

THE MANAGEMENT SIDE OF MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

Clergy who are leaders of local churches often ask the question, "What can I implement which will be of significant help to the management side of my ministry?" This thesis is a response to their question. It responds to their question with research which is presented in an implementable form.

The management side of a clergyman's ministry can be significantly improved through putting into use the ideas contained in each chapter of this thesis. Each of the following topics responds to a chapter.

1. How to manage one's time, utilize one's strengths, and look for opportunities more effectively. A clergyman can best improve his management of a local church by improving his management of himself.
2. How to share more of one's ministry with lay people. A clergyman should continually get ready for the day when he will leave, so that the lay people can continue the work of the parish.
3. How to define the Core Mission of a local church. Until one identifies the purpose of a church, a clergyman cannot know the most important areas in which to spend his time.
4. How to implement the Core Mission of a local church. If a church develops a worthy and clear Core Mission which it then successfully implements, it will have a strong chance of flourishing.
5. A yearly planning process can help provide a road map for action, by which a church can plan ahead far enough to avoid operating continually in a catch-up, crisis mode.
6. A local church problem solving process can help the leadership solve very complex problems which have multiple causes that tend to re-enforce one another.
7. A clergyman can change the frustrating aspects of his working environment which cause him to be de-motivated in his work.
8. There are several areas in the life of a church in which a systematic approach can help one do more ministry in far less time. Ideas range from organizing the repetitive areas of one's work to ministering to shut-ins.

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CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION

Most clergy in local churches do not perceive of themselves as managers of an organizational enterprise. Their training has been theological and pastoral. Their expertise is seen in leading worship and in responding to the crises of individuals. Yet if one looks at how clergymen spend their time, one can only conclude that the clergy in local parishes are continually involved in management. The management side of the ministry includes at least the following functions:

1. Setting goals and policy.
2. Taking responsibility for the organizational health of a local church.
3. Engaging themselves and others in the process of gathering human and financial resources to meet the needs of a church.
4. Utilizing those resources.
5. Evaluating the results of their efforts.

These are tasks which typify a high-level management position.

While most local church clergy have not undertaken their ministries with the hope of becoming effective managers, they can still facilitate their ministries by use of management tools. These tools help reduce the number of organizational crises the clergymen face each year. They can make better use of the clergy's time and that of their lay people. They can allow a church to feel a sense of accomplishment in reaching specific goals it has set for itself.

What follows is an effort to expose the basics of the management side of ministry to local church clergy in such a way that they will appreciate its importance as an on-going part of their work. Learning management is not a program that can be learned once and implemented once. Rather, management is a process at which one must work continually. It requires a sense of discipline. It calls for perspective in analyzing one's opportunities and problems. It demands engagement with those who make the organization work. It needs honesty in evaluating results and making future plans. Although developing management skills does take hard work, the satisfaction resulting from being able to accomplish more ministry with less effort makes the enterprise worthwhile.

The management side of ministry can be outlined under eight topics, each of which corresponds to a chapter. Each topic should be of significant help to clergy in local churches.

1. How to manage one's time, utilize one's strengths, and look for opportunities more effectively. A clergyman can best improve his management of a local church by improving his management of himself.
2. How to share more of one's ministry with lay people. A clergyman should continually get ready for the day when he will leave, so that the lay people can continue the work of the parish.
3. How to define the Core Mission of a local church. Until one identifies the purpose of a church, a clergyman cannot know the most important areas in which to spend his time.
4. How to implement the Core Mission of a local church. If a church develops a worthy and clear Core Mission which it then successfully implements, it will have a strong chance of flourishing.
5. A yearly planning process can help provide a road map for action, by which a church can plan ahead far enough to avoid operating continually in a catch-up, crisis mode.
6. A local church problem solving process can help the leadership



solve very complex problems which have multiple causes that tend to re-enforce one another.

7. A clergyman can change the frustrating aspects of his working environment which cause him to be de-motivated in his work.
8. There are several areas in the life of a church in which a systematic approach can help one do more ministry in far less time. Ideas range from organizing the repetitive areas of one's work to ministering to shut-ins.

Two kinds of research underlie these learnings about the management side of ministry. The first is based on the ministerial experience of active clergy in local churches. In some cases, the yearly planning process for example, the experience is that of one man. In the case of the local church problem solving process, a special research group of clergy was convened to develop the process based on the discipline of Systems Dynamics. In other cases the ideas were collected through personal experience.

The second kind of research was a thorough study of the literature on religious and secular management which might be applicable to local churches. For example, the chapter on helping a clergyman better use his time and strengths is a combination of insights from both secular and ministerial sources. The bibliography provides an additional guide to this area of research.

## CHAPTER TWO

## HOW TO BECOME A MORE VALUABLE CLERGYMAN

The clergyman is the single most critical resource in the life of a local church. He is undoubtedly the most expensive resource in terms of what the church spends to buy his services. He is the professional resource in the doing of worship, in providing special services from baptism to burial, and is the church's trained pastoral counselor. He is the central catalyst for the organizational health of the church. The quality of his leadership can either multiply a church's resources many times over or stultify the church's chance of ever reaching vitality. The clergyman's vision of what he hopes the church will become in large part will determine its shape five years from now. Research has shown time and time again that it is the clergy who are the central actors in whether a local church will flourish.<sup>1</sup>

Though the clergyman is such a critical resource in the life of a local church, he most often does not give to his local church the value which he might. He gives less than full value for four reasons:

1. He lets others spend his time for him.
2. He often ministers with his incompetence rather than use the competence of others.
3. He does not order his working environment so he can flourish.
4. He does not spend his time exploiting opportunities.

Such charges leveled against local church clergy fly in the face of conventional wisdom. Conventional wisdom in the local church sees the clergy as a person who is always on call for the benefit of others, who responds to every need presented, who accepts the limitations of his

environment, and solves problems.

Unconventional wisdom says a clergyman would spend enough time on the critical areas of his church's life to see that it is vital. He should continually find ways to use his areas of competence and develop alternative resources which he can employ in place of his own incompetence. A clergyman should realize that in having needs as any other person he should work to reorder his own working environment to remove hindrances to his effectiveness and reinforce that which makes him effective. Lastly a local church clergyman is a christian opportunist who seeks ways to identify and implement the few critical opportunities which need to be done.

The test of this unconventional wisdom is that it has been developed by practicing clergy in local churches. Those clergy who are the most valuable resources to their local churches have intuitively adopted the criteria of unconventional wisdom.

The test of this unconventional wisdom is whether it can work in reality. It does. The clergymen who are the valuable resources to their parishes in terms of being able professional resources, leaders with vision, and catalysts to action seem to use this unconventional wisdom in their ministry. They set aside time for those activities which they consider to be the most important. After a period of years they have found themselves doing more of what they did best and found ways to supplement those aspects of their ministry which they did not do so well. It is no wonder that today one can be recognized as a superb pastoral counselor, another a great teacher, a third is a prophet, and a fourth is a brilliant enabler of lay people. Each of these valuable clergy

have rearranged the working environment of their churches to fit their needs so they can be effective. Lastly each is a seeker of opportunity who continually asks what might be and then brings it into reality.

#### BECOMING MORE VALUABLE

It took most valuable clergy years to learn what they were good for. It took them years to realize they could not be all things to all people. You can learn what they learned in a far shorter time. You can learn to maximize your unique set of gifts in a matter of months if you are willing to learn, are committed to becoming the best clergyman of a local church that is within your power, and have the discipline to follow a process. The process holds the promise that you can become more valuable to your church as its critical resource than you currently are.

The process which will solve these problems is in four parts.

1. Understand how you spend your time now. Act on how you can better spend your time.
2. Identify your strengths and weaknesses as seen by yourself and by others. Act on your strengths.
3. Understand what is frustrating in your work. Act on how you would like your work to be.
4. Identify a critical opportunity within your ministry. Act to bring it into reality.

As you begin this process you will find two things very helpful. The first is a looseleaf binder with a set of dividers. It is one of the few ways which a clergyman in a local church can gain a sense of perspective and movement in this process. Without such a sense of history which has been written down it is hard to grasp what you really have

accomplished in your work for unlike a manufacturing company churches produce no products, and unlike a surgeon clergy cannot measure success in terms of the number of operations performed. This notebook will become a history book of your efforts to become a more effective resource for your church.

The second is to undertake this venture with another clergyman whom you consider to be your peer. As a team you can keep each other accountable to the process. You can support one another if either gets discouraged. You will have a person with whom you can share successes. In lieu of a clergyman, a lay person may function as your partner. The difficulty with a lay person is they will not have the same feel for the problems and opportunities you will discover along the way. In either case a partner who will enter into the process on a weekly scheduled basis will be valuable in keeping you motivated, honest, and interested.

#### FINDING NEW TIME

The only resource in your ministry which is in absolutely limited supply is time. It is possible for your church to raise more money. It is possible for you to receive more education. It is possible to recruit more lay people. It is not possible for you to generate any more time than 24 hours a day or 168 hours a week.

But clergy act as if it is possible to create more time by running from task to task and by working extraordinarily long hours. Peter Drucker writes of clergy, "The minister chooses himself to be in eighteen places at once and he never stays long enough to do any good work. If you show up at 11 o'clock at a mayor's special meeting and leave at

11:20, you aren't going to accomplish anything--except to wear yourself to a frazzle."<sup>2</sup>

Samuel Blizzard in a report of the Russell Sage Foundation found 418 local church clergy worked the following hours.

The professional work day of the cooperating ministers averaged a few minutes less than ten hours. Rural men reported a work day of nine hours and 17 minutes. That of urban ministers was ten hours 32 minutes. Considering all ministerial informants almost two-fifths of their total work day was spent as an administrator. An incidental but revealing item of intelligence is the time parish ministers devote to sermon preparation and to stenographic work each day. The average time devoted to sermon preparation is 34 minutes for rural men, 38 minutes for urban clergymen. The time taken up by stenographic tasks is one hour and four minutes for both country and city men.<sup>3</sup>

A 1968 study of 913 clergy of the Episcopal church found the average clergy work week was 66.7 hours or 11.1 hours a day for a six day week.<sup>4</sup> The article goes on to say clergy spent their time the following way.

	Hours
1. Public worship	7.5
2. Parish activities organizations	37.2
3. Pastoral activities	15.4
4. Non-church related activities	3.9
5. Personal prayer and meditation	<u>2.7</u>
	66.7

If you are like most clergy you will see yourself in each of these reflections on how clergy spend their time and muse "I wish I could better use my time." You can. To better use your time you must learn how you actually spend it, understand how you can bring it under your control, and how you can spend it in the areas of your ministry which you consider most important.

To learn how you actually use your time you will need to keep a time log. For the first week have a looseleaf sheet of paper with each day of the week marked at the top. Mark down the time you begin work each morning and what you are doing. Each time you begin to do something new write down the time and your new activity. If you are interrupted or distracted make a note of the time it happened, what it was, and when you resumed your original task. For the next three weeks keep a simpler log of your time. Note down what time you begin your work day, end your work day, and what you are doing at half hour intervals at quarter past and quarter of the hour.

Most clergy discover that their time is spent in one endless interruption. Rarely can clergy point to a time during the week when they spent a block of time working on a problem or opportunity during which they devoted their full concentration to their efforts. Instead their time log and most likely your time log will be a series of five minute to thirty minute units.

These constant interruptions are a particular occupational hazard for clergy in local churches. The members of one's church who often have little understanding of what a clergyman does with his time feel free to use his time whether it be by dropping by his office for a chat, calling him by phone or stopping by his house at night. While these informal contacts are important to the supportive aspects of a local church they often tend to dominate a clergyman's life to such an extent that there is time for little else.

This does not have to be the case. Psychiatrists for example will accept no phone calls during their office hours except at certain times

of the day. Effective clergy I have known use a similar system. One, who was a great preacher, announced to his congregation he would be unavailable every Wednesday morning as he was writing his sermon. Another who was a superb enabler of laity would have his secretary hold his calls several times during the course of the week when he was involved in the midst of his work. A third spent every morning from eight to nine praying in his office with the phone off the hook. A fourth went to his local library three times a week to have time to plan and think. Jesus is perhaps our best example for the gospels report that he sought refuge in the hills no less than fifteen times to reflect on the state of his ministry and to pray. The kind of time which clergy need is time in uninterrupted blocks which are long enough to think through a problem or opportunity and come up with a solution. Only by planning your time in advance can you have such uninterrupted blocks.

Once you have kept a log of your time for a week you will be able to demonstrate to yourself how you actually spend your time. As you go back through your log ask yourself two questions:

1. Was this activity a time waste? Would it have been missed if I had not spent time on it?
2. What things did I do this past week which someone else could have done as well or better?

Write down your answers on a separate sheet of paper under two headings: Things I no longer need to do and Things which can better be done by someone else. If you use your pruning shears you should be able to find two hours of time you will not need to spend next week. The items list-



ed under the second heading should point you to several real opportunities for you to redirect your time and for another person to participate in the ministry of your church. One minister in Washington has his lay people trained to do parish calling. A clergyman in Ohio has lay people who are trained in preaching and alternate Sundays with him. A third has thirty women who each month call on the nearly hundred shut in and new members of his church.

For the next week draw up a calendar like the one on the following page. First block off a full day off for yourself and your family. It has been my observation that many clergy appear to be work-aholics or compulsive workers. If God was able to rest after making the world you as a clergyman can take one day off as your day of rest without the world coming to an end. Next mark off three time periods of one and a half hours each. These time periods are your discretionary time and with the exception of an extreme emergency should not be violated. A priori it may seem easy to keep for one's self three time periods but the task is more difficult than it looks. In each of these time periods write what you hope to accomplish. One time period may be to solve a staffing problem in your church school. Or you might use a time period to plan for an important meeting of your local church's governing board. Now write in any appointments you already have made for the week ahead. Include the times of scheduled worship. Do not include those things which you have decided to stop doing or to delegate to someone else. You still will have twenty or more hours unscheduled to respond to the day to day activities of your church and to be interrupted to your parishioners' content.

TO DO 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.		TO CALL 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.		TO CALL ON 1. 2. 3.		
				TO WRITE 1. 2.		
MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.

During this second week keep a log of what you are doing at half hour intervals. At the end of the week go back through your log and see if there are things you did not have to do or things which you could have delegated. Were you able to hold to your three hour and a half time periods? If not, why not? Did you get a day off?

Begin the process of drawing up your calendar again. Mark down your day off and your three time periods with how you plan to use each one. Then fill in the rest of your calendar with your appointments. Keep your log for the third week. Analyze how you spent your time. Repeat the process for the fourth week.

After four weeks time you should have a good idea how you spend your time. You will have spent 18 hours in 12 large time blocks working on things which had the highest priority. You will have stopped using time on things which were producing no benefit. You will have identified several opportunities for lay ministry. The time saving habits you have developed during the last four weeks should be carried on into the future until they become second nature. As time wasting habits do creep back into one's ministry it is wise to do a time log each quarter and ask the two questions:

1. What am I doing which is producing no benefit?
2. What am I doing which some one else can do as well or better?

#### THE NATURE OF YOURSELF AS A RESOURCE

We began this chapter by understanding that you were the most important and most expensive resource in your local church. We now turn to helping you identify the nature of yourself as a resource to your church.

The process used here is very simple.<sup>5</sup> On three separate sheets of loose leaf paper write down:

A list of my major Strengths as a clergyman.

A list of my major Weaknesses as a clergyman.

A list of my major Opportunities in this church as a clergyman.

As strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities occur to you write them down. As you write down your strengths boast a little for you have a right to be proud of the strengths you were endowed with or have learned. As Paul says the Spirit has given each one of us a Gift. Be happy with your gifts. Be honest about your weaknesses for no one can be all things to all men in all situations. If you dislike doing something so much that it blocks you from really using your strengths be honest and say so. As you write down your opportunities, dream a little. What are your dreams given your talents and the church you are now in. Think big, think creative, and think what is the most critical thing which you can accomplish.

