a transforming congregation, we will:

1. Identify "who we are" as individuals, as members of the congregation, as a Congregation, and as members of the larger community	2. Discern what we are called by God to do; developing a spiritual base	3. Facilitate discipleship and evangelism	4. Demonstrate hospitality; nurturing loving relationships	5. Establish vital small groups	6. Develop relationships of trust and communication among leaders and the congregation	7. Develop leadership - pastoral, as well as congregational	8. Provide high-quality and inspiring worship services, including music and the other arts	9. Collaborate with other congregations on mission and outreach	10. the validity of other denominational strategies
*Come to terms with the	*Create spiritu	*Build a ministr	*Reengage the commun	*Reengage the commu	*Come to terms with the	*Build a ministr	*Build a ministr	*Build a ministry plan	*Bu min plan

congregation's past and present identities	al energy for transformation	y plan	ity around the church	nity around the church	congregation's past and present identities	y plan	y plan	*Reengage the community around the church	*Reengage the community around the church

**Congregational
to Lead a Dying Church
Transformation
Nixon
Strategies
that Apply)**

Choices Outlined in I Refuse

by Paul

(Check All

As a transforming congregation, we will:

Develop a strategy for congregational change that leads to health	Build skills needed to promote spiritual and numerical growth	Choose life over death	Choose community over isolation	Choose fun over drudgery	Choose bold over mild	Choose frontier over fortress	Choose now over later

Check All that Apply:

- Past/Present Strength to be Maintained
- High
- New Opportunity
- Continuing Challenge
- Area In Need of Improvement

- Priority Level: Very
- High
- Moderate
- Low

Specific Objective(s) for Program/Project:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

