

enrichment

FALL 2003

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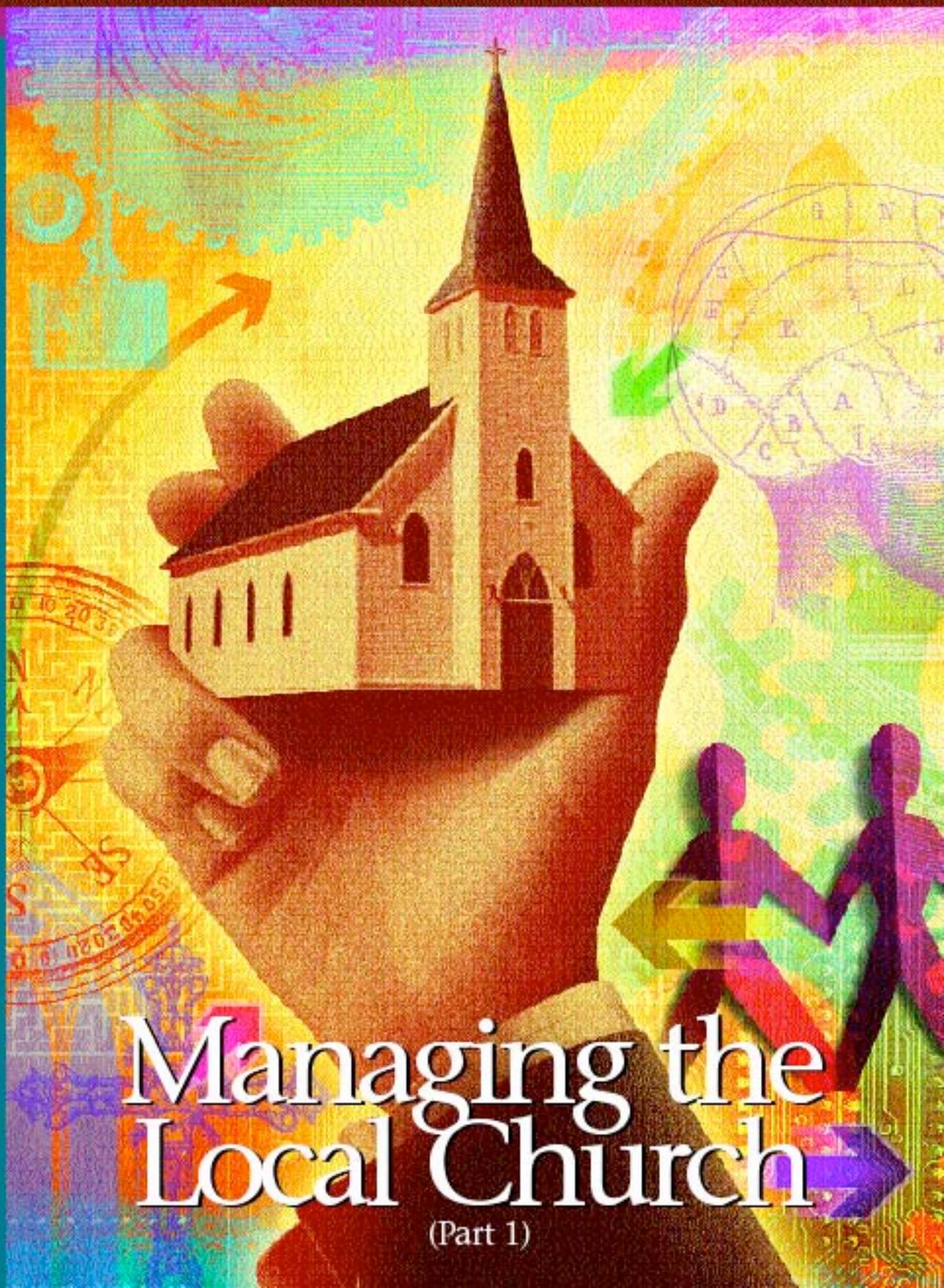
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(Part 1)



The International Language Editions
of the *Life in the Spirit Study Bible*

Bulgaria

BIBLE SUNDAY 2003

Each year, Assemblies of God congregations around the world join hands to provide one of our sister churches a Pentecostal study Bible in the national language.

On **December 14, Bible Sunday for 2003**, our goal is to generate the funds to produce the **Fire Bible** (also known as the *Life in the Spirit Study Bible**) in Bulgarian to help establish Pentecostal churches in this Eastern European nation.

Bible Sunday, sponsored by the Assemblies of God Bible Alliance, can be celebrated on any Sunday, if December 14 is not convenient for your congregation, because **every Sunday is Bible Sunday in the Assemblies of God.**

To find out how your congregation can have a part in providing this great gift to the church in Bulgaria and to order free Bible Sunday materials, please call **1-800-532-0440.**

Assemblies of God Bible Alliance is a ministry of Assemblies of God World Missions.

**formerly Full Life Study Bible*

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September 28

National Sunday School Day

JESUS—
“These words I
speak to you...are
foundational
words, words to
build a LIFE on.”

(Matthew 7:24, *The Message*)

Renew a vision for Sunday School!

The 2003 NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL DAY theme introduces a new vision for discipleship in Sunday School:

Learning to Live the LIFE*

LEARNING together
INCLUDING all who come
FINDING others who need to know
EMERGING for ministry

*In May 2003 every Assemblies of God church received a **FREE** copy of the **LIFE** video and booklet, along with a **FREE** student copy of the new training book *Awakening the Sleeping Giant*.

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FREE: Commitment Cards

These cards emphasize the potential of 1 million believers uniting to **pray**, to **learn**, and to **give** through Sunday School. Request **FREE** commitment cards. (Available while supplies last. #714 954.)

FREE Planner

Begin planning as soon as possible for **National Sunday School Day**. A **FREE** planner is available in print. Call 1-800-641-4310 and request number 714 955. You can also download a copy of the planner at www.sundayschool.ag.org.

LEARNING ^{TO} LIVE
THE

Coming in to Learn. Going out to LIVE!

LIFE



ministry matters

BY GARY R. ALLEN



Managing the Local Church

Ministers have the unique role of wearing several hats, often changing them several times each day or wearing some of them at the same time. The major hat-wearing roles of the local church minister are those of leader, manager, and facilitator.

The emphasis of the past few years has been on leadership. However, a major portion of ministry is managing the church as an organization. Many pastors tend to concentrate on either leading or managing. Few people seem to be naturally good at both leading and managing. Good leaders sometimes need to be intentional about developing management skills, and most managers need to make efforts to be good leaders.

It is important to clearly define the role and function of a leader, manager, and facilitator. This helps us know when to assume each role and to understand which one is most effective in a given situation. Leaders excel at doing the right thing, managers concentrate on doing things right, and facilitators help people do things right.¹

To better describe these principles, let's look at the minister as:

LEADER

The leader influences people to accomplish a purpose. The natural tendency of strong leaders is to just get it done, often thinking they don't have time to train someone else. However, this becomes an exhausting cycle of visioning, planning, and doing. The end result is often one person doing nearly

everything. The risk of leading is getting so excited about the big picture that you overlook strategic details and do not enlist others as partners in the vision or implementation process.

MANAGER

The manager implements the vision by involving others to accomplish the tasks that fulfill the vision. The manager must be skilled in training, enabling, empowering, releasing, delegating, assessing, evaluating, adjusting, and rewarding. A good manager can maintain the big picture and also tend to the details. The risk of managing is getting lost in the details and losing the main focus.

FACILITATOR

The facilitator helps others accomplish what they never envisioned themselves doing. This is one of the greatest joys of leadership.

Jesus was a servant leader, manager, and facilitator. He knew the Father's vision, He was committed to accomplishing His mission, and He inspired and empowered those around Him to excel in the Kingdom.

Pastors need discernment to know when to be leaders, managers, or facilitators. The Holy Spirit will help us know what role, style, and process we should utilize as well as the proper timing. Much also depends on the readiness level of the followers. At any given time, some need more leadership, others need more managing, and others need more facilitation.

Perhaps the first reaction of many

ministers is to think, *I can't do what I am expected to do now. How can I be all three?* Understanding these three roles and how they can use them in nearly every ministry function in the church frees ministers to be more creative. It helps define their own roles and functions and excites others to see how they can be more effective in ministry by partnering with their pastor.

For the first time, *Enrichment* is offering one theme in two volumes. This issue of managing the local church addresses church governance, staffing issues, and the church office. Our next issue covers managing finances, legal and risk-related issues, and buildings and facilities.

This has been an exciting challenge for the *Enrichment* staff to shift from an article-centered style to a resource-manual model for these two volumes. We hope these issues will become a resource that you refer to often and that the Internet links and resources listed in these issues will open the door to endless opportunities to learn even more about being an effective manager of the local church. 

Gary R. Allen, D.Min., is executive editor of Enrichment journal and national coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri.

E N D N O T E

1. Richard G. Weaver and John D. Farrell, *Managers As Facilitators: A Practical Guide to Getting Work Done in a Changing Workplace* (Williston, Vt.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1997), 5.



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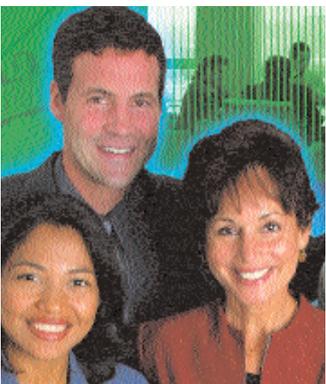
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Interview with Thomas E. Trask

While preaching and teaching are the primary spiritual responsibilities of the pastor, there is another side of pastoral ministry that must not be overlooked or underemphasized.

16 MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES TO EFFECTIVELY GOVERN CHURCH LIFE

By T. Ray Rachels

As pastor, you are called to manage your church. Navigating the matrix of church-management issues can be an arduous and painstaking task for any ministry leader. Whether large or small, paid or volunteer staff, leading and managing your church effectively remains at the heart of ministry.

With broad sweeping strokes, author T. Ray Rachels launches the theme of this issue with an article that encapsulates a number of salient points pertinent to local-church management.

27 MANAGING CHURCH GOVERNMENT: MAKING THE SYSTEMS WORK FOR YOU

By Richard L. Dresselhaus

A wise and successful pastor knows how to work within the framework of organizational polity and navigate through bureaucratic roadblocks to accomplish purposeful ministry. The work of the Kingdom is far too urgent for you to settle for less than fully utilizing the church's governmental systems to ensure the fullest possible release of ministry by every believer and staff member in your church. An important task of your pastoral leadership, then, is to ensure that the church's policies and procedures advance the work of the Kingdom rather than hinder it. This section explores the central issues of church polity and governance and provides practical guidance on how you can make the church's systems work for you.

51 MANAGING THE CHURCH OFFICE: AN EVER-CHANGING CHALLENGE

By Shirley J. Good

The church office is the hub for the business and ministry functions of the local church. To some, it is a place of refuge where the comfort and wise counsel of a loving pastor is found in time of need. For others, it is a launching pad out of which volunteer ministry flows to the four corners of the church and community. And to others, it is a welcome center for visitors seeking a new church home. However, to pastoral staff, a well-run church

office means enhanced productivity and the promise of quality pastoral care and outreach.

When most pastors said yes to the call of God to ministry, they were probably not thinking about managing the church office and having to dig their way out of paperwork. Yet, managing the office is part of every pastor's job description and pertinent to equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. This section explores the many facets of managing the church office. Whether you are the pastor of a large or small church, you will find something in this section to assist you in your office-management role.

81 THE ART OF MANAGING CHURCH STAFF *By Dan M. Reiland*

As pastor, you have a responsibility to manage and mentor your staff. Selecting and developing the right people is at the very epicenter of fruitful leadership development. Your ability to develop your staff is the lid lifter that allows your church to reach its God-given potential—a Spirit-filled potential far beyond the limits of natural gifts and talents. Unfortunately, many senior pastors have had less than euphoric experiences with staff. Regardless of where you are with your staff—really loving them or ready to leave them—this section is dedicated to help you better lead and manage your staff.

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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY JIM DARNELL

Next time in *Enrichment*

Managing the Local Church (part 2)

How can a church best manage its finances? What are the important legal issues a church needs to address? How can a church make sure its facilities are safe and inviting? These and other issues concerning church management will be discussed by James F. Cobble, Richard R. Hammar, John P. Joseph, Merwin Pickney, and others. This issue of *Enrichment* is the second of a two-part series on church management.

To order extra copies for your staff/volunteers or to subscribe, call 1-800-641-4310.

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ClergyWatch

A/G CONDUCTS NATIONAL CLERGY/LAITY SURVEY WITH BARN A RESEARCH GROUP



THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD RECENTLY CONDUCTED A NATIONAL SURVEY WITH THE BARN A RESEARCH GROUP. THE STUDY OF CLERGY AND LAITY WAS CONDUCTED OVER A 1 MONTH TIME PERIOD AND PARTICIPANTS WERE SELECTED AT RANDOM. BRG CONDUCTED PHONE INTERVIEWS TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF THE SURVEY. THE RESULTS ARE WITHIN A + OR - 3.5% MARGIN OF ERROR.

THE QUESTIONS AND FINAL RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY CAN BE ACCESSED ON THE VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION WEB SITE: WWW.VFT.AG.ORG

—Barna Research Group, Ltd. is a full-service marketing research company located in Ventura, California. BRG has been providing information and analysis regarding cultural trends and the Christian church since 1984.

George Barna is president of the organization.

UthTrax **ADDICTED TO SPEED**

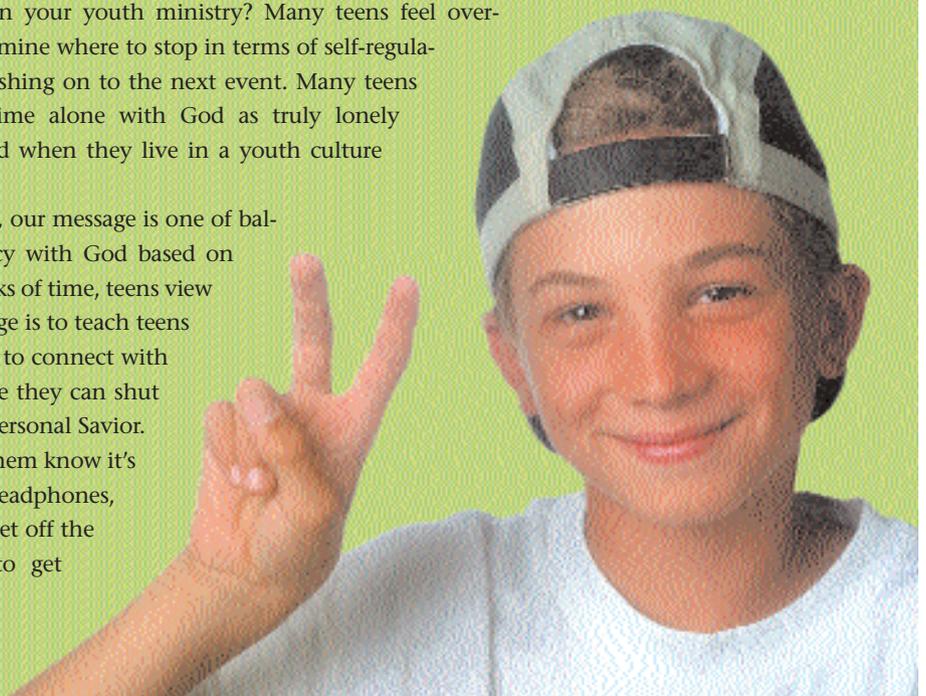
Zoom, zoom, zoom. Today's teens live by the second hand of their watch as they juggle schedules that include church and youth group activities, athletics, family, school, homework, and jobs. They are the ultimate multitaskers. In their down time they chat online, instant message their best friend, listen to their favorite CD, and do their homework—all at the same time.

How does this affect teens in your youth ministry? Many teens feel overwhelmed. They struggle to determine where to stop in terms of self-regulation because they are always pushing on to the next event. Many teens feel disconnected, describing time alone with God as truly lonely because it's difficult to hear God when they live in a youth culture where silence is deafening.

In a society addicted to speed, our message is one of balance. If we teach them intimacy with God based on schedules or predetermined blocks of time, teens view it as one more duty. Our challenge is to teach teens how to slow down long enough to connect with God, to find a secret place where they can shut out the hype and relate with a personal Savior.

Help your teens unplug. Let them know it's OK to turn off the computer, headphones, telephone, and cell phone and get off the hamster wheel long enough to get alone with God.

*—T. Suzanne Eller,
Muskogee, Oklahoma*



Boomers to Zoomers

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

The greatest challenge facing pastors today is the absence of adults age 18–24 in their churches. The percentage of young adults in the general population is almost twice that in the church.

The signs for the future are not encouraging. In 2001, George Barna reported:

- Less than 5 percent of U.S. churches have a youth group of 100 or more.
- The positive effect of being raised in church on future attendance is declining.
- Today's teens have the lowest likelihood of attending church as adults reported in the last two decades.
- Adults under age 35 are the least likely to have a biblical perspective or consistent faith practices.

Panic is not the proper response to these trends. Action is.

The average congregation is still organized as if its adults marry immediately out of high school and then surface 2 weeks later (post honeymoon) in the young married Sunday School class. Sometimes this happens. But with most people not marrying until at least their late twenties, we have a huge demographic gap in church ministry. Young adults often read this as rejection.

If we think of age-level ministries as a demographic

pipeline designed to serve people in all life stages, we have a section of pipe missing—ministry directed specifically at under-30 adults. In many cases, the crisis is the absence of a church program to which young adults can relate. This is a situation that would be regarded as intolerable if teens or seniors were at risk.

Many churches use the following ministries, often in combination, to reach the under-30 demographic:

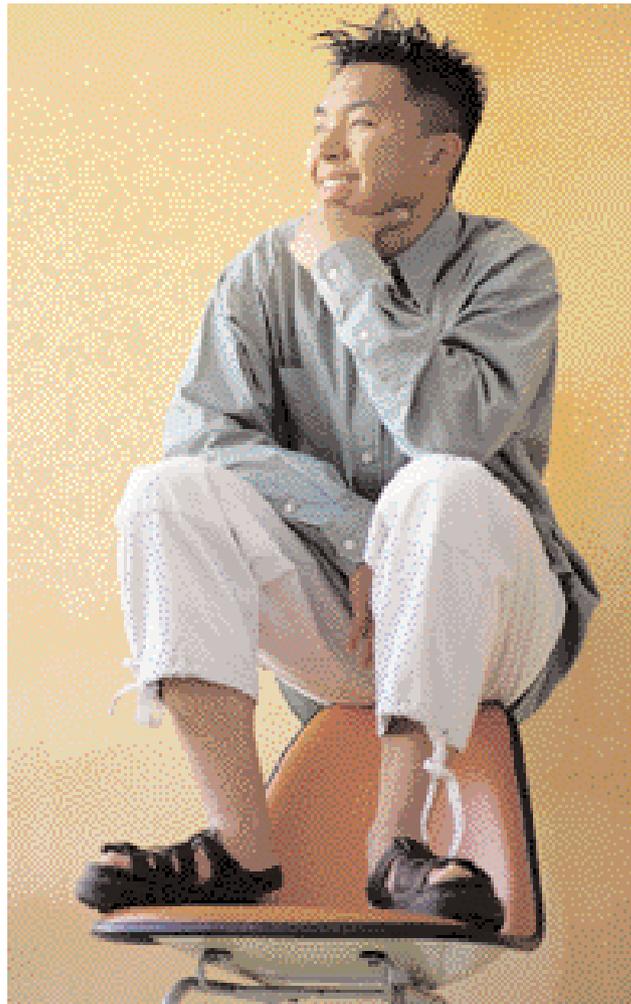
- Sunday School classes.

- Evening services.
- Coffee houses.
- Small- and medium-sized home-based groups.
- Internet-based cyber communities.

The vehicle is not as important as making an effort to help your young adults feel they still have a seat at the table. We will get only one chance.

Source: SBC Life, June/July 2002.

—Earl Creps, doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary



Did You Know?

- The Iraq war has sparked so much interest in the world oil market that the Energy Information Administration now provides the Energy Situation Analysis Report online at www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/security/esar/esar.html.

- In 2001, overall life expectancy in the U.S. reached an all-time high of 77.2 years, from 77 years in 2000. For men, life expectancy increased to 74.4 years, up from 74.3 years in 2000. For women, life expectancy jumped to 79.8 years, up from 79.7 years in 2000 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

- Most federal agencies have youth-related sections or sites that provide games, fun facts, career data, and other useful information. See www.fedstats.gov/kids.html for a list of kid pages relating to science, health, safety, transportation, energy, substance abuse prevention, and other timely topics.

- There are more men in the 20s, 30s, and early 40s than there are women. There are 119 men for every 100 single women in their 20s and 107 men for every 100 women ages 30–44. That trend reverses for adults 45 to 64 and 65 and older, with just 72 men per 100 women ages 45 to 64 and 31 men per 100 women in the 65 and over age bracket. Single includes never married, divorced, or widowed (Census Bureau).

- Computers for Learning transfers excess Federal computer equipment to eligible nonprofit organizations (www.computers.fed.gov/Public/home.asp).

- Government auctions are often a great source of low-cost, affordable cars, office equipment, and even real estate. For information, visit www.firstgov.gov/shopping/auctions/auctions.shtml.

—Lisa A. Crayton

CrossRoads

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

New technology inevitably creates issues for which previously established procedures are inadequate. For example, *USA Today* reported that one-third of the American public views talking on the cell phone in public as the apex of rude behavior.

I cringe every time a pager or cell phone goes off in church. The issue has become more a question of who gets the attention in a church service: Verizon or God?

The Old Testament concept of Sabbath indicates that God rested from His work of creation on the seventh day (Genesis 2:1,2). The people of God in the Old Testament recognized the seventh day of the week as a day of rest (Exodus 16:23-26). The Sabbath related to time and was a symbol of sacred time and a future that would reflect the culmination of God's design.

The author of Hebrews developed the concept of Sabbath and rest in Hebrews 4:1-11. Simply put, Sabbath has to do with God's redemptive plan that takes place in space and

time but supersedes all the limitations of a 24/7 understanding of time.

Pagers and cell phones interrupting church services is not merely about annoyance. To enter into a time and place where our sole purpose should be to give God space and then allow intrusions from phones and pagers is essentially demonstrating that we will accept a relationship with God only on our personally defined terms.

When we come together as God's people, we enter into sacred space. It's a place where human clutter that's kept to a minimum allows God to speak and say: Can you hear Me now? Good.

—Byron Klaus, D.Min.,
president, Assemblies of God
Theological Seminary



Photo: Courtesy of the Billy Graham Center Museum

History at a Glance

GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA: ITALIAN REFORMER

505 years ago—1498

Italian religious and political reformer Girolamo Savonarola, along with two Dominican disciples, is hanged and burned on grounds of heresy, although still professing his adherence to the Church. (See article on Savonarola on page 118.)



100 Years Ago—1903

The Holiness Baptist Churches of Southwestern Arkansas was organized at Sutton, Arkansas, on November 6-8. This body of Pentecostal believers, led by William Jethro Walthall, eventually grew to 36 churches, all of which were brought into the Assemblies of God in 1917. Walthall later served as chairman of the Arkansas District of the A/G.

75 Years Ago—1928

The revised *Book of Common Prayer* was rejected by the English Parliament. Nonetheless, the revised prayer book was quite widely adopted in the Church of England with episcopal approval. Official sanction from Parliament did not come until 1965.

50 Years Ago—1953

After wholesale evacuation of missionaries from China during World War II, the last missionaries of the China Inland Mission left on July 20.

25 Years Ago—1978

On October 16, the College of Cardinals elected Karol Wojtyla of Poland, at the age of 58, to lead the Roman Catholic Church. He was the first non-Italian chosen as pope in 456 years. Over the last 25 years, as Pope John II, he has become the most recognized person in the world and the most traveled pope in the 2,000-year history of the Church. He speaks eight languages and has met with numerous world leaders and spoken before large audiences around the world.

—Glenn Gohr, assistant archivist,
Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center

HealthWatch

TWO SIMPLE RULES FOR A HEALTHY DIET

If you live in America and own a TV, you know that as a nation we are getting heavier. Simply look around at the mall and you see this phenomenon in action.

For many people, being overweight contributes to deteriorating health. Diabetes, cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, gall bladder disease, back pain, and esophageal reflux are some of the problems that can result from being 20 percent or more over your desired body weight.

Weight maintenance and modifying your risk of these ailments can be achieved by following two simple rules.

1. Eat five or more fruits and vegetables every day.

Eating fruits and vegetables ensures that you get plenty of fiber, vitamins, and

phytochemicals, which protect against many physical ailments. Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and thus facilitate attempts to control weight.



2. Reduce portion sizes

Learn what normal portion sizes look like, then stick to them. Doing this reduces calories and helps you better control your weight. Keep total meat intake to 6–8 ounces per day. Don't supersize your lunch. Take half of your pasta home with you when you visit your favorite Italian restaurant. Limit sugar-sweetened beverages to 12 ounces per day. Better yet, drink diet beverages. Use a 1/2-cup measuring cup as your portion size at dinner. No foods are off limits if portion sizes are kept in check.

Following these two simple rules are the easiest things you will do today.

—Donna Skelly, RD



What In the World!

BIG FAT GREEK WEDDINGS AND THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Every once in awhile a movie that has taken the country by storm is worth mentioning in a sermon. Just as Jesus referred to the arts by referring to Jewish poets (the Psalms) and the Roman theatre ("hypocrite" means actor), so we must be willing to call attention to artistic expression in our society. In today's culture, speaking the language of the person in the pew means being conversant with plays and movies.

Over the past year a low-budget movie has become a box office blockbuster. My Big Fat Greek Wedding is living proof that you don't have to spend big dollars or have a big name to make it in Hollywood. It's a film that gives permission to those of us who are Greek-Americans to take pride in our ancestral roots. What is more, it's a film that celebrates the value of extended family relationships regardless of the ethnic background you may claim.

A close look at this comedy will reveal a portrait of human hunger too serious to laugh at. My Big Fat Greek Wedding illustrates the innate desire individuals have to experience authentic community. The Portokalos family is an imperfect (although helpful) picture of the church. Likewise, the bride of Christ has blemishes and yet possesses the honesty and loyalty that make it a family that nonbelievers want to be a part of.

—Greg Asimakoupoulos



TimeWise

MEETINGS—FRIEND OR FOE?

Are church committee meetings consuming too much of your time? The following suggestions should help:

1. **Start with prayer.** God wants to be in control of your meeting.
2. **Start on time.** Don't wait for those who are always late. By starting on time, you make a statement: "The meetings will start with or without you." Some companies charge \$1 for each minute a committee member is tardy.
3. **Provide a written agenda for each meeting.** The agenda should be distributed as members walk in, or better still, given to them in advance.
4. **Stick to the agenda.** Avoid asking, "Any new business to consider?"

Make sure the meeting stays on track. When it begins to wander, bring it back.

5. **Eliminate unnecessary meetings.** Ask yourself: *Do I have enough agenda items to call a meeting? Can the matters be discussed by phone or e-mail? Can meetings be combined?*
6. **Schedule committee meetings for after service whenever possible.** With the busy schedules of both pastor and laity, consider a brief meeting at the conclusion of the Sunday evening or weeknight service to avoid another night out.
7. **Keep the meeting interesting and simple.** Open the meeting with a lighthearted story or joke. Avoid boring histories on agenda items. Get to the point.
8. **Don't make committee members feel too comfortable.** Avoid soft couches or lounge chairs. Use a room with straight-back chairs and monitor the temperature. Consider a short stand-up meeting at the conclusion of an evening service. Evidence reveals that 5-minute meetings usually accomplish the same as 5-hour endurance tests.
9. **Provide minutes to all members.** This provides documentation that can assist in legalities as well as provide the details of action taken.
10. **Don't call a meeting to discuss these suggestions.**

—Faith Hamilton, office coordinator, *Enrichment journal*

Congregational Life

TITHING DOWN 62 PERCENT IN THE LAST YEAR

Amid widespread reports that churches are suffering from decreased giving over the past year, a new study from the Barna Research Group helps explain at least part of the problem. The proportion of households that tithe to their church—that is, give at least 10 percent of their income to that ministry—has dropped by 62 percent in the past year, from 8 percent in 2001 to just 3 percent of adults during 2002.

The research indicated that the drop is due to a combination of factors: the soft economy has either diminished household income or led to concerns about financial security; the nation's political condition, in terms of terrorism and the war in Iraq; and scandals involving Catholic priests reduced people's confidence in church leaders.

Barna noted that the most effective long-term strategy to encourage more people to tithe is to ensure that congregants make life decisions on the basis of a biblical

worldview. In the short-term, it is helpful to give evidence of how efficiently the church uses money, demonstrate the life-changing impact of the church's ministry, and establish trust and confidence in the leadership of the church.

—The Barna Research Group, Ltd. is an independent marketing research company located in southern California. Used by permission. Visit Barna Research Online at www.barna.org



LeaderLife

HOW TO COME ACROSS LIKE A GENIUS—IN 9 EASY LESSONS

Imagine the influence you could have if others thought of you as a genius. It's really not that hard. Here are nine easy steps to earning your genius card:

1. Understand that genius is conferred by others. Instead of worrying about your IQ, cultivate a positive impression through humility and authenticity.

2. Develop your own unique strengths. Most leaders never find greatness because they try to be clones.

3. Focus on your passion. Geniuses are not balanced people. They are extraordinarily good at a handful of things.

4. Appreciate the value of silence. Never miss a good chance to shut up. Silence earns respect. Speaking by request is 10 times more powerful than speaking by intrusion.

5. Speak last at meetings. Closing speakers are perceived as judicious, mainly because they benefit from the contributions of their more anxious peers.

6. Read irrelevant literature. Geniuses are interesting people. Reading widely will make you a person that others look forward to seeing.

7. Build relationships with people smarter than you. This is great fun and greatly humbling: a win/win situation. The best case is to invest in relationships with really smart, intimidating lost people.

8. Ask questions instead of giving sermonettes. Well-crafted questions have an enduring impact far beyond our statements because they help people think instead of telling them what to think.

9. Seek the anointing of the Spirit on all of your communication. We pray for God to anoint our preaching. Imagine what would happen if we asked for the same on our listening, our questions, our silence, our reading, and our relationships.

The bottom line: in Leonard Sweet's phrase, "we must transition from being learned to being learners."

My major recommendation: Tie the points above to passages in the Book of Proverbs and the ministry of Jesus, and then adapt this outline for teaching or staff training. We own what we train.

—Earl Creps, doctor of ministry director,
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

CyberBuzz

ONLINE CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCE GUIDE

Pastors looking for easy access to a central depository of recent and comprehensive spiritually related materials have an online search tool at their disposal to make the job easier. The Congregational Resource Guide (www.congregationalresources.org) is a free online directory that offers a variety of



resources on far-ranging issues. The references are associated with different aspects of efficient congregation- and faith-development and are designed to help church leaders gain insight into the problems they face and to encourage ways to transform their congregations.

The CRG site is updated regularly to provide pastors and lay leaders instant descriptions and commentary on books, magazines, Web sites, organizations, and other religious resources. It is organized into 10 main categories that include administration, building issues, religion in America, congregational vitality, leadership, public ministry, specialized ministries, spirituality, and worship. Entries for books, journals, magazines, guides, Internet resources, and organizations have been substantially annotated. The site contains targeted searches for specific issues or topics, plus an option to click on a publication resource and be directly linked to the publisher for an order.

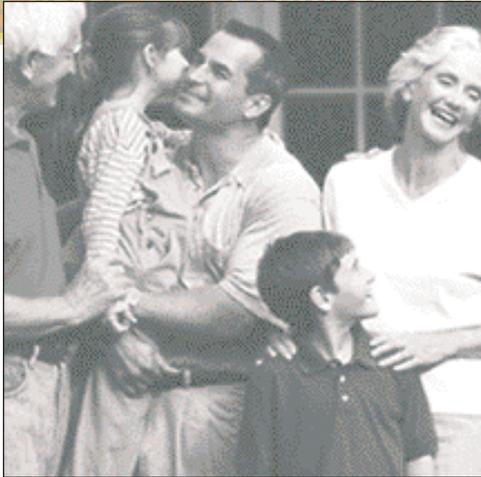
The site is a joint effort between the Alban Institute and the Indianapolis Center for Congregations. It is funded with a Lilly Endowment grant.

—John W. Kennedy

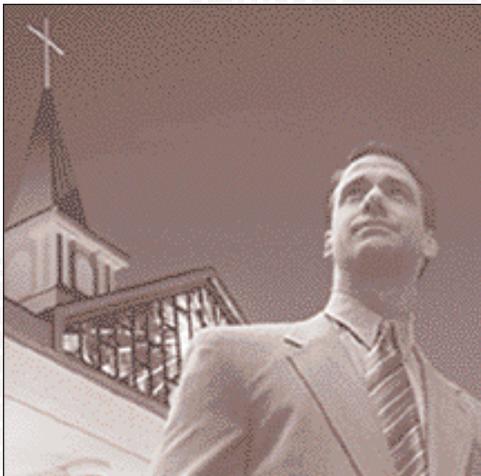


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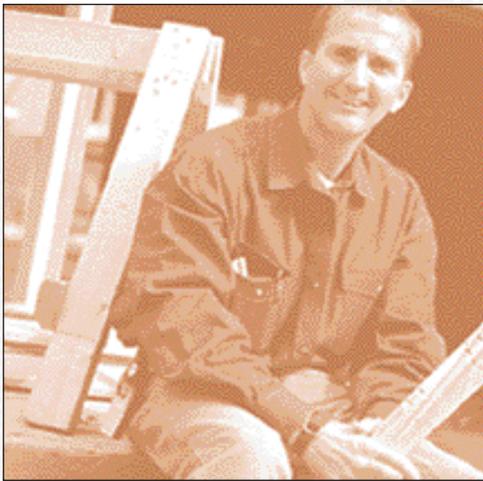
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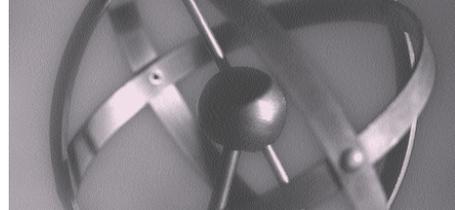


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your church, or your ministry.



Ask the Superintendent— Management: the Other Side of Pastoral Ministry

The Early Church appointed men to serve as administrators so others could give themselves to prayer and studying the Word.



While preaching and teaching are the primary spiritual responsibilities of the pastor, there is another side of pastoral ministry that must not be overlooked or underemphasized—the business and management side.

In this first of two interviews on the subject of managing the local church (the second will appear in the winter 2004 issue), General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask puts on his management hat and talks about church governance, the church office, and working with pastoral staff.

THERE ARE SEVERAL CHURCH-GOVERNANCE MODELS USED TODAY. WHAT GOVERNANCE MODEL IS MOST EFFECTIVE FOR CHURCHES?

TRASK: A governance model should not put all authority in leadership. None of the biblical models do that. A governance model that gives the pastor the flexibility he needs, but also has accountability built within that model, is critical. If this is not done, the church may end up with a dictatorship where the authority is invested in one person who has no accountability. In the Word

of God we see that with leadership comes accountability.

HOW DO YOU DISTINGUISH BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGERIAL ROLES IN THE MINISTRY?

TRASK: A leader deals with the spiritual aspects of the church; the manager deals with the functional aspects—budget, facility maintenance, staff care, and day-to-day operations. Some feel that management is an unspiritual task. But you can't divorce the church from management; it is part of the responsibility of leadership.

If some pastors are not gifted as managers, then it is necessary for them to either develop their managerial skills, or find someone who has these skills to help them. Many larger churches have administrators or executive pastors who help the senior pastor manage the church. There is a biblical pattern for this. The Early Church appointed men to serve as administrators so others could give themselves to prayer and studying the Word. However, if a church doesn't have the resources to provide an administrator,

then the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the pastor.

Pastors can increase their managerial skills in many ways. God equips those whom He calls. However, that doesn't remove pastors of the responsibility to avail themselves of the helps provided today. For instance, if a person lacks fiscal-management skills, she can take a course and increase her abilities in that area.

The Holy Spirit also helps pastors with their managerial skills. In a pastor's daily devotions he can say, "Lord, I need wisdom for today. I need Your help. I need insight." As he listens, God will give the ideas and direction needed.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DYNAMICS IN MANAGING STAFF AND VOLUNTEER WORKERS?

TRASK: The first responsibility is to see that job descriptions are clear so others understand what is expected of them. Second, once the ministry responsibilities have been clearly defined, the pastor must give the staff the freedom to function in their roles. When I had 10 full-time staff members, I gave them their portfolio, but I didn't stand over them to watch if they performed their tasks. People must understand what's expected and then be accountable to the church, the senior pastor, and the Lord.

RELEASING OTHERS IN MINISTRY HAS RISKS. HOW CAN PASTORS REDUCE THESE RISKS?

TRASK: Pastors can minimize risks by being selective about the people they put in positions. Know their capabilities and limitations. Make sure the lines of communication are always open so there are no hidden agendas and no secrets. And pastors need to trust. The rewards of empowering people far outweigh any liability. The few problems I had to deal with usually resulted from me not being careful enough in selecting personnel.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF SELECTING STAFF FROM WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH?

TRASK: I see four main advantages in hiring from within. First, the congregation knows that person. Second, that person is

committed to the vision of the senior pastor. Third, loyalty and trust have already been established. And fourth, it carries with it a reward system. If a couple comes into the church and begins to volunteer and it is evident they have the call of God on their lives, when a need for a paid staff position opens up, the pastor can say, "We have noticed your gifts in ministry. We would like to reward you. Come on staff with me." It says volumes to the laity and to the church.

WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIRING AND SUPERVISING STAFF?

TRASK: That depends on the size of the church, but the pastor has to be the point person. In a multiple-staff church, a business administrator, senior administrator, or executive pastor may hire some staff, but the senior pastor must be kept informed of who is on staff and to whom they are accountable. The bottom line is the senior pastor is held responsible for all staff positions.

SOME CHURCHES ARE HIRING FEWER PAID PASTORAL STAFF MEMBERS AND UTILIZING MORE VOLUNTEERS. PLEASE COMMENT ON THIS.

TRASK: Leadership must prepare laity for the work of the ministry. The more people you get involved, the more work can be done. It's a mistake to put all leadership roles in paid staff. When a church grows, you need to add paid staff for oversight of the various ministries. Those people still need to involve volunteers in the work of the ministry. That's one of the roles of the leadership for the local church.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR THE CHURCH TO MAINTAIN AN EFFICIENTLY RUN OFFICE?

TRASK: Having an efficient office begins with the pastor. As ministers, we must guard our time. A pastor must spend time at the church office to be available to people. That requires time management. When I was senior pastor, I let my secretary know that certain days and certain times of the day were given for devotions, sermon preparation, and preparation for ministry. There

were also certain days I was available for counseling and staff matters. People need to know that somebody is tending to the business of the church.

If a pastor is the only full-time employee, regular office hours must be kept. The pastor might not be able to keep a schedule like a church that has a full-time secretary or receptionist, but the congregation needs to know that the pastor is available to them 24/7.

Pastors of smaller churches also need to manage their time. Perhaps they can't afford a full-time secretary. If this is the case, the pastor can ask volunteers within the congregation to staff the office. One person might not be able to carry the full load, but two or three part-time volunteers could answer the phone. The congregation should still know that the pastor or a volunteer will be at the church to answer the phone during a predetermined part of the day. If pastors will do this, people will not need to call them at home. Pastors of smaller churches need to communicate their schedules to their congregations. This creates a healthy discipline essential for the church and pastor.

The pastor must maintain excellence in the office operation of the church. We are serving the kingdom of God, and it deserves our best. The church office should be kept neat and orderly. When people come to the church office, they should be received in a professional manner. Our business dealings tell the public what kind of church we are.

WHAT ABOUT CONNECTING THE CHURCH OFFICE TO THE INTERNET?

TRASK: While there are benefits to having Internet access in the church office, caution must be exercised because many pastors and church employees have been caught in the trap of pornography. The enemy will lay any trap possible.

Several Internet service providers screen for objectionable sites to prevent users from accessing questionable material. As well, many software programs prevent access to objectionable sites. These systems must be put in place to prevent any misuse of the Internet in the church office. 

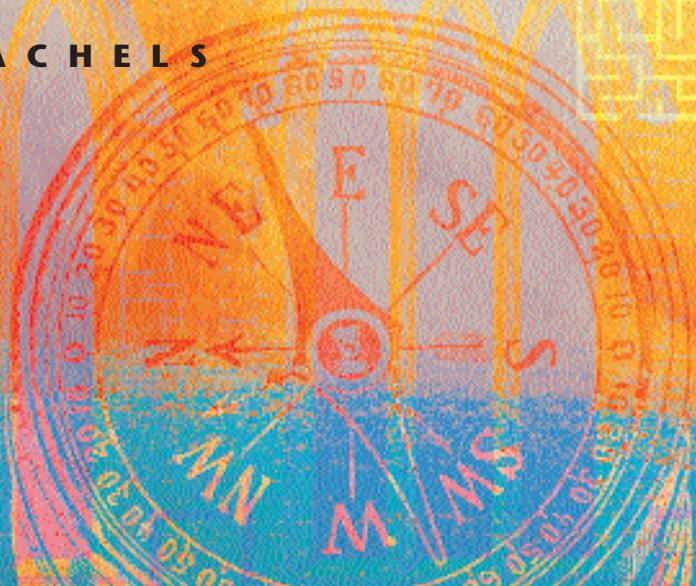
Management Principles To Effectively Govern Church Life

This issue of *Enrichment* is part one of a two-part series on church management. The goal of these issues is to better equip pastors and church leaders to successfully navigate through the oftentimes complex matrix of church-management issues.

The following article serves as our primer on the subject of church management. It summarizes a variety of management issues that will be covered in greater detail in subsequent articles in this issue as well as articles appearing in part two—the winter 2004 issue.

Finally, topics are cross-referenced within and across the three major sections of the issue giving multiple entry points on subjects of specific interest to you.

BY T. RAY RACHELS





The closest I have come to seeing a perfectly managed organization was on a downtown sidewalk in Visalia, California. There were 20 preschoolers, walking single file and accompanied by 4 teachers—one teacher in front, one at the rear, and one on either side—boxing them in. Down the middle was a rope held by the teachers in front and back. Twenty preschoolers, 10 on each side, held the rope as they walked, talked, laughed, and looked around. It was a perfect system for getting preschoolers in a difficult environment safely from point A to point B, with minimal disturbance.

The teachers were competent in their task and the kids happy to be led. With everybody going in the same direction, it was management by walking around; all parties had a hands-on relationship to the task. And those who looked on applauded the event with appreciation.

John Kotter of the Harvard Business School says, “Management is about coping with complexity. Without good management, complex enterprises tend to become chaotic in ways that threaten their very existence. Good management brings a degree of order and consistency to key dimensions.”

Those 20 preschoolers, led by 4 wise managers, is an example of how to deal effectively with a group that has a high potential for disorganization.

MANAGING THE LOCAL CHURCH

As pastor, you are called to manage your church. Whether you have a large or small church, paid or volunteer staff, leading and managing your church effectively remains at the heart of ministry.

Don Cousins, in *Mastering Church Management*, says: “The term *administration*, itself, hardly sets feet dancing. In many people’s minds, *administration* stands precipitously close to *bureaucracy*. It smacks of endless details, rigidity, red tape, and routine.

“Yet, administration—managing the affairs of a church—often spells the difference between pastoral effectiveness and ineffectiveness.”

MANAGING THROUGH CHURCH GOVERNANCE

The single most effective strategy for building public confidence in organizational church life is *accountability*. Without openness and transparency that provides disclosure of decisions and actions, a pastoral leader invites suspicion and mistrust. One of the important ways to build trust is to have good church governance. (For a thorough discussion on this subject, see the section on managing church government beginning on page 27.)

Constitution and Bylaws

Part of church governance includes proper organizational structure. Every congregation needs to be accountable to its constitution and bylaws. If these documents are well-written, they will provide structure for responsible accountability for everyone within the organization. Bylaws set up procedures by which the church operates. These procedures are not obstacles to effective ministry but an aid to getting things done right. It is important to cultivate congregational respect for its bylaws. The foundation of accountability is a uniform governance standard to which everyone must conform.

Boards

Decisionmaking at the board level is hard work. It is a process that requires asking questions and insisting on answers. It requires evaluating facts and information, weighing risks and rewards, and reviewing alternatives. It may also require consulting experts such as accountants, attorneys, fundraisers, engineers, and financial planners.

The board must have freedom to discuss and debate issues, deliberate, and then make decisions. The board can make responsible decisions only if it has its eyes open and has access to all relevant information. If a pastor discourages board members from asking questions or characterizes reasonable inquiry as negative, he* fails in his responsibility and does not serve the

best interests of the church. Board members cannot fulfill their duties if their pastor refuses to provide answers to reasonable questions.

Where only views supporting or approving pastoral decisions are permitted, truth and reality are suppressed. Where differing views are discouraged or characterized as negative thinking, accountability is also suppressed. The result is poor, ineffective, and unaccountable board decisionmaking. The better rule is to encourage open and free discussion where all views are heard and respected.

There is no reason why a split decision is always unacceptable. Where there is freedom to vote against proposals, accountability abounds, and effective, positive board decisions are possible.

The Book of Acts relates how Paul and Barnabas had a sharp difference of opinion (Acts 15:36–41). Although Paul and Barnabas disagreed, it worked out well for both.

Unanimity was not necessary for their ministry to continue. In fact, unanimity, had it been the rule, would have frustrated any meaningful missionary activity by either Paul or Barnabas.

A caution is in order, however. Boards need to temper the pursuit of honest inquiry with a spirit of cooperation toward pastoral leadership to avoid an antagonistic relationship. When the spirit of cooperation is lost, the church’s pastoral leadership, ministry, and accountability will suffer.

Finances

Church finances are another area that must be managed well. Maintaining financial integrity requires full and regular disclosure to a competent church board and to the congregation at the annual business meeting.

A church’s budget should be analyzed for cost-benefit ratios, as in any effective business or organization. In ministry, organizational efficiency means positive, tangible outcomes resulting from investing funds.

If a church wants to regain lost credibility, it must make sure it keeps

promises and does so within budget. A team of leaders that includes members of the congregation, not just staff, also enhances credibility. This process involves time and a long-term strategy. (Managing the Local Church, part 2 [winter 2004], will discuss church finances in much greater detail.)

Paperwork

Since a church is a corporation, accountable not only to its membership, but also to its legal charter, it must pay attention to paperwork. Corporate existence, health, status, financial condition, liability, and accountability all depend on written documents.

A key component of accountability for any church is an effective system of documentation. Without a proper paper trail, it is difficult for anyone to determine who made what decision, based on what information, and who was told about it. Good minutes tell the story.