After you have compiled your lists put them into a priority of one through five. Once you have completed this task you should feel a new sense of having met yourself. To have identified your strengths should give you a greater sense of self worth. Knowing your weaknesses should help you to organize your way around them so as to minimize their effect on your ministry. Your list of opportunities should provide a sense of excitement as to what your future work may hold.

Once you have completed answering the three questions to the best of your ability take them to three to five lay people who know you quite well. Ask them to be honest and frank in answering the three questions:

1. What do you perceive to be my five greatest strengths?
2. What do you perceive to be my five greatest weaknesses?
3. What do you perceive to be my five major opportunities at our church during the next two years?

Be willing to listen to what they say even if their diagnosis is different from your own. In each case write down what they say so you can compare your answers with theirs.

If your experience is like others you will learn that your lay people know more about you than you realized. You will find your strengths will be reaffirmed, your weaknesses already perceived, and they too have been thinking where your greatest contribution to your church may be. This reality testing is important even if you find they agree point by point with your analysis. Even more important will be the places where they may disagree with your analysis. Have they recognized strengths, weaknesses, or opportunities which you have not seen? At each point of disagreement ask why? Here is an example.

#### SELF PERCEPTION

(S) Operates democratically  
 (W) Pastoral counseling  
 (O) Build up Church School

#### LAY PERCEPTION

(W) Operates autocratically  
 (S) Help in crisis situation  
 (O) Do Adult Biblical Education

(S) Strength, (W) Weakness, (O) Opportunity

The first case disclosed the fact that the clergyman was not operating in a manner consistent with his self image. In such a case you may want to seek an outside consultant to observe you to see whose perception is correct and provide remedies for the discrepancy. In the pastoral counseling case you may be more effective than you thought. Such a

realization may cause you to re-evaluate your perceived weakness. In the case of your opportunities you will be beginning a "marketing process" by which you will begin to listen more effectively to the needs of your church as perceived by your lay people.

Once you have gone to see these five people individually return to your original list of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Given this new information are there any items you would give new definition or priority? If so go ahead and do so. The one criteria of selection is your approval of the final priority list in each category. The primary purpose of this exercise is to begin to get you to think of yourself as a unique resource in the life of your church. Once you have done this you will know your capabilities to a greater extent than most clergy who are too busy doing to be in touch with who they are. Lastly you will have gone through the refreshing process of hearing about yourself in an organized and freeing way from your lay people. It has been my observation that most clergy very infrequently take the opportunity to listen to their lay people and to try to understand how they are perceived. This process is freeing for one no longer has to hide one's weaknesses as your lay people already know of them. It also is supportive for your lay people probably appreciate your strengths more than you thought they did.

#### CHANGING WHAT YOU DISLIKE IN YOUR WORK

Any working environment has its frustrations. There are people conflicts, unreasonable demands on one's time and patience, and doing what one really does not enjoy doing. But clergy have a great deal of freedom to change what they dislike in their work.

The technique is very simple. In your loose leaf note book begin to keep a list of those things which you dislike in your work. Whenever something frustrates you, makes you angry, or makes you less effective write it down. No aspect of your work is too trivial or too large. Once you have collected twenty items, begin a second page entitled, "What I wish in my work." For each frustration write down a wish.

Page 1	Page 2
WHAT I DISLIKE IN MY WORK	WHAT I WISH IN MY WORK
1. People who don't follow through	People who follow through
2. Too many nights out	Nights home with my family
3. Not being appreciated in my work	Being appreciated in my work
4. Not having measurable results	Having measurable results
5. Having to recruit people	Have others recruit people

It may be that some of your wishes may be in your power to change immediately. In other cases you may have discovered some long range projects to change your working environment. Lastly you may realize there are things you cannot change. These are the things you live with as they can be scheduled to get them out of the way so you can get on with what you enjoy.

The clergyman whose list was used as an example responded in the following way.

1. Called his non-follow-through-leaders each week to check on their progress. (implemented immediately)
2. Limited nights out to two times a week and rescheduled his other commitments. (implemented immediately)
3. Not feeling as if he was appreciated enough. (lived with)
4. Developed criteria of measurement for each activity before it was begun. (long range)

5. Had his lay leadership recruit their own participants and co-workers. (long range)

USING YOUR LEARNINGS TO CHANGE THAT WHICH IS WITHIN  
YOUR POWER TO CHANGE

This final section will begin to integrate your learnings to date. Let us say that three months from now you are going to give a speech to your church's governing board or to your wife about what you have accomplished in the last ninety days. These accomplishments should not be accidental but rather have been stated by you as specific goals three months before. The goals you sought to accomplish in this time frame should have maximized your strengths to the greatest degree possible and at the same time minimized your weaknesses. Further they should build on those aspects of your working environment which you enjoy the most or which you have wished for in your wishing list of job requirements and minimized the number of times you find yourself frustrated by that which you do not like to do.

The task at hand is to set goals for the next ninety days. They should meet the following criteria:

They are reachable--using your strengths.

They are measurable--you should develop written bench marks.

They will make you feel good if they are reached.

They should minimize your weaknesses and frustrations.

Once you have written down your goals on paper return to your time sheets for the next several weeks. Begin your implementing process by saving the time necessary over the weeks ahead to begin to implement your goals. Also on your calendar mark a time half way through this three month period for you to take out your goal sheet and look at the progress



you have made. In many cases you will have met and completed several goals by the time half of your three month planning period is completed. This intermediate period will give you the opportunity to refocus your attention on those goals still to be accomplished. Finally at the end of three months take out your goals and measure the results of your accomplishment against them. Remarkably for most clergy the first time they go through this process they find they have attempted and completed more work than they imagined. This realization does wonders for one's self esteem.

There are other things you will discover in setting personal goals every three months. You may discover that you do not reach a goal you had set for yourself. If this happens you may want to modify the goal for the next quarter. If you again fail to meet the goal for a second time your behavior is signaling you to find an alternative way of reaching it. For example if your goal is to call on six families a week and you have averaged two families what are your alternatives. You could gather them into a group, you could train lay people to do calling, or you could hire a part time church visitor. Or if your goal was to have planned and taught an adult education class and you never got to it for two straight quarters you now can look at alternatives: Invite another local clergy to teach the course, train lay people to teach the course, use the resources of a local seminary, or research published material suitable for lay people on an individual at home basis. Usually there is at least one good alternative to reaching each goal you have set for yourself. By knowing what you are "good for" you have the option of seeking these alternatives for that which you are not as

empowered to do.

Such a quarterly planning process should be repeated four times a year. You may want to project out your goals over a longer period of time for those things which you cannot accomplish in three months. It is helpful to have these year goals written out because they provide a reference point in judging both accomplishment and the changing of one's priorities. As one management consultant has said, "Until you write something down and are committed to it you can't change your mind. Why? Because you never made your mind up in the first place."

#### THE RESULTS OF YOUR NEW VALUE

If you have worked through this process during the last month you undoubtedly have been busy. You should now be able to point to the first results of your efforts--results which demonstrate to yourself and to your church that you are now a more effective resource for them than you have been in the past. It is a good feeling to be able to point to what one has accomplished and know how one got there.

## CHAPTER THREE

## THE NEED AND OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP MORE VALUABLE LAY PEOPLE

If a clergyman's first responsibility is to develop himself into the best minister he can become, then his second is to develop the members of the church into the best lay people they can become. Without the volunteer efforts of lay people no local church is possible. As you focus on the opportunity of training and using lay people for significant ministry, one attitude will help you keep in perspective the central need for enabling your lay people to undertake such ministry. It can be called the acid test of one's ministry. The acid test of one's ministry comes after you, the clergyman, leave either to accept another call, or through your retirement, or your death. If the lay people you leave behind see the ministry of the church as their ministry and if they have been well trained to carry on the church's ministry in your absence then your ministry can be considered a success. But if after you leave the church drifts while it searches for another clergyman to become dependent upon, then your ministry can be judged a failure.

Most clergy through their Seminary training and their experience perceive the ministry of the church to be synonymous with their professional ministry. They are looked to by lay people to provide leadership and special skills. If one asks a clergyman to list his specialities, he would include leader of worship, chief theologian in residence, and primary pastoral counselor in the church. Because of these specialities the members of the church come to the clergy to be ministered unto.

As you have begun to realize from the work you have completed in the second chapter on using your strengths, minimizing your weaknesses,

and extending the reach of your work, you no longer have to be all things to all people. Instead you have a new responsibility which goes beyond only ministering to the needs of people, that of equipping others for ministry. One of the first actions of Jesus after he began his ministry was to train and send out the disciples in pairs on a mission. By his action Jesus acknowledged that the ministry was not his alone. In fact the New Testament can be read as Jesus' successful effort to teach, train, and equip an unlikely group of people to become the ministers of God.

Most clergy have at some time heard this new point of view expressed. Many clergy have tentatively tried to equip some of their lay people to undertake a portion of what currently is regarded as the domain of the clergy. Few clergy have dedicated themselves to this task. Why is there resistance to training lay people for responsible ministry? Some clergy do not want to have to change their narrow identity as Ministers to become educators in ministry. Other clergy feel in the short run that it is often faster to do ministry than to teach another person to do ministry even though once the person is trained a significant portion of a clergyman's time can be freed up. Many clergy do not seek to share their ministry with lay people for fear they no longer will be in control of the church's entire ministry. At its heart this is a question of trust. Can a clergyman trust a well equipped lay person to carry out a well defined function of ministry in a way which will bring credit to the ministry of the local church? Because of the clergy's resistance many talented lay people no longer look to the church as an organization of opportunity, for in the past they have been

given only menial tasks, while the clergy kept all the important work for themselves.

A clergyman needs to adopt a new perspective if he is going to overcome his narrow professional identity, need for complete control, and feeling of time pressure. The new perspective is to begin equipping gifted lay people for ministry on an experimental basis. A clergyman might commit ten percent of his working time to the development of lay people to become competent lay ministers in very specific areas of the church's ministry.

Such a program of equipping lay people for ministry can begin with your ministry. Begin by going back through the time logs you developed in the first chapter. With a colored magic marker underline those things which you have done with your time which you could teach a lay person to do. They may be things which you do very well in which case you can be a good teacher. They may be things you do poorly in which case a lay person who is motivated and trained may be able to do better than you. From your markings make a list of possibilities of that which lay people could undertake. Your list may be very long and include most of your work. Rather than feeling depressed that you have no special vocation as a clergyman you can have a feeling of elation that your vocation has just expanded. Remember that clergymen are no more than laymen who have been trained and ordained. Remember too that at some point you will leave. The question for you on that day is how much of your ministry will you leave behind.

From your list of Lay Ministry possibilities choose one which will be relatively easy to teach, will make a difference in your work load,

and has a high probability for success. Next draw up a brief job description which explains the specifics of this facet of your ministry and what a lay person would need to know to carry it out. Once you have identified the nature of the job, list the members of your church who might be motivated and qualified to begin an educational process through which they can become proficient. At the same time you will want to begin searching for educational resources which will help equip the lay people for their ministry.

In Washington, D.C., a clergyman<sup>6</sup> was leaving his church for an extended sabbatical. A major concern for himself and the church was how the pastoral ministry of the church might continue. The concern was resolved when several laymen agreed to become proficient lay pastoral callers and counselors. By nature these men were good with people and had an intuitive flair for helping people solve their problems. Before the clergyman left they began a weekly meeting with a psychiatrist during which they discussed the specific cases they had dealt with during the previous week. Rapidly they became more qualified in their pastoral ministry, and members of the parish began to turn more and more to them as professionally trained resources. Because their experience had been so good, upon the clergyman's return he began to join them in their weekly meeting with the psychiatrist so he, too, might update his pastoral ability. Instead of one pastoral resource this church now has several trained pastoral resources so the church's capacity for pastoral ministry has expanded dramatically.

A clergyman<sup>7</sup> in a small mission parish in Ohio found he was not able to come up with an inspirational sermon each week. He also had as a

dream the possibility of good adult educational programs of Biblical study. Through a trained and educated group of lay people he turned both problems into opportunities. He selected eight laymen from the congregation and paired them off. He charged each pair with becoming "experts" in one book of the Bible. Each pair was further given the responsibility of preaching four times a year based on their study. The clergyman provided them with Seminary level commentaries, translations, and resource material for their initial study. As the time approached for their preaching he would guide them in sermon preparation. After they preached there was a forum hour during which the congregation was able to explore further what their fellow laymen had said and why. These post-worship gatherings were very much looked forward to. Next the clergyman had these men begin to teach an eight part course in Biblical studies, they individually became experts in their particular book. Together they made a good faculty who are more knowledgeable than most local church clergy who do not take time to keep up with their Biblical studies.

Once you have successfully completed one or two experimental lay ministry development efforts within your church, you may want to begin to look farther afield. An example of such a ministry beyond the walls of a local church was initiated by the telephone call of a lay person to the clergyman of her church. She had heard on a radio talk show that the church's community lacked a first class drug treatment program at a time the community faced an acute drug abuse problem. The clergyman<sup>8</sup> responded by gathering three lay people, one of whom was already working

in the drug addiction field. While the initial focus of this gathering was how the church and its members could respond to this problem, it did not take long for this focus to expand. The lay people soon realized they had an opportunity for ministry beyond the capabilities of their local church. The clergyman's role was to provide the encouragement that the church was not the only vehicle for ministry. Instead he said the church should become the means for a new ministry to begin. Within six months of the initial meeting, the lay people had opened a professionally staffed outpatient drug treatment center with local, state, and federal funding.

Lastly lay people are beginning to realize they have a ministry to do in their places of work. In a metropolitan hospital several nurses on a floor reached the point at which they realized either the quality of care received by their patients would have to improve or they would have to resign their positions. They contracted with a seminary student who was skilled in organizational change to help them improve the health care delivery process on their floor.<sup>9</sup> They did this without the knowledge of the hospital administration. Shortly after they began this covert change effort, the hospital independently decided to reassess how effectively they were doing their business. Because this group of nurses had already done its homework on what needed to be done, they became a major focal point in guiding the hospital through its evaluation and implementation of changes in the way nurses, doctors, and the administration worked together to return patients to health.

How well would these clergy do if measured against the acid test of their ministry? What will remain of their ministries after they have



departed? One church will have a trained and competent group of pastoral counselors. A second church will have a core of lay preachers and teachers who can continue to reduce their church's level of Biblical illiteracy. A third clergyman can take pride his lay people helped to spawn an ongoing clinic which daily meets the needs of some of societies most desparate people. A seminary student, now ordained, can realize she empowered a group of nurses to change a major institution.

These are the kinds of opportunities which are open to you as a clergyman. By focusing on equipping, encouraging, and facilitating Lay Ministry you not only can make your work easier, but also more enduring. The rewards judged by the acid test say that the redirection of ten percent of your time in this area are more than worth the effort. All that is needed is the choice of an area for action, and the will to act.

CHAPTER FOUR  
HOW TO DECIDE THE CORE MISSION  
OF A LOCAL CHURCH  
STAGE ONE (2-3 MONTHS)

There is one task which is so self evident that most clergy or local churches never undertake it. Those who do undertake it find the task to be extremely difficult. The result of this difficulty is the task is rarely completed in a simple, concise, and inspiring manner. THE TASK IS TO CLEARLY STATE THE PURPOSE OF YOUR CHURCH.

Such a statement of purpose should be so simple that it can be explained to a ten year old in less than two minutes. It should be comprehensive enough to make sense of the majority of work your church will undertake in the future despite its seeming diversity. It should point to a biblical foundation and be of an inspirational nature.

To develop a statement of the core mission for your church, to put it in writing, and then constantly to communicate it will be the most important responsibility you will undertake in your ministry. As it will color everything else you undertake, it will become your guiding star in the East. Your purpose will dictate how you shall spend your limited resources. It will allow you to measure your results and achievements. Through communicating your purpose you can ask for others to join you. Your purpose shall provide the cornerstone to your fund raising. Lastly it will provide a focus for educating the laity of your church in fundamentals of their Christian faith.

