**Twenty Vetting Criteria for Ministry Initiatives**

**By Jim Baker, Sacred Structures**

**“Good is the enemy of great” is the first sentence of Jim Collins’ business best seller, *Good to* *Great.*** Collins goes on to say, “and that is one of the reasons that we have so little that becomes great.  We don't have great schools, principally because we have good schools. We don't have great government, principally because we have good government. Few people attain great lives, precisely because it is easy to settle for a good life. The vast majority of companies never become great precisely because they become quite good. - and that is their main problem.”

The same can be said for churches. Each year we are faced with more opportunity than we have time or resource and without a clear vetting process we can easily settle for less than the best. Church members come to us with their passions they want funded. Church staff return from the latest conference with new ministry ideas they want to implement. With a constant flow of ideas, requests and opportunities for Kingdom impact confronting church leaders, a set of vetting criteria can serve as filters and help distinguish the good from the best.

**Twenty Vetting Criteria for Ministry Initiatives**

1. **Spiritual**: What indications are there the initiative is God’s will?
2. **Agreement:** Degree of staff and lay agreement, support, affirmation: High/Medium/Low
3. **Principles:** Is the initiative consistent with the church’s mission, values and doctrine? How so?
4. **Priorities:** Degree to which the initiative addresses the church’s objectives and goals: Scale of 1-10
5. **Alignment**: Degree to which the initiative supports the church’s core strategies in worship, discipleship, service and missions: Scale of 1-10
6. **Impact**: Degree of potential Kingdom impact on the church’s mission, vision, objectives, goals and strategies: High/Medium/Low
7. **Probability of Success**: Likelihood of the initiative being well received by church leadership and the target audience and implemented successfully: High/Medium/Low
8. **Risk/Reward**: Degree of risk versus potential reward: High Risk/Low Reward; High Risk/High Reward; Low Risk/High Reward; Low Risk/Low Reward
9. **Cost/Benefit**: Are there budgeted funds for the initiative? If not, how will it be funded? What is the demand on the church’s facilities and support services: High/Medium/Low
10. **Capacity:** Is there sufficient staff, lay leader and volunteer time and motivation to see this initiative through? If not, what additional staff and/or volunteers will be required?
11. **Trade Offs**: If we do this what will we not be able to do and/or have to stop doing?
12. **Competency**: Do we have the current staff and/or lay competency to successfully implement this initiative? If not, what type of competencies will be required and how will they be secured?
13. **Champion:** Is there a staff and/or lay champion who will lead this initiative? Who is it?
14. **Problem Avoidance:** What potential problems might we foresee if this initiative is implemented? If it is not implemented?
15. **Obstacles:** What are the obstacles to implementing this initiative? How will they be addressed?
16. **Precedent:** Do we have a track record with this type of initiative? What were the results?
17. **Relational:** Who will be impacted most by this initiative? Who will benefit? Who might potentially be hurt? Who else needs to be involved in this decision?
18. **Goals:** What are the Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely goals of the initiative?
19. **Metrics:** What are the key metrics that indicate success? How and when will they be reported?
20. **Communication:** What are the channels for communicating the plans and outcomes?