Every good pastor needs accountability with a good board. “A board of directors,” said Robert R. Thompson and Gerald R. Thompson in *Organizing for Accountability*, “acts only in the form of a resolution. If formal resolutions are not proposed, debated, and passed, the board has not acted. Moreover, if a resolution exists only in verbal form, every board member will have a different recollection of what it was. The virtue of putting resolutions in writing is that it helps end any dispute as to what action the board took.” A rule of thumb: always put it in writing. (See sidebar, “Minutes of Meetings—A Guide,” in the managing church government section, page 42.)

MANAGING GOALS AND VISION

The success of a well-managed church depends on how it fulfills God’s plans and purposes. In one of Annie Dillard’s books, she talks about life lessons on swinging an axe and chopping wood.

“Chopping wood,” she says, “is best done when you aim for the chopping block. If you aim for the wood, you will hit nothing. Aim past the wood,

aim through the wood; aim for the chopping block.”

That idea holds a great lesson for building a healthy local church. When swinging your management axe, look past the present moment, past the little pieces of church life that may hold distractions for you, past the inefficiencies and poorly managed systems that may now be in place. Take the long view, the view that tells you and the entire congregation about a fabulous future that is available to express itself in biblical proportions, needing only a tough and tender guiding hand to point it toward a Christ-honoring future.

Big questions remain: *What priorities must I employ that puts into motion a standard of excellence for my pastoral leadership? What management principles govern effective church life? Will Spirit-led people follow? How do I get people on board? Where do I start?*

For a pastor to lead his church and manage it well, he must know where his church needs to go. This is accomplished through a vision and mission statement. This credo—a mission statement—will be a behavioral guide for every person in leadership, from the custodian, to the ushers, teachers, board members, to the lead pastor. Be specific and honest. Whatever success or failure you may have as pastor should tap into that credo/mission statement as the values that will be applied by every team member to every ministry in the local church, no matter how small it may seem. And your effectiveness will come only to the degree that people buy into your beliefs and purpose. If this is not in place, you will not be able to effectively lead your staff and church. Here are some areas that are important.

There should never be confusion about why your church exists.

Spell it out. Then include your well-defined purpose in every strategy the church undertakes. Your influence within and outside the congregation will grow as you present clear and compelling reasons for your church’s mission to the community.

Make sure everyone can clearly state the church’s purpose.

It’s one thing for the pastor to know what the church’s business is; it’s another to transfer that vision so the people have ownership of it.

Thomas Watson, Jr., founder of IBM in 1914, built the incredible success of IBM on the few words he wrote and distributed to each employee he hired: “One, the individual must be respected. Two, the customer must be given the best possible service. Three, excellence and superior performance must be pursued.” These words are still in force at IBM and are at the heart of its *Business Conduct Guidelines* manual which is distributed to every employee once a year and is required reading.

When a church’s vision and core values are clarified, energy is infused into the entire organization.

Make sure your people know their role in making the church’s purpose a reality.

Cousins likens the church to a football team. The purpose is to get the ball across the goal line. But unless the wide receiver knows his route, and the left tackle his blocking assignment, and the center the snap count, they will trip over each other and go nowhere. Every player needs to know his specific assignment.

It’s the same in the church, notes Cousins. If the worship leader doesn’t know how much time he is allotted in the service, or if the youth leader doesn’t know what activities he or she is expected to plan, or if the ushers aren’t told about special events, there will be disarray. In the well-managed church, these players not only know the overall purpose, they also know what they can do to contribute to the goal. (See the section managing the church office beginning on page 51 and managing church staff, beginning on page 81.)

Put your best foot forward by having a neat, clean, and attractive facility.

This is especially true for those areas people pass through on Sunday morning—“Main Street,” as Don Cousins calls it.

Main Street is the corridor from the parking entrance, through the parking area, church entrances, lobbies, and main halls, to the auditorium—the portion everybody, especially visitors, passes through on Sunday. They may not see the offices or rehearsal rooms, but people at church will walk through Main Street.

Neglecting Main Street speaks volumes about church management. Pastoral managers who are careful about these details will likely have other aspects of ministry under control. (Managing the Local Church, part 2 [winter 2004], will discuss managing church facilities in greater detail.)

“Management helps us make the most of the light we have,” advises Cousins. “Organization helps us enhance our capabilities. If we order our lives well, and carefully manage those placed in our charge, our churches will shine brightly, as lights set on a hill.”

Decisionmaking is easy when values are clear. A church’s core values are the basis for church leadership decisions. Nothing feels better than playing on a team where everyone is trying to move the ball toward the same goal. Few experiences are more stressful than working with a group whose values are moving them in opposite directions. (See sidebar “Developing an Outstanding Staff” in the managing church staff section, page 102.)

MANAGING CHANGE

A museum in Corpus Christi, Texas, contains an exhibit of a mockingbird skeleton. Inside the winged skeleton is a huge eggshell. The bird produced an egg too large to lay and died trying to lay it. A leader who emphasizes or promotes teachings that do not match the theological selectivity of most people in his congregation understands how that mockingbird must have felt.

When you feel change is needed and seek to initiate that change before bringing your board and congregation alongside you, then, as the premedieval

mariner’s maps warned about unknown territories: “There be dragons.”

People will follow a good pastor almost anywhere when trust is established. And trust takes work and time.

When working toward change, a wise pastor’s most important role is to determine the parameters in which committees or task forces do their work. The idea is to give away tasks to competent people. Let them know what needs to be done and when, empower them, and release them to fly. When you cast your bread on waters like that, it usually comes back buttered, with jam on it. (See Web sidebar, “Finding and Discipling Quality Volunteers” at www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org. Click on current issue and choose article “Managing the Church Office: An Ever-changing Challenge.”)

The most common mistake is trying to change too much, too fast, too soon. We overestimate what we can do in 1 year and underestimate what we can do in 5 years.

In guiding people toward a realistic pace of change, Paul Munday, director of the Andrew Center, a nondenominational agency for helping church leaders, suggests that effective pastors and lay leaders follow these principles:

Affirm that grandiose is not always grand.

Overambitious, big-time plans do not always serve the best interests of a local church. In many instances, small is beautiful, beneficial, and better. Management guru, Charles Handy, reminds us that it is often the seemingly insignificant things that alter life most profoundly:

“The chimney, for instance, may have caused more social change than any war. Without a chimney, everyone had to huddle together in one central place around a fire, with a hole in the roof above. The chimney, with its separate flues, made it possible for one dwelling to heat a variety of rooms. Small units could huddle together independently. The cohesion of the tribe in winter slipped away.”

Where do you need to build chimneys, rather than bonfires, in the life of your congregation?

Affirm that a journey of many miles is taken in many steps.

Most change efforts need to be undertaken step-by-step, plank-by-plank. Three years worth of change can’t take place in 3 months. But it can be broken down into a series of smaller incremental changes. A sequence of multiple steps gives people time to adjust to each smaller change as it comes.

Affirm that one size does not fit all.

Congregations can be seduced by the notion that a successful change effort in one place will automatically work in their church.

Each congregation has its own unique identity and fingerprint, defined by its culture, systems, and temperament. Church size affects the programs and ministry approaches a leader should attempt. For instance, it might not be wise to force highly structured programming on a smaller, relationally based, family church.

Affirm that addition is better than subtraction.

Change happens best as we multiply people’s options, rather than pulling the plug on cherished activities. Adding a Saturday morning small group for working women is preferable to disbanding the Tuesday morning sewing circle (no matter how gossipy they may have become).

Affirm that God’s provision accompanies God’s vision.

Dream the dreams, but count the cost. Challenge committees or task teams with a fundamental question: “Do we have the minimal resources necessary—in terms of time, money, people, and energy—to undertake this effort?” There will always be tension between vision and provision. Even the best idea, pushed at the wrong moment, can be a disaster.

MANAGING TIME

The term *time management* may seem like an oxymoron to most pastors. But meeting the challenge of time management is not impossible.

Pastors work with five resources: time, people, money, buildings, and equipment. Of these five, time is the hardest to manage because we cannot see it. Yet this invisible resource determines what we accomplish with the other four.

In recent years several effective time-management principles and methods have emerged from the business and church world. As you review the qualities/characteristics of thinking and behavior patterns for keeping control of the things that can be controlled in your schedule, ask yourself: *Do my time-management habits help or hinder my productivity as a church leader?*

Leaders often lament their need to find time to effectively accomplish their ministries. *Finding time* is a picturesque metaphor but a less than precise phrase. Time is never lost, only poorly used. If pastors see themselves as stewards of a precious gift and build on that perception with effective goals and habits, effective ministry results.

First, decide your life and ministry priorities. Second, decide to use your time to accomplish those priorities, instead of the dozens of other important matters that clamor for your time. Function from this perspective and you will find the time about which other people only dream.

IMPROVING MANAGERIAL SKILLS

In a famous comic strip, Charlie Brown is forlornly explaining to Lucy the scientific details of why kites fly. As he's busily winding up his kite string, he says that the ratio of weight to surface area is known as *sail loading*. Lucy listens to his technical explanation about kites and praises his knowledge. In the last frame, Lucy asks him why his kite is down the sewer.

Most pastors and church leaders

recognize that, despite countless books and articles on the art/science of management, something is still missing. How do you keep your kite in the air and out of the sewer?

Many pastors may not know their management style and how it affects their role as pastor. Once they determine their style, pastors also need to understand how effective their style is and how to change their style to be most effective in every situation. (To determine your management style, complete the sidebar, "Finding Your Personal Management Style," page 22.) To understand more about management styles and how to use them effectively, visit: http://business.baylor.edu/phil_vanauken/articles.html.

Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric from 1981 to 2001, presided over that company's rise to become the largest corporation in the world. An interviewer in *Harvard Business Review* asked him how GE was able to maintain its growth momentum, given the complexities of the organization, its size, and the need to discipline spending.

Welch's answer: "GE is big in its overall size but small in its execution."

Question: "What are three or four things I can do right now to make my company small in execution?"

Answer: "Get information from every person so each knows his/her ideas count. Celebrate small successes. Evaluate people down to the lowest units, so they know their achievements are constantly being measured and that they count. It's critical that people know their contributions matter. It's critical that they know what they do will be seen and rewarded."

Welch further said that you should "always overstaff an opportunity. If you believe a business is critical to your future, put better people on it than it seems to deserve. If it's a \$5 million business, put a \$300 million person to work on it while it's still \$5 million, and they will make it \$300 million. You put a \$5 million person

on it, and it will stay \$5 million."

That same principle applies to church management. If your church is located in a community filled with young couples with small children, the most valuable staff person will be one whose expertise is ministry to young families with children. (Go to page 84 and read the section "Hiring Eagles—One at a Time.") Good leaders/managers must point their knowledge toward the right goals.

"Talent, like muscle, grows through exercise," advises Kenneth Hilderbrand. "If we fail to extend ourselves and merely go through the motions while we wait for something more fitted to our abilities to come along, we are headed for continual frustration. We may think we have ability enough to warrant starting at the top, but the only chance most people get to start at the top is digging a hole."

God has never put anyone in a place too small to grow. Wherever our place may be—on a farm, in the office, behind a counter, at a teacher's desk, in a kitchen, wearing a uniform, caring for a child, or behind a pulpit—when we fill that place to the best of our abilities, personal growth is inevitable. Three things being to happen:

We do a better job of what we're doing.

We expand our talents through vigorous use.

We fit ourselves for larger responsibility and wider opportunity.

You reap what you sow. It's a principle so elementary that all other factors, without exception, pale in comparison. **e**

T. Ray Rachels is superintendent of the Southern California District Council of the Assemblies of God, Irvine, California.



**Use of the masculine pronoun for pastor is used throughout this issue and should be understood to include both genders.*

FINDING YOUR PERSONAL MANAGEMENT STYLE

What is meant by management style, and how can you know what yours is and how to use it? The following exercises identify management styles and the typical behaviors that accompany each. Completing the exercises will help you characterize your personal management style.

Ministry Style Assessment

Using a five-point assessment scale, describe to what extent the 40 attributes below characterize your ministry style. Choose two or three people who know you well to help you think through your answers as objectively as possible. Use a scale of 1-5, where 1 means "very uncharacteristic of me" and 5 means "very characteristic of me."

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Decisive | _____ 16. Visionary | _____ 31. Detached |
| _____ 2. People-pleasing | _____ 17. Demanding | _____ 32. Experimental |
| _____ 3. Organized | _____ 18. Sensitive | _____ 33. Power-conscious |
| _____ 4. Change-oriented | _____ 19. Concern for routine | _____ 34. Conflict-avoiding |
| _____ 5. Exhorter | _____ 20. Nontraditional | _____ 35. Information-focused |
| _____ 6. Spontaneous | _____ 21. Perfectionist | _____ 36. Activist |
| _____ 7. Efficient | _____ 22. Accommodating | _____ 37. Dominating |
| _____ 8. Innovative | _____ 23. Planner | _____ 38. Contemplative |
| _____ 9. Controlling | _____ 24. Questioning | _____ 39. Detail-intensive |
| _____ 10. Informal | _____ 25. Confrontational | _____ 40. Controversial |
| _____ 11. Politically sensitive | _____ 26. Procrastinating | |
| _____ 12. Persuasive | _____ 27. Formal | |
| _____ 13. Competitive | _____ 28. Long-run focused | |
| _____ 14. Sharing and participative | _____ 29. Results-focused | |
| _____ 15. Closure-oriented | _____ 30. Emotional | |

The 40 style attributes are regrouped into four columns below. Transfer your numerical responses to the corresponding column and enter your total score for columns I – IV.

Style I	Style II	Style III	Style IV
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
5. _____	6. _____	7. _____	8. _____
9. _____	10. _____	11. _____	12. _____
13. _____	14. _____	15. _____	16. _____
17. _____	18. _____	19. _____	20. _____
21. _____	22. _____	23. _____	24. _____
25. _____	26. _____	27. _____	28. _____
29. _____	30. _____	31. _____	32. _____
33. _____	34. _____	35. _____	36. _____
37. _____	38. _____	39. _____	40. _____
Total: _____	Total: _____	Total: _____	Total: _____

The ministry style with the highest point total signals your dominant, or preferred, ministry-management style. The higher the score for your preferred style relative to the other three styles, the more that style probably dominates your ministry behavior. More than one high score among the four shows you have a broad managerial-style repertoire—the capacity to utilize more than one ministry style.

Ministry Style Matrix

Consider the following descriptions of management styles:

Style I: Commanders (decisive, exhorter, controlling, competitive, demanding, perfectionist, confrontational, results-focused, power-conscious, dominating) combine a direct interpersonal style with a strong relationships orientation. Commanders like being in the driver’s seat and thrive on using legitimate power to achieve ministry results.

Style II: Shepherds (people-pleasing, spontaneous, informal, sharing and participative, sensitive, accommodating, procrastinating, emotional, conflict-avoiding, contemplative) are relational like commanders, but they prefer to facilitate (guide, encourage, equip) ministry members rather than to overly direct them.

Style III: Managers (organized, efficient, politically-sensitive, closure-oriented, concern for routine, planner, formal, detached, information-focused, detail-intensive) use formal, official policies and procedures to efficiently direct ministry activities in a way that permits independent action and decisionmaking, minimizing the need for group deliberation and participative management. Maintenance managers favor orderly, routine operations run “by the book.”

Style IV: Entrepreneurs (change-oriented, innovative, persuasive, visionary, nontraditional, questioning, long-run focus, experimental, activist, controversial) like to operate independent of organizational bureaucracy with an eye toward facilitating change and innovation. Entrepreneurs yearn to start projects hooked to a tantalizing vision of ministry progress.

Management Style Situational Effectiveness

Which of the four ministry styles is most effective? That depends on circumstances. Each style has unique strengths and weaknesses, depending on the needs of the particular ministry. The table below provides insight into the situational effectiveness of each style for the 10 most common managerial challenges.

	Commander	Shepherd	Managers	Entrepreneur
Jolting productivity	A	D	B	C
Defusing conflict	A	B	C	D
Fostering change	D	B	C	A
Bolstering morale	A	B	C	D
Implementing routine work	B	C	A	D
Implementing new projects	C	D	B	A
Building relationships	D	A	C	B
Managing a crisis	A	D	B	C
Goal setting	B	D	A	C
Keeping in touch with people’s feelings	D	A	C	B

A = Style of greatest potential B = Style of second greatest potential C = Style of third potential
 D = Style with least potential

Management-style flexibility is a cardinal virtue. You need to strive to utilize your preferred style (the one God has especially suited you for) in as many situations as possible that benefit from its strengths. You should also use any strong subordinate styles in a similar fashion.

It’s important to know where your style strengths are ineffective and seek out partnership opportunities with other leaders who hold complementary style strengths. Ultimately, all Christian ministry is a partnership between interdependent team members empowered by God to do His kingdom work.

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S E C T I O N I

Managing Church Government

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Managing Church Government: Making the Systems Work for You

It is time to look at how we as pastors manage church boards, church committees, and the annual membership meeting.

BY RICHARD L. DRESSELHAUS





1. Call to order by the pas
7. Devotional and enrop
- determination of quoru
- removal of the minutes
- reports.

The ticket to the pulpit is bought with management dollars—fail to manage and soon you will fail to preach. It is just that simple.

I have to think hard and long to identify a pastor who has been requested to leave because he was a poor preacher, an insincere minister of the gospel, or a sluggard who refused to work. Typically, failure has to do with management—failure in managing time, people, morals, staff, boards, money, and family.

It is time to look at how we as pastors manage church boards, church committees, and the annual membership meeting.

Basic assumptions become the essential place to start. First, a pastor must have a fundamental understanding of how administration systems work. (See sidebar “Understanding Your Church’s Constitution and Bylaws.”) How can any system function unless those charged with its execution comprehend what these systems are and how they work?

Second, a pastor can, with confidence, bank on the averages. In any given congregation, regardless of size, there will be enough people in the majority to provide good leadership when given proper direction. Of course, every church has its notorious

troublemakers. But they will typically be balanced out with a majority influence that will carry the day. With good direction, a typical group of parishioners will rise to the occasion and make good decisions.

Third, a wise pastor understands that blame must be accepted as one-sided. When there is confusion and disorder in the church, the pastor must be prepared to accept responsibility. Why is this helpful? Because if the blame is placed on others, a pastor is powerless to address the problem. But if the pastor sees himself as the one ultimately responsible, he can move forward in identifying solutions to the problem. When leaders accept this responsibility—though rarely is the fault entirely theirs—the problem is well on its way to a solution.

Fourth, good leadership is committed to the long view. Leaders must be prepared to outlast the detractors. I recall a leadership challenge that developed in my ministry years ago. The solution took years to resolve. If I had been less than doggedly determined, it might have marked the end of my effectiveness in that particular pastorate. Effective leadership must be prepared to weather the storms

and outlast the strategies of the critics. Here is a strong argument for long-term pastorates. It takes time to silence criticism in a positive and constructive way.

Fifth, wise leaders have learned the act of cautious response, in contrast to careless reaction. Years ago I faced a strong assault on my leadership as pastor. There was every reason to be confrontational and reactionary. But the Lord helped me understand the dynamics of this particular challenge. Imagine a donkey that is typically passive. Yet, with continual prodding, the donkey reacts with a strong kick. This was the mental picture the Lord dropped into my mind. I was like that animal. The Lord showed me that if I became agitated, my detractors would use that reaction against me. People who were fundamentally supportive would have been given reason to sympathize with the critics. It was my commitment to response over reaction that saw me through that significant time of crisis.

Sixth, effective pastors project a creative and contagious vision that is attractive to their people. There is nothing that promotes unity in the church as effectively as the presence of a God-given vision. People really do want to be led, and the instrument by which they are led is a clear, practical, Spirit-inspired vision. When people get their eyes on the harvest and God’s way to bring it in, they have little interest in the nonessential.

Finally, governmental structures vary greatly from church to church. (See sidebar “Weighing the Tough Issues Relative to Local Church Governance,” page 32). The typical Assemblies of God church follows a congregational form of church government—the pastor and board are elected by the full membership of the church. There are, however, modifications to this model that sometimes include a board of elders, either appointed or recognized, to serve alongside the elected deacon board. Their focus is on visitation, counseling,

(continued on page 34)



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHURCH'S CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

The constitution of a church contains the fundamental principles that govern its operation. The bylaws establish the specific rules of guidance by which the church is to function.

WHY HAVE A CONSTITUTION?

A church is a body of believers organized for worshiping God, evangelizing the lost, and discipling believers.

When a church develops a constitution, it helps clarify its purpose, provides the foundation for building an effective church, and defines its structure. It also gives members and potential members a better understanding of what the church is about and how it functions.

Understanding the value of a written document that clearly describes the basic framework of your church makes drafting the constitution a much easier and more rewarding experience.

WHAT SHOULD BE COVERED IN A CONSTITUTION?

The church constitution should be concise, yet contain the important framework of an organization. It should be between two and four pages in length, leaving the detailed procedures of a group's daily functions to the bylaws. The following is an outline of standard information that is included in a constitution. The constitution covers these topics in a clear, simple, and concise manner.

- Article I. Name
- Article II. Prerogatives
- Article III. Affiliation and Relationship
- Article IV. Tenets of Faith
- Article V. Membership
- Article VI. Officers
- Article VII. Meetings
- Article VIII. Departments and Committees
- Article IX. Finances
- Article X. Property
- Article XI. Amendments

WHAT ARE BYLAWS?

While the constitution covers the fundamental principles of a church, it does not provide specific procedures for operating the church. Bylaws set forth in detail the procedures to conduct the church's business. Bylaws are usually easier to change—requiring only a simple majority—than the constitution that normally requires a 2/3 vote. Below is an outline of the kinds of information normally covered in the bylaws.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE BYLAWS?

Bylaws must not contradict provisions in the constitution.

Bylaws generally contain specific information on the following topics:

- Article I. Duties of Officers
- Article II. Elections and Vacancies
- Article III. Membership
- Article IV. Departments
- Article V. Property Rights
- Article VI. Order of Business
- Article VII. Parliamentary Order
- Article VIII. Amendments
- Article IX. Arbitration of Disputes

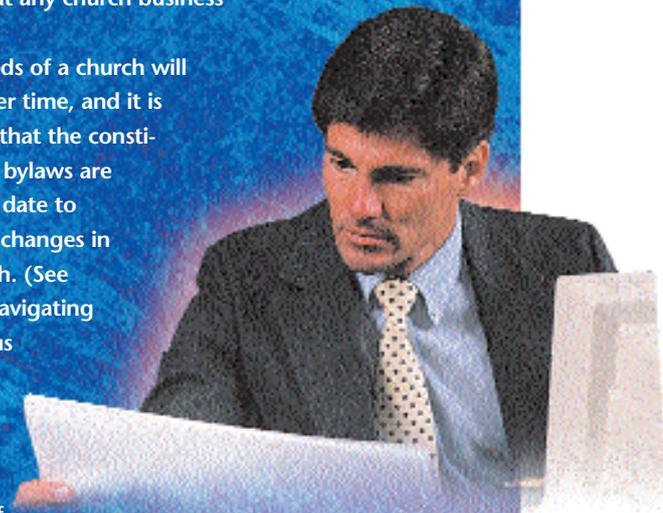
WHAT DO WE DO WITH THEM?

A constitution and bylaws articulate the purpose of a church and provide the procedures for its orderly functioning. Constitutions usually require a 2/3 vote of the membership for adoption and are very seldom changed. Any changes made to the constitution must be provided to the membership 60 days before the scheduled business meeting. Bylaws require only a simple majority for passage and can be changed or amended at any church business meeting.

The needs of a church will change over time, and it is important that the constitution and bylaws are kept up to date to reflect the changes in your church. (See sidebar "Navigating Treacherous Waters," page 48).

Make sure each member of the church has a copy of the church's constitution and bylaws. This will help unify and educate your members by informing them about the opportunities that exist for participation in the church and the procedures that they need to follow to be active, contributing members. A thorough study and review of the constitution and bylaws should be a part of leadership training.

—Adapted from Mercer University Center for Student Involvement & Leadership Web site. Used with permission.



WEIGHING THE TOUGH ISSUES RELATIVE TO LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNANCE

Here are some issues and questions to ponder in determining which form of government may be best within a local church.

I stood at the altar consoling weeping young people immediately after a church business meeting in which their beloved pastor received just under the two-thirds vote needed to sustain his pastoral tenure. A little more than one-third of the congregation had determined the destiny for all. The scores of young people crying around me were not members and did not have a vote.

A few of the old-timers had decided the pastor was getting too many new people into the church; and if they didn't stop it, their power base would be broken. They would have never explained it in those terms; but as an outsider conducting the business meeting, I think I knew their real agenda.

That was many years ago, and the church has never been the same. Clearly congregational government had not worked. It had become an impediment to growth and served only to enhance the entrenched power of a clique determined to keep control on power.

Go with me to the opposite extreme. The pastor of a church did not trust congregational governance. He handpicked elders to govern. Over time, this small ruling clique ran the church into the ground. Years later, only five percent of the congregation is still around. Neither those who attended the church nor the district officials could penetrate the defenses erected by this self-perpetuating eldership.

Take one more example. A well-established Assemblies of God church of about 200, with over 40 years of history in the community, elected a new pastor. Prior to his selection, the church in earlier years had reached as high as 400 in attendance. Often when a church is in decline, a church board simply does not have sufficient skills to properly evaluate the applicants for the pulpit. This pastor had an initially engaging personality that hid a passive/aggressive personality bent on control.

In today's urban environment, church members typically do not stay and fight it out as had been the case in an earlier era. They vote with their feet. Within a few years, the church membership had dwindled to the size of the pastor's personality and leadership skills. Since the membership hovered safely over the 20 minimum status for General Council affiliation, the pastor was able to gain control by clearing the membership rolls of all but his loyal followers and family members. He led his loyal cult into removing themselves from the Assemblies of God. Within a couple of years, he persuaded them to sell the debt-free property for over \$1 million and place the assets in his nonprofit evangelistic association so he could do worldwide ministry—a code name for his retirement. He legally stole a church that others before him had sacrificed to pay for.

All the above cases are real. Each shows the weakness in the governance structure of the local church.

What can be done?

BIBLICAL FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNANCE

The Assemblies of God has always believed and practiced that congregational government is both a preferred biblical and practical model. There is plenty of Scripture to warrant this view. The Jerusalem church elected the replacement for Judas (Acts 1:15–23) and selected deacons (Acts 6:1–7). Not only is there a New Testament basis for congregational government, we have also experienced these benefits: (1) it has permitted a sense of ownership by the local church, thereby promoting a greater measure of personal responsibility for the well-being of the body; (2) leadership must be in touch with the membership to sustain election—their authority derives not from the appointment of a bishop (superintendent) but from the people's earned respect; and (3) persons with strong leadership gifts flourish in a congregational atmosphere where there is not the fettering of an overreaching hierarchical church denominational bureaucracy.

The New Testament also supports an alternative model of church governance based on eldership. Look at the churches founded by Paul. You may search long and hard, but you will not find local leaders being elected by young and immature congregations. Selections were made by Paul's appointment (Acts 14:23), or his representative's (Titus 1:5). Elders are to look after all the flock of God to resist the wolves that prey (Acts 20:28,29). Never does Paul counsel a church in trouble to raise its flag of "Don't touch me; we are a sovereign local church" when devourers are on the loose.

Demas, Alexander the metalworker (2 Timothy 4:10,14), and Diotrefes (3 John 9), to name a few, were leaders who would have subverted the good congregational government of any church. They needed a footprint of eldership from outside their local church on their stubborn necks.

Clearly, there are problems in any form of local church government if leadership is unwise or self-seeking, or if the local church itself has a history of unwholesome spiritual pathology.

RESOLVING CHURCH-GOVERNANCE ISSUES

How could the three problem cases given at the beginning of this article have a different outcome?

The church where the pastor was voted out? In this instance, the pastor made a fundamental leadership mistake of not processing new adherents through the membership class and membership rolls. These nonmembers, had they been members, would have given him a comfortable margin to proceed with his leadership in a growing church.

Also, the church bylaws would have been better served to include this provision: a pastor who fails to receive two-thirds of the vote may continue his tenure for 1 year if he receives a majority of the votes. This would permit the pastor a year of grace to work for healing and to add new members. Then, after 1 year, if the pastor failed to receive two-thirds, his tenure would end.

The church where the elders took control? Self-perpetuating eldership ultimately kills a church because there is no way to break their monopoly on power. The problem is avoided by spiritual oversight from outside.

During my time of overseeing district-affiliated churches as an assistant district superintendent, we created appointed boards for over 160 of our 430 churches. The pastor nominated whom he wanted on the board—Pentecostal laypersons inside and outside the church, as well as neighboring ministers. These were then approved and appointed by the district superintendent. The functioning of the boards was regularly reviewed to ensure accountability. The superintendent had the authority to vacate any or all positions on the board in the event that became necessary.

One of the churches under this system grew to over 1,200 people and did a \$3 million church construction under this model of governance. They were reluctant to apply for General Council affiliation because that eldership model had worked so well. Perhaps this form of governance mentoring permitted them to adjust well in subsequent years to the congregational governance now in place.

The church stolen by an unethical pastor? In the Assemblies of God, we must either be content to live with such risks, or we must change our system to permit outside intervention.

Let's face it. Churches are different. If you place authoritarian leadership and democratic congregational church governance on a continuum, then a church like Corinth, with its multiple divisions and doctrinal chaos, needs a more authoritarian system of church governance. A mature church like Jerusalem appears to have operated well with congregational decisionmaking.

[Parenthesis: apostles and prophets. Some are advocating that local church governance function according to the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4:11,12, and therefore the leadership direction of the church be set by local apostles and prophets. If Paul meant his words to be taken in that manner, it's rather strange that when he met with the leadership of the Ephesian church at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem, the leadership consisted solely of elders—not apostles or prophets—and it was to the elders he gave the charge to be "bishops" and "pastors" (Acts 20:17–38, especially verses 17 and 28). Read also the position paper, "Apostles and Prophets": www.ag.org/top/beliefs/position_papers/4195_apostles_prophets.cfm.]

At the start of this new century, we would do well to realize that governance for local churches requires some flexibility, that one style does not necessarily fit all. The dangers lying on the opposite sides of the continuum are twofold: (1) an authoritarian, dictatorial, and ego-centered control (always masked behind a guise of "spiritually strong leadership"), and (2) an entrenched voting bloc within a sick church that votes out any pastor under whom the church begins to grow.

DETERMINING THE BEST FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNANCE

Here are some questions to ponder in determining which form of government may be best within a local church.

1. How new is the church? If it has been in existence for less than several years, then the scales tip in favor of operating more by an eldership type of government until there is sufficient maturity to operate within a congregational model. The church would be well-advised to function as district affiliated, benefiting from the insight and help of spiritual overseers.

2. Is the church deeply divided and unable to reconcile its members peacefully? Congregational government will likely result in one side's winning and the other leaving. An alternative is eldership so the congregation, for a time, is given a rest from voting on anything. This church likewise would benefit from being district affiliated for a season.

3. Is the church growing stagnant or declining? The choices a declining church must make to reverse its downward trend are often so painful the members either do not recognize the problem or are unwilling to change things even if they do see what needs to be done. Such a church could vote itself into district hands, but that is not likely to happen. Our present system does not provide any other solution for this very difficult issue.

4. Is the church healthy and growing, with effective incorporation of new members and well-thought-through bylaws? Then, the congregational model works well, and becomes a vehicle for the further spiritual maturation of the membership. They can participate, like the Jerusalem Church, in the vital choices of leadership and church direction.

In our Fellowship, there is a wonderful partnership of pastors, ministers, district and national leaders, and local church members and boards. Within the counsel of this circle of relationship, there is wisdom. We need one another and a multiplicity of approaches for the full outworking of God's plan for the local church.

—George O. Wood, D.Th.P., is the general secretary of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.

THE DEACONS AND THE PASTOR

Church boards that desire to be sensitive to the needs of their pastor should give careful thought to the following five questions.

The New Testament makes it clear that the primary task of deacons is to serve. And the pastor, as much as anyone, needs their help. It is to them that the pastor looks for guidance and help in handling the affairs of the congregation.

The entire church will feel the positive effects of a strong and trusting relationship between the pastor and the board of deacons. The harmony that exists in this relationship will soon be copied by the membership of the church.

Several questions should be asked:

(1) Who is the final authority in the local church? Is it the pastor or is it the deacon board? This is hardly a fair question. The Lord is the Head of the Church. His is the final authority in the church. Yet, He works through people. It is His pleasure that the pastor, in harmony with the deacon board, together seek the will of God for direction in handling the affairs of the church. A spirit of "submitting one to another" should prevail. This is not, however, to lessen the place of the pastor as the undershepherd over the household of God.

(2) What are the responsibilities of the deacon board to the pastor in matters of finance? The deacon board should be sensitive to the needs of the pastor in this area. An annual review of the pastor's salary and benefits is advisable. The increases in cost of living, the positive performance of the pastor, and a comparable wage analysis should be taken into consideration in setting levels of compensation. A pastor should have faith that the Lord will supply his needs, and the deacon board should seek the Lord as to their response to his faith. Mutual respect and understanding are imperative on this sensitive issue.

(3) Is it necessary for the deacon board to give gifts to the pastor on special occasions? This will be a matter for individual boards to determine. While a pastor should never expect any kind of special treatment, there may be occasions when courtesy and love would make giving a gift appropriate. There are many ways for a congregation to show their love and appreciation to the pastor, and an occasional gift may be a chosen way to do so. Never should such considerations as these become of major importance, either to the pastor or to the deacon board.

(4) Is it advisable for the deacon board to maintain a retirement program for the pastor? If possible, there should be positive action on this matter. Too often a pastor reaches retirement age and lacks the financial resources to provide for his own welfare. If a pastor has lived in a parsonage during the years of his ministry, he may be without a home at the time of his retirement. A systematic program of investment will eliminate this unfortunate circumstance. Many churches have developed flexible and practical plans for the retirement needs of the pastor.

(5) Is it advisable for the deacon board to grant the pastor leave for study and prayer? Most certainly it is. In addition to vacation time, a pastor should be allowed time away for study and prayer. One pastor is given 2 weeks per year for this purpose. He has commented that during this time he is able to read through a number of books and have time for prayer and meditation. Deacon boards should admonish their pastor to avail himself of this opportunity. The work of God will be blessed by it.

—Richard L. Dresselhaus. Reprinted from *The Deacon and His Ministry*, ©1977.

Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Mo. Used with permission.

(continued from page 30)

and the general support of pastoral ministries. Yet, in other churches, the managerial board of the church is referred to as the board of elders. Great care must be taken that the leadership structure of the church is representative of the people and separated from all forms of autocratic and dictatorial rule.

Let us look at the systems by which these leadership assumptions find expression in the ongoing governance of the church.

CHURCH BOARDS: FRIEND OR FOE?

For 40 years I have been blessed by God with wonderful church boards. Initially it was a board of good men, much my senior, who trusted a 28-year-old greenhorn to assume the leadership of a rather large and influential congregation. I was both humbled and honored. Without their careful mentoring and wise leadership, I would not have stood a chance. I am forever indebted to this incredibly wonderful church board. They were my friends. (See sidebars "The Deacons and the Pastor" and "Pastor-Board Relationships in the Smaller Congregation")

So it has been through the years. Through property acquisition, building programs, staff recruitment, and budgetary management, good boards have been used of God to impact the Kingdom. Church boards have been God's gift to me.

I have a deep conviction that God not only speaks to me, but He also confirms that leading through the board. It is amazing what happens when board members understand that the pastor believes God also speaks through them. It follows that they will be careful in what they say when they know how seriously a pastor takes their words.

Here are the imperative principles:

Establish strong and healthy relationships with each member of the board.

Since effective ministry flows out of relationships, building these relationships becomes critical. What is experienced in the boardroom relationally,

PASTOR-BOARD RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SMALLER CONGREGATION

After the honeymoon of starting a new pastorate is over, the work of building strong pastor-board relationships is just beginning.

Shortly after assuming my role as district superintendent, I surveyed our ministers and found most of them desired help with pastor-board relationships.

Pastors often view their boards as adversaries. A number of boards have the same feelings toward their pastors. Pastors and boards sometime fail to understand each other's roles in leadership and are insensitive to each other's needs. Shortly after the honeymoon is over, problems develop that hinder the pastor's ministry and the progress of the church in the community. This can be especially true in a smaller congregation.

PASTOR/BOARD RELATIONSHIPS

Pastors need to be sure of God's call on their lives. Becoming a person of God is a worthy ambition. Leaders need to make sure their vision is God-birthered. Board members need to share the pastor's vision.

Great ideas and vision are born when people of God communicate and build relationships with each other.

Pastors need to know their board members by spending time with them. Visit their homes and work-places. Pastors need to understand their board members' backgrounds—how they think and make decisions. Many board members live and work in hostile environments. They will appreciate knowing their pastor cares for them. They, too, have had to make adjustments to leadership styles for each pastor with whom they may have served. Visiting with board members over a cup of coffee or lunch can be profitable in promoting fellowship and building relationships.

Pastors need to be aware of the spiritual level and needs of each board member. It does little good to bemoan the level of commitment and spiritual concerns of board members unless the pastor is willing to encourage them. Most board members will be responsive to a pastor's honesty, sincere concern, and passion to please God and do His will.

A wise pastor affirms and honors his board and helps them feel they have an essential place in their relationship with him. Most men and women appreciate being involved in the responsibilities of the church and its mission. It is rewarding for them to feel needed and valued.

Boards must feel the need to be partners with their pastor. They are assistants and helpers. Some church disciplines give the board absolute authority. In many Pentecostal churches, the pastor is the God-called leader. The board is chosen by the people and used by God to assist the pastor in the ministry of the church (Acts 6:3-7).

(continued on page 36)



(continued from page 35)

Many churches have gone through difficult times, some of which could have been avoided by being more diligent in building relationships. Most problems that arise are a result of poor communication, failure to understand each other, and incompetent and insensitive leadership. This often results in declining attendance and financial difficulties with accompanying spiritual and moral erosion.

Pastors and boards can make a difference when they build strong relationships and address problems with honesty, prayer, and a willingness to work together. Issues need to be dealt with in love, honesty, and firmness. Unwise leadership allows issues and problems to escalate until they polarize the people and division takes place. This leaves people wounded and discouraged. Many churches that once had a passion to make a difference in their world have become museums and failed in their mission.

Wise board members understand that some pastors are visionary and eager to see the church progress, while other pastors are laid back and content to lead in a leisurely manner. It takes time, patience, and understanding for board members to work with and accept different leadership styles. (See sidebar "Finding Your Personal Management Style," page 22.)

Wise boards make themselves available to share the pastor's vision and help with implementing the mission of the church.

It is important that boards seriously accept the responsibility of being leaders in the church. Consistent and faithful support of the church in attendance, finances, and cooperation with the programs of the church should be par for the course. First Corinthians 4:2 reads: "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (NKJV).

PASTORAL CHANGES

For a church to fulfill its mission, it is essential that the pastor and board understand they are fellow laborers with a common mission. Churches do best when there is an atmosphere of love, understanding, and trust. One place where trust is often broken, understanding is lacking, and love is not demonstrated is during pastoral changes. During these times, church members may lose heart and no longer share the enthusiasm they once knew. It is then incumbent on pastors to lift the level of people's faith and trust in each other. Here is where the work of the pastor and board becomes important.

Stress is often present when churches go through pastoral changes. Close relationships may have been severed and some people go through grief. Or, discord and frustration may have led to the pastor's resignation. This affects the way people respond to leadership. Wise leaders are patient and kind with people who go through the trauma of transitions. Leaders may need to spend more time than anticipated while helping people through this grief recovery.

Some church members may feel the loss of a beloved pastor, friends, or a style of worship. Some, through it all, have lost trust in leadership. It helps when pastors and boards are aware of the traumas of transition and work together to bring healing to the church.

Wise leaders learn that building relationships with hurting people is sensitive and time-consuming. It often means putting ambitious plans and programs on hold until the pastor and board have bonded and the people are willing to accept his leadership. If pastors are too eager to get things done, they may get ahead of their people. If pastors attempt to push their sheep too fast, sheep have a tendency to scatter. Pastors can avoid many conflicts if they understand the temperament and inability of some to accept new leadership. Time spent building relationships with love inspires trust. Great ideas and vision can be lost when leaders expect people to respond before the trust factor has been established. Little can be done until leadership bonds and is able to share the vision and work together with the people.

CONCLUSION

One of the best ways to avoid problems is to maintain good pastor-board relationships and seek God's wisdom in all deliberations. Most problems involve poor communication and a failure to address issues in love and sensitivity. Complaining church members need attention just like crying babies. Scolding or ignoring them will not cause problems to go away. Assess the need, attend to the issue at hand, and seek God for guidance in applying the remedy with love.

It has been said, "I don't care how much you know, but I would like to know how much you care." The language of love has healed many hurts. Learn to listen. Hear both sides of the story. Be fair. Seek God's wisdom in making determinations and administer with love.

—*Marcus Bakke, Bismarck, North Dakota, is former North Dakota District superintendent of the Assemblies of God.*



good or bad, will soon be felt in the pew. Good pastoral leadership will make healthy pastor-board relationships the highest priority.

The key is trust. Following is a checklist that can assist a pastor in determining the extent to which this trust is being cultivated:

1. Am I careful never to presume upon the board by assuming their concurrence without inviting their input?
2. Do I provide full disclosure of all information that is essential to wise decisionmaking?
3. Do I lead the way in preserving confidentiality so the decisionmaking process is not compromised?
4. Do I live my personal life in such a way that nothing I do reflects negatively on the church board and the membership they serve?
5. Do I state accurately to the membership the results of board action and make sure that its actions are appropriately implemented?

Pastor-board disunity inevitably becomes pastor-church fractures. Conversely, rarely is there discord in a church where the pastor and board are working together in harmony. (See sidebars “Eight Steps for Effective Board Decisions” and “Wise Timing for Board Decisions.”)

Choose board leadership with great care.

Typically, and wisely, church bylaws require that nominees for the office of deacon (or deacon/trustee) be selected by a board-appointed committee. (See sidebars “Appointment Process: Board Member/Elder Selection” and “The Board Selection Process,” pages 38 and 39.) The work of that committee is most important. Although a prescreening of all potential nominees may be helpful, it is finally the responsibility of the nominating committee to make wise choices. The pastor, as chairperson, has the privilege and responsibility to lay down the rules for the functioning of this committee. The most important rule is that any member of the committee has the privilege to pass on any person

EIGHT STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE BOARD DECISIONS

Robert R. Thompson and Gerald R. Thompson, authors of *Organizing for Accountability*, suggest that a board needs to take eight steps to make effective decisions:

- Ask relevant questions.
- Evaluate information, but do not assume all necessary information has been provided.
- Examine the known alternatives.
- Weigh risks and rewards.
- Seek the opinion of experts.
- Consider everything in the light of biblical values.
- Fulfill the church’s purposes.
- Decide.

—T. Ray Rachels, Irvine, California

WISE TIMING FOR BOARD DECISIONS

Wise church leaders discern carefully when to call for decision and action. Paul Munday, director of the Andrew Center, a nondenominational agency for helping church leaders, offers these six pointers on timing:

- 1. Never introduce a new idea and vote on it in the same meeting.** Always allow space between your initial presentation of the new possibility and a final decision. Give people ample time to make up their own minds.
- 2. Identify clearly the avenues for additional information and input.** Make people aware of the option of more give-and-take with you and other members of the appropriate committee. Keeps facts and figures flowing.
- 3. If people are opposed, meet with them individually.** Listen carefully to objections, reviewing the benefits of the proposed change as needed.
- 4. Don’t position yourself for a negative vote.** Avoid a decision or vote, at all costs, when the tide is taking your boat out to sea.
- 5. If you sense that the tide is against you, do a reassessment.** Does the vision or goal have broad backing, or is it an idea that belongs to only a few people? You may need to broaden the support base before proceeding.
- 6. When you sense that people are with you, bring them together and move toward a positive vote.** Ted Engstrom, former president of World Vision, calls for Christian leaders to distinguish between priorities and posteriorities. Priorities give us direction about what and when we are going to do something. Posteriorities are statements of things that we are not going to do this year. Picture an organization as an alligator; it has a great tendency to grow a very long tail. Periodically someone needs to chop off the tail so the alligator can keep moving. Perhaps we need a committee to decide each year which 10 percent of all the things we did last year we are not going to do again this year.

—T. Ray Rachels, Irvine, California

APPOINTMENT PROCESS: BOARD MEMBER/ELDER SELECTION

1. Suggestion Period

Names can be suggested to the board selection committee.

2. Consideration Period

The appropriate leadership talks to each nominee and explains doctrinal issues, constitution and bylaws, frequency of board meetings, time and ministry commitments, etc.

3. Investigation Period

This step needs to be thorough. Issues are addressed, such as: Do they have a consistent devotional life? What is their prayer life like? Do they have a strong marriage? Do they tithe? Are they involved in personal evangelism? Are they a church member? Are they aware of time commitments for this responsibility?

4. Interview Period

How do they control temper, lust, passions, etc.? Are they walking a consistent Christian life?

5. Approval Period

During this time members of the church can give a signed note of disapproval to the board selection committee.

6. Evaluation Period

Informal or formal evaluation meetings are helpful to both the pastor and the board member.

7. Dismissal Procedure

In case of moral failure or divisive issues (Titus 3:10), it is good to have a dismissal procedure approved by the board.

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under consideration—and that without stated reason. This safeguard also gives the pastor opportunity to eliminate persons who might not serve the church body well without having to state reasons, and to make sure all nominees have a strong commitment to the stated vision of the church.

I have yet to work with a board member who was contrary and difficult. The process outlined above has provided me the procedural rationale by which board selections can be appropriate and strong. A pastor who fails to exercise good leadership at this central junction will live to deeply regret that failure.

Make the agenda work for you.

The board I work with meets monthly. Several days before each meeting an agenda, complete with all reports, is mailed to each board member (For an example of a board meeting agenda, see sidebar “Monthly Meeting of the Official Board,” page 40.)

