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Dear Friends,

One of many personal assessment tools I've taken, *StrengthsFinder*, identifies your top five strengths with the intent that focusing on what you do best will take you further than trying to improve on your weaknesses. One of my top strengths is "maximizer," being one who likes to improve or take things to the next level. As Executive Minister, that trait leads me to ask questions such as...

*As you look at the health and vitality of your church, what do you need to do to move forward, to focus more clearly on God's intent for your congregation?*

Many, if not most of us, are stuck doing the same things we've always done while expecting different results. (How's that working for you?) Jesus told us to "go into all the world and make disciples." Why, then, does most of our energy as a church go into attracting people to come into the building rather than getting us out into the world?

This is why you've been hearing a lot about the **Missional Church Learning Experience**, beginning this month.

**It's practical.** I've got enough training notebooks on my shelf. MCLE trains and implements the learnings as each church team plans and carries out a new community outreach project over the course of a year.

**It's contextual.** This is not a cookie-cutter program, copying some other church's plan. Your project will be unique to your setting. Participating churches learn from each other. By themselves the community assessment tools you will use are well worth the time.

**It's affordable.** In partnership with American Baptist National Ministries, we are able to provide this opportunity for \$50 per church. Donations will be received to help the host church cover snack expenses.

**It's doable.** Every church has the capacity and resources to participate. A team of five people—the pastor and four others make four Saturday morning commitments (April, July, October, January) plus homework to implement their project plan.

**It's life-changing.** Parchment Valley Baptist Church, Ripley, WV says, "Our greatest lesson learned with the Missional Church Learning Experience is that the church is NOT the building, but 'out there.' God is working in the minds and hearts of our church family to look out beyond ourselves – with no strings attached."

**It multiplies in effectiveness.** The principles and tools can be used over and over with new teams formed and new volunteers used.

Unsure about MCLE? Come to the orientation on March 20<sup>th</sup> at First Baptist Church of Indianapolis from 9:00 to noon. (Sign up by March 15<sup>th</sup>.) Talk to me about the possibilities. Share the brochure posted on our website.

Ready to sign up? The application form is on our website, [www.abcgi.org](http://www.abcgi.org). Become the church God is calling you to be.

With you in the journey,

*Joan*

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