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# GROWTH POINTS

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With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

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## Thoughts on Directing

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One of the fun elements of watching high school and college football games is the half-time band performance. Traditionally, bands march in lockstep across the football field playing their school's fight song. The sound of the drums and horns energizes the fans, but it's the intricate formations that delight them.

Sophisticated maneuvers and dance moves cause audiences to clap with joy, but they don't happen by chance. In front of the band is a director who has selected the band members, chosen the music, designed the various maneuvers, and led them in practice. Occasionally, the director marches along with the band in a visible position, while at other times, it's difficult to see where the director is marching.

Without a director, it's unlikely that any band's performance would happen, and it surely would not happen as well as it does.

As a pastor, you work with people of numerous talents, abilities, and skills. Directing people so that they work together in unity brings out the best in your church. Orchestrating the body so that harmony flows out of action is necessary to reach the church's mission of making disciples.

As director, you promote an environment that inspires people to serve and motivates

people to participate. The essence of the director's job is to recognize ability in people and get them working in harmony with others.

## Keys to Directing Well

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First, know your mission. We are all aware that businesses have a financial bottom line. At first we might think that churches don't have a bottom line, but that's incorrect. Churches do have a bottom line; it's just different. The bottom line of a church is changed people. While businesses seek to satisfy the customer, churches seek to change the person. When you think of it, that's what all non-profit organizations seek. A hospital seeks to change sick people into healthy ones. Schools seek to change students into educated adults. Churches seek to change people into followers of Christ—disciples who change their values into God's values and change their lives into godly ones.

Second, stay on mission. You have to learn to say no. There is always too much good to do and not enough resources to do it all. Any

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organization can only do a certain number of tasks. A major danger in smaller churches is to attempt more ministry than what resources can support. A major danger for larger churches is to take on things that don't fit its mission. Remember, God's kingdom encompasses both heaven and earth. Most non-profit organizations focus all of their efforts on the earthly side of the kingdom. The church is the only organization that focuses on the other side of the kingdom— heaven. For that reason, many good causes and needs should not be your primary focus. The church has to keep touch with God's whole kingdom, but the church is not a food bank, or counseling center, or housing shelter, or any other strictly social service entity. Yes, you must keep touch with humanity and provide assistance where needed, but as a church, your focus is on changing lives, particularly bringing people into right relationship with Jesus Christ. If you allow yourself to get involved in too many good things, you'll lose focus.

Third, get others on mission with you. Pastors typically use five primary appeals to recruit and motivate volunteers: duty, logic, accomplishment, belonging, and caring. Last on the list today are duty and logic. Pastors using duty as a motivator usually talk about the importance of loyalty, commitment, and the obligation to use one's gifts. Using logic, pastors present statistics and analyze data, hoping it inspires others to serve where there is verifiable need. Next is motivational attempts based on challenges to accomplish something good for Christ and his church. Unfortunately, neither duty, logic, nor

accomplishment of something valuable for Christ is a good motivator today. On the top of the list are caring and belonging. Recruiting people to care for others while becoming part of a caring group works the best.

Fourth, get others to play well. Musical directors usually know how to play multiple instruments, but can you imagine a band director running back and forth attempting to play every instrument? As crazy as that sounds, some pastors try to do so. Successful pastors are those who know their job is to build an effective team that will outlast them. They are the servants of the team. In place of trying to play every instrument, they recruit others who play better than themselves.

Fifth, get others to play together. The role of a band director is to produce a fine sounding piece of music. The problem is the various band sections see the specifics in different ways. The brass, the woodwinds, the percussionists, and all instrumentalists must perform well in order for the band to produce a unified sound that is beautiful to the ear. The director has to hold everything together. Each instrumentalist must play his particular instrument well, but also in a manner that harmonizes well with the rest of the orchestra.

*Think about it!*

What is your church's bottom line?

Are your resources invested in activities that focus on your mission?

What do you need to start doing or stop doing?

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