The agenda packet includes the following:

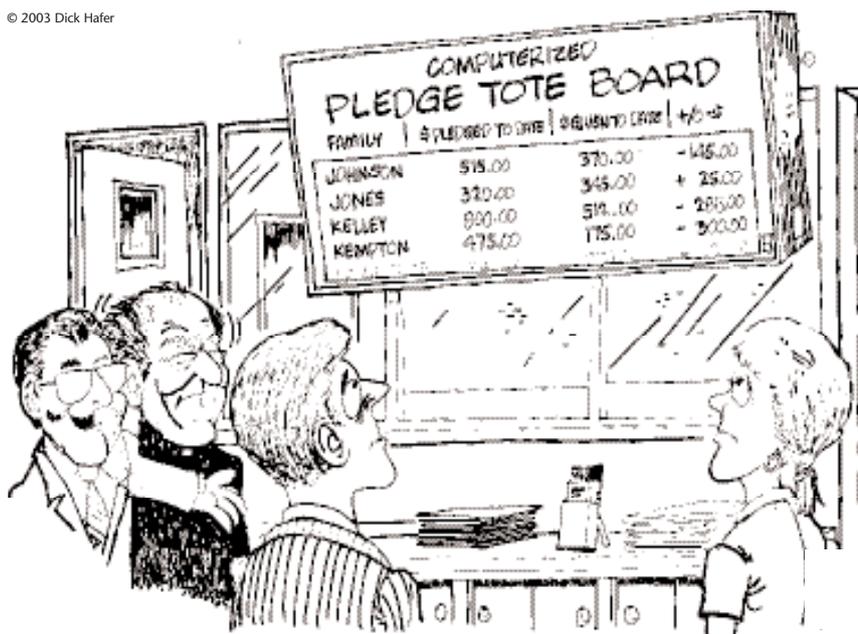
1. *Complete financial reports.* These provide full disclosure of church finances. A church board cannot function in an informational vacuum. This report includes all income and expense balances, is linked to the annual church budget, and shows whether or not each department is in compliance. These same rules apply, regardless of the size of the church.

2. *Letters of requests for missionary funding.* Typically a request for funding includes a letter of rationale and intention. Board members must have the privilege of reviewing these materials before the board convenes.

3. *Items for decision.* Each item to be discussed is described and contextualized. Then a course of action is recommended by staff. In some instances, staff only requests that the board discuss and give direction. In this way, the board does not need to speculate on the position held by the pastor and staff.

After a catered meal together we

© 2003 Dick Hafer



“The church board thought this might boost contributions.”

THE BOARD SELECTION PROCESS

In a sense, the selection process is where the work begins. Who in the church should be chosen to provide leadership? Who possesses the essential qualifications for leadership as set forth in Scripture? By what mechanisms of selection might these individuals be chosen? Several matters must be considered.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

It is impossible here to discuss all of the varieties in board selection processes found in churches. A brief summary will be helpful: (1) The board of deacons/trustees is elected for a specific term by the membership. The term of office is typically 3 years. (2) The board of deacons/trustees is elected by the membership but the term of office is indefinite. That is, the members of the board, once elected, will serve until resignation, removal, or death. (3) The board of elders is recognized as having attained already a place of spiritual influence and leadership. The term here is also indefinite. The board of elders is nonadministrative in function and serves to complement the work of the pastoral team. In cases where the board of elders serves as the primary policy-setting and accountability board, it is wise that they be in some way selected by the membership.

NOMINATION

Here again, the procedural variety found in our churches is great. In smaller churches the entire membership is frequently involved in the nominating process. Where individuals are well-known, this procedure can work rather well. In larger churches a committee is usually appointed by the board to place in nomination a list of candidates who in the judgment of the committee meet the qualifications for these offices. While it is still possible to entertain nominations from the floor, to do so tends to invalidate the work of the committee.

What is the function and purpose of the nominating committee? (1) Its members must be fully aware of all the qualifications necessary for those offices nominations are being made for. Both scriptural and bylaws requirements must be followed. (2) Nominating committee members must devise whatever means necessary to determine whether or not a prospective nominee meets all requirements. It might be well, especially in larger churches, to devise and send a questionnaire to all persons under consideration to determine if indeed those requirements would be met.

Conversion, baptism in the Spirit, marital status, faithfulness, tithing, giftedness—these are just a few of the areas a questionnaire might cover. Personal interviews can also prove effective. One thing is clear: this committee must be well-informed if it is to make the proper choices in the nominating process.

PRESENTATION

It is the responsibility of the nominating committee (assuming its existence) to place in nomination those who have been selected. Again, in larger churches especially, it will be helpful to post the list of nominees well in advance of the meeting. That list could include pictures, vocation, length of membership, offices held, ministry involvement, family, and giftedness. Members will be grateful for this information as they prayerfully consider their choice. Also it is important that each nominee be properly presented at the membership meeting. Typically an alphabetical introduction will be sufficient. It is generally unwise to ask each nominee to speak. Previous notification will have given people opportunity to make inquiry on their own in a private and more appropriate context.

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MONTHLY MEETING OF THE OFFICIAL BOARD

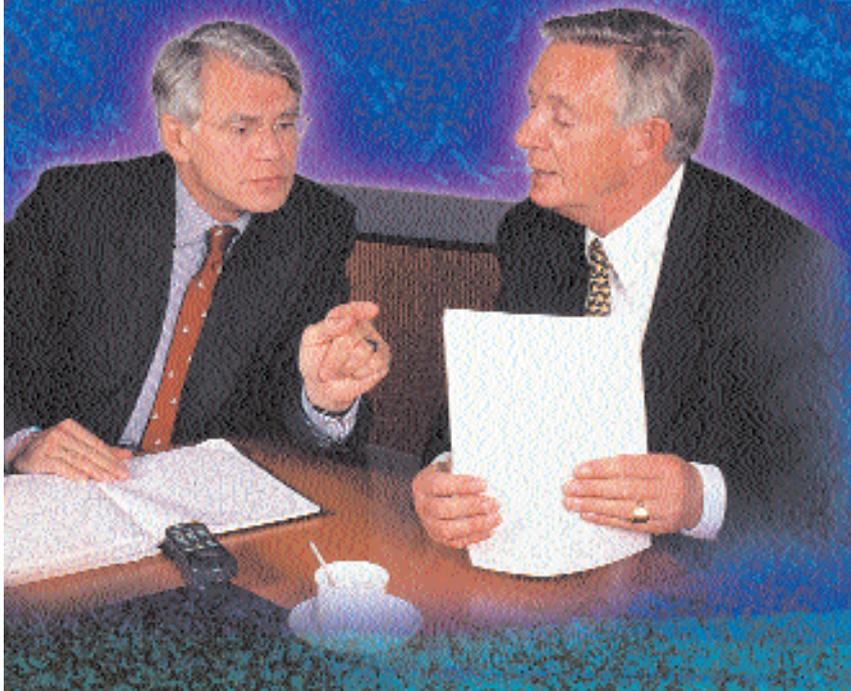
October 16, 2003, 7 p.m.

Convening in Pastor's Office

1. Devotions (a 5-minute devotional by a deacon is good, followed by group prayer and worship)
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Financial report
4. Reports of deacons
 - a. Building and maintenance
 - b. Ushering and Communion
 - c. Sunday School
 - d. Youth
 - e. Missions
 - f. Stewardship
 - g. Music
5. Action on reports
6. New business
 - a. The acquisition of playground equipment
 - b. Wage adjustments for secretarial staff
 - c. The proposed purchase of kitchen equipment
 - d. Candidates for membership
 - e. Repair of roof over church office
7. Adjournment

The matters that need action will dictate the agenda. It is not so important what form the agenda takes as it is that there be an agenda. Too often board meetings freewheel and unnecessary time is taken. Deacons will learn to appreciate the efforts of the pastor as he attempts to facilitate board action by giving careful thought to the agenda.

—Richard L. Dresselhaus. Reprinted from *The Deacon and His Ministry*, ©1977. Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Mo. Used with permission.



begin each meeting with a devotional. These rich moments of fellowship provide an opportunity for prayer. We then move through the agenda. A board meeting should not exceed 2 hours.

Careful attention to detail and wise execution of administration systems is vital to preserving capable persons to serve on the church board. Individuals who work in corporate environments will be intolerant of poor pastoral leadership when it comes to administration. A pastor who tries to take shortcuts here will pay a high price for that indiscretion.

It is advisable that the pastor present only items that can gain the support of the board. A wise pastor will discover solutions even to complex problems and offer those solutions to the board for their consideration. Good pastoral leadership is proactive and solution oriented. A well-led board will function in unity and maintain a positive, constructive focus.

Navigate the dangerous curves.

Early in my ministry when a decision needed to be made that would be met with significant opposition, I chose to go easy and allow several months for the item to be discussion only. Finally, the motion to approve the matter was made by the man whose opposition was most apparent. It is hazardous to push for decision when there has been insufficient time to work through the issues involved. A little patience can often make the difference between the solidification of opposition or the solicitation of support and cooperation.

Here are some suggestions that can help a pastor navigate the dangerous curves:

1. *Pick your battles carefully.* Be sure you do not waste valuable leadership currency on unimportant challenges.

2. *Treat each board member with the highest level of respect.* Listen. Think. Control your emotions. Believe the best. Speak words of encouragement and support.

3. *Be willing to admit you may be wrong.* Vulnerability goes a long way. Board members will respond to a pastor's openness and willingness to take another look.

4. *Be sensitive to timing.* A sensitive matter introduced at the right time stands a much better chance of approval. For example, a wise pastor will not introduce a salary increase for staff when the church income is down. Wait until things improve. Then raise the question. Success will come far more easily.

Maintain good records.

Because the church I pastor has good financial records, the board is able to project income a full year in advance. Past trends in giving shed helpful light on future giving. It works out with amazing precision. In addition, maintain a current membership list, minutes of all meetings, attendance information, and a record of all events with historical significance. (See sidebar "Minutes of Meetings—A Guide," page 42.) The past speaks to the present. And that message requires good records.

Create vision together.

Someone has appropriately said: "A leader with no one following is only taking a walk." Yes, the pastor is the God-given visionary for the church. But unless he uses other leaders to confirm that vision, nothing of significance is going to happen.

Here are some essential steps in participatory vision casting:

1. A pastor with a God-given vision.
2. A vision that has the confirmation of other leaders.
3. A plan of action that moves from vision to implementation.
4. A congregational buy-in to the vision.
5. An inflexible commitment to see the vision become a reality.

There is no work that a pastor does that presents a greater challenge than vision casting. Why? Because the urgent keeps crowding out the important. But an effective pastor will pursue a God-given vision with a passion.

Keep the meetings of the board official.

A cartoon shows a church board about to dismiss. This is the caption: "The meeting will reconvene in the parking lot." Sometimes board members caucus on their own and carry on discussion that is appropriate only in a duly called board meeting under proper pastoral leadership. Pastors must train board members to resist the temptation to short-circuit proper protocol and try to influence opinion in ill-advised ways. A good board member will value collective wisdom and refuse to participate in opinion formation that is void of the safety provided by proper procedure. Teach your board to say, "I would rather wait until the pastor and the full board are present before this matter is discussed." That simple practice of good procedure can prevent division.

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS—DREAD OR DELIGHT?

I have heard of church membership meetings that have gotten so out of control that the police have been called. Unthinkable. Inexcusable. The fallout from a disruptive membership meeting is beyond measure. God's

people need to see their collective decisionmaking as an opportunity to demonstrate the Spirit of Christ. Anything less is intolerable.

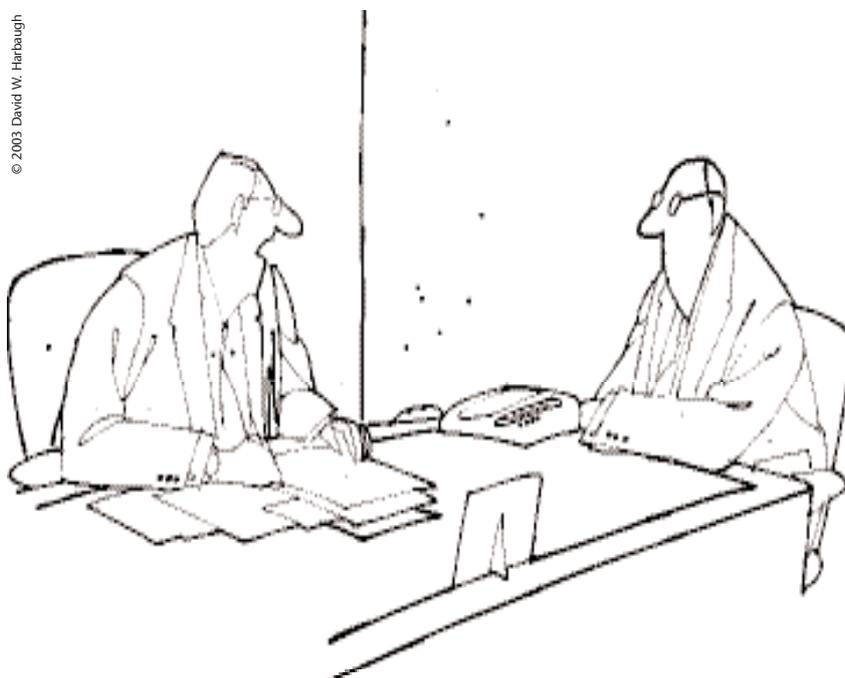
There is a better way, and most churches have consistently experienced it. While I have chaired membership meetings that have been less than harmonious, I have also, more characteristically, been witness to the cooperative work of the church being done in a way that honors the Lord and speaks well of His church. (See sidebar "Conducting the Church Board/Business Meeting," page 44.)

What can a pastor do to help the church conduct its business in the proper way?

Let Robert's Rules be your friend.

For years I have carried my copy of these procedural rules into the annual membership meeting. (See Web sidebar "Robert's Rules of Order—Parliamentary Procedures" at www.enrichmentjournal.org. Click on current issue and choose article "Managing Church Government: Making the Systems Work for You.") To the best of my ability, I have followed them. This way, the

(continued on page 45)



"As for serving on the church board, would you say you're somewhere between 'not a chance' and 'willing to think about it'?"

MINUTES OF MEETINGS—A GUIDE

The past speaks to the present. And that message requires good record keeping. Here is your guide to everything you need to know about taking and keeping the official minutes of your church's meetings.

WHAT ARE MINUTES?

The official notes recording what occurred at a meeting of members or trustees of an organization are the minutes of the meeting. The book in which the minutes of an organization are kept is the official memory, recollection, and record of decisions of the organization. In this form, the minutes become the legal record of actions taken and plans called for in the ongoing work of the organization.

Any organization legally chartered, organized by a constitution and bylaws or acting in behalf of a larger group of members, must keep minutes of all meetings. Subject to any limitations prescribed in the articles of incorporation and not prohibited by law, the minutes are open to all members of the organization.

The minutes are the organization's history and its plan of action for the future. They record past decisions and official actions so in the future they may be referred to for information and guidance. They express the will of the members present about plans, policies, and specific actions.

WHO KEEPS THE MINUTES?

With but few exceptions, the secretary of the organization has responsibility for recording and maintaining the minutes. The exception would be where the body of the organization has appointed some other person to have this responsibility. A good example would be a church board that has an elected secretary but has given the official responsibility for taking and keeping the minutes to the employed secretary of the church.

The secretary, in close cooperation with the presiding officer, takes notes at business meetings, prepares the minutes from the notes, presents them to the group either in printed form or by reading them, and makes any corrections or additions as called for by the group. The secretary may wish to tape-record the discussion at meetings to refresh his or her memory when typing the minutes. The secretary signs the original presented copy of the minutes before changes are made.

Bylaws usually designate the secretary as the keeper of the organization's books and records. He or she should keep these books and records in a safe place with a copy kept at some other site for safety. Many groups have these books and records bound annually. Two copies should be bound so one copy can be kept at hand for reference and guidance while the other copy is placed in another location for protection.

THE MINUTES BOOK

All minutes for a church or church board should be kept in one book. In this way all meetings of members and of board members are recorded in sequence, by date. The reason for the use of a single, chronological minutes book is that congregational meetings are generally held only annually or semiannually. These are intertwined among the minutes of the board that meets more often. The congregational minutes usually follow the actions taken by the board. Keeping all minutes as a record of a single stream of activities is what is needed to follow the official action of the board and the congregation.

The minutes book shall contain at least the following items:

1. Title page
2. Copy of the Constitution and/or Article of Incorporation
3. Bylaws (and any amendments)
4. Minutes of all regular and called meetings of the board
5. Minutes of all regular and called meetings of the congregation (The board and congregational minutes shall contain copies of all financial reports and other departmental or committee reports that are made in writing.)

Loose-leaf books are preferred by most secretaries. It is desirable to bind the minutes at the end of each year or place them in a legal binder. Good quality, acid-free paper for the original copies is preferable.

The handwritten meeting notes taken by the secretary should be carefully set in order with proper English and neatly typed. Pages should be numbered with the date of the meeting at the top of each page. An index by subject, date, and page number is helpful and desirable. This should follow the minutes for each year. The book should always be treated as an entire unit; pages should not be removed to be taken to a meeting or anywhere else. The entire book should be taken to produce the continuity of the records and to have the information available for ready reference.

Minutes of each meeting should end with the signature of the secretary. After they are presented (and corrected, if necessary, in ink) at the next meeting, the corrections should be initialed in the margin by the secretary and also by the

presiding officer at that meeting. Such corrections may be made only with the consent of those present at the meeting, with the exception of typographical errors.

Once the minutes have been approved in corrected form, the countersignature of the presiding officer shall be added below that of the secretary with the current date, in verification of their correctness. Some organizations require that each page of the minutes be initialed by the secretary and presiding officer. No changes or alterations may be properly made in the minutes after verification. Even corrections, typographical or grammatical, may be made only with the approval of the members present at a regular or called meeting. If corrections of actions or changes in decisions or records are to be made after they have been verified, that may be indicated in the minutes of subsequent meetings—not by rewriting history.

CONTENTS OF THE MINUTES

Minutes of each meeting should contain at least the following information. All parts are needed to give complete and accurate reporting for future reference and for legal information.

1. Time (date, hour, and minute)
2. Place, both address or name of site and room number or description (fellowship hall, minister's study, library)
3. Statement that the meeting was duly called:
 - a. By whom
 - b. By the kind of notice (regularly scheduled, if it is a called special meeting then the procedure set forth in the bylaws should be followed)
 - c. Attached copy of the notice for any called or special meetings
4. Presiding officer
5. Secretary of the meeting
6. Names of those present and those absent (in the event provision is made for voting by proxy, the minutes should show the names and number of those voting by proxy)
7. Reading, correction, and adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting
8. Adoption of the agenda if it is prepared in written form.
9. A record of what occurred at the meeting, including:
 - a. Resolutions proposed
 - b. Resolutions adopted (names of movers and seconds and the outcome of the vote including the number for, against, and abstaining if a count is taken)
 - c. Reports of officers, committees, departments, and ministers (especially the treasurer's report)
 - d. Primary issues or themes discussed
10. Adjournment time (date, hour, and minute)
11. Signature of secretary
12. Countersignature of presiding officer (obtained at the next meeting, when these minutes are adopted)

IMPORTANCE OF MINUTES

The minutes of a meeting are prima facie evidence of what occurred at that meeting. They are effective evidence of what was said and done. Laws in some states specifically require that nonprofit corporations keep and maintain minutes of their proceedings and complete books and records of accounts. Often in legal transactions such as borrowing money, selling real estate or securities, copies of the official action as recommended in minutes are required.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Verbatim recording of discussion is not required or even general practice. Issues and subjects should be recorded indicating whether there was major or minor time spent in the discussion. If there are specific statements made for or against issues, these can be summarized. If the statement seems important enough, the substance of the statement and the name of the person making the statement may be recorded.



—James M. Seale. Used by permission of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee.



CONDUCTING THE CHURCH BOARD/BUSINESS MEETING

A well-managed board actually multiplies the efforts of the pastor and staff in accomplishing the ministry.

The pastor/chairman of the business or board meeting must guide the meeting in an orderly manner and maintain an efficient schedule by observing parliamentary rules. The chairman does not dominate the meeting but simply leads the board or congregation through the items of business in a spirit that will bring honor to God's kingdom. We must remember that even though we do all we can to be organized and operate within proper guidelines, we are serving the Lord and His work. Paul told Timothy, "I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15, NKJV). The meeting that conducts the business of the church is a spiritual meeting just as a Bible study or Sunday service is a spiritual meeting. The focus may be somewhat different, but the conduct of church business is essential to the health and proper functioning of the local church.

John Maxwell states: "Two common problems in board meetings are (1) each person has his own agenda, and (2) the pastor has a difficult time maintaining control of the meeting." Maxwell is right. He recommends avoiding digressions by sticking to an agenda prepared before the meeting. He has a further helpful suggestion of dividing the agenda into three categories: information, study, and action items.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Every meeting should start off on a positive note, and the informational section of the agenda makes this possible. Include five or six positive reports on the ministry of the church. Report how many people attended membership class last week or the exciting ministry of the Holy Spirit at the women's event the day before. Give news of upcoming events, meetings, or special services. Use this time to inform and remind of the reason for the meeting. This part of the agenda differs from the "old business/new business" plan, which is sometimes fruitless, boring, and negative.

In traditional meetings, more often than not, finance is the first topic addressed, and many meetings never move forward from there. Informational items, on the other hand, are chosen specifically because they are positive, exciting, and set the tone for the rest of the meeting. Spend no more than 5 minutes in this area—just enough time to inspire hearts and prepare them for the most productive segment of the meeting.

STUDY ITEMS

This part of the agenda always contains the most items. Ninety-five percent of meeting time should be spent studying or discussing these issues and items of interest. Your goal during this part of the meeting is to brainstorm ideas. Work to get every possible suggestion—and objection—on the table.

Never vote on any item that you have listed as a study item. The pressure of a vote causes people to take sides and discourages free and creative thought. Never vote on a study item before the next meeting.

You may keep some study items for months, allowing every option and objection to be put on the table and explored. Other subjects may be study items for only one meeting and then moved on in the next session. Keeping items in the study section of the agenda allows people to process information without feeling threatened, and eventually a consensus is reached. Only then is an item ready to be put before the body for action.

ACTION ITEMS

The final section of the agenda contains action items, which have already been in the study section for at least one meeting, have already been discussed, and are ready for a vote. Never spend more than 5 minutes in this area. If your board has been candid and the discussion and study have been thorough, there is no reason to spend a lot of time in this section.

If you are currently frustrated by board meetings, you are not alone. Every pastor has been there, and most of us have dreamed of a world without committees. But the truth is we need our board members. They give us perspective, experience, and strength that we don't have alone. A well-managed board actually multiplies the efforts of the pastor and staff in accomplishing the ministry.

The official minutes of a meeting should include (1) the name of the organization, (2) the nature of the meeting—regular or special, (3) time and place, (4) name of the chairman, (5) the devotional title or topic, (6) correction and approval of previous minutes, (7) business transacted, (8) adjournment, and (9) signature of secretary and date of approval. The pastor may take some liberty in arranging identifying information at the beginning or end of the minutes.

—Fulton W. Buntain. Reprinted from *The Pentecostal Pastor* ©1997, Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Missouri. Used with permission.

(continued from page 41)

work of the church is conducted in a manner that provides the maximum opportunity for participatory decision-making. A pastor, who out of ignorance or careless disregard, violates these rules will eventually pay a heavy price for that failure.

"We just let the Spirit lead." Right. That pastor is living in an unreal world. It is much safer to believe that what "seemed good to the Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28) can most easily be discerned within proper parliamentary procedures.

Keep your hands on the reins.

The gavel in the pastor's hand is there to be used. It is his responsibility to chair the meeting in such a way that fairness, objectivity, and reason prevail. If the pastor chooses to address a motion on the floor, let him temporarily surrender the chair and speak as a participant. It is the chair's responsibility to preserve the full rights of every voting member and be sure the business of the body is executed in a proper way. It is right to rule as out of order all attempts to disrupt the corporate will of the body. Obviously, in doing so, pastoral leadership must always exude a spirit of humility, sensitivity, and grace.

Be overprepared.

Congregational meetings flow in a way that is consistent with preparation. Here is a checklist that can help:

1. Have I properly announced the meeting as to time, place, and agenda? (See sidebar "Church Business Meeting Agenda," page 46.)

2. Have I prepared and made available all reports that will provide context for each item on the agenda?

3. Have I appointed persons to serve as ushers and tellers?

4. Am I well familiarized with each item that is going to come before the deliberative body for action?

5. Have I refreshed my mind on the fundamental rules of parliamentary procedure so I will be prepared to make appropriate rulings?

6. Have I made the upcoming membership meeting a matter of urgent prayer?

7. Am I prepared in my heart to bring to the meeting an attitude characterized by faith, love, and vision?

Anticipate the fireworks.

A wise pastor will anticipate, inasmuch as possible, any challenges to leadership. Is it possible to meet with any dissidents prior to the meeting? Has everything been done procedurally to minimize negative reactions? Is leadership prepared to meet any opposition with firmness, fairness, and compassion?

Prior to the annual membership meeting in the church I pastor, the board thinks together about issues that may surface and in what ways they might best be dealt with. "Pastor, why don't you address this matter in your report before a member has the opportunity to surface the issue in a negative context?" Doing that has eliminated potential and disruptive challenges.

Pave the way with kindness.

It is true: "A soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). I've seen it work over and over.

"Pastor, I appreciate how you handled that matter. You exhibited grace

and kindness. Thanks." Respect and kindness will combine to disarm critics and render their influence ineffective.

Parishioners expect nothing less. They will quickly dismiss improper responses from delegates, but they will long remember any pastoral response that expresses anger, vindictiveness, or resentment. Here is a marvelous opportunity to demonstrate the likeness of Christ. Always see conflict as an occasion to preach by demonstration a sermon on the fruit of the Spirit.

CHURCH COMMITTEES—BENEFIT OR WASTE?

It is true that when God wants something done, He calls a person. But how is that person going to fulfill the demands of the call? I doubt that Noah built the ark alone. The prophets gathered to themselves other prophets—the school of the prophets. Even Jesus called the Twelve to join with Him in ministry to the multitudes. The Lord never intended that anyone should work alone.

However, there is, at least potentially, no greater waste of time than church committees.

Avoid busy work like the plague.

Scrutinize existing committees for effectiveness. If the original purpose



Pastor Larry finally meets his match.

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is not being accomplished, recess the committee. And before appointing a committee, ask: Is this work essential to the mission of the church? If not, by all means abandon the effort before it begins. Some churches are so entangled by committee work that the real work of the church—touching people for Christ—is squeezed into oblivion.

Transform committees into mission groups.

This simple change in perception will move the task to a priority of mission. Committees are abandoned in exchange for a call to mission. Persons who are recruited are challenged to embrace a mission. And that mission must conform in a complementary way to the overall mission of the church. Here is the fundamental criterion by which these groups are commissioned: Will the proposed task contribute directly to fulfilling the stated mission and vision of the church?

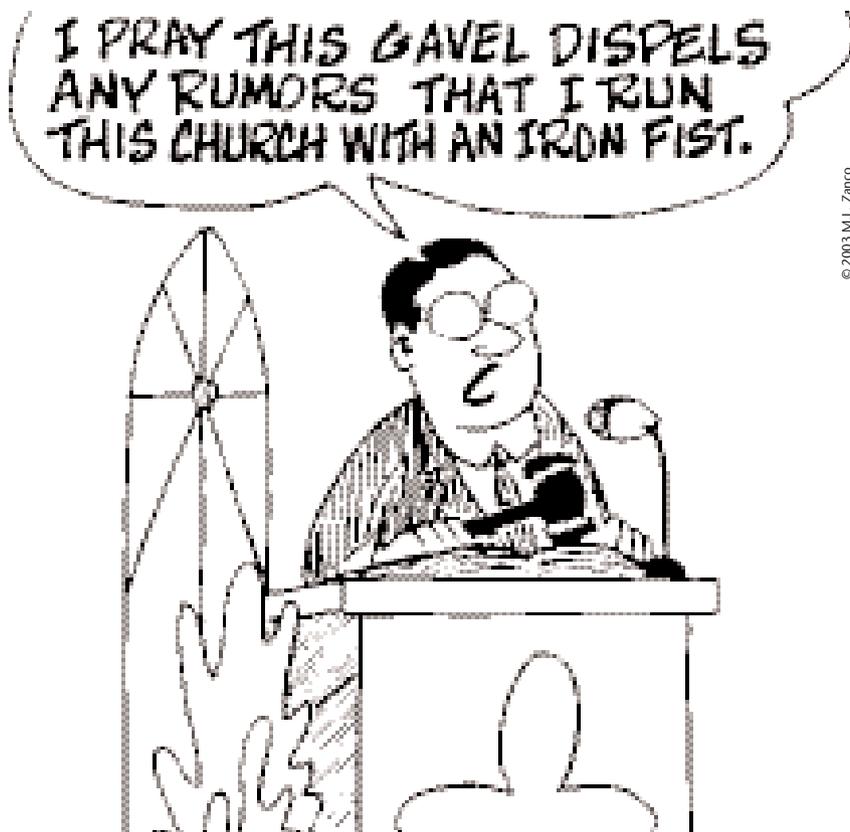
Here is how it works. A person develops a God-given burden for an

area of ministry and communicates that burden to church leaders. Leadership then validates that burden and authorizes its development. A call is given for others to join the visionary. Corporately the group sets forth its strategy to achieve its mission. Incidentally, if the visionary moves on for any reason, it may be good to recess the group—unless, of course, someone else steps forth with the same burden. Quickly dissolving groups that are without passionate leadership is wise. The willingness to allow church committees (or mission groups) to die with dignity is good for any church.

Organize for output.

While the mission-group concept will help provide focus and assure effectiveness, it is still essential to organize for output. Here is the checklist that will regulate output:

1. Is the task (or mission) clearly stated and understood?
2. Is each member passionately committed to its fulfillment?



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IN OTHER WORDS. . . .

The legal way to rule with an iron fist.

CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

The essential part of a business meeting is an agenda that clearly defines what is going to be discussed in the meeting. An agenda committee is most helpful in keeping the meeting on track. This official committee should meet prior to all official church meetings, possibly in an informal setting, to plan the agenda. If the full body agrees at the outset of a meeting to abide by a previously prepared agenda, the possibility for a smooth meeting is greatly improved. Many problems in church meetings come when the floor is opened to any discussion on any subject, without proper investigation, prayer, and documentation.

Here is one suggested order of business.

1. Call to order by the pastor/chairman
2. Devotional (may include congregational singing and rejoicing in what God is doing in the church or in individual lives)
3. Determination of quorum by roll call or visual check
4. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting and agenda for current meeting
5. Reports
6. Unfinished business
7. Elections
8. New business
9. Special items such as announcements
10. Adjournment

—Fulton W. Buntain. Reprinted from *The Pentecostal Pastor* ©1997, Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Missouri. Used with permission.

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NAVIGATING TREACHEROUS WATERS

Navigating the treacherous waters of documentary revision is hazardous, but the results of such an effort are most rewarding.

To stir up the dissidents, just announce that a study committee has been formed to consider revising the church constitution and bylaws.

Why? Because that document represents for some a toehold of authority and the single safeguard against unwanted change. To meander here is to tread on thin ice and risk awakening slumbering negativism.

So why take the risk? Why not just leave well enough alone? Because out-of-date and cumbersome governing documents will hold the church down like a ball and chain. Capable and visionary leadership will gladly accept the challenge; the alternative is unthinkable. This is the work of the Kingdom.

Several years ago, the leadership of the church I pastor accepted the challenge, faced the risks with courage, and led the congregation through the process with positive results.

Here are the steps we took:

1. The congregation voted in favor of a board-appointed constitution/bylaws revision committee. This gave the committee the sanction and approval to do its work with courage.
 2. The revision committee took its time (about 1 year) to do its work. The committee moved through the existing documents to note needed changes and then began to incorporate those changes into a document of revision. A recording secretary helped the committee maintain its focus and forward movement.
 3. Two public forums were held to seek input. The committee explained the revisions and solicited suggestions from the membership. These were listening times for the committee. Comments were taken seriously and prompted further revisions.
 4. An official meeting was called to present the final report of the committee and enlist confirmation from the membership. Interestingly, in about 2 hours the document had been approved with very little amendment. It was the result of careful planning, full disclosure, and participatory decisionmaking.
 5. The process from beginning to end was supported by prayer. This is the key. God's work requires His direction and His blessing. We were all grateful.
- The most controversial matter had to do with women in ministry. Or more specifically, whether or not the prohibition that disallowed women to serve on the official board should be lifted. The committee itself was originally divided. But after much study, prayer, and discussion, they reached a consensus and proposed a recommended course of action. That recommendation was included in the document that was finally adopted by the full membership. Hard work and due process had paid off.

Progressive leadership cannot ignore the importance of good governing documents. If the constitution and bylaws are no longer representative of the life of the church, a revision is mandated.

Of course, navigating the treacherous waters of documentary revision is hazardous, but the results of such an effort are most rewarding.

Who knows—you may enjoy the ride. I did.

—Richard L. Dresselhaus, D.Min., San Diego, California

3. Have subordinate tasks been carefully assigned to persons who possess the proper gifts?

4. Has a timeline been established that will provide the accountability necessary to ensure each task is accomplished in a timely fashion?

5. Has criteria by which success, or the absence thereof, been thoughtfully delineated?

6. Is there a profound sense that the power of the Spirit is at work in the effort?

CONCLUSION

The work of the Kingdom is far too urgent for leadership to settle for less than fully utilizing every believer's gifts and callings. Ministry is everyone's call. And it is leadership's privilege and responsibility to be sure church systems are designed to ensure the fullest possible release of ministry.

Here is the key: Church systems must be designed to function. If they don't, drop them, replace them, or rework them. But don't tolerate hindrances to effective ministry.

If the bylaws are restrictive, do something about it. (See sidebar "Navigating Treacherous Waters.") If the board functions in a negative manner, lead the way to change. If committee structures steal precious time, propose a new approach. If the record system is awkward, be a voice for change. If any of the administrative systems of the church become restrictive, do not rest until they have been dropped, amended, or in some way made the servant of progress.

Pastor, here it is: the system must work for you and your leadership team. If not, the God-given vision will never be realized, the work of the Kingdom will be stifled, and the people of God will be frustrated. That is a price no church ever dare pay.

Pastor, make the systems work for you. 

Richard L. Dresselhaus, D.Min., is an executive presbyter and senior pastor of First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.





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S E C T I O N I I

Managing the Church Office

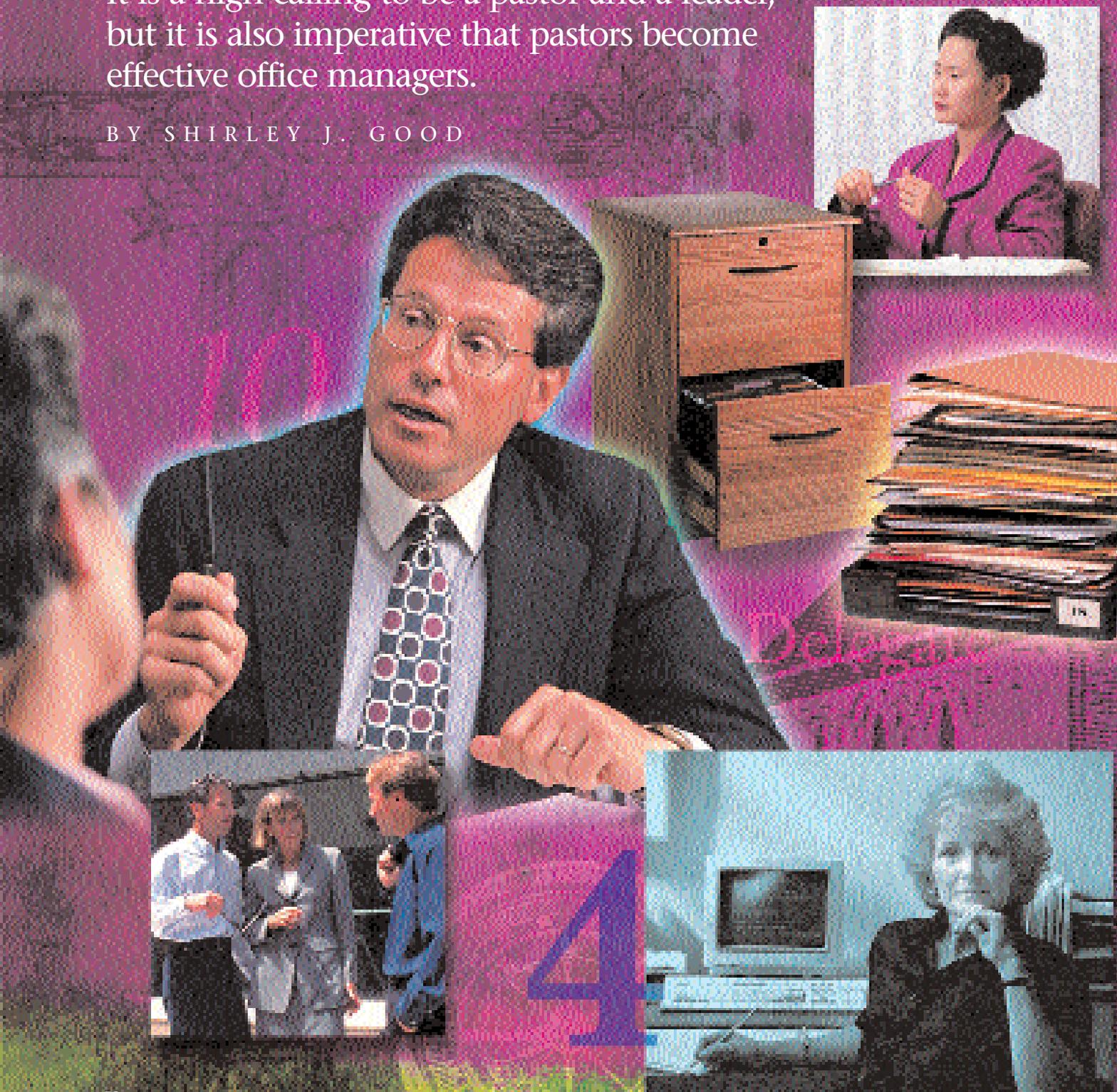
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Managing the Church Office: An Ever-Changing Challenge

It is a high calling to be a pastor and a leader, but it is also imperative that pastors become effective office managers.

BY SHIRLEY J. GOOD





POLICIES

SOFTWARE



SECURITY

E-MAIL

When most pastors said yes to the call of God to ministry, they were probably not thinking about managing the church office. They saw themselves behind the pulpit preaching the gospel, baptizing people, and making disciples. But trying to dig their way out of paperwork was never part of their dreams.

Bible college students preparing for ministry are required to study the attributes of God. They learn that God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. He is holy, just, and faithful. Students are encouraged to pursue godliness, to follow His example, and to allow the Holy Spirit to develop similar characteristics in their lives. There are, however, a few of His virtues that are rarely taught and seldom discussed in the classroom. Here are a few of these traits: God is efficient, He is organized, and He keeps excellent records. Thus, He is an excellent example for pastors of how to manage a church office. For instance, He plans for the future and communicates His plans to everyone involved well in advance. He observes adherence to prescribed policies and procedures. The planets of His solar

system rotate on course in their proper places. The tide comes in and goes out on schedule. The sun rises and sets at specified times. Scripture, science, and historical record prove that God does not waste time or resources; His work has always been carried out efficiently.

DEVELOPING MANAGERIAL GIFTS

Most church staff members, pastors in particular, find that the process of becoming godly by developing managerial gifts is a lifelong challenge. There are certain temperaments that find efficiency and organization easier than others, but that does not excuse the rest from following God's pattern. How does one go about acquiring help in this area?

Recognize that effective church administration is a spiritual goal.

When our lives and ministry reflect peace and order, it is easier for a world in chaos to see the Prince of Peace. Humbly admitting deficiencies and past failures to the Lord and our coworkers is another step forward. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Ask for God's help and direction.

He knows where to find support staff gifted in administration who can assist in the work of the ministry. It is a high calling to be a pastor and a leader, but it is also imperative that pastors become effective office managers. Office administration training or previous work experience has equipped some pastors to function effectively in today's church office, but only a few have been taught logistics.

Pastors can learn the basic logistics of organization by reading books on management, taking a management class at a local college, or by listening to tapes on management. Don't expect a computer or a calendar (electronic or otherwise) to get you organized; these are simply tools to assist you in organization. When you give an account to the Lord of your use of time, money, resources, and people, will it be a report of godliness in action or one of confusion, frustration, and waste?

Many aspects of the church office are radically different from what they were just a few years ago. No longer is the church office just a place to store lost Bibles and Sunday School material. It is now a fast-paced, business-oriented, bustling place. How does a pastor handle all the details of church office management?

The following gives a thumbnail view of some of the necessary components involved in church office management:

1. People skills.
2. Communication.
3. Acquiring and discipling staff.
4. Processing paperwork.
5. Policies and procedures.
6. Office setup and layout.
7. Technology and church office equipment.

PEOPLE SKILLS

Developing the ability to effectively read and understand people enables the pastor to accomplish more ministry in less time and with less effort. Becoming an astute student of people will help pastors move people toward

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**"Who arranged for my new e-mail address:
longwinded@firstchurch.org?"**

solutions—whether that means prayer, benevolence, information, conflict resolution, material supplies, or an appointment for counseling. The ability to triage people with speed, wisdom, and kindness can be learned, but it doesn't come automatically with the call to ministry.

Understanding Personality Traits

Learning basic temperament traits will help pastors understand why certain individuals respond the way they do. There are four basic categories and each one has natural strengths and common weaknesses. Each temperament has a definite drive or compulsion that predisposes that person toward certain activities. A sanguine will participate quicker if the activity is fun. The choleric will be delighted to be in charge and may take charge even when not appointed to lead. A melancholy needs to have things in order and done by the book. Phlegmatics like peace and will get involved if there isn't turmoil.

Each temperament has specific emotional needs. The sanguine needs approval from others and attention for himself. The choleric needs achievement for himself and appreciation from others. The melancholy needs order for herself and sensitivity from others. Phlegmatics need respect from others and a personal sense of self-worth. When those emotional needs are not being adequately met, the negative traits or weaknesses of that particular temperament will likely be expressed. When selecting individuals to fill ministry positions, knowing how the applicant is wired temperamentally will be a valuable asset.

Sanguine individuals are friendly and talkative. They make wonderful ushers, greeters, and receptionists. They delight children and never meet a stranger. Choleric are leaders by nature; put them in charge of projects or groups of people. Melancholies prefer behind-the-scenes work and are great with remembering details and keeping accurate records. Phlegmatics

are quiet and easygoing. They never make waves.

Understanding Work Styles

There are two general work styles that need to be understood to further develop your people skills. One is not better than the other; they are just different. Individuals with a monochronic work style are linear in their work processes. They function best when they work on one project at a time and bring it to completion, or at least to a clearly defined stopping place before addressing a new task. Polychronic individuals can have many plates spinning at the same time and can easily switch between projects at any given time without feeling frustrated. It is imperative that such differences are considered when filling office staff positions. When hiring for an office manager position, search for a polychronic person who won't be shaken when pulled in many directions. Monochronic people make excellent bookkeepers because they respect the sequential aspects of accounting. They are more methodical and focused on necessary steps.

COMMUNICATION

If you took a survey of church office staff members and asked them what their greatest frustration is, the most common answer would be lack of communication. Although we think we are communicating, becoming a good communicator takes time and effort. No one is born a good communicator. Communication is a skill to be learned and improved on with focused and determined practice. Clear, concise, and consistent communication to staff members has a positive effect on staff morale. (See sidebar "Creative Ways To Show Your Appreciation," page 56.) Here are some important areas the senior pastor needs to communicate with his office staff.

Communicate plans, vision, and expectations.

It is crucial that the senior pastor communicate his plans, vision, and

expectations to his staff. Don't expect them to be mind readers. When staff members are left in the dark about events, decisions, or even the pastors whereabouts, they become frustrated and angry. As a result, productivity and ministry suffer. Keeping staff updated and apprised of important details enables them to make wise decisions, respond accurately to inquiries, and appear competent to your congregation and community. When staff members lack pertinent information, efficiency is lost and a negative impression will be cast on individuals, the church, and its leadership.

Communicate personal preferences.

The senior pastor needs to communicate how he wants information given to him. Does he want it verbally, in writing, or via e-mail? Often staff members follow one procedure, and then a new pastor comes who wants information processed in a different format. Tell them in words; don't expect staff to know your desires. Most pastors know what they want their people to do, but they may fail to tell their staff in a way they understand.

Communicate how you want your secretary to handle calls from your spouse or family members.

Should the secretary interrupt a counseling session with a call from your spouse or first tell your spouse that you are in counseling, giving the spouse the option of whether or not to interrupt.

Communicate your schedule.

When you leave the church building, does your secretary know when you will be returning and how to contact you in the event of an emergency? When your plans change, do you update her on your anticipated return? When individuals call and ask when you will be back in the office, your secretary feels stupid and embarrassed if she has to admit she has no clue. When repeatedly placed in such awkward circumstances, it becomes

CREATIVE WAYS TO SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION

As you struggle to think of other ways to reward and recognize your employees, try this. Think about yourself. What could your boss do that would really demonstrate how much he or she values you (besides giving you a raise or praise)? Remembering individual differences, you can use your own list to think about how to reward your employees. Here are a few hints that will get you started.

TIME

What a precious commodity. Give an outstanding employee the afternoon off. Let another sleep late. Thank a whole team by giving them a Friday off. Let them decide when to use their gift of time. One boss created a days-off bank. He put 25 days in the bank and then used those days to reward individuals and teams for outstanding performance.

TOYS

What toys might they want? A cappuccino machine? Tickets? Spending \$1 on something clever and unique is better than spending \$50 on something ordinary and forgettable.

OPPORTUNITIES

What special or unique opportunities might your employees want? Having a choice about the next project or a chance to learn something new? One boss paid for a training class (of the person's choosing) to be taken on company time.

FUN

Would your employees like taking an outing on company time?

FREEDOM

What kind of freedom might they want? Flextime? Freedom to work from home, to dress casually, to change the way they do some of the work?

SMALL MONEY

Sometimes it's a small sum (\$50-\$100) to put toward whatever the rewarded employee wants.

BOTTOM LINE

Over and over, research has told us that money is not the major key to keeping good people. We double-checked this research with our own, and it proved true. When employees across the country answered the question, "What kept you?", few had dollars in their top three reasons. People want recognition for work well done. Assess your pay scale to be sure it's fair. Then praise your good people. Find creative ways to show your appreciation, and you will increase the odds of keeping them.

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increasingly difficult for her to be loyal to you as a boss. She deeply desires to be a quality representative of you and the church, but without your faithful communication, she'll fail in her goal and both of you will tarnish your public image. (See sidebar "Four Essentials of a Church Secretary.")

Communicate staff-behavioral issues.

Give constructive observations to staff members on a regular basis. In the book, *The One Minute Manager*, coauthor Ken Blanchard encourages bosses to regularly give 1-minute praises and 1-minute reprimands. He offers the following suggestions to help people reach their full potential:

1. Tell people up front that you are going to let them know how they are doing.
2. Praise people immediately.
3. Tell people what they did right—be specific.
4. Tell people how good you feel about what they did right, and how it helps the organization and the other people who work there.
5. Stop for a moment of silence to let them feel how good you feel.
6. Encourage them to do more of the same.
7. Shake hands or touch people in a way that makes it clear that you support their success in the organization.

Blanchard states that his purpose in the 1-minute reprimand is to eliminate the behavior and keep the person. He recommends that you get to the individual as soon as you observe the misbehavior or are tipped off in some way regarding the action or attitude. Pastors will do well to keep in mind that they are to shepherd the flock and make disciples—even of those individuals who are on the church payroll. As Blanchard says, "It is very important when you are managing people to remember that behavior and worth are not the same things." He adds, "You will be successful with the 1-minute reprimand when you really care about the welfare of the person you are reprimanding."