The difficulty of fashioning a purpose for a local church is great. The activities of many local churches are so diverse as to be without a

common thread. As the nature of the local church's business deals with the qualitative side of life, finding a purpose is more elusive. As there is no completely consistent purpose which the Church historically has adopted, there is no model which can readily be adopted by any given congregation.

According to Jeffery Hadden in The Gathering Storm in the Churches, the Protestant Church is facing a critical three fold crisis:

a crisis over its very meaning and purpose for being, a crisis of belief, and a crisis of authority. The three crises are obviously interrelated. Clergy have reinterpreted the theological basis of their faith and in so doing have come to feel that their faith involves a much more vital commitment to the problems of this world. Laity have challenged the authority of clergy because they do not share their understanding of the meaning and purpose of the church. The shattering of traditional doctrines has weakened the authority of the clergy, for it is no longer certain that they hold the keys to the kingdom.<sup>10</sup>

However the difficulties of simply stating the purpose of a local church is the very reason for its importance. A statement of purpose is needed to hold together the operational diversity of a congregation. Only such a statement of purpose which is acted upon can chart a course through the turbulence of the storms which are currently blowing in the churches.

#### WRITING A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE<sup>11</sup>

The statement of purpose in the end should not be written by a committee. It should be written by the clergyman alone. This does not mean you should sit down and write the first thing which enters your head. The written statement of purpose should come after hours of consultation with the lay people of your church. This consultation should be both informal and formal. Informally you should ask every member of your congregation you meet what they consider to be the purpose

of their church and their responses should be catalogued in your notebook. You should try out your ideas on them. Formally you should work with a leadership group to explore options and try out various ideas. A written record of the findings in each process should be kept. The development of a statement of purpose will also require you to return to your Biblical studies and to search again the original purposes of the early Church. With the approach of finally writing the purpose statement you will begin to lose sleep over it. If no sleep is lost it means either too little research has been done or you are really not committed to defining and implementing a purpose for your church. In its final written form The Purpose Statement should not be more than a sentence long. It should be short enough to memorize by someone on the first hearing. By the time you have finally written it down you should be excited to try it on the leadership group who will be responsible for planning and implementing it. If they are not excited, then it is back to the drawing boards. If they are excited by it then you should take it farther afield. If it captures people's imagination, if it is clear, and if under its umbrella people can see direction for action then it is time to take it public. The purpose statement should be the cause of sermons (the biblical research has already been done,) the cause of educational programs, and the cause of action.

A set of criteria which the final statement should meet are:

1. It is true to Biblical roots.
2. It is simple enough for a ten year old child to understand and remember.
3. It is situational in that it takes into account the history and the people of your particular church.

4. It is inspiring in that it touches the deepest dreams of the Christian People.
5. It sets the clergyman and layman on fire with possibilities.

Here are some good questions you might ask yourself in the process.

What Biblical motifs inspire you?

What in the history of your local church is important today?

What actions of a Christian church make it different from other organizations which lay people belong to?

What dreams do you have for the Christian church which excite you down to your bones?

Why should a society allow your church to exist?

#### EXAMPLES OF PURPOSE STATEMENTS

The purpose of our church is to BECOME A COMMUNITY OF CHRIST, A COMMUNITY OF CARING, AND A COMMUNITY OF CONCERN.

The purpose of our church is to DEVELOP THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

The purpose of our church is to CELEBRATE LIFE.

The purpose of our church is to MAKE GOD KNOWN.

The purpose of our church is to BECOME THE BODY OF CHRIST, PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL, AND TO CARRY ON JESUS' MISSION.

The purpose of our church is to SERVE THE CITY OF BOSTON.

The purpose of our church is to ENABLE THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST TO LIVE.

The purpose of our church is to be a SUFFERING SERVANT.

#### THE STRATEGIC PLAN TO FULFILL THE PURPOSE

An integral part of the purpose statement is to indicate in broad terms the plan by which it will be fulfilled. This enabling plan should be as simply stated as possible. It should be concrete enough to focus the energy of the church's resources and broad enough to give a common denominator to the church's diverse work. It should be easily memorable

by a person who hears it for the first time.

#### EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIC PLANS TO FULFILL THE PURPOSE

The purpose of our church is to make God known through the BREAKING OF THE BREAD, THE PREACHING OF THE WORD, AND SHARING THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST.

The purpose of our church is to develop the people of God THROUGH WORSHIP, EDUCATION, AND MEETING OF UN-MET NEEDS.

The purpose of our church is to serve the city of Boston by SETTING PEOPLE FREE TO LOVE THROUGH WEEKLY WORSHIP, EDUCATION, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY BEYOND THE CHURCH.

The purpose of our church is to become the Body of Christ, proclaim the Gospel, and to carry on Jesus' mission THROUGH STUDY, WORSHIP, SOCIAL SERVICE AND ACTION, AND STEWARDSHIP.

The purpose of our church is to be a suffering servant THROUGH STUDY, SHARING, AND SERVICE.

#### COMMUNICATING THE PURPOSE AND PLAN

##### STAGE TWO (1-3 MONTHS)

By this time the following things will have happened.

1. Most of the congregation will have been asked at some point to indicate what they think the purpose of their church should be.
2. A leadership group will have wrestled with the church's purpose even more directly.
3. The clergyman will have gathered all the information together, returned to his biblical scholarship and focused on a written purpose statement.
4. He will have tried it out orally on many members of the congregation to see if it was clear, memorable, and inspiring.
5. He will have begun to preach about the purpose out of his Biblical scholarship and his information about the church.
6. The lay leaders will have accepted it both formally and informally and begun to communicate it to others.
7. There are two final tests for the first stage of communicating the purpose and plan by the clergyman and the lay leaders. The first test is for several people on the fringe of the church to be asked if they have heard of the statement of the church's purpose. If they have it means the oral communication has been very extensive.

The second test is for several people spontaneously to approach the church's leadership and say, "If our purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_, then we should be doing \_\_\_\_\_." If they do the purpose is shown to be inspiring. Only now should the church's written purpose be circulated for to do so earlier would take away from the edge of having people talking to people instead of relying on the written word.

## WRITING A MANAGEMENT PLAN

### STAGE THREE (1-2 MONTHS)

A management plan sets specific targets for the church to achieve by certain dates. It should be very specific in terms of what it expects to happen, a time deadline for each target, and who is expected to do what. It should have its targets set at least a year into the future and five years may be better. It should assign quantitative numbers where possible that can be measured in the future. Such a plan should be developed by lay people working actively with the clergyman. Once it is developed it should be mailed and distributed to every member of the congregation. It should be the subject of sermons backed up by its biblical foundation. It should be the subject of forums and other educational events where it can be communicated. It should be adopted by the governing board of the church both formally by resolution and informally by their commitment to seeing it implemented.

An example of a management plan (slightly modified) developed by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Cohasset, Massachusetts follows:

The Purpose of St. Stephen's is to become the Body of Christ, to proclaim the Gospel, and to carry on Jesus' mission through study, worship, social service/action, and stewardship.

The Goals of St. Stephen's which have been adopted by the Vestry of the Parish to fulfill our purpose:

1. In order to become the Body of Christ--led by Him--it will be necessary that the members of the Parish engage in a continuing program of study about their Faith.

Goal--Study--That by the end of 1974 15% of the adult membership (age 14 and over) will be engaged in at least one 12 week Bible Study Group.

by the end of 1975	30%
1976	50%
1977	75%
1978	100%

2. In order to become "the Body of Christ and a community of followers" the members of a Parish must be together-- they must develop a growing sense of fellowship and acceptance. They must continually hear and experience the "good news." They must be involved in the central act of the Christian Community--worship.

Goal--Worship-- That by the end of 1974 100 family units will be regularly attending worship services (Sunday or Wednesday.)

by the end of 1975	110
1976	125
1977	150
1978	200

3. In order to "become the Body of Christ" and "carry on Jesus' mission of healing, justice and peace" and to be able to "proclaim the Gospel" of God's love for all persons, the Parish of St. Stephen's will need to be involved in efforts to deal with the sources of injustice and oppression in society, to alleviate the pain of the oppressed, and to change unjust structures that cause such suffering.

Goal--Social Service--That in 1975 20% of St. Stephen's budget will be spent outside our parish to support the church's mission to the world.

1976	25%
1977	33%
1978	40%
1979	50%

Goal--Social Action--That in 1975 5% of the congregation's membership will be involved in a task group to deal with a specific social problem (hunger, prison reform, etc.)

1976	10%
1977	15%
1978	20%
1979	25%

4. In order for St. Stephen's to be able to carry out the preceding goals and for its membership to be financially faithful, we will need to become sacrificial givers in terms of our annual giving to the Parish.



Goal--Stewardship--That in 1975 5% of the membership of the Parish will be tithing (giving at least 10% of after tax income for benevolent giving--with at least half of that going to the church).

1976	10%
1977	15%
1978	25%
1979	35%

#### HOW PEOPLE WILL REACT TO THIS PROCESS

If you and your church complete this process successfully your church will have an articulated reason for being, a sense of direction, and a mechanism to monitor your progress. The major implication of this process is how people will react to it.

There are some who will become highly motivated to implement the specific opportunities which will help the church fulfill its purpose. These people need to be put to work as rapidly as possible.

There are some people who will watch and wait to see if the purpose statement and plan will make any difference. These people need to be continually communicated with and listened to. They need to become increasingly involved in the implementation process so they will gain a growing sense of ownership in the new expectations of their church.

At some point in time your church is going to begin to lose some of its old members because of your new expectations. While it is painful to have members of your church reject your new dreams it still is a healthy sign. It means you have communicated your purpose well enough to have people decide it is not for them. It means you will have begun to implement your purpose and plan enough to have people decide they do not want to participate. It means you will be left with those people who have the strongest desire to see the purpose fulfilled. Remember that Jesus lost one of twelve for a defection rate of slightly less than ten percent.

If no one leaves your church either your purpose is too general, it has not been communicated effectively, or it is not being taken seriously.

One day you will find your first converts on your church's doorstep who are there because your church has a purpose and a plan. People are always on the look out to participate in something which makes sense to them and which they perceive to be an opportunity. In fact the higher the expectation of people as stated in your purpose and plans the more likely you are to find yourself with new prospects who are willing to answer the challenge. They will more than make up for those who will ask to leave.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## IMPLEMENTING YOUR CHURCH'S PURPOSE

One Diocese in the Episcopal Church had each of its local churches go through an extensive process to define its purpose and to plan for the next five years of its life. On visiting several of these churches there was one common denominator: the future plans of each church ended up on a shelf. Three critical ingredients can insure success in implementing your church's purpose and plan and keep them from gathering dust on a shelf.

There is you. As your church's professional leader you have control over your actions which can push towards implementation. The leaders and members of your church have the opportunity to endorse and promote for implementation the newly articulated purpose of your church. There is a process. Instead of implementation seen as an added program of the church it is viewed as an INTEGRAL ONGOING PROCESS in the life of the church as a whole and in each organization. With clergy support, lay support, and a sound process the chance of implementation is very high.

Such a process is outlined on the next page. By this time you will have talked with several hundred people in formulating the purpose statement in trying it out and then communicating it widely. (Step 1) In communicating your church's purpose extensively you will have raised expectations as to the direction the church will be going in the future. These expectations will have been endorsed formally and informally by the leaders and members of the church.

## COMMUNICATING THE PURPOSE

You will find it helpful if you plan how you will communicate your

church's core mission. In your notebook you can make a list of all the formal opportunities you will have to speak over the next several months. A list might include sermons, meetings of groups within the church, or scheduled forums. The list can be expanded to opportunities you may want to create. A second list should include a list of the key people you will want to talk with individually or in small groups. This list should include all the leadership or potential leadership who will have to accept the purpose of the church as their own if it is to be implemented in the future. In each case you will have to decide how the ownership of the purpose can be transferred from you to them. If we look at Jesus' ministry as a model he spoke with individuals who became disciples, with small groups of people, and with the multitudes as he worked to have his stated purpose become the purpose of others. He then had these people go out and speak the purpose as if it were their own. The same strategy should work for you. Once you have communicated the purpose and it has been accepted then commission that person to communicate with someone else. Using such a chain letter effect it should not be long before the entire church has heard of the church's articulated purpose formally and informally several times.

#### A PURPOSE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

- I. THE PURPOSE HAS BEEN BROADLY COMMUNICATED
  - A. Extensive inquiry with lay people before purpose was stated.
  - B. Subject of several sermons, talks, presentations after formulation.
  - C. Purpose has been extensively shared internally. Those who have bought into purpose have shared it with others.
  - D. After oral communication, written communication through bulletins, working papers, and leaflets.
- II. THE PURPOSE HAS BEEN BROADLY ENDORSED
  - A. Formally by the churches governing board.
  - B. Informally by the church's governing board--as individual members

- who are willing to work to see it implemented.
    - C. Informally by a broad cross section of the church's membership who have indicated their enthusiasm for implementation.
- III. THE PURPOSE IS IMPLEMENTED BY THE CHURCH'S ONGOING ORGANIZATIONS
  - A. Their leadership has endorsed purpose.
  - B. Their leadership accepts responsibility to generate alternatives for implementation.
  - C. Alternatives are checked by clergy for consistency with the purpose.
  - D. Organizations are delegated the authority to implement the selected alternatives.
- IV. THE PURPOSE IS IMPLEMENTED BY NEW SPECIAL TASK FORCES AND WORKING GROUPS
  - A. Area of opportunity is defined.
  - B. Leaders are recruited.
  - C. Opportunity is focused.
  - D. Task is delegated.
- V. THE PROGRESS OF PAST IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE PLANS IN I. THROUGH IV. IS EVALUATED EACH QUARTER
  - A. Determine progress against goals.
  - B. Set future goals.
  - C. Implement.

#### HAVING THE PURPOSE ENDORSED

In communicating your church's purpose extensively you will have raised expectations as to the direction the church will be going in the future. These expectations should be endorsed formally and informally by the leaders and the members of the church. (Step 2) Again it will be helpful to plan who needs to endorse the plans of the church. Such a list will include the church's governing board, the major organizations, and informally those who have clout in the local church system. When such endorsement is asked for it should be no surprise, for each of the leaders should already have been pre-sold on the purpose.

In some cases you may find resistance to endorsing the purpose of the church. In fact it would be surprising if you did not for you are asking people to change their expectations of the one sacred organi-

zation to which they belong. Here you will have to be prophet, pastor, and politician. As prophet you will have to point to the underlying Biblical foundation of the purpose. As pastor you will have to be willing to listen to their fear and anger. You may have to give them time to grow to understand how the core mission of the church as it is now articulated can become their own. You also should be willing to give them the option of seeking a church which is more to their liking. As a politician you will have to use your best instincts to generate a momentum in your church for the purpose to be endorsed by both leaders and a large majority of the church's members as well. This step will be completed when the leaders of the church and a broad cross section feel a sense of ownership in the core mission of the church as it has been articulated. In fact there should be a sense of building momentum towards implementation. If you are not sure this momentum is present then go to ten lay people who will be honest with you. If they express their doubts that a broad cross section of the church's membership or the key leadership is committed to implementing the purpose then you will need to seek out the reason why.

1. Poor purpose
  - A. Not right for particular church
  - B. Not clearly stated
  - C. Not inspirational
  - D. Not Biblically based
2. Poor communication
  - A. Not enough people were consulted before defining the purpose
  - B. Not enough communication after definition
  - C. Leadership did not buy into purpose
  - D. Grapevine, informal communication decided the purpose was not worthy
3. Too little endorsement
  - A. The behavior and informal communication of leadership say the purpose is not important

- B. A broad cross section of local church decided informally not to endorse purpose

Depending upon your findings you can return to the step which is causing the problem (purpose definition, communication, or endorsement) and begin again. As each step builds on the foundation of the one before, it is important not to move too quickly through them. It is well worth spending a month or two more on a step at this stage than to find a year from now that your church never did understand or accept as their own the purpose of their church as articulated by you.

