



# EQUIPPER

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Dear minister of Jesus Christ:

Christmas blessings and happy New Year!

It's hard to believe, but 2012 is almost here! Whatever it may bring (and many are worried about that), there will be new opportunities to journey with Jesus—sharing what he is doing in the power of the Spirit to fulfill the Father's mission.

Here are tips for how pastors, ministry leaders, advisory councils and finance committees can help their congregations journey well in the new year:

1. Remember that we journey *with* Jesus. In that regard, prepare yourself this Advent/Christmas season to give clear witness to the Light that has entered our darkness. Our members need leaders who set the pace in following Jesus: sharing in his faith, hope and love—even when times are unsettled.
2. Join your members in prayer to discern what Jesus is doing. Capture that vision together, then communicate it clearly and often (for vision-casting tips, see <http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-how-to/152908-the-6-vehicles-for-church-vision-how-many-are-you-using.html?print>).
3. Clarify and strengthen your congregation's *disciplemaking pathway* (for tips, see <http://mindev.gci.org/strategy.htm>).
4. *Budget on purpose.* Prepare a mission-focused budget for 2012. For tips, see chapter 2 of the GCI-USA *Financial Management Manual*.
5. Be vigilant in upholding financial integrity (see the article on page 2 and GCI's Statement of Financial Stewardship at <http://www.gci.org/aboutus/financial> ).
6. As a congregation, consider supporting our journey forward as a denomination by donating to the *GC Next Domestic Mission Fund*. For details go to <http://genmin.gci.org/Web%20Documents/GC%20Next%20one%20page%202011.pdf>).
7. Bring your key leaders and workers with you to one of GCI's 2012 U.S. Regional Conferences (see <http://www.gci.org/event/11/conferences>). Make this important conference a shared learning experience.

Journeying with Jesus,  
Dan Rogers, GCI superintendent of U.S. ministers



On journey with Jesus

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Outfitting churches, ministries, pastors and ministry leaders for ministry on journey with Jesus.

## Leadership integrity in financial matters

The article below is from David S. Bell (pictured at right). David is Senior Design Partner for Design Group International, a Christian consulting firm that helps churches and other non-profits with planning and financial stewardship. We believe that what David addresses in this article is of great importance to pastors and other leaders of congregations and ministries. As we prepare for 2012, we urge our pastors and financial committee members (including treasurers) to read this article in conjunction with reviewing the GCI-USA *Financial Management Manual*.



The recent events involving the abrupt dismissal of two Penn State leaders—Joe Paterno, the iconic head football coach, and Graham Spanier, the seasoned university president—should cause most non-profit leaders to review their own practices. Even as I write this, I am certain that more news will be forthcoming from State College, Pennsylvania. I am not focusing on the particulars of the allegations that led to the sequence of successive events. Likewise, I do not seek to debate the coaching tenure of JoPa. However, I do note the uncanny connection between a few PowerPoint slides that I routinely discuss in a pastoral leadership seminar and the apparent unraveling of Penn State’s leaders.

The connection is simply this statement: ***Adhering to moral, legal, and fiduciary responsibility is among the hallmarks of leadership integrity.*** Pastors, like it or not, are the administrative officers of a non-profit corporation. This office—not to mention one’s call and ordination or commissioning as a pastor—obligates one to conduct one’s self in accordance with the church’s governing policies. Leaders bear fiduciary responsibility to assure to the absolute best of their ability that the organizational policies, the governing rules, the denominational church law, and, of course, state and federal law are being followed. If not, appropriate action is required.

Too often, I experience pastors being swayed by the winds of church politics, the need for self-acceptance, the desire to avoid conflict, or the fear of disenfranchising a long-time constituent. This pressure can result in a neglect of moral, legal, and fiduciary responsibility. In other words, some outside influence or internal compulsion takes precedence over this responsibility. Or, maybe leaders just are not as vigilant to this responsibility as boards of directors, courts, or donors believe they should be.

Where do I see the breakdown? Because of my high involvement with organizational fund development and financial practices, I typically note the gap in these two areas. When the pastor observes or learns about a gap between the financial practices and the policies, the pastor, at minimum, has a moral and fiduciary responsibility to report the gap and to pursue corrective action. Let’s consider a few typical examples. The treasurer pays general operating expenses from a donor-restricted fund.... One person counts the Sunday morning cash contributions. An annual financial review is not completed. An operating budget is not established. The list could go on...

Routine time spent in assuring that the financial practices and donor care reflect the church’s policies and directives may not seem like the job of a pastor. At first glance, they may not seem to connect to spiritual matters. It surely is not most pastors’ passion. But, then again, a football coach’s responsibility is about far more than winning football games. Adhering to moral, legal, and fiduciary responsibility is among the hallmarks of leadership integrity.

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