FOUR ESSENTIALS OF A CHURCH SECRETARY

MEET THE HUB OF WHAT MAKES YOUR MINISTRY GO ROUND

A church secretary can be like the hub of a wheel. All good things revolve around her well-organized, dependable, and caring center.

"A good secretary is important in a church setting because she is on the front lines and is the first person the public sees or talks to," says Bobbi Linkemer, an author and expert in business communications. In that sense, the secretary becomes pastor, church, and denomination to visitors or callers.

It is important, then, that a church secretary does everything possible to represent who she works for in the best way possible. Four traits no church secretary should be without include:

1. Discretion. The wisdom to refrain from indiscriminately sharing information is critical in a secretary. For example, when the pastor is out, a wise secretary will say to a caller, "I'm sorry, he's not available" or "He's not in at the moment; may I take a message?" That's greatly preferred to "He went to pick up his daughter from aerobics class" or "He's not back from lunch yet." Even if the latter is true, that is really no one else's business.

Even more important is the ability to handle confidential information. A secretary who talks openly about giving records or the personal problems of church members can cause serious problems in a congregation.

Lack of discretion can cause disruption, embarrassment, or something worse. So a secretary's ability to refrain from sharing private information is a major plus in a church office.

2. Willingness to learn. If a secretary's primary tools are a typewriter and correction fluid, your church office may be in trouble. Today's church secretary must be proficient in word processing and familiar with using modern office equipment.

At the same time, exceptional technical skills aren't necessarily a prerequisite to the job. More important is the flexibility and willingness to acquire new skills as needed.

For example, Ruth Chuvala, administrator of First Baptist Church in Brewster, New York, says that traditional typing skills are way down the line in qualifications for a church secretary today. More important is that a church secretary is "articulate, verbally economical, and able to work effectively with desktop publishing and multi-media communication," she says.

At First Baptist, secretaries (who are called staff assistants) spend more time creating flyers, posters, brochures, and slide presentations than in straight typing of correspondence or other documents.

3. A caring attitude. While secretaries in any field need basic technical skills, those in the church have an additional responsibility. They need the kind of caring attitude that will help a pastor and other church leaders fulfill the church's mission.

Linkemer says church secretaries should have two qualities, which on the surface may seem mutually exclusive but can actually coexist: empathy and detachment. "A person in this job must be able to truly understand what congregants are feeling, while at the same time remaining separate from the problem," Linkemer says.

4. Dependability. Finally, a good secretary is reliable. That means she (or he) meets deadlines, remembers important details, and routinely completes assigned tasks. Effective secretaries get to work on time and are at their desks when expected. They are also diligent about following up on various tasks of office management.

That doesn't mean that secretaries can't be sick or take vacation days or that they must perform flawlessly. It simply means that they need to do their jobs consistently and reliably. From simple tasks, such as remembering to pass on phone messages, to more involved projects, such as assembling documents in time for an important meeting, reliability is a must.

Integrity is an important element of reliability. "The most important attribute a church secretary can bring to the job is not technical skill but a Christ-centered life," says Gayle Hilligoss, president of Success Systems, in Lee's Summit, Missouri. "Lack of know-how seldom causes serious problems in the church office; lack of integrity often does."

—Mark Rowh, Dublin, Virginia. Adapted from May/June 2002 *Your Church*, a publication of *Christianity Today International*. Used with permission.



E-MAIL TIPS

TIP #1

E-mail has flattened most corporate organizational structures because anyone can e-mail another on staff regardless of position. Thus some complain about the sheer volume of e-mails they get and must respond to. Some e-mail software has the ability to sort your incoming e-mail into various folders based on sender, subject, or key words in the text. This can help greatly when time is short and you need to focus only on high-priority e-mails.

TIP #2

E-mail, by its very nature, has the built-in expectation of a quick response. However, most of us don't want to constantly respond to e-mail throughout the day. When you need to build more time into senders' response expectations, consider having your e-mail software give an automatic response to new messages similar to the following:

"Thank you for your e-mail. I have directed our system to send you this automatic response to let you know it may be a day or two before I can respond. I'm working on a project that is taking all of my focus. If your message was urgent, please call me at (222) 555-1111. Thank you."

A similar automatic response can be used to alert e-mail senders that you are away on vacation or at a conference. This is a great way to let them know your response delay is merely a result of your being unavailable.

TIP #3

Spam is the term applied to unwanted mass marketing e-mails making various offers and solicitations. Many are harmless, but some contain viruses, and some are scams.

When I open my e-mail mailbox, the first thing I do is delete all spam. I don't even open them. The e-mails I consider to be spam are from other countries where I don't know anyone, offers to enlarge body parts or reduce mortgage rates, or whose sender or subject looks unusual, unwelcome, or suspicious (like "I Love You").

—Nick B. Nicholaou, Huntington, California

Being honest and genuine with people works. And it sure beats being inwardly irritated while trying to act like nothing is wrong.

Electronic communication

One of the most common ways people communicate today is through e-mail. While e-mails may be a convenient and effective form of communication, they can also interrupt work and become time consuming. Learning to manage and use e-mail properly can help you communicate more effectively to your staff and others. (See sidebar "E-mail Tips" to learn how to use e-mails more effectively.)

Developing and maintaining effective communication is a major hurdle for nearly every pastor. Learning to express your expectations and frustrations in an appropriate manner so deadlines, instructions, and desires are understood and accepted is an ongoing challenge. When you are unhappy with your staff, tell them, not your spouse. Tell them what you want and what you don't want. While it may be uncomfortable initially, it will develop better relationships in the long haul.

ACQUIRING AND DISCIPLING STAFF

Determining staff needs

Finding the right person to fill office

positions can be a dangerous venture. Hire slowly and carefully. Do your homework and be prepared before adding to your staff. Before you even begin thinking about who could fill a position or do a job, determine what the job entails. Establish a written job description that includes what you want the individual to do annually, quarterly, monthly, weekly, and daily. (For a sample job description for the pastor's secretary, visit: www.webedelic.com/church/secjobf.htm.) After you have listed the specifics on what the individual is to do, consider what qualifications are needed to accomplish those tasks and write them down as well. A good job description will take some time to develop. Think it through, fine-tune it, and become familiar with the details. Only after you have created a quality job description and prepared your interview questions should you advertise the job position. (See sidebar "Support Staff Job Description Template.")

Conducting a job interview

Draft a list of questions for the interview, but make sure your questions avoid topics that are deemed discriminatory by federal law. It is critical that you avoid subjects related to the applicant's race, skin color, origin, marital status, arrest or criminal conviction record, height and weight, debts, or disabilities. All questions should relate strictly to the applicant's qualifications for the job and the ability to carry out the job description. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is a federal agency that issues regulations and enforces labor laws. (See EEOC home page: www.eeoc.gov, and click on the link, "Federal laws prohibiting job discrimination: Q&A.") Churches and religious organizations, though, are permitted to discriminate on the basis of religion.

During the interview you could say to the applicant, "Tell me about yourself," and after he or she answers say, "Tell me more." But you cannot ask, "How old are you?" "Are you married?"

“Do you have any children?” “Who takes care of your children when you work?” “Where were you born?” Such questions fall into discrimination categories. If a woman applies for a position and is obviously pregnant, it is not permissible to ask when her baby is due. The reason? Pregnancy discrimination.

Be meticulous and methodical in your interviewing; take notes and move slowly. If you are a married man interviewing a female to serve as your personal secretary, invite your wife to be present during the interview. If she votes no, you also vote no. Don't violate your spouse's gut feelings when evaluating applicants of the opposite sex. Many pastors spend more time with their secretary during the week than they do with their wives. Choose carefully.

Check references carefully and prayerfully. Determine in advance that you will hire based on qualification, experience, and character qualities, not on personality. “Nice person” and “efficient person” are often worlds apart. And it's rarely easy to delete poor choice employees, especially if they are church members. (See sidebar “Getting Good People To Stay,” page 60.)

Managing Office Staff

Once you have selected your staff, the real work begins. Few pastors are totally comfortable wearing the boss hat. They love being pastor, but many of the duties involved in managing the office represent foreign territory. Tom Peters, who cowrote the book *In Search of Excellence*, tried to identify policies, structures, and procedures that made a company great. Instead, what they found were intangibles like enthusiasm, pride, respect, caring, fun, and love. If those components are present in your office, the atmosphere of your office will be warmer and work will be more enjoyable. (See sidebars “Ten Sentences That Will Help You Retain Your Best Employees,” page 60, and “Ten Ways To Motivate Employees,” page 61.)

Realize in advance that most of your congregation erroneously believes that you are anointed 24/7. And they often

SUPPORT STAFF JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

Writing a good job description takes time and effort. The following template can help you prepare a job description or review the suitability of the one you already have. Remember, no two job descriptions will be exactly alike.

Part I. Job Identification

Date:
Job Title:
Report To:
Pay Scale \$:
Education:
Experience:
Work Hours:



Part II: Summary of Responsibilities

Note: Write a general description of the secretary's responsibilities. The office secretary provides secretarial services to the pastoral staff, department heads of church ministries, and to the chairperson of each standing committee. In addition, the office secretary serves as the church receptionist and coordinates the overall functions of the church office.

Part III: Detailed List of Responsibilities

Note: Break the responsibilities down into a detailed list.

- Types correspondence and other documents for the pastoral staff.
- Files and manages church records and correspondence.
- Maintains master church calendar.
- Coordinates use of church facilities.
- Sorts mail.
- Recruits and schedules volunteer workers.
- Orders office supplies.
- Schedules routine maintenance and repairs of office equipment.
- Prepares church bulletin.
- Prepares monthly newsletter.
- Maintains bulletin board located in the church foyer.
- Maintains petty cash.
- Maintains church keys.
- Maintains log of any borrowed church property.
- Maintains church membership list.
- Maintains list of church members who are hospitalized.
- Notifies pastoral staff of reported deaths, accidents, or emergencies involving congregational members.
- Types committee reports.
- Types financial reports.
- Types annual reports.
- Photocopies reports, handouts, and other church materials.
- Answers phone.
- Greets and screens visitors to church office.

—James F. Cobble, Matthews, North Carolina. Reprinted with permission from the November 2002 edition of *Church Secretary Today*.

GETTING GOOD PEOPLE TO STAY

To Do: Praise your employees

Spontaneously. Catch people doing something right, and thank them then and there. Leave voice-mail recognition messages. That takes less than 1 minute.

Specifically. Praise people for specific (rather than generic) accomplishments or efforts. (See sidebar "Ten Sentences That Will Help You Retain Your Best Employees.")

Purposefully. Take an employee to lunch or dinner at a great restaurant to show your appreciation of work well done.

Privately. Go to your employee's office to give a personal thank-you and praise. (Verbal thank-yous are critical.)

Publicly. Praise an employee in the presence of others (peers, family members, your boss). One team adds "shameless bragging" as a short agenda item in all staff meetings.

In Writing. Send a letter, memo, or e-mail. Possibly send a copy to team members or higher-level management. Don't forget—written thank-yous are a coveted workplace incentive.

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think pastors are born with administrative expertise. It is disconcerting to discover they were wrong. Managing the church office may not come easy to you, but you can learn to do it well.

Ongoing training, developing time-management skills, and keeping abreast of new technology and equipment are time-consuming and sometimes expensive. Such discipleship

TEN SENTENCES THAT WILL HELP YOU RETAIN YOUR BEST EMPLOYEES

The human resources team at a major bank sent out a memo with recommendations to help managers make their praise more specific. They suggested that telling people "You're doing a great job" isn't going to make them want to stay. Praise can help you retain your top employees—but only if it is detailed and relevant. Here are the openers they recommended. Try using any of them with your own employees:

1. "You really made a difference by . . ."
2. "I'm impressed with . . ."
3. "You got my attention with . . ."
4. "You're doing top quality work on . . ."
5. "You're right on the mark with . . ."
6. "One of the things I enjoy most about you . . ."
7. "You can be proud of yourself for . . ."
8. "We couldn't have done it without your . . ."
9. "What an effective way to . . ."
10. "You've made my day because of . . ."

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will also involve learning to set priorities, establishing boundaries, and incorporating methods that diminish stress. (See sidebar “Ten Rules for Effective Delegation.”)

It is common to find it difficult to stay spiritually healthy while employed in a church office. So much time and energy are required for the work of the ministry that the spiritual walk of those consumed in office management details often suffers. Using volunteers can help achieve goals, but doing so without thought and planning may backfire. (An excellent Web-exclusive article entitled “Finding and Discipling Quality Volunteers” can be found at www.enrichmentjournal.org. Click on current issue and choose article “Managing the Church Office: An Ever-Changing Challenge.”)

Performing Annual Reviews

Good office managers conduct annual performance reviews. This scares some pastors. The process is not merely an opportune time to express disapproval, but to set goals, offer help, gain insight, improve efficiency, and communicate preferences. Most secretaries look forward to finding out how they are doing;

TEN RULES FOR EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

1. Communicate clearly; describe what is expected and when the job is to be completed.
2. Do not limit delegation to the jobs you do not want to do.
3. Explain the importance of assignments.
4. Share power with other office professionals.
5. Know your fellow office professionals, their aptitudes and interests.
6. Delegate work evenly among all office professionals.
7. Schedule program checks of delegated tasks.
8. Define responsibilities for each office professional and make this information known to others.
9. Establish reasonable deadlines.
10. Reinforce good performance; offer suggestions to improve unsatisfactory performance.

—From *The Complete Office Handbook* by Susan Jaderstrom, Leonard Kruk, and Joanne Miller, copyright © 1992 by Professional Secretaries International (r). Used by permission of Random House, Inc.



they want to know the boss’s opinion regarding their efforts. (The sidebar, “Why Do Performance Appraisals?” on page 62 will give you ideas on what to evaluate and how to express it.)

PROCESSING PAPERWORK

Producing and moving written

information in a timely manner to facilitate ministry takes practice and skill. Without determined effort, paperwork can bury a pastor and office. Most churches suffer from an information and paperwork overload. How do you conquer it?

(continued on page 65)

TEN WAYS TO MOTIVATE EMPLOYEES

1. Personally thank employees for doing a good job—one on one, in writing, or both. Do it promptly, often, and sincerely.
2. Be willing to take time to meet with and listen to employees—as much time as they need or want.
3. Provide specific feedback about performance of the employee, the department, and the organization [church].
4. Strive to create a work environment that is open, trusting, and fun. Encourage new ideas and initiative.
5. Provide information about upcoming products and strategies [activities and plans in the church], how the company makes and loses money, and how each employee fits into the overall plan.
6. Involve employees in decisions, especially those decisions that affect them.
7. Encourage employees to have a sense of ownership in their work and their work environment.
8. Create a partnership with each employee. Give people a chance to grow and learn new skills; show them how you can help them meet their goals within the context of meeting the organization’s goals.
9. Celebrate successes of the company [church], the department, and the individuals in it. Take time for team and morale-building meetings and activities.
10. Use performance as the basis for recognizing, rewarding, and promoting people; deal with low and marginal performers so that they improve their performance or leave the organization [church office].

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WHY DO PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS?

A good performance appraisal will:

- Encourage better communication regarding job expectations and progress.
- Reduce anxiety because the employee knows for certain how he or she is perceived and how he or she is doing.
- Increase productivity potential when there is timely and corrective feedback.
- Inspire continued quality performance when positive contributions are recognized and affirmed.
- Help the employer discover job-related problems and involve him or her in seeking solutions.
- Help both the employer and the employee plan for the future.

Sample Support Staff Performance Evaluation Form

Name of individual being evaluated: _____

Position: _____

Evaluator's Name: _____

Date: _____

Scale: 9-10 Excellent
7-8 Good
5-6 Average
3-4 Fair
1-2 Poor

Scale Definitions:

9-10 Excellent: Outstanding performance that repeatedly makes contributions to the organization above the requirements of the position. Exceptionally high quality performance that leaves little to be desired.

7-8 Good: Performance marked by initiative and intelligent execution, not only fulfilling the requirements of the job, but generally contributing more than the individual's share. Good performance indicates sound judgment, knowledge, and competent mastery of the job.

5-6 Average: Workmanlike performance with the responsibility being handled competently in a satisfactory or adequate manner.

3-4 Fair: Minimum performance requirements just being met. Area needs some improvement.

1-2 Poor: Performance that is below minimum requirements. Repeated intervention by the overseer has been necessary to accomplish the work. Intensive effort by the staff member and close attention by the supervisor are required to effect improvement. Area needs much improvement.

Please indicate the evaluation score in the appropriate columns. Scores that fall into the "poor" category must have an explanation. "Poor" category scores will not be considered without an explanation.

EVALUATIONS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Attitude										
2. Attendance										
3. Punctuality										
4. Loyalty to leadership, staff & organization										
5. Interpersonal skills										
6. Relationship in church										
7. Relationship in office										
8. Cooperates with & assists coworkers										
9. Personal hygiene, appearance & modesty										
10. Ability to resolve conflicts or problems										
11. Uses work time to work										
12. Prioritizes work well										
13. Meets deadlines										
14. Maintains neat office										
15. Creativity										
16. Quality of work										
17. Quantity of work										
18. Written communication skills										
19. Oral communication skills										
20. Technical/professional knowledge										
21. Accepts suggestions & directives										
22. Sees the job as a ministry										

“Poor” category score explanations

____ / _____

Title of category

____ / _____

Title of category

—Shirley J. Good, Springfield, Missouri

DON'T GET SNOWED UNDER

A PACK RAT'S GUIDE TO MANAGING CHURCH RECORDS

If your church is like most, it accumulates paper faster than you can dispose of it. Church offices are probably filled with records, files, letters, and other documents. Sorting through the stacks to determine what is worth saving and what isn't would require a huge investment of time and energy. And what if someone mistakenly throws out something of great importance? Isn't it easier just to allow the papers to pile up?

No, in the long run, it's not. Office space is dear, for one thing, and few churches have the luxury of an expansive storage room. More important, if you make no effort to review and organize your documents, the church risks becoming dependent on the memory of the longest tenured minister or office worker. Eventually that person will leave the church and with him or her will go any reasonable prospect of locating important material in the remaining mountains of paper. It is better to review documents regularly and systematically—pitching those the church no longer needs and archiving the rest for a set amount of time.

"Churches should review their papers annually," says Lynette Chambers, president of MarketPlace Resources, an Atlanta-based organizational development firm that advises churches about tracking and managing their records. She recommends applying the 6-month rule: throw out any document you haven't used in the past 6 months unless you can come up with a good reason not to pitch it. Any remaining documents should be stored with easy access in mind. Files should be kept in a convenient place but not out in the open, where they may be in the way or, even worse, be thrown out by mistake. MarketPlace Resources trains its clients to use a color-coded system, which enables them to instantly know who originally prepared a certain document.

CHURCH RECORD CHECKLIST

Still, you may wonder how long various types of documents should be stored. So, here are some general guidelines, based on government agency requirements and general business and church practice, that can help you make sense of the mounds of paper lying around the church office.

Tax records. Tax returns must be kept for at least 3 years after the return is due. Three years is the statute of limitations period for a claim on an inaccurate return. If the church has investments in stock or property, information about the purchase price must be kept until the item is sold, since that price will be used to figure the amount of taxable financial gain realized from the sale.

The Internal Revenue Service mandates that employment tax records, like withholdings, be kept for at least 4 years after the date the tax becomes due or is paid, whichever comes later. These records include not only personal information about your employees, such as names, addresses, Social Security numbers, and job titles, but also information concerning salaries, the number of hours worked by hourly employees, and payments to annuity, health, or other benefit plans.

Financial records. Internal records of your finances, such as income and expense statements, budget reports, and accounts payable and receivable, should be kept for several years, so you can track your church's economic ups and downs, among other things. Canceled checks should be kept 5 to 7 years, in case you need to prove payment to a contractor or supplier. The statute of limitations in some instances can be as long as 6 years.

Job advertisements. The Americans With Disabilities Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, and other federal statutes require employers to retain job advertisements for at least a year. The church should save one newspaper in which the job listing appeared, so an investigator could, if necessary, check the text as it was seen by the public. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act requires that some paperwork for older applicants be maintained for 3 years. (In general, employers come under the authority of these acts if they employ 15 or more people.)

Personnel files. In most cases, an employee has 2 years to file a claim against his or her former employer. Federal statutes require employers to hold records of promotions, demotions, and other job actions for a year, records of earnings for 2 years, and payroll records for 3 years. Résumés and applications must be kept for a year; records of tests used in promoting or terminating any employees also must be kept for a year. The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires records of job-related injuries and illnesses to be stored for 5 years.

Contracts. Service contracts should be kept for the life of the agreement or 6 years from the date the contract was signed, whichever is later. You may have as long as 6 years from the time you entered into the contract to file a grievance.

Insurance records. Copies of your liability insurance policies should be kept permanently, especially if the policies are written on an occurrence basis. Policies written on an occurrence basis cover the church for any claim or suit brought against it as long as the situation at issue occurred while the policy was in effect. This is true even if the claimant was unaware of any harm at the time and does not sue until years later. Because of the broad potential for coverage created by this type of policy, insurance companies are increasingly writing claims-made policies, which require both the situation to have occurred and the claim to have been made before the policy expires.

For other insurance policies, it is probably sufficient to maintain only the declarations page, which comes annually at about the time for renewal, in a permanent file.

Immigration records. You may or may not be aware that the Immigration and Naturalization Service requires all employers to obtain proof that their employees are American citizens or have the necessary work permits from the federal government. You are obliged to keep a copy of this evidence for 3 years after employment begins or 1 year after termination, whichever is later.

Constitution and bylaws. A copy of all versions of your incorporation documents and your church's bylaws should be kept in a permanent file. They then can be referred to easily if your church's nonprofit status is questioned or if a dispute arises over why your bylaws were written in a certain way.

Property-related documents. The deed or deeds to your property should be permanently stored in a safe place, along with any mortgages. Be sure to save any surveys of your property because they can be very useful if zoning questions arise or if your church decides to expand its facilities.

Birth, marriage, and death records. You have a significant responsibility to those baptized or married in the church to keep a permanent record of the event available for inspection and consultation. If your church has a cemetery, it should keep historical records of its use.

Membership information. Of course you'll want to keep names, addresses, and phone numbers of members as long as they are members, often longer. A better question is how often you should update such information. The answer is as soon as possible. Make sure you promptly record address changes and any changes in family makeup.

If your membership records are computerized (and if they are not, they should be), you should back up your records regularly to a floppy disk. Companies like Shelby Systems, Servant PC Resources, Lowell Brown Enterprises, and Parsons Church Group offer excellent church management software packages to help you efficiently store membership information. (See sidebar "Selecting Church Management Software," page 73.)

Pledge records and gifts to special funds. Records of gifts and pledges should be maintained permanently, in case there is ever a question of how much was given and for what purpose. These also can be saved using church management software.

—Stephen Chawaga (schawaga@monteverde.com) practices law with the firm of Monteverde McAlee & Hurd in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Reprinted from November/December 2001 issue of *Your Church*, a publication of *Christianity Today International*. Used with permission of the author.

Develop an effective filing system.

With or without a secretary, keeping up with paperwork and mail is a common challenge in most church offices. Few people like to file, and there are some common reasons most people dislike this task. When individual file folders are stuffed so full of paper that jamming another sheet into it requires a serious outlay of energy, people will put off filing. Another reason filing is a pain is that people frequently have to strain to figure out where to file it. And when you need to retrieve a document, divine revelation may be required to know where it is located. It is no wonder many individuals think piling is easier than filing. But when your files are established with a logical and practical plan, easy retrieval is possible.

Files are not just a place to stick papers to get them off your desk and out of sight. (Find guidelines to establishing and maintaining a quality filing system in the sidebars "Don't Get Snowed Under" and "Your Church Filing System," page 66.)

Handle mail effectively.

To quickly and efficiently process mail, establish three folders: one for high priority items—paperwork that is urgent and needs immediate attention; the second for financial items; and the third for low-priority items. The first folder should be handled daily with every item being addressed, delegated, deposited in a file, or disposed of as unnecessary. When mail is opened, the envelopes should be discarded, multiple page documents stapled together, and date-sensitive or response requested items highlighted. If a secretary can process the mail, it saves the pastor a lot of time. Also, all incoming mail should be date stamped. The pastor who establishes a daily routine for handling mail will avoid being bogged down with paperwork.

When considering whether to retain a particular document, ask yourself:

1. Will it prove something that needs to be proven or verified?

YOUR CHURCH FILING SYSTEM

Although not totally inclusive, the following list provides an overview of the most common file components usually needed in a church office. There are specific categories (general, equipment, insurance, etc.) that should be identified on the outside of the file cabinet and on the first file placed in that category. Files should be placed in alphabetical order within each category to make retrieval easier. Keeping an up-to-date file index on the computer that details the entire file system is a wise practice. When a document needs to be saved, the file category list should provide direction to the appropriate location. The following list contains components usually needed in a church file system.

GENERAL

All Church Ministries Reports

Appraisals

Baby dedications

Bulk mail (permit and forms)

C.C.L.I. (copyright license)

Correspondence

Current year

Past years (only on sensitive matters)

Deeds (list by property address)

Directory

Employee I.D. numbers

Incorporation

Inventory

Key list

Marriages (licenses/legal proof of ceremony)

Policies

Water baptisms

Weddings (policies, programs, forms)

EQUIPMENT (WARRANTIES, INSTRUCTION MANUALS, SERVICE AGREEMENTS, COPIES OF ORIGINAL INVOICES)

Audiovisual

Sound systems

TVs/VCRs

Video projectors

Kitchen

Refrigerators

Freezers

Dishwashers

Microwaves

Misc. items

Maintenance

Lawn mowers

Snow blowers

Vacuums

Misc. items

Office

Answering machines

Computers

Copiers

PDA's

Printers

Telephones (cell and land line)

INSURANCE

Dental

Health

Multiperil

Vehicle

Workmen's compensation

BUILDING (WARRANTIES, CARE AND REPAIR INSTRUCTIONS, PAINT COLORS, COPIES OF ORIGINAL INVOICES)

Appraisals

Baptistry

Carpeting

Curtains/drapes

Electric

Flooring (tile, hardwood)

Furniture (pews, chairs, pulpit)

Heating/AC

Roof

Signs (outdoor) and signage (name plates)

Steeple

Wall coverings

Water and sewer (plumbing, location of lines, etc.)

Windows

CHURCH GOVERNANCE

Annual business meeting minutes

Annual reports

Board meeting minutes

Constitution and bylaws

Membership

Current list

Past lists

Inactive list

Transfers in and out

FINANCIAL

Accounts payable (File alphabetically according to the individual or company to whom the check was issued.)

Accounts receivable (contributions, payments, funds received)

Banking

Checking (one file for each account)

Deposits

Statements

Savings account

Money market accounts

Reports

Annual

Quarterly

Monthly

Taxes

Sales tax exemption

State

Payroll

Property

HISTORY (LIST BY YEAR OR BY DECADES FOR MATERIALS THAT ARE MORE THAN 10 YEARS OLD)

Examples

Dedication of babies

Photos (identify by name, date, and event)

Special events (promo, newspaper clips, awards, and recognition)

CATALOGS (KEEP ONLY CURRENT ISSUES)

Audiovisual equipment and supplies

Books and literature

Curriculum

Films and videos

Fund-raising

Furniture

Maintenance and janitorial (equipment and supplies)

Office products

Misc. catalogs

—Shirley J. Good, Springfield, Missouri

2. Will it help me make a wise decision?

3. Will it help me to produce a sermon or an activity in the future?

If the answer to all three questions is no, dispose of it; you probably don't need it.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies, procedures, and written job descriptions are essential. The Bible is full of them and a well-managed church will follow that pattern. In some churches, the pastor establishes many policies on his own, but it is always wise to involve church leadership in developing policies and procedures. This will help them understand why and take ownership of the guidelines.

The size of the church probably has the greatest bearing on how stringent the regulations need to be, but every church will diminish the stress potential if policies and procedures are determined in advance and put into operation. (See sidebar "Church Office Employee Policy Manual." For a sample church office policy manual, go to www.webedelic.com/church/polmanf.htm.)

With the growing use of computers and the Internet in church offices, it is imperative that churches develop information system policies. Doing so can prevent or curtail misuse of church equipment by employees and help maintain the church's and its employee's integrity. According to Nick Nicholaou of Ministry Business Services, "In ministry we trust each other. The world of computing is changing, though, and many ministries are looking for resources to help them keep up with the changing legal issues that accompany providing computers for staff use." Ministry Business Services has put together a recommended and editable set of policies and procedures to help keep your ministry current in light of new laws impacting computers in the workplace. They also include policies that help improve computer strategies, and are done with Christian ministry in mind.

CHURCH OFFICE EMPLOYEE POLICY MANUAL

Church policies may differ as much as pastors. However, there are many commonalities in the situations that most church office employees face. Those situations elicit questions that require decisions and answers. If the following topics are included and carefully established when creating an employee policy manual, the majority of those inquiries will have the needed answers.

For a sample of a church office employee manual go to www.webedelic.com/church/polmanf.htm

1. Accidents and injury
2. Benefits
 - A. Bereavement leave
 - B. Bonuses
 - C. Education
 - D. Holidays
 - E. Jury duty
 - F. Medical insurance
 - G. Medical leave
 - H. Military leave
 - I. Personal day
 - J. Pregnancy leave
 - K. Recognition
 - L. Sick time
 - M. Travel reimbursement
 - N. Vacations
3. Conduct
 - A. Alcoholic beverage abstention
 - B. Christian model/behavioral expectations
 - C. Confidentiality
 - D. Ethics
 - E. Communication boundaries
4. Dress code
5. Extended leave of absence
6. Grievances
7. Hiring and recruitment
8. Office hours and schedule
9. Information systems policies
10. Performance evaluations
11. Remuneration
12. Security (church building, office, equipment)
13. Sexual harassment
14. Staff meetings
15. Termination of employment
16. General policies
17. Statement of understanding

—Shirley J. Good, Springfield, Missouri



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"As you can see, membership is down this year, although we feel this is just a correction."

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE OFFICE LAYOUT

When developing a floor plan for your office, consider who uses each machine, the size of each machine, and the noise and heat generated by each machine. You will want to minimize the need for staff members to walk repeatedly across the reception area or up flights of stairs. You will also want to avoid the noise pollution, and possibly sick-building syndrome that can result from cramming the printer and electric stapler next to the receptionist.

"Keep in mind that the church is a family, but we are also running a business," says Jan Townes of Townes Interior Design Group in Northbrook, Illinois. Townes has designed several church office interiors and notes that each church building and staffing arrangement is unique, but advanced planning can optimize your use of office space and equipment.

Following the tips below is a good start.

Provide light. When redesigning offices, Townes allows for as much natural light as possible, pointing out, "Studies prove that [a good] environment makes a productivity difference."

Buy appropriate office furniture. The proper furniture, often modular cubicles, can help set traffic patterns and reduce the tangle of wires that accompanies office equipment. Ohio office manager Cathy Zappia has seen her congregation grow from 1,500 to 4,000 members in the last 10 years. The modular furniture in her logically arranged office space has helped keep the increased traffic in check. "A corridor channels visitors to the back offices and keeps work disruption in the reception area to a minimum," she says. A 4-foot partition makes up one of the corridor walls while it also serves as the back of the modular workstations. The desk and wall joints of the workstations contain wire conduits, phone jacks, outlets, and task-lighting devices. The secretary sits near the church entrance and can easily glance up from her work to greet visitors.

Follow the directions. Townes advises following manufacturers' recommendations when arranging furniture and equipment. This includes setting machines several inches away from walls to increase ventilation. Also be sure to avoid placing equipment in the direct sunlight, which can fade colors.

Put equipment, especially smaller units, near those who use them most. Chris Workman, church administrator at Speedway Christian Church in Speedway, Indiana, keeps an addressing printer and a folding machine in her office, even though the church has a secretarial office and equipment room. The proximity, she says, saves time when mailing out 1,200 newsletters every week.

Try networking. For larger churches, reductions in hardware costs make networking multiple computers and printers an affordable option. Each of the pastors at Speedway Christian Church has an office equipped with a private computer and printer. They can work efficiently and access shared information while protecting sensitive files. An outside vendor maintains the network and equipment at the church, the best alternative to a tech-savvy staff member working on a 24/7 schedule.

Consider separate equipment rooms. Townes observes that large churches frequently allocate space and money for separate equipment rooms.

Bethany Lutheran Church and School in Naperville, Illinois, employs this strategy. Pam Bunte, church printer, spends many of her days in the workroom. She designs the bulletin on her computer and prints it on a laser printer. Then she loads the original document onto a duplicator, creates a master, and prints 1,000 bulletins. The folder, a louder machine, creases the bulletins while Bunte is busy creating her next document. Coworkers come in the workroom to use the central fax and postage machine or to collect office supplies. "When it gets too noisy," she says, "I visit the reception office. It's quieter."

Do the best your church can. Townes acknowledges that small churches often have limited space options. Karen Hainley, one of two church secretaries at the 350-member Reamstown Church of God in Reamstown, Pennsylvania, describes the situation at her workplace and many others, "Most of our equipment is in the church office."

At Reamstown, the pastor uses the laptop and printer in his office but occasionally hands a diskette to Hainley so she can print a document in color. Both secretaries have their own computer and printer. One printer does black and white, the other does color; both computers are networked to both printers. Teachers and other administrative staff members use a copier stored in the central hall, while the secretaries use a copier, duplicator, and folding machine in the main office. Hainley says the equipment is packed in, but that keeps everything handy.

So, get rid of your old typewriters and adding machines, invest in the right equipment, and focus on the one aspect of your church office that doesn't require extra space or upgrades—greeting visitors with a warm smile.

—Katherine Crosett, New Albany, Ohio. Reprinted from May/June 2001 issue of *Your Church*, a publication of *Christianity Today International*. Used with permission.



Developing the ability to effectively read and understand people enables the pastor to accomplish more ministry in less time and with less effort.

They are available at www.mbsinc.com. For computer policies and procedures information in this article, see Technology Appendix beginning on page 70.

OFFICE SETUP AND LAYOUT

Office appearance

What does your office look like? Does it contain a clean and neat reception area that communicates that your church cares enough about its visitors to keep its environment pleasant? The office goal should state by appearance the following:

- This is a professional office, not a home.
- Men and women work in this office.
- We care that you're comfortable.
- We are ruled by the Prince of Peace; clutter and chaos do not belong here.
- This is a joyful place to work.
- We have planned our office decor.

These goals can better be met by avoiding the following:

- Covering the walls with announcements.
- Having notes everywhere, making the staff appear mindless.
- Cluttered desks.
- The look of an office supply store.
- The look of a computer repair shop.
- Crocheted poodle toilet tissue covers and lace doilies.
- Grungy, soiled carpeting.
- Overly busy wall coverings.
- Stacks of magazines and boxes.
- Dead or dying plants.

If you want to create a sharp look in your office, observe the components of a classy hotel lobby. Visit a new bank or business. Look at their walls, windows, and desks. What impressions do you get from their office? Visitors to your office are getting an impression too. Make sure it's a positive one. (See sidebar "Location, Location, Location.")

CONCLUSION

Managing a church office with expertise takes time, energy, determination, and prayer. But it's part of every

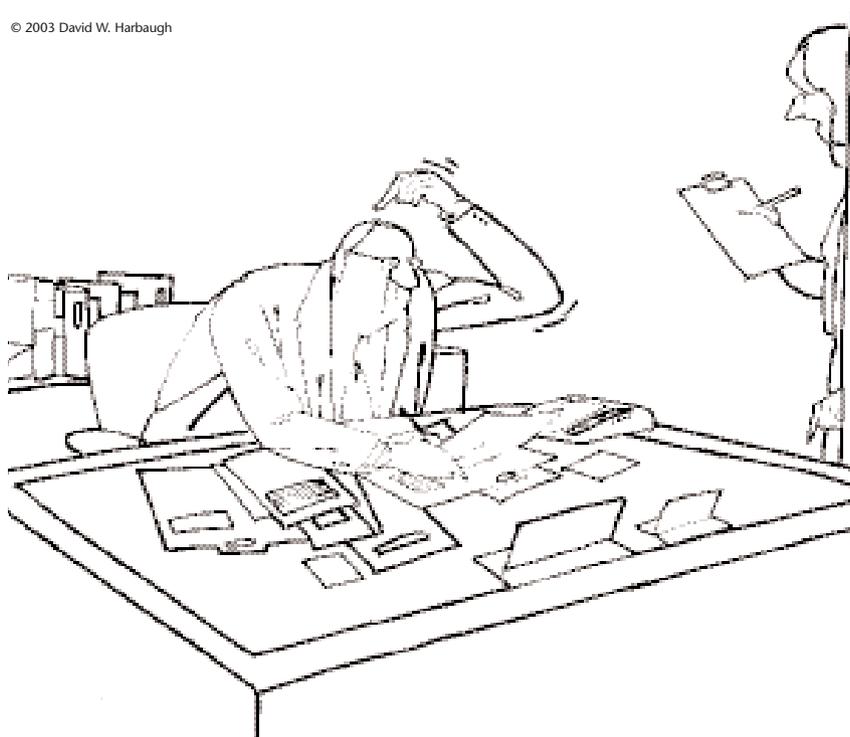
pastor's job description and pertinent to equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. **e**

SEE THE TECHNOLOGY AND CHURCH OFFICE EQUIPMENT APPENDIX BEGINNING ON PAGE 70

Shirley J. Good is director of Office Revival, a church-office efficiency consulting service, based in Springfield, Missouri.



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"We're monitoring the fitness of the church staff. Do you know anyone with insomnia and daytime fatigue?"

TECHNOLOGY APPENDIX

TECHNOLOGY AND CHURCH OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Technology is everywhere in ministry. But it wasn't always that way. Most started by getting a computer to help with accounting and then added another for managing a database. Today computers are on every desk and in nearly every briefcase. We still use them for accounting and database

management, but we also use them as study, communications, and purchasing tools. Because of the significance of current technological advances to ministry opportunity, many churches are taking the high-tech road to modernization and equipping their offices with quality digital equipment. The following seven sidebars will help you navigate through the sometimes

confusing world of digital technology.

1. Current Technology Maximized
2. What's Hot in Church Office Equipment
3. Buying the Right Stuff
4. Selecting Church Management Software
5. Security—It's Time To Get Serious
6. Information System Policies
7. Practical Church Computer Policies.

CURRENT TECHNOLOGY MAXIMIZED

CONSIDER THESE NEW TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAN HELP YOUR MINISTRY BECOME MORE EFFICIENT.

Some say that, in the end, those with the most toys win. We know better. But there are some new technologies available that can help your ministry become more efficient. When translated into ministry terms, that may mean more souls in the Kingdom.

PDAS

Personal Digital Assistants are great tools. Storing addresses and contact lists, appointments, and task lists, PDAs come with ministry facilitation written all over them. But enhancing them with some inexpensive software makes them even more helpful.

Adding, for instance, Bible software means you will always have the Word with you when you need it. Available from www.laridian.com, you can get the complete Bible in your favorite version with built-in tools like a searchable concordance, bookmarks, and more.

INTRANET

Nearly all ministries are challenged with internal communication. Intranets are internal-only Web sites you can use to get important information to your team, keeping them informed of issues, schedules, and more. This can also be a repository for your forms and manuals, making them easily available to anyone on your staff who needs them.

DIGITAL CAMERAS

Digital cameras have come down in price significantly. For those adding pictures to their database, worship experience, and/or Web site, these are a must have. Some PDAs, like Sony's CLIE™ NX70V (www.sonymstyle.com/micros/clie) even have built-in digital cameras.

Cellular Phones

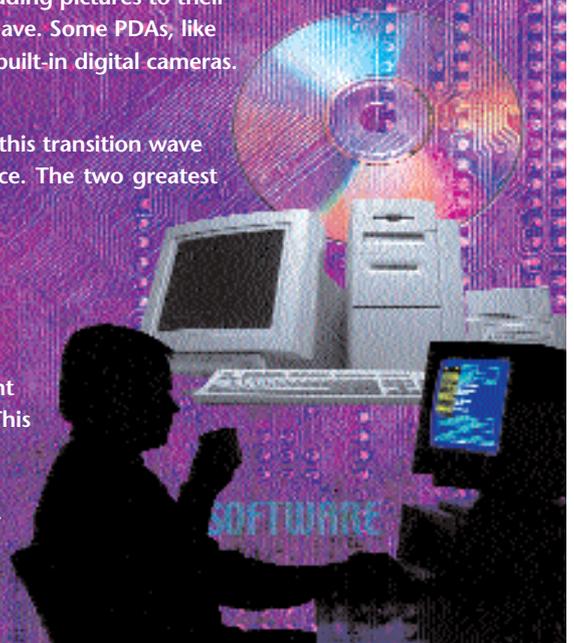
Cell phones are being built into PDAs. We are at the beginning of this transition wave where our cell phones and PDAs will be combined into one device. The two greatest advantages:

1. One less device to carry.
2. A complete PDA address book/contact list with a dial button.

Worthwhile Investments

Technology continues to march forward. Desktop and laptop computers have become so fast and powerful that the development focus has shifted to devices, sometimes referred to as appliances. This trend may continue for a while. Although some would call these new developments toys, when used to empower ministry teams, they can translate into saved souls. This is when technology investment makes sense and becomes worthwhile.

—Nick B. Nicholaou, Huntington, California



WHAT'S HOT IN CHURCH OFFICE EQUIPMENT

CURRENT RESEARCH DATA ON CHURCHES

Recent research reveals what office equipment is most sought after by churches today. And not surprisingly, the move—even among smaller churches—is more and more toward equipment that can maximize time, energy, and limited budgets.

Copy Cats

The hot printing equipment that churches are snapping up are digital copiers and document shredders. In the past 3 years, one in six churches (16 percent) purchased a digital copier; and today, 43 percent of all churches own a digital copier. In addition, one in eight churches (13 percent) has recently obtained a new document shredder, bringing the ownership total to 40 percent.

The bigger a church's budget, the more likely it is to own virtually every one of the products in our study. Large churches with an annual budget of greater than \$500,000 are clearly the trendsetters when it comes to owning digital copiers and document shredders.

Standard Equipment

The majority of churches of all budget sizes own a photo copier and duplicating equipment for their printing needs. The majority of large (96 percent) and medium-large (69 percent) churches (\$250,001–\$500,000 annual budget) own a time-saving paper folding machine. Only one-third of medium churches (\$100,001–\$250,000 annual budget) and one-tenth of small churches (annual budget of \$100,000 or less) are able to justify the expense of such a machine.

Fax Frenzy

Fax machines continue to be a hot communications commodity among churches, even in this Internet age. One in seven churches (14 percent) added a fax machine to their church office in the past 3 years. Eight in 10 churches (78 percent) now own a fax machine, making it second only to the telephone as an electronic communications device found in church offices. Again, ownership varies by annual church budget. Less than half (45 percent) of small churches own a fax machine, while nearly all churches with a budget of more than \$250,000 have at least one.

Electronic Communication

The majority of churches in our study do not own intercoms, voice-mail systems, or pagers. However, the vast majority of medium-large and large churches can probably justify the expense of an intercom due to the size of their ministry staff. Church ownership of pagers dropped dramatically in the past 3 years probably due to the growth in cell phone usage. Voice-mail systems or answering machines continue to grow in usage especially among small- and medium-size churches.

The Study

A total of 1,989 surveys were mailed and 557 returned, or 28 percent. With a sample this size, results are considered accurate to within plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Church Office Evolution Office Equipment Ownership

Printing Equipment

	1998	2001
Photocopier	87%	89%
Duplicating Equipment	72%	74%
Paper Folding Machine	43%	47%
Digital Copier	27%	43%
Document Shredder	27%	40%

Electronic Communication Devices

	1998	2001
Fax Machine	64%	78%
Intercom	43%	48%
Voice Mail System	35%	40%
Pager(s)	27%	19%

MONEY AND MACHINES

Small	\$100k or less
Medium	\$100k – \$250k
Medium-Large	\$250k – \$500k
Large	more than \$500k

Printing Equipment

	Small	Medium	Med-Large	Large
Photocopier	80%	88%	98%	94%
Duplicating Equipment	63%	68%	82%	90%
Paper Folding Machine	10%	34%	69%	96%
Digital Copier	25%	39%	52%	64%
Document Shredder	10%	35%	48%	72%

Electronic Communications Devices

Fax Machine	45%	78%	93%	98%
Intercom	16%	39%	84%	76%
Voice Mail System	31%	35%	42%	62%
Pager(s)	3%	16%	15%	49%

—John LaRue, Glen Ellyn, Illinois. Reprinted from the May/June 2002 issue of *Your Church*, a publication of Christianity Today International. Used with permission.

BUYING THE RIGHT STUFF

Not sure which computer system to buy for your church or ministry? The following steps will ensure you have a much better experience and will bring a higher likelihood of buying a system that truly serves your ministry needs.

It's time to buy a new computer. Local stores sell them.

Companies on the Internet sell them. A member of your board wants to build one for you. How can you decide which is the best option for you and your ministry?

Many clients ask us, as ministry consultants, which computer system to buy. Following are some of the factors we recommend considering when deciding which system is best for you and your ministry.

Ministries Are Unique

We hear from ministry computer users how difficult it is for them to cope with computers that crash. Ministry offices are more like publishers than any other type of office environment: There are constant deadlines to meet and rarely enough time to get it all done. Throw a few computer crashes each week into the mix, and team stress can go through the roof.

For this reason, more than any other, we recommend placing a high priority on buying proven systems. Surprisingly, however, not all name brands enjoy a reputation among corporate users for solid design.

Some Perspective, Please

When computers were young in their development, system crashes and downtime were common. They needed sterile environments and teams of specialists and programmers to keep them running.

Today's computers are much easier to use and are more reliable. We have seen people who are completely unfamiliar with computers quickly master them and turn them into key tools for ministry.

Many computer programs today are well-written, making implementation and use fast and easy. Applications for ministry abound. Some have been so solidly written that you will rarely find a task that hasn't already been provided for.

The computers available today are also relatively inexpensive. A current workstation that is fast and capable can be purchased for about \$1,000.

How To Choose the Right System

Computer system dissatisfaction is usually caused by one of two things:

- A poor choice of equipment.
- Incorrectly selecting hardware, then software, and then

hoping it will meet needs.

Following is what we have found to be the best approach to choosing the right system for your ministry.

1. *Identify your needs.* First identify the needs you want a computer to satisfy. These might include accounting, creating and printing letters and flyers, keeping track of members and their skills and/or contributions, etc.

2. *Find the software that best meets those needs.* Objectively research as many software packages as possible to determine which one best satisfies the needs you identified in step one. Go beyond looking at brochures and boxes. Ask for a full demonstration or a working copy to evaluate. Be sure to contact present and past users.

