

## LESSON 10

### START RIGHT

#### READING ASSIGNMENTS

Thom Rainer, *High Expectations*, 5-6;  
Study Guide Lesson 10

#### LEARNING GOAL

The learning goal of this lesson is to offer leaders help in beginning a new ministry. When leaders begin new ministries right, they can pursue a long-term ministry that offers the best evangelistic opportunity. Long-term effectiveness in evangelism depends on starting right in a new ministry. The old saying, "If it fizzles in the finish it was at fault from the first" applies to not only spurious conversion decisions and unwise marriages. It also applies to the start-up phase of new ministries. At the end of this lesson, the student should be able to identify specific steps to starting up a new ministry in an evangelistically effective manner.

### EXPLORING THE LESSON

#### STARTING RIGHT IN THE INTERVIEW

For a minister, an effective evangelistic ministry often begins in the interview process. A minister must demonstrate candor when interviewing for a new ministry. Transparency and honesty must reign. The minister must honestly describe his theological position, his ministry history, his intentions for ministry, and his perspective on the denomination. At the same time, the

minister often needs to help the search committee deal honestly. Not only is the search committee interviewing a candidate for a ministry, but the candidate is also interviewing the church. Honesty must reign in the questions the minister asks. Many churches suffer from a decline in evangelism, attendance, giving, and service. Churches rarely decline because the church does things well. During the interview process, the minister must gingerly uncover the problems that have caused the decline. This can be difficult for the candidate. Though most search committees do not intend to deceive, they often avoid hard issues in the interview process. They may be in denial, they may not know the causes of decline, or they have experienced a temporary sense of optimism when the former minister vacated the position. Under these circumstances, they may believe that the worst is behind them. The minister can research the Annual Church Profile, speak with the state convention personnel, a Director of Missions, or former pastors to aid him in assessing the church.

#### STARTING RIGHT IN THE FIRST MONTHS

Besides starting right during the interview process, the minister must start right in the first two months of ministry. The minister has a short window of opportunity to bond with the people when he begins his ministry. Although I cannot explain why, many congregations keep this window open for only a month or two. The first few weeks of a new minister's ministry are especially