

Week 1, Temporary Shepherds Study guide

Assignment:

Have read the Introduction through Chapter 2 (pages ix-25)

Introduction highlights:

5 realities facing congregations today

- Institutional resistance to change
- Need to redefine purpose and mission in the modern settings of the church
- Challenge to exercise viable Christian stewardship
- Controversial social issues will continue to produce conflict and tension well into the future for mainline denominations
- Increasing diversity in American society with a consequent blurring of differences in religious traditions

Three vignettes of congregations facing transitions (pp. xvi-xvii)

Chapter 1 "The Challenge of the Interim Time" highlights:

Getting Our Bearings explores the eight stages of the interim journey:

1. Termination
2. Direction finding
3. Self-study
4. Search
5. Decision
6. Negotiation
7. Installation
8. Start-up

The Developmental Tasks

Task 1: Coming to Terms with History

Task 2: Discovering a New Identity

Task 3: Leadership Changes during an Interim

Task 4: Renewing Denominational Linkages

Task 5: Commitment to New Directions in Ministry

Chapter 2 "Characteristics of the Interim Congregation" highlights:

Grief

Conflict: Latent or Active

Secrets May Emerge

Openness to the Denomination

Low Self-Esteem

Lagging Stewardship

Rebuilding/Creating Infrastructure

Communication Channel Development

Ambivalence about Change

Mixed Emotions

Questions (focus on Chapter 2 reflection and discussion, p. 25)

Reflection on surprises, new insights

2. If you were asked to describe your congregation as it enters the interim period, what characteristics would you cite?

3. What adjectives might you use to describe your congregation at this juncture in its journey? List as many as you can.