3. *Choose the best computer hardware for the software.* Ask the software company for computer specifications and recommendations. Ask satisfied users which hardware they are using and whether or not they would choose differently today.

Not All Computers Are Created Equal

New computers and chips are introduced all the time. If you get caught in the trap of needing to have the latest and the fastest computer around, next month you will be disappointed when the newest latest and fastest computer is introduced. Or, you will put off your decision indefinitely because you are concerned it will soon become obsolete. With computers, if you can buy it, it's already obsolete.

Another trap computer buyers often fall into is overfocusing on the price of the hardware. Don't choose a system based primarily on cost. Experienced computer users know that price has little to do with quality.

A study was conducted some years ago to discover what influenced computer buyers most. First-time buyers rated price as their number one priority (on a scale of 1 to 10), service as number four. Second-time buyers rated service number one, price number nine.

Our Recommendations

Locally built computers may not be best. Many local computer builders do little more than assemble parts they have purchased. They don't have the funds necessary to do full research and development engineering.

Choose your computer from an established company with a national reputation. Our clients have had the best experience with Dell computers, so we negotiated a volume discount for those who call 800/MBS-DELL and say they are part of the MBS buying agreement. (We receive no income from this arrangement.)

Choose a computer close to the technological edge, but not on the edge. You want a computer that will be useful to you, but not a computer that is experimental. Leave the testing to those with the time to devote to reconfiguring unstable systems.

Buying a computer can be a little scary. Following these steps will help you have a much better experience and will bring a higher likelihood of buying a system that truly serves.

—Nick B. Nicholaou, Huntington, California, is president of Ministry Business Services, Inc., a team of management consultants specializing in ministry administration.

You can reach Nick via e-mail: nick@mbsinc.com.



SELECTING CHURCH MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Which is the best CMS for your church or ministry?

Following these guidelines will improve your CMS selection success dramatically.

Choosing your church management software (CMS) package is the most important ministry software decision you will make. It is the tool you and your team will depend on to help you:

- track and identify trends within your congregation.
- minister to those under your care.
- demonstrate good financial management.

Last Things First

Many make cost their first factor in the CMS search process. Focusing on price too early in the process usually steers toward poor choices. The best approach is to find the system that best meets your needs. Then determine whether or not you can afford it. You can go to a lesser choice if necessary, but at least it will be an informed and intentional decision that will probably get you a better fitting system than you would have otherwise gotten.

How Big Is Too Big?

What do you plan to do with your CMS database? Some only use them to maintain names and contact information. For those ministries, a CMS package with less extensive capabilities may be a good choice. Identifying expectations at the beginning of the search will guide you through the decisionmaking process.

If you and your team identify that you will be wanting to track more in-depth information such as contributions, attendance, volunteers' gifts, talents, and ministry interests, you will need a more sophisticated package. One thought worth considering is this: systems that only meet your current needs are likely those you will quickly outgrow.

History of Satisfied Customers

Many have entered the competitive CMS market only to decide within a few years that the profit margins are too small. Check with new users, medium-tenure users, and long-term users to see how pleased they are with the software and its support. Ask, "If you were making the same decision today, what would you do differently?" Call the software's technical support to see whether the person you get meets your expectations.

Find a CMS Vendor With Vision

Some vendors have stopped developing their systems and are doing little more than maintaining them. Others have been slow to keep up with current technologies. Buying a CMS package is a long-term strategic decision that will impact your ministry for years to come. Ask questions that will help you and your team gain confidence that this investment is one you will never regret.

Never Write Your Own Software

Writing your own CMS is a losing proposition 99.99 percent of the time. This is true even if a volunteer offers to do it for free. If

you can find an existing system that meets 80 percent or more of your needs, get it. Custom systems rarely get that close.

Require Training and Periodic Retraining

This is the most important software you will be running on your system. It makes sense to train your team so they can work with it efficiently. In addition to initial training, establish a retraining plan that will improve your team's knowledge over time.

Application Service Provider

Many software companies are moving toward offering ASP options. ASP means connecting to a software host over the Internet and all work is done via the Internet. For those ministries that cannot afford to buy a full license for their first software choice, this may be a way to get that high-quality software for a small subscription fee.

Good Financial Tracking

Half of all church splits come from financial questions and concerns. It is essential, then, to make accounting a strong focus in your CMS search.

Key elements to look for in this area:

Automatic tracking of multiple fund balances. Correct ministry accounting requires that ministries track income and expenses that close to different fund balances. This is how they identify how much, for instance, is in the building or missions fund.

Secure audit trail. A secure audit trail means that once a transaction is posted, it cannot be erased. Every transaction, then, is available for scrutiny and cannot be hidden.

Who Owns the Data?

This is an issue that most don't think to ask. It means that you have the CMS database layout so you can get to your data and do anything you would like with it. We run into this issue when clients have decided to change their CMS. Some companies won't share their database layout, making data conversion difficult. Remember, it's your data.

Determining what you need, selecting the best software to meet your needs, and asking questions before signing contracts will improve your CMS selection success dramatically.

Enrichment journal's Web site has a helpful tool available for pastors who are looking for new church management software. It's an article written and updated annually by Nick Nicholaou of Ministry Business Services (www.mbsinc.com), that lists software providers and their software's capabilities.

To download a free copy of this valuable tool, go to www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org. Click on current issue and choose article "Managing the Church Office: An Ever-changing Challenge."

—Nick B. Nicholaou, Huntington, California.

SECURITY—IT'S TIME TO GET SERIOUS

IT'S TIME TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT SECURING YOUR CHURCH'S COMPUTER SYSTEMS.

Since September 11, 2001, most Americans are more security conscious than at any time in recent history. While we don't normally think of terrorists targeting ministry computer systems, Craig Cato, former president of Capin Crouse Technology, says some enemies of the Christian faith have begun to target ministry computer systems. Add to that the many security loopholes in some Windows® network operating systems and software and our concerns about identity fraud, and it becomes clear that it's time to get serious about securing our ministry computer systems.

What are the risks?

There was a time when our computer systems were relatively simple. The only threats were computer viruses passed on floppy disks and regional catastrophes that could damage our buildings and equipment. But today we have a host of threats that could compromise sensitive data or our operational dependencies on computer systems.

- *Internet access loopholes.* Many network servers running Windows® NT, 2000, or XP are connected to the Internet. These systems have many security loopholes, with more being discovered at least weekly. Because of these protection gaps, others may be able to gain access to these servers and use them for whatever purpose they desire. Your Windows® servers, if connected to the Internet, could be used as a distribution point for viruses, pornography, denial-of-service attacks, and even television shows. As you know, if some of your sensitive data, like your contributor list, got into the wrong hands, it could be bad.

- *Identity fraud.* Armed with the right information, outsiders could pose as ministry-team members. Sensitive data, therefore, must be protected. In many states, unprotected sensitive data could lead to lawsuits from those who feel they have been hurt. Yet most ministries have very loose—often nonexistent—information system security policies. Two ways we know this are when computer users know each other's passwords and/or the passwords are easily guessable. These open systems are ripe for identity fraud.

- *E-mail viruses.* This is a battlefield many of us are familiar with. Whereas viruses were once distributed primarily by floppy disks, today they are spread mostly as e-mail attachments. Unfortunately, many of these come from trusted friends and colleagues, and by the time we realize what's happening to our computer, it's too late.

What can we do about it?

- *First, get tested.* There are many companies available that perform IS security audits. The cost can range from free to more than \$10,000. We tried some of the free audits that are available on our network and were told we had perfect security. Then we tried Capin Crouse Technology's audit (www.capincrousetechnology.com), and a number of security gaps were discovered that the previous audits didn't find. Although it costs a little—less than \$500—it is well worth it. And along with a full test of our system's Internet vulnerabilities, it also asked about our policies and procedures.

- *Second, fill the cracks with patches.* Microsoft has patches available to correct every security hole they are publicly aware of. Keep checking Microsoft's Web site for patches and don't delay their application. A delay of just days could make the difference between security and an embarrassing disaster.

- *Establish good IS policies and procedures.* Set policies regarding passwords and enforce them. Require all computer users to keep their password to themselves, and to use a combination of letters and/or numbers that are not guessable. Avoid names, words, and dates—forwards or backwards.

- *Install virus protection and keep it updated.* Virus protection should run on all workstations and servers. The manufacturers of antivirus software publish virus signature updates whenever new viruses are discovered. These should be checked often and applied as quickly as they are available.

We would not consider compromising our family's safety, and for our ministries we need to exercise the same concern. The likelihood of a data disaster has, unfortunately, become so great that we cannot ignore it any longer. Thankfully, computer security protection is available and affordable.

—Nick B. Nicholaou, Huntington, California

INFORMATION SYSTEMS POLICIES

From identity fraud to infidelity, Internet abuse can be devastating to ministries, individuals, and families. Consider the following policies to protect your staff and ministry.

Now that we have computers for all of our staff, and those computers are connected to each other and to the Internet, there is potential for abuse. While this may not sound serious, it can be. From identity fraud to infidelity, Internet abuse can be devastating to ministries, individuals, and families. Ministries need to change the way they look at technology and how they manage it. They need information systems policies.

Following are a few policies we recommend for your ministry:

Non-Privacy of System Contents

An increasing number of ministries are finding they need to terminate employees for improper use of computers. Although it is most often because of adult Web sites and content, it can also be because of inappropriate e-mails. Unless your ministry has a strong privacy policy, it may have difficulty prevailing in a case resulting from such a termination. The terminated employee may believe his or her e-mail or hard drive was private. So consider the following two policies (Change “our ministry” to reflect your ministry’s name.):

1. Our ministry provides resources to facilitate employees’ contributions toward accomplishing its mission and reserves the right to examine all provided resources at any time and without warning. Such resources may include desks, desk drawers, computers, databases, communication systems, e-mails, voice mail, lockers, file cabinets, etc., secured or not. These resources are the property of our ministry and are therefore not private.

2. All computer systems are the property of our ministry and are provided to enable users to carry out their duties of employment and volunteerism, and all e-mail messages are and shall remain the exclusive property of our ministry. To ensure that its systems are dedicated to ministry purposes and are secure, our ministry maintains the right to monitor all computer systems and their use. Those using our ministry’s systems should not have any expectation of privacy in their use or in anything that is created or maintained on them.

A Policy That Protects the Staff

The Internet is a great tool. Like any tool, however, it can be abused. To protect your team, let them know your policy on Internet use. Consider the following:

Our ministry has established a system that allows certain users to browse the Internet and look at public Web sites. Logs are maintained that are regularly reviewed, listing each Web site visited by users and how long they were on each Web site. Users found to be viewing inappropriate Web sites will be counseled, may have their browsing permissions removed, or may, if deemed appropriate, be terminated. Prohibited sites specifically include, but are not limited to, pornographic, obscene, and so-called “adult” Web sites and gambling Web sites.

What would happen, however, if a team member who is weak in this area could walk up to almost any computer and use it without the restrictions associated with their own log-in ID? For this reason, you should also consider policies specifying what you consider to be secure passwords, whether those passwords can be shared with others, and whether computers can be left logged in while unattended. (See sidebar “Practical Church Computer Policies,” page 76.) By improving these areas, you may be helping a weaker brother or sister.

LOOKING FOR AN INFORMATION SYSTEM POLICY RESOURCE?

In ministry, we trust each other. The world of computing is changing, though, and many ministries are looking for resources to help them keep up with the changing legal issues that accompany providing computers for staff use.

Ministry Business Services has put together a recommended and editable set of policies and procedures to help keep your ministry current in light of the new laws impacting computers in the workplace. They also include policies that help improve computer strategies, and are done with Christian ministry in mind. They are available at www.mbsinc.com.

—Nick B. Nicholaou, Huntington, California

PRACTICAL CHURCH COMPUTER POLICIES

A computer policy and procedures handbook helps stabilize system operations. Following are some important questions to think through as you put together your computer policy handbook.

According to studies, the second greatest cause of computer problems is user error. Fortunately, written computer policies and procedures can prevent user-caused computer problems. Without them, computer users can lose valuable time correcting problems that could have been easily prevented.

Following are some questions to think through as you put together your computer policy handbook. The resulting policies and procedures will help you and your team avoid many common pitfalls and maximize your ministry team's efforts for the Kingdom.

1. Who may use your computers? Rather than establishing an open policy that allows nearly anyone to use your computers, restricting their use will go a long way toward making the system one that is reliable for the church staff and available when they need it.

2. What is the backup procedure, and who is responsible for doing backups? We recommend daily backups of at least your data onto rotated sets of tapes. Ideally, we recommend daily backups of your entire system. In addition, make an extra backup of your entire system periodically and store it off-site. Many keep their off-site backup in a safe deposit box or at a key employee's home. We recommend doing this at least monthly.

3. When a problem occurs, how should it be documented, and who should be called? Create a form asking which program users were in, what they were doing immediately before the problem occurred, and what they did to get past it.

4. Should computers be shut down when not in use or always left on? Consider logging out and turning them off during lunch and overnight.

5. Can screen savers be used on computers? Many of the lockup problems on network workstations are caused by screen savers. Consider not allowing their use in a networked environment.

6. Can personal work be done on the ministry's computer system? If the individual is authorized to work on the system, and the work is being done on personal time, why not? The ministry will likely benefit from skills this kind of freedom develops.

7. Who approves what software or hardware can be added to the system? Someone needs to be in charge. An individual or committee can be given authority to approve or disapprove what software and hardware can be added. This will help guard against copyright law violations, viruses, and protect the system from compromise.

8. Who may change a computer's configuration? Only those authorized should be allowed to change a computer's configuration.

9. What is the security policy protecting sensitive data such as payroll and contributions, letters, and counseling notes? Passwords must be kept secret. Give users a strategy to follow in designing their passwords. We recommend:

- Never use names or initials or words, not even backwards. Those who could cause the most damage are those who know us. They probably know our family members' names too. Good passwords never refer to anything that could be guessed.
- Use the initials of a favorite hymn, verse, or praise song. In addition to being difficult to guess, this will also remind users why they are there every time they log in to your system.
- Passwords should be from three to five characters long.

10. Can there be more than one database? When members advise us of an address change, they expect all mail to go to the new address. Maintaining duplicate databases, in addition to being inefficient and costly, compromises that expectation.

11. Should the system be scanned for viruses? Install a high-quality virus-scanning product. It should monitor all writes to the hard drive, scan memory, and have the ability to scan for known and unknown viruses. Also, someone must be responsible for loading the latest virus signature files to catch the latest bugs.

12. Can software be copied onto home or member's computers? Viruses spread through practices such as this. Beyond the copyright law issues, you never know what might be transmitted on those disks you will be putting into your system.

13. For those on a network, what are the network start-up procedures if the system goes down? Detail how to restart your server and load any manually activated software.

14. Which files should be kept on the system hard drive? Periodically evaluate the files on your hard drive to see if they are worthy of the space they occupy. Maybe some should be deleted.

- Only programs you use should be on your hard drive.
- Only the data files you will need within the next 12 months should be on your hard drive.

15. Can users eat or drink near their computers? Establish reasonable guidelines to help your team understand the potential danger associated with this.

A computer policy and procedures handbook helps stabilize system operations. By asking these questions while writing your handbook, your system will become more reliable and available for your staff. It will decrease the administrative load required to do ministry, maximizing your team's efforts for the Kingdom.

—Nick B. Nicholaou, Huntington, California. You can reach Nick via e-mail: nick@mbsinc.com.



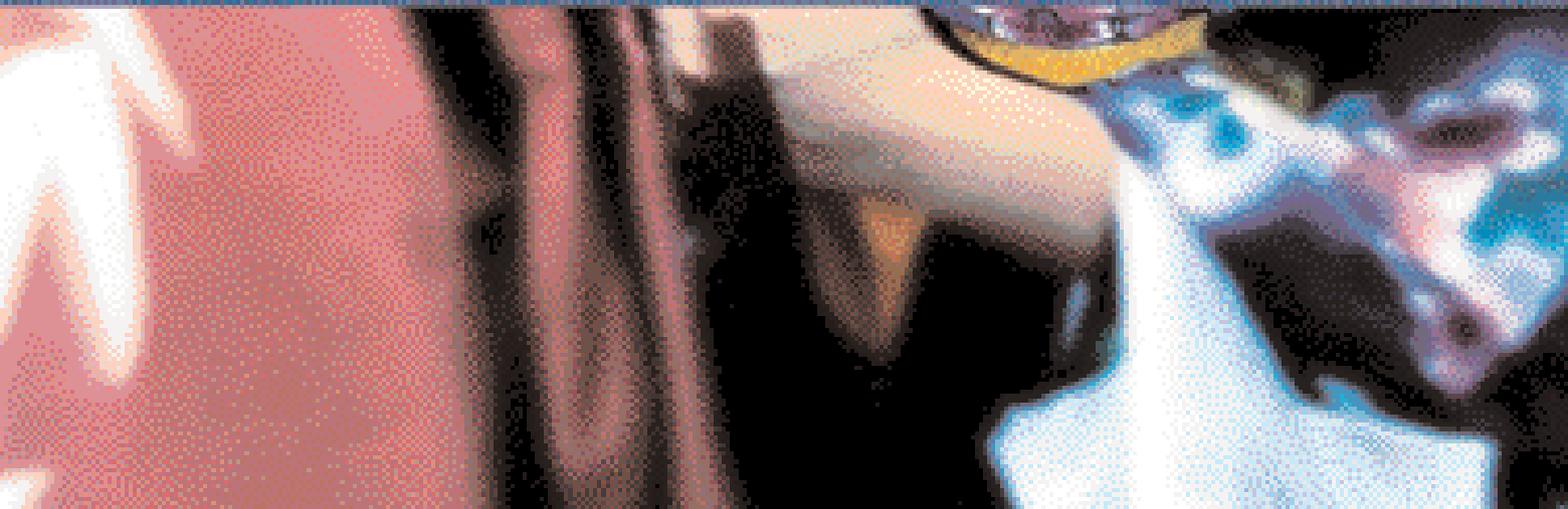
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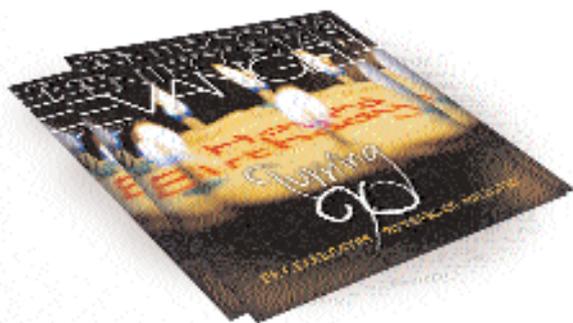
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The Art of Managing Church Staff

BY DAN M. REILAND

Regardless of where you are with your staff—really loving them or ready to leave them—this article is dedicated to help you better lead and manage your staff.



MANAGE

Plan

Deter

Pastor Ken* called me for advice about his music pastor. His first words were: "I think he's saved, but I'm not sure." It got worse from there.

Ken shared with me that David*, his music pastor, was competent in music and an above average worship leader, but had no people skills. In fact, it was so bad he was described as leaving body bags everywhere he went. When confronted, David didn't see a problem and felt offended. After nearly a year of turmoil, David was asked to leave. He left under protest.

In contrast to Ken and David, let me tell you about a top-shelf eagle on my staff at Crossroads. His name is Chris Huff. He found Christ at Crossroads under Pastor Kevin Myers' (our senior pastor) ministry and grew as a leader. Chris led several ministries as a layman before being asked to be an elder. In time Chris was on staff as a pastor and eventually had oversight of other pastors. When I arrived, after much discussion with Chris, I felt he would make his greatest contribution as our business services director. From minister to moneymen in 1 day—a business director with a pastor's heart. Chris is

intelligent, a self-starter, good with numbers and people, and is completely dedicated to God's work at Crossroads Community Church.

How about your staff? Do you have a David or a Chris? Do you have some of each? How do you reward Chris, and how will you deal with David?

In my travels as a church consultant and personal experience as a pastoral leader, I have invested thousands of hours over the past 21 years on the subject of church staff. I have been uniquely blessed because the vast majority of my time with church staff (primarily pastoral staff) has been positive and productive. Unfortunately, many senior pastors I've connected with over the years have less than euphoric experiences with staff. One pastor, reflecting the attitudes of many pastors, said, "I know I need staff. I just don't want them around the church or near the people."

Regardless of where you are with your staff—really loving them or ready to leave them—this article is dedicated to help you better lead and manage your staff.

The majority of this article will deal

with paid staff, with an emphasis on pastoral/ministry staff. Please note, however, that many principles and insights on managing and leading paid staff can be applied to volunteer staff. (See sidebar "Leading Volunteer Staff.")

HIRING EAGLES—ONE AT A TIME

There is more to developing a strong and effective staff than hiring well; but if you don't hire well, you are in trouble from the start. Remember, no matter how much work it takes, it is easier to hire than fire.

Know what you want and why you are hiring.

When it comes to hiring staff, assumptions are lethal. Perhaps you lost your youth pastor. The typical response is: "We need to hire another one." That may or may not be true. Rather, ask what the church needs most at this time. You may determine that you do need a youth pastor. Take it a layer deeper. Ask, "What do we want in a youth pastor?" It is important to know what emphasis you want the youth ministry to take. This is not up to the youth pastor to decide. While each person has a unique style, personality, and gifts, senior leadership sets the direction and philosophy of youth ministry. When this is not done and clearly communicated during the hiring process, you will nearly always hire the wrong person. It often results in a good and hardworking youth pastor at odds with a good and hardworking senior pastor because they have major ministry philosophical differences.

The following questions will serve you well in the hiring process:

What will bring notable strength to the church?

What does the church need most in this season?

What can the church afford? (And what can it not afford?)

What would most advance the mission of the church?

How can we improve on the most recent past?



"And in response to Pastor Stallman's request for a multiple staff"

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LEADING VOLUNTEER STAFF

How one pastor came to terms with leading volunteer staff and saw it as an opportunity rather than a curse.

Leading God's people well is the task of a pastor. We embrace the responsibilities and opportunities of shepherding a precious commodity—God's flock. We will be asked to give an account of how we treat God's children: "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly" (James 3:1*).

For many years I was frustrated with the members of my congregation. There were never enough mature, committed Christians to meet the needs of the church. I lived in a constant state of agitation. Why couldn't people be more faithful in their service, their giving, their prayer time, their attendance, and in a host of other expectations I held? I regularly prayed that God would send a more mature group of Christians for me to pastor. Certainly, the current group was substandard.

In a Damascus Road experience, I was confronted with a brutal fact: The congregation was not at fault; I was. I faithfully prayed for mature Christians to arrive. In truth, I was praying that someone else would do my job of training volunteer staff and then send me the end product. I realized my opportunity in the Kingdom was to walk alongside unbelievers or immature Christians and help them mature in their faith. A congregation filled with problems was an opportunity, not a curse.

I began to change my attitude toward the people I ministered to and toward the tasks at hand. The results have been remarkable. We have experienced exponential growth in almost every aspect of congregational life—attendance, conversions, baptisms, ministry enrollment, and giving. Pastoral ministry has become a joy.

I learned a lesson that redirected my life. For God to produce change through me, I must embrace change within me. It is so simple, yet I had spent untold hours agonizing over the needs I saw in others. In truth, I was the barrier to God's best.

A familiar phrase from Scripture began to echo in my mind: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

To transform is to change in potential. To change the potential of my life was going to require a transformation in my thought processes.

I had to change the following areas.

My feelings

Instead of being angry and frustrated, I decided every person in the congregation was a valuable piece of God's design for the congregation and my ministry. I began to ask God to help me see a strength in every person within the faith community. Just as God gave Jonah an object lesson to help him grasp the depth of God's grace for the Ninevites, I needed a grace perspective toward people.

My theology

I was convinced my beliefs in scriptural authority, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and holiness would limit opportunities for a growing ministry. I was convinced the church needed to dilute the truth to reach a broad group of people. I was wrong. Ineffective communication of the gospel repels people; the truth does not.

My leadership

I had to accept responsibility for the poor morale and ineffectiveness of the congregation. I had to grow my leadership skills if there was to be an increase in fruitfulness. It became imperative for me to cast compelling vision, develop leaders, create momentum, encourage people, and establish a spiritual tone that defined our culture.

My vision

I had to believe we had an opportunity for effectiveness. We didn't have a collection of Stanford degrees, but with God's help, we could be light in our community. When we became intentional in our desire to be an effective congregation, all the rules seemed to change. We had permission to say no to ideas—even when they were godly—that drained resources and energy. We had a mandate to say yes to practices that enabled us to move toward our objective.

My work habits

I had to identify tasks that would produce results, not just tasks I enjoyed. Previously I had filled my calendar with responsibilities. Even if they were not helpful, at least I was busy.

(continued on page 86)

(continued from page 85)

My learning pool

I had a collection of college degrees, a personal faith, and a theological system, but little understanding of effectiveness. I had to humble myself and become a learner. I began to search for additional mentors—people who were effective at building consensus, motivating people, resolving conflicts, and anticipating needs. Wherever I saw effectiveness, I asked questions and began to learn new skills.

My responsibility

I accepted responsibility for developing disciples. If there was a shortage of mature Christians, I was not performing my duties. Effective pastoral ministry included all aspects of congregational development, not just pulpit duties. The nursery, children's ministry, ushers, and clean facilities are all components of effective ministry.

My expectations

Recruiting for ministry opportunities was no longer a burden or an imposition on already busy people. I was extending an invitation to participate in the kingdom of God. We would provide training for effectiveness, support when problems arose, celebrate victories and the joy of making a contribution into the lives of others. An invitation to ministry is a privilege, not a burden. If it is perceived as a burden, we would prefer you not participate.

The transformation of my attitude and behaviors did not take place in a day or even a month. It was similar to training for a marathon. I was required to build a little extra strength and endurance each day.

One day I was weary with the struggles. I had scheduled a lunch appointment with a friend who managed a manufacturing plant. During lunch I complained about a conflict between nursery workers. I had helped reorganize the entire team a few weeks earlier, and the solution had only brought a short-term respite from the conflict. My friend looked at me and said, "If everything stayed fixed, they wouldn't need us. Just be quiet and find a solution."

I have often found comfort in Solomon's prayer.

"Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this" (1 Kings 3:8-10).

I am reminded that the task is to care for God's people in a way that honors Him. If I truly care for His people, God will provide all that I need.

God created each of us for effectiveness in His kingdom. Your life and ministry are an incredible resource. Whatever your past experience, allow God to begin to shape a new future for you.

For more on this subject, see the Web sidebar, "Finding and Discipling Quality Volunteers," at www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org. Click on current issue and choose article "Managing the Church Office: An Ever-Changing Challenge."

—Allen Jackson, senior pastor,

World Outreach Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

*Scripture references are from the New International Version.



Never hire in a panic or out of desperation.

Remember the nursery rhyme about the old lady who lived in a shoe? She had so many kids she didn't know what to do. Well, that was our story. In a congregation of well over 2,000, more than 36 percent were children fifth grade and under. Our facilities were busting at the seams and people kept coming—and

they brought their kids. Our children's team was good, but we needed a children's pastor.

There was one service where I could have sworn there were more kids at the end of the service than the beginning. Spontaneous generation isn't possible, is it? Where were these kids coming from? I felt tremendous pressure to find and hire a children's pastor. There were

moments I was tempted to hire anybody with a pulse. Anyone who was breathing and said they loved Jesus would do.

Experience has taught me, though, that when I hire in a panic or out of desperation, I regret the decision. So for 10 months I processed résumé after résumé, phone call after phone call, interview after interview. But it was

worth it. Our patience and diligence landed God's person for us.

Take your time when hiring. When in doubt, don't hire. Wait. The pressure of an open position is better than hiring the wrong person.

Learn how to attract quality staff.

You can't attract eagles into a chicken coop, and they don't bite on chicken feed.

- *Cast a big vision.* You may not always be able to pay big dollars, but you can always cast a big vision. Know your dream and vision—tell it in a compelling way. Let candidates see how they can have a part in a future with great potential.

- *Be forthright and honest about the church's situation.* Tell them the good and the bad. A great leader will see the rough parts as a challenge.

- *Pay well.* You may not always be able to pay big, but you can be as generous as possible. When you can afford to pay better, do so. We all know ministry is not about getting rich, but if you find an eagle, you are wise to pay well. (See sidebars "Determining Equity" and "Quick Tips on Salary Matters," on page 88.)

- *Let them know you are committed to their personal growth.* Explain in practical terms how you expect results from them but not without investments from you.

- *Be authentic about who you are.* Let them get to know the real you during the hiring process. This doesn't mean that it's all about you. In fact, you should talk far less than the candidate. But do let them see your heart and discover who you are as a person. It won't take long after they are hired, so why not find out what the chemistry between you will be like before they are hired?

Know what an eagle looks like.

Leadership is without question the primary trait you are looking for. But hire by hire, there are minor and major differences in the specific skills you are looking for. For example, when hiring a children's pastor, the ability to recruit is a major factor, while musical ability is minor (if needed at all). When hiring a

DETERMINING EQUITY

It's true that there will never be equity in this world, either in the affairs of the world or in the church, but there are certain guidelines that you can follow to keep peace in your heart, your team, and your congregation. Here are some:

1. Be sure to have financial policies established and recorded in your church's policy notebook. They ought to deal with every conceivable financial need.
 - a. Do cost-of-living increases apply to the net or gross salary?
 - b. Vacation guidelines. How many weeks to start with and how long before additional time is granted?
 - c. When does mandatory retirement come, and what retirement benefits can be expected?
 - d. When and how is pay increased beyond the cost-of-living index?
 - e. What insurance and Social Security benefits are paid by the church? How are additional costs on those items cared for?
 - f. What conventions and continuing educational costs will be covered by the church?
 - g. What special benefits, such as books and entertainment, will the church cover?
 - h. If a parsonage is provided, what part of the cost of the upkeep and services can the church be expected to cover?
 - i. What auto finances will be covered by the church?
2. The personnel committee should review each team member's finances with him or her each year before the budget is finalized.
3. It is common to base the salary of team members on the local public school salary scale. Keep in mind that teachers' salaries are often based on 10 months (9 for teaching and 1 for vacation), so your scale should be one-sixth more than theirs.
4. The total budget for your team's salaries should not be more than 60 percent of your church's annual budget. In fact, 40 percent is more ideal.
5. It is common to pay the senior pastor approximately 15 percent more (total compensation package) than a mature, experienced staff member because of the responsibility of the task.
6. Some churches and denominations base their pay scale on other churches of equal size in their area. Be sure you compare the gross compensation package.
7. Keep in mind that professional expenses such as car expense, entertainment, books, and conventions should not be shown on the budget as part of the salary package.
8. If your church is financially unable to pay the yearly expected increase, then it should be added the following year before the financial percentages are figured.
9. It is advisable to put all the salaries in one staff expense figure in the published church budget. Many church people do not understand the complexities of salary packages and thus tend to make poor judgments and comparisons about the staff's compensation. Thus all the salary items of the whole team appear as the one figure in the budget.
10. Since all housing expenses are tax sheltered, this is an additional financial benefit to each pastor. Keep this in mind when you compare salary figures with the average salary of the congregation. That will vary with each family, according to its tax bracket.

—Harold J. Westing, Littleton, Colorado. Taken from *Church Staff Handbook*, Second Edition © 1997 by Harold J. Westing. Published by Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Used by permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

QUICK TIPS ON SALARY MATTERS

Quick tips on setting salaries that will serve you and your church well.

The art of merging ministry and money has always been challenging and sensitive. On one hand, we are called to serve God and His kingdom, fully ready and willing to sacrifice worldly riches. On the other hand, church staff, like anyone else, must pay their bills.

Paul wrote, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages'" (1 Timothy 5:17,18, NIV).

The following quick tips on setting salaries will serve you and your church well:

- Establish a detailed breakdown of salary and benefits in writing during the hiring process.
- Be as generous as you can without skewing salary ranges or allowing your total compensation dollars for all employees to exceed 50 percent of your total general budget.
- Fine-tune your salary setting by collecting salary surveys from similar size churches in your general geographic region.

The more complex matter is the issue of giving raises. The following quick tips will help you reduce headaches and keep morale high.

The wrong reasons to increase compensation include:

- tenure on staff.
- length of time in ministry.
- personal friendship.
- size of family.
- political pressures.
- personality.
- fairness.
- compassion.

The right reasons to increase compensation are an:

- ability to influence people as a spiritual leader for the good of the church and its overall mission.
- ability to organize multiple projects and ministries according to key goals for the year.
- ability to solve problems and work with people.
- ability to think creatively.
- ability to see and seize opportunities.

The bottom line for increasing salary is the staff member's overall productivity and contribution to the team, in alignment with clear goals, on a year-by-year basis.

Questions that will help you establish salary increases:

- What is the staff member's overall value to the church?
- What is the staff member's level of productivity?
- What is the staff member's level of potential (capacity to grow)?
- What is the level of difficulty to replace the staff member?
- What is the staff member's level of team play and quality of attitude?

For additional information on this subject, read the Web-based article, "Compensating Your Church Staff," by Ken Godevenos at www.churchbusiness.com/articles/121webx1.html

—Dan M. Reiland, D.Min., Lawrenceville, Georgia.

teaching pastor, the ability to communicate is major, while the ability to administrate is minor.

Let's get back to leadership. Eagles influence people. This is key in all hires. However, leadership and leadership skills can be taught, learned, and improved. If the basic raw material is there, and you are willing to make the developmental investment, the growth of the candidate should go well.

The absence of good character—or a major character flaw—can turn a potential good hire into a disaster. You can develop skills, but candidates will usually retain the character they come in with. Therefore, make certain you feel confident about the character traits important to you. To do this, you must invest much time with them and ask dozens of questions. (See sidebar "Sample Pastoral Staff Interview Questions.")

The following is a character list that gives you something to begin with.

- *Integrity.* The first and most important thing I look for are things like honesty, authenticity, ethical and moral patterns, and a sense of being trustworthy.

- *Strong Christian testimony and lifestyle.* It surprises me how many staff members are never asked to tell their Christian conversion testimony during the hiring process. I not only want to know their conversion testimony, I want to know devotional habits and how they are currently maturing in their faith.

- *High energy and contagious passion.* Low energy and low passion people do not lead well for long. This isn't about personality. There are many leaders who are not the life of the party but have tremendous energy and passion for what they do. It's about a fire in the belly that causes and sustains initiative and the pursuit of results.

- *Intelligence.* Hire smart people. This may seem like a "duh," but I caution you to be attentive to this point.

- *Good sense of humor.* This reveals whether or not they take themselves too seriously and can laugh at themselves. As a leader, it's important for others to

SAMPLE PASTORAL STAFF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe your conversion experience.
 2. Describe your call to ministry.
 3. Why are you considering leaving your current ministry position?
 4. What brings you the greatest joy in ministry?
 5. What causes you the most frustration in your ministry?
 6. Of all the things you have done in ministry, what is the one you hope to never be asked or required to do?
 7. As a leader, are you more of a risk taker or do you play it a little close to your chest?
 8. Describe your leadership style.
 - Charismatic
 - Relational
 - Organizational
 9. Would your peers describe you as a good recruiter? Why?
 10. If one of the people from your current church, who is not a fan of yours, was sitting with us, what criticism would he/she have of you?
 11. What is your approach to handling conflict and confrontation?
 - Head on—assertive, fast, fix it
 - Avoid, procrastinate, eventually get to it
 12. When it comes to finances, are you more of a faith person or a facts person?
 13. How do you handle pressure?
 - Pull back—retreat—reflect
 - Power up—get aggressive
 - Align yourself with allies—find those who support you and smooth things over
 - Ignore, procrastinate, and pray for God to intervene
 14. Are you overworked or underworked in your current (or previous) church?
 15. Have you ever experienced burnout in ministry? If yes, explain.
 16. Describe a normal work week for you.
 17. Are you a night person or a morning person?
 18. Describe one of your greatest failures in ministry.
 19. Describe one of the most difficult leadership decisions you have made.
 20. Fill in the blank, I would be a better leader if _____.
 21. Are you energized more internally or externally?
 22. As a leader, why do people follow you?
 23. If you have only 1 hour, which do you think is more important: (and why)
 - Visiting a top leader in the church in the hospital
 - Making and keeping an evangelism appointment
 - Spending quality time in prayer?
 24. If your supervisor gave you 9 assignments to complete in 1 week and you felt you could only accomplish 5 of them, how would you handle the situation?
 25. What do volunteer leaders in your church compliment you on most?
 26. What does your immediate supervisor compliment you on most?
 27. What kinds of problems do people in your church ask you to help them solve?
 28. Share a few names of people who are far from God that you are investing in relationally?
 29. Is your marriage positive, fulfilling, and growing?
 30. Is your wife/husband supportive of you and your ministry? If relocation is involved, how does your family feel about relocating?
 31. Are there any difficulties in the home or anywhere in your family life? Finances, in-laws, children, etc.?
 32. Is there anything in your past we have not discussed, that we should know about?
 33. Describe your practice of prayer and devotional time with God.
 34. What are you currently studying during your devotional time and what is God telling you? (How are you growing?)
 35. Are there any biblical /theological/ doctrinal issues or concerns?
 36. What is your spiritual Achilles heel—your personal temptation?
 37. What personal accomplishments (outside of ministry) do you feel most proud of?
 38. If you joined the Crossroads team, why because of you, would we be a bigger, better and stronger church?
 39. What draws you toward Crossroads Church?
 40. If you were to join the team, what kind of financial compensation would you expect?
- Cool facts of interest, plus personalized questions that come from the resume and from answers to the questions can be added.



—Dan M. Reiland, D.Min., Lawrenceville, Georgia.

DEVELOPING A JOB DESCRIPTION

Advantages of Job Descriptions

1. Job descriptions greatly aid the church in narrowing down the field of prospective candidates for a new staff position.
2. Job descriptions will aid new workers in knowing what they are to do and will guard them from a diversified role expectation by the congregation.
3. Job descriptions will clarify relationships between jobs, thus avoiding overlaps and gaps.
4. Job descriptions provide the first step in actual job appraisals.
5. Job descriptions spell out duties, responsibilities, and limits of authority in a particular position.
6. Job descriptions serve as a basis for establishing performance as the team members relate to organizational goals and philosophy.
7. Job descriptions build status, respect, and motivation in the minister.

Job Description Ingredients

The basic format of a job description should include the following items stated in some simple form.

1. *Bibliographic data* (written for a resident person, not on one designed for a job opening). This would include job title, person's name, date, and when the job description should be updated.
2. *Ministry purpose*. When a person is engaged in this ministry, he or she will seek to accomplish the goals listed.
3. *Ministry responsibilities*. Here list the various segments of the ministry or program.
4. *Working relationships*. This will state the one to whom and for whom the person is accountable.
5. *Opportunities*. Include extracurricular activities, such as seminars, conventions, and other ongoing educational experiences.
6. *Qualifications* (to be included for recruiting purposes). This will include academic, spiritual, ministry skills, and personality or temperament traits.
7. *Financial arrangements*. Show first the salary benefits, which would include insurance and vacation. Second, include business expenses, such as car and entertainment fees. A new job description should also include moving and settlement allowances.
8. *Organizational chart*. Include in a job description a pictorial of the groupings of work, people, and superior/subordinate relationships for all the people involved in the organization. In order to understand your role in relation to your team members' roles, you will also need to see everyone's relationship to the boards, committees, and groups.

Overcoming Dangers of Job Descriptions

Job descriptions do not define ministries, because ministries cut across the whole of the life of the congregation. They tend to deal exclusively with institutional and organizational terms. Because job descriptions are used as evaluation tools, they tend to set the parameters of ministry along secular lines rather than spiritual lines. In spite of this and other shortcomings, certain guidelines will help you overcome these pitfalls.

1. The senior pastor should take the lead or initiative in writing his or her own job description first. This will be especially important if the church is going to hire its first additional staff person. There is a great deal of inequity in asking a second staff person to function under a job description when the senior pastor has no ministry guidelines or evaluation tool.
2. Never ask a group to write a job description. Groups don't think conceptually and their discussion of a job description will degenerate to mere duties rather than objectives.
3. Job descriptions need to be kept up-to-date. They should be reviewed and reworked at least once a year. They are not to be filed away as official documents of the church; they are working guidelines for an active ministry. It would be unwise to hand down a formerly used job description to a person filling a vacancy.
4. Each job description should be personally tailored by the individuals involved—never should descriptions be mass-produced.
5. Job descriptions should be looked upon as tools and not as documents. A document is an officially binding instrument that rules a person's activities. A tool is more of a general guideline for the work one expects to do.

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perceive you as enjoyable to be with, someone who possesses the ability to be lighthearted and enjoy life.

- *The capacity and desire for further growth and greater potential.* You don't want to hire people who are as good as they are going to get. Neither do you want to hire someone who has potential but no desire to grow.

Set your standards and stick to them.

We have talked about the danger of hiring too quickly. This principle of standards is connected to that idea. Set your standards and do not lower them. Repeat out loud to yourself if necessary, "I will not lower my standards." Don't settle for less. Go for the best.

The following is a sample hiring criteria that provides a quick picture what a set of standards might look like. (Note: You will be tempted to make your list too long, and end up losing sight of what is important to you. Keep it short. Aim for those things that are of utmost importance to you. (See sidebar "Developing a Job Description.")

Youth Pastor

Professional

5 or more years ministry experience

College degree

At least 28 years of age

Previous church size of at least 300

Track record of sustained leadership success and expertise with youth ministry

Personal

Self-starter/energetic

Organized

People person

Intelligent

Passion for lost kids

We could fill volumes when it comes to hiring, but for now, these five core principles will serve you well. Let me leave you with a simple but powerful old standard. When it comes to hiring and developing staff, there are three things to focus on: character, competence, and chemistry. Are they who they say they are? Are they good at what they do? Do they mix well with others? If you have had staff for any length of time, you know that just because they receive a

paycheck doesn't mean they function well as a team.

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

If you are married with kids, you know that it's not easy to get a family of four or five all moving in the same direction at the same time and be happy about it. You might even question if that's possible.

As a family we enjoy popcorn and a video on Sunday evening after church. You would think that would be easy. Pop the corn, stick the video in, and we're set. Not so fast. Patti and I have one movie we want to see; Mackenzie realizes her favorite TV show is on; and John-Peter just got a new video game, so of course he wants to play it. As the leader of my family, I now have a choice. I can give in (or give up) and let the family do its own thing, or I can provide direction that allows us to be together. And *how* I do that is important if this is going to be a pleasant evening.

The church staff isn't so different. It just has more people (who have titles and job descriptions) all with their own ideas of what to do, where to go, and how to get there. Left unchecked, this

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"The leadership team is in place, NOW, what's the next step?"

is asking for trouble. The senior pastor or senior leader must share the vision, shape the culture, and declare the direction, doing it in such a way that the team wants to participate. (See sidebars "Effective and Ineffective Team Characteristics," "Ministry Staff Retreat Planning Guide," and "On-Purpose Staff Meetings," pages 92-95.)

The following five principles are not academic ideas but tested and true components of a healthy, productive team.

Healthy and productive teams fully embrace the mission/vision and intentionally, consistently, and passionately make a contribution toward its fulfillment.

Your mission is the foundation of your ministry. If you have ever seen a cracked foundation in a house, it is easy to see how this once small crack slowly widens until there is a big gap and a serious problem. If the foundation is not fixed, the home may suffer irreparable damage.

Your church also has a foundation that is expressed in the form of your mission/vision. If it is not poured correctly and tended to properly, it

(continued on page 96)

EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE TEAM CHARACTERISTICS

Probably the greatest hurdle in developing productive and satisfying relationships among professional and nonprofessional staff in the local church is understanding what components are necessary to create a team. Most staff and senior pastors desperately desire positive work relationships. Many people who give their time to the local church would like to experience fruitful ministry among those they can also call close friends.

Quality staff relationships are experienced on purpose, not accidentally. They are the product of hard work in defined areas of relationship and daily work processes. While some leaders may point enviously to this staff or that staff and believe something unusual is taking place because they are getting along, the truth is that almost any staff can learn what makes a staff effective. The divine law of sowing and reaping applies to staff development—sow good things and you will reap the desired fruit. Conversely, sow maliciously or without understanding and bushels of fruit from an undesired harvest will show up in your work relationship. This tool will help you sow into your staff wisely.

The following chart is a tool for identifying the critical components of professional and nonprofessional church workers that make their efforts collaborative or noncollaborative in the truest sense. Note: Your church's accepted, normal organizational-management style may not fit what is here described as effective team characteristics. There are, of course, other ways to lead church leaders, but not all create an environment of shared ministry. The assumption of this tool is that high collaboration is desired. To experience high levels of staff input and significant sharing of ministry responsibility throughout your church, the characteristics organized under effective team characteristics (left column) need to become a reality. As you read through the 10 characteristics below, think about the work relationships of your primary ministry group and which side of the page they favor.

EFFECTIVE TEAM CHARACTERISTICS

1. Atmosphere¹

Informal, engaged, relaxed, open, comfortable, nonthreatening, participative

2. Group objectives

Tasks or objectives understood and accepted, free discussion leading to group commitment, no hidden agendas, regular reviews, measure of a group's success is task achievement

3. Communications

Open and honest; flows freely up, down sideways; everyone is given a hearing; individuals build on each other's ideas; conversation takes place inside and outside formal meetings

4. Handling of conflict

Viewed as natural, even helpful; comfortable handling conflict; disagreements are not suppressed, overridden, or smoothed over; focused on issue, not the person

5. Decisionmaking

By consensus, real issues openly discussed, full commitment by team, little formal voting, simple majority not accepted as a proper basis for action

INEFFECTIVE TEAM CHARACTERISTICS

Unduly formal, disengaged, tense, guarded, intimidating, stiff, fragmented, underchallenged

Group task or objectives are unclear, no evidence that the group either understands or accepts a common commitment, often in conflict with each other and with group's task

A few people dominate discussion; selective listening; information is hoarded, withheld, and flows mainly down; mixed messages

Protocols not understood or used; avoided and discouraged; becomes destructive, personal, politicized; resolution regularly leaves some individuals uncommitted

Forced or majority voting, dictated decisions, emphasis on power, various levels of commitment, dissonance present within group



EFFECTIVE TEAM CHARACTERISTICS

6. Criticism

Criticism is frequent, frank, and constructive; oriented toward removing obstacles that are preventing the group from getting the job done; little evidence of personal attack, either openly or in a hidden fashion

7. Expressing personal feelings

People freely express their feelings and ideas, both on the problem and on the group's operation; few hidden agendas; feedback readily accepted; high levels of trust, respect, care

8. Task achievement

Clear, agreed-on plans and roles; high commitment to follow-through; group regularly weighs performance against objectives and takes steps to ensure success; diversified team member types, skill competence, and talents

9. Leadership

While the team has a formal leader, leadership functions shift from time to time based on circumstances, skills, and team needs; control is not an issue but how to get the job done; positive norms established and modeled by the leader

10. Review of team processes

The group is conscious about its own operations; periodically, it will stop to examine how well it is doing or what may be interfering with team functioning; peer recognition; rewards based on group contributions

INEFFECTIVE TEAM CHARACTERISTICS

If present, it is embarrassing and tension producing; often appears to involve personal hostility; tends to be destructive, seeing only negatives; there is little building on others' contributions

Personal feelings are hidden; viewed as inappropriate for discussion or would be destructive if brought out on the table; risk avoidance

Action decisions and individual roles tend to be unclear; low follow-through, variable commitment; performance is rarely reviewed; poor performance is rationalized; undisciplined; reactive; action-oriented versus results-oriented

Single-leader dominated; leader may coerce, compromise, or abdicate; establishes norms for the group and leads from own value system

Discussion on the performance effectiveness or operation is avoided; discussions about problems are kept private and not brought to the group; rewards are based on subjective, often arbitrary, appraisals



E N D N O T E

1. Adapted from Peter Moxon, *Building a Better Team* (Aldershot, England: Gower Publishing Company, 1993), 102-06, 133-34; Glenn Parker, *Team Players and Teamwork* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 19-29; Thomas Quick, *Successful Team Building* (New York: AMACOM, 1992), 4-5.