#### IMPLEMENTING THE PURPOSE IN EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS

Once you have widely communicated the purpose and it has received broad general endorsement and ownership, implementation can begin for real. The next step for successfully implementing the church's core mission lies in the hands of the church's ongoing organizations.

(Step 3) Several of the following may be recognizable in your church.

1. A Governing Board
2. A Church School
3. A Women's Organization
4. A Yearly Church Fair
5. A Choir
6. An Every Member Canvass
7. An Outreach Committee
8. A Young Peoples' Group
9. An Altar Guild
10. A Men's Group

The trick for you as the clergyman of the church is to go to each of your church's permanent organizations and gain their commitment to help

implement the new purpose. In your notebook make a list of the church's ongoing organizations and the leaders of each.

Your request to them might go as follows, "As you know the purpose of our church is to \_\_\_\_\_. We have developed a plan which gives us some direction as to how we hope this purpose will be fulfilled in the future. My question to you is how your organization can enhance and fulfill the purpose of our church? During the next month will your organization draw up a list of alternative ideas which you could then implement. In a month we can get back together to see the list of alternatives. From this list let us plan to have one or more implemented as quickly as possible. In the mean time I am available to you or your organization in any way you might find helpful." The key to the strategy is to make an initial successful attempt at having the leaders and the organization plan and implement a specific action which will help fulfill the purpose. This achievement can then be used as the foundation for a succession of increasingly ambitious undertakings. For those leaders who are reluctant to develop alternatives for action, it is important for them to realize that they are not being asked to take a big plunge or institute sweeping changes. For those leaders who are over enthusiastic it will be necessary to focus their energy on the achievable.

A check list of what your conversation should include:

1. Orally ask the leaders to play back to you their understanding of the church's purpose to make sure it is the same as yours.
2. Get a commitment from them to use their initiative to develop a list of alternatives for action.  
(You may want to have an example ready.)
3. Establish a milestone with them as to the time you will next get together to discuss the alternatives they will



have developed. Set your appointment now.

4. Retain the authority to help them choose from the alternatives they generate.
5. They should retain the authority to generate alternatives and accept responsibility for implementing the alternatives you and they select.
6. You should be willing to help at their discretion.

If your church has eight ongoing organizations which collectively involve more than twenty-five percent of your active leadership a synergism will begin to build. People from one organization will begin to talk with members of another. They will begin to spur one another on as to which organization shall make the most inventive and pertinent contribution in seeing the purpose implemented.

At your first milestone meeting with the leaders of each organization you may have to make some rather quick judgments. If the leaders and their organization have developed a viable set of alternatives and are enthusiastic about implementing them you need only to respond with encouragement. If the leaders come to this meeting with no alternatives you will need to find out why. It may be their behavior is saying they do not believe in the church's purpose enough to deem it worthy for action. Or they may be disclosing the inadequate planning ability of their organization. In either case you will need to find out the real reason for their inaction and then work to change their expectation so that in another month they will have developed the alternatives for action as they had agreed. If several organizations do not go through this brainstorming state, you will need to begin again at an earlier step to get them on board, even if you have to begin the entire purpose defining process again.

The third situation you may encounter is for the organization to have developed alternatives which are not appropriate to the purpose. In such a case you will have to openly negotiate with them to develop a second set of alternatives which are more in line with the expectation of the core mission of the church. This negotiating is delicate, for you need to keep their enthusiasm while at the same time you will be working to change their expectations. It is an opportunity for education at its best. It may be helpful to remember the implementation of one or more of these specific alternatives is a first incremental step in a longer range process which may take several years. Only you at the moment can judge the degree of flexibility which the bargaining requires. The only time you should be completely hard line is if an alternative is presented with which you cannot live. In this case you will have to be forthright in expressing your opinion and take the consequences.

#### IMPLEMENTING THE PURPOSE THROUGH NEW ORGANIZATIONS

The church's newly defined core mission should bring to mind several new opportunities for action. While communicating the church's purpose statement, in having it endorsed, and in seeking its implementation by ongoing organizations, ideas will have been generated. Often people will have remarked, "If this is our purpose, then we should be doing \_\_\_\_\_." Each time an idea is expressed you should keep a record of it in your notebook along with who originated it. Further you may want to seek additional ways to generate new options for the church to act upon.

At the same time the "opportunities list" is being kept, a list of people should be kept as well. In meeting with lay people you should

seek out four to eight who will become the core of a "future of the church planning effort." The ongoing function of this group will be to gather new ideas, identify human resources, and bring the two together so that worthy ideas can be brought into reality. The membership of this planning team should be composed of some of the brightest members of your church who are open enough to look to the future, know enough about the church to know what is possible, and whose judgment you are willing to trust. Also this planning group should include at least two members who are well known in the church and whose judgment will be implicitly trusted by the lay members of the congregation. The charter to this group should be given both by yourself and the governing board of the church. The mandate given them is to generate by what means they choose and then cause to be implemented one new opportunity for the church each quarter. The opportunity can either be of a one time nature or can be ongoing. An example of the former might be a one time educational event for adults. An example of the latter might be to create an adult education task force who will be charged with creating adult educational opportunities all the year round.

In essence this planning group is comparable to a research and development group in an industrial corporation. Its importance will become evident as the church can expect a new stream of opportunities to be in the offing, rather than having to rely only on the innovations of organizations which already exist.

#### EVALUATING PROGRESS

This chapter has outlined four steps in implementing the newly defined core mission of the church. Each step in itself is a process

which initially will take from one to several months to initiate. In reality no step will ever be completed for they should be seen as ongoing processes of communication, endorsement, and implementation. Because of this each process should be continually evaluated, updated, and planned into the future. Just as you have a personal set of goals for yourself as developed in the first chapter, so should these processes have goals. This evaluating and goal setting process should be conducted by yourself and a subgroup of the church's governing boards on a quarterly basis. This group should first take the responsibility for determining the progress which has been made in each category. In those areas which have not done well they should seek ways to provide help. Their findings should be communicated to the governing board as a whole. Next they should ask each of the appropriate leaders to set written goals of where they hope to be by the end of the next quarter or other appropriate time limit. These too should be communicated to the governing board. On an ongoing basis the congregation as a whole should be informed in a more general sense of the direction these four processes are taking and the progress which is being made. Through such an evaluation and planning procedure you should gain a growing sense of achievement and momentum.

## CHAPTER SIX

## MANAGING THE CHURCH YEAR MORE EFFECTIVELY

So much happens in the life of a local church during the course of a year that most clergy and church leaders never have time to stop reacting to the constant demands and seize the opportunity of deciding in which direction they would like to have their organization go. Further in spending so much energy on merely reacting to the never ending demands which ask for immediate attention, rarely do church leaders have the time to feel a sense of deep accomplishment in having met goals which they considered important. Instead of a sense of satisfaction in what has been accomplished, there is often a sense of frustration that time was never saved to do the really important things and that really important opportunities may have been missed.

This does not need to be the case for the local church can do more than merely react. For this possibility to happen the leadership of the local church must step back from the immediacy of all which it does and visualize the work they hope to have the church accomplish during the next year.

Let us begin by looking at what takes place in the life of a local church. Obviously worship, christian education, and the rituals of baptism, confirmation, and burials are constants which happen week after week. On any given day a person may seek out the church for pastoral counseling, to become an active member, or to request the church to respond to an urgent need within the community. Annually most churches raise funds for their work the next year, plan major services of worship for Christmas and Easter, and mobilize people for an annual major occasion.

Underlying these specific tasks is an on-going dynamic process which happens time after time after time. Unmet needs are identified and diagnosed. Plans are laid to meet those needs. Leaders are recruited, trained, and empowered to satisfy the people who have brought their problems to the local church. Action is taken. The process begins immediately again. The major difficulty of the local parish Church is not in what it is attempting to do nor in the process which is constantly engaged in. The difficulty is in how it actively attempts to implement the process it uses to achieve its goals. It has been my observation that most clergy and lay parish church leaders are able to plan no more than a few weeks in advance. Because of this, clergy and actively involved lay people must continually play "catch up" with their ideas of what they would most like to see happen. Most planning processes are only partially completed for there is not time to plan more carefully about the best way to achieve their desires. Recruitment of people is carried out on a crisis basis because the lay person must begin responding immediately. The lay person often feels frustrated because of a lack of clergy support or that they are being rather ineffectual in the new job they have taken. Rarely does one ever stop to think what has been accomplished because the next crisis is upon the church and it must be responded to.

What the local church needs is a management system which will give clergy and lay people a map of where the church will be going during the next year and an outline of processes which will be used to reach their destination. The map must be very simple so that it can easily be carried in the head of the clergyman and active lay leaders of the parish

so they can know where the church is going rather than hear through the grapevine later which crisis caused what not to happen. What follows is a management system which if implemented by a local congregation will allow that congregation to seize its future and feel a sense of accomplishment for its efforts. The place this management system begins may seem odd at first for it is a radical departure from managing the local congregation as it is currently done. The major difficulty in implementing this management system is not that it is complex, for the simplicity of its wisdom soon will become apparent. The difficulty of implementation is in being able to break old habits and be willing to accept the discipline of new ones.

#### THE CHURCH YEAR MANAGEMENT CALENDAR

THE CALENDAR	THE ACTIVITIES
November, December	Planning for the next academic year and evaluating results
January, February	Recruiting for the next year (and the year after)
March, April	Preparing the budget, planning the next year's programs, including time spent on training and empower the newly recruited leaders
May	Finalization of next Fall's programs
June, July, August	Time off
September, October	Program implementation, Fund raising

#### NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER--PLANNING

Planning is the first step in the local church management system. Such planning takes place during November and December before the next academic year in the life of the church, which will begin the following September. The academic year beginning in September is chosen for

implementing plans and programs because with so much of our lives geared to the school calendar and summer vacations that it is possible to take advantage of the academic calendar rather than having it work against us. Every hour used in planning for the programs--activities, and opportunities for the next academic year will save ten hours of future management time in trying to respond to crisis situations.

In November and December the clergyman should write down from his perspective the standard things which will happen during the academic year--the fact that God will be worshipped, a church school must begin in September, a choir will sing, and that funds will be raised in October.

Once the fundamentals are listed then he should take time to dream about what might be. Could lay people learn to become trained pastoral counselors, or teachers of the Christian faith with enough knowledge so as to give college level adult biblical education courses for the rest of the congregation. Is there a major community need which could be met if the parish really planned well and mobilized all its resources to meet that one critical need. This is the time for lay people too, to dream about what they would like to see happen in their church for now the lead time has been provided to develop the resources needed to have a dream become reality. Lastly, the clergy and lay people together should decide that which the church will no longer do. By the end of December there should be a master list drawn up of plans for the coming academic year. This master list is the road map of the year ahead.

#### JANUARY AND FEBRUARY--RECRUITING

These are the months during which recruiting to meet the plans



should be done. The time is perfect. The next academic year is still far away so that lay people feel more comfortable about accepting new responsibilities. Those who are asked to participate in helping the parish realize its plans and dreams most likely have not been approached by other volunteer organizations so the church who recruits this far ahead can have the pick of who they want. Further, research by at least one major volunteer organization has found these months to be the best for having volunteers accept opportunities to participate.

Such early recruiting should help churches whose laity is very mobile. Lay people who are uncertain about their own futures naturally hesitate to accept responsibility in the affairs of their parish. But if the first task of a new lay leader is to select a second in command who can take over in his absence, then strong leadership continuity can be maintained. In fact, this creates a leadership team, which makes recruiting this far in advance even more attractive.

The concept of such a leadership team has been taken one step further by Dr. John O'Hear at Christ Church Christiana Hundred. In this "coadjutor system," the recruited person is asked to be vice-president of the organization for the year ahead with the understanding that the following year he or she will become president. The vice-president thus has a chance to learn the president's job for an entire year, noting all he would like to see happen when the time comes for him to be in charge, and the current president has a willing assistant to share the work load.

Any parish which does its recruiting in January for the year ahead will no longer find itself recruiting church school teachers in September,

fund raisers in August, a head of the women in July, or the head of a youth group in June. By the end of February all the parish leaders will have been identified and will have begun thinking about how to most effectively carry out their responsibility. When this happens one can begin to feel a sense of momentum and expectations about the year to come building in the life of the parish.

#### MARCH AND APRIL--PROGRAM AND BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

During these months the clergy and lay people can develop the programs they hope to have take place beginning in the Fall. The road map plans developed in November and December can be amplified and fleshed out. Further resources which need to be found can be sought out. A master calendar can be prepared of what will be happening when, so dates planned by one group will not conflict with those of another.

This too is the time the budget can be worked on for the next year. As plans are already well under way the vestry or other leadership body can make good estimates of what funding will be needed. These estimates can then be tested against the expectation of those who will be responsible for the fund raising. Time too can be spent on what methods shall be used in fund raising, on how the church's story can best be told, and in generating early support to have the planned budget met.

#### MAY--FINALIZATION

This is the month to finalize all the planning and preparation which has been done to make the first part of the Fall academic year a success. It is the time to go down a check list to make sure the plans envisioned in November and December are ready to be realized beginning in September. It is the time to check with each parish church leader to make sure all

is in hand for the arrival of the new academic year.

#### JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST--SLACK TIME

These are months of time off. At the very time most churches are scrambling to organize for the next Fall, the church using this management system can enjoy their summer months. Perhaps these months can be a time for further reading, greater informality, more personal contact through parish calling. These are months of relaxation and expectation in knowing that all the preparation for the year ahead has been completed.

#### SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER--IMPLEMENTATION

The new academic year begins. The plans envisioned last November and December unfold one after another. The people who were recruited in January and February assume their places of responsibility in performing the work they have prepared themselves to do since last spring. The parish is alive with a sense that things once dreamed are really happening. In any organization there are always going to be crises, often in the most unexpected areas. A designated leader may move out of town, or some group may have underestimated the size of their task. But if the planning and preparations have been reasonably well done the parish should have a new sense of accomplishing more of what it really wanted to do with much less effort than before it thought possible.

These too, are the months for doing the fund raising which will sustain the parish for another year. The plans laid in the Spring and the reasoning behind the preparation should be common knowledge to the majority of the members of the congregation. They should visibly be able to see the benefits of the parish in operation in the flurry of the

first activity of the new academic year. Hopefully giving to the parish will change from an ought to to a personal desire to participate.

#### NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER--EVALUATION AND PLANNING

The process begins again, with one difference. Time should be spent in evaluating what happened during the previous academic year and evaluating the preparations for the current academic year. A notebook of these evaluations should be kept so those who are responsible for the next academic year can begin to have not only a sense of history about the past and all the parish has been able to do, but also to be useful guides to those who will implement the plans developed for the next academic year.

#### THE COST OF THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

There is a cost of implementing such a management system in a parish church. The cost is that of self-discipline in not procrastinating about doing things today. This system takes far less total time to use than the crisis, at the last moment system currently used in most parish churches. In fact, a clergyman should be able to cut his time spent in administering a local parish church by twenty percent if he was willing to change his parish's habits in planning, recruiting, and preparation. And likewise lay people should gain a sense that they now are able to accomplish much more with less effort for they no longer need feel under prepared or just reacting to crises. The costs of changing bad habits into good habits, of approaching the management of a local parish church with a sense of purpose and plan, is a small price to pay for the anticipated benefits--a renewed vital parish which knows where it is going.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## A LOCAL CHURCH PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

What local church does not face a series of critical problems which continually seem to defy solution? These are the kinds of problems which produce an on going sense of concern by the leadership of a local church and yet for all the attention given them never seem to be solved. When these problems are identified and a commitment is made to solve them usually one of two things happens. Either those who set off to solve them become so frustrated that they decide the task is not worth it or they push so hard that a human explosion occurs in the church's life between those who are desirous of change and those who see the very solution of the problem as a threat to the church to which they are committed. A list of such problems might include the following. Less than fifty percent of the members of our church participate regularly in its life. The number of children in our church school is rapidly declining. With inflation we do not know how we are going to pay the bills. Our church does not attract very many young families. The list could go on and on.

