

When assets are not

The “new ideas” team in a suburban church in Indianapolis thought they would use the asset-based approach to “find more people” to help our pastor with his visits.” The first discussion was about the problems they were experiencing:

- ❖ People waiting too long for home visits by the pastor.
- ❖ Emergency visits taking priority over all other visits.
- ❖ The congregation’s membership growth overwhelming the visitation program’s capabilities.

Next they agreed how many people would be needed to help the pastor. Then they made a list of the members in the congregation they were pretty sure were good at visiting people. Their anticipated next tasks included:

- ❖ Phoning the list of likely visitors to ask if they would be willing to help the pastor.

■ BUT RESPONSIBILITY STILL REMAINS WITH THE PASTOR.

■ A “PROBLEM-SOLVING” APPROACH MAY STILL BE NEEDS BASED AND NOT FOCUSED ON ASSETS.

■ THIS SEEMS A RATHER FEEBLE ATTEMPT AT FINDING ASSETS.

■ A BETTER APPROACH: PERSONAL INVITATION.

- ❖ Making a three-year plan of how to increase the size of this program.
- ❖ Asking their denomination for resources or other help in knowing how to train visitors.

Within a few months, the “visitation program” went sour. Most of the likely visitors were already over-committed in the congregation. The three-year plan fizzled when the group disagreed about how much money it would require. The denominational office suggested that the team “probably already knows how to visit people.”

The pastor still makes all the visits; he is now about two years behind.

■ TOO FAR AHEAD; CONDITIONS WILL CHANGE.

■ ASKING “EXPERTS” ABOUT HOW TO DO SOMETHING CAN HIDE YOUR OWN CAPABILITIES AND DELAY ACTION.