—Timothy Hager, D.Min., senior pastor, Sterling, Colorado

MINISTRY STAFF RETREAT PLANNING GUIDE

Thinking through the major issues in planning and preparing for a church staff retreat.

Retreats are one of the best environments in which a pastoral/ministry team can learn, play, grow, bond, develop community, and strategize together.

The hectic pace and framework of life at which most full-time pastors and ministry staff live calls for a complete break from the familiar surroundings of their normal day-to-day ministry setting. Staff retreats are one way to provide this break.

Significant change comes from significant experience. When people move so fast that they don't have time to reflect and truly process the learning experience, it is difficult, if not impossible, to internalize new truth or ideas to the point of personal change. Something as simple as a play-and-pray retreat can accomplish change in deep ways because of the inner renewal that comes with the experience. This inner renewal makes room for change to take place. The retreat offers a creative setting to see desired change take place.

The following outline will help you think through the major issues in planning and preparing for a retreat.

Determine the purpose.

There are no rules for the right way to do a retreat, but there is one wrong way, and that is not to know your purpose. Decide up front what you want to accomplish, and then plan your retreat. There are many possibilities and combinations, but let me offer three general types of retreats.

1. *Play-and-pray retreat.* This retreat offers both fun and extended times before the Lord. Though this may seem like a freewheeling setting without much structure (there is some free time), it is highly planned. Think through the games and the prayer times so they can accomplish your retreat goals. Typically, these kinds of retreats are held to develop relationships and increase team spirit and morale. But a play-and-pray retreat is also great for spiritual breakthrough, fasting, and hearing God's voice. Play-and-pray retreats are usually 1 to 2 days in length.

2. *Planning retreat.* A planning retreat is typically shorter in length, usually just 1 day, without staying overnight. The reason for the shorter stay is that the level of intense concentration needed can't be sustained for much longer than a full day. It's not uncommon, however, to combine some play-and-pray elements into a planning retreat to lengthen the time together so relationships can be developed. The important thing is to remember this retreat's purpose—planning. In other words, in contrast to the play-and-pray retreat, where that is the purpose, playing and praying provide a brief break from the primary

objective of planning. The most common planning retreat is one in which the next ministry year is outlined as a big picture strategy. Other planning retreats are used for short-term goals that involve more detail and intensity.

3. *Personal and professional growth retreat.* This retreat is focused on staff training. The possible variations are limitless. You might bring in a speaker/coach/facilitator or lead it yourself. The most common topic is leadership, but spiritual formation is also a worthwhile investment. You might travel together to a conference but include significant discussion times with your team. The key is to make sure the content of the retreat has application to the lives of your staff members.

Determine who attends the retreat.

Who gets to go often creates political skirmishes and hurt feelings, but don't let these things serve as guides for who attends. Make your selections intentionally. Who attends is determined by the purpose.

Determine your budget.

Again, there are no rules here, but don't be cheap. You are investing in the future of your church when you invest in your staff. If you don't have much money set aside this year, plan for a more generous amount next year. Funds for the retreat should be under the leadership development category in your budget.

Select a location and set the date.

Hotels work OK, but a retreat/conference center is better because it usually gives more of an out-of-town feel. If you choose a hotel, make sure it suits your purpose—such as a clergy couple getaway weekend—or has great outdoor recreational options such as a pool, spa, golf, walking gardens, etc.

Avoid the major obstacles to a successful retreat.

1. Unclear purpose
2. Lack of preparation
3. Last-minute preparation
4. Unmotivated attendees
5. Poor location (no thorough on-site check before booking)
6. Staff missing (calendars not cleared in advance)
7. Lack of follow-through (You must follow up on idea implementation, assignments, and questions that arose during the retreat.)

I recommend two retreats a year, one of which is a planning retreat. Have fun.

—Dan M. Reiland, D.Min., Lawrenceville, Georgia.

ON-PURPOSE STAFF MEETINGS

An on-purpose staff meeting strategy includes four different kinds of meetings, each designed to keep your ministry team on course.

Have you ever come to the end of a staff meeting and wondered what was accomplished? Most of us have. For staff meetings to be productive, they must first be on purpose.

Don't try to make your staff meetings a one-size-fits-all meeting—a combination prayer meeting, training meeting, emergency meeting, business meeting, and regular all-purpose (no-purpose) meeting.

Let me offer an on-purpose meeting strategy that includes four different kinds of meetings, each held once a month in different places for different purposes with different people attending.

(Note: In smaller churches, key volunteer leaders are included in any or all of the four types of meetings.)

The first Tuesday: all-staff meeting

The primary purpose is shaping staff culture and building team morale.

All paid employees are included. The components may consist of celebrating organizational wins, a training lesson that shapes staff culture, communicating big items, and community building from things such as celebrating birthdays, to giving awards, to prayer for each other. The meeting should last about 2 hours. A simple continental breakfast is a nice touch.

The second Tuesday: matters of ministry meeting

The primary purpose is communication and strategic thinking.

The pastoral/ministry team and key administrative staff are included. This is the meeting that most closely represents the typical weekly staff meeting. The key components are an exchange of important information, ministry development and alignment, and prayer (specifically for the congregation.) This meeting should last from 90 minutes to 2 hours. There are a number of ways to design this meeting for productivity and high value. The following is one example.

Storytelling. Have several staff members share stories of changed lives from within your congregation. Tell stories of the ongoing transforming power of Christ.

Rapid fire. There are many items included here, but only a few minutes are needed. This is a fast review of calendar items, ministry updates, policy and administrative items, and numerical reports.

Think tank. This is the bulk of the meeting. It will usually have only one item and no more than three. This is the time to deal with ministry strategy and design. It's the time for brainstorming and idea exchange. There is no end to the possible subjects, from better assimilation of first-time guests to evangelism strategies.

From the heart. This is a brief moment when the team leader can share whatever may be on his or her heart in a personal way.

Prayer time. Pray for the people in your church by name. Like the possibilities for topics in the think-tank discussions, you can pray for anything from God's favor for a Great Commission harvest to someone being healed of cancer.

The third Tuesday: staff-development meeting

The primary purpose is dedicated solely to leadership development of the pastoral/ministry team.

There are components of community and team building included in this meeting, but the focus is leadership development. I recommend you have this meeting off church property, in the same location each time—preferably a warm, inviting environment without distractions, such as someone's home. This leadership-development meeting lasts 3 to 4 hours and involves a variety of possibilities such as book studies, teaching leadership lessons, analyzing case studies, watching and discussing videos. I consider this the most important meeting of the four. Applying what is learned is essential.

The fourth Tuesday: calendar-planning meeting

The primary purpose is master planning with a detailed focus on the calendar.

Our staff at Crossroads meets in our War Room where we display a 14-foot January to December calendar with different colors to indicate various kinds of activities. This meeting includes some of the pastoral staff and several of the administrative staff. It lasts about 45 minutes and is more informal and less structured than the other three meetings. This is a stand-up meeting with free-flow dialogue, even multiple conversations at one time to counter the effect of the intense level of detail. Success is found as you continue to land a good rhythm and balance of ministry timing. This meeting requires strong big-picture thinking to achieve a purposeful and balanced sense of programming for the church as a whole.

For additional information on making your staff meetings more productive and worthwhile, see Michael D. Jackson's Web sidebar, "Staff Meeting Reality," at www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org. Click on current issue and choose article "The Art of Managing Church Staff."

—Dan M. Reiland, D.Min., Lawrenceville, Georgia

ENCOURAGING STAFF MEMBERS

Whether paid or volunteer staff, people need encouragement from their senior pastor.

APPRECIATION

Appreciation can go a long way in sustaining successful ministry. Your personal ministry to your staff could include: (1) inviting them to your home for dinner or just to relax and talk, (2) meeting them for coffee or lunch, (3) going on visitation or to a local sporting activity together. Take time to be involved in their lives; pastor your staff.

RECOGNITION

Find ways to publicly recognize—in church services, at banquets, or at sectional and district events—those who work with you in sharing the gospel.

QUALITY

Sometimes showing appreciation is not enough. The quality of the effort conveys how much you really appreciate your associates. Poorly planned affairs that put the maximum on economy may be worse than doing nothing.

LOVE

Associates are encouraged and rewarded most by the attitudes you reflect toward them. Are their personal needs really important to you, or are you only using them?

TEAM

Associates must know you consider them an integral part of the team—“our” church rather than “my” church. Involving them in planning, implementing, and evaluating ministry and activities gives ownership.

—Clyde Harvey, Duluth, Minnesota

(continued from page 91)

can crack. In extreme situations, it can crack so big it splits the church. This rarely happens over doctrine, membership rules, or how the annual business meeting is conducted. It's about leadership and the direction of the church. (We just package our beefs in theological terms.)

Your ability to keep focused on the big picture and your direction from God is essential. I like to simplify this massive concept by asking: “What does a win look like?” In other words, if your church were to win for God as you pursue the Great Commission according to Matthew 28:19,20, what would that win look like? It is important to get everyone seeing the same big win or main thing. There will be smaller sub-wins (departmental), but only if they

help accomplish the big picture.

When it comes to each player on the team, two things count—attitude and action. Ask attitude questions like: “Does this staff member go the second mile with responsibilities?” “Does this team member bring a solution-oriented and positive outlook to the team?” Ask action questions like: “How is the church better because this staff member is on the team?” “How has this staff member helped advance the mission?”

Everyone on the team must not only be committed to making a difference for the good of the church, but also with an uplifting and godly attitude.

Healthy and productive teams insist on a set of clearly established responsibilities and expectations.

The picture is still vivid in my mind. I

was consulting with a church in Texas. There was blatant tension in the room between the senior pastor and the three pastoral staff members. The pastor complained that the staff was not getting the job done. The staff was frustrated because their pastor's expectations were never made clear. I pressed the pastor by asking him, “What do you expect from your staff?”

He blurted out in exasperation, “I don't know.”

This story is not uncommon. Leaders must first know what they want. Until that is clear, look no further than yourself. When you know what you expect, write it down in a short, simple, and clear way that each staff member understands. And finally, follow up. Stay in consistent communication to know how each staff member is doing. Encourage and equip them to do the job, but also hold them accountable to get the job done. (See sidebars “Encouraging Staff Members” and “Are You Holding Your Staff Accountable?”)

Healthy and productive teams contain a mix of the pack that produces a positive chemistry.

There are three kinds of chemistry for a local church staff. Each of the three brings an important dimension to the team.

Relational chemistry. Relational chemistry means that you like each other and enjoy being together. This is important to function well as a team. Of all three kinds of chemistry, this is the one the congregation will pick up on first. Bad chemistry leaks quickly into the congregation and contaminates the morale. Good chemistry does the opposite. People pick up on the good vibes, intuitively feel better about the church, and are more apt to get involved and become more committed.

Productivity chemistry. This means that the group of people who comprise your staff team are better together than apart; the staff is better because they are together as a team. The Beatles are a classic example of productivity chemistry. They were

extraordinary together, but apart they were just above average.

Cultural chemistry. The third kind of chemistry deals with the overall team fit. Every church has its culture. Some churches have a button-down business culture and others a more relaxed culture. Some churches have a unique worship culture. Skyline Wesleyan Church where I served with John Maxwell had a culture of leadership development and personal growth. Some churches have a “this is the way we’ve always done it” culture.

There is no end to the variety of church cultures. Your church has its own unique makeup, and it is important that all the staff connect well within that culture.

Healthy and productive teams demonstrate a diligent effort to enhance the effectiveness of church and staff communication.

You cannot overcommunicate as a staff team. However, mere words are not the goal. It is the right words to the right people at the right times. For example, I never share a problem in the church with Kevin Myers (the senior pastor at Crossroads) on Sunday, especially before and after worship services. It may be the right thing to say, even important, but it’s the wrong time. (See sidebar “Staff Communication,” page 98.)

Healthy and productive teams possess an ability to resolve the tough issues with grace and speed.

Even the best of staff teams experience conflict. Motion causes friction and leaders cause motion, therefore leaders cause friction. Like in a good marriage, the goal is not to avoid conflict but to learn to resolve it. (See sidebars “Ten Conflict-Management Strategies for Staff Pastors” and “Preventing Dis-ease Among Staff,” pages 99 and 100.)

Nine steps to conflict resolution:

1. Speak the truth in love.
2. Seek to understand the other’s point of view.
3. Seek common ground.
4. Make expectations clear.
5. Stay focused on the issue at hand.

ARE YOU HOLDING YOUR STAFF ACCOUNTABLE?

15 questions that will keep your staff on the right spiritual path.

1. Name one of your core values. Describe.
2. How would God say you are doing spiritually?
3. Did you kiss your spouse good-bye this morning?
4. Have you exaggerated or lied since we last met?
5. Is there any believer with whom you are out of harmony?
6. Do you give more or get more from ministry?
7. What are you doing in your area of ministry that you couldn’t do without the aid of the Holy Spirit?
8. What would you do for God if money or time were not an object?
9. How many hours did you put in last week?
10. What are you passionate about, making you weep and pound the table?
11. How many calls do you have in voice mail?
12. Have you met with God this morning?
13. Are you keeping up with your personal debts?
14. What would those who know you best say about your relationship with Jesus Christ?
15. What is your life verse? Why?

—Michael D. Jackson, Janesville, Wisconsin

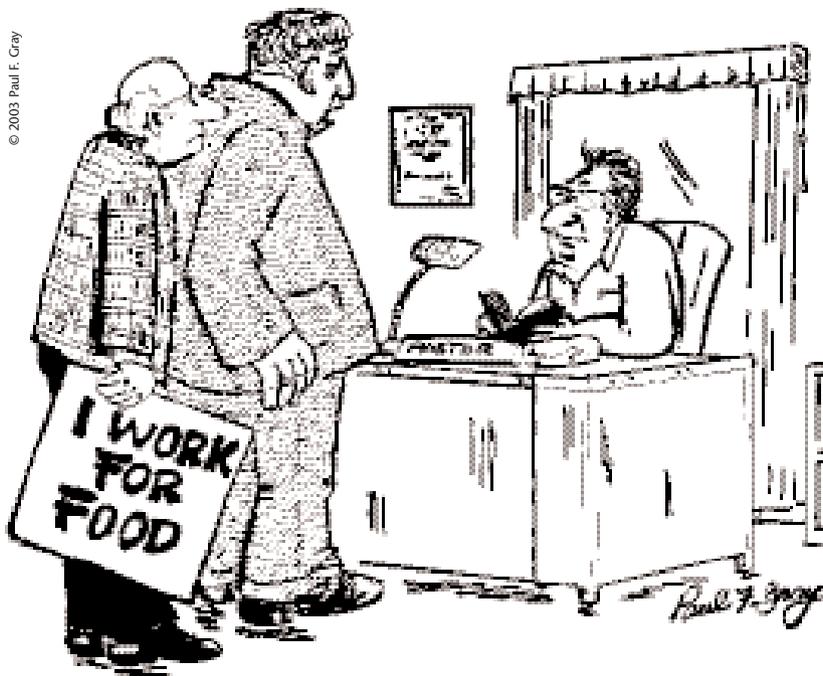
6. Maintain direct communication—no third parties.
7. Listen and don’t respond defensively.
8. Make a commitment to what is in the church’s best interest.
9. Always reflect to discover and apply what you learned.

The dynamics of male-female

relationships on a staff team, particularly if it is supervisor to employee, are complicated and sensitive. (See sidebar “Male-Female Staff Dynamics,” page 101.)

RELEASING A STAFF MEMBER THE RIGHT WAY

Even when you hire well and build a



“We’ve come up with a way to increase your income without dipping into the church finances.”

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Communicating with staff can be hard work. The following seven areas are key to effective staff communication.

Tools for communication have skyrocketed over the past few years, but more technology has not necessarily made us better at communicating. We can easily allow the fascination of technology to move our focus away from real communication. Handheld computers are improvements only if we use them wisely. H. Norman Wright said, "Communication is accomplished only when the other person receives the message we sent."

I recently met with a small group of volunteers in our church with a proposal I thought would be a good direction for their ministry. I thought I had clearly communicated the proposal, but it soon became evident that my expectations were not clear. It became an emotional issue, and it took a number of meetings to achieve a unified understanding. It reminded me again that clear communication can be hard work.

The following seven areas of communication are essential:

Equipping. One of the biggest challenges and needs comes in equipping people to take on the tasks you ask of them. Do they know how to do what you're asking them to do? Do they know when they are succeeding? Sometimes spending time mentoring, leading, helping, and guiding is critical to the success of an operation.

Quarterly reviews. How am I doing at my job? Am I performing up to the standards expected of me? These questions need to be answered regularly. Staff who don't know what you are thinking about their work or ministry begin to worry and speculate. This hurts everyone.

Clear expectations. Make sure you agree on what is expected from each person. If we expect to know more than we are getting, we need to advise our coworkers of that.

Regular meetings. Keep everyone on your team well-informed. Make plans and work out schedules. We do this at least every third week.

Follow-up. Do this with team members especially when a project is ongoing. Stopping in an office and telling the story is often all that is needed.

Constant communication. Use forms, memos, e-mail, and voice mail to keep others informed. Sometimes meetings take too much time, so a quick e-mail solves the problem. When leaving your office, inform your assistant or secretary where you are going and when you will be back.

Prioritizing. Too much time is sometimes spent figuring out priorities for a given week. Don't let people go off on their own and do things you don't think are necessary.

A published schedule of all events in the building or congregation is a tremendous help. Everyone knows what's going on; and if there is a conflict, it can be resolved quickly.

How you say what you need to say facilitates communication. Gentleness and friendliness foster good relationships. I advise my staff to remember that relationships are the most important ingredient of communication. When we strive to create and build good relations among the staff, we often circumvent problems that originate from hurt feelings and anger. Learn to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

Even with a staff of 40 people, these tools and actions make communication a joyous part of working together.

—Vernon Armitage,
senior pastor, Pleasant
Valley Baptist Church,
Liberty, Missouri, with
Mark Littleton

strong team there will come that rare time when you must let someone go. Firing someone is about as much fun as a tax audit, but there are times in your ministry when it is necessary for the good of the church.

In a local church environment, letting someone go can be like firing a family member. It almost feels as if you are doing something wrong. I recall releasing a staff member I cared a great deal for, and the pain of trying to help his spouse, a friend of mine, understand. These are difficult decisions, but decisions a leader cannot avoid.

There are a few assumptions I'm working with. First, you have given clear and written evaluations making the staff member aware that his performance and/or attitude is unsatisfactory (staff ministry evaluations will be discussed later in this article). Second, you have invested effort in training the staff member. Third, the possibility of being fired is not a surprise to your staff member. And fourth, you have assessed the situation as a non-turnaround scenario. (A turnaround scenario is a long and involved attempt committed to help the staff person grow as a leader and remain on staff.)

Questions to ask before you make your decision:

- Will the church be hurt more by retaining than releasing this person?
- How difficult will it be to replace this person?
- If you could do it over today, would you hire this person again?
- What is preventing you from releasing the person?
- Does the person fit on the team?
- Would you miss the staff member if he were gone?
- What does God say?

If the bottom line has been determined and you know in your heart and mind that keeping this staff member is not going to work, the following steps will help you navigate through a potentially difficult time.

TEN CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR STAFF PASTORS

1. *Ask for a clear job description.* Most staff conflicts occur because of ill-defined expectations. Associates must know what roles they fulfill and what goals they are expected to reach.
2. *Develop a servant's heart.* The associate's job is to serve and help make the senior pastor successful.
3. *Practice submission.* Associate pastors model biblical submission by cheerfully responding to and cooperating with their senior pastors.
4. *Seek understanding.* Senior pastors listen to associates who have teachable spirits.
5. *Suggest alternatives without pressure.* Associates can offer new perspectives on decisions, programs, and schedules, but should not feel hurt or angry if their ideas are rejected.
6. *Represent the senior pastor accurately.* An associate must not discuss the senior pastor's weaknesses publicly. Treat senior pastors with integrity, kindness, and courtesy, and they will respond in kind.
7. *Communicate.* Weekly reports go a long way in keeping the senior pastor informed. Senior pastors don't like unwelcome surprises.
8. *Do not harbor negative feelings.* Senior pastors make mistakes. If it is minor, forget it. If it is major, explain your concern privately. Either way, process the hurt, and do not let it fester.
9. *Contribute to healthy staff meetings.* Associate pastors can help develop warm relationships among staff by participating fully in staff meetings.
10. *Do your best for Jesus.* Associate pastors have key roles in championing the Lord's work by doing their best. Positive attitudes go a long way in fostering joy and team spirit on a church staff.

—Erik Johnson, marriage and family counselor with Family Challenge Ministries, Bellingham, Washington

Seek wise counsel and support of key leadership.

Don't make this decision in a vacuum. Though you must own the decision yourself, it is important to let your key leaders in on the process to gain their wisdom. If they do not support your decision, slow down. Don't necessarily back off, but process the decision with them. Give them time to understand why you are doing this. It may take weeks or even a couple months, but don't rush it if your inner core leaders are not at first supportive of the decision.

Make sure you know exactly why you are releasing the staff member.

Your mind must be made up before you meet with a staff member to release him. This is not a time to negotiate and discuss the issues. The time for that is

over. Write the reason down, for your own use. Even if it's only a word or two, or a short sentence, writing it will help you sharpen your clarity.

Determine to honor the person with compassion and dignity.

Determine before meeting with the person you must fire, that you will treat him with honor, compassion, and dignity. He may be upset or angry. Don't battle the anger; minister to it. If he gets ugly, end the meeting and resume again after a few hours or the next day.

Communicate without malice. So often, because firing someone is unpleasant, it is procrastinated. Procrastination makes it worse. The delay often causes a buildup of resentment on your part toward the staff member. By the time you meet to tell

PREVENTING DIS-EASE AMONG STAFF

Five things pastors can do to prevent staff infections.

The church is a center of healing and recovery. However, infections among staff associates can threaten the congregation's vitality and its ability to function as Christ's body in the world.

Dis-ease among the church staff can be a fatal disorder. Early detection and treatment can keep staff relationships alive and healthy. Here are five things pastors can do to prevent staff infections:

1. *Conduct a complete personality physical during the candidating process.*

Use a personality inventory that analyzes work styles and forecasts predictable areas of conflict (e.g., Myers-Briggs, Taylor-Johnson, etc.). The shadow that clouds good intentions will be easier to detect, allowing you to no longer consider this person at the candidating phase. Or, if you desire to hire this person, you might determine that occupational therapy needs to be enacted from the beginning of the new staff member's ministry.

2. *Practice preventive health by requiring a precise daily regimen.* An associate's job description should be detailed beyond what seems necessary. Uncommunicated expectations generally translate into unacceptable performance.

When I interview staff members, I make sure job descriptions include office procedures, weekly time minimums, weekend and evening expectations, and an accountability structure. The demands of a job description can be relaxed when trust is earned. Knowing what is expected also relieves employees from the anxiety of wondering if they are doing too little or too much.

3. *Make frequent office visits and house calls.* Drop by the new staff member's office or home for regular visits and program reviews. These visits establish a natural relationship that allows face-to-face discussions and reduces the risk of rejection.

Weekly staff meeting checkups are a must to maintain a common heartbeat, evaluate and plan, and pray together.

4. *Check blood pressure often.* Unexpressed anger and resentment cannot be allowed to build. Monitor what you are feeling toward your coworkers. If you detect uncharacteristic distancing between another staff member and yourself, is it possible he or she misunderstood something you said or did?

5. *Assume health unless there is just cause for concern.* Don't continually look for employee problems.

Most people want to do their best. They are motivated by opportunities for success and affirmation.

—Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois. Adapted from *The Time Crunch (Multnomah)* by Greg Asimakoupoulos.



him, you explode. Unknowingly, some leaders unload on a staff member because it helps them internally justify the decision. Discipline yourself not to do this. Be firm and tough if needed, but don't be mean.

Employ the 10-second rule.

Don't begin the meeting with sugar-coated platitudes about how wonderful a person he is. He may well be a wonderful person, but that isn't the point of the meeting. Don't drag this

out. Brevity is kinder than dragging it out with long preambles of how much you love and appreciate him. There will be time for that later. Above all, don't say how much this pains you. It's not about you; it's about him. Take this opportunity to pour into him.

Within the first few seconds of the meeting, let him know your decision. Clearly articulate the reason for termination, and then stop talking. Let him respond. The conversation will unfold from there.

Explain and offer the choice of high road or low road.

It is best to be upfront with the two options we all know exist. Tell him he can choose the high road or the low road. Explain both choices. The high road is one that includes a resignation, no pouting and causing trouble, and an agreement to put the good of the church as the highest agenda. The high road also promises from you as the leader a supportive send-off, generous severance, honor and appreciation for the good he has accomplished, a farewell party (if appropriate), and a gift. The low road is the scenario in which the staff member fights the termination, gains allies, causes trouble, and makes it difficult for everyone. In return for a low-road decision, your support is low, severance modest, and everyone loses, but the staff member loses the most. Help him understand that. Ask him to tell you face-to-face which road he will choose.

End the staff member's responsibilities quickly.

Rarely, if ever, have I seen a church where there was any benefit to allow the staff member to remain after the decision was known. I recommend that a brief amount of time is taken to wrap things up, maybe a couple weeks, then he needs to be out of the office and done with his job. This is the purpose of severance. The severance provides him opportunity to take care of his family while focusing his full-time effort on locating a new ministry.

MALE-FEMALE STAFF DYNAMICS

We must constantly work at making sure the male-female dynamic works for us and not against us. Here are some guidelines in making the male-female dynamic positive and productive on a church staff.

Much has been written about the difference between males and females. God has designed us that way, and that is good. But a high level of respect must be demonstrated if the dynamics of male and female relationships are to be positive and productive on a church staff.

Close working relationships develop between men and women on staff. Sometimes that intimacy becomes dangerous to both parties. Therefore, it is wise to build a respect that protects relationships from becoming detrimental.

Bobbie Maloney has been on our staff for 13 years. She started attending our church over 20 years ago. The new life she found in a personal relationship with Jesus filled her with enthusiasm for serving the Lord. She was at the church nearly every day serving in various ways and continually asking questions about her new faith. I immediately connected her with my wife, and they became dear friends. While Bobbie and I have worked closely over the years, she has worked more closely with my wife.

Here are some guidelines I have found helpful in making the male-female dynamic positive and productive.

- Number one is respect. We must highly respect each person in regard to personality, giftedness, and gender. Without respect, there is no true trust that fosters effectiveness.
- Work together with impeccable integrity in male-female relationships. Never allow any inappropriate thoughts or actions to take root. Take the advice of Barney Fife and nip it in the bud.
- Learn how to give meaningful encouragement without any overtones that could be misinterpreted. Beware of saying things to the opposite sex that might incite the wrong kind of thinking. Rather than saying, "You look beautiful today," mention peripherals that are neutral in tone. "That dress looks nice."
- Develop safeguards that clearly establish limits on traveling together, lunch meetings, length of meeting time together, etc. Let your staff and mate know your safeguards so they can hold you accountable. I have on occasion given this information to the church.
- Avoid getting involved in sharing personal problems that would lead to intimate discussions.
- Work together as if your mate (if you are married) were present.

Men and women will many times bring a different perspective to ministry. We are extremely wise in building on the positive side of being different. Each gender has a vital contribution to make. We must constantly work at making sure the male-female dynamic works for us and not against us. In following guidelines such as those above, you can circumvent the kinds of mishaps that might develop.

—Vernon Armitage, senior pastor, Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, Liberty, Missouri, with Mark Littleton



Even though it is not common, follow up with the person you released.

Too often, because the situation is difficult, no contact is made after it's all over. This is a mistake. Contact the pastor in a couple weeks and then again in a couple months. The point is neither to relieve guilt nor to become best buddies. The goal is simply to communicate that you care and value him as a person. If the situation is too sensitive, have another key leader from the church do the follow-up.

THE GREATEST INVESTMENT YOU CAN MAKE

We all understand the simple facts about deposits and withdrawals when it comes to our bank accounts. If you don't make consistent deposits,

you will soon be overdrawn. Unfortunately, we have overlooked this truth when it comes to paid staff. Too often we assume that they are paid professionals and shouldn't need coaching. Nothing could be further than the truth. Some leaders understand the value of investing in their staff but feel they don't have time. Then there are a few leaders who consistently invest in their staff through leadership-development deposits. These leaders reap tremendous rewards within their ministry.

Not only must we invest in our staff through leadership development and spiritual formation, but we must also invest more than we expect. If you want to set high standards and raise the

bar in terms of expectations from your staff, then you must invest all the more. (See sidebar "Developing an Outstanding Staff," page 102.)

There are some unique groups within a local church when it comes to overall development and training. Among those groups are ministry interns. (See sidebar "The Power of an Internship Ministry," page 103.)

EFFECTIVE STAFF MINISTRY EVALUATIONS

Most pastors equate conducting a performance evaluation with the level of fun experienced during a root canal. We don't even like to use the word *performance* because it carries so much baggage. But the truth is, performance matters.

DEVELOPING AN OUTSTANDING STAFF

Developing staff in four areas is key to their continued spiritual growth and ministry development.

Developing a staff team becomes a priority as a church grows. Jesus began His public ministry by recruiting a core of individuals to whom He gave special developmental attention. Later on they were given the task of multiplying His ministry. In many ways, this paradigm describes the initial stages of staff development for a growing church.

Jesus' invitation, "Come, follow me, . . . and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19, NIV) is just as compelling in the 21st century as it was in the first century.

There are four specific areas in which a staff person needs consistent development: 1. vision, 2. information, 3. ministry skills, and 4. exposure.

1. Communicating the vision for ministry is the engine for success.

A compelling vision enables us to sacrifice today for the opportunities of tomorrow. Your staff needs a clear sense of your heart and imagined future. This is most easily accomplished during informal times. Visiting over a cup of coffee in the morning provides an opportunity to share a dream. A clear sense of where we are going provides the basis for the needed self-discipline to help us get there.

2. The skills needed for effective ministry are learned, not intuitive.

Imagine you are going to help someone build a toolbox filled with ministry tools. Identify three or four key ministry skills and develop a plan for excellence in those areas. Opportunities for learning are everywhere. Communication skills are central to ministry. A great place to begin is learning how to answer the phone in a welcoming way or how to treat someone who drops by. These opportunities remind us that people are the purpose for ministry, not a nuisance.

What are the three or four most frequently asked questions about your church or ministry? Develop a set of responses and discuss them with your staff team.

Take time to process ministry opportunities. Talk about the most difficult issues or the most effective encounters from the previous week. The difficult ministry concerns will get passed up to you. Spend your energy helping your staff become effective in responding to the more routine concerns of daily ministry.

3. Every growing ministry needs growing people.

Provide information tools for your team to grow. A variety of tape clubs provide outstanding material. Once a month take a long lunch and listen to a tape. Discuss its impact for your ministry. Ask, "Which ideas are important for us and which ideas are not?" Three or four times a year share a book with your team. When you hand them the book, give them four or five questions to process while they read. A few weeks later, discuss what they learned. You will create a learning environment, and your staff will begin to develop an arsenal of information they can share with others.

4. Exposure to growing ministries is a critical part of development.

Visit two or three churches that are excelling in some way. As you explore facilities and experience new environments, let them feed your own vision. A cautionary note: Avoid a highly critical perspective when visiting other churches. Identify what they are doing best. It is easy to be critical, but far more productive to understand their strengths. Visiting larger churches will plant seeds of possibility in the minds of your staff.

Many churches offer seminars for church staff. Take your team to a seminar, then schedule a half day following the seminar to process what you learned and how it may be applied to your environment.

Set the tone for your staff. Your own personal habits of learning and growing will establish expectations for your team. The apostle Paul set the tone for the churches he helped lead: "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9, NIV).

Developing your staff will become an integral part of your ministry. It will require growth and developing your own skills. People want to do well for God, but often lack the confidence of a leader who will walk alongside them as they learn to excel.

—Allen Jackson, senior pastor,
World Outreach Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.



THE POWER OF AN INTERNSHIP MINISTRY

What are the ingredients for an effective internship ministry in the local church?

Kent and Cheri are church planters in Croatia. They birthed a church where there was no church 10 years ago. Chris planted a church in Wisconsin, his second successful church plant. Robert pastors in southern California and is raising young leaders by the hundreds. Michael is a missionary aviator among an unreached people group in Asia. Tim and Gary are both church mobilizers, working with pastors who are struggling and need the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit to blow through their congregations. Jennifer works with university students in Missouri, discipling women and multiplying her leadership on several campuses. Mike and Michelle took a dying church in Minnesota and breathed life back to it through their leadership.

What do these individuals have in common? Each started as an intern in our church during the '80s and '90s. They are among nearly 400 others who answered a call to vocational ministry at Skyline Church over the course of a decade. I believe in the power of a ministry to interns.

I concede, however, that while I always had a heart for young leaders, giving oversight to our internship ministry was a learned process. Sometimes I feel the need to apologize to those early interns who were part of my learning process. Over time, however, it became the most fulfilling part of my pastoral position. Let me share with you the ingredients that made our internship effective.

From the beginning we wanted to equip students who were preparing for full-time ministry. Consequently, we established an internship that lasted 2 years (often the interns' junior and senior years of college) and required 20 hours each week. This left them time for classes and/or a part-time job if they chose to work. San Diego is a college town and at the time had 100,000 students enrolled on university campuses. We had a large pool to draw from, but a large college nearby is not an ingredient to a successful intern ministry. A student had to be a member of our church and committed to preparing for ministry. We chose them based on their GIFTS. They were . . .

G—Gifted: we saw an obvious public gift in them.

I—Influential: we noticed they had influence among their peers.

F—Fruitful: we could already see fruitful ministry happening in their lives.

T—Trustworthy: we spotted character and maturity in them.

S—Serving: we saw them in ministry before the internship.

Once we selected the intern, we brought him or her before the pastoral staff for approval, just like any other appointed person in ministry. After official approval, the 2-year internship began. We used the following big IDEA, based on Jesus' method of equipping His disciples for leadership.

I—Instruction

We gave them lots of leadership instruction. You can't be in a church with John Maxwell as the senior pastor without leadership teaching going on. We taught them at weekly meetings, where we studied one leadership issue per month. We read through books together and discussed their content. Every intern received a notebook to fill with handouts of learning material received over the 2 years.

D—Demonstration

While instruction is important, we knew they needed more than teaching. The internship was show and tell, not just tell and tell. We made sure they had plenty of chances to see leadership modeled at the church. They watched pastoral ministry up close. We took them on field trips and discussed what they observed. They interviewed the staff members at the church and even had a yearly group time with John Maxwell.

E—Experience

We didn't just tell them and we didn't just show them—they also got firsthand experience. That's how people learn best. We forget most of what we hear. We remember more of what we see. But we retain most of what we do. The interns all led something during their time with us. In fact, they each had four to five responsibilities based on their gifts. We gave them spiritual gift assessments and placed them accordingly. Basic assignments included oversight of some ministry team (based on their gifts), discipling at least one person, and some form of evangelism.

A—Assessment

Finally, we made time for regular assessment of their life and ministry. Experience is not the best teacher. Bad experiences can lead folks to wrong conclusions. We felt that weekly meetings, biannual evaluations, and a steady review of programs helped them stay on course. I kept a folder on each of them, like a doctor does on a patient. They knew they were loved and cared for as we equipped them.

—Tim Elmore, EQUIP Ministries, Duluth, Georgia



SAMPLE MINISTRY ACTION PLAN (MAP)

Middle School Ministry

October 2003–September 2004

LEADERSHIP

1. Recruit a male coach.
2. Recruit worship leader.
3. Expand coach's role and training.
4. Recruitment strategy:
 - "The Hook, Line, and Sinker": Capture Mechanism. Under 2 hours. Vision and strategy cast. "This is who we are, and we'd love to have you join us!"
 - "Cat Herding 101": 3 to 4 weeks of Youth Ministry 101 for those who have bitten the hook. More in depth than The Hook. "You want to join us; here are the essentials of youth ministry."
 - "Middle School Community": Ongoing. Spiritual life and community as well as equipping and developing. Once every 6 weeks. A middle school version of Leadership Community.
5. Expand adult leader numbers.
Current numbers:
Male: 12
Female: 9
Current Total: 21
Projected numbers:
Male: 16
Female: 14
Projected gain: 9
Projected total: 30
6. Equip middle school E-Leaders.
Equip for future goals, not defaulting to present needs.
7. Tech leader identified and trained.
Student team of techies.

EVANGELISM

1. Hit 150 mark on Sunday a.m.
2. April/May average: 130.
3. Minister of fun—activities coordinator:

- 2 large-scale outreach events.
- 3 medium-scale events.
- Ongoing small events.
4. Greet-team leader, strategy, and team solidified.
Calls, e-mails, or cards to each first-time visitor.

SMALL GROUPS

1. Recruit small-group leaders.
Current small-group leaders.
Male: 8
Female: 6
Current Total: 14
Projected small-group leaders.
Male: 10
Female: 8
Projected gain: 4
Projected total: 18
2. Small groups average 50 percent of Sunday a.m. total.
3. Shepherding with regularity.
Postcards, e-mails, or calls by small-group leaders every other week.
Meet outside of church once every 6 weeks.
4. New believers class.
Measure evangelism success by numbers through class.

COMMUNICATION

1. Student ministry Web site.
2. E-mail database of students.
(10/03: Semi-operational and growing.)

RETREATS

1. Small groups cabin retreat. Goal: community, depth.
2. Leaders fall and spring retreat. Goal: alignment, community, encouragement.
3. Dare 2 Share. Goal: Evangelism training.
4. Summer camp. Goal: Community, depth, outreach.

—Dan M. Reiland, D.Min., Lawrenceville, Georgia

I remember conducting my first ministry review with a staff member years ago. Jason* was older than me, smarter than me, and had more experience in general local church work. Yet, I was the leader of the team. That was an uncomfortable process to say the least. I wish I would have known the following.

Advantages of conducting ministry performance evaluations.

Let me start by encouraging you with the value of a ministry evaluation. First, soak them in yourself, then communicate any or all to your staff.

- Increased communication
- Increased productivity
- Enhancement of teamwork

- Reduction of unforeseen problems
- A valuable tool for personal and professional growth

Invest 80 percent of your effort and energy into each staff member's Ministry Action Plan (MAP).

The actual review represents approximately 20 percent of the value of the

process. It is simply the formalized recognition and recording of their ministry results and personal growth for the year.

The heart of the matter lies in a skillfully crafted Ministry Action Plan that replaces a traditional job description. (See sidebar “Sample Ministry Action Plan.”) Though you may need a job description for hiring purposes, it typically adds little value to a review. It is generic, difficult to measure results by, and static in nature.

However, a MAP is a one- or two-page bullet list set of measurable goals. These goals have been agreed on between the supervisor and the team member. Each year the MAP is revisited and revised to keep it fresh.

Understand that different staff will relate to MAPs and evaluations differently.

The top one-third of your staff will find value in the evaluation through enhanced communication and recognition regarding their work.

The middle one-third of your staff will find value in the evaluation through increased organization and prioritization of their work.

The other one-third of your staff will find value in the evaluation through the direction and supervision it brings to the table.

Clarify the purpose of a ministry evaluation.

• *Looking forward—personal and professional development.* The number one purpose of a ministry evaluation is to be used as a tool for growth. When a staff member is evaluated in context of specific goals, it is live leadership rather than classroom study. It is easy to see where their skills fall short as well as where their gifts shine. In the areas where the staff member falls short of an agreed-upon goal, this is not used to punish the staff member but to identify specific areas for growth. Further, the areas of excellent performance help identify areas of unique gifting, which aids correct placement on the team.

• *Looking back—compensation level.* Caution. A ministry review does highly influence a staff member’s salary, but does not set it. Do not tie performance and salary too closely together.

• *Looking at the present—improve communication, organization, and morale.*

Think process.

Don’t surprise your staff. The worst thing you can do is to design a quality MAP, ignore it for a year, then call the staff member in for his review. This grenade will explode. The review takes place all year long. You are consistently discussing with staff members how they are doing while at the same time coaching them for professional growth.

Stick to the essentials.

When it is time for the evaluation, remember that even under the best circumstances, this is a little stressful. So don’t make it longer than it needs to be. Take the time you need, but don’t chase rabbit trails. Stick to what is important. This means you must prepare in advance. Ask the staff member to evaluate himself, and you do the same. Compare your results. This provides a great way to talk through the highs and lows of his MAP. Ask good questions and listen more than you talk.

Be concrete and specific in your evaluation process.

Divide the review process into at least two categories. For example, 50 percent of the evaluation is based on how well they met their agreed-upon goals. The other 50 percent is based on a set of team values, including things like attitudinal, cultural, or ministry values. This is based on how well they, for example, cooperate with other staff, demonstrate a servant’s heart, and lead in alignment with the overall vision of the church.

CONCLUSION

As pastor, you have a responsibility to manage and mentor your staff. Selecting and developing the right people is at the very epicenter of fruitful leadership development. Your ability to develop your staff is the lid lifter that allows your church to reach its God-given potential—a Spirit-filled potential far beyond the limits of natural gifts and talents. **e**

Dan M. Reiland, D.Min., is executive pastor at Crossroads Community Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia.



**Names have been changed.*

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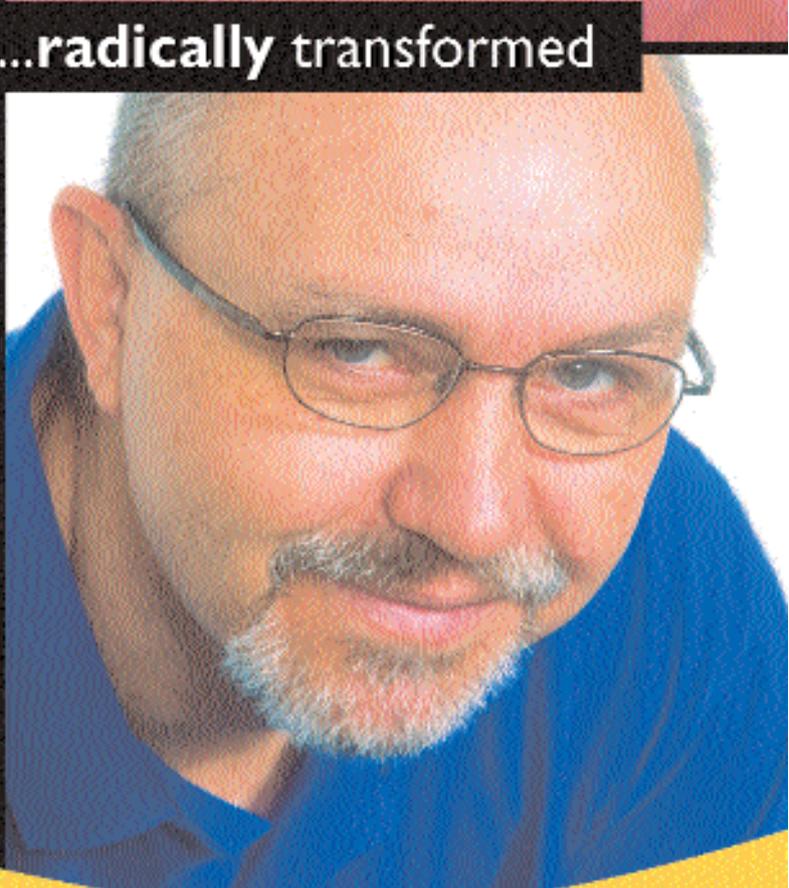
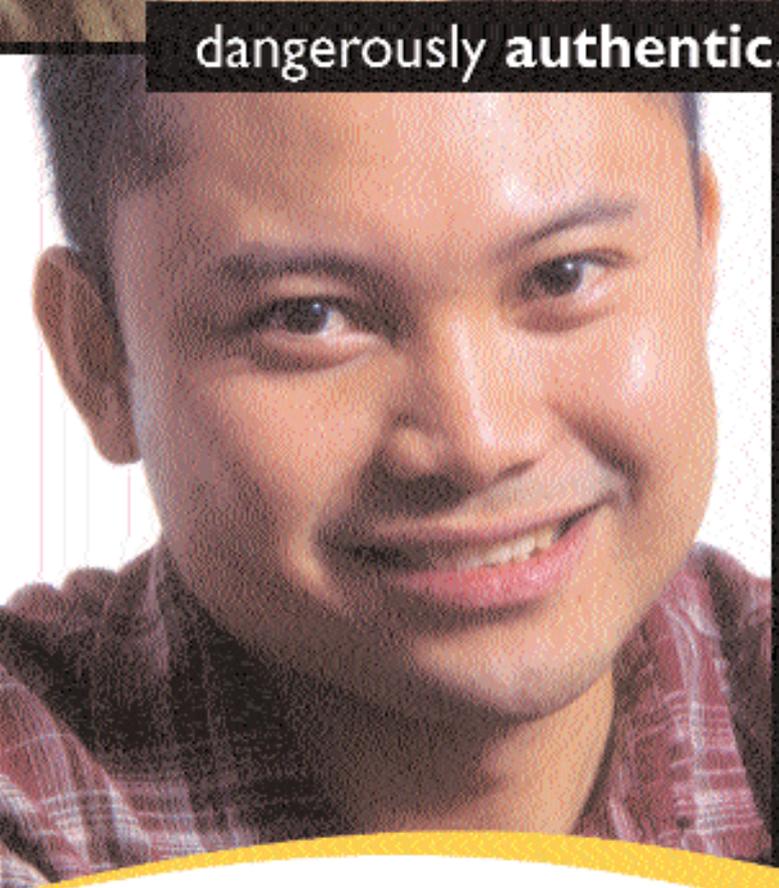
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Six Levers of Series Preaching (Part One)

What is the difference between a collection of sermons on the same subject and a strong series? How do we take full advantage of those unique strengths?

BY CRAIG BRIAN LARSON

Recently I decided to fix a basement leak and had a contractor give an estimate. Wanting to remove some paneling, he asked, “Do you have a pry bar?” I retrieved two: a small, thin lever about 5 inches long and a superbar more than a foot long. The contractor grabbed the superbar and removed the paneling in minutes.