In the past several methods have been tried to solve difficult problems in the life of a local church. One method was to have a local church go through an extensive planning process in which it would identify its objectives. The difficulty with the method was that those who formulated the plans were not the ones who were going to implement the plans. This meant that the plans more often than not collected dust on a shelf. A second method has been to train clergy and lay people as "change agents" by having them receive special education, then using their new learnings

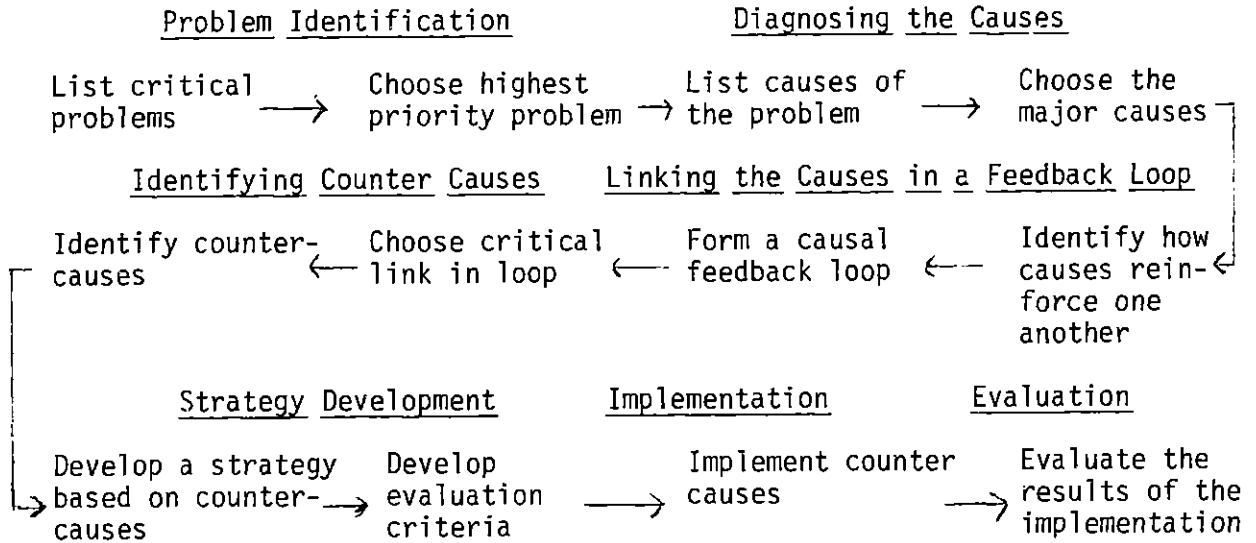
to help their local church solve its change resistant problems. Here the difficulty was that, by their lack of responsiveness to change, those who had not received the special training frustrated the efforts of those who had been trained. A third and more successful method was to have outside process consultants work with the clergy and a broad segment of a local church's leadership to discover and implement newly formulated goals. This method has met with a significant degree of success which has been limited only by the skill of the consultants, the commitment of the leadership of the local church to really see its problems solved, and the ability of the church to pay the cost of the consultants.

What is needed by almost every local church is a low cost and highly effective process by which critical problems in the life of the local church can be identified and solved, by the church's own members. To be adopted broadly, such a process should be easy to learn and use by clergy and lay people alike. It should be able to ferret out the significant causes of the problem rather than just deal with symptoms. At the end of the process a method of evaluation should be provided to see how successful the problem solving effort has been.

This paper is a description of such a process by which critical problems in the life of a local church can be solved. It is an integrated approach of problem identification, diagnosis of the problem's causes, the postulation of counter-causes, counter-cause implementation, and finally evaluation. Illustration #1 is a diagram of the process.

## ILLUSTRATION #1

## A PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS



This process is based on the disciplines of Organization Psychology and Systems Dynamics. To be effective it needs a major commitment on the part of the participants to really be willing to solve the problem rather than merely study it. Further the leadership of the local parish, if they are not the ones involved with the process, must be willing to support the answers which the participants find. Being realistic, if either the leadership of the parish or the participants in the process is not fully committed to implementing solutions and the changes they will bring, it is better not to begin the process at all.

The participants in the example which will be used in this paper were clergymen who were rectors or pastors of six different local churches in the Boston area.<sup>12</sup> They had come together as a research group of the Academy of Parish Clergy. Their churches were of different sizes, locations, and denominations, which suggests that this process may be able to meet the needs of a wide diversity of local churches. While in the example the experiences of clergy are used, this process should be just as effective if the problem posing and solving team were made up of clergy and laity from a local church or a team of laity who were given the authority to implement change in a particular area of the church's life. The critical factor is that the participants have the power and the authority to implement the solutions they devise as a result of this process and not merely have their diagnostic efforts shelved at the point of implementation.

#### PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The most difficult part of beginning a problem solving process is to clearly define the problem. In the case of these clergymen they were



given a two page questionnaire which looked like Illustration #2 which is found on the next two pages. The first difficulty faced by most local churches is that there is more than one critical problem. Secondly once the problem is identified, agreement is often difficult to get on what the problem really is, for different members of the church see the problem in different ways. Thus this process begins by giving the participants an opportunity to clearly identify and define the problem. The inquiry of the problem solving team should be limited only by the boundaries of the area of their authority in which they are empowered to implement solutions. Such an area may be as large as the whole local church or as small as the area of Christian Education or Worship. It is important not to have the area too narrowly defined for if this happens, it may mean that a more critical problem will be overlooked or the problem may be of a size that does not warrant such a major effort in arriving at a solution.

The questionnaire outlined in Illustration #2 enables each participant of the problem solving team to carefully think through specific problems he sees in the area of authority in which he has been given responsibility to work. There are some ground rules in filling out these questionnaires which should if followed, make them more effective. A questionnaire should be filled out in writing by each participant independently. The answers of the participant should be as specific as possible so the problems listed can be clearly defined. It is for this reason that each participant is asked to identify problems in both organizational and personal terms. Two sections of the questionnaire are devoted to "opportunities," for in thinking through opportunities,

ILLUSTRATION #2

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

- A. Name the five major problems your local church or your area of responsibility will face during the next two years.
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
- B. Name the most difficult binds, problems, or dislikes you will face as a leader of your local church or in your area of responsibility during the next two years.
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
- C. Name the five major opportunities your local church or your area of responsibility will have during the next two years.
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.

D. Name the five major opportunities you will have as a leader in your local church or in your area of responsibility during the next two years.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

E. Star the problem or opportunity in each category which you consider to be the most important.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

It is intended that this Questionnaire be duplicated and given to each participant.

in relationship to problems the nature of the problem often becomes more clearly defined. Lastly and most important, the respondent must be as honest as possible, even if the problem is particularly difficult to expose or commit to paper. The diagnosis of what the possible problems are should be as candid as one would expect from a doctor who is deciding whether or not to operate on a patient. The problems listed must be real and felt, that is to say they should not be listed to merely be able to complete the questionnaire.

The clergy who filled out the problem identification questionnaire found it to be the most difficult task of the entire problem solving process. They found it difficult for they had to look at the problems of their parish not only in specific terms, but also over a longer time horizon than was usually done. Before completing this questionnaire they reported being far less specific in analyzing their churches' problems and rarely did they look beyond a few months ahead. They also found it difficult to be honest with themselves as to the nature and the extent of the problems which faced their churches. One man said he went so far as to only include problems in his list which he already had solved. Lastly several of the clergy said they felt a feeling of anger in filling out the questionnaire, for they were confronting areas in the life of their local churches about which they had generated tremendous negative feelings and never had been able to solve.

The first task of the problem solving team is to share the problems which they have written down individually, including the problem they starred as having the highest priority. Here it is helpful to have some-

one act as a recorder by noting the problems as they are listed on a black board or news print. What soon becomes evident is that several individuals will have identified the same problem. This for this first time breaks down the sense of isolation many people feel in thinking that they alone have recognized the problem's existence. This is the beginning of what is likely to be a growing esprit de corps by the problem solving team.

As the experimental clergy group shared their priority problems one common theme was struck: a lack of community in their individual churches. They finally defined this problem common to most of the individual members of their churches as "a failure to perceive the Church community as powerful in my life." In their own individual questionnaires they had spoken of many different symptoms of this problem. Their list of symptoms included:

1. The Quality of Worship on Sunday.
2. Church leaders who were away many weekends each year at vacation houses.
3. Low expectation that the local church provided a community of support strong enough for people to share what was really troubling them.

In this stage the clergy problem solving team found it to be important to take the time to make sure that everyone agreed the most critical problem had been identified and clearly defined. A temptation is to let the problem be defined by those who are the most articulate and aggressive speakers. A good check is to go back to each person's questionnaire to make sure the problem as now defined by the group is grounded in the perception of each participant of the problem solving team.

## DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEM'S CAUSES

The Causal Identification Questionnaire is a way for an individual on a problem solving team to discover the critical causes of the problem. The problem statement which was defined in the first step of the process is written at the top. Each participant then goes through a brainstorming process to list all the causes of the problem he can identify and from that list chooses the major seven. Next the participant identifies a preliminary list of counter-causes to the problem, an end condition in which the problem would be solved, and three criteria by which one would measure the degree to which the problem had been solved. Counter-causes are those factors which if implemented would solve the problem. This questionnaire is helpful if the problem solving team has a period of time between the time it first meets to define the problem and the time it meets to refine the list of the problem's causes and counter-causes. In using this process an individual needs to be cautious on two counts. The first is the temptation to identify solutions before exhaustively listing the possible causes of the problem. This may result in a mis-diagnosis so that the best solution will never be discovered. Secondly, because an individual working alone may not identify causes of the problem which may be obvious to another person it is necessary for the problem solving team to re-cycle through this process as a team. The team should enforce a sense of discipline in taking enough time on identifying the problem's causes before leaping to identifying either counter-causes or a solution.

The clergy problem solving team found it easier to list the causes of the problem than they did to identify the problem in the first place.

CAUSAL IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

A. Give a clear statement of the problem:

B. List seven causes of the problem:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

C. List seven counter-causes of the problem:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

D. Give a statement of a specific goal condition in which problem would be solved:

For the first time they were able to make connections between the fact of their priority problem and the causes of that problem. They found it much easier to identify the causes of the problem while working in a group than they did as individuals for they were more able to concentrate on doing diagnosis rather than identifying solutions. While in the clergy example the identification of the causes did not change the definition of the problem, in other cases individuals have reported the definition of the problem changed during the process of identifying causes. If during the course of identifying causes, a clearer definition of the problem occurs, then the newly defined problem should be written at the top of a Causal Identification Questionnaire and the process begun again.

In our example the clergy listed the following causes of their problem.

1. Needs of intimacy not met in local church.
2. Needs of community not met in local church.
3. Low expectation of local church.
4. Worship goes against intimacy.
5. Worship is defined too narrowly.
6. People inside the church have a stereotype of what "church" is.
7. Little transformation of peoples' lives.
8. Architecture.
9. Feelings across the spectrum of joy to sorrow and pain are not readily expressed which leads people to act with a polite facade in church.

#### LINKING THE CAUSES IN A FEEDBACK LOOP

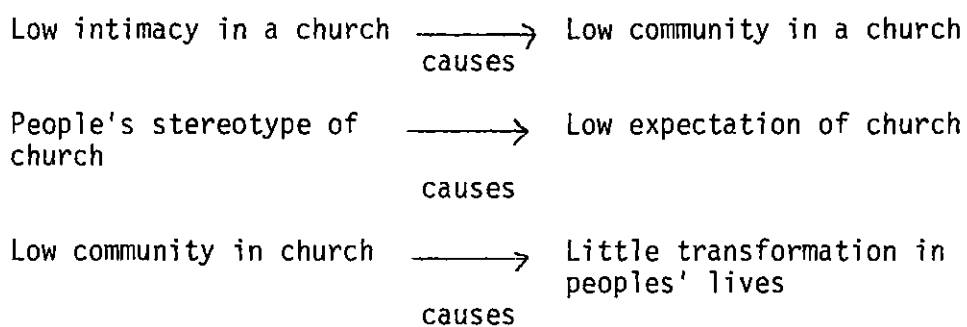
The major breakthrough in this problem solving process comes in this



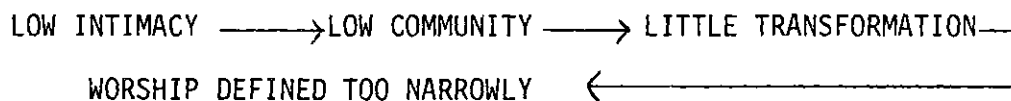
step. Once a list of the major causes has been developed it is necessary to see how they influence one another. One soon discovers that the causes of a critical problem are not independent of one another, but rather reinforce one another. For precisely this reason local church problems have been so resistant to solution in the past. Formerly when a congregation would treat only a symptom of the problem, the other causes of the problem would work to keep the problem from being solved.

The first step is to begin to see which cause influences another until one has several strings of two or three causes each, which can be linked into a still longer chain. The goal of this step is to finally form this string of causes into a circular feedback loop, so the dynamic and reinforcing nature of the problem can be visualized.

The clergy problem solving team example should be helpful in understanding this step. From the list of their causes they began to link those together which seemed to influence one another:

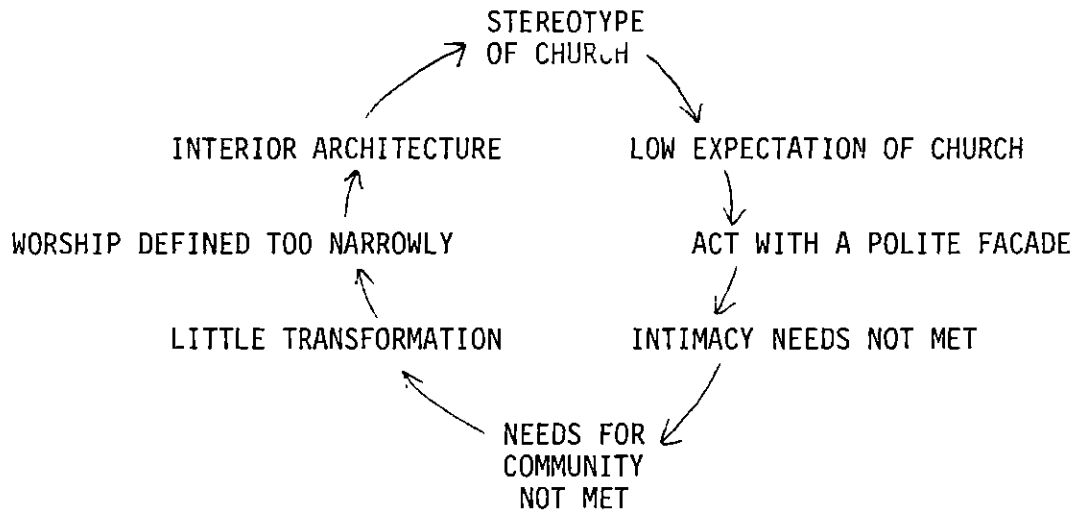


They then linked these couplets into a longer chain of causes influencing other causes.



To the surprise of the clergy it finally was possible to see how each

cause of the problem influenced at least one other cause of the problem in such a way that the following loop could be drawn.



