

# Moving Forward, Stepping Up

By Barney Kinard

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Sharon and I took an Alaskan Cruise this year for our vacation. Of course, the Holland America Cruise Ship Zuiderdam was just huge. One of our off repeated experiences every day was to leave our room to navigate our way from deck to deck. There were really two ways to do this: use the three sets of elevators or use the stairs. Feeling we needed the exercise, we began using the stairs. The stairs were designed like the photo above, with a landing half way up or down, and the next set of stairs connected to another floor. This stair design is the most efficient use of space, as opposed to one continuous set of stairs between decks. However, I soon realized another function of that the landing between sets of stairs.

Clearly, the majority of the passengers on this cruise were retirement age. A lot of seniors take this adventure North to Alaska. Every floor has something to offer the passengers, and traveling on the boat for a week, means a lot of stair climbing, if you choose. Lots of people were using the stairs, as we were. We soon realized that the landing was becoming the convenient resting place. Here one could stop midway, experience a momentary recovery from the energy expended and gather courage to face the next set of stairs, up or down. It was more obvious that this resting place was used more when going up. I began focusing on the one movement of my foot, either going up or down, was always forward moving. Even on the landing between stairs it was forward.

As I have thought about this idea it occurred to me that Moving Forward is a leadership issue—taking another step, moving forward. However, it is not about movement, it is more about taking another step in the right direction, up or down. At the platform in between the steps (up or down) is like the decision making process, considering our options, gathering more information, getting ready to be proactive, taking the risk, conserving our energy for the next push to step up. Maybe, we just rest here, just catch our breath after the effort to get there.

However, going up is taking the leadership risk. For some it is going where you have never gone before.

For others it is a repeat performance, which is all too familiar, but having to repeat it again. Facing forward, watching your step, going up is a deliberate effort. Taking small, but intentional steps, is sound leadership in my book. Having a plan, taking calculated risks, moving forward and moving up. So the kind of leadership that matters most is leadership that is moving onward and upward.

So when we discuss our Children's Ministry going to the next level, what are we talking about? We are talking about what it will take to not only keep it moving (maintenance), but also what it will take to improve it (growth)

My Challenge: Make a list of all the programs that you are currently involved with. Then next to each one, write down one thing that you could either add or improve or enhance the quality or quantity of ministry that could take place in that program. Ask yourself the question "what can I do to make a difference in this program?" or "What one thing could I do that will make the greatest impact in the next three months?" You might look at your Job Description and go through each item there, asking the same questions to see what you come up with.

Developing your plan is what you do on the platform, putting the motor into gear is the commitment of climbing the stairs to the next level. This is advancing the ministry step by step. So it is, again, onward and upward—moving forward and stepping up.