The contractor chose the tool with more leverage. In the same way, many pastors wanting greater leverage choose to preach primarily in series.

But we may not be using all the power inherent in the form. When we understand how a series differs from a single sermon, we can take full advantage of the unique strengths a series affords.

Here are three differences, along with suggestions, on how to capitalize on them. (Three more will be presented next quarter in part 2.)

DEEP DEVELOPMENT

The more an idea is developed, the greater its impact. If I preach a 30-second sermon—reading John 3:16, saying, “God loves you so much He sent Jesus to die for your sins. Believe

illustrate with stories showing human sinfulness, give examples from the Gospels of people turning to Jesus in faith, and so on. As long as there is movement, not redundancy, more development means more power.

Series offer much more time for development; a four-part series gives us several hours. We can explain more principles, dig deeper theologically, answer more objections, paint images in greater detail, offer more examples, tell longer stories, address the full scope of application (who, what, where, and how), and expose more Scripture. Instead of one drama or testimony in support of the theme, there can be many. We can preach sequential expository sermons through books of the Bible. Such breadth and depth and focus will more likely change lives.

To harness the power of deep development, we need to plan a series with the big picture in mind. In many cases, we can view the entire series as a single large sermon, having one main subject and one big idea needing development. In this megasermon perspective, each week’s sermon is like a main point developing that big idea.

what point in the series will I deal with these various aspects?

A series is not four sermons gathered loosely under a general topic (a wide series), but rather four sermons working together to accomplish one aim (a deep series).

MOMENTUM

A series that gathers momentum can be a landmark in church life. I recently preached through Galatians, and midway through one man prayed in the service, “Lord, thank You for leading Pastor to preach through Galatians. You have spoken to us through this book. Continue to guide him as he plans his preaching in the future.” Another woman told me, “Make sure you are tapping these.” Others asked me to e-mail my sermon notes that week, and one woman asked for my printed notes. This series coincided with a renewed sense of God at work in our church, leading in new people, and bringing back people long absent. God gave us spiritual momentum that was not there when the series began.

In the sports world, momentum is called Big Mo, and it can make a season. Momentum in a sermon series is just as powerful. People get curious and excited. They learn new things that change their lives forever. They stand up and tell how God is working. They invite others.

Series build momentum because of connection: what happens today is tied to what happened last week and what will happen next week. A series resembles a giant flywheel, still spinning from spiritual energy applied before, accelerating more from energy exerted today.

As long as there is movement, not redundancy, more development means more power.

in Jesus and you will be saved,” and then sit down—that will have less effect (all things being equal) than if I give a 30-minute sermon in which I explain why God sent His Son,

Ask yourself: *What is the overall purpose of the series? What Scriptures do I need to cover? When the series is over, what do I want people to know, do, feel? What objections will I need to answer? At*

Series have far more potential than single sermons to increase attendance and visitor flow. After the first sermon, hearers know what to expect in future sermons' and if they are helped, they are motivated to attend and to invite others.

One reason people like series is they give a sense of mastery of a subject. Serious Christians do not want to be shallow novices. Spirit-filled people yearn to learn and understand.

To take full advantage of the power of momentum:

- *Sweat over titles and announce them with enough lead time.* Use titles that promise something, stir curiosity, create tension.

- *Do not release all tension and answer all questions before the last sermon.* As you answer questions in one sermon, raise new questions by saying things like, "Notice that so and so is true, but what about such and such? We'll talk about that next week." Media land calls those teasers, and they are extremely effective. Plan the series before you begin so you can use teasers effectively.

- *Over the course of a series, aim for a pattern of crescendo rather than decrescendo.* I am prone to give my best stuff up front and make the first sermon the climax, but then the following sermons simply let the dust settle. Instead, like a novelist writing a mystery, we should plan what tension will be maintained and resolved at what points of the series.

- *Tell people who should attend in the future.* "If you know someone with an addiction problem, you will want to bring him for the next 2 weeks." And lest we overlook the obvious, tell people to invite their friends. "Has God been helping you through this series? Whom do you know who needs the same thing?"

- *Pray.* The Spirit of God is the primary source of Kingdom momentum.

WIDE RESEARCH

When we study for a series that will last 4 weeks or more, we have added time,

reason, and motivation to thoroughly research our subject. We know our spade work will pay higher dividends.

- *Build margins in your preparation.* Plan for several weeks or months between when you decide on the

When we understand how a series differs from a single sermon, we can take full advantage of the unique strengths a series affords.

When preaching through a book like Genesis or Revelation, expanded research is critical. We must make decisions about how to interpret texts early in the book, and we don't want to have to pull an about-face in chapter 20.

David Jackman, a leader of The Proclamation Trust in England, says when he decides on a book for exposition, he begins to read it devotionally, and he focuses his side reading on related commentaries. This process begins 6 months or more before he starts preaching the book.

Bill Hybels says when he takes his monthlong summer study breaks, he brings a pile of books on topics he knows he will preach in the year ahead. He culls stories, statistics, and principles.

subject of a series and when it begins (some preachers plan preaching calendars 6 months to a year ahead). This usually means we will research future series at the same time as we do final study for a current series.

- *Plan your research.* Once you decide on a series, list the must-read works on the subject; and to prevent procrastination, set due dates for completion. **e**

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"Cheer up, Pastor. Jesus gives victory, even over dead sermons!"

Is Jesus Really King of the Jews?

Is He King of the Jews today or of dedicated Christians only?

B Y R A Y G A N N O N

As prayerful prelude to the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), the modern Jewish religious calendar calls for 10 Days of Awe, a sobering season of spiritual introspection and repentance, in preparation for the new religious year. The Days of Awe officially begin with the Jewish New Year, *Rosh HaShanah*, and conclude 10 days later with the Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur*. These Holy Days come in September or October in keeping with the Hebrew Bible's lunar calendar.

Rosh HaShanah (literally "head of the year") is biblically termed "a day of blowing the trumpets" (Leviticus 23:24) and is commonly known as the Feast of Trumpets. According to the *Mishnah* (the late second-century written compilation of the rabbinical oral tradition), the Feast of Trumpets is also considered the annual Judgment Day. The Book of Life is opened and God makes decrees for the following year largely in response to the sincere

(Ah-KAY-dah), the powerful story of Abraham's readiness to offer Isaac in sacrifice to God (Genesis 22). In concert with the *Akedah* is the custom of *Tashlich* (TAHSH-leeckh), one of the most fascinating religious practices associated with the Days of Awe still practiced in many Jewish Orthodox communities today. *Tashlich* dates back to the Middle Ages or earlier and is based on a fictionalized legend found in the Talmud that combined the story of Abraham's offering of Isaac and old European superstitions involving evil spirits and streams. Crumbs were thrown into the stream to appease the evil one's appetite so no harm would come to the people. The scapegoat idea also played a part as the concept held that the fish and stream would carry away the sins of the people symbolized by the crumbs. One rendition of the *Tashlich* prayer reads: "You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea, and may You cast all the sins of Your people, the house of Israel, into a

to signify Jewish good wishes for a sweet and prosperous New Year. The greeting, *L'Shanah Tovah* (Happy New Year) is followed by a delicious *Rosh HaShanah* meal.

Declaring God King

One of the primary functions of *Rosh HaShanah* is the reaffirmation of God's kingship. In fact, this is chief reason given for the first of the three soundings of the *shofar* (ram's horn) during this 2-day worship occasion. The first trumpet sounds to honor God as King and Ruler over all the universe. The second sounding is to remind the Jews that God is Judge of all humanity. The third is to emphasize God's worthiness of all Jewish faith and confidence. One line in the *Machzor* summarizes the holiday's lesson: "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us."

Jesus As King of the Jews

We know from the Gospels that the sign posted over Jesus on the cross read, "The King of the Jews." This was done in Roman derision of Christ and served as a public indictment against Him. Yet the functionary religious leadership of that hour protested Pilate's sign since it did not sufficiently make clear to their satisfaction that Christ's claim to kingship was mistaken. They proposed, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews'" (John 19:21, NASB).

But is Jesus really the King of the Jews? Is it appropriate for us to entitle Jesus "King of the Jews" even before He is officially recognized and fully appreciated by the Jewish people as their national

One of the primary functions of *Rosh HaShanah* is the reaffirmation of God's kingship.

repentance, faithful prayers, good deeds, and charitable acts of the Jewish people. At the culmination of the 10 Days of Awe, the fate of humanity is divinely sealed for the next 12 months (e.g., whether one will experience life or death, health or sickness, prosperity or poverty, etc.).

The Torah (Pentateuch) reading for *Rosh HaShanah* includes the *Akedah*

place where they shall be no more remembered or visited or ever come to mind."

After lengthy liturgical services at the synagogues as recited from the *Machzor*, or special High Holiday prayer book, the Jewish worshipers return home in their customary *Rosh HaShanah* white apparel to be welcomed with apples dipped in honey

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King? Is He King of the Jews today or of dedicated Christians only? Does not His kingship over the Jews await a future millennial utopia that only becomes possible subsequent to yet another dreadful Jewish holocaust? And what of the modernly proffered dual-covenant theology suggesting that Jesus is pertinent only to the new covenant and Christian salvation? This teaches that Christ is not germane to the distinctly Jewish covenant with God and is totally irrelevant to Jewish salvation.

Unfortunately, apart from the *Rosh HaShanah* liturgical services, there is little evidence in contemporary Jewish life to challenge the perception that the Jewish world presently regards God as occupying a mostly symbolically post in a manner similar to the largely ceremonial and figurehead position of the modern British monarch. God may be publicly addressed with a measure of Jewish religious feeling on what is considered appropriate ceremonial occasion, but any suggestion of His present sovereign activity in space and time or intervention in the affairs of men is considered a rather far-fetched notion. Yet God's perceived irrelevance to everyday Jewish existence would in no way intimate to religious Jews that God is not King. The fact God is not consulted, His Scriptures not searched, or the instruction of His Spirit not sought, does not lessen Jewish religious insistence of the identification of God as the King of Israel. Of course, to

honorary post while neglecting to acknowledge His active mastery over the whole earth.

The good news is that God is King in spite of human response. He is Master of the universe even should mankind manage to almost entirely forget Him as in the days of Noah. He does not need to qualify for His throne nor does a straw vote need to be taken to first establish His popularity or

be the Son of God, the Davidic Messiah, and the very King of the Jews.

Acknowledging Jesus As King

In 1972, we conducted our first *Rosh HaShanah* service in a large Jewish home in Beverly Hills, California. The home was packed with scores of Jewish people who gladly trumpeted their love and honor of Jesus, King of the Jews. A fair number of Jewish unbelievers were

God has made Christ the Lord, the federal Head, the only Savior, and the coming King of all Jews everywhere.

approval rating. He is currently and forever the Master of all the nations and of every breathing human whether he or she realizes or approves of it or not. Plainly, all persons and nations would be greatly advantaged to humbly recognize God's eternal kingship and His applied mastery of the universe.

In an identical manner, the Messiah Jesus is "King of the Jews" not by virtue of Jewish popular sentiment but by the expressed will of the Sovereign Lord and Creator of all. No human action or inaction can alter God's decree. God has made Christ the Lord, the federal Head, the only Savior, and the coming King of all Jews everywhere. Non-Jewish followers of Christ may correctly apologize to the Jewish

also present. In that Jewish New Year solemn assembly, in full harmony with God's own biblical testimony, we boldly proclaimed the kingship of Jesus without apology or hesitation. Several Jewish people were born again into the kingdom of God that evening. Since then we have witnessed many thousands of new Jewish believers in America, and tens of thousands worldwide, coming to terms with King Jesus, the saving Deliverer of "all Israel" (Romans 9:25,26).

Christians need to do less equivocating in the pursuit of social acceptability and make greater prophetic effort to boldly proclaim Christ's kingship to the Jewish world without apology or fear of social rejection. Jesus is surely the King of the Jews and Messianic Lord of Israel, although only a growing remnant (150,000 to 200,000) of Jewish people worldwide presently acknowledges Him as King. But the day will surely come, according to Paul's Romans 11, when "all Israel will be saved."

Now is their accepted time; today is their day of salvation. Since Jesus is the King of the Jews yesterday, today, and forever, let us boldly proclaim Him to "all Israel" in this acceptable hour. Jesus is Israel's Judge, Lawgiver, and King; He will save His Jewish people from their sins. **e**

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**The good news is that
God is King in spite of human response.**

be fair, many professing Christians make no appeal for daily guidance from the King of the universe either. Unfortunately, too many Jews and Christians alike perceive of God as King merely in terms of His official religious and community-recognized

people for past episodes of Christendom's persecution of Jewish people, but no one needs to apologize for proclaiming Jesus King of the Jews. He is King of the Jews and of all mankind because the God of Israel has both anointed and announced Him to

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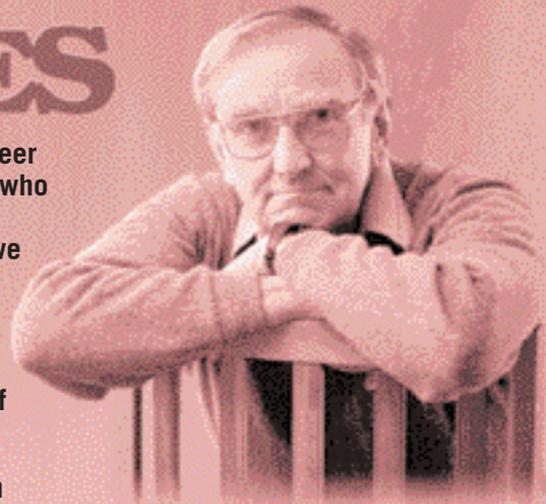
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BENEVOLENCES

Managing the Smaller Church

While strong spiritual qualities are essential to shepherding the church, pastors of smaller churches must also demonstrate competence in church management and administration.

B Y R A L P H A D C O C K

In the small church, the terms *leadership* and *management* must be defined before the small-church pastor can obtain a good understanding of the skills needed as manager. Many leadership materials make major distinctions between these words; however, in the small church the term *management* defines the leadership abilities of the pastor.

While strong spiritual qualities are essential to shepherding the church, pastors of smaller churches must also demonstrate competence in church management and administration. Administrative and managerial prowess is needed most in the following three areas.

MANAGING THE CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

Pastors must understand the culture and nature of the smaller church to maintain the decorum needed in the business meeting while exercising management by relationship. How business is conducted is determined by how certain individuals will be affected. Replacing the organ with a keyboard is not based on the desire of the youth to update the music, but how it will affect the family who donated the organ years ago.

Business meetings in the smaller church tend to be less formal. Because of the trusting relationships in the church, there may not be printed copies of the treasurer's report and other items for business. Even though the church is small, paying attention to these details can help the church become better organized. (See sidebars "Conducting the Church

Board/Business Meeting" and "Church Business Meeting Agenda," in the managing church government section on pages 44,46.)

In the smaller church, vision and direction are often established by the congregation rather than the pastor. Once a decision has been made, the pastor is expected to facilitate and assist in carrying out the vision.

The pastor's success in establishing church policies and procedures comes from influence gained during the relationship-building process. A wise pastor will work with the individual leaders of the church before presenting a new program to the congregation for a decision. The item that a pastor feels is insignificant can become a life-altering situation if not presented correctly.

Nominations for deacons and church officers are generally made from the floor rather than from a nominating committee. Deacons and officers may be chosen because of family relationships rather than spiritual qualifications. Some of these leaders may have been in office for a long time. Pastors in smaller churches need to learn how to work with a board under these circumstances. (See sidebar "Pastor-Board Relationships in the Smaller Congregation" in the managing church government section on page 35.)

In the smaller church, decisions guide the budget rather than the budget guiding decisions. Should the congregation be in favor of a specific project or purchase, in most cases, the finances will be there. While issues like this may appear restricting, the wise pastor can learn to use relationships and influence in the church to make needed changes.

MANAGING THE CHURCH OFFICE

Managing the church office is one of the most critical and challenging tasks of the small-church pastor. The church's image and influence in the community will rise or fall depending how well the pastor manages the church office. Following are a few important matters to which every small-church pastor should give attention.

Many small churches do not provide a secretary for the pastor. The responsibilities of correspondence, answering the phone, preparing the Sunday bulletin and monthly calendar, and ordering church supplies may fall to the pastor.

Written communication from the pastor's office should be of the highest quality possible. All correspondence reflects on the church and pastor. Good writing skills are a must. The pastor should be trained to use a computer.

Well-established telephone protocol is a must for the small church. According to an August 22, 2000, Barna church telephone-usage report, "contact with a person was not established with 40 percent of the churches called, even though multiple callbacks—as many as 12 per church—were placed. Amazingly, at almost half of the churches (44 percent) at which human interaction was not established, there was not even an answering machine available to capture or relay a message." (For the full report, go to www.barna.org/cgi-bin/pagepressrelease.asp?pressreleaseID=69&reference=e&key=telephone.)

Pastors need to establish regular office hours so their congregations can reach them. If a pastor is not in the office because of secular employment,

the church needs an answering machine. The pastor also needs to check phone messages frequently and return calls promptly. Pastors also need to watch the abuse of the telephone by continual usage. This can consume valuable time that could be used in other areas of ministry.

Pastors might ask volunteers to staff the office during certain times of the day or week. If this is the case, training on proper telephone etiquette should be provided.

The bulletin and calendar are excellent tools for sharing schedules or announcements with the church family. Be sure they are not carelessly maintained. Remember, they are for the benefit of the church family—so do them well.

Perhaps you might have a volunteer do the bulletin. If so, establish guidelines. Often a volunteer can add new ideas; however, use discretion so nothing unseemly, untimely, or ungodly appears in the bulletin. What might be innocent to some may be offensive to others. Use caution, work together, and most important, appreciate the ones who volunteer.

Ordering church supplies can demonstrate good stewardship. Lack of finances often demands frugality. A fine line exists between enough and too much; therefore, pastors need to make sure they spend wisely.

Not only are most of the above tasks required of the pastor, some of them may be required without the needed equipment to accomplish the tasks. The finances of most small churches do not allow for the high-tech conveniences of computers, copiers, fax machines, and other electronic equipment. The services of dedicated, trained volunteers to manage the church office will free the pastor's time so the more weighty matters of preaching and pastoral care can be done.

MANAGING STAFF

While the smaller church may not have paid staff, they probably have volunteers who function much like the

paid staff in larger churches. Even though these individuals are not paid, the pastor still has the responsibility to manage them and to equip them for ministry (Ephesians 4:12,13). Due to difficulty in locating volunteers, many pastors say, "I'd rather do it myself." But turning down volunteer labor in the small church prevents some from using

The pastor's success in establishing church policies and procedures comes from influence gained during the relationship-building process.

their gifts and making a difference in the Kingdom.

Volunteer staff may be scarce in many smaller churches because some people in smaller churches think they lack the skills and education for ministry. As pastor, you can help people understand how God can use them. Providing training can help them obtain needed skills and confidence.

Because pastors in small churches might have difficulty recruiting volunteers, they may beg people to help. Pastors sometimes say, "We could not find anyone else, so we were wondering if you would do it?" When someone is approached in this manner, he may not think the ministry position is that important and may not put much effort or enthusiasm into preparation and ministry activity.

Many of the insights and principles for working with paid staff can be used in managing and leading volunteer staff. (See sidebars "Leading Volunteer Staff" on page 85 and "Finding and Discipling Quality Volunteers" at www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org. Click on current issue article "Managing the Church Office: An Ever-changing Challenge.") When recruiting volunteers, communicate the importance of the position, and the reasons why they are qualified. Also, let them know what is required of them. People are willing to give their time when they see what they

are doing is significant and valuable to God's kingdom.

Those in ministry need spiritual care. Many people in smaller, rural churches may have taught Sunday School or worked in other ministries in the church for many years. They might need time off for recharging their spiritual batteries. If finding a replacement

for them is not possible, look for ways to refresh them as they minister. (See the *CE Counselor* Web site: www.ag.org.cecounselor for more ideas on encouraging volunteers.)

Do not overlook the importance of ministering to the needs of every volunteer. Caring for the workers involves recognition for faithfulness, not just accomplishments. The person who is faithful in cleaning the church is just as important as a dynamic Sunday School teacher. By commending people for their faithfulness, you are giving them a sense of value and worth. People want to know they are contributing to the work of God.

Should a smaller church have paid staff, even part-time staff, the pastor needs to make sure the church meets the requirements of the tax and insurance laws as well as any other requirements of the local or state in which they are located.

When hiring staff, look for individuals with exceptional character and integrity who will represent not only the church but the kingdom of God well. People who have a heart to serve the Lord with their God-given talents can be an asset to the church. (See Dan Reiland's article "The Art of Managing Church Staff," especially the section on "Hiring Eagles—One at a Time," page 84.) **e**

Ralph Adcock, D.Min., senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Buffalo, Oklahoma.

Girolamo Savonarola— The Prophet of Florence

Savonarola was a prophet, anointed with great spiritual power, one of history's monumental spiritual leaders.

B Y W I L L I A M P . F A R L E Y

Girolamo Savonarola (1452–98) was God's John the Baptist to the Reformation. He died just 19 years before Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of his Wittenberg church. Savonarola's ministry was a clarion call to repentance.

Tragically, no one claims him. Because he fearlessly and vigorously rebuked the pope, calling for moral reform at the highest levels, the Roman church disowned him. Like most Protestants, he loved and preached the Bible; but since he was pre-Reformation, he did not clearly see justification by faith alone, so Protestant historians don't know what to do with him either. But God knew him, and that is all that matters. He was a prophet, anointed with great spiritual power, one of history's monumental spiritual leaders.

Savonarola was a household name in 16th-century Europe. His meditation



Photo: Courtesy of the Billy Graham Center Museum, Wheaton, Ill.

BIRTH AND TRAINING

Savonarola was born in Ferrara, Italy, in 1452. His pious grandfather raised him in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and in a day when the Bible was ignored and despised, taught him to

congregation and end with a tiny handful. To end the young man's misery and embarrassment, his superior transferred him to the monastery of San Marco (Saint Mark) in Florence. There he would be useful at something besides preaching.

The Renaissance, an intellectual movement that eventually sought to supplant revealed religion with human reason, was in full flower, and Florence was its capital. The city was a cesspool of sexual immorality, political corruption, and godlessness. The wealth and power of the ruling Medici family attracted artists like Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Botticelli, to practice their crafts. It was in this immoral environment Savonarola began his greatest ministry.

TRANSFORMED PREACHING

Frustrated by failure, Savonarola died to his preaching ambitions. He came to the end of himself. It was a God-engineered humiliation. He didn't know it, but he was now ready to be used by God.

It was at this time that he began a series of lectures in the monastery garden on the Book of Revelation. Neither he nor his superiors expected much. But in God's sovereign purpose, a new power breathed through him. God was there, and the effect was electric. The people began flocking to his lectures. Within a few weeks, the only seating was on the garden walls. Such was the demand for his preaching that his superiors finally moved him to the Duomo, the huge cathedral in downtown Florence.

Savonarola was a household name in 16th-century Europe. His meditation on Psalm 51, written while under torture, was a best seller.

on Psalm 51, written while under torture, was a best seller. It outsold Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, at that time a best seller in Europe. His meditation was still in print as late as 1958. His writings influenced Luther and many other great men. In his old age, Michelangelo, one of Savonarola's admirers, could still hear the sound of his voice. Who was this man and why is he important to us today?

read and love the Bible. Ultimately, his passion for Scripture was the secret of his great spiritual power.

Inspired by God's Word, Savonarola longed to preach. Because the Dominicans were dedicated to preaching, he entered their order in his late teens. He was an oratorical failure. His teaching was so abysmal that people would walk out in the middle of his sermons. He would start with a large

God's presence attracts, and the people came by thousands to listen to the young monk. His message, like that of John the Baptist—his favorite Bible hero—was one of repentance and self-denial, not one to which men are naturally drawn. The Bible was always his text. He fearlessly proclaimed the need for contrition, warning men of God's coming judgment. He urged the citizens of Florence to confirm their repentance with deeds of righteousness. Nothing but the presence of the living God can explain the results. One biographer writes:

"The Cathedral could no longer take in the multitudes streaming in from far and near. . . . Wooden galleries had to be erected inside the cathedral in the form of an amphitheater to accommodate the crowds. Even this enlargement proved insufficient. . . . It was a bewildering sight to see that mass of people coming with jubilee and rejoicing to the sermon as to a wedding feast."¹

The experience of Bettuccio, a profligate non-Christian, speaks for many. An eyewitness wrote: "As soon as Savonarola mounted the pulpit everything changed in Bettuccio. . . . He could not tear his eyes away from the preacher. His mind was captivated, his conscience was touched by the Friar's words, and, he says: 'At last I knew myself to be as one dead rather than living.'"² Bettuccio surrendered his life to Christ and never looked back.

Sometimes the people were so overwhelmed by the reality of their sins that Savonarola had to wait for their weeping to subside before he could continue. At least 10 times the monk, while transcribing his sermons, was so overcome by God's power and presence that he could not continue transcription because of his weeping.

Jacob Burckhardt, the Renaissance historian, notes:

"The instrument by which Savonarola transformed and ruled the city of Florence was his eloquence. Of this, the meager reports that are left to us, taken down on the spot, give us

evidently a very imperfect notion. It was not that he possessed any striking outward advantages, for voice, accent, and rhetorical skill constituted precisely his weakest side. . . . The eloquence of Savonarola was that of a commanding personality. . . . He held his own eloquence to be the result of Divine illumination."³

God transformed Florence through the monk's preaching. This skeptical, licentious, proud city became believing, repentant, and humble. They fed the poor, attended church enthusiastically, purged the government of corruption,

and sang hymns in the streets. It is one of the remarkable occurrences of church history. Through Savonarola, God proved that the Renaissance and its ideals were impotent before the Holy Spirit's power.

HIS PERSECUTION

While he was in his teens, God showed the friar that he would die a violent death in Christ's service. Alexander VI was pope. Typical of the Borgia family, he had numerous mistresses and illegitimate children. He was opulent, sensual, and greedy. He did not represent Christ.

As Savonarola's moral and spiritual influence grew—not only in Florence, but also throughout Italy and Europe—a confrontation with the Borgia corruption became inevitable. Savonarola publicly challenged Alexander to repent of his immorality. He even called him "the representative of Satan, rather than Christ."

The little friar had gone too far. Alexander leveraged the immense power of the papacy, put the courageous monk through a mock trial, tortured him for 30 days, and hung him before a huge throng in the

main square of Florence. Savonarola suffered all this with great courage and dignity. The religious establishment had successfully extinguished a burning and shining light in the heart of both Florence and Italy.

HIS IMPORTANCE

Why is Savonarola important? First, he was a forerunner of the Reformation. This expression usually brings to mind men like Wycliffe (1330–84) and Hus (1373–1415). But, like John the Baptist, Savonarola came in "the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17*). His ministry

God demonstrated the immensity of His power through Savonarola.

called Europe to repentance in preparation for the coming Reformation.

Second, what transpired in Florence was one of the first revivals in modern history. For 10 years the Holy Spirit deeply moved and transformed this corrupt, sensual city. It was one of the first recorded spiritual awakenings after the Book of Acts, and it portended many similar moves of God to follow in the post-Reformation world.

Third, God demonstrated the immensity of His power through Savonarola. Florence was the center and capital of European moral corruption. Despite this, at the height of the little friar's ministry, one observer described the change in the city: "No blasphemies were heard in the smithies, the bakeries, and the warehouses. Sometimes the market place spontaneously turned into an open-air religious songfest. . . . The priests were kept so busy . . . that Savonarola . . . asked the faithful for a two weeks suspension from all these duties . . . [because] the monks were physically exhausted."⁴

When you feel tempted by hopelessness, remember that no city or nation can resist the power of the Holy Spirit. Wait on God in repentance and faith.

Our situation is never hopeless. We serve a big, omnipotent God. What He did in 15th-century Florence, He can do in New York or Los Angeles.

Savonarola was a jar of clay indwelt by the treasure of God's power. He modeled both the weakness and fear and the demonstration of the Spirit's power so prominent in Paul's ministry (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

Fourth, to the chagrin of many art historians, his preaching deeply influenced men like Michelangelo and Botticelli. Michelangelo is reputed to have painted the scenes of judgment in the Sistine Chapel from his memory of the monk's sermons. Botticelli was so deeply transformed that he quit painting for several years. When he resumed, his paintings had a spiritual caste previously lacking. "An important effect on the young artist's (Michelangelo's) mind must have been exerted by Savonarola, whose preaching influenced Botticelli so deeply. In his old age Michelangelo still read the

works of the martyred preacher and still recalled the sound of his voice."⁵ Even Savonarola's enemies reluctantly confess his influence.

Last, when God wants to change a city or nation, he raises up a leader, not a program, organization, or committee. This has always been His method. That is why Jesus exhorted us: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37,38). Let us pray with diligence and, like Isaiah, wait on God:

"Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled

before you" (Isaiah 64:1-3).

Find a good book on Savonarola. There are many in print. You won't be disappointed. I recommend *A Crown of Fire* by Pierre Van Paassen. History is His story! **e**

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**Scripture passages, unless noted, are from the New International Version.*

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3. Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, (New York: Modern Library, 2002).
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A N E W W E B S I T E

"The Women in Ministry Web page is a focal point for encouragement for women who are following their divine call to ministry."
—Peggy Musgrove

"It's a site by women in ministry, for women in ministry. Log on. Be inspired. Be connected. Be informed. Be equipped! This site's for you."
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- News of upcoming conferences and seminars

www.womeninministry.ag.org

Looking Through the Stained Glass Window

Think about what it might be like to be a visitor in your service. Is it an orderly, purposeful experience with a balance of observation and participation for newcomers?

B Y J . D I A N E A W B R E Y

In our quest for a new church my family has encountered a variety of approaches, not only to nursery facilities (summer 2003 *Enrichment*), but also to the administration of the service and other aspects of the worship experience. If the search for a comfortable nursery experience made us feel like Goldilocks in the house of the Three Bears, then in the church services themselves we felt more like Alice adrift in Wonderland.

BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING

Let us follow Alice's advice and begin at the beginning. In most churches, as you walk into the sanctuary you are given some kind of printed matter. The size and prosperity of the church often determine the nature of this material. After encountering a wide variety of bulletins, visitor packets, and other handouts, I have some suggestions about effectiveness.

Writing text for the bulletin may be the only activity in which a church leader would do well to follow the example of a journalist. Reporting 101 requires writers to answer six essential questions: who, what, where, when, how, and why? So should Sunday bulletins.

Nothing brings a group together more quickly than an exchange of names. Even if no one knows my name, I feel more a part of things if I know the names of the major players in a service. One bulletin we collected lists the names of participants (pastor, Scripture reader, music leader, ushers, etc.) on the back of the bulletin. Another mentions the special music, speaker, and other participants specific to that service and the evening service in narrative form.

Others use an order-of-service approach and place the names with the appropriate activities. Whatever the style, the important thing is to draw newcomers into the experience by answering the question "who?"

Answers to the other questions should also be available. What can we expect from this service—singing, offering, Scripture reading, sermon, special music? Some practices that regular attenders take for granted, such as one church's habit of placing offerings in a box by the sanctuary door, may not be obvious to newcomers. How do these elements relate to each other? Why are we doing it this way? Where and when should already be answered by our starting on time where we are. But time and place questions also apply to other church activities and could be listed in the bulletin.

Bulletins, however, are not the only opener to a visitor's experience in a service. We found a stunning variety of styles for opening a service, some effective, some disconcerting. One church begins with announcements to keep from interrupting the flow of worship. Another church puts announcements at the end of the service, just before dismissal, under the heading "community time." This time of sharing gives visitors a quick glimpse into the inner workings of that body.

LOST IN WONDERLAND

Whether we admit it or not, Americans like to know who's in charge. The current trend for pastors to sit in the congregation until sermon time often leaves visitors wondering if the church has any leadership at all. Even if a

church is small and the worship team is led from the body rather than by a staff person, the leader of opening worship should introduce herself, open in prayer, or make some kind of introductory remark. It just makes sense in terms of focusing the audience on the business at hand.

All the members of the congregation, visitors and regulars alike, have come from a variety of places both physically and spiritually. An opening comment, Scripture, prayer, or other kind of call to worship can serve as a focusing element to bring people together into a cohesive corporate experience. Teachers don't expect final papers to be written without drafts, coaches don't expect players to practice or play without warm-up, and worship leaders can't expect worshippers to worship without preparation.

In *Blended Worship*, Robert E. Webber suggests that regardless of its liturgical, traditional, or praise and worship style, every effective worship service incorporates four acts of worship: 1) entering into God's presence, 2) hearing God speak, 3) responding with thanksgiving, and 4) dismissing to love and serve the Lord. If a church thoughtfully and prayerfully incorporates these elements into the service in recognizable and meaningful ways, no visitor will get lost in the wonderland maze of detached, multidirectional praise singing or unidentified speakers we have encountered in our travels.

One disturbing trend occurs when a service appears to begin in *medias res* or "in the middle of things." This style is great for epic sagas, but not so effective for worship services. For example, in

one district council—notably different from a Sunday morning service, but still reflective of the tendency in some churches—musicians wandered up on the platform and began what sounded to me like tuning up. Audience members were milling around, finding their seats, greeting one another, and generally ignoring the platform.

Suddenly an unidentified woman who was not a member of district leadership popped up on the platform, grabbed a microphone, and began insisting that we raise our hands in instantaneous, boisterous praise. It was like asking a Greyhound bus to go from zero to 60 in 3 seconds flat.

Since that experience, I have visited local churches with a similar tendency to appear to begin in the middle of things. Once I arrived 20 minutes late to a service and ran into the pastor and other churchgoers in the lobby. I was unable to tell if the service had begun. A few people on the platform were singing while congregants continued to gather. And the leader was still wandering the halls.

As Alice would say, “Curioser and curioser.”

One church must have read Webber’s book because each element of the service was clearly marked in the bulletin as headings for the order of service in words that were meaningful to that congregation. If a body prefers a more casual approach to the order of service, it would still behoove the leadership of each service to have some idea in mind of the elements that will make up the worship experience and their proportions.

LOOKING FOR THE WAY OUT

Now that we have begun at the beginning, as Alice says, let’s go on until we come to the end, and then stop.

I’m not really talking here about dismissals. They’re rarely hard to miss in any kind of service. What I’m talking about are exit strategies for visitors. Few experiences are more deflating to someone looking for a church home

than to visit the service and have no one notice. Some churches take care of this by recognizing visitors during announcements or the offering, asking them to fill out a form and drop it in the offering. This practice is better than nothing.

One large church I visited went much further. After every Sunday morning service, visitors were invited to a reception room, easy to find from the foyer, where they were offered punch and cookies. Here visitors could visit with the pastor, his wife, and other members of the church leadership team. Hosts and hostesses were designated to keep conversations going around the room, depending on the number of visitors and how long the pastoral staff might be delayed.

A smaller church we visited announced in the bulletin and from the pulpit that refreshments were served after service for the whole church body in the foyer. This approach does much for building relationships within the body. However, it would have been more effective for visitors if the congregation had designated certain greeters to scope out the crowd for newcomers or assigned visitors

a place to stand and be identified.

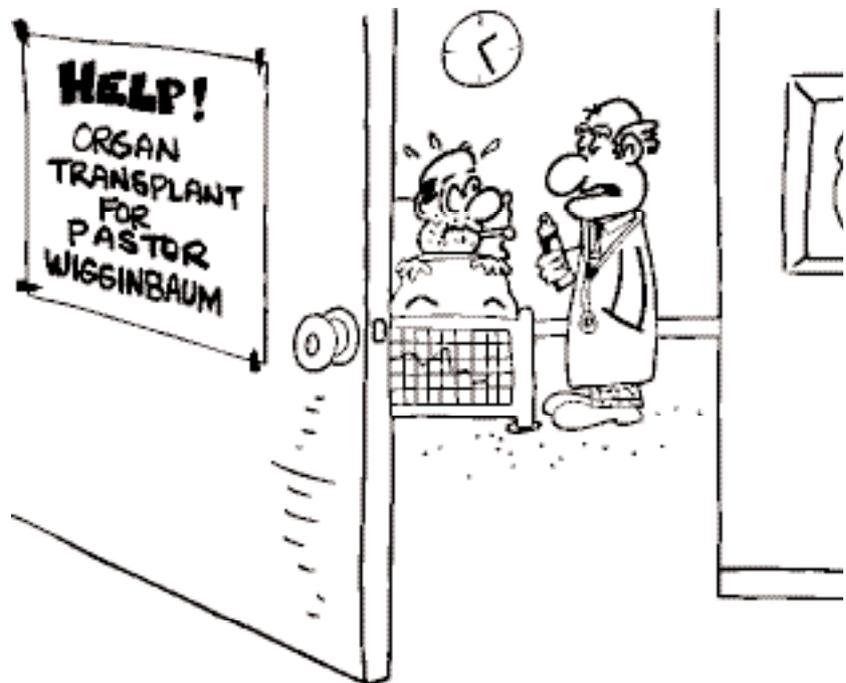
Another tactic used by one church was to collect names during the announcements and offering and then send a church member by the house later that day with bread or treats and a quick personal note from the pastor thanking us for attending. The delivery person didn’t stay long but was friendly and encouraging about our visit that morning.

I’m sure church growth materials abound with strategies for contacting visitors, many of which may be far more effective than what I have suggested here. My intention is to encourage you to think about what it might be like to be a visitor in your services. Is it an orderly, purposeful experience with a balance of observation and participation for newcomers? Or is it for them, as it sometimes felt to us, more like falling down a rabbit hole into a land peopled with interesting, colorful, but sometimes confusing characters?

With that, I’ve come to the end and will stop—for now. **e**

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“Bad news, Pastor. The only donation we’ve gotten so far is a Wurlitzer from the orchestra.”

Who Is in the Basket?

The similarity between the great apostle's experience and what can transpire in our current students' lives must be noted.

B Y R O B E R T H . S P E N C E

As another academic year begins for Assemblies of God colleges and universities, there is predictable enthusiasm on all of our campuses. With hundreds of new students joining thousands of returning students, there is a sense of anticipation at each of our institutions for what God is going to accomplish in the lives of students during the coming months.

Strategically located in various geographical areas of our nation, our 19 endorsed schools have welcomed students who sense the Holy Spirit's direction for their lives and who desire the academic and spiritual help that can best be provided by Spirit-filled professors. With each year of ministry, these Assemblies of God colleges are gaining in academic strength and curricular offerings.

The focus of Christian higher education for the Assemblies of God is students. They have come to our campuses from all kinds of backgrounds, from all types of churches with a common desire—to be better prepared for what God is directing them to do with their lives. The potential represented in these students is beyond our ability to adequately access or predict. There is a scriptural parallel that can be drawn between these new unknowns and one of the most effective leaders the Church has ever had.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The explosive growth of the church described in the Book of Acts was possible because of the power of the Holy Spirit and His anointing on men and women. The disciples who had walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry—

especially Peter and John—were most prominent in the days immediately following the Day of Pentecost.

Fierce opposition developed to the proclamation that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah. Persecution in Jerusalem resulted in believers fleeing to other cities and even to other provinces. In effect, the attack against the Early Church resulted in more rapid growth as those “who belonged to the Way” (Acts 9:2*) went everywhere preaching the good news that Jesus is God's all-sufficient sacrifice for sin and that He had been raised from the dead.

Spirit quickened Saul's extensive knowledge of the Scriptures. The truth was revealed to him; he began to see and understand what had previously been hidden from him. His enemies became his friends. Fellowship with the disciples became a source of strength.

The scriptural account of what transpired in Damascus is a commentary on the power of the Holy Spirit in the life yielded to the Lord. “At once [Saul] began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, ‘Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem

With each year of ministry, these Assemblies of God colleges are gaining in academic strength and curricular offerings.

In Acts, Luke details the efforts to destroy the infant church, focusing on Saul of Tarsus, known to us as Paul. Notorious in his diligence to stamp out this threat to his personal beliefs, Saul sought authority from religious leaders to go beyond Jerusalem and persecute any who believed in Jesus.

In a display of sovereign grace and power, God revealed himself to Saul as he traveled to Damascus intending to continue his destructive mission. Saul's conversion stands as a reminder after almost 2,000 years that God delights in saving people who are considered unreachable and unsavable.

As Saul was led blindly into the city of Damascus, the Lord was preparing a special person, Ananias, who could minister effectively to him. The Holy

among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests? Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 9:20–22).

Saul (Paul) became so convincing in affirming his newfound faith in Jesus and in proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah that the enemies of the Church plotted his assassination. Saul learned of this conspiracy and avoided leaving the city by way of the main gates. The Bible describes a rather unusual departure: “But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall” (Acts 9:25).

THE MINISTRY OF OTHERS

The similarity between the great apostle's

experience and what will be transpiring in our current students' lives can be noted.

In the first place, this brief glimpse at a critical moment in the apostle's life indicates that he needed the help of others. He could not do what needed to be done alone. In a similar fashion, the faculty and the staff at every one of our institutions of higher learning depend on the help of others. The most gifted professor and the most dynamic classroom leader require the support of coworkers.

Another significant point in this brief story is the fact the dedicated people who helped Saul escape Damascus are not identified; there is no recognition even in retrospect by letting us know their names. Those who serve so faithfully in Assemblies of God higher education seldom receive the recognition they deserve. The students in whom they invest their lives often move onto places of prominence and influence. Rarely are these eminently qualified faculty recognized for the vital part they have had in the shaping of a life.

We are told that it was night when Saul's new friends assisted in his safe escape. While others were home and perhaps asleep, these vigilant and courageous believers were willing to sacrifice for someone else.

A UNITED EFFORT

All of us have seen occasions where a significant group would become involved in an effort if they were assured all would do their fair share. Those who helped Saul that night were willing to do something even though others in the Christian community were not at risk, going without rest, or expending their physical resources.

We do not know how high the wall was or if there was great risk in Saul injuring himself if he fell, but obviously a basket was used to assure his safe arrival outside the city. In the darkness they may not have been able to tell how much rope would be needed. Perhaps they could not even see the ground.

The similarity in the ministry of

Christian higher education is that dedicated workers offer their gifts to the Lord and to the church often without being able to foresee the end result. In obedience to the Scriptures, these gifted teachers provide an opportunity for "precept upon precept; line upon line; . . . here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10, KJV) to help in maturing a child of God. They cannot always foresee where the teaching of a particular moment will offer the desired result. Much as farmers plant seed in one season, knowing that the harvest will be reaped in a totally different season and will take on a different form, they continue to labor faithfully.

UNKNOWN POTENTIAL

Perhaps one of the most significant applications of this Scripture is the fact these brave people, under the cover of darkness, lowered their new brother in the Lord to the ground outside the city to save his life, but they did not really know who was in their basket. To be sure, they had heard a great deal about Saul of Tarsus and for the recent past had been watching him as he shared his testimony of the encounter he had with Jesus, but they could not foresee what

he would eventually become.

When the Lord spoke to Ananias, giving him direction to go to the home of Judas on Straight Street and minister to Saul, He included the statement: "This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel" (Acts 9:15). While Ananias had this assurance from the Lord that Saul would have a vital ministry, the people who helped him escape Damascus did not know to what extent God was going to use him—shaping the Church and providing a wealth of Scripture.

In the same way, this fall our faculty stands before students. They teach, lead, and seek to inspire without really knowing who is in the class. Only God knows the future of the shy young lady or the timid young man who is sitting in one of our classrooms preparing for the future. Only God knows who is in the basket. **e**

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**Scripture passages, unless noted, are from the New International Version.*



"Fred, I don't really think today's sermon at church was specifically about you."

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S E R M O N S E E D S



ASPECTS OF REVIVAL: LESSONS FROM JEHOSSHAPHAT

2 Chronicles 17:1–13

INTRODUCTION:

Many believers today, and countless others before us, have cried out to God for revival. What more can we do? Where are we missing it? Let's look at what King Jehoshaphat of Judah did to bring about revival when he came to the throne.

MESSAGE:

1. Resolution (2 Chronicles 17:1–8).

- a. Prepared: "strengthened himself against Israel. And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah" (verses 1,2).
- b. Practiced: "he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim . . . and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel" (verses 3,4).
- c. Prayed: "but sought to the Lord God of his father" (verse 4).
- d. Pulled down: "he took away the high places and groves out of Judah" (verse 6).
- e. Proclaimed: "Also in the third year of

his reign he sent to his princes . . . to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levites . . . [and] priests. And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people" (verses 7–9).

2. Results (2 Chronicles 17:3–15).

- a. Paralysis: "And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah" (verse 10).
- b. Presence: "And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat" (verse 3).
- c. Promotion: "Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand" (verse 5).
- d. Peace: "all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah . . . made no war against Jehoshaphat" (verse 10).
- e. Plenty: "All Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honor in abundance" (verse 5). "Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and

tribute silver; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats" (verse 11).

- f. Prosperity: "And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store. And he had much business in the cities of Judah" (verses 12,13).

CONCLUSION:

There is no shortcut to revival. If we are willing to pay the price of preparing our resources, practicing our faith, praying diligently, pulling down our idols, and proclaiming the uncompromised gospel, we will behold the paralysis of our enemies and the resultant effects of revival. The Lord will cause to come upon us promotion, peace, plenty, and prosperity, capped off with the awesome presence of an awesome God.

—Aldo J. Rivellino
Lakeland, Florida

JESUS HEALED ME AND YOU HELPED HIM

Acts 3:1–8

THEME:

The ministry of healing.

THESIS:

Jesus is the healer; we are His helpers.

INTRODUCTION:

A 3-year-old boy got a splinter in his finger. He was crying hard as his mom attempted to remove the splinter with a needle. The longer it took, the harder he cried. And the harder he cried, the harder it was for his mom to work on his finger. Hearing the crying, the dad went to the room, put the child on his lap, wrapped his arms around him, and held his finger while his mom quickly removed the wood sliver. Within a few minutes, the child jumped off his dad's lap and was happily playing. Later that day, he showed his dad his finger and with a warm, thankful smile, said, "My finger feels better, Dad. God healed my finger and you helped Him."

That is what this fascinating story from Acts 3 is about: Jesus is the healer and His disciples were His helpers. God uses His

children to help bring His healing to the hurting. Let's look at the process as the physician Luke tells this story.

MESSAGE:

1. Somebody carried the lame man (verse 2).

- a. Someone had carried him every day, perhaps for years. Though we don't know who this person was, we do know he was faithful. Consequently, this lame man was in a place where the Lord could heal him because someone had carried him.
- b. We can carry people to the Lord by:
 - (1) praying.
 - (2) giving a Bible or tract to someone.
 - (3) being kind.
 - (4) being consistently honest in our business dealings.

2. Peter challenged the lame man (verses 4,6).

- a. Peter challenged him to take his eyes off his problem, his lack of money, and get his eyes on the problem solver ("In the name of Jesus . . .").