It now becomes very apparent that the causes of why individuals fail to perceive the church community as a powerful force in their lives reinforce one another in such a way as to make it an extremely difficult problem to solve. Causes such as the interior architecture of a church, the low expectation with which the church community is approached, and the perceived need to act with a polite facade which at first appear to have no relationship with each other can be seen as reinforcing one another. With this diagramming of causes in a circular linking form two phenomena which have been experienced in the past and not well understood now become clear. The first phenomenon is why minor changes in the life of a local parish seem to generate such conflict. Because each of these causes reinforce one another a change in one area has implications for changes in all the other areas. For example in the Episcopal Church an attempt was made several years ago to introduce a "passing of the peace" in the midst of the Communion Service. The passing of the peace was to be no more than having the

members of the congregation greet one another during the service. In many parishes this natural act of hands greeting one another caused an uproar, for not only did it impact peoples' expectations about worship, but it also impacted the levels of polite facade, intimacy, and community, etc. as the change was amplified around the loop.

The second phenomenon which now can be understood is why it has been so difficult to implement change in a local church. Formerly it was thought that a good idea implemented in one area should be successful. Yet instead of success many churches found the idea never took hold at all. The reason for the lack of success of many good problem solutions is an under-estimation of the forces of inertia which work to keep a local church the way it is. Thus it is important to develop solutions which will have the power to overcome the forces which will tend to work against the solution.

#### IDENTIFYING COUNTER-CAUSES

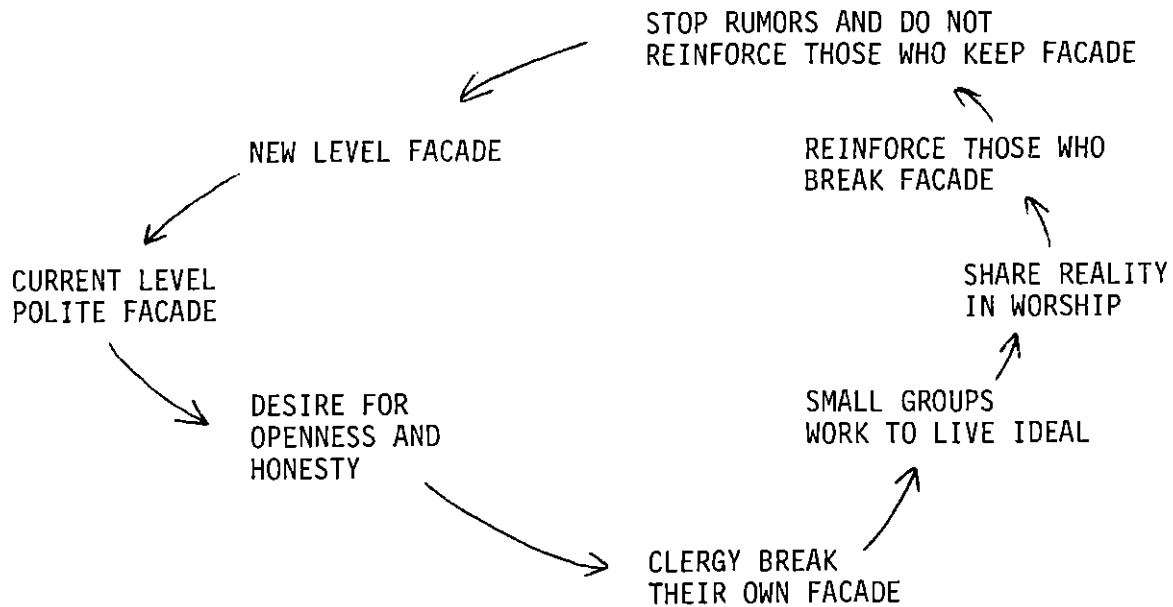
Once the dynamic loop has been developed the next task is to look for the critical link in the loop which has open to it a number of important counter-causes which can be developed to counteract the identified link. The strategy then is to develop these counter-causes with enough impact that the entire loop can be changed so as to solve the problem.

The example of the clergy's group experience will be helpful. Of all the links which caused the lack of a sense of powerful community the polite facade which many people brought to church was seen as the most critical. In several churches people expected that they were to leave their problems and feelings outside the church's door. In other churches

people were able to express that which was good and joyful, but negative feelings were not acceptable. In very few churches were people able to come out from behind their facade, express honestly what was happening in their lives, and then expect their local church as a christian community to transform those areas of their lives in which they needed help. The clergy then listed the following counter-causes to this particular problem.

1. Clergy can become an example by expressing honestly their own feelings, from joy to frustration.
2. Small groups within the church could adopt a new norm of honesty and then encourage others to do likewise.
3. A new sense of honesty and openness could begin to take place in worship by using open intercessory prayers.
4. Rumors and gossip on the "grape vine" can be exposed and a norm established within the church that destructive communication behind a person's back is no longer acceptable.
5. On each occasion when a person comes out from behind their polite facade the risk they have taken should be reinforced so they will be willing to risk exposing themselves again.

The clergy then linked these counter-causes into a loop which began with the initial level of the polite facade they found in their churches and then linked the counter-causes they identified above. These counter-causes if implemented will become a new dynamic loop which will tend to reinforce each other. The arrow between the new level of facade and the current level is drawn to show that the circular reinforcing continues with the new level becoming the current level and beginning the process again.



During this part of the problem solving process the clergy began to feel a sense of exhilaration and trepidation from realizing that they were exposing counter-causes which if implemented would have a dramatic impact on their local churches. The next issue is to develop the strategy and implement these counter-causes.

#### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

The strategy development, with such a thorough diagnosis having been done, is relatively easy. Each counter-cause should become the foundation for a particular strategy as to how the counter-cause can best be implemented. For example one clergyman developed a rule for himself that if he ever heard of a rumor within his church he would immediately call the parties involved to see if it was true. Each time he had done this he has broken the power of the rumor for whether it was either confirmed or killed it now had been taken out of the realm of the polite facade. In another church a plan was made to begin to have a time set aside in each worship service for people to say their

inner prayers publically whether it was to pray for themselves or others during a period of intercessory prayer. A third clergyman planned to go home and confront one of his parishioners from whom he was hiding.

The next step was to begin to develop the criteria by which the effectiveness of the implementation could be measured. In each strategy, the clergy were able to find measurable ways of determining whether they had been successfully implemented. The clergy involved saw as measurable whether they did stop a rumor, whether people did pray aloud during a worship service, and whether they did no longer hide from their lay people.

Further it is necessary for two other evaluative criteria to be developed. Before implementation one should develop criteria for measuring change in the critical cause of the problem and the degree to which the problem has been solved. In the case of the clergy's example, it is necessary to measure the degree to which people within the local church are now able to communicate both their positive and negative feelings within the church community and thereby share with the local church their real selves rather than merely a facade. Secondly it is necessary to measure the effect which the change in the level of peoples' facade has on the other causes of the primary problem which the clergy first stated. Such a measurement might be made by giving a short questionnaire to a large number of people within the local church, both before the counter-causes were implemented and then a year after the counter-causes were implemented. Such a questionnaire might ask how open people felt in the local church in the worship of the local church and the degree of power which they felt the church had in their lives.

## IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE

The problem solving team by this time will have given far more thought to the problem than usually is given in a local church. One thing they should look for is the impact of their solution on the other causes in the feedback loop. Most likely, their solution to the problem will encounter opposition, for if they truly are being effective in solving the problem they will be disturbing other areas in the life of the church which will tend to oppose the solution. Rather than be surprised at this, the problem solving team should work to deal creatively with such opposition and take it as a sign that their efforts are having some effect.

The problem solving team should be as rigorous in their evaluation of their efforts as they were in the initial diagnosis. These evaluations should be made in writing and include measurements as to the results of their intervention in the life of the local church. Further it would be helpful for them to document their experience by keeping a written notebook of their diagnosis, implementation, and evaluation so later problem solving teams will be able to draw on this initial experience. Such a notebook should also account for the human side of the process during each of these stages with advice as to how the next problem solving team could be even more effective.

## CONCLUSION

Such a problem solving effort in the life of a local church will be a major effort in terms of time and human resources, but this process holds the promise of enabling a local church to solve its most critical problems with its own people being its major resource. The conclusion

of the clergy who acted as a problem solving team in this paper is that the results are worth the effort. Their major advice is that each step in the process should be utilized for a skipped step will cause a problem solving team to miss an important aspect of this integrated problem solving process. Their major learning is that with a sense of discipline and a commitment of the time, it is possible for local churches to solve their most critical problems. It is hoped such solutions to critical problems will bring a sense of new life and vitality to many local churches.



CHAPTER EIGHT  
IMPROVING THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT  
OF A LOCAL CHURCH

While it may seem unusual to speak of the "industrial relations" of a local church, one soon discovers that the categories which industrial relations uses to analyze the secular work environment are powerful tools to analyze the working environment of a local church. This Chapter will use the discipline of industrial relations to understand more fully the working environment of the local parish church. The focus will be on the issue of wages, working conditions, and conflict resolution in the relationship between professional clergy and lay people.

These issues will be discussed from the point of view of a typical local church. While any local parish church may be an exception from the composite picture, it nevertheless is important to make sure the exception is real for two reasons. First because many local churches have denied the reality of these working environment issues for a long period of time. Therefore the reader may find it easier to deny the existence of these problems than to attempt to solve them. Secondly if the composite picture is correct a solution to problems found in one local church may provide the solution to similar clergy-laity problems in another local church. The second half of this paper will discuss such solutions which may be applicable to a broad range of local church situations.

WHO IS THE EMPLOYEE

A local parish church through its governing board calls and employs a church professional, a clergyman. The clergyman is paid by the funds

which members of the church contribute to the church. It is the expectation of the church that the clergyman will do a number of things for the local church in return for his compensation. One of the major expectations is that the clergyman will make use of the members of the local church to carry out not only the work of the church but to aid the clergyman in his ministry. In essence a local church hires a person to employ them in the work of the church. The employers become the employed. This is the beginning of an unspoken confusion which permeates the life of almost every local church as to who is the employer and who is the employed. In fact this confusion is built into local churches by their very nature as Volunteer Organizations. Clergy are seeking a satisfying vocational working environment. Lay people are seeking a satisfying environment to volunteer their discretionary time. Because of this it is possible to visualize not one working environment within a local church but two. This Chapter will focus on the working environment as experienced by professional clergy in a local church.

#### THE POLITE FACADE

The confusion is further compounded by what can be called a "polite facade" which exists between clergy and lay people on matters of the working environment as it relates to the professional clergyman. Because of this facade valuable information which might otherwise be communicated between these two parties is lost. The facade is used to cover up the confusion which each party feels about their un-met expectations of the other. Because of sense of duty to a concept of Christian love and non-conflict the issues of wages, working conditions, and power are rarely dealt with in the open. Instead, the process is

more like an ongoing shadow boxing match. A simple way to see this is in the form of a table which states the extreme position of each point of view.

#### ISSUE: CLERGY COMPENSATION

##### Clergy Point of View:

Low pay, a sense of dependence on the gifts to the church, a conflict of self image as to how "poor" he should be to live up to the Christian ideal of poverty.

##### Lay Point of View:

Clergy are nicely taken care of, most often a house is provided, don't clergy get discounts (?), don't clergy want to be poor (?).

#### ISSUE: WORKING CONDITIONS

##### Clergy Point of View:

On duty 24 hours a day, job description is not well defined, a multiplicity of demands with no systematic way to evaluate which demands are most important, difficulty in saying "no" to people who ask for help, a desire to be needed.

##### Lay Point of View:

Clergy work mostly on Sunday mornings, their job description is clearly defined, don't really know how clergy time is spent during the middle of the week or what clergy really do with their professional time.

#### ISSUE: HOW CONFLICT IS RESOLVED

##### Clergy Point of View:

Bargaining power comes from past services rendered to lay people, the authority of the office, a feeling that not enough laity give enough of their time and money (power) to the local church, use of Canon Law, when applicable, a feeling of powerlessness in comparison to other professionals in our society.

##### Lay Point of View:

Bargaining power comes from the withdrawing of psychological and monetary support from the clergy or the local church, feeling that the church/clergy ask for too much of their time and money (power), alliances of numbers of people can be formed, clergy often don't really hear or respond well to needs.

#### THE ISSUE OF COMPENSATION

If the above analysis is correct it means the working environment of a local church is potentially very unstable and even destructive. It is obvious from this analysis that there is an extremely wide chasm of

understanding on the part of each side as to the nature of the working environment issues involved. The local church norm of maintaining a polite facade keeps these issues from continually breaking out in conflict as they would in a secular organization. For example clergy conform to the expectation of lay people by acting as if they are being well taken care of. Most clergy do this even though they know in their heart of hearts that they are neither being well taken care of or even minimally compensated for what they consider to be their true worth. Clergy maintain this facade for fear of being exposed as a wanting and materialistic person. The clergyman has a basic fear that if he raises the question of his low compensation he will be criticized by his lay people for not living up to some vow of poverty they expect he has taken in becoming a minister. Further as this image of poverty does play a role in the self-esteem of a clergyman he is even more unwilling to raise the compensation question even if it is causing a hardship on his family.

Meanwhile, the lay people rather than seeking ways to compensate their clergyman on the basis of his education, productivity, and responsibility use the clergy labor market of supply and demand to determine what their clergy are to be paid. Thus if two equally qualified clergy are vying for the same job, the lay people will choose the one who is willing to work for less. Because of the clergy's inability to raise the compensation question and the natural desire of lay people to pay as little as they can for a given quality of clergyman the salary levels of parish clergy are abysmally low. For example clergy have received four years of college education and three years of graduate education and within

their respective communities they are regarded as professionals. In 1974 the average clergy salary including housing was \$10,438.<sup>13</sup> By comparison a new motorman on Boston's MBTA subway system begins working with a base salary of \$14,000. a year before fringe benefits. Within the Episcopal Church a study was made to determine the average compensation of clergy in each Diocese including their housing. In each case the average compensation was lower than what the Federal Government had determined to be a moderate income for a family of four in that part of the country. While there has been a trend to increase clergy compensation it appears the rate of inflation has increased more rapidly.

Two specific cases may be useful to illuminate the extent to which the norm of polite facade and the norm of supposed desire for poverty hide the true reality of the compensation which clergy receive. In one case a clergyman had received no wage increase for ten years. He and his wife were attempting to raise their two children on \$7,500. a year in an expensive metropolitan area. After being encouraged by several of his clergy friends he went with fear and trembling to his Vestry to ask for a raise. The Vestry was stunned for they always had suspected that he was independently wealthy and would be embarrassed if they offered to pay him more. In the second case a Clergy Association was shocked to find that some of the clergy in their Diocese were indeed living at the poverty level and set up a fund to help raise these poverty level salaries to a minimumly acceptable level. When one local church was asked to contribute to this fund they declined. The clergyman of this church then took a moonlighting job in a hardware store to earn the money to make a contribution to this fund in the name of his church. In

this case it appears the norm of clergy poverty even to the detriment of the clergyman's family was more important to these lay people than seeing the clergy in their Diocese paid at an adequate level.

#### THE ISSUE OF WORKING CONDITIONS

Because of the "polite facade" which exists between clergy and most lay people there exists a chasm between the working conditions as perceived by lay people and the actual working conditions which most clergy encounter. Most lay people perceive the job of clergyman as well defined. He does worship on Sunday morning, prepares sermons, baptizes, marries people, buries those who die, and when it is called for does pastoral counseling. From the lay persons side of the collar it looks like a relatively easy job with low time demands, freedom, and long vacations.

From the clergy point of view, even in small churches, the working conditions look vastly different. The job description is not well defined for in addition to what lay people see being included are responsibilities to keep parish organizations viable, provide ongoing emotional support to literally hundreds of people, make sure the church can finance itself, and serve on Diocesan and community organizations. The list can get longer if one also expects a clergyman to keep up with his scholarship, his prayer life, and the political sparring of self interest groups within the local church. In many local congregations a clergyman is not able to take one day off a week and can expect to receive multiple telephone calls each night at home. Many clergy feel as if they are on duty 24 hours a day with demands for time and expertise coming from so many sides that it is difficult to set priorities.

Further a clergyman is often faced with the threat that if he does not meet someone's needs that either psychological or financial support will be withdrawn from himself and the local church.

If this description of clergy working conditions seems somewhat overstated a factual example might help. The leadership of a medium size urban parish of three hundred families met to develop a job description for their clergy for a weekend conference. The lay leadership were asked to list the work which they expected the clergy of this church to perform in the course of their normal duties and the number of hours a week which should be spent on each item. Then a master list of expectations was compiled for each of the clergy. The Rector according to the compiled list of expectations should have been able to complete his work each week in 158 hours. The Assistant could complete the weekly work expected of him in 96 hours. This exercise made explicit the work demands which lay people collectively place on clergy and of which individually they are not aware.

#### THE ISSUE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Just as in secular organizations there are issues of conflict, so are there issues of conflict in a local church. On the clergy side is the power of the authority of his office and the good will he has generated through his past services to the lay people. On the side of the laity is their ability to withhold psychological support from the clergyman and financial support from the church.

Let us look at preaching as an activity in the life of a local church which has the potential of generating great conflict and see how this conflict is resolved. Preaching is an area which is considered to

be under the control of the professional clergyman. Lay people expect that he will use his scholarship, experience, and wisdom to interpret the word of God. Some clergy look upon preaching as their main opportunity to communicate honestly with their lay people even if it generates conflict in the process. Because of this, clergymen from time to time say things with which lay people disagree. Because there is no feedback process by which these lay people can express their point of view, their negative feelings begin to get bottled up. It is not uncommon for a family to stop coming to church or even to have a lay person get up and walk out of a sermon. In either case the lay people are using the withdrawal of psychological support to try to get their clergy to change their mind. Rather than conflict being an opportunity for growth by both the clergyman and the lay person, the seeds of a destructive relationship begin to sprout.

Two dramatic examples may be of help to show the effects of this conflict. I can remember sitting in one clergyman's office on a Monday morning when he received a call from a parishioner who announced they were no longer going to complete paying their \$6,000. pledge because of the conclusion their clergyman had reached the morning before. The most expensive sermon of which I know cost the local church \$275,000. and its major contribution to its building fund. Because of this the church was never built.

Unlike secular industrial relations there is no grievance procedure or apparatus to settle such conflict. While most denominations do have cannon law which does state the rights and responsibilities of clergy and laity alike it is rarely referred to. Instead conflict runs its course



covertly in psychological and monetary terms.

#### THESE ISSUES AS SOLVABLE OPPORTUNITIES

We have looked at the issues of clergy compensation, clergy working conditions, and the uses of power within a local church. They are significant problems for they continue to cause low morale on the part of the clergy. For the most part these three issues rather than major theological conflict are the primary reasons why so many clergy are leaving the ministry of local churches. There comes a point when almost every clergyman asks three questions. How much must he allow his family to sacrifice for his work? How long can he continue to respond to so many demands which each seem to want immediate attention? Is it worth being continually undercut by lay people who do not realize the effectiveness of their actions in piercing the heart of a clergyman's hopes? But these are not issues without hope if both parties look upon these problems as solvable opportunities.

The first need is for more open communication. The facade which exists between clergyman and lay people must be broken so lay people can perceive the needs of clergy and clergy can better understand the actions of lay people. The dishonesty with which clergy hide their financial needs must be broken through. Clergy must be willing to ask for what they think they are worth. In such asking they may find one of two things. They are worth as much as they thought which would be a pleasant surprise. They are worth less than they thought which may say something about how important their lay people really perceive their work to be. It is interesting to note in the two examples of attempts by clergy to have their salaries raised, the support of other clergy was

the catalyst to give the clergy the confidence to raise the compensation issue. Such modified "collective bargaining" and mutual support would not be at all unfamiliar to secular organizations. The American labor movement is based on such a foundation and professional organizations such as the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association have much of their strength based in looking out for the interests of others in their same profession.

Lay people should realize how vulnerable their clergy are to being taken advantage of by lay people who are not willing to compensate them for their real contribution to the lives of the people within their care. An opportunity exists for lay people in leadership positions unilaterally to right the compensation wrongs which exist in local churches today. I can imagine no more unexpected event in the eyes of a clergyman than for the lay leadership of a local church to unilaterally raise their clergy's salary to a level equal to his true worth and productivity. Further the morale of the clergyman would rise so rapidly that the whole church would receive the benefits of his raise. At the very least lay people in responsibility should no longer take advantage of the low salaries for which clergy are willing to work as a means of not having to contribute more to their local church to keep it financially viable.

The second need is for a new set of expectations as to the role of clergy within the local church. These expectations can begin with the mutual writing of a specific and realistic job description for the clergyman. Such a job description should include unstructured time for the clergy to be able to respond to the emergency situations which continually come up. It might be realistic for a forty hour work week

to be drawn up and expect that another ten hours a week shall be spent on the un-expected. The clergyman on his part should keep a log of his time which should be reviewed by a small support group of lay people on a monthly basis. These lay people should make sure that the clergyman is not extending his hours of work to meet non-essential needs such as acting as the janitor in opening and closing a church building for night meetings, doing work which a secretary could do, or spending time on tasks which a lay person could fulfill. Further this group should work with the clergy to re-adjust his job description as they learn how his time is actually spent and as new opportunities appear for the local church. Lastly this group of lay people should also act as a support group to help the clergyman learn how to say no to unreasonable requests for his time.

The clergyman should begin to sense that his time is more valuable than he formerly thought and work to spend his time on those things which he and his local church see as having the greatest value. Through such a reordering of the use of his time a clergyman should find his productivity increasing. It is easier to write about such a reordering of the use of clergyman's time than it is to implement such a change. Time is an elusive and scarce resource to grasp. It takes a strong commitment and strong self-discipline to take advantage of the time a clergyman has to give, but the results of this effort promise much if the effort is made.

The uses of power in the resolution of conflict in a local church should be made as explicit and honest as possible. From the earliest days of the Church until the present there have been issues of power

present in the life of every church community. The difficulty of dealing with issues of power and conflict in today's local church is how seldom the correct issue is surfaced and dealt with openly. In most churches power is exercised behind the scenes. Conflict is avoided to keep negative feelings from being surfaced. In fact the opposite should be the case. Honesty should become the norm of operation. When power is used it should be recognized that it is being used and not used in a hidden or covert way. Conflict should be looked on as a creative adventure on the road to truth or as the motto of one Seminary says, "Seek ye the truth, Come whence it may, cost what it will."

The learnings of the Senior Warden<sup>14</sup> of a local church during the period his church was without a clergyman may be instructive. He commented that shortly after the clergyman left he would try to put off making difficult decisions and avoid dealing directly with members of the church whom he heard had a complaint. In each case he found this made the situation worse. He developed a new decision rule. At the first hint of a problem he would work to solve it immediately even if it meant enduring some short term conflict. Since he began operating this way he has found no problem has blown up to major proportions.

Lastly, it may be that new structures are needed to handle such conflict in a more creative way than it is handled today. There are three changes in structure which if implemented simultaneously would reduce the chances for conflict to be submerged, for power to be exercised without recourse, and would keep the clergy and lay people more knowledgeable as to the unstable issues in the life of the local church. The first is to have the clergyman assume regular office hours

when he can be reached by telephone. Just as many pediatricians have found it is easier to be reached when they set aside one hour each morning to be available by telephone, the same has also been found by clergy who have tried it. It should be made explicit to the congregation that the clergyman is available to not only answer questions during this daily period, but also is available to act as an ombudsman if a lay person has a complaint. Secondly the clergyman should gather together different groups of seven to ten lay people each week to get their input into what they like, what they don't like, and what they would like to see happening in their local church. Lay people should begin to have the idea that they will be listened to. During these meetings the clergy should also be equally as honest with his lay people in sharing his own difficulties as well as dreams. In this way the wall which exists between lay people and their clergy can begin to come down. Out of the communication which ensues, mutual affirmation and support for new and creative ideas are likely to develop. Such structured and organized groups to take the pulse of the church should surface the issues of power and conflict before they become destructive. Lastly the clergyman should have a small support group of lay advisors whose judgment he trusts. The clergyman needs allies whose perspective and vantage point will be different from his own, for they can provide alternative ways of dealing with the potentially destructive and explosive issues which are now submerged below the surface of the life of a local church. Further this should be a reference group with whom a clergyman may want to remain accountable in a very personal way, which is not possible with either the large number of people who are members

of the local congregation or its governing board. It is no accident that Jesus had three disciples with whom he was very close, nine more with whom he was a little less close, then the seventy evangelists he sent out in pairs, and lastly the multitudes who followed him everywhere.

This chapter looked at the working environment a clergyman finds in a local church. It was found that the same industrial relations issues of wages, working conditions, and the resolution of conflict are present in the local church and that solutions for each of these problems are possible. If these solutions are implemented a great deal of the ill health which is often found in a local parish church can be remedied. The ill health can be replaced with a healthy working environment in which the minister of the local church could find more satisfaction, more productivity, and a greater sense of worth in his work. The discipline of industrial relations may provide a breakthrough, for which clergy have been searching for a long time, in improving the working conditions of a local church.

CHAPTER NINE  
IDEAS FOR ACTION

Through experience clergy learn to do portions of their ministry with greater ease by finding better ways to solve problems which recur. Unfortunately these individual learnings are rarely transferred among clergy in a form which allows them to be used in another church. In this chapter four Ideas for Action are presented. They have been collected from a variety of sources and have been organized in a way to facilitate their transferability.

The four Ideas for Action are:

1. Prayer For Clergy Who Don't Have Time To Pray
2. How To Organize the Repetitive Aspects of a Church's Life
3. How To Develop a Preaching Resource Network
4. Ministry to Shut-ins

It is hoped in these Ideas for Action clergy will see a further opportunity for themselves. This opportunity is to seek, collect, organize, and use the ideas their colleagues have developed. Lastly it is hoped clergy who do such research will share their findings with other clergy in local churches who can use them as well.

## PRAYER FOR CLERGY WHO DON'T HAVE TIME TO PRAY

Many clergy have difficulty finding the time to say their prayers in a disciplined and helpful way on a daily basis. Yet prayer has the potential of enabling clergy to be in touch with God's resources of power and authority which can enrich their lives and ministries. This Idea for Action sets forth a method which is a modification of one used by the Anglican Bishop Bardsley. The system offered here may be a useful starting point for a clergyman who presently has no disciplined approach.

### How to Begin

Each day set aside a fifteen minute period to pray at a time when you are least likely to be interrupted. If possible the period should be the same time each day. The process can be simply remembered in the words RELAX, READ, RELATE, and REMEMBER.

RELAX by taking several deep breaths and putting the cares of the moment from your head.

READ stands for reading a portion of the Bible whether it be several verses or a chapter. A good way to do this is to select a Book and then work your way through it.

RELATE what you have read to what is happening in your own life, the life of your congregation, the life of your community, and the events of the world. Such relating often brings new insight.

REMEMBER all those people who come to mind who are in need of your prayers whether they be sick, about to face a challenge, or have some reason to rejoice.

Once you have completed this process then return to your work.

### What to Expect

While it is difficult for some clergy to maintain this discipline, you will find the effort worth it. Empirically, those who live by it



sense a void in their lives when their discipline breaks down and they stop taking the time to pray. Conversely, they find when they do take time to pray, they are in closer touch with themselves, their Biblical heritage, and the power of their God's Spirit, which then seems to empower them in their work.

## HOW TO ORGANIZE THE REPETITIVE ASPECTS OF A CHURCH'S LIFE

Most young clergy perceive each Sunday to be a new occurrence, one which requires planning as if a Sunday morning service of worship had never before been put together. More experienced clergy see each Sunday as unique and yet part of a continuum of Sundays. They do not have to begin their planning from point zero. In fact most experienced clergy have most of the planning for a Sunday morning worship service completed by the beginning of the week unless an extraordinary occurrence intervenes. Clergy who do such pre-planning find they have more time to spend on the important aspects of their ministry rather than worrying over last minute detail.

Few clergymen will not recognize themselves in this example. Through experience we learn how to do things better. But what is missing in most churches are clergy who actively seek ways to do the repetitive aspects of their work more efficiently so they can spend more time ministering to the deeper needs of their people. The premise of this Idea for Action is that clergy can find significant ways to save time through using some inventive common sense and being willing to change how they currently are doing things. Three examples of such inventive common sense follow.

## A TIME SAVING FILING SYSTEM

From the perspective of the Church Calendar each Sunday of the Church year is an annual occurrence. Every local church should have a file folder for each Sunday of the Church Year and the week which precedes it. In this folder should be kept the Sunday Bulletins of the church from the preceding years, annotated copies of worship

services if they are unique such as Christmas and Easter, annotated records of events which happen during that week each year such as a Christmas pageant, and a "tickler" file of notes you will want to remember when you get to that week in the year ahead. With such a system you will have completed much of your planning work before the week arrives. Instead of groping to remember what you did last year and having to begin again, you will have past information to build on.

#### PLANNING HYMNS AND LESSONS

Many clergy spend time each week choosing hymns and lessons for the upcoming Sunday. Once chosen they then have to hunt down the organist to inform him of the selections, the Altar Guild to get the Bible marked, and any lay men involved in the service to tell them what to read, etc. One clergyman developed a better system. In May before the next academic year he spends a morning with his organist. Together they go through the hymnal and choose the hymns for the coming year. By doing it all at one time they can plan for hymns according to the church season, hymns which the congregation knows well and hymns they want the congregation to learn. It takes them about two hours instead of twenty hours if they tried to do it on a weekly basis. That is a savings of over four man days a year. Perhaps four times a year they will find reason to select different hymns than those they already had chosen. The other forty eight weeks they have saved their time for better things.

Likewise this clergyman sits down and chooses the Biblical Lessons and Psalms for the year. Some years he uses the lectionary provided by his church. Other years he uses another lectionary he has come across.

Besides providing a continuity of Biblical fare for the congregation it gives him a discipline from which to preach. Surprisingly these pre-selected lessons are more appropriate to preach from in most cases than selecting the Biblical readings either by leafing through the Bible or choosing a passage from memory. Like the pre-selected hymns, different Lessons and Psalms can be chosen if the occasion merits. One hour spent planning in May can save a half hour a week searching for the "right Biblical passages." Such pre-planning can save another three man days. A sample of the Hymn selection calendar and Biblical lectionary as used by Christ Church Christiana Hundred in Wilmington, Delaware are reproduced at the end of this idea for action.

#### CHECK LISTS FOR RECURRING EVENTS . . .

Each year a clergyman in a local church does several baptisms, marriages, and funerals. Further in most churches there is a constant coming and going in the membership of the congregation as people ask to join and leave. While each of these occurrences are routine for experienced clergy they still require two kinds of responses: standard and spontaneous. Standard responses are those which apply to every situation. Spontaneous responses are those decisions a clergyman must make because the situation is unique. But most clergy prefer to deal spontaneously, and because of this their standard responses are often less than adequate. What clergyman has so ordered his priorities to give adequate instruction to every God Parent? What clergyman has made sure that every family in grief has not only been given all the help they can in planning for the funeral, but also received adequate pastoral support before and after the service? What church has a good way of socializing

new families into the congregation and in the socializing process given and received information which will be helpful in the years ahead? What clergyman follows up every family who leaves the church to find out why they are leaving, what useful perceptions they have about the church, and to help them transfer to another church?

I have yet to meet a clergyman who feels each of these areas cannot do with some improvement. A large measure of improvement in each area is possible if a clergyman takes the time to make up for himself a check list for each area. The check list should include each of those things which must be done each time one of these events occur. The advantage to such a check list is the clergyman then can concentrate on those things which require an individual response rather than being caught short because some routine matter has been forgotten.