- b. We need to challenge the hurting to take their eyes off their problem and see the Lord as their provider, to stop looking at their shortcomings and start seeing Christ's sufficiency.
- c. The task of the church is to release the life of God, to declare the power of God, and to make available to people, in the name of Jesus, the help that only He can give.

3. Jesus cured the lame man (verses 7,8,16).

- a. Peter helped him up; Jesus made him strong.
- b. This man was healed through faith in Jesus' name.

CONCLUSION:

God uses some to carry the hurting to a place of healing. God uses others to challenge the hurting to trust in Christ. God alone cures the hurting. It's just as the 3-year-old said, "Jesus healed me and you helped Him."

—John Palmer
Des Moines, Iowa

S E R M O N S E E D S

FAMILIES ARE . . . FOR LIVING, LEARNING, LOVING, LEAVING

Joshua 24:15

INTRODUCTION:

Many families today do not conform to the traditional image of husband, wife, and two kids living together happily ever after. Churches need to be concerned about families—traditional, single-parent, extended, mixed, or any other configuration. So, “What are families for?” becomes a legitimate concern.

MESSAGE:

1. Families are . . . for living

(Joshua 24:14,15).

- a. Families are God’s idea.
 - (1) From the beginning He provided for marriage and children.
 - (2) God understood our needs and put them there.
 - (3) God provided the pattern.
- b. Families in Israel were challenged to:
 - (1) fear the Lord.
 - (2) serve Him with all faithfulness.
 - (3) throw away false gods.
- c. Families provide a process for maturing.
 - (1) For fathers and mothers.
 - (2) For children.
 - (3) For stabilizing society.
- d. Families with Christ at the center are blessed.
 - (1) Enjoy your children while they are young.
 - (2) Give one another time.
 - (3) Live for the now, honor God, bless posterity.

2. Families are . . . for learning

(Proverbs 22:6).

- a. The Bible is the great textbook for

families’ living and learning.

- b. The Bible does not answer every question of modern families, but the principles for life and happiness are there.
 - c. The Bible provides examples for parents to learn to communicate, make decisions, resolve conflicts, and love one another.
 - d. The Bible recognizes socialization as a necessary process.
 - (1) To adjust or make fit for cooperative group living.
 - (2) The family is an ideal classroom.
 - e. The Bible is the handbook for children to grow in the right direction.
- #### 3. Families are . . . for loving (John 15:17).
- a. Loving is a characteristic of Christian living.
 - b. Love is a need of every family member.
 - (1) Parents need love.
 - (2) Children need love.
 - c. Love provides security and protection.
 - (1) Many evils threaten today’s families.
 - (2) Biblically based love meets needs.
 - d. Love modeled is the best education children get for family living.
- #### 4. Families are . . . for leaving (Matthew 19:5).
- a. God understood the need to:
 - (1) establish homes and families.
 - (2) develop independence in a new family.
 - b. Leaving home should be a natural process.
 - (1) In *Promises to Peter: Building a Bridge From Parent to Child*, Charlie Shedd reminds us that

one of the first jobs of a parent is to be able to say and mean: “Listen to me, children! Your first loyalty is not to me. You came by me, but you are not from me. . . . The secret is to discover who God wants you to be and be true to that. This moment I set you free to say, ‘Get off my back. I’ve got to be me!’ ”

- (2) No child should have too much freedom. Rules are needed for the growth and development of your child.
- c. Leaving includes when children marry. Parents should give advice only when asked. Let them leave mother’s apron strings and daddy’s authority.
- d. Part of the process is to prepare spiritually and emotionally for that final leaving the family.
 - (1) Death can best be seen as a part of the natural process of living.
 - (2) Discussing death from a Christian viewpoint is emotionally and spiritually a family opportunity.

CONCLUSION:

Some feel the family is near extinction as both secular and Christian families have problems. However, Christians have help. Jesus Christ is Lord of the family. The resources of the church should help us not just survive but to have a bit of heaven on the journey. God bless the family.

—J.D. Middlebrook
Bartlett, Tennessee

WEATHERING THE STORM

Acts 27, NIV

MESSAGE:

1. The voyage (verses 1–12).

- a. Commenced (verse 2). They put out to sea. Likewise, we all put out on the sea of life. The sea of life is ever changing—sometimes calm and sometimes rough. But we must sail on.
 - b. Completed (verse 44). They all escaped safely. The voyage on life’s sea has a start and a finish. Life’s voyage is not an end in itself; the goal is to reach the other side, eternity’s shore.
- #### 2. The vicissitude (verses 13–20).

- a. Ferocious storm (verses 13–15). The sea of life brings many storms, such as temptations and trials.
 - b. Fruitless struggle (verses 16–19). They were not sailing anymore; they were driven. Their efforts were futile.
 - c. Fearful sailors (verses 20,29). All hope was taken away. They dropped anchor and wished for daylight. We have an anchor that keeps the soul (Hebrews 6:19).
- #### 3. The vision (verses 23–25,31).
- a. Paul’s confession: “whose I am and whom I serve” (verse 23).

- b. Paul’s consolation: “keep up your courage” (verse 25).
 - c. Paul’s confidence: “have faith in God” (verse 25).
 - d. Paul’s commitment: “stay with the ship” (verse 31).
- #### 4. The victory (verses 43,44).
- a. All escaped safely (verse 44). The storm passed. Either the storm passes or we pass through it.
 - b. The safekeeping of all who follow Jesus (John 10:27,28).

—Nelson E. Brenner
Pocomoke City, Maryland



COMPETING INTERESTS

If timing is everything, many fund-raising projects will never meet expectations because churches often simultaneously sponsor several fund-raising projects. Here's how to ensure your projects do not compete against each other for members' financial gifts.

Set priorities. Where do you need money most? Emphasize that area while developing an annual budget. A well-developed budget helps detail projected income. Much of that income will likely come from tithes, as well as general and special offerings. Be realistic as you budget; economic conditions and other factors can decrease giving.

Get the big picture. How will you raise funds this year? Will you have several short-term projects or a long-term one that spans the entire year? Maximize member participation by avoiding program overlap. Calendar all corporate and/or departmental giving programs/activities for a clearer view of what's happening each year. Distribute copies of the calendar to all leaders.

Promote teamwork. Regardless how much money any individual department brings in, it is only a small piece of the corporate budget. Encourage chairpersons to work with—not compete against—each other.

Advertise. Internal and external promotion can spur giving, including nonmember contributions. Promote activities from the pulpit, on your church's bulletin board and Web site, and in bulletins, newsletters, or flyers. Where appropriate, consider advertising banquets, musicals, plays, or similar activities in the events or religion section of local newspapers. In many cases, there is no cost for advertising in those sections.

—Lisa A. Crayton, Oxon Hill, Maryland

UNIQUE FUND-RAISING CONCEPT

How could a modest congregation of 180 raise \$20,000 above their budget? That was the problem facing our church after we pledged to help missionaries in Central Asia build four churches at a cost of \$5,000 each.

With \$5,000 donated to start the project, each family or individual who wanted to participate was given \$100 to use as seed money. They were challenged to use the money over a 6-month period and return it with any profits.

Men, women, teens, and children worked to earn money or made and sold items. Through their work, they not only raised more than the needed funds but also reported gaining renewed faith and insight into the power of prayer.

The money was collected during a Harvest Sunday

celebration. Each person was given a wooden block to take home with a message encouraging prayer for the missionaries.

Not counting the initial \$5,000 which started the fund, over \$28,000 was raised. The church exceeded its financial goals and broke attendance records with over 200 people present.

—Mary Vogelsong, Fredericksburg, Virginia

EXTENDING OUR LOVE

Our biggest outreach of the year is our Christmas production. Since it takes an incredible amount of time, we involve the whole church.

Last year we had three performances at the performing arts center downtown. The attendance was overwhelming, and the reaction from the public was incredible.

We don't charge admission, but we take an offering and give the funds to a designated community project. At the end of the last performance, we present a check to a representative of our chosen project. This simple act ties a knot between the church and community and shows our community love for the Lord and for each other.

—Deanna Smith, Watsonville, California

Adapted from Network News. Used with permission.

MARKETPLACE MINISTRY

Reaching boomers and busters can be challenging. But many of them are white-collar computer operators who love to eat lunch at upscale restaurants. I selected two men from church who have a passion to reach their friends. Each month I meet with them for lunch at their favorite restaurant. I ask one of them to come with a topic and a short Scripture passage to match the topic we can discuss as we eat. I attend the lunches but my men lead it.

I have them invite their friends to eat with us. They tell their friends the topic and Scripture we will be discussing. We select topics such as being a great dad. Their unsaved friends became acquainted with some men in our church. This made inviting them to church easy.

These lunches, in a nonthreatening atmosphere, are effective for reaching both the boomer and buster generations.

—Brent T. Galbreath, Kearny, New Jersey

SEND US YOUR IDEAS

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THE THREE STOOGES

Many people are interested in antiques and other collectibles. Baseball cards, furniture, and plates can be worth a fortune. Of course, they are only worth what someone else is willing to pay.

In November 1993, a New York auction sold a photo of presidents Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, and Richard Nixon—signed by all three—for \$275. Another photo, this one of the Three Stooges and signed by Larry, Curly, and Moe, sold for \$1,870. Why? Who knows. This was the value people placed on them.

We decide what is truly valuable to us. If the kingdom of God and Christ's church are important to you, you will place a high value on them by giving quality support of time, talent, and tithe. The angel said in Luke 1:33, "And he [Christ] shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Be generous. The church of Jesus Christ is eternal.

—David G. Rose, Colleyville, Texas

BLAMING OTHERS

Samuel Hirsch presented McDonald's with a lawsuit. It seems Hirsch represents eight New York City children who claim Ronald McDonald, Grimace, and the Fry Guys are responsible for their health problems.

According to an *ABC News* report, 15-year-old Gregory Rhymes ate at McDonald's everyday—sometimes several times a day. Now he weighs 400 pounds and has diabetes.

Greg's mother says, "I had no idea he was destroying himself."

Really?

We love to mock ridiculous lawsuits, but we often reveal similar tactics. We may not blame a Big Mac for our life's decline, but perhaps we blame an irritating commute for the tone of our voice when we arrive home. Blame a hamburger. Blame slow-moving cars. It's really all the same. We want to avoid personal blame.

—Joel E. Labertew, Plainfield, Illinois.

Information from ABCNews.com

THE STRESS OF WIND

Do you remember the 2 years that scientists sequestered themselves in an artificial environment called Biosphere 2? Inside their self-sustaining community, the Biospherians created a number of minienvironments, including a desert, rain forest, and even an ocean. They were able to simulate nearly

every weather condition except one—wind. Over time, the effects of their windless environment became apparent. A number of acacia trees bent over and even snapped. Without the stress of wind to strengthen them, their trunks grew weak and could not bear their own weight. Is it possible that such is true of our lives? What would happen to us if we were sequestered from the winds of adversity? Would we be strong without the stresses of life? And since there is no such thing as a life free from the winds of adversity, shouldn't we embrace such challenges? The struggles that we face are necessary for our well-being and health.

—Harry Staiti, Ware, Massachusetts

A PRAYER OF JOHN WESLEY

John Wesley dedicated himself to spreading the gospel among the unchurched. Traveling an average of 8,000 miles a year on horseback, he preached to enormous crowds gathered in fields. Perhaps some of Wesley's drive came from this prayer in which he asked God for a "lively, zealous, active, and cheerful spirit."

Deliver me, O God, from a slothful mind,
from all lukewarmness, and all dejection of spirit.
I know these cannot but deaden my love to Thee;
mercifully free my heart from them, and give me a lively,
zealous, active, and cheerful spirit; that I may vigorously
perform whatever Thou commandest, thankfully suffer
whatever Thou chooseth for me, and be ever ardent to
obey in all things Thy holy love.

—Victor Parachin, Tulsa, Oklahoma

TO QUOTE

God is more concerned about our character than our comfort. His goal is not to pamper us physically but to perfect us spiritually.

—Paul W. Powell

Teaching a Christian how he ought to live does not call so much for words as for daily example.

—St. Basil the Great

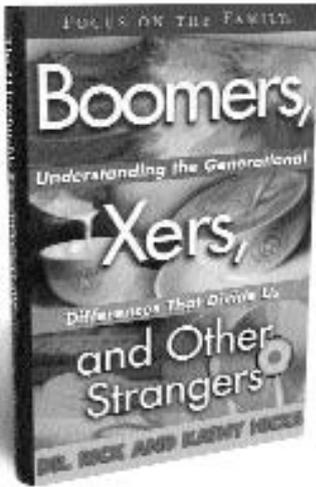
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book reviews



BOOMERS, XERS, AND OTHER STRANGERS: UNDERSTANDING THE GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES THAT DIVIDE US

Rick and Kathy Hicks (Focus on the Family Publishers, 384 pp., paperback)

For those perplexed by the differences in how generations think, react, or clarify values, this book is for them. The authors describe generational distinctives that we encounter as we divide people into demographic age groups. Each age group is exemplified by constituted values, preferences, and visible lifestyles.

The authors have a threefold purpose. First, they seek to tell each generation's story and the unique milieu of that group's upbringing: their hopes, aspirations, fears, and triumphs. Second, they show the reader why generational values often conflict. Finally, these authors show how each of the generations can be brought together to appreciate the unique perspectives and diversity that each offers.

The book condenses a great deal of complex sociological information into easily digested portions. Although written from a Christian perspective, it is not preachy but thoughtful in its application of biblical love and acceptance for those

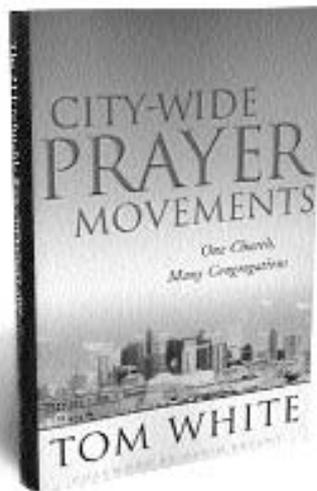
older or younger than we are. The charts and pictures pack information into an easy-to-understand grid. My only concern is that this book is written from a white, middle-class vantage point and doesn't adequately capture the ethnic diversity of our culture. Nonetheless, I recommend it for those who wish to gain a better understanding of both the similarities and differences between the generations.

—Reviewed by Joseph J. Saggio, Ed.D.,
academic dean, American Indian College,
Phoenix, Arizona.

CITY-WIDE PRAYER MOVEMENTS: ONE CHURCH, MANY CONGREGATIONS

Tom White (Vine Books, 190 pp., paperback)

This book is an asset to an ongoing prayer ministry and has a number of strengths. The author's easy-to-understand style captures the reader's attention. Particularly fascinating is the concept of a city able to have one church and yet many congregations.



The author gives practical suggestions that help the teaching principles in the book make more sense. For example, White talks about the importance of a city-church having mission, vision, and value statements from the start.

Then, in Appendix 8, he gives an example of that very thing in an already existing city-church in Corvallis, California.

The author does an excellent job communicating that when forming city leadership teams, the main purpose is "uniting in prayer, worship, mercy and evangelism."

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and I plan to implement some of the biblically based principles. People with a passion to impact their community through prayer will be challenged by this book.

—Reviewed by Abel Perez, pastor, First Assembly of God, Gallatin, Missouri.

THE MEASURE OF A CHURCH

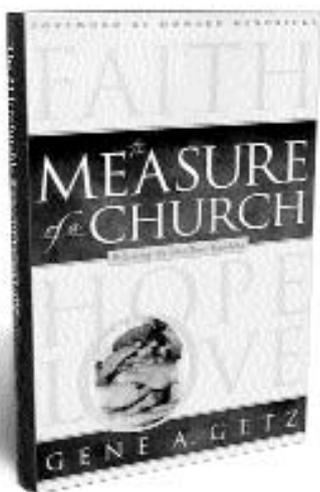
Gene A. Getz (Gospel Light, 264 pp., paperback)

What is the criterion by which the church is to be measured? Attendance? Finance? Programs? Evangelism?

The *Measure of a Church* by Gene Getz searches through the New Testament to discover the biblical standard by which the church is to be measured. It is a refreshing break from the countless nonbiblical devices commonly used in our day. The format is fascinating and effective. Biblical data is assembled, interpreted, and then used to create a measuring device by which a church might be evaluated.

For example, "When measuring a church, we must evaluate the degree to which the true disciples in that church are functioning as a family." Thirty-six such measuring instruments emerge. The reader has the keen sense that finally the church is being viewed against a standard designed by God. That is at once informative and convicting.

It is also reassuring that Getz has field-tested his work. A dynamic



church was birthed as he employed these measuring instruments to his own ministry. The great success of this church lends credibility to his conclusions. What is done in accordance with God's plan is assuredly positioned to receive God's blessing.

Admittedly, Getz's work is reflective of Reform theology, yet his work is valuable for the Church at large. His principles of measurement, drawn from Scripture, will help shape the modern Church in positive ways.

—Reviewed by Richard L. Dresselhaus,
D.Min., senior pastor, First Assembly of
God, San Diego, California.

BROTHERS, WE ARE NOT PROFESSIONALS: A PLEA TO PASTORS FOR RADICAL MINISTRY

John Piper (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 304 pp., paperback)

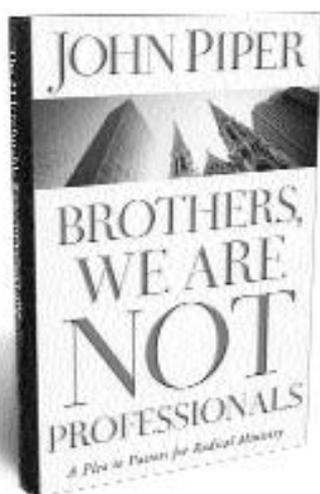
John Piper has written another powerful book. In this recent work, he pleads with fellow pastors to abandon the stereotype of the pastor mold and pursue the prophetic call of the Bible for radical ministry.

How does Piper define a professional minister and distinguish that from the mode of a radically biblical minister? He states, "The world sets the agenda of the professional man; God sets the agenda of the spiritual man. The strong wine of Jesus Christ in ministry will explode the wineskin of professionalism."

The book is comprised of 30 brief chapters that explore various issues pastors today must face. The topics include what to preach, a pastor's prayer life, a call to study hard, what makes for essential reading, and the plea for pastors to feel the terribleness of hell.

Few will agree with all Piper has to say. His personal style (and opinions) as a pastor who has gathered a large congregation in a strong church stand out clearly. Not all he asserts will be adaptable to every situation and to every pastor, but many of his key principles are worthwhile.

This book is well-written and worth reading. Chapter 30 on how to pray for our schools that train future ministers



is especially valuable. Any preacher with a hungry heart who is weary of the status quo will find this book a welcome challenge.

—Reviewed by Thomas Lindberg,
D.Min., senior pastor, First Assembly of
God, Memphis, Tennessee.

ONE CHURCH, FOUR GENERATIONS: UNDERSTANDING AND REACHING ALL AGES IN YOUR CHURCH

Gary L. McIntosh (Baker Book House, 248 pp., paperback)

Have you had conversations in your congregation about how each generation

perceives things differently? Like music, for instance?

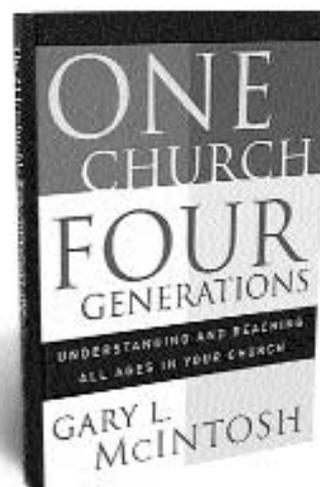
In *One Church, Four Generations*, McIntosh believes it is the ideal that congregations be multigenerational, not totally homogenous/generational-specific. But this requires understanding the makeup and needs of each particular generation.

McIntosh uses the widely accepted generational labels of builders (born prior to 1946), boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), busters (born between 1965 and 1983), and bridgers (born in 1984 and later).

He discusses not only their societal characteristics, but also how each generation relates to church. For example, it will be no surprise to any pastor that for builders, corporate worship "is a time of quietness and contemplation of God. A worship service requires minimal audience participation and that includes hymns, expository or content-oriented sermons, a pastoral prayer, recognizing guests, and organ/piano music is preferred."

I recommend *One Church, Four Generations* as a helpful resource. Though the book is not an in-depth sociological analysis, it sufficiently provides the understanding most pastors need.

In our own congregation (since we have a multigenerational pastoral staff), I had different pastors take a chapter from the book and represent their own





book reviews

generation to the other pastors to help us better understand each other.

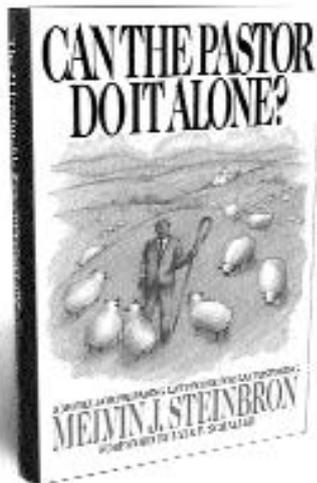
—Reviewed by Paul E. Grabill, senior pastor, State College Assembly of God, State College, Pennsylvania.

CAN THE PASTOR DO IT ALONE? A MODEL FOR PREPARING LAYPEOPLE FOR LAY PASTORING

Melvin J. Steinbron (Regal Books, 258 pp., paperback)

Melvin Steinbron's desire to equip called lay pastors resulted from his personal frustration to adequately meet his congregation's needs and the scriptural directive to effectively equip church members for works of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-13). He discovered that God-called and properly equipped laypeople are able to extend the vocational pastor's ministry through quality pastoral care.

Members who sense a lay pastor's calling are identified and interviewed by pastoral staff. Those with the gift of pastoring attend 12 equipping sessions.



Following training they are assigned 5 to 10 families to whom they provide pastoral care. Each lay pastor is accountable to a trained lay shepherd and church

pastor. Lay pastors complete reports for all ministry provided to their flock. Sessions are conducted for encouragement, reports, assessment, and further equipping.

Can the Pastor Do It Alone? is utilized as the lay-pastor training manual and addresses three phases of lay-pastor equipping ministry: 1) Development—putting the program together; 2) Implementation—getting it off the ground; and 3) Maintenance—keeping it going. Many churches have successfully adopted or adapted this program. The book includes a leader's guide, and the appendix contains forms used for this ministry. Pastors will benefit from this material as they equip laypeople for works of ministry.

—Reviewed by Jerry Newswander, pastor, Christ Chapel of the Assemblies of God, Platte City, Missouri.

THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN LIFE: WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?

Rick Warren (Zondervan, 336 pp., hardcover)

This is a great book by a skillful teacher. Profound truths are delivered with clarity in a systematic 40-day format. The promise—personal transformation. These five truths focus the process:

- You were planned for God's pleasure.
- You were formed for God's family.
- You were created to become like Christ.
- You were shaped for serving God.
- You were made for a mission.

The book is a treasure of foundational insight and practical ideas for living. But the book quietly poses a challenge. Will the people of the Spirit adopt this book without addition and clarification?

I was struck by the minimal attention given to the working of the Holy Spirit.

The implication is that at salvation you are already filled and gifted for ministry. Add truth and focused energy, and you are ready to live the purpose-driven life.

Consider, for instance, Warren's summation of Jesus' preparation of His disciples for purpose-driven living: "He helped them to know and love God, taught them to love each other, gave them the Word so they could grow to maturity, showed them how to serve, and sent them out to tell others." This is missing Jesus' model of how to minister in the Spirit's power.



The wise pastor then, if utilizing the great strengths of this book, will also add to it a focus on the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. With this in operation, people who are purpose-driven can be Spirit-driven as well.

—Reviewed by David Argue, senior pastor, Christ's Place Church, Lincoln, Nebraska.

A SERVICE

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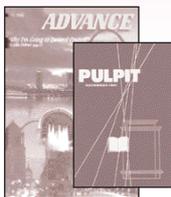
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ARE YOU OVERLOOKING THE BENEFITS OF FLEXIBLE SAVINGS ACCOUNTS WITH HIGHER YIELDS?

Credentialed ministers of the Assemblies of God are eligible to open two personal savings accounts with Ministers Benefit Association: a Demand account and a Term savings account. These accounts operate similar to passbook savings accounts with a commercial bank, yet they pay a superior rate of return. The primary investment is in quality first mortgages with Assemblies of God churches.

You can access your Demand account funds at any time. Term accounts allow up to one withdrawal each calendar year with no penalty. Unlike certificates of deposit, there are no other contractual time commitments. Ministers age 65 and over, disabled, or widows of ministers are eligible for preferential rates.

These savings accounts are also an excellent source for short-term borrowing. The rate of interest you pay when borrowing against your account is one percent over the Term savings rate. There is no loan committee or reporting to credit bureaus, and you can borrow up to 75 percent of your account balance. For more information, call MBA at 1-800-MBA-PLAN.

HOME MISSIONS CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Assemblies of God home missionaries have done more than choose a career. They have chosen a way of life—a life of sacrifice. That is why a monetary gift for Christmas is a wonderful financial blessing. Yet, it means much more.

Many are living in the inner city reaching the fatherless, the abandoned, and the poor. Others are living in recreational vehicles as they travel the country building and renovating churches. Some are living in

rehabilitation centers helping people with life-controlling problems get their lives back. Still, others are ready to lay down their lives as they protect our freedom.

October 26 has been chosen for the Home Missions Christmas Offering. Your monetary gift is more than just saying thank you to our missionaries; it provides an opportunity for you to offer a sacrificial gift of your own.

HOME MISSIONS CANDIDATE ORIENTATION

Have you ever said or had someone in your congregation say, “I think the Lord is calling me to be a missionary”? If so, A/G Home Missions may be the answer.

Skilled laborers who are committed to the cause of Christ are needed to reach America. A/G Home Missions is on the forefront of finding dedicated men and women who are willing to do whatever it takes to reach the lost. We have the tools to assist you or members of your congregation to become nationally appointed home missionaries.

Home Missions Candidate Orientation will be held Sept. 14–17 in Springfield, Mo. Orientation sessions consist of interviews, training, and evaluating future home missionaries. This time of preparation will ensure that candidates are emotionally and spiritually ready for the rigors of missions work.

Anyone interested in learning more about becoming a nationally appointed home missionary can contact Home Missions at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 3252, or visit www.HomeMissions.ag.org.

CHURCH PLANTING BOOTCAMPS

The A/G Home Missions Church Planting Department has several Church Planting/Church Revitalization Boot-Camps scheduled for fall 2003.

The Rocky Mountain District will hold a BootCamp Sept. 15–18; the Southern and Northern New England District, Sept. 29–Oct. 2; the Spanish Language BootCamp (Texas), Oct. 13–16; the Minnesota District, Oct. 20–23; the Pennsylvania-Delaware District, Nov. 3–6; and the Alabama District, Nov. 17–20. If you are interested in attending a BootCamp or receiving more information, call the appropriate district office or the national Church Planting Department at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 3255.

NATIONAL RV CONVENTIONS

The 17th National RV Convention will be held in Carlinville, Ill., Oct. 5–9, 2003. The 4th Western National RV Convention will be in Palm Desert, Calif., Oct. 26–29, 2003.

PENTECOSTAL PREACHING

There is a disturbing void in the American pulpit—a disconnection from anointed power that undermines spiritual strength and potential.

Poignant, candid, and respected author and preacher Charles Crabtree describes the immeasurable blessings from preaching with Pentecostal anointing. He also lays out the framework for becoming a vessel of God.

Crabtree traces the steps of Pentecostal preaching through the New Testament, shows how pastors can preach the spiritual gifts and the baptism in the Holy Spirit, how they can find the mind of Christ through every step of sermon preparation, and how they can fulfill their role as an ideal Pentecostal preacher as exemplified by Paul.

Through reading *Pentecostal Preaching*, pastors can discover how Pentecostal preaching is divinely positioned to make a difference in their pulpit, church, and world.

To order a copy, call 1-800-641-4310 and ask for item number 02-0850. The price is \$12.99.

CHI ALPHA

How can your church reach the post-modern world? By learning about the world's future leaders at Reach the U, an intensive training program for those interested in reaching their local college or university campus. This training will take place in June 2004. For more information, contact the national Chi Alpha office at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 1425, or visit www.reachtheu.com.

SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES REGIONAL CONFERENCES SLATED

Single Adult Ministries is sponsoring regional conferences designed to raise awareness of the need for young-adult and single-adult ministry on a local, regional, and national level. These conferences train volunteer and paid leaders, as well as help single and young adults grow spiritually and relationally. Locations and dates for these conferences are:

Lakeview Christian Center, Indianapolis, Ind., Oct. 2-4, 2003.

Sheffield Family Life Center, Kansas City, Mo., Nov. 7-9, 2003.

New Life Christian Fellowship, Jacksonville, Fla., Feb. 12-14, 2004.

For further information, contact the Single Adult Ministries Agency at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4125, or visit: www.singles.ag.org.

BENEVOLENCES CHILD CARE HARVEST FESTIVAL DATES

Hillcrest Children's Home will host its annual Harvest Festival, Oct. 3,4. Highlands Child Placement Services and Maternity Home has scheduled its Harvest Festival for Oct. 17.

Hillcrest takes in children from around the nation who are homeless or who cannot live in their homes for a variety of reasons. Highlands is the pro-life ministry of the Assemblies of God that provides free housing and care for young women facing an unexpected pregnancy. Both of these ministries

depend on the financial support of churches and individuals.

To find out more about these ministries, or to order Harvest Festival needs lists, visit: www.benevolences.ag.org; or call 1-417-862-2781, ext. 2182. To get travel directions to Hillcrest go to www.hillcrest.ag.org; to Highlands go to www.highlands.ag.org.

AGED MINISTERS ASSISTANCE DAY

"Do not cast me away when I am old" is the heartfelt cry of many of our retired ministers. Today, separated from ministry by age or infirmity, many retired ministers feel alone at the holiday season. Some are in desperate financial need. Nearly 500 retired and disabled pastors, evangelists, and missionaries depend on Aged Ministers Assistance to help them with their day-to-day living expenses and medical costs. They couldn't make it without AMA.

Sunday, Nov. 16, is AMA Day. An offering for our worthy pioneer preachers at this Thanksgiving season is a tangible way your congregation can express their gratitude. Send your offering to Aged Ministers Assistance, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802.

To participate in the Christmas Care-A-Van where you or your church can take or send a Christmas box to a specific retired minister on AMA, call 1-417-862-2781, ext. 2184. Browse our Web site at www.ama.ag.org.

EVANGEL STAFF PREPARES NINTH SUPER BOWL OUTREACH EDITION

For the ninth consecutive year, the *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* team will produce a Super Bowl outreach edition that challenges readers to evaluate their status in the game of life through testimonies from some of football's most dedicated believers.

Since its introduction in 1996, the Super Bowl outreach edition has become the most widely used evangelistic issue annually published by the *Evangel*. For the past three Super Bowls, churches ordered more than 100,000 additional copies of the outreach editions to distribute in their communities

and provide to guests attending special ministry functions.

The upcoming Super Bowl outreach edition will be published for Jan. 25, 2004, 1 week before the NFL title game on Feb. 1. The lead time between the issue's publication and the Super Bowl will give churches more opportunities for ministry tied into the championship contest.

Churches ordering at least 400 bulk copies by Wed., Dec. 31, 2003, will receive complimentary customized imprinting on the back cover of every issue. Orders for the January 25 Super Bowl outreach edition (item 69-7404) can be made by calling Gospel Publishing House Customer Service at 1-800-641-4310.

BIG CHANGES IN RADIANT LIFE CURRICULUM

In an effort to continually improve its curriculum, Radiant Life Resources has implemented major changes (*Toddler & Twos* through *Pathways*) beginning with the fall 2003 quarter. The changes are designed to help teachers become even more effective in teaching biblical truths and evaluating the students' retention and application of those truths.

Overall changes to the curriculum include an easy-to-use, four-step outline that makes it convenient for teachers to plan their classes. An at-a-glance checklist allows a teacher to make note of needed supplies. Bible-focused and character-based objectives provide measurable goals for each class period, and a suggested list of 100 top memory verses is included.

Other changes are taking place at specific age levels. *Toddler & Twos* is changing to a guided play format. In addition to its packaging (it will come in a box), *Beginning Explorers* will also include a student color book. *Pathways* will change its name to *Connections* and pursue an adult Bible fellowship format, incorporating facilitators and more small-group discussion.

Implementing the current scope and sequence, Radiant Life will spiral its scope and sequence through the entire



news & resources

curriculum cycle. Consequently, students who start with Radiant Life at a young age and continue with it should grasp the major biblical principles by adulthood. This will be measurable by a set of national guidelines established by a team of highly trained educators.

For more information on Radiant Life curriculum, visit: www.radiantlife.org. To order Radiant Life curriculum, call 1-800-641-4310, or order online at www.gospelpublishing.org.

NEW LOOK FOR BEGINNING EXPLORERS

Radiant Life's preschool children's church, *Beginning Explorers*, is undergoing a transformation beginning with the fall 2003 quarter. The most noticeable change will be in the appearance and packaging of the curriculum. Instead of a teacher's guide and resource packet, *BE* will be packaged in a complete children's church kit. This kit, an easy-to-carry box with a plastic handle, can also be used to store the curriculum once the quarter is finished. The kit will include the teacher's guide, CD, three unit posters, full-color flash cards, and an instruction sheet. New items for *BE* included in the kit are full-color stickers, an attendance/memory poster, and a book of reproducible pages.

While the format of the children's church service isn't changing, other changes will benefit the *BE* curriculum. A coloring book will be available for each quarter for student activities. The teacher's guide is expanding from 80 to 96 pages and will be more teacher-friendly by providing an easy-to-follow format and allowing more space for teacher's notes. More options for the lesson are provided. For example, the CD will include Sycamore Sam telling the Bible story, allowing teachers to

play the CD rather than read or tell the story themselves.

For more information on *Beginning Explorers*, visit: www.radiantlife.org. To order Radiant Life curriculum, call 1-800-641-4310, or order online at www.gospelpublishing.org.

RADIANT LIFE'S YOUNG ADULT CURRICULUM TAKES ON NEW PHILOSOPHY, FORMAT, AND NAME

Radiant Life's *Pathways* is taking on a new image beginning with the fall 2003 quarter. The young adult curriculum is moving from a teacher/student-based philosophy to a more interactive, discussion-based lesson philosophy. The new format allows for more group interaction and makes the curriculum useful for small-group settings and adult Bible fellowships.

Part of the new philosophy is a new name, *Connections*. The significance of the name is two-fold: (1) it reinforces the emphasis on relationships—connecting with God and with others, and (2) it focuses on connecting biblical principles to everyday life.

The lesson format itself has undergone a major transition. There is emphasis on intentional fellowship through interactive questions to get students talking with each other and discussing issues. The teacher's guide is given in outline form, making it easier for the teacher to follow at a quick glance. Additional background information and commentary are provided for more in-depth study. Optional group activities and class projects are included to encourage relational interaction beyond group discussion.

For more information on *Connections*, visit www.radiantlife.org. To order Radiant Life curriculum, call 800-641-4310, or order online at www.gospelpublishing.org.

RENEWING A VISION FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

Throughout 2003, the national Sunday School Department is launching a new vision—Sunday School: Learning To Live the LIFE.

LIFE is an acronym that defines the mission of Sunday School today.

L—learning together.

I—including all who come.

F—finding others who need to know.

E—emerging for ministry.

Learning together. The small-group strategy called Sunday School promotes an interactive setting where people of all ages learn the Bible at their own level of understanding.

Including all who come. In Sunday School, students of all ages meet others who share common interests, needs, and abilities. As they pray together, listen to one another's faith stories, and search the Bible for God's answers to their questions, they become a spiritual family for one another.

Finding others who need to know. Sunday School provides practice for telling others about Jesus. Students leave Sunday School ready to tell how knowing the Bible is changing their own lives.

Emerging for ministry. According to Ephesians 4, teachers help prepare God's people for works of service. In Sunday School students discover and develop their ministry gifts, and they minister to one another and to the community.

In 2003, this new Sunday School vision has been highlighted in several ways.

- A free vision video and booklet has been mailed to every Assemblies of God church. The 30-minute video includes both promotions and training segments. Use the video throughout the Sunday School year to highlight the benefits of attending Sunday School and to prepare teachers to use Sunday School for evangelism, discipleship,

assimilation, and ministry training.

- A free National Sunday School Day planner suggests ways to introduce the vision to the church at the beginning of the 2003 Sunday School year. The planner provides help to plan for Sept. 28, National Sunday School Day.

- The new Sunday School Web site—www.sundayschool.ag.org—provides ongoing resources for developing and using the vision.

Anyone who would like information about these resources may inquire through the national Sunday School Department at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4012, or sspromotions@ag.org.

2003 NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL DAY: LEARNING TO LIVE THE LIFE

National Sunday School Day provides a time for every church to thank faithful Sunday School teachers and to highlight the lifelong discipleship strategy of Sunday School. September 28 is National Sunday School Day. This year's theme, "Learning To Live the

LIFE," highlights a strategy to expand the ministry vision of Sunday School in every church. In the spring of 2003, every A/G church received a free vision video and booklet that introduced "Learning To Live the LIFE."

Suggestions for planning National Sunday School Day events were provided in a free planner enclosed with the summer 2003 ministers letter from the office of the general superintendent. Additional copies are available free from the national Sunday School office by calling 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4012, or by sending an e-mail request to sspromotions@ag.org. For more event ideas and information on National Sunday School Day, visit www.sundayschool.ag.org.

WWW.SUNDAYSCHOOL.AG.ORG

Help for your Sunday School is just a click away. The national Sunday School office has launched a new Web site with free resources for your Sunday School. Teachers, administrators, and pastors

will find a library of articles, recruiting tips, planning helps, training, promotions ideas, and more at the site. Site visitors will find what they need to recruit and train teachers, renew a vision for Sunday School, improve facilities, and make Sunday School a place where people not only want to be but also where they learn to live a life that pleases God.

Visit the site. Explore the resources. If you don't find what you need, let us know. We will be adding more help for Sunday School in the months ahead.

DISTRICT S.S. LEADERS CONFERENCES

District Christian education directors, in cooperation with the national Sunday School Department, are offering training for local church Sunday School leaders. For more information concerning the details of the following events, contact the district office, or e-mail: sstraining@ag.org.

September 12,13, 2003—Louisiana
September 19,20, 2003—N. Texas

Did you know that a pair of glasses can build a church?

"The HealthCare medical team, working in collaboration with the national church and missionaries, has done more to reach this city than I could have done in one whole term of missionary service."

Missionary—West Africa

When the volunteer medical evangelism teams compassionately bind a wound or fit a pair of eyeglasses, people open their hearts to ministry to their deeper need—that of knowing Jesus. As the local church follows up on those who accept Jesus in the HealthCare Ministries clinics, many become a part of the local church.

Pastor, your medical personnel can help build a church! For more information, contact:

HealthCare Ministries

A MINISTRY OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD WORLD MISSIONS • 521 West Lynn Street • Springfield, MO 65802
Telephone: (417) 866-6311 • Fax: (417) 866-4711 E-mail: fieldprojects@hcmdfm.org • Web site: www.healthcareministries.org





news & resources

September 26,27, 2003—Georgia
 October 2-4, 2003—Wisconsin/N. Michigan
 October 10,11, 2003—Southern Missouri
 October 24,25—South Texas
 November 14,15, 2003—Iowa
 November 21,22, 2003—Alaska
 March 12,13, 2004—Arizona

KIDSQUEST USA

KidsQuest USA is taking our nation by storm. “What a blessing KidsQuest USA has been to us. It has created a sense of family and teamwork . . . [and] numerous ministry opportunities” (Joy Hemler, children’s pastor, Savage, Maryland).

“Thank you, KidsQuest USA, for helping our church reach the children in our community” (Keith Shelton, senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Billings, Missouri).

KidsQuest USA is an outreach ministry of the national Children’s Ministries Agency in partnership with Assemblies of God churches across America. The KidsQuest USA kids crusade is a 3-night event using the KidsQuest kit. The kit is a prepackaged children’s crusade, complete with scripts, costumes, props, and sound effects—over 500 items. The kit comes from the national KidsQuest USA office.

KidsQuest USA desires to partner with churches that can conduct the crusade with home missions churches, military installation churches, Indian reservation ministries, Convoy of Hope outreaches, inner-city ministries, and other ministries across the Fellowship that need an outreach event for kids. The concept is simple: Churches helping churches to reach kids until Jesus comes.

Anyone who desires to do a KidsQuest crusade needs to attend one of our regional training events.

To connect with KidsQuest USA, or to find the locations of the regional training events, contact the national Children’s Ministries Agency at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4089, or visit our Web site: www.kidsquestusa.ag.org.

2003 NATIONAL MISSIONETTES WEEK IS SEPT. 14-20

The purpose of Missionettes is to win girls to Jesus Christ, teach them to obey His commands, and build in them a Great Commission mentality.

National Missionettes Week is Sept. 14-20. The offering received by the local church during this week helps the national office cover administration costs and provide resources to over 200,000 girls and sponsors involved in the Missionettes program.

The magazine *Club Connection* is part of the ministry of Missionettes that encourages girls in their commitment to Christ and to have fun living for and telling others about Him. A promotional flyer and order form for *Club Connection* is included in the packet mailed to local Missionettes coordinators.

2003 NATIONWIDE MISSIONETTES SLEEPOVER

The annual Nationwide Missionettes Sleepover is Sept. 26,27. This year’s theme is “Celebrate Freedom.” The Missionettes in your church can celebrate the freedoms they have in the U.S. and in Christ. The Nationwide Sleepover is a great way to start your new Missionettes year and introduce visiting friends to Jesus. The annual Coins for Kids offering is also received during this event. All funds collected this year go to the Native American Children’s Project to assist pastors and missionaries in their ministry to Native American children. All Coins for Kids funds sent to the national Missionettes office will be included in

your church’s total BGMC giving.

Every church reporting a Missionettes ministry on the Annual Church Ministries Report will receive a combination annual Theme/Sleepover packet. If you have not yet received your packet, contact the national Missionettes office or go to the Web site at missionettes.ag.org for a downloadable version.

SPANISH MISSIONETTES CURRICULUM UPDATE

The following Missionettes curriculum and training materials are now available in Spanish:

- *Rainbows Sponsor Guide*
- *Rainbows Activity Folder*
- *Daisies Sponsor Guide*
- *Daisies Activity Folder*
- *Prims Sponsor Guide*
- *Prims Activity Book*
- *Missionettes Leader Training Guide*
- *Missionettes Leader Training Kit* (video to accompany MLTG)
- *Missionettes Theme Songs CD* (Spanish/English)

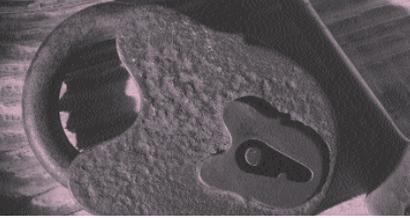
Translation of Stars, Friends, and Girls Only curriculum is under way.

CURRICULO DE MISIONERITAS EN ESPAÑOL.

El siguiente currículo de Misioneritas y los materiales para adiestramiento ya están disponibles en español:

- *Club Arcoiris Guía de la Instructora*
- *Folleto de Actividades de Arcoiris*
- *Club Margaritas Guía de Instructora*
- *Folleto de Actividades de Margaritas*
- *Club Rosas Guía de Instructora*
- *Libro de Actividades de Rosas*
- *Guía de Adiestramiento para Líderes de Misioneritas*
- *Video de Adiestramiento para Líderes de Misioneritas*
- *Disco compacto ingles/español con canciones de los temas de Misioneritas*

La traducción de Estrellas, Amigas y Solo Chichas se esta realizando. **e**



in closing

BY MICHAEL MESSNER

Faithful Stewards



How many times have you formed a strong opinion about a business or restaurant based on how it was managed? Did the staff seem well-trained? Were they knowledgeable and helpful? Were things clean? Could you find what you needed easily? Although others carry out most of these tasks, a good manager creates a comfortable and focused atmosphere. Most important, the result is a happy customer.

I had an experience in an airport that drove this point home. I had just been seated in one of the airport restaurants when a commotion two tables over caught my attention. An agitated man shouted, "You have to be kidding me." By that point, everyone in the restaurant was watching in silent disbelief as the scene unfolded.

This customer had entered the restaurant just minutes before me, but there was no hostess to seat him. Spotting several open tables, he seated himself. A member of the wait staff brought him a menu and placed tableware and water before him. The problem arose when, several minutes later, the prodigal hostess returned and found that the man had the audacity to seat himself without her knowledge. She raised such a protest with the restaurant manager that his good customer-service judgment collapsed.

The manager approached the customer and asked him to leave his table and reenter the restaurant so the hostess could reseal him. After all, that was her job, and the customer was not authorized

to seat himself. The customer refused and put up a good fight, but ultimately the restaurant policy prevailed. The manager refused to serve the customer and asked that he leave the restaurant.

The man threw his menu across the restaurant and stormed out. I'm sure he has never been back. I haven't. That one encounter made an unforgettable impression on me and continues to influence my patronage each time I pass through that airport.

The daily activities of the kingdom of God are far more important than any business. How we conduct ourselves in the visible activities of the church directly affects how believers and nonbelievers understand the unseen kingdom of God.

The apostle Paul stated, "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2, NKJV). At its core, stewardship is good management. In the New Testament, stewards presided over the affairs of a family and made provision for it. The office of steward carried great responsibility and only those with impeccable character filled this position. Stewards were trusted, and how they carried out their duties spoke volumes about their master.

There is a strong similarity between the role of a steward and that of a pastor. The reality for pastors is that they are both manager and minister. How we faithfully execute those responsibilities reflects upon Christ.

In recent years there has been a great deal of focus on leadership training for church leaders. On occasion, teachers

have set in contrast the role of the leader with that of the manager. A popular axiom is that "leaders don't manage, and managers don't lead." Elements of this prove to be almost universal. However, being a faithful steward over our God-given resources is required of all of us, regardless of our ministry in life.

Paul's description of the Body in 1 Corinthians 12 underscores the reality that we cannot function alone in life. We need every member of the Body functioning as God designed for the whole to benefit. That is true in fulfilling our stewardship mandate in the operation of the church.

For some, church management comes easily. For most, however, it is just plain hard work. Yet, God empowers us to accomplish the tasks, large and small, in a manner that demonstrates His faithfulness toward us.

This issue of *Enrichment* and the next, winter 2004, are designed to help you become a more effective manager in your church, regardless of its size. The journal staff has presented topics that are at the core of church management. I trust these two issues of *Enrichment* will provide you with the management tools you need.

Just as God has given some people special musical talents and others the ability to preach, He has gifted others with managerial skills. As these stewards step forward and use their gifts, they will be found faithful. **e**

Michael Messner, executive pastor, James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

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Pastor Needle Meyer unwittingly brings his congregation, kicking and screaming, into the modern era.

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