#### AVOIDING CONFLICTS IN SCHEDULING

Even small churches seem to run into problems of scheduling their buildings, meetings, and events. There is a simple way to overcome this. On a large black board draw the outline of six monthly calendars. Write the month's name above each outline and place each day's date in the corresponding blank space. (One church found such a black board so helpful they had one professionally made.) Fill in all regularly scheduled events such as services of worship, meetings of the church's organizations, and other previously scheduled events. This black board which should be kept in the church's office then becomes the central scheduling location for the church. As new dates are requested to be scheduled whether they be marriages or a conference they are added to the board. Conflicts are avoided by using the first come first right

to use the building rule. This has a secondary benefit in prodding the leaders of the church to schedule their events early.

#### ONLY A BEGINNING

Once a clergyman begins to think in terms of what tasks continually recur in the life of a local church he can find ways to so organize them with pre-planning that the amount of time and energy normally spent in doing them can be spent in areas which are more important and productive. This Idea for Action will have been effective if it causes a clergyman to take the time to do such pre-planning and reap the benefits of organizing the repetitive aspects of his church's life.

## HYMN SELECTION FROM EPISCOPAL CHURCH HYMNAL

First Sunday in September		
Pro	Come, thou almighty King	271
Hymn	Take my life (11 a.m. service)	408
Ser	O Master, let me walk with thee	572
Re	Christ is the world's true Light	258
Second Sunday in September		
Pro	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	279
Hymn	Our Father, by whose Name (11 a.m. service)	504
Ser	The King of love my shepherd is	345
Re	On our way rejoicing	568
Third Sunday in September		
Pro	Lord Christ, when first thou cam'st to men	522
Hymn	He who would valiant be (11 a.m. service)	563
Ser	Awake, thou Spirit of the watchmen	255
Re	The Church's one foundation	396
Fourth Sunday in September		
Pro	Holy, Holy, Holy!	266
Ser	The great Creator of the worlds (1st tune)	298
Re	Rejoice, the Lord is King!	350
Fifth Sunday in September		
Pro	Glorious things of thee are spoken	385
Hymn	Love divine, all loves excelling (11 a.m. service)	479
Ser	Christ for the world we sing!	537
Re	Now thank we all our God	276
First Sunday in October		
Pro	God of our fathers, whose almighty hand	143
Hymn	Sing, my soul, his wondrous love (11 a.m. service)	294
Ser	Ye holy angels bright	600
Re	Glorious things of thee are spoken	385

## Key:

Pro stands for Processional Hymn  
 Ser stands for Sermon Hymn  
 Re stands for Recessional Hymn

## A SAMPLE LECTIONARY OF BIBLICAL LESSONS

## Second Sunday in September

TRINITY XII

Psalm 139: 1-16, p. 514

Proverbs 8: 1, 22-36

St. Matthew 5: 38-48

## Third Sunday in September

TRINITY XIII

Psalm 73, p. 428

Deuteronomy 15: 7-11

St. Luke 16: 19-31

## Fourth Sunday in September

TRINITY XIV

Psalm 19, p. 363

Jeremiah 1: 4-10

St. John 4: 31-38

## Fifth Sunday in September

TRINITY XV

Psalm 50, p. 401

I Kings 21: 1-20

St. John 16: 1-15

## Second Sunday in October

TRINITY XVII

Psalm 115, p. 485

Exodus 20: 1-20

St. Matthew 5: 21-22, 27-28, 38-48

## Third Sunday in October

TRINITY XVIII

Psalm 27, p. 371

Exodus 32: 1-14

St. John 13: 1-11

## Fourth Sunday in October

ST. SIMON &amp; ST. JUDE

Psalm 72, p. 426

Wisdom 5: 1-10, 13-16

St. Luke 6: 12-23

## Second Sunday in November

TRINITY XXI

Psalm 91, p. 454

Joel 2: 15-19, 21-22

St. Mark 2: 18-28



## HOW TO DEVELOP A PREACHING RESOURCE NETWORK

In most churches preaching is the clergyman's one activity which touches more lives in an inspirational way than any other during the week. In talking with lay people about their clergy, often the first topic they raise is their clergyman's ability as a preacher. Most clergy recognize the importance of preaching as a corner stone of their ministry; many still feel that it is more of a burden than an opportunity. By its very nature it is a weekly or bi-monthly intellectual and emotional endeavor of which lay people have high expectations. Because of the frequency, preaching begins to seem relentless. Add to this the emotional aspect of researching, writing, and delivering a new and insightful statement of faith each week, and the task seems even more difficult, especially if the preacher is wrestling with his own faith. What novelist, playwright, or lecturer is expected to develop a new work each week, much less a work which will be compared to the imagined great preaching of a Martin Luther?

There are two norms about preaching which make it even more impossible for clergy to be as effective as they might in this area. The first is the norm that each clergyman each week will research, write, re-write, and deliver a masterpiece sermon with no outside help. It currently is a matter of professional pride that clergy will accept no outside help in their preparation for preaching. The second norm is that clergy are not expected to have an organized way to receive honest feedback about their efforts. Most clergy must content themselves with the comments of lay people as they are leaving Church, comments which are too brief and formal to give enough information to be very helpful.

This Idea for Action will focus on specific ways in which a clergyman can be nurtured by outside resources and receive honest feedback on his work.

#### From New Help to Better Results

The true payoff for preaching a sermon is how helpful it has been for the members of the congregation. Of lesser importance is the personal learning the clergyman does during the preparation of the sermon. Of little importance is the norm that a clergyman must begin from scratch each week. In fact most experienced clergy use what they call their "barrel" of old sermons they have preached before, which with re-reading can often spark the central idea of a new sermon. By expanding this "barrel," clergy can improve the results of their preaching as both a learning exercise for themselves and their lay people.

How can the "barrel" be expanded. One method is to buy professionally prepared sermons for each Sunday with the implication that one need deliver only what someone else has prepared. The disadvantages to these sermon services are that they are not very good and rarely appropriate to one's particular congregation on a given Sunday.

Instead a clergyman needs to develop his own Sermon Resource Network. Begin by identifying the five best preachers in your denomination. Write to them and ask to be put on their sermon mailing list which most of them have. (Some may have a small charge to cover postage.) As you receive the sermons, read them with a magic marker in hand. If you are struck by a sermon being good or portions of it being outstanding draw bold outlines to that effect. If no part of the

sermon inspires you then it can be discarded. One thing you soon will learn is that even great preachers have bad days.

Next begin a filing system which will have three major categories. The first category will be for specific Sundays of the year i.e. Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter, Pentecost, etc. The second category is topical, i.e. Forgiveness, Hope, Historical, Love, Redemption, etc. The third category is by Biblical verse. Each time you find a sermon which you think might be useful in future sermon preparation, file it in a folder whose title and category will help you retrieve it in the future. After a period of several months you will have begun to develop a valuable resource. After several years it will become invaluable, particularly as you become more selective about which you save. Also you may want to keep your own sermons in this retrieval system.

Let us say it is two weeks before Christmas and you are looking for a fresh way to relive the birth of Jesus. Your preparation process should begin as in the past by writing down your own insights and reflections. Then go to the Christmas folder to read again the four or five sermons you have saved and whose strengths you have marked. You then can bring to bear the further insights of your silent tutors. The question then becomes how much of your final sermon should be yours and how much should be from your resource file. The deeper question is how much credit should you give to yourself and how much to the original sources. Here you must be as honest as possible. The focus of your work is on the effect the sermon will have on the members of the congregation and not on your own prestige. If the focus is on these results then

you no longer have to be concerned with the sermon being for your own glorification. A simple rule is when in doubt, give credit.

#### Getting Better Feedback

There are three ways to get better feedback about your preaching efforts. The first way is to get feedback even before the sermon is preached. Several clergy prepare their sermons far enough ahead of time to share with a small group of lay people before they are given. Based on their responses it is rewritten for greater clarity and clout. The advantage of such a system is that the things you learn from such a trial run can be incorporated directly into your sermon. The difficulty is the time such a process takes. You may find it helpful to do such pre-screening a few times a year to help sharpen your preparation techniques.

The second way is to give people a means of responding to the sermon immediately after it is preached either on paper or in person. In churches which hand out leaflets on a Sunday morning, it is possible to insert five to fifteen sermon feedback forms at random in the bulletins. Next you must gain the commitment of the members of the congregation to participate on the Sundays they receive such a form in their leaflet. Specifically ask to fill the form out and drop it in a special box at the back of the church. The form, which could be the same size as the bulletin itself should have four questions.

In one sentence what did the sermon say?

What was most helpful about the sermon?

What was least helpful about the sermon?

In the future what topic would you like to hear a sermon on?

Over a period of time you should begin to have a good understanding about your strengths and weaknesses as a preacher. More importantly you will learn what is heard by your people and how it differs from what you thought you said. The future topic question should give you an insight into what areas your congregation would most like to hear about.

Another way to give people a chance to respond to your sermon in dialogue is by holding a forum hour after the worship service, instead of just a coffee hour. During this time people can have the chance to question you on what you said, and for you to question them on what they heard. With this method particular points in the sermon can be explored in greater depth.

#### Improved Results

Your preaching resource network of sermon ideas coming in from the great preachers of your church and honest feedback from your people should improve the quality of your preaching dramatically. This improvement should provide benefits to your congregation for the sermons they will hear will be of greater worth to them. You, too, should benefit both in the preparation of your sermons and in knowing how well you are actually doing.

## MINISTRY TO SHUT-INS

People who are shut-in because of age or health face two difficult realities. They are cut off from the large number of human contacts which mobile people take for granted. Also they face a crisis as to their worth to themselves and to others. Ministry to shut-ins should provide opportunities for communication and worth.

## Identification

Many churches do not have a complete list of their members who are not mobile. One clergyman<sup>15</sup> solved the problem by posting a list of all those who he knew to be shut-in. The congregation then brought to his attention all those who were in this category which he and the church did not know about. The purpose of the list was not to say we know who and where everyone is, but to say whom have we missed. This simple technique worked.

## Communication

With the list of shut-ins in the above mentioned church was a stack of cards, envelopes, and a mail drop. Whenever people looked at the list they were encouraged to write a brief note to someone they knew on the list. The church stamped the envelope and mailed it. It cost the church a little over ten dollars per hundred personal communications. This is a bargain in ministry.

A lay woman in another local church was concerned about shut-ins. Her idea was to have a number of lay women gather monthly and spend the afternoon calling on those who were shut-in. She and the clergy drew up a list of perspective callers who were warm and personable. They gathered at the church monthly with the clergyman for a brief meeting

before they went out two by two for their afternoon of calling. Each pair called on three different people. At nursing homes they often had tea with more than one person. Upon their return to the church they met with the clergy and indicated where follow up was needed. There now are more than thirty women involved as callers. They report the experience for them is even more valuable than the gift of their presence they bring to the shut-ins.

A clergyman in a third church was concerned that he never was able to see each shut-in each month.<sup>16</sup> He hired a part time parish caller who was to spend twenty hours a week calling in the name of the church. She is so loved by the shut-ins, and loves her work so much she spends over thirty hours a week at it. His recommendation is to hire a person for a three month trial, with further work negotiable by both sides. Selecting the proper person is the key to success. As this is a service to the people being seen, a clergyman may have to be tough and try several people before he finds the right person.

Lastly a clergyman whose parish has a number of elderly and shut-in people tries to see them three times a year. At the end of each visit he schedules their next visit together. It not only keeps him honest in planning to do his calling, but it also gives his parishioner the expectation of his return.

#### Worth

A parish has a mid-week prayer service during which the sick, troubled, and shut-in of the church are remembered. This service which is held at the church brings to mind an opportunity for those who can rarely come to church, for few shut-ins are not able to pray. As the

prayer list is updated each week it can be duplicated and mailed to each shut-in. Each shut-in can be asked to pray for each person on the list each day during a brief service which the church can mimeograph as well. Not only will the sick of the parish be prayed for by a larger group of people, but the very group of the church who cannot come to worship can be the backbone of this spiritual endeavor. In praying for others they can find new worth for themselves.

As people are removed from the prayer list because they have returned to health, a notation can be made at the bottom of the current list. Further this process can be reinforced by the calling processes which were outlined under communication.



## CHAPTER TEN

## CONCLUSION

This Thesis is a first attempt at presenting the Management Side of Ministry to clergy in local churches so they may learn to do their ministry in a more effective manner. A clergyman who spends the time and effort to learn to use the ideas and processes presented in this Thesis will find his methods of doing ministry to have changed in the following ways. He will have organized his time and ministry to take greater advantage of his competence and to focus on those tasks which are the most important. He will perceive the lay people of his church as more important resources for ministry than he formerly believed was possible. His church will have attempted to define and implement its core mission. Yearly planning will have become an on-going part of church life. Using the System Dynamic Problem Solving Process his church will have the means of tackling difficult problems with multiple causes. His working conditions will have improved. Lastly he will have begun to collect and act on the good ideas of his colleagues in other churches.

## Next Steps

The next step in this research on the Ministry Side of Management is to have clergy put this research into practice as a system. This will be done in two ways. The first shall be to have twenty clergy use it in written form as it now stands. The second shall be to use it with another twenty clergy as the core of a curriculum for a ten week continuing education course. Once the feedback is received from both implementation efforts this Thesis will be re-written and expanded based

on the experiences of the participating clergy. It is hoped the revised document will be suitable for publication and wide distribution.

#### Suggestions for Further Study

Further original study beyond the scope of this Thesis should be undertaken in the following areas. Local church finances should be explored as to the optimum size of a church, the development of a computer aided accounting system, and a functional budgeting system. Local church dynamics should be pursued using the discipline of Systems Dynamics to seek out the underlying generic factors which are operative in all parish churches. The researcher in such an effort will have to find a skillful way to present his findings so as to have them be acceptable to church people who might use them. Lastly a study could be undertaken in local church structure and strategy. The parish church as we know it will soon be undergoing rapid change in response to the economic, social, and cultural environment. Such a study of strategy and structure should look for alternative ways in which ministry can be done given the changes in the environment beyond a church's control.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Loren B. Mead. New Hope for Congregations. The Seabury Press, New York, New York, 1972, p. 105, 106.

<sup>2</sup>The Christian Ministry, "Peter Drucker on Church Management 'The Art of Doing the Important,'" September 1972, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Blizzard. Christian Century. Russell Sage Foundation, report, April 25, 1956, p. 509.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 509.

<sup>5</sup>There are other processes which are more complicated and detailed than the one presented here. A good sampling of processes to help you think through your strengths and weaknesses can be found in a book entitled What Color is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job Hunters and Career-Changers, by Richard N. Bolles, Ten Speed Press. It can be found in most college book stores or ordered from the publisher for \$4.95 plus .25 handling. Ten Speed Press, Box 4310. Berkeley, California 94704.

<sup>6</sup>The Rev. James R. Adams, St. Marks Capital Hill, Washington, D.C.

<sup>7</sup>The Rev. Todd H. Wetzel, Church of the Advent, Westlake, Ohio.

<sup>8</sup>The Rev. Calhoun W. Wick, Christ Church, Greenville, Delaware.

<sup>9</sup>The Rev. Alice Mann Gallagher, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

<sup>10</sup>Jeffery Hadden, The Gathering Storm in the Churches, Doubleday, New York, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>The best discussion on developing a purpose statement for a local church is in the Rev. Robert K. Hudnut's book, Arousing the Sleeping Giant. The ideas expressed in this sub-chapter up to the questions on page 36 are a simplification of his approach.

<sup>12</sup>See the acknowledgement section for their names.

<sup>13</sup>1974 Study of the National Council of Churches for the Professional Church Leadership Program Commission of that organization. The study was of 4,635 clergy in nineteen denominations.

<sup>14</sup>Mr. Richard Watson, Christ Church, Shaker Heights, Ohio.

<sup>15</sup>The Rev. Warren R. Radtke, Trinity Church, Melrose, Massachusetts.

<sup>16</sup>The Rev. Alanson B. Houghton, Church of the Heavenly Rest, New York, New York.

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